The Black Scare: Cold War Anticommunism and the Long Civil Rights Movement in America

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MA degree in History

University of Ottawa

Table of Contents

Introduction…….....v

Chapter One: The “Exaggerated” American: Strategy Split and Subversion.....1

Chapter Two: Black Culture and Subversion.....48

Chapter Three: The Death of the “Exaggerated” American.....96

Epilogue.....134

Bibliography.....148

Abstract

This thesis discusses the impact of the Cold War on the Long African American Civil Rights Movement in the US from 1945 into the early 1970s. I seek to address the historiography that argues that the Cold War was an animating or galvanizing force behind the Civil Rights movement. I argue that black strategies of activism and black thought during the long civil rights era were directly or indirectly influenced by Cold War politics. Strategies towards freedom and equality were manipulated, altered, and transformed due to anticommunism in America.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Thesis Supervisor Dr. Heather Murray for her insight, drive, and guidance throughout this experience. I would also like to thank Matt and Nica for the meals, stress relieving laughs, and for their words of encouragement. Additional thanks to my family for their support and relative enthusiasm.

And to my mother, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Introduction

In Ralph Ellison's 1952 classic novel *Invisible Man* the Cold War and black America collide in a dramatic tale of personal identity. Critics have long considered *Invisible Man* to be an anticommunist and anti-black nationalist commentary because of the main character's battle against both ideologies; however Ellison's novel addresses a deeper issue about the image and interpretation of blackness.[1] In numerous points throughout the book, blackness becomes a symbol of divergence as Ellison is interpreting America's image of African Americans as well as the main character's realization that he cannot escape that image. In his Prologue, Ellison dreams of a black congregation preaching a sermon on the "Blackness of Blackness", exclaiming that "Black will make you […] or black will un-make you."[2] In the quotation, Ellison is making a comment on the struggles of black racial identity in a society that will "un-make you" because of the colour of your skin. The main character works in a paint factory whose signature paint is "Optic White" and its slogan states "Keep America Pure with Liberty Paints".[3] The colour of American ideals of freedom and liberty is therefore white, and blackness becomes excluded from those essential principles of United States democracy. Later on the protagonist of *Invisible Man* discovers the tragedy of erasing his blackness in order to finally be accepted as an American, and in doing so racializes an already far-reaching discourse on the social value of conformity:

> Whence all this passion towards conformity anyway? Diversity is the word. Let man keep his many parts and you will have no tyrant states. Why, if they follow this conformity

[1] The following books note that *Invisible Man* was a commentary on the limits of radical ideology and can be categorized as a Cold War novel. Orville Prescott, "Book of the Times" *New York Times* (April 16th 1953) no page number; Richard Purcell, *Race, Ralph Ellison, and American Cold War Intellectual Culture*, (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 16; William J. Maxwell, *F.B Eyes: How J. Edgar's Ghost Writers Framed African American Literature (*Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 224.
[2] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1952), 7.
[3] Ellison, 152 and 149.

> business, they'll end up by forcing me, an invisible man, to become white, which is not a color but the lack of one.[4]

Released at the height of the Cold War, Ellison's novel here demonstrates his frustration with pressures to conform to the American social mores and the pressure on blacks to assimilate to the racial status quo. Why would Ellison highlight the complications of black identity during an era when Cold War tensions between the West and the Soviet Union were rapidly becoming a reality of American life, and when many Americans seemingly accepted a culture of Cold War consensus? Arguably, Ellison demonstrates the association between blackness and otherness, the un-American, or the "invisible". In the Cold War American context this is significant because race was deepening as a controversial symbol of subversive imagery and intention. Ellison's work is an arresting introduction to this thesis as it engages in an array of themes explored in this work such as anticommunism, black thought and ideology, and race as subversion.

This thesis addresses the impact that the Cold War had on the "long Civil Rights Movement", circa 1945 into the early 1970s. This study seeks to explore how the Cold War circumscribed, complicated, and reshaped, the fight for black freedoms, given the ubiquitous claim of anticommunists that the Civil Rights movement was being influenced by subversive communists.

Much as this claim seems distinctive to the Cold War era, the social and cultural construction of blackness as "subversive" dates back to the justification of slavery in the American South. American slaveholders were convinced, like many in the Western World, that black Africans were subhuman and uncivilized, thus using "people" as a means of labor became

[4] Ellison, *Invisible Man,* 435.

justifiable.[5] Through a process of dehumanization and "othering", slave holders would justify the institution of slavery by proving that African slaves and American born slaves were dissimilar from them. For example, Damian Pargas illustrates how white populations marginalized "enslaved migrants" in order to distinguish itself from blacks:

> Chained, roped, humiliating marches through crowded town squares, and preyed upon by the appraising glares of potential purchasers, slave migrants were quite visibly marked as inferior beings.[6]

During the period of emancipation, the perceived 'otherness' of slaves was emphasized to defend the further existence of the economic institution. In an 1868 segregationist text entitled *Negroes in Negroland,* the author illustrates a villainous depiction of blacks stating, "we behold the crime-stained blackness of the negro".[7] Here we see the criminalization of blackness, which long after slavery carried on as a racial trait and stereotype surrounding black subversion.

In *Black Is A Country*, Nikhil Pal Singh addresses the subject of citizenship and how emancipation and Reconstruction created a dilemma of where to include blacks in the spectrum of American nationality, which had long been exclusive to whites:

> Whiteness became the privileged grounding and metaphor for the empty abstraction of U.S citizenship, blackness presented an apparent contradiction and a fixed limit against which it was enacted and staged.[8]

Singh's analysis shows how blacks in America in many senses represented an alien presence or the Un-American. Later the politics of Jim Crow separatism solidified the alien position of blacks within the South, as whites were afforded the opportunity to position

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[5] Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 11-44; J. William Harris, *The Making of the American South: A Short History 1500-1877*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 110.
[6] Damian Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration in the Antebellum South,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 97.
[7] Hinton Rowan Helper, *Negroes in Negroland: The Negroes in America and Negroes Generally* (New York: G.W Carlton, 1868), xi.
[8] Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is A Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 22.

themselves apart from black Southerners. In practice, separate but equal laws created deeper racial divides as African Americans lived removed lives that were almost always unequal to the great majority of Americans.[9] This complicated American history that placed minorities on the fringe of American citizenry, coupled with stereotypes that othered black Americans, formed the basis for assumptions that racial equality was a perverse idea well into the 20th century. Unfortunately for African Americans fighting for their civil rights and freedoms, the Cold War, as it expressed itself both in domestic and in foreign policy, rivalled their growing movement in domestic and international interests.

The Cold War and anticommunist sentiments that followed its commencement became a challenge for black Americans, especially those involved in the growing Civil Rights movement for racial equality and justice. First, the Cold War began near the end of World War Two in 1945 when rivalling superpowers the United States and the Soviet Union disagreed on the ideological path the emerging postwar world should take. As a result of this disagreement, an extended political feud between the two countries developed that shaped half a century of world history. The war was not only fought politically, but through culture, science, military and economic power. Americans and the Soviets used these elements to assert their dominance on the world stage. Historians Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell argue that the idea of the Cold War has come to embody "post-war American history", and here is where my focus rests.[10] In *Uncertain Empire* these historians problematize the category of the Cold War to show that the historical period

[9] Henry Louis Gates, *Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History, 1513-2008* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 93.
[10] Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell, *Uncertain Empire*: *American History and the Idea of the Cold War,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4.

embodies a "rubric" of discussions.[11] An array of domains was shaped by the Cold War, including racial issues.

After 1945 the United States stated its claim as the leading advocate for worldwide democracy, yet it failed to provide democratic equality to black Americans. The principles of communism promote the equality of all people; the U.S.S.R used this tenet as a diplomatic propaganda tool to cast its society and ideology as racially harmonious.[12] American anticommunists saw the fight for racial equality in America as a possible internal communist plot to overthrow their capitalist society. White supremacist, right wing political factions, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and national security agencies (led by FBI) used this fear as a pretext to investigate black Americans fighting for their civic freedoms. From an international standpoint, ironically, racial prejudice in America hindered the country's fight against communism as America withheld basic freedoms from its black citizens.[13] Though the American government was forced to give proposed concessions towards black freedoms in order to deflect criticism on their status as the 'leader of the free world', reality often contrasted with that practice and American policy was often contradictory on this score. For instance, the United States State Department was sending black musicians overseas to showcase American opportunity in contrast to Soviet repression, whilst southern protesters were holding signs that read "Race Mixing Is Communism" regarding the move to integrate schools in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957 (see second chapter). White abhorrence of racial equality and U.S. anxieties over its postwar rival ideology of communism melded and existed in reality, whether out in the open by pro-segregationist or in clandestine fashions.

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[11] Isaac and Bell, 2-4.
[12] Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 6.
[13] Singh, *Black Is A Country* 113.

Once black Americans began to organize in mass in the postwar era and confront the racial hierarchy across America, especially in the South, Southern segregationist looked for an explanation for African American discontent. As Jason Sokol states:

> From the white side of the southern racial divide […] the civil rights movement created a massive conceptual gap. Many thought blacks were incapable of organizing, and were content in 'their place.' They could hardly divine, or even acknowledge, a sufficient motivation for black protest. Communism helped to fill that interpretive void.[14]

Sokol's argument, not only clarifies the origins of anticommunism as a reaction to black equal rights in the South, but can also be applied to the reactions of a portion of American society that was influenced by the culture of the Cold War and the existing racial status quo. Consequently, the vigilance about communism within America and the perceived black subversive stereotype upheld by many white Americans pushed African American activists to consider the obstacle of anticommunism in their thoughts and strategies on the movement towards black liberation.

My central research questions are the following: was it the atmosphere of Cold War terror and anticommunist domestic policies that compelled federal agencies to raise claims of subversion, or was it the fear that black equality and rights would disrupt the status quo of American socio-political establishments, or was it perhaps a mix of both? Were the controversies over the transnational and human rights direction of African American protest due to the fact that national security agencies and anticommunists believed that black transnationalism would hinder the American government from developing international alliances with emerging nations, or was it due to a mistrust of black voice and opinion American foreign policy? How did strategies of respectability in the face of these perceptions of black subversion hinder the growth of the Civil Rights movement and conversely, how did these strategies protect it? In what ways did black

[14] Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 85.

activists and public figures resist the Cold War American status quo and what were the consequences of their actions on the development of black protest?

My thesis will explore the general attitudes of black Americans towards the Cold War conflict from 1945 to the early 1970s. I will argue that the Cold War influenced the transformation of Movement strategies including, non-violence, transnationalism, multiple factions of black radicalism, and black respectability practices (which sometimes can be read as black religious traditionalism or black conservatism). American Cold War anticommunism created a culture of scapegoating that easily mixed with an existing stigmatization of racial minorities and positioned African American society and social protest as warranted targets of subversive accusations. This work will explore the efforts on the part of anticommunist agencies (both private and public) to connect black struggle and culture to subversive ideologies. I suggest that the image of the subversive African American rendered the movement less aggressive in its positions towards civil rights and international human rights in order to protect the movement from the repercussions of red-baiting. Respectability strategies gradually became a way of thinking as Civil Rights groups sought pragmatic approaches to surviving Cold War anticommunism. However, I also illustrate that the impasse in black protest due to Cold War liberalism created bubbling frustration that deepened the movement towards radical activism by the mid 1960s. By exploring these subjects, I hope to expose that American anticommunism played an disabling role in the evolution of African American activism, African American culture, and African American identity in the United States.

Historiographical Review

Scholar Mary Dudziak's book *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* has arguably become the most dominant text on the correlation between both Civil

Rights and the Cold War.[15] Her book examines the passing of Civil Rights legislation owing to the intense criticism America was receiving from international allies and opponents. Her approach suggests that the early Civil Rights movement took advantage of international criticisms of America's race issues, therefore concluding that Cold War criticisms of the United States accounted for the success of Civil Rights initiatives in the late 40s and early 50s. Though Dudziak's study is interesting, her conclusion does not fully recognize the circumscribing force of the Cold War on black liberation in America, in which I wish to here.

Manfred Berg agrees with the Dudziak's popular view on the scholarship of the Cold War/Civil Rights relationship. He argues that the NAACP's 1947 move to adhere to Cold War protocol that positioned American foreign policy interests as a priority was an important strategic move to capture the needed gains for black equal rights activism in America. Carol Anderson in several of her books identifies that shortcomings of adhering to Cold War liberalism, but argues mainly that groups like the NAACP were able to stick to their agenda for civil rights reforms, informed American foreign policy and handled colonial liberation efforts overseas, despite intimidation by anticommunist forces in America. Arguably, Dudziak, Berg and Anderson do not pay enough attention to the severity of consequences of the subversive label on Civil Rights activists. Focusing solely on the domestic condition of African Americans in Cold War America, I question these acts of "token diplomacy" such as the creation of a Civil Rights Commission;[16] as in reality the movement was subject to aggressive attacks that were justified by the claims that

[15] Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*2 (Princeton, US: Princeton University Press, 2011); Clarence Lang and Robbie Lieberman, ed. *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement: Another Side of the Story*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2; Steven Lawson, Review of *Cold War Civil Rights* by Mary Dudziak *American Historical Review* I07 (February 2002): 246-247.

[16] See Chapter One.

African American Civil Rights leaders were communist subversives.[17]

The Cold War manipulated and molded black strategies towards freedom so that black activists could fight for civil rights in fashions that wouldn't attract anticommunist opposition. Also African American activists had some of the most intense reactions and criticisms towards America's position in the Cold War conflict; these activists risked isolation from the movement by refusing to be influenced by white power structures in their plans for liberation. John David Skrentny agrees that the Civil Rights movement benefited from the American "embarrassment" over their race problems, yet he does acknowledge that many black activists were hindered by the subversive culture that the Cold War created within America: "Though the Cold War aided the advancement for blacks as a group in the United States, many individual blacks found themselves harassed by the federal government".[18] The relationship between anti-subversive institutions such as the FBI and HUAC, as well other proponents of America's Cold War initiatives, in my view, did more to hinder important strategies of the black freedom struggle in America. Concessions that blacks did gain from America's Cold War dilemma are essentially marred, as black thought and individual expression were restricted in the long run.

There have been a growing number of scholars who have engaged with the negative impact of America's obsession with anticommunism and postwar image and what these meant for Civil Rights activism. Historians who engage with global perspectives in African American history such as Penny Von Eschen and Thomas Borstelmann have produced most of this scholarship. Scholars that focus on the history of the black left as well as black radicalism such

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[17] Philip E Muehlenbeck, ed. *Race, Ethnicity, and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012) 7. Note Dudziak has published work that acknowledges that anticommunist agencies targeted influential African American public figures, see Mary Dudziak, "Josephine Baker and the Cold War" in Michael L. Krenn ed, *The African American Voice in U.S. Foreign Policy Since World War II* (New York & London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998): 543-570.

