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No Last Words: Class, Cultural Production, and the Black Radical Tradition in the Pre-Classical Civil Rights Movement, 1909–1948

Anna Livia W. Y. B. Chen , '18

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Abstract: This paper argues that the strategic shape of the 1954–1965 classical civil rights movement was neither inevitable nor a simple progression of American values, but was the result of extensive ideological contestation during the *pre-classical* civil rights movement. Between the inflection points of 1929 and 1948, two ideologies, one rooted in Progressive Era racial stewardship and the other in the Black Radical Tradition, engaged in a Gramscian "war of position" for leadership of their coalition against white supremacy. An important tool in this Pre-Classical War of Position was cultural production.

"The history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic. There undoubtedly does exist a tendency to (at least provisional stages of) unification in the historical activity of these groups, but this tendency is continually interrupted by the activity of the ruling groups; it therefore can only be demonstrated when an historical cycle is completed and this cycle culminates in a success… Every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should therefore be of incalculable value." —Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*[1]

"My love for my children makes me glad that I am what I am, and keeps me from desiring to be otherwise; and yet, when I sometimes open a little box in which I still keep my fast yellowing manuscripts, the only tangible remnants of a vanished dream, a dead ambition, a sacrificed talent, I cannot repress the thought, that after all, I have chosen the lesser part, that I have sold my birthright for a mess of pottage."
—James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*[2]

I. Introduction: Neither their Birthright nor a Mess of Pottage

For centuries, artists and intellectuals have been captivated by the allegory of Esau selling his birthright to the Abrahamic kingdom to his younger twin brother, Jacob, for a 'mess of pottage.'[3] From satirist Jonathan Swift to poet Lord Byron, theorist Karl Marx to transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, Black filmmaking pioneer Oscar Micheaux to Indian nationalist V.D. Savarkar, the Biblical parable is typically used to warn against or scold short-sightedness. However, there is also the unjust tragedy that some underscore, for Esau is "at the point of death" and has no bargaining power; if he refuses to sell, he will die and lose his claim to inheritance anyway.[4] Still, his younger brother persists, taking advantage of Esau's vulnerability, refusing to give Esau any food until he swears to sell his birthright. This exploitation takes on a still darker meaning in light of the prophecy foretold when their mother was pregnant with them: "Two nations—in your womb, two peoples from your loins shall issue. People over people shall prevail, the elder the younger's slave."[5] In the case of Jacob and Esau, the oppression persists throughout their lives, even following their supposed reconciliation twenty years later, carried on after their death by the "two peoples" born from their lineages.[6]

The classical civil rights movement, typically periodized from the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to the 1965 Voting Rights Act, is widely celebrated in American culture, but, like the celebration of Jacob in the Abrahamic religions, it does not tell the whole story. Why did the classical civil rights movement take the relatively gradual and reformist shape that it did, given the increasing strength of the Black Radical Tradition following the Great Depression? Did the Black activist community sell their radical birthright for a 'mess of pottage,' or were they, like Esau, 'at the point of death' with no choice but to accept what the Jacob-like power structure was willing to concede? This paper will investigate the years leading up to the classical civil rights

movement, that is the *pre-classical* movement, seeking to understand why the classical movement emerged when, and took the shape that, it did. The reality lies somewhere between popular celebrations of the movement as "a natural progression of American values" and a Biblical betrayal of one's birthright.[7] Rather, the classical movement was the result of decades of struggle between two ideological factions of people who were opposed to the hegemonic value of white supremacy, one rooted in Progressive Era racial stewardship—what I will refer to as Meritocratic Racial Uplift—the other in the Black Radical Tradition[8]—what I will refer to as Vernacular Intellectualism. One of the central differences between Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism is related to class, particularly class sensibilities, and their acceptance or rejection of capitalism.[*] Though Meritocratic Racial Uplifters had a much stronger institutional foundation and ongoing support from influential individuals on both sides of the color line between the start of the Great Migration and the Great Depression, the years between 1929–1954 saw significant restructuring of power on the national and international stages that bolstered the appeal and application of Vernacular Intellectualism, raising the possibility of a more radical and far-reaching counter-hegemonic movement. To see just how captivating Vernacular Intellectualism had become in the 1930s–1940s, one must look at cultural production, such as novels, music, and cartoons, because it often evades formal articulation. Despite Vernacular Intellectualism's growing strength through the Great Depression and World War II, these years also increased white, conservative backlash, which ultimately stunted its radicalism, forcing it into the shadows of a more moderate,

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[*] In this paper, 'class' is used to refer to the socioeconomic combination of one's economic class status—as defined by indicators such as income, wealth, and property ownership—and one's social class sensibilities—behavior, morals, attitudes, language, etc. Some class indicators cannot be neatly divided in between status and sensibilities, which leads to varying assumptions about the relationship between certain sensibilities and their implications about one's status. Class will be further discussed in Section III.

largely Uplift-based classical civil rights movement.

The map of this paper will start with broader foundational ideas and then proceed to the historical specifics of the pre-classical civil rights movement. It begins with an overview of historiography and theory, using the writings about hegemony by Antonio Gramsci and Gramscian scholars to stitch together the bodies of literature about 'the long civil rights movement' and cultural history.[9] Though this section will front-load Gramscian theory, the reader need not try to understand the theory on its own; it will drawn upon throughout the rest of the paper, illuminating both the theoretical and historical material. The first body section goes into further detail about each ideology, including how cultural production encodes ideological beliefs and arguments. The second body section traces the protracted ideological contestation between Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism during the Great Depression, World War II, and the start of the Cold War. The conclusion returns the reader to the doorstep of the classical civil rights movement. Though the classical movement was not the 'birthright' promised to radical activists and foot soldiers, it was not a straightforward birthright that Meritocratic Racial Uplifters hoped for either. Instead, leaders of the classical movement combined elements of each ideology, favoring Uplift but also utilizing a few key aspects of Vernacular Intellectualism, such as the strategic leveraging of mass mobilization. Ultimately, the civil rights movement was neither the Black Radical Tradition's birthright *nor* a mess of pottage, but a barter: an adaptation of that birthright to what was possible at that historical moment.

II. Historiography and Theory: Context, 'Common Sense,' and the Culture/Politics Dichotomy

To examine the ideological contestation during the pre-classical civil rights movement, I will use the historiography of what Jacquelyn Dowd Hall calls 'the long civil rights movement' as a starting point and for the historical context. The study of the long movement has emerged in the

last 15 years as historians have started explicitly questioning the conventional 1954–1965 periodization of the Civil Rights Movement,[10] preferring to see these years as the *short*, *heroic*, or *classical* components of a longer, more complicated movement.[11] Building on previous work[12] that challenged popular preconceptions of the classical movement, scholars of the long movement have used the literature and lines of inquiry of labor, urban, and international history, arguing that we must expand the traditional parameters of periodization and region in order to understand this mid-century struggle for liberation.[13] A central component of the study of the long movement, whether as an intended goal or an unexpected byproduct, has been returning the radical critiques and imaginings—i.e., the Black Radical Tradition—of the struggle to the historiography. Scholars of the long movement such as Hall, Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodard, Nikhil Singh, Peniel E. Joseph, and Glenda E. Gilmore have excavated these elements of the Black Radical Tradition, including the centrality of local movements and leaders,[14] the strategic marriage between nonviolent direct action and armed self-defense,[15] the influence of labor organizing and Great Depression-era radicalism,[16] and the continual dialectical between racial justice and white, conservative backlash.[17] Other works try to understand why and how said elements of the Black Radical Tradition were largely purged from the movement, at the time and in public memory, the answer lying largely in the machinations of the Cold War, McCarthyism, and Stalinism.[18]

The scholarship of the long civil rights movement lays the groundwork for this paper's narrative, offering the context during which contestation between Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism occurred, but it pays little attention to the ways in which theoretical concepts like ideology helped shape the movement. To distill these currents of ideology, we will reframe long movement historiography in terms of Antonio Gramsci's theorization of hegemony, pulling out two key insights: the relationship between ideology and culture, and the 'war of

position.' Writing at the same moment as the pre-classical civil rights movement, Gramsci used the term 'hegemony' to explore the ways in which groups in power achieve and maintain their position in the political and social domains. Influential Gramscian scholar Raymond Williams defines hegemony as "includ[ing] and go[ing] beyond" the individual ideas of cultural activity and ideology, arguing that it is "a lived system of meanings and values. … A 'culture,' but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes."[19] Though a group in power may *dominate* by using exclusively *coercive* means, such as violence or the law, it can only be said to be '*leading*' when it is continuously creating unity and *consent* of the subordinated through cultural means such as schooling, religion, sports, cultural production, etc.[20] As such, an ideology exists on "two distinct floors," one of which is its formalized, philosophical "conception of the world," the other of which is its cultural presence in "the practical, everyday consciousness or popular thought of the masses," or what Gramsci calls "common sense." [21] Crucially, one floor does not guarantee the other. Just as an ideology can be philosophically coherent but neglect to enter the realm of popular, cultural 'common sense,' Hall explains that any group with similar experiences will also have a "spontaneous… instinctive understanding of its basic conditions of life and the nature of the constraints and forms of exploitation" that they experience, but that coordinating effort, whether by artists, intellectuals, or activists, must be done for this instinctive common sense to also exist on the coherent, philosophical 'floor' such that unity can be said to exist.[22] Therefore, "unity is never assumed," but instead a group's "collective will" must be carefully, laboriously, and continuously negotiated, taking considerable care to note and address the ways in which they are inevitably "crosscut by conflicting interests, historically segmented and fragmented."[23]

The centrality of consensual unity is just as true for the central, national hegemony as it is

for a coalition of counter-hegemonic forces that wishes to challenge some aspect of the central hegemony, such as a racial justice coalition attempting to disrupt the hegemonic intertwining of liberalism and white supremacy—what this paper will call "White Liberalism."[24] In creating consensual leadership within the coalition, various ideological factions struggling for power in a protracted *war of position* "across many different and varying fronts of struggle, where there is rarely a single breakthrough which wins the war once and for all." [25] A war of position will often find each side attempting to "control or transform or even incorporate" aspects of the opposing ideology in an attempt to win.[26] The framework of a "war of position" illustrates how, contrary to the typical narrative about the classical civil rights movement, extensive effort was expended by two ideological factions of the counter-hegemonic coalition in order to create enough unity for an assault on hegemonic white supremacy. This period of extensive effort is what is referred to by "the pre-classical civil rights movement" or "the Pre-Classical War of Position."

Gramsci's challenge to the culture/politics dichotomy is supported by the abundance of cultural history about the political uses of cultural production; the debate was not about *if* culture could be political, but *how* to leverage this fact. Much of the cultural historiography about 1929–1954 was sparked by Michael Denning's seminal work, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*, a work that focuses on the Great Depression and the ways in which various components of the "politics of art" became crucial strategies of resistance and solidarity, alliance-building and mobilization.[27] Ensuing cultural analysis extended and complicated his central ideas, including several scholars who inquire specifically into the racial dimensions of the Cultural Front.[28] Other cultural historians started from the perspective of Black culture, seeking to fill in the historiographical 'gap' between the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and the Black Arts Movement that started in the mid-1960s.[29] Additional contextual information

came from cultural historiography specific to the genres of humor and the visual arts.[30] Scholarship in the last 10 years have further indicated that culture as an overtly political tool was an important idea not only among radical counter-hegemonic groups but also among moderate counter-hegemonic groups[31] and the dominant, hegemonic forces, such as the federal government.[32]

Public memory of the Black American population since emancipation tells a progressive, unified arc towards liberation, but there has never been consensus over how to best advocate for racial justice—not during the mid-20th century civil rights movement nor before it. This paper will combine the historiography of the long civil rights movement with historiography of mid-20th century cultural production to analyze the ideological war of position taking place directly prior to the mid-20th century classical civil rights movement, using the cultural production as its primary location to study this ideological contestation. Cultural production is a particularly helpful locus because of relative accessibility of cultural forms compared to, for example, political power or organization.[33] Encoded within cultural production were ideologies of change, one rooted in Progressive Era racial stewardship and the other in the Black Radical Tradition, with ideas about how a challenge to hegemonic white supremacy could and should be waged. One of the most significant differences between the two ideologies was their divergent perspectives about class—status and sensibilities—and whether a counter-hegemonic confrontation should challenge the structures of capitalism in addition to those of racism. Given the scope of this paper and its associated research, I will only be drawing on one of the many cultural producers from this time: journalist, cartoonist, and activist Oliver "Ollie" Harrington. Harrington is far from the most well-known artist/activist from what Brian Dolinar calls "the Depression Generation" and Lawrence P. Jackson calls "the Indignant Generation," but that his life passes through many of significant

events and trends of the 1930s–1950s makes his work a compelling gateway to the culture, ideology, and politics of the time.[34]

Before embarking upon this inquiry, however, we must note an important proviso with regards to the cultural archive. Though counter-hegemonic ideology can be found in cultural production, it does not get translated perfectly, partially because any cultural production is created under the shadow "of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up."[35] As Hall explains, "always these forms [of culture] are impure, to some degree hybridized from a vernacular base. Thus, they must always be heard, not simply as the recovery of a lost dialogue bearing clues."[36] This caveat is especially true when recovering traces of the counter-hegemonic ideology rooted in the Black Radical Tradition, as this ideology is vernacularized: concerned with and rooted in the everyday practices, experiences, and struggles of the non-elite, what I call the motley crew.†

III. "The Negro in Art: How Shall He Be Portrayed?": Culture, Ideology, and Class

The two central ideologies that engaged in the Pre-Classical War of Position were Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism. Prior 1929, both ideologies existed but they were not yet engaged in a bona fide war of position: Uplift was the only formalized counter-hegemonic ideology and had assumed dominance in its relationship with Vernacular Intellectuals, particularly after the 1909 found of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored

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† I use this term to refer to the Black poor, the working class, migrant populations, members of the middle class who still found their economic status incredibly fragile (see Mary Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999)) for more on the fragility of the Black middle class). Its usage comes from Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker in *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), esp. 28. 'The motley crew' can be understood as a tri-pronged definition: a group that is not completely economically independent; a group that challenges the power structure; and a collection of individuals who are, above all else, hetereogenous from each other, whether in economic dimensions, ideological dimensions, or otherwise. Because of the overwhelming importance of this hetereogeneity, "the motley crew" will be treated as a plural noun for grammatical purposes.