[18] John David Skrentny. "The Effect of the Cold War on African-American Civil Rights: America and the World Audience, 1945-1968." *Theory and Society, Vol. 27, No. 2* (Apr., 1998), 267. http://www.jstor.org/stable/657868.

as Nikhil Pal Singh, Gerald Horne, and Manning Marable also have analyzed the Cold War and its troubled history with black non-centrists ideologies. These scholars have generated a point of view that postwar uniformity and American foreign policy created problematic conditions for a varying spectrum of postwar African American political perspectives.[19] Moreover, some historians have begun to incorporate the Cold War and Civil Rights into recognized narratives of the movement. For example, the seminal study *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-communism in the South* by Jeff Woods frames how southern politicians, white-supremacist groups and supporters of the Jim Crow laws used the fear of communism to justify their protests on integration.[20] Though Wood's work provides a perfect example of the Cold War guise covering aggressive racism, it doesn't include black experiences with anticommunism outside of the segregated South, which I hope to rectify in my analysis, and which is one of the central contributions of my thesis.

Other pioneers, such as Gerald Horne's various works, emphasize the handicap of the Cold War period on black empowerment, but focus mainly on the isolation of the black left during this era. Scholars who focus most of their arguments on how the Cold War affected the black left do not sufficiently emphasize the constraints that the Cold War also had on the equal rights activism of black liberals and seminal figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. after he became firm in his criticism of United States foreign policy during the Vietnam War. This thesis explores and demonstrates the negative impact of anticommunism on several branches of black activism, hence why I choose to follow the long Civil Rights timeline in order to cover the large

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[19] On Postwar American uniformity and conformity see Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 199. Bell and Isaac, *Uncertain Empire,* 207. For Cold War American Foreign Policy see Perry Anderson, *American Foreign Policy and its thinkers* (London: Verso, 2015), 193.

[20] Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948 – 1968.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004). See for example p. 49-53.

scope of black strategies towards equality.

Moreover, another central theme of this thesis is the relationship of race and subversion. Segregationists in the South and white elites within America feared that black equality would rearrange centuries of fixed institutional frameworks. As the fear of communism grew in the American mainstream during the late 40s and throughout the 50s, ambivalence towards racial equality merged into the Red Scare. Civil rights scholars have highlighted that the Cold War presented a guise for racism to be shadowed under the cause of anticommunism. For example, the edited compilation, *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement*, though instrumental to understanding the challenges that blacks experienced due to the Cold War on the home front, doesn't fully consider how established subversive ideas of blackness made African Americans a prime target for red-baiting. Editor Robbie Lieberman produces a strong argument on the early Cold War experience of black world peace advocates and how the agency "worked to undermine" these "social movements and discredit them as communist".[21] Yet, he doesn't consider the discriminatory dialogue that many anticommunists like J. Edgar Hoover used to describe black activists.[22] Other scholars like John Noakes and Kenneth O'Reilly have published wonderful studies on the impact of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's war against black advancement, whether through the Civil Rights movement, presence in popular culture, and political leadership. Their works conclude that the Bureau in the years of the Cold War used the socio-political turmoil over possible communist infiltration in the U.S. to conspire against the movement and its main figures. I will incorporate the arguments presented by both historians to illustrate my arguments on race and subversion. However both studies do fall short in terms of their analysis of African American Civil Rights strategies and their reaction to national security

[21] Clarence Lang and Robbie Lieberman, 35.
[22] See Second Chapter on Black Culture and Subversion.

agencies tactics of opposition.

My interpretation of the black freedom struggle rests on the recent scholarship that challenges the dominant 1954-1965 historiographical narratives by extending the dates of the struggle from the late 1930s and surpassing the iconic non-violent period in the mid 60s. Scholars like Jacquelyn Dowd Hall argue that the general narrative of the black struggle shadows the efforts carried out by early thinkers and intellectuals forming the roots of Civil Rights activism in the North and also excludes the various strategies of protest outside the non-violent approach popularized by the dominant black liberal class.[23] Hall also argues that by considering a longer period of the black freedom struggle, the Civil Rights movement can then be framed as a "casualty of the Cold War" instead of a benefactor.[24] In other words, the fight for black liberation in the second half of the 20th century suffered from the socially engineered fear of subversive ideologies.

Historian Manning Marable argues that black activism was devastated in the 1950s due to the anticommunist Red Scare and the processes of Cold War liberalism. This contributes to the mythology of the 1960s as the central period of the movement, in that the period of mass protest produced a valorous and uncomplicated image in historical memory compared to the movement's era of moderate litigation in the 1940s-50s. Thus, the concept of the "long Civil Rights movement'" is important to my approach, as it not only covers crucial periods of the Cold War, but it also emphasizes that the fight for black rights was not led by a homogeneous body of black activists that shared the same approach to liberation. This periodization welcomes the multiple strategies that contributed to black protests for better lives in America and gives these strategies equal footing in African American study. The Black Power Movement, for example, is

[23] Jacquelyn Dowd Hall. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *Journal of American History 91* (March 2005): 1233-1263.
[24] Ibid, 1249.

generally considered to be a separate phenomenon from the Civil Rights Movement,[25] yet within the framework of the long Civil Rights movement that I am offering, Black Power is seen on an equal plane to the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s. The long Civil Rights movement was large in scale covering numerous ideologies, regions, and objectives; the scale of the movement explains why opponents directed subversive accusations at every faction, no matter how pro-democratic or politically radical black activists' approach to obtaining political and social freedoms was.

What sets apart my work from other scholars is that my thesis engages with the long Civil Rights timeline in order to show how a large scope of the movement became influenced and refashioned by American Cold War dynamics. I also use the experiences from many activists and intellectuals alike in the movement to paint a vivid illustration of how deeply anticommunism and the intertwined conformist culture[26] in America interfered in the lives of black intellectuals, the NAACP, entertainers, and social leaders that sought to play a role in gaining liberties for African Americans; whether reacting in favor of anticommunism or reacting against it, the scope of individuals covered in this work proves that the Cold War was a bitter reality in the black community. All these main players are recognized within mainstream narratives and scholarship on the subject that highlights their involvement in black protest as well as discrimination they faced. However, I use these recognized figures and organizations to highlight the political repression on their ideas, thoughts and activism. For example, scholarship and Civil Rights narratives recognize James Baldwin as a literary spokesperson of the 'Negro Problem', yet his opinions on American political conflicts like the Cold War and the opposition he overcame due

[25] Peniel E. Joseph, "Rethinking the Black Power Era." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (2009): 707.
[26] "National imagery was a product of the Cold War, the fears in which it played on had a long prehistory, in alarmist scenarios of U.S vulnerability to external attack and magnification of foreign dangers. See Singh 169-175.

to his commentary on black life are rarely acknowledged. Thus, the hurdles that specifically African American intellectuals had to overcome are underscored through my approach.

My work also emphasizes the impact the conflict had within America on black strategy and thought. My thesis indicates that black strategies of respectability, radicalism, internationalism and non-violence all had Cold War roots to their development. By discussing these themes we can gain a better appreciation and sense of the complex challenges that confronted black activists in the struggle, and how the Cold War unquestionably changed the approach to freedom in African American minds.

Methodology

This study contributes most primarily to the fields of intellectual and political history. I discuss at length the development of particular political ideologies and strategies used by the movement as Cold War forces influenced them. There has been a tendency by African American historians to view and study the Civil Rights movement as social history, analyzing the performance and grassroots of the movement rather than the roots of its strategies and ideas. In this thesis I engage in a discussion of how intellectuals engaged with politics and social situations, which assisted in the development of movement strategies and interpretations of Civil Rights. Figures such as W.E.B Du Bois, Franklin Frazier, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Amiri Baraka amongst many other intellectuals are referred to frequently in my thesis because of their theoretical engagement with black social situations and their participation in civil rights activism. Using the view of intellectuals gives us greater insight into the Cold War Civil Rights clash, as the discourses of black intellectuals often were put into practice and inspired the movement. For example, Du Bois' views against colonialism and imperialism became a

significant thread in black activism throughout the 20th century.[27] Additionally James Baldwin's popular literary work on the importance of integration to solving the "Negro Problem" became the written mouthpiece of the non-violent movement.[28] Through the lens of intellectual engagement we avoid reproducing general narratives of Civil Rights, the preconceptions about the movement being solely a social and cultural phenomenon, and expose the ways in which black thinkers played a dramatic role in shaping the black freedom movement's strategic and ideological framework. In Nikhil Pal Singh's *Black is A Country* he states that "Black activist intellectuals" prior and during the long Civil Rights era "have produced what can be characterized as a distinctively dialectical discourse of race and nation".[29] In this statement Singh is arguing that intellectuals have produced not only differing point of views, but distinctive and original point of views that strictly pertain to experiences of black Americans in the United States. In recent years, scholarly blogs like "United States Intellectual History" and "African American Intellectual History" demonstrate and expand the vast development of and emerging interest in this field of historical study. In scholarly literature, historian Mia Bay is expanding this scholarship with respect to black female intellectual history in compilations such as *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women,* which emphasizes the role of black writers as "producers of ideas" or "producers of knowledge" that have become instrumental in the African American experience.[30] In so doing, Bay asks us to move beyond a rarefied form of intellectual history to engage with writers and creative figures. In addition, Singh's *Black Is A Country*, which I employ throughout my thesis, takes up the commentary and exposure of black

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[27] For an extensive presentation of Du Bois' anticolonial views see W.E.B Du Bois, *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace,* (New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization, 1945), 58-72.
[28] James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*. (1962;reis, New York, NY: Modern Library, 1995).
[29] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 44.
[30] Mia E. Bay and Farah J. Griffin and Martha S. Jones and Barbara Dianne Savage et. al. *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women.* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), xi and 2.

intellectuals to examine African American liberation activism in the United States in relation to international liberation struggles. Throughout the thesis, I analyze not only these intellectual sources, but also documented material from a spectrum of Cold War influenced bodies (i.e. national security agencies, government institutions and political parties).

A Note on Terminology

The term "subversive" or "subversion" in this thesis is central to understanding America's Cold War culture and its understanding of communism. Additionally, it is also used to represent America's stigmatization of black Americans, which merged social protest against racism with the building concern over communist infiltration in the United States. My interpretation of Cold War subversion rests on Phillip Selznick's 1952 definition on Communist subversion and America's actions to prevent it:

> Such activities, and ultimate overthrow of the government are of course related, but concern for the integrity of the institutions themselves leads us to seek modes of self-defence long before any clear and present danger to established authority is demonstrable.[31]

The "modes of self-defence" employed by anticommunist agencies were used against many African American activist in the long Civil Rights Movement, as black tactics to eliminate racial injustice in the political and cultural landscape of America was perceived by many to be an act of treason or subversion that would dismantle the "integrity" of American democracy in national and international circles.

This thesis makes use of several ideological and political terms that explain the strategies employed by black activists for freedoms and popular American social and political consensus from 1945 to the early 70s. One of the central terms used in my study of black respectability and

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[31] Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon: A Study of Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company Inc, 1952), 5

transnational interpretations of the movement is the ideology of Cold War Liberalism. My definition of this term is based on Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s book *The Vital Center*. Published in 1949, the book emphasized the survival of liberalism as the "Vital Center" to combating far right and far left ideologies that threatened to redefine American democracy. According to Schlesinger, Cold War liberalism rests on the following idea:

> For hope of the future surely lies in the revival of the Center-in the triumph of those who believe deeply in civil liberties, in constitutional processes and in the democratic determination of political and economic policies. And, in direct consequence, the main target of both totalitarian extremes must be the Center-the group which hold society together. Neither fascism nor communism can win so long as there remains a democratic middle way, which unites hopes of freedom and of economic abundance; so the destruction of the middle way becomes the first priority for both.[32]

As the U.S.S.R became the rivalled power against America, the liberal agenda moved towards a stricter criticism of the Left. In relation to the Civil Rights movement, black Americans were able to keep their ties with democracy including arguing that their goals were based on basic American principles of equality, liberty, and private enterprise, yet also felt compelled to interpret and even denigrate leftist ideologies as a threat to those principles because many leftist factions supported Marxist forms of economics that conflicted with U.S. capitalism and individual private sectors.[33] Consequently, the Civil Rights movement had to acknowledge the consensus culture proposed by figures such as Schlesinger. Cold War liberalism arguably continued as the basic framework in U.S foreign and domestic policies into the 1960s as the country extended missions to expand their economic, military and ideological influence over the world. Jason K Duncan contends that the Kennedy administration and the modeled Johnson

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[32] Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr, "Not Left, Not Right, But the Vital Center", *New York Times* (April 4, 1948), 7. This argument was expanded in his 1949 publication.
[33] Willie Thompson, T*he left in history: revolution and reform in twentieth-century politics*. (London: Pluto Press,1997). 15-42.

administration "infused Cold War liberalism with new energy and idealism" in the early 60s.[34] Additionally, Manning Marable, agrees that Cold War liberalism accelerated into the 1960s but faced international questioning with issues like the Vietnam War and the very public Civil Rights battle at home. By the mid 1960s, a significant portion of African Americans embraced radical positions on the direction of black protest in America and renounced the hegemony of Cold War liberalism on race issues nationally and internationally.

"Radicalism" or "radical" are also terms used in this thesis. My interpretation of radicalism rests on the definition of Cold War subversion. The term became a label used by national security agencies and anticommunist fanatics to describe enemy ideologies including popular interpretations held by the black left and transnationalists.[35] However, the term isn't exclusive to activists of the Black Power tradition or black Leftists, as I argue that non-violent demonstrations were radical in essence as they challenged dominant black litigation strategies and transformed the movement towards mass action.[36] Also I use radical /radicalism to describe a turning point in black thought and activism during the mid-1960s once racial tensions failed to improve due to civil rights legislation and the ongoing disappointment with Cold War conflicts such as the Vietnam War. In particular, there was a radical reaction by many black Americans that can be demonstrated in the rise in popularity of Black Power activism and Martin Luther King Jr's opposition to American foreign policy ventures.

Transnationalism is a thread throughout this study as I examine how this strategy of social activism and partnership were deemed illicit to the development of American economic, political, and military power in emerging nations. The emergence of the Cold War consensus

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[34] Jason K. Duncan, *John F. Kennedy: The Spirit of Cold War Liberalism*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 6.
[35] Peniel E. Joseph ed, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power era,* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 9-10.
[36] See Chapter One on The Exaggerated American, and Joseph's *The Black Power Movement,* 4.

culture sidelined the global networks of black activists, therefore elevating domestic activism as the preferred strategy towards African American equal rights.[37] My interpretation of the term rests on W.E.B. Du Bois' understanding of the shared experience of colonialism/imperialism and American segregation. In his view, the strength of a global community could offset racial hierarchies – "the national and race ideal has been set before the world in a new light – not as a meaning subtraction but addition, not as division but as a multiplication".[38] *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* also gives credit to Du Bois for creating the intellectual basis of transnational thought amongst African Americans stating, "systematic ideas of African identity and unity in the writings of W.E.B Du Bois" formed the "earliest notions of Pan-African vision of unity".[39] Historians like Robin D.G Kelley presents the historical origins of African American transnational perspectives that existed from the days of American slavery. According to Kelley, the forced emigration of Africans into the U.S for slave labour created a alien demographic that rendered African Americans ""transnational" by default"" and "remained at the heart of a very long debate within black communities about their sense of national belonging".[40] Transnationalism in this thesis rests on the efforts to expand the notion of civil rights from strictly resting on American politics and the policies of the U.S nation-state to connect and compare experiences with international communities that also sought to resist forces of oppression.

The relationship between civil rights and human rights also is reflected in my arguments on the development of national African American strategies towards racial justice. Civil Rights

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[37] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 104.
[38] W.E.B Du Bois, "The Color Line Belts the World" *Collier's Weekly* (October 20, 1906), 20.
[39] Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier ed, *The Palgrave dictionary of transnational history: from the mid–19th century to the present day* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 16.
[40] Robin D.G Kelley, *The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 18.

are based on terms that guard the individual's basic social and political freedoms within the confines of their country. [41]According to Carol Anderson, civil rights in America generate from the U.S. Bill of Rights.[42] Human rights are a larger concept that transcends national lines, and can be explained as the fundamental rights an individual has as a human being.[43] Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze explain that the practice of human rights is based on the belief that "every human life is and must remain sacred".[44] In my thesis I discuss the relationship between the two standards of rights within the atmosphere of the Cold War and the ways in which factions of the Civil Rights movement isolated its equal rights activism from the phenomenon of human rights by the late postwar period. Human rights naturally draws transnational ties as it inspired oppressed peoples around the world living in similar marginalized positions to seek justice through the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and under the support of international law.[45] Many African Americans dissatisfied with racial progress in the U.S. also saw human rights as a solution; some of the most prominent players in Civil Rights history, such as Du Bois and Martin Luther King, bridged human rights and transnationalism together.[46] However, as I demonstrate, transnationalism and human rights strategies in the black freedom movement were deemed consequential to America's Cold War containment policies and international image. [47]

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[41] Michael C. Dawson, *Black Divisions, The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 26.
[42] Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights 1944 -1955*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6.
[43] Charles R. Beitz, *The idea of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1.
[44] Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze ed, *Biopoltics: A Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 6.
[45] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 155.
[46] On human rights and the African American transnational experience see Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 79-82; Singh, *Black Is A Country*, 53.
[47] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 166.

Chapter Summary

My first chapter uses Franklin Frazier's theory on the "Exaggerated" American to explain the NAACP's reaction to Cold War liberalism at the beginning of the Cold War into the early 1950s. The chapter argues that many Civil Rights activists dropped former initiatives to frame the race problem in America as a human rights issue and also became ambivalent towards transnational links for liberation in order to protect America's Cold War image and gain concessions for black loyalty. Within this chapter I illustrate that the move to domesticate the movement and perform under the laws of anticommunism alienated black activist intellectuals who refused to abstain from giving a critique of America's rising Cold War imperialism, thus marginalizing their role in the struggle and becoming subversive enemies in their country. The chapter will lend to the reader's understanding of Cold War liberalism and how notions of racial equality worked as a great propaganda tool overseas, but at home were simply deemed communist. This put the leaders and activists of the Civil Rights movement in a position to choose between respectability and survival or risk limiting the movement's progress towards racial advancement.

The second chapter ventures into the theme of race as subversion as experienced by popular black cultural figures and artists during the zeitgeist of McCarthyism. In this chapter I explore the relationship between politics and black culture, specifically observing how Cold War subversion equally affected black political actors that used their popularity to promote Civil Rights causes and black Americans in the cultural marketplace. This chapter engages more with the personal effects of America's anti-subversive obsession and the repressive actions carried out by Cold War warriors on black writers, entertainers and actors that fought to advance the status of their race in their profession and in American minds. "Black Culture and Cold War

subversion" deals with questions of blackness and how blackness was viewed in American society during the era of McCarthyism. Within Cold War agencies such as the FBI, HUAC and right-wing groups, a pervasive sense was that racial equality was a sign of leftist sympathies, that black art forms and the growing popularity of black culture would influence a mainstream audience away from American democracy and into the hands of communists. This chapter will give the reader a better understanding of Cold War counterintelligence and blacklists in America. I illustrate how these forces reverberated in the lives of African Americans and deepened the political nature of black culture.

My final chapter outlines the deepening of black radical strategies and thought in the late 1960s to early 70s as a result of the frustrations and political disagreements with a stagnant domestic movement and Cold War matters that continued to derail black progress. The rebirth in transnational and human rights perspectives is tackled in this chapter as it relates to the inspiration of independent movements overseas and the further alienation of American involvement in the Vietnam War. I use Martin Luther King Jr. as a point of reference throughout this chapter to demonstrate his inclination towards transnational human rights activism. I also take up King to prove that anticommunism and post-Civil Rights Bill events had a significant effect on his way of thinking. This chapter demonstrates the culmination of Cold War Civil Rights. I argue that a significant part of the movement refashioned itself away from Cold War liberalism and respectability that restricted protest to domestic bounds and reduced strategies of internationalism, thus producing the death of the "exaggerated" black American. The rollback on civil rights issues due to Vietnam and the rise of African American militancy created a dilemma for many central actors in the movement. Black activists were influenced to choose between

respecting American foreign policy initiatives or face accusations of communist sympathies by doing the opposite.

The Cold War united with an array of phenomena hampering Civil Rights, including Southern segregation, and 'American century' propaganda that emphasized the importance of patriotism and U.S. expansionist objectives. The challenges the Cold War produced for black lives in America were a testament to the enduring legacy of struggle faced by African Americans from slavery and after. Black Americans in the movement were essentially faced with the age-old question of whether to maneuver within the confines of racial hierarchy towards equality that in return would cause little threat to the ruling elite, or achieve liberation on their own terms and confront their opposition no matter the consequence. Richard Wright, a target of anticommunism and outspoken black intellectual, sums up the tragedy of the American way and the impact of the Cold War disposition on black thought and Civil Rights strategy in his aptly titled *Black Boy*:

> Our too-young and too-new America [. . .] insists upon seeing the world in terms of good and bad, the holy and the evil, the high and the low, the white and the black […] It hugs the easy way of damning those whom it cannot understand, of excluding those who look different, and it salves its conscience with a self-draped cloak of righteousness. Am I damning my native land? No; for I, too, share these faults of character![48]

[48] Richard Wright, *Black Boy,* (1946;reis, New York: Chelsea House, 2006), 272.

The "Exaggerated" American: Strategy, Split and Subversion

In 1947 when Harry S. Truman issued his Truman Doctrine, proclaiming America's military position on contesting communist threats around the world, his declaration also sent a message to the American home front.[1] The "American century" had arrived and the U.S. was the leading power in the world, with an ideology that brought citizens (white citizens) prosperity and the freedom to consume at their leisure. The American way was the consensus of the day and so was anticommunism. Cold War American consensus culture boomed after the Second World War when it became increasingly hard for the American government to disconnect foreign policy from domestic life due to the cultural nature of the Cold War battle.[2] If the government could convince Americans that the fight against communist expansion was imperative to maintaining the new abundance of their day to day lives it would be easier for officials to gain economic support, military recruitment and a general positive assessment of the benefits of American democracy. David Ryan sums up the essential nature of American Cold War stating:

> Through the strategy of Otherness, domestic dissent was precluded; identified with supporting the Soviets, it was considered disloyal. McCarthyism ultimately represented the apotheosis of this process. The emerging Cold War culture narrowed the parameters of debate; an increasing homogeneity of outlook emerged and ultimately coalesced into what became known as the Cold War consensus.[3]

Henry R. Luce, the founder of *Time* magazine, wrote an instrumental essay in 1941 that illustrated the position American culture and society would take in the postwar period. In the

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[1] Jonathan, Bell. *The Liberal State on Trial: The Cold War and American Politics in the Truman Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 100-107.

[2] See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War,* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 1-19. May's study is on the cultural and political propaganda of the American Cold War nuclear family. A part of May's study is the examination of conspicuous consumption as a tool to showcase the benefits of capitalism vs the benefits of socialism; See Emily Rosenberg, "Consuming the American Century," in *The Short American Century: A Postmortem* ed. Andrew Bacevich, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 38-58.Rosenberg's essay focuses on how Cold War patriotism ushered by the American century seeped into all aspects of American life including economy and culture.

[3] David Ryan, "The Cultural Construction of the Cold War" in *American Cold War Culture* ed. Douglas Field (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 60.

"The American Century" Luce argues that Americans had to take advantage of their country's prestige, its position as a world power, and display "passionate devotion to great American ideals".[4] To put Luce words in the context of the postwar period, this type of thinking ushered in by World War Two's victory and Cold War competition produced a new century of America's manifest destiny to promote and defend democracy worldwide. This way they could embrace free enterprise and serve as shining examples of freedom and justice, which stood in stark contrast to the lives of the Soviet enemy.

The era brought new challenges and a new discourse to the writings of African American intellectuals, as this vaunted picture of American freedom did not apply to many black Americans who were second-class citizens in their own country. Leading intellectuals spoke out about the ritualized conformity of Americans in reaction to the Cold War and its effects on black Americans. In his retrospective 1976 essay *The Devil Finds Work* James Baldwin summarizes in his own way the cult of American personality during the first decade of the Cold War stating, "the most vindictive hatred couldn't have imagined the slimy depths to which the bulk of white Americans allowed themselves to sink: nosily, gracelessly, flatulent and foul with patriotism".[5] Moreover, in the same essay he mentions the character of the "disloyal American", who is, according to Baldwin, an American who betrays their country by "disapproving the course his government was taking".[6] After World War Two, anticommunism became more of a pressing issue amongst the American populace. Baldwin comments on white America's reaction to the Cold War period in which Americans were "foul with patriotism", but he does not address the

[4] Henry R. Luce, "The American Century, *Life Magazine,* (February 17th 1941), 65..
[5] James Baldwin, "The Devil Finds Work" in *Collected Essays*, (New York: Literary Classics Inc, 1998), 542.
[6] Baldwin, "The Devil Finds Work", 543.

similar reaction that black Americans had to the Cold War and the freedom movement's efforts to fight against the "disloyal American" label.

The reverse side to Baldwin's "disloyal American" originates in Franklin Frazier's "exaggerated American" concept conceived in his 1955 book *Black Bourgeoisie*. Frazier was a controversial African American sociologist, becoming the first black President of the American Sociology association in 1948. He was one of the first Black Americans to document the social influences on their day-to-day life, which made him a household name in the black scholarly community.[7] He wrote *Black Bourgeoisie* as a commentary on the rising black middle class in the postwar era. This middle class happened to play a big part in the direction of the Civil Rights movement, as they served as the financial backbone of organizations like the NAACP and they were able to make supportive connections with white liberal classes to which their middle class status allowed them access.[8] Anthony M. Platt, in his critical study of Frazier's anthology of writings, furthers this point stating that Frazier's *Black Bourgeoisie* was deeply critical of the New Negro movement rising out of the postwar years.[9] Frazier argued that black Americans had become obsessed with indulging in the fruits of American consumer culture and achieving the approval of the white middle class in their political endeavours. In the process blacks involved in rights activism had repudiated what was best for the black masses in terms of achieving true equality and justice, and had become "exaggerated" Americans in search of acceptance.[10]

His concept is enlightening because it places black Americans within the postwar American century consensus and the phrasing of the term "exaggerated" American provides as a

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[7] See Anthony M. Platt, *E. Franklin Frazier Reconsidered* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991).
[8] Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black, 1945-2006* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 118.
[9] Platt, 78.
[10] Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 147.

useful descriptor that personifies the practice of Cold War liberalism in American society. Frazier's use of the "exaggerated" American as a harsh depiction of the black middle class and liberal groups can be reimagined through the pressures of the anticommunist atmosphere of the early Cold War period. I do not wish to say that middle class sensibilities and black consensus liberalism engendered no black progress, as Frazier argued. Instead, I wish to revise the "exaggerated" American descriptor and use it as framework to understand the actions of black activists who approached the Cold War through the lens of respectability, and prioritized America's fight against communism alongside domestic and international race concerns. Through Cold War liberalism certain black activists sought to achieve concessions for the movement and to protect it from subversive accusations. The reinvented "exaggerated American" will be used in reference to the Cold War and African American experiences that are discussed in this thesis.

I will argue that the NAACP, feeling caught between pragmatic opportunism and its long record of respectability, cooperated with the anticommunist culture and policy that animated early postwar America in hopes of gaining prominence for their organization and the Civil Rights cause. However comprehensible their intentions, I suggest that this move detracted from and limited strategies of transnationalism and human rights and was detrimental to those black activists who refused to conform to Cold War Liberalism. This resulted in the domestication of the movement and a period of stagnation for racial equality within America up until 1954. Within this chapter I also hope to highlight the discourse and action produced by anticommunist crusaders in light of black equality activism and finally how the stagnant form of activism influenced by Cold War liberalism played an instrumental role in ushering in the African American strategy of mass action in the South by the second half of the decade.

Origins of the NAACP Cold War position

I would like to discuss briefly the importance of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and how the organization helped frame the "exaggerated American" concept as their actions during the Cold War period provide a crucial source in understanding the moderate black liberal approach in the midst of mid-20th century. According to Mia Bay, at the beginning of the 1900s, the goal of mainstream black organizations like the NAACP was formed by the social science of liberal environmentalism, which aimed to "eradicate race distinctions" and increase assimilation.[11] Moreover, this black liberal perspective also upheld the principles of American nationalism and the capitalist system and believed that racial equality could be included in these frameworks.[12] Black liberal perspectives contended that equal opportunity should be granted to all Americans regardless of race and that integration was a major solution to structural racism. In *Black Visions* by Michael C. Dawson, he presents a compelling argument on the difference between American Liberalism and black liberalism, as black liberalism strove to achieve all of the promises of the American constitution but recognized the racial constraints to achieving it that American liberalism did not:

> Black liberals argue not only that, with all of its flaws, American liberalism is the best philosophical and pragmatic system for achieving justice for blacks, but that America can only redeem itself by finally becoming a society where blacks have gained justice and equality.[13]

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[11] Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925,* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 202.
[12] Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is A Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 39.
[13] Michael C. Dawson, *Black Divisions, he Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies,* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 252.