People (NAACP). Rooted in the most well-known strands of post-Reconstruction political thought, it served as the formal and informal philosophy of most racial liberation organizations, showing up in social programs and cultural production. Vernacular Intellectuals also used culture, operating it to critique oppressive language, action, and structures, whether perpetrated by hegemonic White Liberalism or the counter-hegemonic Meritocratic Racial Uplift; however, did not make significant progress towards ideological formalization until after the Great Depression. The biggest issue of contention between the two ideologies was the way in which Uplift reproduced White Liberalism's judgments about class, especially class sensibilities, in its counter-hegemonic ideology. Because their shared interests were continually being "crosscut by conflicting interests" and both ideologies were uninterested in creating a consensual "collective will," neither unity nor leadership yet existed within their hypothetical coalition.[37]

Meritocratic Racial Uplift

The best-known ideology of racial liberation, referred to at the time as 'racial uplift,' can be understood as a type of politics of respectability: fundamentally meritocratic and typically metonymic[38] in its mechanism of change. Most early Black leaders, including both sides of the W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington rivalry,[39] and most well-known racial liberation organizations, such as the NAACP and the National Urban League (NUL), believed in some form of Meritocratic Racial Uplift. Because of this, its formalized "conception of the world"[40] is well documented, from founding charters of these organizations to the extensive expository writing of Uplifters.[41] Influenced by progressivism, its challenge to Social Darwinism, and its substantial influence in the increasingly popular study of social sciences,[42] racial uplift endeavored to prove that Black people deserved equal treatment and access because they held the same behavioral and moral virtues as the rest of American society—a code of common ground on which interracial

understanding and cooperation could be built.[43] Meritocratic Racial Uplift organizations sought to strengthen this common ground through various social services including vocational training, education on proper morals and behavior, and assistance finding jobs, housing, and support services.[44] In its endeavors to "contest and transform" the hegemonic ideology of white supremacy, the NAACP, the NUL, and other Uplifters launched their own cultural campaigns as well, seeking to introduce a new "common sense" to both white and Black audiences.[45] There were two major components of Uplift cultural campaigns: publicizing, sponsoring, and generally proliferating depictions of well-behaved, morally virtuous Black people, often created by Black producers—this had the added benefit of demonstrating Black minds at work, testaments to the intellectual and creative capacities of race; and using culture as a pedagogical tool to instill the Uplifter behavior and morals in the motley crew.

A quintessential example of the Uplift cultural agenda about representations of Black people can be found in a 1926 symposium sponsored by NAACP periodical, *The Crisis,* and led by *Crisis* editor, W.E.B. Du Bois. In proposing the conference, *Crisis* wrote an editorial called "The Negro in Art: How Shall He Be Portrayed?"[46] Editors delineated seven specific questions that often had the 'correct answer' embedded already in them, such as, "Is there not a real danger that young colored writers will be tempted to follow the popular trend in portraying Negro characters in the underworld rather than seeking to paint the truth about themselves and their own social class?"[47] Though the reactions and responses to the questionnaire were quite varied in their opinions on the 'questions,' the list encapsulates much of what Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke, and other Meritocratic Racial Uplifters thought about the power of the cultural. These leaders and intellectuals were convinced that a central reason for structural racism and Jim Crow was the innocent white perception of black inferiority, a "race prejudice… 'born of ignorance and

misapprehension, honest mistake and misguided zeal."[48] If they could change the narrative by educating and exposing white people to instances of Black refinement—and also educating fellow Black people to stop behavior and depictions that cast the race as uncivilized—Uplifters believed that the hegemonic power structures would willingly, even happily, dismantle structural manifestations of white supremacy. Through writing and art in *The Crisis*, media boycotts and lobbying, and sponsorship of Black artists, the NAACP and the NUL waged the cultural component of the war of position against negative Black depictions.

The battle over representation would only work if the vast majority of Black people were true to the Uplift moral and behavioral virtues; in addition to the social services training, Uplifters also strove to achieve this goal by using culture as a pedagogical tool. Culture was particularly compelling as an instructional apparatus because of the assumption that many who needed teaching—i.e., the motley crew—were uneducated, barely literate.[49] Using cartoons and simple, if any, writing could access those who needed to be taught Uplift behavior the most. An example of such a cartoon was published in the *Atlanta Daily World* on September 22, 1943, one of a series published between 1943–1945 by an anonymous artist.[50] The cartoon (fig. 1) dramatizes a group of Black bus passengers getting into a shoving match with the simple title, "Do's and Don'ts." This particular cartoon is condescending, but from the perspective of Uplifters, they intended this component of their liberation struggle to be empowering: enabling any Black person to chip away at racism by leveraging the few metaphysical outlets, i.e. behavior and morals, over which white supremacy and Jim Crow did not exert control. In this way, Meritocratic Racial Uplift had elements of socially democracy, contending that any Black person could demonstrate their worthiness through class sensibilities regardless of income, wealth, job, or any other traditional metrics of class status. Uplifters' emphasis on sensibilities over status makes even more sense when one

considers the fragility of the Black middle class and the various ways in which the machinations of white supremacy—be it slavery, Jim Crow, or racial terrorism—target their ability to achieve and maintain economic status markers.[51] Though no ideology can change that reality, Uplift offers dignity to individuals of any status through its emphasis on class sensibilities—behavior that can be neither burned nor pillaged.

Nonetheless, the elitist components of Meritocratic Racial Uplift ultimately undercut and outnumbered its socially democratic elements. To begin with, the fundamental mechanisms of change, meritocracy and metonymy, pivoted on class sensibilities and the assumption that refined behavior not only makes one a better person, but also that it indicated everything one needed to know about a stranger's character. This could be seen explicitly in their varying attitudes towards different forms of cultural production, their producers, and their consumers. The NAACP and the NUL were selective in which modalities and genres of art they supported, believing that only "the creation of 'high' art… was a signifier of a group's status," leading them to support literature and fine art enthusiastically, but being more selective for 'popular' forms of art and culture, only doing so when individual artist reinforced the values of dignity and intellect.[52] Less careful support of these 'uncivilized' art forms could indicate to white observers that Black people were "contented with their unequal status" and "did not offer an image of the race that would improve white attitudes."[53] This highlights the double-edged nature of meritocracy and metonymy: any positive argument about the race made by said behavior could just as easily be contradicted by instances of crudeness, lewdness, or over-enthusiasm. The third and most egregious aspect of Meritocratic Racial Uplift was its conception of racial diplomacy. Rooted in doctrines of racial stewardship,[54] Uplift never presumed that the entire Black race was worthy but instead envisioned respectable representatives of the race to act as negotiators, a buffer between whites and the "vicious

element[s]"[55] of the greater Black Population—hence the talented *tenth*, not the talented whole. Intentionally designed to give these racial ambassadors a "stranglehold on influence with [white society]," subject to "little or no accountability to the rest of the black community,"[56] Meritocratic Racial Uplift saw the liberation as driven from the top of the socioeconomic pyramid, whether in the case of social programs or a cultural campaign. The rest of the race would be liberated too, freedom spreading downwards through social programs and positive depictions enacted by Uplifters; such a hope was enunciated in the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs's motto, 'Lifting as we Climb.'[57]

Vernacular Intellectualism

The second ideology, Vernacular Intellectualism, focused on the motley crew—their everyday experiences, joys, and struggles, their power, their dignity—and articulated critiques of ideologies, attitudes, programs, and institutions that contributed to their oppression. The vernacular focus on everyday experiences combined with thoughtful, analytical appraisals of their oppression is why this ideology is called Vernacular Intellectualism, and also clarifies why it is part of the Black Radical Tradition. Though the language and conceptions of Marxism may make one's criticisms of the oppression in their daily lives more specific or incisive, the heart of this ideology is about the Black lived experience. Though Vernacular Intellectualism derives from and centers its focus on the motley crew, it is important to emphasize that there is not an exact correspondence between class status and ideology: a middle-income intellectual can be a believer in Vernacular Intellectualism just as a low-income factory worker can believe in Meritocratic Racial Uplift.

By definition, an ideology that is derived from the complexity and variety of experience, rather than from elite, romanticized values will be both less uniform and formally theorized less often. This is even more true because, as James C. Scott explains, those who are more likely to be

critical of mainstream ideologies are also more likely to find themselves in more relationship(s) of dependency—upon landlords, bosses, the government, etc.—than their Meritocratic Racial Uplift counterparts, making it more dangerous to formalize their counter-hegemonic ideology.[58] The fewer instances of formalized Vernacular Intellectualism does not mean that the motley crew did not have intellectually complex ideological beliefs, but because it is articulated in fragmentary, hidden, seemingly-contradictory ways—i.e., not on the 'floor' of "coherent philosophy" it often does not leave a reliable archival trail, nor that ever really sought to challenge Uplift for leadership over a counter-hegemonic coalition.[59] One of the few ways that historians can track it is through cultural production of Grant Farred's definition of *public* vernacular intellectuals:

> "[They are] in no way connected to organized political structures. ... These figures emerge, quite literally, out of the vernacular experiences, well versed in the discourse of popular oppositionality but outside of its formal articulations. … Vernacular intellectuals are oppositional public figures who use the cultural platforms and spaces available to them, but not ordinarily accessible to their disenfranchised communities, to represent and speak in the name of their communities."[60]

These public vernacular intellectuals tended to be somewhat less dependent on dominant power structures, which is why they could use vernacular platforms to speak on behalf of their communities. This paper draws primarily on the platform of Oliver "Ollie" Harrington's *Dark Laughter*, a cartoon that ran for nearly 30 years in one of the most widely-read Black newspapers of the 20th century, *The Pittsburgh Courier*.[61]

Black Vernacular Intellectuals criticized the various elements of their and their community's oppression, be it racial, gendered, or sexual, but the dimension that puts it in most conflict with Meritocratic Racial Uplifters is about the latter's elitism, especially with regards to class sensibilities. Vernacular Intellectuals rarely mounted a coherent challenge to Uplift's leadership of the counter-hegemonic coalition—at least prior to the Pre-Classical War of Position—but the two ideologies had also not yet reached the degree of unity where a 'collective

will' could be formed and pursued.[62] Consider, for example, the ways in which two pieces of cultural production published in *The Courier* communicate their respective ideologies.

Uplift is demonstrated by Wendell Smith, the *Courier*'s sports editor who is best known for his serving as Jackie Robinson's companion and advocate during his attempts to break the color line in Major League Baseball in 1947. As Robinson pursued a spot on the Dodgers roster by working his way through its farm system in 1946–1947, Smith accompanied him, chronicling his progress and often commenting on racism, Jim Crow, and white supremacy. In his April 20, 1946 column, Smith informs his readers that two Negro players, Robinson and Johnny Wright, secured spots on the roster for Dodgers minor league farm team, the Montreal Royals.[63] Smith includes "A Special Note to the Fans," imploring readers to adhere to the tenets of respectable 'Public Conduct,' railing against "over-enthusiastic fan[s]" and those "drinking in the stands and [displaying] rowdy deportment."[64] He is not calling for respectable conduct only for the sake of respectability, focused centrally on its impact on how the rest of the world sees Black ballplayers. Smith cites a conversation with Robinson about the enormous pressure the latter felt each time when cheering would erupt when he came up to bat, so much so that the pressure hurts his performance. "Every owner in baseball will be watching Robinson and Wright," Smith reminds his readers, and contends that they must "help these two players make the grade."[65] Despite positive intentions, Smith's Uplift preaching is also onerous and condescending in its policing of behavior. All the more insulting are his dramatic characterizations of this behavior, describing them as "going into convulsions," mercy to "rants and raves, yells and screams."[66] His warning that baseball owners will not just be watching Robinson and Wright but "also how you react, Mr. and Mrs. Negro Baseball Fan!", reveals that he does believe in some degree of meritocratic equivalence between respectable behavior and deserving integration. Instead of balancing his

acquiescence to white society's metonymic attitude with a criticism of its partiality, Smith merely berates these 'rowdy' fans, arguing that they are "the guy[s] who will be cheering [Negro ballplayers] out of Organized Baseball, [67] rather than in."[68]

On the other hand, consider the way that Harrington conceptualizes public conduct at a baseball game. In a cartoon published on April 26, 1952 (fig. 2), Bootsie sits in the bleachers with other fans, drinking from a bottle of beer or soda. An older woman nudges him as she pulls out her knitting, and says "Hey, Big Stuff, look here. I don't believe in no liquor dancin' and baseball, so I'm just here to sit in the cool and knit some. But will you please nudge me when Jackie comes up to bat?"[69] There is an understanding by the older woman that she and Bootsie are clearly from different social and likely economic groups. Her speech, dress, and habits are more proper than that typically seen in other *Dark Laughter* panels from Bootsie and his friends, and they would not have even met if the older woman did not want to see Robinson, a hero among the Black community, in person. Yet they are still acting friendly to each other, no sign of tension or judgement between them. The older woman does not question why Bootsie is not at work or demand that he changes his behavior, but instead asks him to help her enjoy the element of the game in which she is interested. In other words, her silence about Bootsie's behavior is just as important as Uplifters' explicit statements. If we accept cultural historian Michael Denning's argument that the political potential of cultural production lies in their ability to imagine new "way[s] of life [and] conceptions of the universe," then we can see that Harrington imagines a world in which members of different socioeconomic groups are able to coexist beside each other, respecting how the other chooses to live regardless of whether they think it is proper or preferable. Harrington's Vernacular Intellectualism does not see an automatic connection between class sensibilities and the value of one's character, disputing the meritocratic and metonymic

assumptions of Meritocratic Racial Uplift and offering an educative lesson for the elite. In this way, Harrington subverts the typical presumption that only the formally-educated have worthwhile knowledge, and the motley crew must be taught by them.