The NAACP provided a model for black liberal ideology as well as the model Civil Rights organization. In turn, anticommunist forces such as the HUAC and the FBI saw them as the most important black organization with the greatest influence.[14] Historians of African American history agree that despite the NAACP's major role in the advancement of civil rights issues, the organization garnered a reputation for treading lightly on certain issues in order to keep their prominence amongst elites in American politics. Murali Balaji, the author of *Professor and the Pupil* , argues that the NAACP had often let their "survivalist instincts" dictate the way they responded to salient topics. The organization was one of the few black led organizations that garnered the respect of Democrats and Republicans and its figureheads were often paranoid about keeping their respected position amongst black and white communities. Thus, they did whatever they could to protect their dominant status.[15]

Historian Penny Von Eschen criticizes the NAACP more harshly for their soft politics arguing that, "By acquiescing in a narrowed civil rights agenda many civil rights leaders forfeited the means to address […] structural changes"[16]. In Manfred Berg's scholarly article "Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism," he narrates the ways in which the NAACP members adhered to the Cold War agenda in order to keep in good favor with the powers that could grant them equality legislation. He states that the NAACP played a key role in moving the great majority of the movement into the "camp of Cold War liberalism".[17] The term Cold War Liberalism, popularized in the 1950s and 60s, was coined to describe those who supported

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[14] J. Edgar Hoover*, Masters of Deceit: The Story of Communism in America and How to Fight It,* (New York: Holt, Rinehardt Winston, 1958), 247).
[15] Murali Balaji, *Professor and the Pupil: T*he *Politics and Friendship of W. E. B Du Bois and Paul Robeson,* (New York: Nation Books, 2007), 248.
[16] Penny Von Eschen, Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957, (Ithaca, NY:Cornell University Press, 2014), 149.
[17] Manfred Berg "Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War." *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 76.

equality legislation and American style democracy, but also accommodated or championed the anticommunist agenda.[18] A great number of African Americans fighting for Civil Rights causes would associate with liberal ideologies and would take part in some form of American exceptionalism from 1945-1954, which exempted the United States from certain codes of political conduct. The portrait provided in this chapter on the NAACP's anticommunist policy will highlight their leading position in promoting Cold War liberalism to the African American community. The NAACP's strategy of litigation for civil rights causes and its assimilationist position when it came to popular politics have become a mainstay in Cold War/Civil Rights study. Throughout this study the NAACP will serve as the greatest example of early black liberal strategy in the Civil Rights movement because of the central influence the organization had on African American public opinion.

The Cold War climate certainly rattled the organization into taking a fast position on the consensus of the day once their credibility as Civil Rights champions came into question after 1945. Mainstream Americans were exposed to race related Cold War subversion in popular media sources such as *Life* magazine's article in 1946 by historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. entitled "The U.S. Communist Party". In the article Schlesinger discusses numerous examples of Soviet Communism's influence on United States labour unions, immigration influxes and the 'Negro problem'. The historian stated quite boldly that communists were "sinking tentacles into the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People".[19] This same year the NAACP petitioned the United Nations regarding the inhuman treatment of blacks in America. The organization and its members were also quite critical of the U.S. government's promotion of pro-

[18] See Jonathan Bell, *The Liberal State on Trial: The Cold War and American Politics in the Truman Years,* (Columbia University Press, 2005), 52; Duncan Bell and Joel Isaac ed, *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War,* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 214.
[19] Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr, "The US Communist Party", *Life* July 29, 1946: 90.

western independent movements in Africa and Asia. Consequently, accusations like Schlesinger's may have been a response to NAACP's criticisms of American affairs, and *Life* magazine's willingness to publish the material. Additionally, in the 1930s, black Americans registered high numbers in the Communist Party of America before dropping membership in the war period.[20] This fact may have influenced Schlesinger's assumption of the NAACP's affiliation with subversive ideologies. Naturally an accusation like this would have major influence on a susceptible white American audience, who were the main subscribers and readers of *Life* in the mid-40s.[21]Schlesinger's accusation shook the NAACP to its core and they would spend the rest of the 40s trying to rid itself from any left wing political association. Appealing to the strategy of Cold War conformity, the NAACP cooled their criticism of international/domestic politics and joined the domestic loyalty program of the Truman administration. In his description of the "exaggerated" American, Frazier argued that there was a large portion of black Americans in the struggle who were willing to achieve "the price of the slow integration at the price of abject conformity in thinking".[22] His ideas can be used as basic framework for the reactions and inactions of the NAACP in the early Cold War years. This included repudiating issues that the organization had long concerned themselves with, none bigger than insuring international solidarity between people of colour around the world and their connection to America's "Negro Problem".

Human Rights vs. Civil Rights

[20] James Edward Smethurst, *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930-1946,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 38.
[21] Erika Lee Doss ed, *Looking at Life magazine,* (Washington, D.C. : Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 48.
[22] Franklin Frazier, "The Failure of the Negro Intellectual", *Negro Digest,* February 1962, 31.

A crucial way the Cold War changed the direction of black thought and framed many activists in the position of the "exaggerated" American was the domestication of the black struggle for freedom and the rejection of international racial solidarity beginning in the late 1940s. The black struggle for freedom became more domesticated in the face of Cold War era pressures, therefore limiting African American participation and comparisons with international human rights issues. This change corresponds to ideologies that dominated the black freedom struggle, in that the interest in a transnational approach to civil rights was an indication of the priorities of the black left whereas the focus on domestic issues was more a focus of black liberals.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights illustrates the role that human rights could play in the lives of subjugated peoples across the world:

> Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.[23]

In the view of early Civil Rights movements and its pioneers, circa the 1920s to the mid-1940s, a human rights agenda was a powerful tool to solve black struggle in the United States, as "the rule of law" would break down federal state barriers that upheld segregation and institutionalized racism.[24]

African Americans involved in Civil Rights had long connected the repression of their race with non-white peoples around the world, creating a transnational culture of oppression. In the 1930s, Richard Wright argued that black colonial peoples in Africa and African Americans fighting for U.S. and European powers during the Second World War were "misled in giving

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[23] United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* United Nations, http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

[24] Ibid.

their lives in the interest of imperialism".[25] Wright spent much of his later life trying to find the "meaning of western civilization as a whole and the relation of Negroes and other minority groups to it".[26] Other black intellectuals like Frazier, along with leading rights groups up until the mid-40s, made it a priority to support third world countries who were seeking independence from European imperialists. Historian Robbie Lieberman supports this argument stating "African Americans had a long history of interest in foreign policy, especially where issues of social justice were concerned".[27] Moreover, the connection of the Negro problem to the repression experienced by other people of colour around the world was evident as well in black literature and culture.

In her 1959 play *Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry connected the African American experience to the African experience of colonialism.[28] The play emphasized a bond between the two, which in the setting of the Cold War was quite dangerous as many African countries were seeking liberation through socialist aims. Bruce McConachie states that *Raisin in the Sun* explicitly links "the fight for independence in Africa and the struggle for dignity and economic justice in the United States".[29] For example, in Act II of the play the male lead Walter pretends to be an African Warrior while cheering on the accomplishments of Kenyan independence leader, Jomo Kenyatta. Walter exclaims, "That's my man, Kenyatta" while Beneatha, who throughout the play becomes more entranced with her African heritage, shouts African chants in celebration.[30] Hansberry clearly connects the culture and social desires between African

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[25] Angelo Herndon, "Negroes Have No Stake in This War, Wright Says" *Sunday Worker,* February 11 1940, 7.
[26] Quoted in Michael Fabre, *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 366.
[27] Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang ed. *Anticommunism and the Black Freedom Struggle,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 17.
[28] Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin in the Sun*, (NY: Random House, 1959), 57.
[29] Bruce McConachie, *American Theater in the Culture of the Cold War: Producing and Contesting Containment*, 1947-1962, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005), 149.
[30] Hansberry, *Raisin in the Sun,* 78.

Americans and colonial peoples of Africa in this scene. From 1952 Hansberry was monitored by the FBI because of her participation in Pan-African groups, and investigations increased after the premiere of her anti-colonialist play in 1959. Her FBI file was over 1,000 pages before her death in 1963, therefore showing the national security agency's concern with not only the Civil Rights movement, but also black activists who linked the struggle at home to anticolonial movements in foreign countries of interest to the U.S.[31]

From the early 1950s when she was a writer for *Freedomways* magazine, a pro-left publication, the FBI stridently noted her affiliations with leftist organizations and any activity that connected her with the racially oppressed around the world. In particular when *Raisin in the Sun* opened, an agent was instructed to investigate whether the play was "in any way controlled or influenced by the Communist Party and whether it in any way follows the Communist line".[32] They concluded that

> the play contains no comments of any nature about Communism but deals essentially with negro aspirations, the problems inherent in their efforts to advance themselves, and varied attempts at arriving at solutions".[33]

Prior to viewing the play the Bureau assumed that there would be possible communist related content, but concluded that the play's content revolved around Negro life. Though the Bureau does not mention the explicit transnational perspective on Civil Rights in *Raisin in the Sun*, it does note that there were "varied attempts at arriving at solutions" on black advancement.[34] One of the solutions Hansberry hints at is for people of color across the world to join in eliminating

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[31] See William J. Maxwell. F.B. Eyes: *How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 101. Maxwell was able to gain access to for the first time over 51 FBI files of prominent African American literary figures and public figures. Through the US Freedom of Information Act these files are available to the public through the F.B Eyes Digital Archive, which I will be using throughout my thesis.

[32] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Lorraine Hansberry File, 5th September, 1958.

[33] McConachie, 190.

[34] U.S, Federal, Lorraine Hansberry File, 5th September 1958.

their unjustified situations from oppressed forces, while also exposing the power structures that created these unjust situations; thus the Bureau appeared concerned over Hansberry's protests against anticolonialism and comparisons to subjugated experiences in the United States in the age of America's containment strategies. My second chapter on "Black Culture and Subversion" discusses further the politicization of black culture.

America's Cold War, however, made it incredibly difficult for the main power players in the Civil Rights movement to identify with people of colour around the world and their struggles. On the one hand there were organizations and activists rising out of the postwar period who were in full support of anticolonial movements, but on the other hand some black rights groups decided to repudiate or disavow African American links to international issues of colonial independence in order to gain favour with the current government administration in hopes of gaining civil rights concessions and protecting the movement from redbaiters. Civil Rights organizations such as the Civil Rights Congress ignored the demands of Cold War Liberalism and took on an independent route towards black liberation. The CRC were investigated by anticommunist agencies, ostracized, and eventually became defunct.[35] Hence, the NAACP and other groups that chose to regulate their equal rights activism to domestic concerns were pragmatic, but also survivalist in the conservative climate of the early Cold War period.

Writing in 1971 about black leadership during the early years of Cold War, James Roark states the switch happened "abruptly" around 1947 when international racial solidarity basically vanished as leading black activists groups "began to use world affairs, particularly the Cold War,

[35] The Civil Rights Congress formed in 1947 but was disbanded by 1956 due to persecutions by the anti-subversive Internal Security Act of 1950. See Gerald Horne, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946-1956* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987), 50.

as a lever to speed progress for Negroes in the United States".[36] His interpretation is sound as in 1947 President Truman proposed the Presidential Committee for Civil Rights in lieu of the NAACP declaration in support of his international anticommunist doctrines. Truman's early concessions in favour of the movement allowed black leaders to justify their shift away from international progress and focus towards domestic gains.[37] Roark goes on to state that only a "handful of prominent Negroes" proceeded to connect black American oppression to a wider human rights issue.[38] One of those prominent black leaders happened to be one of the co-founders of the NAACP, W.E.B. Du Bois.

From the early 20th century onwards, Du Bois wrote about the plight of people of colour around the world plagued by colonialist and imperialist forces. Prior to the mid-1900s Du Bois believed that the most important role he had in the NAACP was as the head of the foreign affairs department, which indicates his keen interests in international issues.[39] Looking at some of his early writings we can get an understanding of Du Bois' outlook on world affairs and how they connected to the black liberation struggle. Specially, in 1906 Du Bois wrote an article for *Collier's Weekly* entitled "The Color Line Belts the World". The "Color Line" was a term popularized by Du Bois that was mainly associated with the racial segregation between black and white America and internal divisions;[40] however the "Color Line" according to Du Bois was experienced by the majority of subordinated peoples from "darker to the lighter races of men in Asia, and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea".[41] In the article Du Bois regards the color line as a worldwide reality; namely, the hegemony that Europe holds over non-white

[36] James L. Roark, "American Black Leaders: The Response to Colonialism and the Cold War, 1943-1953." *African Historical Studies* 4, no. 2 (1971): 262. http://www.jstor.org/stable/216417
[37] Roark, 265.
[38] Ibid, 265.
[39] Walter White to Du Bois, June 19, 1943, Reel 55, #475.
[40] W.E.B Du Bois, "The Color Line Belts the World", *Collier's Weekly*, October 20, 1906, 20.
[41] W.E.B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk,* (1903; reis., New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15.

peoples of the world, especially those under imperialist hold. In his own words Du Bois stated in the article "the color question enters into European imperial politics and floods our continent from Alaska to Patagonia".[42] The intellectual and Civil Rights pioneer continued to hold this attitude into the 1940s; for example, at the end of the Second World War he encouraged several black organizations in the U.S. to take advantage of the rising human rights initiatives:

> The necessity of a document of this sort is emphasized by the fact that other groups of people, notably the Indians of South Africa, the Jews of Palestine, the Indonesians and others are making similar petitions.[43]

After the war he became centrally involved in numerous projects that reflected his application of transnational perspective on civil rights issues including the Pan African Congress, the Anti-Nuclear Arms movement, and the appeal to the United Nations on America's genocide of black Americans.[44]

In 1947, the NAACP, led by Du Bois, made it a point to address segregation as an international concern, by issuing an appeal to the United Nations stating, "we American Negroes appeal to you; our treatment in America is not merely an internal question of the United States. It is a basic problem of humanity; of democracy […] it demands your attention and action".[45] Their position was supported by many countries around the world, but questioned by their own country as Cold War containment ideology began to take root after the Second World War. The Truman administration was looking to influence countries in Africa and Asia; thus black rights groups that exposed the horrors of American racism to the world stood in the way of that

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[42] Du Bois, "The Color Line Belts the World", *Collier's Weekly*, October 20, 1906, 20.
[43] Herbert Aptheker ed, *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois, Volume III,* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 163.
[44] See David, Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919*, (New York: Owl Books, 1994), 449 and 675; also Gerald Horne, *Black & 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, 25, 76 and 201.
[45] W.E.B. Du Bois, "An Appeal to the World: A Statement of Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nations for Redress", 1947.

influence.[46] As discussed earlier, an ideal in this era was to agree and fully support the superpower in all aspects of its interests. Thus, black organizations that supported liberation movements in countries whose populations rejected western power or United States containment strategies were obviously seen as a threat to rejecting essential aims in American democracy in the eyes of anticommunist. Here is where the characterization of the "exaggerated" American comes into play as leading Civil Rights groups and activists like Du Bois had to confront the dilemma of whether to continue linking the "Negro problem" to a worldwide human rights or to stay silent on international issues that the U.S. were involved in and define black inequalities through a domestic context. As we will see, the latter choice would offer up opportunities to grant African Americans freedom concessions at home in alliance with the American government beginning in 1947. However, those who stuck to the former approach would come under suspicion of being subversives and often fell victim to Cold War national security measures. It's important to discuss the larger Civil Rights movement's swift detachment from a human rights solutions to black American oppression as it highlights not only the connection of the Cold War to Civil Rights, but the restricted political views in which African Americans were expected to express their ideas and fight for their freedoms. Thus, Civil Rights organizations like the NAACP avoided the risk of the movement being painted red by taking a pragmatic approach and painting the movement red, white and blue instead.

In 1953 the FBI, commissioned by the Eisenhower administration, released a document entitled the "Communist Party and the Negro". The document voiced opinions that had been set in motion prior to the 50s, including an anti-subversive perspective on anti-colonial movements. The Bureau stated that the Communist Party of United States saw the "movement for Negro

[46] Mary L. Dudziak, *Politics and Society in Modern America : Cold War Civil Rights : Race and the Image of American Democracy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 27.

freedom in this country" aligned with the "struggle of colonial peoples, particularly the darker races, to free themselves from their oppressors".[47] Counterintelligence agencies and the American government had basically associated this type of activism with communism; therefore organizations that took up this sentiment would be considered subversive and would receive a subversive label. Many organizations and activists that had made international human rights issues and saw the U.N as the answer to the national solution for racism like the Civil Rights Congress and Council on African Affairs were in fact blacklisted by the American government by the beginning of the 50s.[48] According to historian Penny Von Eschen the American government also showed its blatant rejection of African American criticism on U.S. foreign affairs. In her book *Race against Empire* Eschen uses the example of the revocation of Paul Robeson's passport to outline that the American government believed that Civil Rights leaders had no position in criticizing American foreign policy.[49] Additionally, Singh also argues that blacks in the U.S. were one "political constituency" that supported worldly perspectives on civic freedoms that challenged "US imperial politics abroad"; however, their position was often "disparaged and rejected as Un-American" by white political elites.[50] Thus, black rights organizations were pushed into a position where they had to adjust their ideas in order to get ahead.

In his 2009 essay "Another Side of Story," Lieberman illustrated how the Cold War induced a split in strategy within the Civil Rights movement:

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[47] The Federal Bureau of Investigation, "The Communist Party and the Negro: 1953-1956", United States Department of Justice, 111.
[48] Robert Justin Goldstein, *American Blacklist: The Attorney General's List of Subversive Organizations*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 105-109.
[49] Eschen, *Race Against Empire,* 96.
[50] Singh, *Black Is A Country*, 54.

> The dividing line was between those who maintained their commitment to these sorts of peace issues (and who challenged red-baiting that inevitably followed) and those who appeared to accept silence about U.S foreign policy at the price of progress on civil rights.[51]

In other words the period right after the Second World War and during McCarthyism in the 1950s pushed social movements like the Civil Rights movement in two corners – those activists who believed that in order to present their cause clearly, they had to address certain controversial issues vs. those who understood certain issues as out of bounds. The Civil Rights strategy of litigation that the NAACP took was simply stagnant to those radical blacks who sought direct action approaches. The NAACP strategy worked more in the lines of respectability towards the US government and its reputation. At one point in 1949, Walter White, one of the co-founders of the NAACP, denounced Du Bois' initiative to declare a nuclear peace between the U.S. and the Soviet Union because he knew that the Justice Department and the HUAC would perceive it as "communist-inspired propaganda" and would hurt the NAACP's legal resources and prestige. Thus, it was safer to follow Cold War protocol in order to be deemed more favourable by white audiences and white liberals in the government. [52] White's and the NAACP's response to the Cold War was built on years of a black respectability tradition.[53] Respectability was a concept that most African American elites, intellectuals and middle classes saw as a bridging of social status and behavior between blacks and whites. This status and behavior would allow white society to see black Americans as equals. Respectability had its roots in the construction of early Civil Rights institutions as educated and well-off blacks

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[51] Lang and Lieberman ed. *Anticommunism and the Black Freedom Struggle,* 21.
[52] Ruby Hurley to White, memo, September 7, 1950, Box 201, File "Communism: General, 1949-59," *Papers of the NAACP*.
[53] Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movemen*t, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2. Also See Victoria W. Walcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2013), 6.

heralded the development of early Civil Rights groups including the NAACP.[54] Thus, the organization's reactions were embedded in their historical practice of respectability. Alternatively, Carol Anderson in *Bourgeois Radicals* argues that the assumption that the NAACP took a limited approach to colonial liberation struggles overseas is overstated and the leading black organization was active in combating international racial oppression.[55] Though I agree with Anderson that the NAACP did appeal for UN interventions and human rights solutions for countries emerging from colonial/imperial rule, nonetheless it can be argued that the NAACP did not seek these same solutions for the plight of black Americans. Therefore, disconnecting the relating systems of oppression between people of colour around the world and marginalized blacks in the United States.

As stated earlier, anti-subversive agencies made it clear that they would perceive any groups who paralleled U.S racism with the struggles of colonial peoples as aligned with the Communist Party of America.[56] Du Bois' intense criticism of America's treatment of blacks and comparisons with the horrors of imperialist motives around the world placed him in a position opposed to the majority of black rights groups, especially the NAACP, once the Cold War climate in America established itself. Du Bois, along with black activists on the left, saw the movement as being interrelated to other social movements around the world, and sought support from any country that was willing to exploit the "Negro problem". The U.S. State Department and American media outlets saw this advocacy as a threat. They did not want issues of race at

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54 Calvin White Jr. *The Rise to Respectability: Race, Religion, and the Church of God in Christ* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2015), 31.
55 Carol Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals: The NAACP and the Struggle for Colonial Liberation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 6.
56 J. Edgar. Hoover, "The Communist Party and the Negro 1953-1956". Federal Bureau of Investigation United States and the Department of Justice. October 1956, Part III.

home to be distinguished as a human rights issue as it would give the Soviet Union ammunition against them.[57]

Interestingly enough the Soviet Union was one of the first countries willing to present the NAACP's early case of U.S. mistreatment of blacks before the United Nations prior to 1947. Perhaps this was simply strategic on their part. But I am more interested here in the consequences of this Soviet intervention on civil rights in America. It has been argued that Soviet support for black rights in America became a major catalyst in the Truman administration's decisions to vocalize equality in the U.S. as a developing priority.[58] It can be argued that having the support of America's biggest enemy would not benefit the perception of Civil Rights issues in the eyes of a white American public that was generally quite fearful of the communist threat. When the Soviet Union agreed that the NAACP accusations should be investigated and their appeal for NGO status be considered, the American government refused to present the NAACP case before an international panel, providing as a major indication that Civil Rights grievances should stay domestic.[59] Eleanor Roosevelt, a member of the United Nations and a "friend" of the NAACP, informed Du Bois that it would be detrimental to U.S. prestige and only aid the Soviet Union with ammunition against them, and she would be compelled to resign from the UN if the matter became a main subject of debate in the UN.[60] The implication

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[57] Several media outlets responded to the UN petitions with concern over its effects on American national security including the *Morgantown Post* of West Virginia, W.EB Du Bois to Editor of *Morgantown Post,* October 27, 1947 in Herbert Aptheker ed, *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois, Volume III,* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 185; On the State Department's concerns over Soviet propaganda see Clang and Lieberman, *Anticommunism and the Black Freedom Struggle,* 18.

[58] William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration,* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970), 66; Mary Dudziak, "Desegregation as A Cold War Imperative" *Stanford Law Review* 41, no. 1 (1988): 61.

[59] Walter Francis White, *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1948), 264.

[60] Robert W. McDonnell, "Eleanor Roosevelt -- letters from Du Bois concerning the NAACP petition to the United Nation". Reel 60 #809, 1947. *Papers of W.E.B Du Bois*; Joanna Schneider Zangrando and Robert L. Zangrando, "ER and Black Civil Rights, in Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, ed. *Without Precedent: The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 88, 101-102.

of this action severed the movement from other movements that were also depending on the universal declaration of human rights to secure their prospects of freedom. As Samuel Moyn argues, the African American fight against discrimination could have thrived within the "internationalist, anticolonialist framework" of human rights activism, however "the rarity and complexity of its (Civil Rights Movement) affiliation with human rights has to be acknowledged".[61] Moyn explains that the black American position in the global struggle was rare and complex because it was "stigmatized" and pushed into a "peripheral position" due to pressures to align African American interests with Cold War interests. [62]

The NAACP Domestic policy and the isolation of Du Bois

The main ideological forces in the movement are visible when we look at the campaign for transnationalism vs. the domesticization of the movement. The sudden suppression of Du Bois and those black Americans who sought a human rights solution to the repression of blacks at home and the rising dominance of those black leaders who submitted to negotiations with the U.S. government to benefit the domestic Civil Rights movement also is an indication of what direction the movement would take for the remainder of the 1950s. Du Bois' split with the NAACP can be understood as emblematic of the split between radical and moderate ideologies in the movement. His exit from the organization also explains the movement's transition towards race issues on the American home front. To be clear, the NAACP did uphold missions to assist subjugated in emerging post-colonial nations, as Anderson argues. However, as Brenda Gayle

[61] Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 100.
[62] Ibid, 103.

Plummer emphasizes, the NAACP "supported national liberation in Africa but saw the black struggle in the United States as a minority issue subject to national laws".[63]

In 1946, Du Bois wrote to the Secretary for the NAACP Staff conference on the direction the organization and the Civil Rights movement should take towards obtaining rights legislation. In the memorandum he points out that the form of activism that the "American Negro" has practiced until the first half of the twentieth century has failed the movement and there was a need to revise the NAACP program.[64] One of his first points in regards to "the revised program in the case of the American Negroes" draws on his international perspective of the rights movement; here he states that the movement needs to give special attention to "colonial peoples, and more especially Africans".[65] Moreover, in the same document Du Bois boldly suggests that the NAACP as heads of the movement must "not be diverted by witch-hunting for communists".[66] This is significant because Du Bois is clearly criticizing the anticommunist crusade in America as the Cold War ignited. Not only does he view the color question as a significant global one, but he also is encouraging the NAACP to stand against the consensus of the nation. This information is important to point out because in 1951 the NAACP Board of Directors would agree to adopt a policy that would limit membership to individuals that supported "the communist line" within the U.S. and in foreign affairs,[67] which was clearly a reaction to fears of communist charges as the Cold War domestic atmosphere implied that

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[63] Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956-1974* (New York Cambridge University Press, 2013), 133.
[64] Herbert Aptheker, ed. *Against Racism: Unpublished Essays, Papers, Addresses, 1887-1961 – W.E.B Du Bois* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 256.
[65] Ibid, 256.
[66] Ibid.
[67] "Resolutions Adopted by the Forty-Second Annual Convention of the NAACP at Atlanta, Ga, June 30 1951." *The Crisis*, August – September 1951, 475.

American foreign policy should not be questioned. Thus, the change in focus in strategy to the domestic focus of the movement was set in motion by 1947.

The denial of a human rights perspective was made even clearer by the later years of the 1940s as Du Bois was pushed out of the NAACP once the organization took up the Cold War influenced strategy of domesticating Civil Rights. For example, in 1951, White served on the General Assembly of the United Nations when Du Bois was pushing for the international organization to recognize the genocide of blacks in the United States. White, along with the core leaders of the NAACP at this time, had slowly rejected the strategy to make the "Negro problem" an international issue as it was turning into a "subversive conspiracy" against the U.S.[68] As a result he voted along with the rest of the assembly to reject Du Bois's petition. Du Bois's reaction embodied the type of "anti-American" speech that was labelled subversive in the age of the early Cold War. He criticized White for jumping on the "Truman Bandwagon" and therefore giving blacks in the struggle "no chance for opinion or consultation" by accepting "reactionary, war mongering colonial imperialism of the present administration".[69] It was clear the threat this type of rhetoric would cause the NAACP in the building anti-subversive climate, and thus to avoid the risk of being blacklisted like several other Civil Rights organizations of the time, White and heads of NAACP agreed to "dismiss" Du Bois from his service in the organization. The action outlines the severe pressure on the Civil Rights movement in the atmosphere of the Red Scare in that one of the most recognized faces of Civil Rights was deemed harmful to the movement's progress. Berg states that even the most conservative members of the rights movement were surprised by the NAACP's handling of the Du Bois

[68] Drew Patterson script, November 23, 1951, Box 636, File "United Nations: Genocide, 1947-51, *Papers of the NAACP*.
[69] As quoted in Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize,* 141.

situation.[70] Additionally, historian Carol Anderson, also contends that the NAACP's "abandonment of Du Bois was just one in a long string of dubious choices" in this era.[71]

Anticommunism, Paul Robeson and the Divide in Civil Rights Activism

In *Black Bourgeoisie* Frazier criticizes those blacks who give up traditional thinking and strong black identity to assimilate to mainstream American ideas. To reiterate Frazier's statement quoted previously: "price of slow integration which the Negroes are experiencing must be bought at the price of abject conformity in thinking." This parallels the strategy which the NAACP would take in their shift from a global solution for the struggle to a domestic view. As Thomas Borstelmann argues the possibilities for African American advancement "came at the expense of muting their belief in the international character of white racial domination in the early Cold War".[72] The pressure to conform to the pro-American century took hold of the NAACP in the late 1940s once they began discussions with Harry S. Truman on a Civil Rights bill. Liberal strategy of the movement then switched to appease American officials that could help their cause, which meant affirming their commitment to the Cold War consensus and "messianic vision of the Truman Doctrine" and leaving behind human rights rhetoric.[73]

The NAACP's national paper *The Crisis* started to fade out its regular column on major international news concerning people of colour once it became clear that speaking out on matters that affected American global agenda was quickly becoming a political taboo. As late as the mid 40s the NAACP provided readers with content on international situations of people of color. In

[70] Berg, "Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism", 87.
[71] Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize,* 175.
[72] Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56.
[73] Quoted from Damian L. Thomas, *Globetrotting: African American Athletes and Cold War Politics* (University of Illinois Press, 2012), 33.