It is important to keep in mind that the contexts in which Harrington and Smith are working, though only six years apart, have significant differences. Once Robinson officially broke the color line in Major League Baseball, others rapidly followed: 63 Black players who had played in premier Negro League teams would be signed to Major League teams including Willie Mays, Monte Irvin, and Hank Aaron.[70] Though Black ballplayers would continue to face racism in various forms, the seemingly insurmountable task of desegregating the majors had been achieved by the time Harrington drew the 1952 cartoon. Without his back seeming to be against the wall, we cannot know whether Smith, as an individual, would have cared so intently about how Black baseball fans acted when Robinson came to the plate. What is certain, however, is that these contrasting examples highlight the ways in both ideologies carry implied attitudes towards socioeconomic class, even when there is no explicit mention of such.

That so much of the Vernacular Intellectuals' criticisms of Meritocratic Racial Uplift are related to class suggests the fundamental difference between the two ideologies: their attitudes to the value system and desirability of the current economic system, i.e. industrial capitalism. In their challenge to the white supremacy component of White Liberalism, Uplifters were counter-hegemonic; however, they were not challenging the machinations of classic liberalism, a "system predicated on economic inequality."[71] This meant that any reforms would accept and "necessarily replicate [hegemonic] class divisions [from] the larger society" in the forenamed counter-hegemonic movement.[72] Furthermore, in seeking to emphasize their "common ground," Uplifters often emphasized their faith in and dedication to industrial capitalism.[73] This understandable

approach led to a more viable movement than—and did not create *as* many enemies as—Vernacular Intellectualism ever did; by the 1950s, it would form much of the ideology and implementation of the classical civil rights movement. However, this 'way out of no way' came at this unfortunate cost of exclusionary politics, encouraging division more than unity within an already marginalized class.

Acceptance of industrial capitalism influenced the scope of change envisioned by individuals and organizations of each ideological camp, thus shaping how they interpreted the struggles faced by Black populations and the specific strategies necessary to ameliorate said struggles. For example, in the case of racialized poverty, Uplifters would likely zero in on any behavior that was hindering an individual from escaping it, launching a campaign "would necessarily center on adjusting *people* rather than their *environments*" (emphasis his).[74] Modest structural reform might accompany individual-focused initiatives, but White Liberalism's intransigence in denying Black people access to paths of economic mobility meant that Uplifters often had to "triage" their efforts, only giving public housing or industrial jobs to those they deemed 'worthy' based on their behavioral code."[75] Vernacular Intellectuals, on the other hand, believed that most 'subversive' economic behavior often "encode[d] larger economic and political disenfranchisements. Overburdened" as their communities were "by structural lack."[76] This conviction led them to argue that the environment, not the individual, was what needed to change. In calling for broader-reaching alterations on the institutional, 'environmental' level, Vernacular Intellectualism reinforced it position in the Black Radical Tradition, even though campaigns for extensive change of this nature were almost always nonstarters. Meritocratic Racial Uplifters were 'radical' in other ways—in their refusal to accept the idea of Black inferiority, in their determination to improve the material lives of *some* even if they could not help all—but it did

envision a more narrowly-modified future that Vernacular Intellectualism.

Many of Harrington's *Dark Laughter* cartoons illuminate this point about scope of change, most insightful of which discussed rent control, published on March 8, 1947 (fig. 3).[77] Bootsie is shown with a surprised and innocent look on his face, fending off his landlord, who is threatening him with a broom. "[Illegible] difference will it make to you if they DO lift the rent controls? You ain't paid for your room since before they started the OPA!" Bootsie's landlord is referring to the Office of Price Administration, a government agency created by the Emergency Price Control Act (EPCA) of 1942 to curb inflation, which had started after the September 1939 German invasion of Poland.[78] The OPA was the central component of the anti-inflation program in the US from 1941–1946, overseeing rationing, rent controls, and price controls.[79] In November 1943, the OPA froze rent prices in New York City at their March 1, 1943 levels. The OPA lost much of its regulatory power after the end of World War II and, true to Bootsie's fears, expired in May 1947. Rent control would continue in New York City for structures built before 1947 through other agencies, one of the few types of price control to survive the postwar era.[80] In this cartoon, published a few short months before official end of the OPA, Harrington makes the Vernacular Intellectualism argument for strong rent control, contending that there is a structural problem preventing Bootsie from paying his rent, not an individual-based one. The humor, of course, comes from the landlord's observation that he has not paid for his room since before the OPA: even a revision of pure-market prices does not change the outcome on rent day. Given the ample evidence testifying to Harrington's developing Marxist sensibilities, it is not likely that he is in favor of a program of Uplift behavior reform.[81] On the contrary, he is likely pushing for an even deeper government intervention in providing citizens' right to housing. Though the OPA does intervene in classical

liberalism's supply/demand price point, it is still a capitalist system, demanding a lower price but a price nonetheless, for what Harrington likely saw as a human right.

IV. Negotiating Unity: The Pre-Classical War of Position

On October 29, 1929, the United States stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression, a crisis in capitalism that involved economic, social, and political upheaval. One element of this upheaval was the start of the pre-classical civil rights movement, the war of position between Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism. By challenging the dominance and wisdom of industrial capitalism, the Great Depression also challenged the dominance and wisdom of Meritocratic Racial Uplift, which had always endorsed capitalism. The Great Depression "create[d] a terrain more favourable [sic] to the dissemination of certain modes of thought," especially ones like Vernacular Intellectualism that had established a mistrust of capitalism and a focus on the economic oppression of the race.[82] The ideological nature of a counter-hegemonic movement, which had been Uplift by default prior to the Great Depression, was thrown into legitimate question: could a more revolutionary re-visioning and reordering of American society be possible, one in which both race- and class-based oppression were disputed, even defeated? Though there was never a year of uncomplicated, unmitigated radical promise during the Pre-Classical War of Position, the period was primarily a boon for Vernacular Intellectualism, with Uplifters and hegemonic White Liberalism more interested in, convinced of, and even intimidated by the power of the masses than ever before. As Vernacular Intellectualism strengthened during the 1930s, it began taking on elements of Uplift—and vice versa—as the two waged their war of position. In the 1940s, partly because of the looming possibility of the United States' entrance into the Second World War, unified strategies emerged from the counter-hegemonic coalition, with Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism being near-equal partners in the

alliance. This balance was dashed following World War II as backlash, stoked among White Liberals, manifested and the Cold War reared its ugly head.

The Great Depression and the New Deal

As the Great Depression set in, it became increasingly clear that substantial intervention would be necessary for the economy to recover, likely by the federal government. Throughout the Progressive Era and the Roaring '20s, exponentially more individuals and families found themselves ingrained in the complex of industrial capitalism due to the consolidating forces of urban migration, including the First Great Migration,[83] and the Managerial Revolution.[84] One of the most important and lasting consequences of the Managerial Revolution was the advent of welfare capitalism.[85] Reinforcing similar values of communalism imbibed by ethnic, religious, and secular charity organizations, welfare capitalism spread the belief that larger institutional powers could be relied upon when individuals were beset with hardship, such as getting injured or losing one's job. In many ways, the emphasis on collective support systems was also a component of Meritocratic Racial Uplift, which conceived race leaders and organizations as providers of education and assistance for the motley crew—as long as they follow the Uplift behavioral code. When the Great Depression began, many assumed this safety net would continue to soften the blow. However, the enormity of the Depression overwhelmed and undermined both corporate and charitable welfare, and those struggling were forced to "look in new directions for the security that their ethnic groups, employers, and even their families had provided."[86] Seeing the greed of those who ran the industrial capitalist system as the cause of the Depression, people turned to two other institutions: the federal government and unions.[87]

Though both the government and unions still operated under top-down leadership, the strengthening of both institutions were successes for Vernacular Intellectualism. The 1930s saw

an explosion of participation by the motley crew: in voting booths, in unemployed and hunger marches, and in letters to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.[88] Much of the increased participation in confrontational tactics was by Vernacular Intellectuals, but formerly-Uplift members of the motley crew also participated, believing that behavior and morality could only do so much. Sometimes the system, not their individual manners, was the problem, and Vernacular Intellectualism advocated compelling answers.[89] Harrington threw his support behind Roosevelt in his cartoon panels, equally praising Roosevelt's recovery platform (fig. 4)[90] and lambasting Hoover's economic and racial failings (fig. 5),[91] one of many Vernacular Intellectuals to endorse Roosevelt and government-driven economic reform. Roosevelt crafted his "egalitarian alternatives to classical liberalism"[92] with his 'brain trust' of economic advisors—a top-down process—but the motley crew was vital in maintaining pressure on Roosevelt to expeditiously implement his reforms through their letters to the president, continued organizing, and the cultural production of Vernacular Intellectuals.[93]

The increased needs and activity of the motley crew exerted substantial effects for both counter-hegemonic ideologies. Leading Vernacular Intellectuals made concerted efforts to congregate together, trying to streamline a coherent ideology and program of change to address "the position of the Negro in our national economic crisis" specifically, and the economic needs of the motley crew broadly.[94] The first gathering was in Amenia, New York in 1933 at the estate of the NAACP Chairman Joel Springarn. Du Bois would later describe the conference in his monograph, *Dusk of Dawn*, explaining, "despite agreement on the universal importance of economic issues, the meeting resulted in little consensus and left the participants 'whirling in a sea of inconclusive world discussion.'"[95] An ensuing conference, hosted by the Joint Committee on National Recovery (JCNR), occurred two years later at Howard University, laying the groundwork

for the founding of the National Negro Congress (NNC) in February 1936.[96] The NNC would play a significant role in the pre-classical civil rights movement, constantly pushing for greater focus on the needs and lived experiences of the motley crew, mobilizing programs that stemmed out of those needs. The creation of the NNC was a significant achievement on the part of Vernacular Intellectualism, its vision articulated and programs implemented, but in doing so it took on elements of Meritocratic Racial Uplift, such as basing its official "conception of the world"[97] largely on the opinions of well-educated intellectuals. In its Pre-Classical War of Position bid for leadership, Vernacular Intellectualism necessarily lost some of its pluralism.