July 1944 an article entitled "The ILO and the Postwar Planning for African Colonies" was a headline news story with a five-page spread.[74] In December 1945, the same month America entered as a member of the United Nations, *The Crisis* published "Africa Awakes", an article on the Nigerian Labour party's fight to end British colonial rule in the nation.[75]Additionally, in 1946 they celebrated the centennial of Liberia's independence with a special article on the landmark achievement.[76]

The NAACP's journal soon switched content from their traditional support for self-determination for Third World countries to articles that justified American intervention and the implementation of American style democracy, moving in what some may consider a neoconservative direction.[77] For example, in the January 1951 article "The Struggle for Asia" the writer compares the benefits of American intervention vs. Soviet intervention, embodying the language of American Cold War consensus culture. The writer is able to speak on American foreign policy engagements because he is vilifying USSR intervention in Asia:

> The Russian imperialist pattern is the same as the European. The Soviet promise for Asia is merely to replace European colonialism with Soviet colonialism to replace European imperialism with the Russian brand of ideological and cultural imperialism. [78]

The writer makes sure to differentiate "good colonialism" vs. "bad colonialism". Good colonialism obviously falls to the United States, as the writer argued in Marshall Plan style that America could bring economic prosperity to the "poverty stricken" Asian countries, which would help stop "the march of Soviet imperialism…and Soviet colonialism".[79] The article plays

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[74] Thyra Edwards, "The ILO and the Postwar Planning for African colonies" *The Crisis,* July 1944.
[75] "Africa Awakes", *The Crisis,* December 1946, 348.
[76] "An African Republic Approaches its Centennial" , *The Crisis*, July 1946, 204.
[77] See Josh Muravchik, "The Past, Present, and the Future of Neoconservatism" *Commentary,* 1 October 2007. https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-past-present-and-future-of-neoconservatism/
[78] "The Struggle for Asia", *The Crisis,* January 1951, 28
[79]Ibid, 28.

into a long-standing tradition of American exceptionalism, which exempted the U.S. and their form of global intervention from normal practices and principles required by other regions.[80] It emphasized the success of the American economy under a capitalist directive that in turn permits America to push its influence on the world; this was a popular move for the U.S. since the turn of the century as they promised to free countries from imperial holds whilst deepening American political, economic, cultural and military influence on those countries.[81] Additionally, in another issue of *The Crisis,* NAACP journalists state "South Africa likewise has the distinction of being the only country in the world to narrow people's political rights in recent years". [82] Though the editorial gives attention to racial discrimination and oppression in South Africa, they completely ignore the similarities between South African apartheid and American segregation, therefore exempting the United States from sharing in South African international scrutiny. This example puts into perspective the NAACP's Cold War liberal approach to their overseas missions which historians like Carol Anderson fail to fully consider. For example, Anderson argues that despite the "prevailing McCarthyist wings howling through the American political landscape", Walter White and the heads of the NAACP fought to make the issue so strong that neither the US, UK and France could avoid it" .[83] However, the 1952 article clearly demonstrates that the NAACP tried to avoid the "prevailing McCarthyist wings" by appealing to acts of Cold War liberalism "that separated oppressive white racial orders from the existing racial hierarchy in the U.S", and keeping the fight for equal rights for African Americans within domestic law without shaming the expansionist and oppressive intentions of Cold War American politics.

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[80] Lipset*, American Exceptionalism*, 17-19.
[81] See Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton Books, 1996), 17-19.
[82] Editorials, *The Crisis,* November 1952: 578.
[83] Carol Anderson, "International Conscience, the Cold War, and Apartheid: The NAACP's Alliance with the Reverend Michael Scott for South West Africa's Liberation, 1946-1951." *Journal Of World History 19*, no. 3 (September 2008): 319.

The Cold War liberal strategy that dominated the years of 1947 – 1954 would become a main subject of conflict between left and right black leaders and their attempts to correct inequality for blacks in America. The "exaggerated American" descriptor embodied the ways in which the NAACP adapted to fit into the pro-American mold. To be clear, the leftist activists were not the only activists in the movement interested in transnational connections to African American racial justice, however transnationalism and human rights solutions to domestic race issues were perceived as subversive by national security agencies. Through this existing assumption the black left was further accused of subversive activity. Alternatively, in several issues of *The Crisis,* the writers do connect America's race issue to the article. In the "Struggle for Asia," for example, the author makes it a point to mention that "democratic revolution" cannot happen in those countries until racism is fixed at home.[84] Thus, this author approves of American intervention in countries under the "threat" of communism while also ensuring that domestic grievances are not forgotten. Cold War liberalism echoed the strategies of blacks throughout history that justified their opportunistic and conformist actions in order to survive in a repressive society. The influence of anticommunism wasn't only restricted to the NAACP and their press, as by 1948 "five national black papers allocated four times more space to world communism".[85] Black activists, including leaders in the NAACP, limited their protests against European colonialism and American foreign policy in order to help the momentum towards equality at home survive as well as to keep the movement as a whole alive under the growing suspicions of the FBI, the HUAC and other powerful American anticommunists. Berg brings up an important point in his study stating that the NAACP "struggled to keep the cause of black civil rights on the agenda" as anti-communist forces and segregationists continued to tie the

[84] The Struggle for Asia", *The Crisis,* January 1951, 28
[85] Roark, "American Black Leaders" , 265.

movement to anti-American subversive causes throughout the 50s.[86] Conformity continued in other factions outside of the broad issue of human rights vs. domestic politics. To understand the decline of transnational strategies orchestrated by activists on the left and the rise of the Civil Rights liberal leaning factions, we must look at how the NAACP interacted with anticommunist forces to protect the development of the Civil Rights movement.

The NAACP's collaboration with anticommunist forces reveals the great lengths to which activists in the Civil Rights movement went to prove that they were dedicated citizens of the postwar American way. The presence of ghostwriters employed by the FBI within the NAACP press became a trend at the height of McCarthyism. One way to prove they were not communist was to employ the respect and wishes of FBI agents who were terrorizing the personal and public lives of black leftists. Literary critic William J. Maxwell describes the relationship between the black leaders and national security forces as an example of the "Americanist element in New Negro culture", which "made for as many strange bedfellows as its racial primitivism".[87] The relationship between the Bureau and the heads of Civil Rights causes is significant because it casts doubt upon the conventional image of a united movement in which all blacks rose up together for their rights. In reality black organizations like the NAACP were well aware of the anti-subversive eyes on their organization and their views on racial equality; thus to dissuade the attention of the FBI and other national security agencies from being on the NAACP, the organization had to reproach and target other suspects of subversive behavior, even if those suspects were fighting for the same freedoms they were. During the Second World War the NAACP had been friendly with J. Edgar Hoover. This was mostly due to the FBI's fear of

[86] Berg, "Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism", 77.
[87] William J. Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes: How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 41.

black anti-war sentiment in Northern cities owing to the treatment of black soldiers overseas.[88] White agreed to give Hoover information on possible protesters in return for Hoover's assistance in producing frontline journalist stories from writers in the NAACP.[89] The same collaboration would be employed again during the Cold War, only this time it resulted in a thorough divide between those fighting for black freedoms through open criticism of the American government and those seeking to respectably co-operate with the administration.

A pivotal article in *The Crisis* entitled "the Lost Shepherd" embodies the type of anticommunist propaganda that the NAACP had participated in order to show their supportive position towards domestic Cold War protocol. The article, which focuses on Paul Robeson and his pro-communist activities, is also a great example of how the movement was divided in its response to Robeson's high profile dispute with the HUAC. Robeson is a key figure in the scholarship on how the Cold War became fused with the Civil Rights movement. Because his case has been covered widely by numerous historians I have chosen to focus instead on the reactions to Robeson's case from those on opposite wings of the movement in order to demonstrate the complexity of black thought during this era. In 1951, an FBI ghostwriter Robert Alan wrote "The Lost Shepherd" article in *The Crisis* condemning Paul Robeson and his friendship with the Soviet Union.[90] Again the NAACP had the largest influence on black America, so it is no wonder that the Bureau chose to use *The Crisis* as a platform to sway blacks from Robeson's apparent ideological orientation. Hoover stated in his 1958 Cold War handbook *Masters of Deceit* that the NAACP was the Negro rights organization with the most influence and that the Communist Party that Paul Robeson had "long fronted for" was making "vigorous

[88] J. Edgar Hoover*, Masters of Deceit: The Story of Communism in America and How to Fight It* (New York: Holt, Rinehardt Winston, 1958), 247.
[89] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Walter White File, 21 May. 1944.
[90] Robert Alan, "Paul Robeson- the Lost Shepherd", *The Crisis,* November 1951, 569.

efforts to infiltrate" them.[91] Though Hoover documented his suspicions later on in the 1950s, his views explain the NAACP and other black activists' reasons for abiding by the laws of Cold War Liberalism at the risk of vilifying Robeson and blacks on the left. In the article Alan is quite aggressive, painting Robeson's actions as a betrayal to his homeland; the language very much rings true to the consensus of the time.

For example, the article makes it a point to illustrate African American progress in the post-war years. The article argues against Robeson's view that black Americans were deprived of making social progress in America; instead the article points out the rising academic enrolment and higher economic prosperity of African Americans to show that "concrete figures spell out the rising stature of the Negro on the national scene".[92] The content works along with other sources of U.S. Cold War propaganda that worked to present a benign picture of black life in America to the world in order to prove that democratic capitalism was more beneficial than the totalitarian dictatorship of the Soviets. Consensus culture in the early Cold War was heavily practiced after the hostile years of the Second World War, and the rise of totalitarian governments around the world assisted in the U.S. public's assumption that American democracy provided the freest lifestyle in the world.[93]

"The Lost Shepherd" arguably also reveals the lack of priority the American government was putting on Civil Rights issues, as this writer was trying to tell a black audience that their race was making progress, thus there was no need to start a "revolution" of sorts. The article also makes it a point to frame Robeson as an example of the "bad Negro", one that has "departed

[91] J. Edgar Hoover, *Masters of Deceit*, 246.
[92] Alan, "Paul Robeson- the Lost Shepherd", 569.
[93] David Ryan, "The Cultural Construction of the Cold War" in *American Cold War Culture* ed. Douglas Field (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 50.

from his people". Alan also separates Robeson's motive to exploit black inequalities under the American system of government from the task of the Civil Rights movement:

> They (Communists) cannot see in this man the Paul Robeson who once was one of America's strongest pleaders for democratic equality. It is difficult to explain why Paul Robeson has been deterred from his course as a leader of the democratic crusade to break down the barriers of segregation and discrimination.[94]

Not only does the writer dissociate Robeson's involvement in the movement by using the past tense, "Robeson…once was", but he also associates ideas of equality and the breakdown of "segregation and discrimination" with democracy. Therefore, this guarded the NAACP and other liberal black rights activism within American values and distanced the movement's fight for equality from other Civil Rights strategies/ ideologies that didn't fit the democratic aesthetic. Furthermore, this article's interpretation of black identity and thought is important to my study because it shows how subversive impressions of the black race had seeped into media propaganda of the time. The description of Robeson as a "Kremlin stooge" who was a "communist propagandizer first, and a singer second" reveals an underlying racial preference to have blacks positioned in roles where they could be controlled. In Robeson's case, the logic was, his powerful voice should remain silent on political issues but utilized in his singing career.

The fact that the NAACP was allowing agents in the FBI to degrade one of the most outspoken proponents for black rights exposes the extremes of conformity they had reached in this era. Walter White, in his own article about Robeson in *Ebony* magazine in the same year, entitled "The Strange Case of Paul Robeson," is even more trenchant as White abandons his thirty year friendship with Robeson to prevent a backlash against the NAACP from the Bureau that seemed hell-bent on equating civil rights with an international communist conspiracy. White

[94] "The Lost Shepherd", 569.

denounces Paul Robeson's turn to leftism, which results in a larger condemnation of the black left and strategies that diverted from the domestication of the movement:

> Basic to an understanding of Robeson's reasons for his leftist turn is the deep resentment he has always felt against slight and deprivations because of his color…Embittered by the contradictions of American democracy he looked hungrily for an escape from the practices which angered him and accepted the Soviet way uncritically because his fervour forbade him from seeing its contradictions.[95]

White illustrates Robeson's attraction to the left as an impulsive, irrational reaction towards black civil inequalities. Words like "embittered" and "angered" paint a picture that black activists on the opposite end of the NAACP's ideology weren't thinking logically. White's statement about Robeson coincide with the stereotype of the dumb volatile Negro that intellectual black critics of the time such as Zora Neale Hurston and Harold Cruse had written and assumed about black Americans who preferred leftist ideologies.[96] In the same article White also made clear that the movement and black America stood on a pro-American platform when it came to American foreign affairs, "In any conflict involving our nation we will regard ourselves as Americans and meet the responsibilities imposed on all Americans".[97] White's declaration against Robeson epitomizes American conformity of the 1950s with the use of phrases like "our nation." It also suggests that blacks regard themselves as Americans first to paint a picture that the movement has no interest in looking towards outside ideologies and nations to build on its progression. In Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* he explains that nationhood relies on the expression of fraternity to evoke the appearance of a united community of people.

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[95] Walter White, "The Strange Case of Paul Robeson" *Ebony* vol. 6 no 4, February 1951, 78-84.
[96] In 1951 Zora Neale Hurston wrote an article in *The American Legion Magazine* where she argued that those African Americans that saw communism and the Soviet Union as their allies were "dumb black brutes" and that "nationality is stronger than race," thus blacks must prove that they are American first and foremost. See Zora Neale Hurston, "Why the Negro Won't buy Communism" *The American Legion Magazine,* June 1951, 55. Harold Cruse is more direct in his insults, as in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* Cruse directly labels Black leftist and internationalists like Robeson, Du Bois, Wright, and Hansberry as "pro-Soviet". See Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership,* (New York: Review Books, 1967), 236.
[97] White, "The Strange Case of Paul Robeson", 46.

Anderson states, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship".[98] Black activists expressed this practice of nationhood in order to demonstrate that the movement and the black community exclusively aligned with the patriotic camaraderie of the American community. To emphasize, White's reactions towards Robeson's were undoubtedly strategic to advance and protect black interests in the country, which underscores the pragmatic response of the NAACP towards Cold War issues. The pragmatist and respectability strategy that the NAACP employed in its response to the Cold War was somewhat tragic as the organization compromised its position on connecting domestic issues to transnational human rights and encouraged the vilification of "radical" black activists like Robeson. However, under the anticommunist climate the organization's pragmatism was in a sense necessary to protect the movement from anti-subversive opposition.