As the Pre-Classical War of Position continued, Meritocratic Racial Uplift also took on elements of Vernacular Intellectualism to maintain its dominance, threatened as it was by the upheaval of the Great Depression. Its top-down leadership had always been a *part* of its strategy and programs of change, not an obstacle to it, but after the start of the Great Depression, the ensuing mass mobilization of the motley crew, and a Vernacular Intellectualist formalized organization, that same leadership structure threatened Uplift's superior position between the two counter-hegemonic ideologies. Not only did the Great Depression ensure that a coalition between Vernacular Intellectuals and Uplifters was imminent, but it questioned whether the Uplifters' assumption of authority would actually come to fruition. At its 1936 annual conference, the NAACP followed the advice of prominent Black economist, Abram Harris, and incorporated worker education and union-organizing efforts into its platform. In doing so, the NAACP began a ten-year period of collaboration with labor in which, "more than any time in its history" before or after, "[it] became a mass membership organization with a populist orientation."[98] Even as they strategically incorporated elements of Vernacular Intellectualism,[99] Uplifters still waged their war of position with the ultimate goal of putting its elite, top-down code of morals and behaviors at the

center of the counter-hegemonic movement. In *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta,* Karen Ferguson argues that, despite some capitulations to the masses, the New Deal actually strengthened Uplifters ability to materially implement their morality and behavioral code because many Uplifters were hired into federal agencies, giving them the opportunity to "work… from within the New Deal's social work meritocracies, manipulating them as much as they could to advance their long-held goals for the black community."[100] One of the most significant instances of this dynamic was Uplifters' role in the Public Works Administration (PWA) slum-clearance and public-housing program. Because public-housing was a limited resource to which only some of the motley crew would get access, Uplifters involved with the PWA got the chance to put their morality and behavioral code into action, implementing it as part of the eligibility standards for the program and thereby, 'triaging' who would be the lucky recipients.[101]

Radical and subversive cultural production gained strength during the 1930s, inspiring more individuals to take up and act on Vernacular Intellectualism and also safeguarding against Vernacular Intellectualist leaders from becoming divorced from the concerns and opinions of the masses. The "cultural front" of the struggle used "the politics of art" as central and explicit strategies of resistance and solidarity, using it for everything from demonstrating shared interests to articulating the multiple dimensions of oppression.[102] Harrington's cartoons from the 1930s reflected the intertwining of racial and economic issues for the Black population, depicting the daily experiences of an unsatisfactory payday in a November 7, 1936 Bootsie cartoon (fig. 6)[103] and the ubiquity of Marxist labor organizers on the New York street corners in a September 28, 1935 panel (fig. 7).[104] Ever the Vernacular Intellectual, Harrington does not cast blame on the sympathetic Bootsie for breaking dishes at his job, instead arguing that perhaps there are other reasons—the low pay, lack of job training—that Bootsie is struggling to make ends meet. Harlem

Renaissance figure Alain Locke noted similarities and differences in the cultural production between the 1930s and the 1920s, writing "Our art is again turning prosaic, partisan and propagandistic but this time not on behalf of striving, strident, but rather in a protestant and belligerent universalism of social analysis and protest," reflecting the same double-sided marginalization in Harrington's cartoons, as well as the centrality of 'universalist' coalition politics during the 1930s.[105] The increased popularity of Vernacular Intellectualist cultural production amplified its ability to influence "the practical, everyday consciousness [and] common sense" of those who held wide-ranging political affiliations and inclinations, building momentum behind the ideology for its war of position against Meritocratic Racial Uplift. [106] There was institutional investment behind the Black cultural front too, the NNC establishing a Cultural Division and hosting cultural session at their annual conferences, starting with their opening conference in 1936. [107] Protests, resolutions, and "network[s], both formal and informal, of contacts that helped many black writers and advance their careers" emerged out of Vernacular Intellectualism's cultural front, including the Chicago's South Side Writers' Group.[108]

Cultural production also took on increased importance during these years because of Roosevelt's approach towards race in the New Deal. Roosevelt, reliant on positive relationships with the 'Dixiecrat' segment of Democratic voters and legislators, evaded nearly all the demands from Black liberation organizations and leaders, such as repeated appeals for an anti-lynching bill and an antidiscrimination clause in the union rights Wagner Act in 1935. The only realm in which Roosevelt was willing to explicitly address the Black population was in his cultural programs: the Federal Arts Project, Federal Writers' Project, Federal Theatre Project, three of projects sponsored by the Works Progress Administration of the New Deal.[109] Each of these projects had specific "Negro Units" or "Negro Affairs" sections with Black administrative heads, unlike all the other

New Deal programs which offered Black citizens relief simply based economic markers—and often left the administration of said relief to states.[110] While the New Deal's cultural programs were important, by no means considered solely symbolic in a research paper founded on the political potential of culture, they reinforced white supremacy by *substituting*, rather than *augmenting*, substantive racial reform with cultural policy. In fact, it has been widely established that in terms of, material change, the New Deal "not only evaded issues of racial reform, in some respects it expanded and legitimized racist practice on a wide scale."[111]

Even though Roosevelt's policies re-inscribed white supremacy in the New Deal's expanded bureaucracy, the promises and ideology of the New Deal still captivated the attention, imagination, and excitement of Uplifters and Vernacular Intellectuals alike. Considering Roosevelt's enthusiasm for government intervention in the realm of economic hardship, much of the Black population hoped that he could be persuaded to do the same in the domain of racial oppression. Roosevelt's New Deal expanded the scope of citizenship, envisioning 'positive rights': protections, securities, and entitlements for Americans that aimed to preempt the laissez-faire status quo from taking advantage of the less powerful. This broadened sense of citizenship was still racialized, not yet fully extended across the color line to the Black population, but its mere creation—what Thomas J. Sugrue calls "the rights revolution"—reshaped activists' envisioning of the possible and steered their strategies against hegemonic white supremacy.[112] Though Uplifters and Vernacular Intellectuals still differed from each other in how they tried to fight hegemonic white supremacy, the rights revolution indirectly impacted both of their strategic programs: Uplifters focused on working within the new bureaucratic system, while Vernacular Intellectuals placed even greater emphasis on mass action, bolstered as rank-and-file efforts were by the New Deal's 1935 Wagner Act.[113] Both ideological camps also made increasing direct appeals for federal

action and intervention, but were repeatedly disappointed by Roosevelt's ambivalence. The excitement from the rights revolution, combined with Roosevelt's 'Black Cabinet,' cultural policy, and opening of the federal job market to educated Black civil servants, made his "the first administration to recognize publically that African Americans mattered as citizens" and won him two-thirds of the Black vote in his 1936 re-election campaign, even with his troubling, intransigent silence around substantial racial reform.[114] The relationship between Roosevelt and the Black population would become more complicated in the 1940s as the eventuality of entering World War II loomed.

World War II

In 1941, the rights revolution took on increased rhetorical and practical strength with Roosevelt's declaration of "the four freedoms," the Atlantic Charter, and the March on Washington Movement. On January 6, 1941, Roosevelt's State of the Union speech included the first declaration of "the four freedoms" in his rationale for American involvement in the Second World War: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from fear, and freedom from want.[115] In this speech, Roosevelt forwarded the idea of human rights, a premise on which a 1945-1947 postwar campaign would be based.[116] The four freedoms were given an even larger platform in August, when they were highlighted in the Atlantic Charter: a joint statement by Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, defining their vision for a post-war world.[117] During the intervening months, between January and June, a landmark campaign was waged that foreshadowed the strategies of the classical civil rights movement: the March on Washington Movement (MOWM), led by A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin. Randolph, co-founder and president of the biggest all-black labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and president of the NNC between 1936–1940,[118] had espoused and practiced Vernacular

Intellectualism for over 20 years, often emphasizing radical and confrontational tactics. Given the United States' increasing dedication to the war effort, especially in the industrial sector, Randolph saw a significant opportunity for leveraging economic and desegregation gains for the Black population. Lobbying the Office of Production Management, publishing editorials, and bringing together various organizations for racial liberation, Randolph and Rustin claimed support to 100,000 marchers for their July 1 event, which demanded desegregation in all war industries and the armed services.[119] Roosevelt tried many conciliatory measures to get the MOWM to back down, but it was not until he signed Executive Order 8802, prohibiting racial discrimination in the defense industries and establishing the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to oversee compliance issues, that Randolph called off the march to put national unity ahead of the fulfillment of their demands.[120] Though the FEPC had no enforcement mechanisms, and Roosevelt demurred from desegregating the armed forces, Randolph agreed to call off the march.

Despite some criticisms leveled towards Randolph for caving to Roosevelt's imperfect offer, the MOWM was a landmark operation: the culmination of years of increased Black activism, a harbinger of the classical civil rights movement's strategies, and one of the first "provisional stages"[121] of "collective will"[122] emerging from the counter-hegemonic coalition. Made possible by the Black activist infrastructure, New Deal gains like Roosevelt's Black Cabinet, and the militancy and enthusiasm of the 1930s, the MOWM "gained the first-ever state concessions to a black movement."[123] In demonstrating that the large-scale direct action could be used to leverage state intervention on racial issues, the birth of this strategy succeeded by borrowing even-handedly from Vernacular Intellectualism and Meritocratic Racial Uplift strategies, hinting at a combination that would be central to the classical civil rights movement. Using the masses to pressure Roosevelt into action was a perfect enactment of Vernacular Intellectualism, focused as they were on the

power and significance of the motley crew. On the other hand, the movement's brokering combined with the single representative of Randolph, his pragmatic compromise to a more gradual, less extensive reform, is right out of Uplift ideology. A similar pattern would be repeated throughout the classical civil rights movement, though the end of the Pre-Classical War of Position would curtail Vernacular Intellectualism's contributions.

A driving factor behind Roosevelt's compromise to the MOWM was a concern about national unity, an issue that he would attempt to address with cultural policy, just as he did with Black concerns during the New Deal. Indeed, that so many Black individuals were willing and excited to participant in the MOWM's July 1 march, despite the resounding calls for pre-war unity outside of the Black community, indicated their ambivalence towards the war. Harrington's cartoons show a spectrum of the motley crew's concerns with entering the war against Germany, ranging from individuals, like Bootsie, not wanting to be sent to the uncertain fate of military service (fig. 8),[124] to disgust regarding the hypocrisy of America's self-proclaimed title as noble defender of the oppressed (fig. 9).[125] Cultural avenues, especially the radio, were already being used for morale-building purposes in a general capacity, but the concern of low "Negro morale"—and the anxiety that the Black population would explode in 'urban unrest'— prompted the Roosevelt administration to conceive of race-specific programs.[126] They could not to craft any messaging that might alienate white, pro-segregation citizens and legislators, so they again committed to the placating potential of culture, focusing on symbolic messaging to reach the Black audiences, such as the recruitment of G.I. Joe Louis.[127]

Joe Louis, a Black boxer who reigned as the world heavyweight champion between 1937–1949, was widely celebrated on both sides of the color line by the time he volunteered for the army in January 1941, an idea that had been circulating between him, the NAACP, and the War

Department for several months. Louis, nicknamed 'the Brown Bomber,' abided by the respectability politics of Meritocratic Racial Uplift at the behest of his managers, done to avoid the racialized antagonism directed at the first Black heavyweight champion, Jack Johnson.[128] Worshipped among the Black population since clinching the heavyweight title in 1937, Louis was also broadly esteemed by white Americans since his iconic, metaphoric defeat of German, supposed-Nazi-puppet Max Schmeling in 1938.[129] For all of these reasons, Louis was seen as the perfect *token* of Black patriotism that also did not threaten or alienate white citizens. During his nearly four years of service, Louis did not speak about publically about racial issues, his most overt challenge to white supremacy being his refusal to fight exhibition matches or speak in front of a segregated audience.[130] However, his Uplift approach did not prevent him from combatting racism. As Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff summarizes, "governmental attempts to demarcate the construction of Joe Louis... could not anticipate the alternative meanings that images offered."[131] The simple fact of the government promoting him so heavily, especially as a hero, was a victory in and of itself, a shift towards Black inclusion that seemingly indicated changing race relations. That such promotions of Louis typically involved strong, righteous, moral symbolism—as a boxer, or else as an armed soldier—further granted dignity to Black men long denied by mainstream culture. Much of Louis's counter-hegemonic meaning involved hallmarks of Meritocratic Racial Uplift, but that the federal government, a hegemonic power structure typically invested in white supremacy, was perpetuating them indicated progress compared to 15 years prior. It also hinted at a resurgence of Uplift's popularity, now that the country had emerged from the depths of the Great Depression. This campaign, though by no means a unilateral success, did seem to ignite excitement among much of the Black population, regardless of ideology. In a Harrington cartoon published on April 10, 1942, Bootsie is seen resting with boxing gloves on his hands (fig. 10).[132] A friend

lays a towel on his back, telling another well-dressed, older man, "Well, since Joe's fighting for the army now, me an' Boots figgered we'd hold things down out here 'til he comes back."[133]

Shortly after Joe Louis's enlistment in the army, another important campaign increased Black commitment to World War II: *The Courier*'s 'Double V' campaign. The campaign was catalyzed by a letter to the editor from 26-year-old James Thompson that proposed the idea of a "double VV for a double victory… over our enemies from without… [and] within."[134] *The Courier* jumped on the phrase, publishing the letter, featuring a Double Victory logo on their front page (fig. 11), and launching a publicity campaign.[135] Hundreds of supportive and enthusiastic letters streamed in, leading to Double V hand signs, 'Girls of the Week,' dresses, hats, dances, bake sales, and quilting bees, created by *The Courier* and Double V Clubs across the country.[136] While the *Courier*'s publicity of the Double Victory campaign tapered off by the fall of 1942, likely due to government surveillance and harassment, its ideology and framing had been cemented in the "practical, everyday consciousness or… common sense" of much of the Black population.[137] Like the 1941 MOWM, the Double V campaign again blended elements of Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism, another "provisional stage" of "collective will."[138] Because it was a campaign taken up individually—rather than culminating in a brokered deal between representatives with the federal power structure—the balance was different to everyone, but general patterns emerge. In capitulating to the importance of the war effort, the Double Victory campaign agreed with Uplifters that a slower, more collaborative tact would produce greater meaningful change than the radical, at times alienating tactics of many Vernacular Intellectuals. At the same time, the campaign was much more accessible for the motley crew than Uplift campaigns had ever been: one did not need to have a certain type of education, display strict morals to be part of the campaign, or even cease all criticisms of American racism to

support the war. Among the supporters of Double Victory were Harrington, who was sent to Europe as a war correspondent in 1944, and Bootsie, who was 'drafted' shortly after Harrington returned from Europe in early 1945 and was depicted serving through the end of the war (fig 12).[139]

Postwar

Despite the promise stoked during the Great Depression and World War II, the end of the War saw the demise of that promise when White Liberalism backlash, equally fueled since 1929, found an opportunity for expression. Mass layoffs of Black workers, a renewed of explosion of racialized terrorism—aimed with exceptional cruelty at returning Black veterans—and the exacerbated housing crisis for the Black population razed many of the material gains made by the Black population.[140] The backlash also predicted trouble for any sort of attempt to make visions of Double Victory or the Atlantic Charter's human rights into a reality. One of the starkest examples of mounting hostility toward 'human rights' for the Black population was the 1945–1947 activity by the NAACP and the NNC with the United Nations (UN), the new international organization created to replace the deeply flawed League of Nations. The NAACP and the NNC saw the UN, "if properly developed… [as] the vehicle to break the back of white supremacy, ensure a just peace, and implement the Four Freedoms" for the Black population.[141] They were sorely disappointed: not only did the UN Charter severely limit its ability to enforce human rights when violations were found, it also limited even the right to *petition* the new Commission on Human Rights, arguing that only petitions submitted from a country's government would be reviewed.[142] The rights revolution spirit that had so enthused activists during the 1930s and early 1940s rhetoric was rapidly curtailed between 1945–1947 so that the supposedly universal birthrights like 'freedom from fear and want' could not be enforced for the Black population in America.

The crucial ideological instrument used to justify such restrictions was anticommunism, a

specter that loomed over domestic life, severely hampered Vernacular Intellectualism's influence within the counter-hegemonic coalition, and essentially won the Pre-Classical War of Position for Meritocratic Racial Uplift. Communism and Joseph Stalin's horrific regime had already cast a divisive pall over the Black population since the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in 1939, especially for Vernacular Intellectuals, who were more likely than their Uplift counterparts to dabble in various forms of Marxism. The NNC's Communist influences had already started to shred its leadership, support, and vision since 1939,[143] but by 1947 the sole institutional pillar of Vernacular Intellectualism was completely disbanded.[144] Public individuals who believed in and practiced Vernacular Intellectualism were widely targeted by domestic, anticommunist 'red-baiting' campaigns, such as Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), including W.E.B. Du Bois, entertainer Paul Robeson, and cartoonist Harrington. The "common sense" of postwar 'red-baiting' viewed anyone voicing or engaging in 'subversive' behavior as a threat to national security, and because Vernacular Intellectualism was, by definition, concerned with subverting the oppression of the motley crew, the Cold War guaranteed its demise. Vernacular Intellectuals necessarily had to quell or tone down their trademark criticisms of White Liberalism—or, as Harrington did, leave the jurisdiction of the American government—in order to avoid scrutiny, harassment, and even imprisonment.

In 1947–1948, the last pieces of the classical civil rights movement's ideology fell in place with the advent of 'Cold War civil rights.' Harry Truman, Roosevelt's third vice president and successor, was faced with the threat of Henry Wallace's third-party candidacy for the 1948 presidential election.[145] Though Wallace took more progressive stances for Black rights, Truman secured the support of the NAACP and A. Philip Randolph by capitulating key gradualist victories: Executive Orders 9980 and 9981, which desegregated the federal work force and armed services

respectively.[146] Meritocratic Racial Uplifters were protecting their agenda by backing the more realistic candidate, but they also protected themselves, whether intentionally or not, by distancing themselves from Wallace, who himself was being red-baited. In the span of three years, the Pre-Classical War of Position went from a deadlock, with a relatively balanced "collective will" emerging, to Uplift once again holding much of the power, influence, and visibility within the coalition against white supremacy. Those in the coalition who did not ascribe to Uplift were silenced by of the threat of red-baiting, more than they had been prior to 1929, while those who did voice their criticisms of Uplift and White Liberalism were persecuted. The one element of Vernacular Intellectualism that the classical coalition never abandoned was the leveraging power of the masses, which had repeatedly proved useful and could be wielded without accusation of Communism. The strategic combination of direct action and Uplift's strong—and often *charismatic*—leadership would be the trademark of the classical civil rights movement. The presidential election of 1948, in which Truman won 69% of the Black vote,[147] solidified "Cold War civil rights" in which the hegemonic power structure agreed to moderate reforms and the counter-hegemonic movement, "on the brink of death," had little power to leverage for anything more.[148]

One of the few avenues of dissent remaining for Vernacular Intellectuals was, as had always been, cultural production. Harrington, who 'self-exiled' to Paris in 1952, continued to write and draw from a Vernacular Intellectualist perspective about American politics, culture, and society.[149] Harrington stayed away from Communist themes, but continued to be 'radical' in his critiques of white supremacy and comments on the divide between everyday experiences of the motley crew and the 'successes' of the classical civil rights movement (fig.s 13, 14).[150] Harrington did not indicate that the classical civil rights movement was worse than nothing—he often reflected

on the positive, important progress of the movement—but argued that there was still much work to be done for integration to be a fully positive force for the entire Black population.

V. Conclusion: 'Last Words'?

In our nation's attempts to attain, and understand the battle for, racial justice, the mistake made by museums, movies, scholars, presidents, Uplifters, and Vernacular Intellectuals alike is to assume that anyone ever gets the 'last words' of a movement.

Prior to 1929, Meritocratic Racial Uplifters held far more institutional support and espoused a formalized ideology, one in which the elite middle class would speak for the race; they would have the first and last word. However, the Great Depression undermined their authority, launching a Gramscian 'war of position' between it and Vernacular Intellectualism and thereby ensuring this would not be so. With this war of position, the antiracism ideologies of Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism vied for leadership of a coalition against white supremacy, thus defining the period as the pre-classical civil rights movement.

Vernacular Intellectual John P. Davis thought he and his fellows would get "the last word," as he told them at the 1936 Joint Committee on National Recovery.[151] For about ten years, it seemed like they might—or, at the very least, they would 'share' the last word with Uplifters—as a "provisional stage" of "collective will" that gave similar weight to Meritocratic Racial Uplift and Vernacular Intellectualism began to coalesce during World War II. [152] However, the specter of the Cold War forestalled the equitable movement, giving advantage to the Uplift once again. Besides Vernacular Intellectualism's central contribution of mass direct action, there were other elements of it and the greater Black Radical Tradition that continued in the "common sense" of activism and popular thought—as the scholars of the long movement attest—but any action based on that common sense had to be delicate and subtle so as not to provoke the powerful ire of White

Liberalism. Though the 'birthright' of the Black Radical Tradition and the rights revolution did not manifest in the way that Vernacular Intellectuals hoped, the classical civil rights movement also did not *sell* the birthright for a 'mess of pottage' in the way that some cynics suggest. Had Uplift organizations, such as the NAACP, stood by a radical envisioning of the movement, they likely would have been disbanded, losing out on the more gradual but still hugely important gains made during the classical rights movement.

Many celebratory depictions of the classical civil rights movement cast it as "a satisfying morality tale" and the last word on race relations in the United States, but still this is not true, as demonstrated by the Black Power Movement and the reinstitution of a racialized caste system, i.e. mass incarceration.[153] Repeatedly, 'the last word' proves not to be so, but merely the dominant word at that moment. Just as the hopes of Black radicalism during the 1930s and 1940s did not banish white supremacy, the Cold War silencing tactics did not destroy the Black Radical Tradition, which returned to visibility in the mid-1960s. Histories such as that of race in America demonstrate that no ideology, group, or individual gets the last word, at least not for long.

VI. Appendix: Referenced Illustrations

fig. 1: "Do's and Don'ts" (1943)

fig. 2: *Dark Laughter*—baseball (1952)

"Hey, Big Stuff, look here. I don't believe in no liquor dancin' and baseball, so I'm just here to sit in the cool and knit some. But… will you please nudge me when Jackie gets up to bat?"

fig. 3: *Dark Laughter*—rent control (1947)

"What difference will it make to you if they DO lift the rent controls? You ain't paid for your room since before they started the OPA!"

fig. 4: Vote for Roosevelt (circa Oct. 1932)

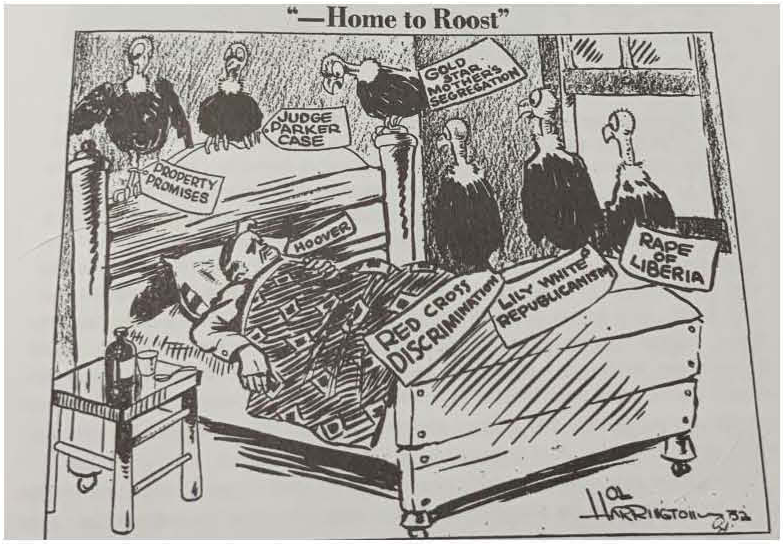


fig. 5: "Home to Roost" (Oct. 1932)

"Now we pays you an' Stewmeat five bucks a week. You done busted seven bucks worth of dishes. Dat makes you owe de management two bucks, an' today is payday."

fig. 6: *Dark Laughter*—payday (1936)

"Now we pays you an' Stewmeat five bucks a week. You done busted seven bucks worth of dishes. Dat makes you owe de management two bucks, an' today is payday."

"Comrades, fellow workers!"

fig. 7: *Dark Laughter*—Marxist (1935)

"Comrades, fellow workers!"

"Sure is funny, Bootsie, but you wuzn't all messed up like this 'til after the night when them radio news flashes said war wuz expected any time."

fig. 8: *Dark Laughter*—WWII draft (1939)

"Sure is funny, Bootsie, but you wuzn't all messed up like this 'til after the night when them radio news flashes said war wuz expected anytime."

fig. 9: Germany vs. Missouri (1942)

"WELL SINCE JOE'S FIGHTIN' FOR THE ARMY NOW, ME AN' BOOTS FIGGERED WE'D HOLD THINGS DOWN OUT HERE 'TIL HE COMES BACK."

fig. 10: *Dark Laughter*—boxing (1942)

"Well since Joe's fightin' for the army now, me an' Boots figgered we'd hold things down here 'til he comes back."

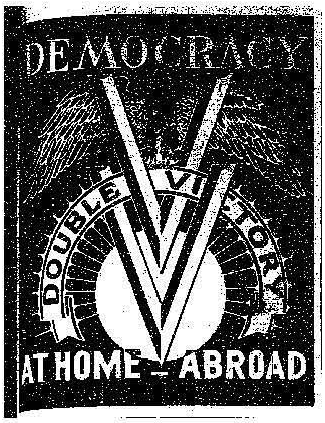
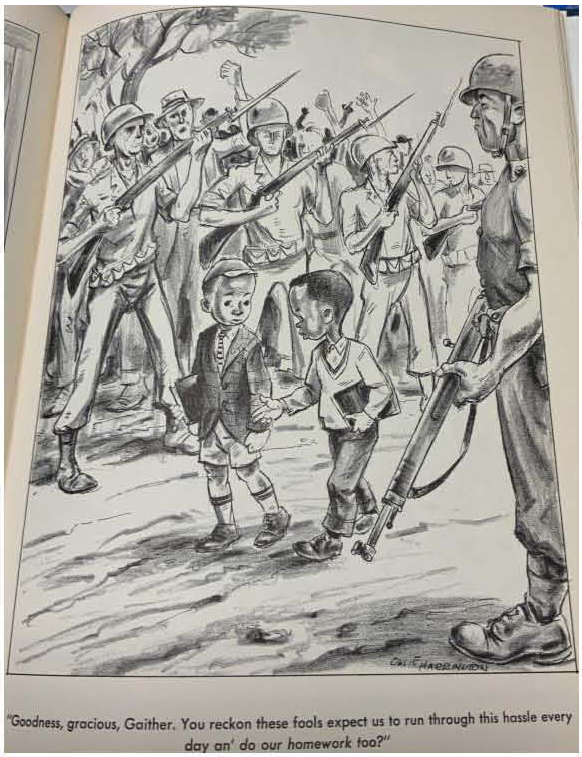


fig. 11: Double Victory logo

"... An' I, as Grand Master, serves notice on the Nazis an' Japanese, on land, on sea, an' in the air, if dear Brother Bootsie don't return, beware of the wrath of the Social Dukes Benevolent an' Athaletic Association!"

fig. 12: *Dark Laughter*—drafted (1945)

"… An' I, as Grand Master, serves notice on the Nazis an' Japanese, on land, on sea, an' in the air, if dear Brother Bootsie don't return, beware of the wrath of the Social Dukes Benevolent an' Athaletic Association!"