The content of *The Crisis* article on Robeson's and White's emphasis on proving the NAACP identity as Americans first and foremost brings into context Franklin Frazier's "exaggerated" American phrase in regards to the "New Negro" movement. In his sociological analysis of the black middle class, Frazier attributed the eagerness of black leaders to be accepted as Americans to Cold War terror on Civil Rights groups whose cries for a new America were interpreted as subversive to many anticommunist agencies.[99] In this case, Frazier's interpretation is probable because black leaders influenced by NAACP style activism did voice their concerns about being perceived as subversives within a Cold War climate. For example, Roy Wilkins, White's replacement in the NAACP after his death in 1955 wrote in his autobiography at great

[98] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1993), 7.
[99] Frazier, "The Failure of the Negro Intellectual", 35.

lengths about his disdain for communism and the threat the ideology brought to American blacks:

> Part of my reasons were personal – I just don't like the way Communists did business – but political considerations also dictated that they be shut out. We were having enough trouble getting Congress to consider even the most elementary civil rights legislation; the last thing we needed was to give ammunition to red-baiting Southern congressmen and senators, who would have loved nothing better than to paint us pink. If we had accepted help from the Communists, or had ducked the issue of keeping them out of the mobilization, Gabriel would have blown his horn for a long time before Congress did right by black Americans.[100]

Wilkins was recollecting the late 40s to early 50s in this excerpt. The NAACP leader shows his acute awareness of American officials' hostility towards civil rights and how much more impossible it would be to get their attention if the NAACP had accepted communism into their ranks. Importantly, he points out the fact that if the NAACP "ducked the issue" of red-baiting and anticommunism there would have been consequences to the progress of the movement. Hence, it can be understood that the Civil Rights movement, liberal leaders especially, felt as if they had no choice but to speak out against left leaning blacks and join the pro-American position of the Cold War. Additionally, black leaders expressed their frustration with the pressures placed on them due to suspicions of subversiveness surrounding their race once Robeson's case went public. Bayard Rustin commented on the dilemma stating, "We have to prove we're patriotic […] Here is a man (Robeson) who is making some other country better than ours, and we've got to sit here and take the gaff".[101] Rustin demonstrates the personal dilemma blacks fighting for liberation experienced as they were met with more obstacles towards equality; according to Rustin blacks had to "prove" that they were patriotic and though the movement consisted of a large number of activists harboring a wide range of opinions, public

[100] Roy Wilkins and Tom Mathews, *Standing Fast: The Autobiography of Roy Wilkins* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982), 210.
[101] As quoted in Daniel S. Lucks, *From Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War,* (Lexington,KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 9.

faces of the movement had to take responsibility for the opinions of one well-known black American.

Robeson's case pitted leaders in the movement against each other and pushed activists to deal once again with the Cold War question. It also reveals the generalization of black thought in America, in that Robeson was widely thought to represent the ideas and opinions of all of black America, especially blacks on the left. However, not all black activists embodied the views of Cold War liberalism; many of the African Americans who had already fallen victim to counterintelligence probing defended Robeson, arguing that condemning Robeson did more to harm to the movement than defending him. It may be obvious that W.E.B. Du Bois in the 1950s headed up the defense of Paul Robeson, whilst his former NAACP associate Walter White condemned Robeson. In 1950, a few years after Du Bois' "dismissal" from the NAACP, he spoke out in *the Negro Digest* on his opinions of Robeson's case. Robeson's case divided an already shaky alliance between African American political ideologies and his article, "Paul Robeson Right or Wrong," symbolizes the split in black interpretations and approaches to the Cold War American climate. First, Du Bois argues that those Civil Rights leaders who were quick to condemn Robeson for his relationship with the Soviet Union had taken up centuries old pressures to appease the white hierarchy:

> Certain Negro leaders hastened to "beat the gun" in denouncing Robeson before they even knew with certainty what he said or meant. This was the old plantation technique, which hastened to outdo "Ole Massa" himself in denouncing any slave who dared lift his head for a minute out of the dirt of slavery.[102]

In other words, if the NAACP and its respectability traditions embodied the Uncle Tom figure who "hastened to outdo "Ole Massa"", then blacks who spoke against the predominant ideology

[102] W.E.B Du Bois, "Paul Robeson: Right or Wrong. Right:Says W.E.B Du Bois," *Negro Digest* (March 1950), 8.

of the day were the Nat Turners – rebellious and threatening.[103] However, it would be at a cost to their civil liberties and role in the direction the movement would take. White and Du Bois' clashing articles in leading black magazines of the era represent the split in strategy in the black struggle as a result of Cold War pressures. Part of Frazier's image of the "exaggerated" black American or the black bourgeoisie was the classification of those who were willing to succumb to the pressures of McCarthyism and marginalize other blacks in the movement. In Frazier's essay "What can the American Negro Contribute" he boldly called out American blacks who adhered to the totalitarian-like social climate of the day:

> They have become mere parrots or phonograph records repeating the ideas of reactionary and conservative white people. There are rare exceptions, like W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson, but they are considered dangerous by white people, therefore, middle class Negroes regard them as dangerous.[104]

Though Frazier's words resonate with the reactions of the NAACP towards both Du Bois and Robeson, the extract also shows the type of aggressive debate in black thought regarding the direction the movement should take. Although there were disputes within the movement between blacks ideologies, what happened to Robeson was a clear lesson issued to blacks that this was the consequence if their ideas criticized the pro-American climate and into international human rights circles. To some black intellectuals opposing leftist directions in the movement, Robeson's case was a clear example that radical strategies weren't helpful in the fight for black freedoms in America. Black nationalist and intellectual Harold Cruse, for instance, declared that "Robeson's political failure" was also the failure of the "leftwing cultural elite".[105]

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[103] Referring to Nat Turner the leader of the 1831 slave rebellion where slaves slaughtered white slave owners and their family. The image of the militant image of Nat Turner comes in direct conflict to the loyal "Uncle Tom".
[104] Franklin Frazier, "What can the American Negro Contribute?", *Negro Digest* (November 1962), 264.
[105] Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 231.

Du Bois, Robeson and many others who preached world peace and anti-colonialism would spend the McCarthy years blacklisted and isolated. Activists who supported independence movements in Africa and Asia were quite critical of America's foreign policy and often were punished for their opinions. As a result of the "cold" treatment of black human rights advocates, some fled to Europe to escape red-baiting and continue their perspective. Writer Richard Wright spent the latter half of the 20th century in France where he felt he had more freedoms as a black man than in the United States. He continued to show his interests in international race relations by traveling to African countries as well as places in Southeast Asia to support efforts against colonialism in hopes that anti-colonial movements would have a ripple effect on racial justice in America.[106] In a 1960 letter to a close friend, Wright linked the restriction of black expression to the Cold War. He stated that to the State Department "I'm worse than a communist, for my work falls like a shadow across their policy in Asia and Africa".[107] Other black activists who championed a human rights perspective fell victim to the Smith Act, an act that required all non-citizens of the United States to be registered and deported if they were involved in activities that the U.S. government deemed subversive. Trinidad born C.L.R. James, for example, was forced out of the U.S for his Leninist political affiliation and criticism of American foreign policy.[108] Infamously, Paul Robeson's career as a performer ended as his public image declined because of his open friendship with the Soviet Union. Blacks who spoke of peace amongst superpowers and who insisted on liberation of countries that the U.S. sought to dominate in the name of Cold War democracy risked their public image and livelihood.

[106] Johannes Skancke Martens, "A Great Writer Speaks Out" *Morgenbladet*, 1959, 187 – 195.
[107] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 171.
[108] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), 54.

Thus, the move towards a strictly domestic Civil Rights movement in light of American Cold War consensus exposes the restrictions on African American thought and expression. To criticize U.S. foreign policy and embrace friendship with the Soviet bloc was conceived by many to be a betrayal to the United States. Again, American society had already pushed blacks to the outskirts of citizenship. Associating with issues outside of your country would prove the long standing racial stereotype of black subversiveness; historic racism perceived African Americans as inherently non-American because of their diasporic origins, therefore they were deemed more likely to associate with alien agents in the United States. Singh sums up the shaky ground that black citizenry stood on, stating "African, - and later Negro, black, and African American – struggles against civil death, economic marginalization, and political disfranchisement accrued the paradoxical power to code all the normative redefinitions of U.S. national subjectivity and citizenship".[109] Hence, it is plausible that the alternative solution towards racial acceptance for many black activists was to conform to the existing condition of the postwar American century. The NAACP and the larger movement were able to prove how American they were by abandoning their colonial/imperialist criticisms. During the same period the NAACP worked to live up to the expectations of the American government in order to gain concessions towards black freedoms.

The NAACP and other black leaders preferred cooperation with the domestic politics of the day rather than question Cold War ethics, and in return they had received closer communication with the White House on Civil Rights than any years previously. The progressive communication between the White House and black equality advocates allowed President

[109] Singh, *Black is A Country*, 22.

Truman to declare himself "the greatest civil rights president the country ever had".[110] By reminding the American government that blacks "are loyal Americans first of all" despite the "handicaps" forced on them by society, as Roy Wilkins declared in a letter to President Eisenhower in 1958, the Cold War liberal side of the movement was able to escape the red label at least in the public eye and gain the promise of legislative concessions.[111] However, their conformist tactics wouldn't suffice for some blacks in the struggle, namely young people living under segregation in the South. Black strategy would take a turn to a more action oriented approach, which I will argue culminated after years of playing the role of the "exaggerated" American for an American government whose priorities were centered around containing the threat of communism overseas and at home and less on improving domestic race relations.

The NAACP leading role in the Civil Rights movement allowed them to communicate with the White House about concessions. The civil rights reforms that were put in place due to the litigation strategies of the NAACP included the Presidential Committee on Civil Rights in 1947 and 1948, as well as the executive order to desegregate the military that was later completed by Eisenhower. Arguably their greatest achievement in the early anticommunist period is the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court case ruling.[112] Though these achievements were groundbreaking they were slow to be enacted. For a period of six years there were discussions between the members of the NAACP and the White House about civil rights. However, the government continued to prioritize the image of a picture perfect American nation for the sake of its Cold War cultural and ideological war against communist aggression rather than push forward legitimate domestic reform. In Roy Wilkins's autobiography he speaks about

[110] Carl T. Rowan, " Harry Truman and the Negro" *Ebony* (November, 1959), 44.
[111] Roy Wilkins,. Letter from Roy Ottoway Wilkins to Dwight D. Eisenhower, June 25, 1958 in *Letter from Roy Wilkins to President Eisenhower, June 25, 1958.* (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, 2004), no page number.
[112] Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past", 1234.

his career in the NAACP and fight for black rights from the 1920s to the 1960s. However, there is a gap in his story from the NAACP's communist lockouts in the late 40s to the Brown vs. Board decision of 1954.[113] This fact increases Frazier's "waiting man" perception on the portion of the black populace he referred to as the bourgeoisie. The larger movement for a bulk of the late 40s and early 50s were preoccupied with its participation in the anticommunist atmosphere.

To review, at the beginning of the 50s, Robeson and Du Bois were blacklisted, former leading progressive black organization were all but forced to disband like the Civil Rights Congress, while the NAACP continued to preach the strategy of Cold War liberalism. Historian Manning Marable argues that historians who write about the Civil Rights movement have done little research on the period between 1945 –1954 because "the impact of the Cold War, the anti-communist purges and near-totalitarian social environment, had a devastating effect upon the cause of blacks' civil rights and civil liberties".[114] Marable is warranted in his conclusion as historians like Mary Dudziak who have discussed this period do so in terms of how the Civil Rights movement achieved concessions at home by reminding the American establishment that racial conditions at home would affect the country's role as a leading superpower. There were no sufficient legislative concessions made during that time span and the movement seemed to fall victim to a waiting period for their allegiance to the American way. However, unlike other black organizations that challenged the status quo of the early Cold War period, the NAACP escaped blacklists and the blunt of anti-subversive purges during the McCarthy era. Civil Rights historian Adam Fairclough supports this argument in his study on *Race & Democracy.* Fairclough states "during the McCarthy years survival became the name of the game, the NAACP survived".[115]

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[113] Wilkins and Mathews, *Standing Fast*, 214.
[114] Manning Marable, *Race Reform and Rebellion,* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 18.
[115] Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana 1915 – 1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), xi.

Cold War liberalism and black respectability allowed black organizations to stay in business, but permitted limited ways in which they could protest for equality. Thus, this brings forth an important question in the development of my study: Was the switch in movement strategy in the second half of the 1950s towards mass action a result of NAACP leadership's early tactics of respectability and adherence to anticommunist protocol? Arguably, it is not a coincidence that the Southern Civil Rights direct action protests against segregation became the mainstream focus of black activism after having been dominated by litigation and political negotiations with leading blacks who worked within the framework of Cold War liberalism. The following section will provide a continuation to the work done in this chapter so far, showcasing the shift in movement strategy after being influenced by conditions prior to 1954.

Non-violence strategy as a reaction to strategies of Respectability and Pragmatism

With all the efforts made to align the movement as a blueprint of the American anti-communist zeitgeist, the concessions on part of the American government were slow in the wake of continued injustices black Americans were experiencing everyday in the South. Once Dwight D. Eisenhower took up the presidency and set in motion the integration of schools in the South after 1954 many blacks thought that this would galvanize the movement's progress towards equality. The link between the late 50s Civil Rights activity in the South and Cold War scholarship is limited in this historiography. Jeff Wood's study *Black Struggle Red Scare* does discuss at length the anticommunist climate in the South during the height of the Civil Rights movement. However, the connection is rarely made in terms of how the movement's increasing visibility in the latter part of the 50s came about as a result of the alteration of black attitudes in their response to the Cold War climate in America. The switch to sit-ins, marches and other forms of non-violent demonstration in the South was provocative in nature and game changing in

many senses. This form of protest directly confronted long standing southern establishments by intimidating them through a system of peaceful resistance,[116] consequently exposing that the movement was becoming increasingly estranged from the stagnation brought upon by Cold War liberalism. Black Cold War liberals' reliance on relationships with the White House was slow moving. Anne Braden, who was one of the public white faces in the Civil Rights movement recalled her experience in the struggle during the years in which anticommunism reigned:

> I came into the social justice movements at the height of the repression of the Cold War period...Organizations seeking civil rights, peace and justice had been crushed everywhere. […] And although I discovered in those years that there was always a resistance movement, many people did indeed fall into silence.[117]

Blacks in the South could not sit back and wait for Eisenhower to make decisions on black freedoms. Singh notes this stating that the "vague mandate" of public school integration in the South gave "succor" to the Southern Civil Rights movement, but wasn't properly enforced by the Eisenhower administration.[118] Thus, the limited civil rights concessions issued to blacks on part of their "loyalty" to the American way during the early years of the Civil Rights movement arguably ushered in the more action oriented strategies of the late 50s into the 60s. As the movement went on, blacks became more publicly vocal about ending Jim Crow laws rather than placing their faith in negotiations and litigations. "Our Struggle," an article written by Bayard Rustin in 1956 under Martin Luther King Jr.'s name, describes the change in the black community by the late 1950s. Under the heading "The New Negro" he stated:

> Our non-violent protest in Montgomery is important because it is demonstrating to the Negro, North and South, that many of the stereotypes he has held about himself and other

[116] Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York City: Norton, 1969), 415
[117] Anne Braden, *The Wall Between* (1958; reis. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), xv.
[118] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 169.