"Goodness, gracious, Gaither. You reckon these fools expect us to run through this hassle every day an' do our homework too?"

fig. 13: *Bootsie*—integrated schools (Sept. 29, 1956)

"Goodness, gracious, Gaither. You reckon these fools expect us to run through this hassle every day an' *do our homework* too?"

"Bootsie, remember how hard our folks had to fight before these eateries would let us in? Well dig this bill . . . And then tell me who's goin' to fight to get us out!"

fig 14: *Bootsie*—integrated dining (Apr. 2, 1955)

"Bootsie, remember how hard our folks had to fight before these eateries would let us *in*? Well dig this bill… And then tell me who's goin' to fight to get us *out*!"

[1] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Nowell-Smith Geoffrey and Hoare Quintin (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 54–55.
[2] James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Jacqueline Goldsby (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 110.
[3] Though the phrase 'mess of pottage' is not in most translations of this passage, its first attested use was by English theologian and preacher, John Capgrave around 1452. It became popular through the 16th century, occurring in various translations for the Church of England's official Bible. Its influence was cemented by the 17th century as a proverbial phrase, in part because of its inclusion in the "translator's note" to the 1611 King James Bible. See Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible*, 58613th edition (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005).
[4] Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 132. This story is from Genesis 25:19–34.
[5] Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 129. Because of this prophecy, particularly that 'two peoples' would be born from the lineages of Jacob and Esau, the story of the siblings is one of the most often passages used by both scholars and laypeople to try to understand the Bible's commentary on race.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1235.
[8] In his seminal work, *Black Marxism*, Cedric Robinson unearths what he terms the Black Radical Tradition, a historical and contemporary culture of resistance that originated from African and African American communities, institutions, cultures, etc. Robinson positions the Black Radical Tradition as a refutation of the common Western presumption that sees all conventions of radicalism as stemming from Marx and European radicalism. The Black Radical Tradition often includes elements of Marxism, but also goes beyond it. Though this paper will not extensively deconstruct the history of this phrase and how it has been used, changed, and expanded, as a paper on radicalism in the Black population, it should fundamentally be seen as an investigation of one element of the Black Radical Tradition. See Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of a Black Radical Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
[9] Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement," 1233–63.
[10] This convention marks the start of the Civil Rights Movement with the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the end with the 1965 Voting Rights Act. It is reinforced through the myriad museums, scholarship, and popular depictions and celebrations of the Civil Rights Movement.
[11] On 1954–1965 as the "classical rights movement," see Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago, 1971), 111-22, esp. 111, qtd. in Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement," 1234. On the 1954–1965 as the "heroic civil rights movement," see Peniel E. Joseph, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2006); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006). This longer

movement stretching from the Great Migration through the 1970s' supposed betrayal of the movement, across the entire country and sometimes even beyond international borders.

[12] John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle, With a New Preface* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); George Lipsitz, *A Life In The Struggle: Ivory Perry and the Culture of Opposition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

[13] Self-identified scholarship of the long movement include: Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005)' Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement," 1233–63; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2008); Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), Kindle; Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006); Peniel E. Joseph, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2006). Hall and Theoharis distinguish themselves among these authors for writing central historiographic essays about the long movement. Included in their reviews of the literature are connections between works that do not identify themselves as part of long movement literature, but inform the story of the movement.

[14] Theoharis and Woodard, eds., *Freedom North;* Theoharis and Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*; Angela D. Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching in Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Joe William Trotter, *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (University Press of Kentucky, 1998); Kimberley L. Phillips, *AlabamaNorth: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915–1945*, Working Class in American History (University of Illinois Press, 1999).

[15] Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Self, *American Babylon*; Peter B. Levy, *Civil War on Race Street: The Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Christopher B. Strain, *Pure Fire: Self-Defense as Activism in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Lance E. Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[16] Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Singh, *Black is a Country*, Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical*

Imagination (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002); Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics and Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936–1975* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression*, African American History Series (Lanham, Md.) (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

[17] George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006); Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Many of these authors have built on existing labor and urban historiography, but connect the issues more thoroughly to race.

[18] Carol Elaine Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, Revised ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[19] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 110.

[20] See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Nowell-Smith Geoffrey and Hoare Quintin (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 3–23, 55, fn. 5, 244, 258–259, 265–266, 268, 275–276. See also Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), 423, 426, 428–432.

[21] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 431.

[22] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 423, 432. It is important to note that even when unity is created, such is "*not* the absolute victory of this side over that, nor the total incorporation of one set of forces into another" (Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 423. Emphasis his).

[23] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 423–424, 432.

[24] Dating back to the combining forces of the Enlightenment philosophy and classical economics, the national hegemony in the United States centers around on the ideology of liberalism, a prizing of freedom of the individual above all else. Much has been written about the relationship between liberalism and racism, little of which will be incorporated into this study, but a consensus has emerged that liberalism and explicit white supremacy had a mutually reinforcing relationship before World War II. Consider, for example, David Roediger's discussion about "*herrenvolk* republicanism" that builds off of Pierre L. van der Berghe's "*herrenvolk democracy*." In government based on *herrenvolk* ideologies, they are "democratic for the master race but tyrannical for the subordinate" race (van der Berghe qtd. by Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class,* 3rd ed. (New York: Verso, 2007), 59). For Roediger's formulation, even in a society where downward economic mobility is

possible for white people, one cannot lose their racial status and the in-group entitlements promised by whiteness (Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness,* 60). In this way, liberalism and racism are related by many to 'the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion,' summoning to mind the seminal *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* by Benedict Anderson (New York: Verso, 2006, revised edition). Debate rages, particularly about the fundamental relationship between liberalism and racism (see, for example, Stephen Skowronek, "The Reassociation of Ideas and Purposes: Racism, Liberalism, and the American Political Tradition," *The American Political Science Review* 100, no. 3 (2006): 385–401 for an analysis about how this relationship changes over time. Also compelling is David FitzGerald, David Cook-Martín, and Angela S. García, *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), and the ways in which two reviewers critique its understanding of relationship between liberalism and racism: Peter Wade, "Racism and Liberalism: The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 8 (June 21, 2015): 1292–97; Christian Joppke, "Liberalism and Racism: An 'Elective Affinity'?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 8 (June 21, 2015): 1298–1304).

[25] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 233, see Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 426–427.

[26] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 113.

[27] Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth-Century*, Haymarket Series. (New York: Verso, 1996), xix. Denning builds on the same Gramscian theory enumerated in this paragraph and in fn. 21 about culture as a political tool. Denning, *The Cultural Front*, xix.

[28] Bill Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935-1946* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); James Edward Smethurst, *The New Red Negro : The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930-1946* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 1999); Lawrence Patrick Jackson, *The Indignant Generation: A Narrative History of African American Writers and Critics, 1934-1960* (Princeton University Press, 2011); Brian Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front: Black Writers and Artists of the Depression Generation* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012). It is important to note that not all of these writers are writing in direct response to Denning, though to not engage with Denning would be a misstep in the ethos of the academy. This is evidenced by select non-race-focused continuations of Denning's work: Alan M. Wald, *Exiles from a Future Time: The Forging of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Literary Left* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Alan M. Wald, *Trinity of Passion: The Literary Left and the Antifascist Crusade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Barbara Foley, *Radical Representations: Politics and Form in U.S. Proletarian Fiction, 1929–1941* (Duke University Press, 2012).

[29] Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938–1948*, John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Robinson, *Black Marxism*; Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem During the Great Depression* (New York: Grove Press, 1983); Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?": Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[30] The three, smaller historiographical inquiries into general visuality, visual arts, and humor indicate that very little research has been done into the specific tradition of Black cartooning—hence the need to cobble together the three for such contextual information. A few cursory

studies exist, including Tim Jackson, *Pioneering Cartoonists of Color* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016); Sheena C. Howard, *Encyclopedia of Black Comics* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2017); ed.s Sheena C. Howard and Ronald L. Jackson, *Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), but none of these are rigorous, scholarly examinations of the tradition, akin to what Barbara Savage did for Black radio in *Broadcasting Freedom*, or numerous authors have done for the Black press, such as in Fred Carroll, *Race News: Black Journalists and the Fight for Racial Justice in the Twentieth Century*, History of Communication. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017); Stanley Nelson, *The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords*, 1998; and the dozens of sources cited by Kim Gallon in her historiographical review, "Silences Kept: The Absence of Gender and Sexuality in Black Press Historiography," *History Compass* 10, no. 2 (February 2012): 207–18.
Visuality: Michele Wallace, *Dark Designs and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Lisa E. Farrington, *African-American Art: A Visual and Cultural History* (Oxford University Press, 2017); Miriam Thaggert, *Images of Black Modernism: Verbal and Visual Strategies of the Harlem Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).
Humor: Mel Watkins, *On the Real Side: Laughing, Lying, and Signifying: The Underground Tradition of African-American Humor That Transformed American Culture, from Slavery to Richard Pryor* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994); Brian Dolinar, "Humor Can Often Make Dents Where Sawed-off Billiard Sticks Can't: The Bootsie Cartoons by Ollie Harrington," *Studies in American Humor* New Series 3, no. 14 (2006): 73–90.
Cartoons and comics: Christopher J. Gilbert, "An Art of War: National Character and the Burden of Caricature" (Indiana University, 2015); Robert C. Harvey, "Withdrawing the Color Line: The First Famous African American Cartoonist," in *Insider Histories of Cartooning: Rediscovering Forgotten Famous Comics and Their Creators* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 86–97; Oliver W. Harrington, *Dark Laughter: The Satiric Art of Oliver W. Harrington*, ed. M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993); Howard, *Encyclopedia of Black Comics*; eds. Howard and Jackson, *Black Comics: Politics of Race and Representation*; Jackson, *Pioneering Cartoonists of Color;* Harry L. Katz, ed., *Cartoon America: Comic Art in the Library of Congress* (New York: Abrams, 2006); Victor S. Navasky, *The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013); Chris Lamb, *Drawn to Extremes: The Use and Abuse of Editorial Cartoons* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Fiona Deans Halloran, *Thomas Nast: The Father of Modern Political Thought* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Roger A. Fischer, *Them Damned Pictures: Explorations in American Political Cartoon Art* (North Havon: Archon Books, 1996);
[31] Amy Helene Kirschke, *Art in* Crisis*: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Struggle for African American Identity and Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Jenny Woodley, *Art for Equality: The NAACP's Cultural Campaign for Civil Rights* (University Press of Kentucky, 2014).
[32] Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal: The Quest for Civil Rights in the Roosevelt Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
[33] See Grant Farred, *What's My Name: Black Vernacular Intellectuals* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 22–25.
[34] Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*; Jackson, *The Indignant Generation.* Graduating from high school months before the start of the Great Depession, Harrington worked as a freelance cartoonist for various papers in New York City before entering the Yale School of Fine Arts. He would continue to rely on his cartooning skills to pay tuition and remained in this career

throughout his life, even after he graduated from Yale; like many Black artists at the time, he faced extraordinary difficulty breaking into a fine arts profession, all of which were more heavily guarded against non-whites than other types of art such as literary and performative (Dolinar 179). As he rose in prominence for his cartoons, Harrington was hired by *The Pittsburgh Courier* and was sent overseas as a correspondent during World War II in 1944. When Harrington returned to the United States, his politics had taken on a new militancy, working on campaigns related to racial violence and radical organizing that utilized both his artistic and journalistic skills. In 1952, like so many other Leftist politicians and cultural producers of his generation, Harrington ex-patriated as he faced increasing surveillance by federal authorities. Harrington continued to draw about and for American issues while he lived out the rest of his life in Europe, first in "Dark Laughter" and later switching to political cartoons. This short synopsis does not do justice to the many contours of Harrington's life but does indicate the breadth of national and international events that impacted his life. This paper is not *about* Harrington, but rather endeavors to use the work of Harrington to tease out the ideological tensions that fought for dominance within the interwar counter-hegemonic coalition.

[35] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 55.

[36] Stuart Hall, "What Is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, 1996, 474.

[37] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 423–424.

[38] To be metonymic is to argue that one or two aspects of a person, institution, race, etc. represents that person, institution, race, etc. This is very common among racial ideologies, and quickly leads to stereotyping: this singular member of the race is [negative or positive trait], so therefore the whole race is [said trait]. This can be done by both racists and antiracists.

[39] Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois are known as two pioneers of Black thought and Black progress, but had some differing ideas about how to achieve that progress—though their differences are often over-exaggerated. In the grand scheme of things, they were relatively similar in their faith of Uplift and the power of education, but they differed in what type of education they promoted. For more information, see Mark Bauerlein, "Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois: The Origins of a Bitter Intellectual Battle," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education; New York*, no. 46 (January 2005): 106–114.

[40] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 431.

[41] For example, see "Principles of the NAACP," part of the founding charter of the organization, and the introductory editorial to NAACP periodical, "The Crisis" (ed. Deidre Mullane, *Crossing the Danger Water: Three Hundred Years of African-American Writing* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 435–437.

[42] Touré F. Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950* (University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 2–26.

[43] Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta*, 4.

[44] Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity*, 5.

[45] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 431.

[46] Thaggert, *Images of Black Modernism*, 2.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Woodley, *Art for Equality,* 3. The embedded quote is from Du Bois.

[49] Kirschke, *Art in* Crisis, 8.

[50] Ferguson, *New Deal Atlanta*, 235–237. Cartoon taken from this book.

[51] For more on the Black middle class, particularly the fragility of such, see Mary E. Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Karyn R. Lacy, *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class, and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
[52] Woodley, *Art for Equality*, 38–39; 40, 92, 160. Kirschke, *Art in Crisis,* 28–33, 6–16, 115–130. For example, the NAACP was oddly quiet about the birth of jazz during 'the Jazz Age,' focusing their praise on two musicians Roland Hayes and Marian Anderson, who also were classical musicians (Woodley 40). Though most cartooning at this time was used in a humorous way, *The Crisis* almost exclusively used cartoons for political messages; Du Bois explicitly warned against Blacks laughing at themselves, seeing any self-humor as merely continuing in the demeaning stereotypes so prevalent in white depictions of Blacks. Instead focus should be on the "more straightforward style of art [that] was emerging" (Kirschke 25).
[53] Woodley, *Art for Equality*, 40.
[54] Though Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois are known for their stark and often public disagreements, they both turned on this concept of stewardship, though other components of their roadmaps to racial equality were different. Henry T. Morehouse, the first person to use the term "Talented Tenth," is also an important figure in the history of racial stewardship. See Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity*, 2–26 and Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta*, 1–16.
[55] Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity*, 2.
[56] Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta*, 4.
[57] For more on the Club Women's movement and the history of Meritocratic Racial Uplift, see Jacqueline Moore, *Leading the Race*; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*; Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*; and Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era*, 1 edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[58] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), ix–xiii. Such relationships of dependency mean that the actions of the motley crew may at time seem to contradict each other, but that this is simply because of the situational logic of power relations.
[59] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 432. See also Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, xi, which explains that ideologies and actions of those in relationships of dependency often appear contradictory at different times, but in reality have "a kind of situational logic to them;" and Kelley, *Race Rebels*, esp. 1–14, which builds on Scott's *Hidden Transcripts*.
[60] Grant Farred's *What's My Name? Black Vernacular Intellectuals* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 22–23. Farred defines the vernacular intellectual as a third categorization on top of Gramsci's "traditional" and "organic" intellectuals (see Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks,* 3–23 for his discussion of these two types of intellectuals). Though Farred talks of vernacular intellectuals in the lower case, I capitalize this phrase when I mean to refer to those who believe in my conception of Vernacular Intellectualism, whether or not they have created a platform from which to publically critique their oppression; in this way, my 'Vernacular Intellectuals' is somewhat wider of a category than Farred's definition of lower-case vernacular intellectuals as "oppositional public figures," though given Farred's emphasis on the expansiveness and "theoretically supple category" of the vernacular and vernacular intellectuals, it is unlikely that he would protest this expansion of mine (23, 14).
[61] While middle-class in education, Oliver Harrington retained and primarily wrote from his working-class origins, best seen in the protagonist of his most famous and longest-written

cartoon, *Dark Laughter*. Bootsie, the protagonist "Dark Laughter," is written with a distinctly working-class subjectivity, focused on the struggles and contradictions of urban daily life for Black migrants, be it making rent, dating, or fighting about sports players. The use of humor itself positions Harrington in a different ideological perspective compared to the likes of James Weldon Johnson or W.E.B. Du Bois, the later of whom thought that "For too long… blacks had laughed at themselves. Now, a more straightforward style of art… was imperative" (Kirschke 25). This attitude toward making the Black person the object of laughter was not paranoia, but rooted in the historical reality that they and their various physical, mental, and emotional traits were constantly caricatured and made the butt of jokes in white popular culture. Instructive books even explicitly suggested doing so: "they are natural born humorists and will often assume ridiculous attitudes or say side-splitting things with no apparent intention of being funny... [including their] love of loud clothes, watermelons, chicken, crap shooting, fear of ghosts, and etc." (E.C. Matthews, *How to Draw Funny Pictures* (1928), qtd. in Tim Jackson, *Pioneering Cartoonists of Color* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 3). Because Bootsie does not conform to Meritocratic Racial Uplift's behavioral code, but is still a sympathetic, fleshed-out character, *Dark Laughter* epitomizes Vernacular Intellectualism. Furthermore, because Harrington continued to write Bootsie nearly every week for over 30 years, its archive does not contain an ideologically homogenous record but instead reflects how one working-class perspective changed over the course of local, national, and international events. Though Harrington would often meet with other Leftist intellectuals at Café Tournon later in his life once he émigrated to Paris, he should not be considered a member of "the elite of cafe society" whom Farred argues are not vernacular intellectuals (22). Most of his work used in this paper was written before he was a part of this population. Furthermore, Harrington's visual modality, use of humor, working-class protagonist, and critique of society—including elements of the Meritocratic Racial Uplift movement—is definitely "versed in the discourse of popular oppositionality but outside of its formal articulations… craft[ing] a unique public space from which to speak as [Harrington] address[es] the issues of the day that directly affect[s] his community" (Farred 22).

[62] See Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 424, 432 for 'collective will,' 431–432 for 'philosophically elaborated" 'floor' of ideology (i.e., one of the 'two distinct floors' of ideology).

[63] Wendell Smith, "The Sports Beat," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 20, 1946, Accessed via ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Pittsburgh Courier.

[64] Smith, "The Sports Beat."

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] This term is used to refer to Major League Baseball teams and the Minor League teams that feed into them. It does not refer to the Negro Leagues, active through 1951, amateur teams, or any other teams that do not feed into Major League Baseball.

[68] Smith, "The Sports Beat."

[69] Ollie Harrington, "Dark Laughter," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 26, 1952, Accessed via ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Pittsburgh Courier.

[70] Rob Ruck, *Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonized the Black and Latin Game* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 104.

[71] Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity*, 194.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ferguson, *New Deal Atlanta,* 4.

[74] Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity*, 193.
[75] Ferguson uses this helpful, considerate phrase often in *New Deal Atlanta* to indicate the overwhelming need of the Black community for advocacy in economic matters during Jim Crow—and the limited ability of leaders to address the needs of everyone (see, for example, 9, 14, 51, 193, 224, 247).
[76] Farred, *What's My Name*, 17.
[77] Oliver Harrington, "Dark Laughter," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 8, 1947, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Pittsburgh Courier.
[78] Andrew H. Bartels, "The Office of Price Administration and the Legacy of the New Deal, 1939-1946," *The Public Historian* 5, no. 3 (1983): 5–29. The project of price control had its beginnings in 1939 with the convergence of two forces: the German invasion of Poland in September, and the ongoing project of economic recovery carried out in the Roosevelt administration. Economist Leon Henderson had concluded earlier in the 1930s that "artificially high industrial prices were impediments to recovery," a conviction that strengthened after the invasion of Poland, then the invasions of France and Norway. Henderson's conviction and plans to address inflation were given power when he was named an advisor to the National Defense Advisory Commission following the invasions of France and Norway (Bartels 7–11). The Office of Price Administration took on the personnel and objectives related to inflation of the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, created in April 1941 by Executive Order 8734.
[79] Bartels, "The OPA and the Legacy of the New Deal," 6. The anti-inflation program "held inflation below an annual rate of 5 percent from 1941–1946… despite rapid economic growth, full employment, and shortages of many consumer goods" (6). One of the central reasons for inflation during the wartime economy was because of the focus of most industrial sectors on war-related production—leading to a shortage of consumer goods. Any shortage of goods will, classically speaking, lead to higher prices, but during wartime economies, there tends to be high employment, driving the prices even higher because consumers can and are willing to pay more.
[80] Bartels, "The OPA and the Legacy of the New Deal," 23–28. The postwar fate of price controls would mirror that of most New Deal economic policy, caught between the classical liberals' concerns about returning to economic depression and New Deal liberals' concerns about unleashing massive inflation. The Federal Housing and Rent Act of 1947 oversaw the regulation and enforcement of rent control for structures built before February 1, 1947. Following the end of federal regulation in 1950, New York State and/or New York City took over the administration of rent control, with the similar approach about 1947 construction, and with additional regulations at various points (Art Shulman, *Rent Regulation after 50 Years: An Overview of New York State's Rent Regulated Housing, 1993*. (Albany: New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Office of Rent Administration, 1994).
[81] Harrington's Leftism is well documented, with a detailed narrative outlined in Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*, 171–223. Two such examples of Harrington's Marxism and human rights beliefs: In 1947, Harrington worked closely with W.E.B. Du Bois on the NAACP's petition to the UN Commission on Human Rights, agreeing with Du Bois's decision to leak it to the press without consulting Walter White (Carol Elaine Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93–112, esp. 101, 103); in 1949, Harrington served as public relations director for the re-election campaign of New York city councilman and Black Communist, Benjamin J. Davis Jr., whom he met on a picket line in 1935 (Dolinar 174, 213).

[82] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 184. See also Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 417–419. Interestingly, this puts the pre-classical civil rights movement (and the classical civil rights movement) into a larger context about liberalism and *its* war of position with other economic modalities. As the counter-hegemonic coalition was trying to forge unity, so too was the rest of the country trying to recreate unity behind capitalism. The result would be the replacement of classical liberalism with New Deal liberalism, which proposed a way to "resolve the contradictory imperatives in modern political life between securing the freedoms of market exchange and forming a large-scale community of social equals" (Singh, *Black is a Country*, loc. 813). The end of 'the New Deal order', i.e. New Deal liberalism, would begin after the end of World War II with the rise of Cold War liberalism, which also exerted significant effects on the counter-hegemonic coalition.

[83] The combination of Jim Crow racial terror and the World War I spike in industrial job opportunities triggered the Great Migration, the northern mobility by 6 million Black Americans from 1916–1970. Though first generation, European ethnic immigrants were an important labor force for capitalists, as they would accept wages that were lower than native or second generation white people, black workers were even more appealing for capitalists—they would accept even lower wages and worse conditions than immigrants. Leveraging various racial and ethnic tensions, or 'the production of difference,' among workers of different background allowed capitalists to exploit workers even further. The First Great Migration is generally considered to be 1910–1940, with 1940–1970 comprising the Second Great Migration, though some choose to talk generally about the entire span from 1910–1970 as a singular, unified Great Migration. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16–50; Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 6–13. See also Elizabeth Esch and David Roediger, "'One Symptom of Originality': Race and the Management of Labor in US History," in *Class, Race, and Marxism* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2017), loc. 1722–2283, Kindle.

[84] The Managerial Revolution to which this refers is *not* that of James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution: What Is Happening in the World* (New York: John Day Co., 1941), which theorizes about the future of capitalism. Rather, it refers to the various components of the Second Industrial Revolution: increased mechanization of production, deskilling of labor, scientific management, and the creation of the 'management' class between the traditional Marxist categories of capitalists and proletariat. The most relevant dynamics of The Managerial Revolution are the increased number of laborers hired for less skilled positions, and the advent of 'benevolent welfare capitalism,' which attempted to dissuade workers from joining unions by offering incentives for productivity and loyalty. For more on The Managerial Revolution, see seminal works, Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975) and David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[85] Components of benevolent welfare capitalism were wide-ranging, from increased wages to organized recreational activities to access to education opportunities. Though some employees lambasted welfare capitalism as ideological indoctrination or unwelcome paternalism, others saw promise and material improvement in what appeared to be corporate benevolence. Regardless of how they viewed the intentions of welfare capitalism, a large majority of workers were happy to take advantage of the newly added benefits; this did not signify undivided loyalty to employers on the part of workers. The ideology of welfare capitalism became a part of mainstream culture

outside the workplace as well, with the expectation of businessmen by peers and the community at large that they would play a role of social leadership (Cohen, *Making a New Deal,* 159–212; Zieger, *The* CIO, 11–12).

[86] Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 250.

[87] Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 251–290, esp. 252.

[88] Ibid, Zieger, *The CIO*, 14–18, 42–43.

[89] We see this ideological conversion in various case studies during the Great Depression. For example, the increase in communism in the South (see Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe;* Gilmore, *Defying Dixie,* 106–153), and the increasing participation of Black (and, for that matter, white) workers in union organizing (Erik S. Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow: The National Negro Congress and the Rise of Militant Civil Rights* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 19–63); Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 291–360).

[90] Harrington, *Dark Laughter: The Satiric Art of Oliver W. Harrington*, ed. M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), xvi. Taken by Inge from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library, Scrapbook Collection. Published circa October 1932 in *The New York State Contender*.

[91] Harrington, *Dark Laughter*, ed. Inge, xv. Taken by Inge from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library, Scrapbook Collection. Published October 22, 1932 in an unknown newspaper.

[92] Singh, *Black is a Country*, loc. 807.

[93] Cohen, Zieger, *The CIO*, 14–18, 42–43.

[94] Davis, "A Survey of the Problems of the Negro Under the New Deal," 3.

[95] Singh, *Black is a Country*, loc. 964.

[96] Singh, *Black is a Coutry*, loc. 1074; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 827–964.

[97] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 431.

[98] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 950.

[99] See Williams, *Marxism and Literature,* 113: "Any hegemonic process must be especially alert and responsive to the alternatives and opposition which question or threaten its dominance." Though Uplift did not yet have control over the counter-hegemonic coalition, in its attempts to gain that leadership it was "alert and responsive," seeking to "control or transform or even incorporate" the other counter-hegemonic ideology (113).

[100] Ferguson, *New Deal Atlanta*, 6.

[101] Ferguson, *New Deal Atlanta*, 163–218. Ferguson's use of "triage" is a helpful one in these sorts of circumstances, as it reminds one that Uplifters were working with limited resources. Though they believed in and wanted widespread adoption of their morality and behavioral code, their ideal would surely be to educate those who did not meet the code, convince them of its importance, and give everyone who ascribed public housing. Their goal was certainly not the entrenchment of "the growing gulf *within* the African American community between have and have-nots, which has grown progressively wider since the Second World War" (Ferguson, 9, emphasis hers). Rather, this issue was created by the limited scope of reform executed by the New Deal, similar to the discussion about rent and rent control on page 19.

[102] Denning, *The Cultural Front*, xix. Denning sees the Cultural Front as one component of the Popular Front, a term that originally referred to the period from 1934–1939 when the Communist International decreased its radically revolutionary rhetoric in favor of coalition politics with liberal organizations (Denning, 22–26; Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*, 3). Though it is still used this way, Denning proposes using it in a more general and broad sense to refer to the

interracial, labor-based coalitions of radicals and liberals, *some* of whom had varying levels of connection to the Communist Party (Denning, 22–26; Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*, 3–4). Denning and ensuing scholars aim to destabilize the common myth that everyone associated with a Popular Front organization were either bona fide members of the Communist Party, or else were unwitting puppets of the Party. The Party certainly did, at times, play a poisonous role in Leftist organizations, including Black Leftist organizations, but this typically was after the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact. Furthermore, many took on Communist Party affiliations and/or communist strategies without being mercy to the whims of Moscow (see Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*; Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 102–159; Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow*; Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*). Particularly compelling is Kelley's analysis of Black Communist cultural production during the 1930s, noting that the Communist International's resolution in 1928 that Southern Blacks were an oppressed nation with an inherent right to self-determination "compelled black Communists to call upon African American writers, artists, and historians to focus their work on the age-old tradition of black rebellion" (109). Counter to the assumption that any Communist affiliation meant that Moscow imposed "a clear-cut 'line' on cultural production that was naturally in conflict with the work of black artists," Kelley argues that at least some Black Communists took what they wanted from Communism without being defenseless to accept all its stances (104).

[103] Oliver Harrington, "Dark Laughter," *The New York Amsterdam News*, November 7, 1936.

[104] Oliver Harrington, "Dark Laughter," *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 28, 1935.

[105] Alain Locke, qtd in Singh, *Black is a Country*, loc. 930.

[106] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 431.

[107] Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*, 36–47.

[108] Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*, 15.

[109] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 1.

[110] By allowing states to administer these programs, Roosevelt also left the Black population subject to regulations and restrictions that varied by state. Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 12; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 1139–1194.

[111] This quotation is from Singh, *Black is a Country*, loc. 888, loc. 1167, but the literature on this issue is vast. See, for example, Ferguson, *New Deal Atlanta;* George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro, *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Michael Brown, *Race, Money and the American Welfare State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999; Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005); David Roediger, *Working towards Whiteness: How American Immigrants Became White*: *The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), among others. Though some still contend that the Black citizens received disproportionately *more* aid—a contention repeated as recently as by Michelle Alexander in her popular *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 44, as the above authors demonstrate, the systemic bias was *against* Black recipients. The most egregious of the bureaucratic inscriptions of white supremacy were the Social Security Act of 1935 and the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937. The former excluded 55% of all Black workers and 87% of female Black workers from one of the central benefits of the New Deal (Hall, "Civil Rights and the Political Uses of the Past," 1241; Ferguson, *New Deal Atlanta*, 124, 258; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 1158). Following the Wagner-

Steagall Housing Act, the Federal Housing Administration, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, and the US Housing Authority created the bureaucratic backbone used by relators and banks to 'red line' and segregate neighborhoods, a system that, in conjunction with 'white flight,' would lead to the start of the 'urban crisis' following World War II (Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 1179–1189 offers a succinct summary of these dynamics, but Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*; Sugrue, *The Origin of the Urban Crisis*; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto* are central, in-depth texts in mid-20th century urban studies). Much has been made about the increased number of Black people serving in Roosevelt's administration following the New Deal, not only his 'Black Cabinet' of influential Black leaders—including the NAACP president, Walter White, National Council for Negro Women Chair and educator, Mary McCleod Bethune—and Black-rights supporters among his trusted advisors, including former Chicago NAACP branch president, Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior. The Black Cabinet should not be taken lightly, as they gave (mostly Uplift) Black leaders unprecedented influence and access to systems of power. However, like his cultural policy, one of Roosevelt's motivations for creating the Black Cabinet was as a small token of placation to the Black community in place of more weighty reforms and legislation.

[112] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 108, 1217–1230. See also Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*; Roediger, *Working towards Whiteness*; Sullivan, *Days of Hope*.

[113] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 1–2, 15–32; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 1202.

[114] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 2, 16–32.

[115] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 1209.

[116] Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 358; Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 16–112.

[117] Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 16–17.

[118] In 1940, Randolph resigned his position in the NNC, after perceived rapid changes following the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact: resolutions urging the US to stay out of the war (while having previously urged the fight against racialized fascism) and praising the Soviet Union's isolationism and commitment to equality (with nothing to say about the atrocities within the union), for example. Randolph called the hypocrisies in the NNC's standards of justice towards the Soviet Union; soon after, he was replaced by prominent Black Communist, Max Yergan (Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 20–22). Though there were certainly issues with top leadership of the NNC national organization, opinions diverge greatly about the degree to which the NNC was at the mercy of said leadership and of the specter of the Communist International. Anderson ardently argues that the NNC was "willing to follow the CP [Communist Party] line," even implying that they did not adopt the CP's newfound gradualist approach to racial equality because it was worried about losing its credibility (Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 23–25). Gellman, on the other hand, contends that the NNC's position was almost completely bottom-up: they, for example, "linked war to imperialism, especially after the Italian attack on Ethiopia," and "the anemic response by the League of Nations confirmed to many African American activists that the Western powers prioritized imperialism over democratic self-determination," leading to many an isolationist stance (Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow*, 157 for quotation, see 149–254 for an in-depth discussion of Communism and the NNC). Dolinar takes a middle-road approach, maintaining, "That the Communists played a major role in the National Negro Congress is unquestionable. Yet there remains no indication that the NNC's activities were being dictated by Moscow. The evidence indicates that much of the initiative within the NNC came from black Communists doing the on-the-ground work… with the autonomy to continue on with

their program[s]" as they saw fit (Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front,* 44–50). To this author and for this paper, it less important to take a definitive stance on the NNC and the CP than to consider Communism among those who believed in Vernacular Intellectualism. As for this consideration, because of the *motley,* independent, fragmented nature of this group of people, I argue that we cannot make one decisive judgment: certainly some were card-carrying, even Stalin-supporting members of the Party, but some were not. Some were have been members, but were not aware of Stalin's atrocities; others never took a party line but believed in Marxist approaches to government. The question of Communism and Vernacular Intellectuals is not an unimportant one, but this is as far as this paper will discuss the matter, in part because of length concerns, in part because I do vehemently believe that some attempts at generalization (especially when they are attempting when length is a concern!) can only lead to stereotype, not insight.

[119] Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 358–361; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 814–1267.

[120] Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 356–369; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, loc. 1247–1275; Singh, *Black is a Country,* loc. 859–871.

[121] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks,* 54–55.

[122] Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 424. It is important to note that even when "collective will" emerges, that does not mean a totalizing unity. In this case, at other points during the pre-classical movement, throughout the classical movement, and in *any* hegemonic or counter-hegemonic moment, there will always be "social forces which lose out [i.e., do not see themselves in the collective will] … [but] do not thereby disappear from the terrain of struggle; nor is struggle in such circumstances suspended" (Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 423).

[123] Singh, *Black is a Country*, 859.

[124] Oliver Harrington, "Dark Laughter," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 22, 1939, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Pittsburgh Courier.

[125] Oliver Harrington, *Dark Laughter*, ed. Inge, xxiv. Taken by Inge from *The People's Voice* periodical, published February 28, 1942.

[126] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal,* 12, 129–140; Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom,* 13–15, 67–84, 101–156.

[127] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal,* 123–240. Savage's excellent monograph helps to inform this point. Though Savage focuses more on instances of discourse *about* race on the radio, rather than the strategic *avoidance* of overt racial messaging using culture, she sets up the need (at the time, for Roosevelt, and historiographically for us scholars) to look beyond only exposition explicitly about race. She explains, "By looking beyond radio, we can see its special strengths and weaknesses as a purveyor of racial propaganda. The medium could only be as powerful as the message, and in the case of African Americans, no message was considered politically acceptable to the national, mass audience that radio reached with such speed and ease. State-sanctioned public discourse about African American claims for racial equality was so restricted that radio lost its voice" (Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom* 109). Her argument demonstrates why the government had to resort to more subtle, culture-focused means to try to win over Black citizens.

[128] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 140–158. Rules included: "He was never to have his picture taken along with a white woman. He would never go into a nightclub alone. There would be no soft fights. There would be no fixed fights. He was never to gloat over a fallen opponent. He was to keep a 'dead pan' in front of the cameras. He was to live and fight clean" (qtd. in Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 141).

[129] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 143–144. See also Mark Whitaker, *Smoketown: The Untold Story of the Other Great Black Renaissance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 1–23, among many other accounts of this fight, considered one of the biggest sports events of the 20th century.
[130] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal,* 148.
[131] Sklaroff, *Black Culture and the New Deal*, 127.
[132] Oliver Harrington, *The Plaindealer*, April 10, 1942, Vol. 44, Issue 17, America's Historical Newspapers, accessed via NewsBank/Readex.
[133] Ibid.
[134] James G. Thompson, "Should I Sacrifice to Live 'Half-American?'" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 31, 1942, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Pittsburgh Courier.
[135] Whitaker, *Smoketown*, 170 for quotation, 152–191 for an extended discussion of the 'Double V' campaign. Logo: Wilbert Holloway, "Double Victory," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 7, 1942, Vol. XXXIII No. 6 edition, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Pittsburgh Courier.
[136] Whitaker, *Smoketown*, 171–172.
[137] Whitaker, *Smoketown*, 173–176. There were, of course, pragmatic reasons why *Courier* editors and writers, wanted to emphasize their support for the war instead of the exchange implied in "Double V." But the government's harassment should not be understated: FBI director J. Edgar Hoover had begun surveillance as early as the fall of 1941, suspecting Communist ties, but backed off, not perceiving *The Courier* as a threat. After the December 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hoover's attention was directed towards "'censorship matters—the president's euphemism for monitoring the press to identify stories that should be suppressed in the name of the war effort" (Whitaker, *Smoketown*, 173). *The Courier* was seen as especially dangerous in this regard *because* of the Double V campaign, and harassment escalated, to the point of the FBI threatening to deem its editions "unmailable" because of its content ((Whitaker, *Smoketown*, 174). See also Stanley Nelson, *The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords*, 1998; Patrick S. Washburn and Clarence Page, *The African American Newspaper: Voice of Freedom,* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2006). On 'common sense: Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 431.
[138] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 54-55. Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 424.
[139] Oliver Harrington, "Dark Laughter," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 3, 1945, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Pittsburgh Courier.
[140] Ferguson, *New Deal Atlanta*, 253–268; Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 58–70; Singh, *Black is a Country*, loc. 1793–2331; see also Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*; Sugrue, *The Origin of the Urban Crisis*; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; and Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action was White*).
[141] Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 30.
[142] Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 8–112.
[143] See page 53–54, fn. 118.
[144] Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize,* 79–92; Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow,* 165–254. Anderson argues fairly vehemently that the actions of the NNC leadership did not put "the needs of black people… first," which would indicate, to this paper's framework of Vernacular Intellectualism, that it was, in fact, *not* loyal to the ideology but had strayed even further leftward (Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 274). Gellman, on the other hand, refuses to give into these broad generalizations, insisting that Communists were only one part of the ongoing coalition of the NNC. He writes that NNC successfully "ma[d]e a fresh start to regain its legitimacy and efficacy

as a civil rights organization" following the "tide of political alliances [that] shifted dramatically during 1940 and 1941," but that "the tensions that the NNC had been able to live with in years past became insurmountable by late 1947" when it was merged into the new Civil Rights Congress (Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow*, 166, 255). For as nuanced as Anderson is in her treatments of the NAACP and the UN, I do find her analysis of the NNC someone flat and over-generalizing; however, Gellman is equally problematic at times, perhaps overstating the romance of the NNC. As is often the case, the reality is like a combination of the two authors' positions; more study will need to be done by Black Radical Tradition scholars to try to undercover the nature of the combination.

[145] Singh, *Black is a Country,* loc. 2222; Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 113–165.

[146] Anderson, *Eyes of the Prize*, 125.

[147] Singh, *Black is a Country*, loc. 2221.

[148] Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 132.

[149] Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front*, 218–223. See also Oliver W. Harrington, *Why I Left America, and Other Essays*, ed. M. Thomas Inge (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993).

[150] Oliver Harrington, *Bootsie and Others: A Selection of Cartoons by Ollie Harrington* (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1958).

[151] Davis, "A Survey of the Problems of the Negro Under the New Deal," 3.

[152] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 54-55. Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance," 424.

[153] Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement," 1235. See also Joseph, *Waiting till the Midnight Hour*; Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*.

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