> Negroes are not valid. Montgomery has broken the spell and is ushering in concrete manifestation of the thinking and action of the new Negro.[119]

The statement by these leaders of the movement tells us a lot about the readjustment of the movement's priorities as well as the breakdown of the "meek" black stereotype. When Rustin states that non-violence resistance has "broken the spell" and has ushered in the "action of the new Negro", he is basically speaking on the fall of the litigation method of the early 50s and the rise of a movement that values the strategy of active demonstration. Nonetheless, though black activism became direct in its approaches to solving racial grievances, the protests were focused internally within the American South. In other words direct action was a domestic phenomenon and continued to work almost exclusionary of transnational links. Therefore, this implies that the strategy of mass action, though it did accelerate the movement's chances towards equality was nonetheless shaped by the exclusively domestic approach. Moreover, though the leaders of these protest movements like the Southern Christian Leadership Convention and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee did not identify with any left wing or nationalist ideology at that time, the response by their opposition claimed their activity was inspired by communist agents within the United States because of the rapidity and ferocity in which this form of protest spread in the South.

The disruption to racial segregation that Southerners were so accustomed to in daily lives appeared as a radical change, and therefore nonviolence can be seen as radical form of protest. As a result, communist accusations on the movement were enacted in an attempt to quell the activity in Southern States. By understanding how non-violent Civil Rights could be described as radical or revolutionary we also expose the complexities of Civil Rights strategies and why nonviolent activism was tied to communism. From the late 1950s some black activists had begun

[119] Published as Martin Luther King Jr., " Our Struggle" *Liberation 1* (April 1956), 3-6.

to develop the attitude that non-violence was a passive form of protest and in order to achieve rights for blacks a more aggressive position. Black activists like Robert F. Williams and Stokely Carmichael began their careers participating in non-violent protests, but once hit by the terrorism of white extremism in the South they switched to the strategy of armed defense.[120] Although non-violence was a nonaggressive tactic in the violent sense, it did intimidate and reposition the foundation of Southern society. Historian Wesley Hogan argues that non-violent protest is largely misinterpreted as a docile form of resistance, yet it did provide people with a "concrete way to act, a way forward […] it tore down the southern caste system – permanently."[121] Black intellectuals participating in non-violent protest of the late 50s made note of its radical elements. Bayard Rustin wrote in 1956 on the revolutionary change in black culture in leadership through the non-violent system stating, "OUR CHURCH IS BECOMING MILITANT. Twenty-four ministers were arrested in Montgomery. Each had said publicly that he stands prepared to be arrested again".[122] Rustin shows that the change from respectability politics that dictated the reactions of black activists in the past to black activists willing to be arrested for change, thus demonstrating the "radical" attitude growing within the freedom movement by the late 50s. Although 1960s Black Power radicals viewed non-violence as a passive form of resistance, again, to white segregationists the overturn of their society's status quo was deemed a major threat. In *There Goes My Everything* historian Jason Sokol emphasizes that to white Southerners the move to end segregation in their minds was a move to change "their racial attitudes and habitual patterns of discrimination […] confront, at the very least, the fact that their cherished

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[120] Robert Franklin Williams, *Negroes with Guns* (reiss. 1998, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962.), 4; Peniel E. Joseph, *Stokely Carmichael: A Life* (New York: Persus Books Group, 2014), 87-101.
[121] Wesley Hogan, "Freedom Now: Nonviolence in the Southern Freedom Movement 1960-1964" in Emilye Crosby, ed. *Civil Rights History from the Ground Up: Local Struggles, a National Movement* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 188.
[122] Martin Luther King Jr, " Our Struggle," 4.

way of life seemed gone for good".[123] A 1958 book entitled *Red Intrigue and Race Turmoil* outlines the social situation in the South in connection to a communist conspiracy. Sponsored by a right wing conservative organization Alliance Inc, the author Zygmund Dobbs warns that the Communist Party of America in connection with the Soviet Union's instructions to incite a race war was orchestrating the fight for integration in the South.[124] For example, Dobbs argues that "the red leadership was able to aid the NAACP in its 'organizing miracles' of 1957 – 58".[125] By "organizing miracles" Dobbs is referring to the mass trend of non-violent resistance in Southern States. Thus, the popularity of the nonviolent Civil Rights strategy appeared revolutionary to white conservative Americans in a subversive sense.

Segregationists were vocal in their connection between race turmoil in the South to the fears perpetuated by the Cold War climate in America. Along with publications like Dobbs, Southern and Northern newspapers abound with headlines that suggested that the Civil Rights movement was a communist front. From Atlanta to New York, America's press carried headlines such as "Little Rock a Red Plot" and "Red Press Gloats over Little Rock".[126] The reaction of the American press to non-violent protest in the South after 1955 emphasizes the point that the movement was perceived as subversive. As a side it's helpful to point out that the NAACP spent a great portion of the 50s supporting anti-communist propaganda and yet could not escape red-baiting once the movement took a very public direction. In fact, in a 1956 cartoon in Mississippi's *Jackson Daily News* depicted an NAACP member with his pants down, his

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[123] Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975,* (NY: Vintage Books, New York, 2007), 6.
[124] Zygmund Dobbs, *Red Intrigue and Race Turmoil (*New York*,* Alliance Inc, 1958), 72.
[125] Dobbs, *Red Intrigue and Race Turmoil*, 72.
[126] "Little Rock a Red Plot, Negro Says," *Atlanta Constitution,* December 19, 1958, 1; "Red Press Gloats over Little Rock" *New York Times*, September 26, 1957, 14.

underwear covered in hammers and sickles and sported the headline "Exposed".[127] Once non-violent protest shook the law and order of Southern way of life, the theory that the movement was communist influenced hardened white southerners' rationalization to combat black equality.[128] From the outset the FBI and the HUAC had classified communism alongside ideas of equality, thus it is understandable how the protests of blacks in the South would be thrown in with communist front fears by those who wanted to ensure a racially divided America.

In a 1956 FBI file, "The Communist Party and the Negro" the Bureau makes mention of the situation in the South after the "Brown vs. Board of Education" ruling and how the Communist Party coverage of the ruling indicated that the organization would try to exploit the mission of integration.[129] Cold War agents like the FBI as well as white extremists were making the connection between Civil Rights activism and communism, therefore forming an opposition towards racial equality in the United States. Civil Rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. at the infancy of the non-violence strategy voiced the implications that America's aversion to alleged subversives was having on the movement by 1956:

> Many white men in the South see themselves as a fearful minority in an ocean of black men […] They look upon any effort at equality as leading to "mongrelisation." They are convinced that racial equality is a Communist idea and that those who ask for it are subversive.[130]

The 180 degree turn in which the movement took demanding not only the American government to change the way things were, but for the American public viewing this violence to also make a change, was a large scale alteration in black strategy. In 1962 Frazier supported this claim; here he reflected on the origins of non-violence and that it was a response against "the old

[127] Woods, *Black Struggle Red Scare,* 62.
[128] Sokol, *There Goes My Everything,* 55.
[129] "The Communist Party and the Negro", 22
[130] King, "Our Struggle", 5.

respectable and conventional leadership", the leadership who mediated the desires of blacks to "the white community".[131] In sum, the change to mass action arguably would never have taken off as fast as it did if it wasn't for the slow moving postwar years when the movement was playing the "exaggerated" American to protect itself from McCarthyism and anti-subversive agencies. One of the reasons the bulk of the historiography on the Civil Rights movement is focused on the years after Brown vs. Board of Education, or what Rustin termed as the "classical" phase of the movement, arguably rests on the fact that the Cold War pressures placed leading figures of black activism in a position where they accepted compromise over actual action.[132]

Historiography that fails to consider the connection between the Cold War and Civil Rights events by the 1950s erases the large implications that Cold War attitudes continued to have on the American psyche years after the fall of McCarthyism. Once the Civil Rights movement became widespread in news media and active black protest shook establishments in the South, accusations of a Soviet-led Civil Rights movement built to discredit black motives surfaced. The Cold War had direct influence on the strategies of the movement as black activists who appealed to Cold War liberalism after 1947 were compelled to follow the consensus just like the majority of Americans who believed that their country should be an example for the rest of the world. However, no matter how "exaggerated" black organizations like the NAACP had become in proving their anticommunist stance, concessions for their good behavior were few and far between. I have argued that the arrival of the non-violent movement and the push for direct action was in part driven by Civil Rights strategies in the years prior to 1954. The atmosphere of

[131] Frazier, "What can the American Negro Contribute?", 33.
[132] Bayard Rustin, D*own the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 111.

conformity within Cold War America propelled Civil Rights pragmatism and deepened black respectability as a sensibility. Pressures of conformity and assimilation to higher powers did not end by the end of the 1950s; with a growing movement came a backlash from extremists who sought to use the label of communism as a guise to preserve white racial hierarchy in the North and South. Black activism would go in several directions during the 1960s, complicating strategies and ideas in the community. Having said that, a strain of thought that happened to link the reigning ideologies in the movement was the refusal to be silent about America's imperialist-like agenda at home and overseas. The gradual change from the "exaggerated" American approach to Cold War American politics to candid black opinion on American foreign policy would feasibly grow due to the progressive bombardment of accusations of subversion within the black liberation struggle into the 1960s.

Black Culture and Subversion

"I do not care a damn...for any art that is not used for propaganda"
– W. E. B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art," *Crisis* 32 (October 1926): 292.

In the 1956 book *The Negro in American Culture* author Margaret Just Butcher complies a study on the ways in which African Americans influenced American culture from emancipation into the early 20th century. In her book she emphasizes that black perseverance through the horrors of oppression in American society came from the strength of black culture, including music, dance and other forms of expression.[1] By the beginning of the 20th century black culture had become more than just *black* culture; it had become popularized American culture, commercialized and a product to export. Though American corporations wanted to profit from many black cultural forms, some racist Americans were concerned about the influence this kind of cultural expression would have on white society. Historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage highlights the conflicting views on race and culture in American society from the mid-19th into the 20th century, stating "while some whites professed revulsion and contempt for African Americans, others enthusiastically appropriated and consumed black culture".[2] The conflicting views towards black culture only grew in the Cold War era. As Brian Ward argues, conservative organizations such as religious groups, municipal authorities, segregationist, and everyday Americans were concerned that the "animal" nature of "black music and black derived music"

[1] Margaret Just Butcher, *The Negro in American Culture,* (New York: Knopf, 1956), 4.
[2] W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed. *Beyond Blackface: African Americans and the Creation of American Popular Culture, 1890-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 2.

would influence white youth.[3] Many were concerned about the impression black culture would have on the wholesome image of the postwar nuclear family.[4]

At the same time Civil Rights leaders and social activists inferred and suggested that a national embrace of black culture would create an atmosphere that would allow integration to take place. W.E.B. Du Bois, for example, realized the strength in securing the black voice and aspiration in the cultural marketplace so that campaigns for equality could progress through this outlet.[5] Thus, black culture in America gave African Americans the opportunity to achieve a level of prominence and recognition amongst white society due to the popularity of black cultural genres, while also providing a realm to educate the public about the need for racial inequality. In the Cold War climate it became increasingly difficult for black artists to separate their artistry from political positions, as many anti-communists perceived any type of black expression as subversive in nature or communist inspired; this is especially the case once it intrigued white audiences or questioned the motives of American democracy. Douglas Field furthers this point in *American Cold War Culture* as he states that racial progress was often seen as motivated by communists and that "black culture would merge with and miscegenate white American culture".[6] Black political actors and black artists who catered to consumer markets were pressured to address their social and ideological standpoints in the face of communist accusations.

Studies on American Cold War culture have become extensive, touching on a wide range of cultural phenomena including suburban consumption, the commercialization of nuclear

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[3] Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, black consciousness and race relations,* (London: UCL Press, 2008), 107.
[4] Ibid, 107.
[5] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903; reis, New York: Modern Library, 2003), 76.
[6] Douglas Field, ed. *American Cold War Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 88.

fallout, and Cold War themed books and movies.[7] Most scholarship on the culture of the Cold War focuses on the age of McCarthyism; a period from the late 1940s into the mid 1950s in which accusation of subversion and communism were rampant, and allegations were based on limited evidence.[8] The Cold War and American pop culture, as Willis Conover famously stated, the Cold War was won by "blue jeans and jazz", a musical genre originating from African American communities.[9] The Cold War touched black American culture in several ways, and in turn African Americans also shaped the Cold War: from the censorship and FBI surveillance of black writers, the use of black musicians as ambassadors of American democracy overseas, to the blacklists and HUAC investigations of black Hollywood entertainers. Furthermore, there are contrasting differences between the impact that Cold War subversion had on black America versus its impact on white America. Domestic anticommunism often meshed with racism leading to prolonged hardships in Civil Rights progress and fields of black culture.

Within the last five years several magazines and news outlets have highlighted the relationship between subversion and black culture. Some of the titles include "The Red-Baiting of Lena Horne" in *The Atlantic,* "Why did the FBI spy on James Baldwin" in *The Intercept* and "When Ambassadors had Rhythm" in the *New York Times.*[10] The recent interest in the subject shows developing insights on how black culture and the Cold War clashed. The interest in FBI relationships with famous African Americans also opens up a discussion on the racist attitudes

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[7] Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, And Rebels: Cold War and American Politics in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1994).

[8] Ellen Schrecker. *The Age of McCarthyism: A brief history with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994), 1-3.

[9] Robert McG. Thomas Jr., "Willis Conover, 75, Voice of America Disc Jockey," New York Times (May 19, 1996), 35.

[10] John Meroney, "The Red-Baiting of Lena Horne" *The Atlantic,* August 27, 2015. http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/08/the-red-baiting-of-lena-horne/398291/; Hannah K. Gold, "Why did the FBI spy on James Baldwin", *The Intercept,* August 15, 2015, https://theintercept.com/2015/08/15/fbi-spy-james-baldwin/ ; Fred Kaplan, "When Ambassadors Had Rhythm" *New York Times,* June 29, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/29/arts/music/29kapl.html?_r=0.

towards black Americans in established government institutions. Anticommunism during the McCarthy era and after made it increasingly difficult for black artists within literature, music, entertainment and other professional art forms to position racial matters within their work or speak in support of black civil rights, in that ideas of equality were largely supported by leftist ideologies. Therefore, the Cold War had a circumscribing role in black culture as it did in black politics.

This chapter will focus on the dynamics of blackness as portrayed in black literature, music and entertainment. The primary focus of this chapter is to illustrate the ways in which anticommunist agencies saw black culture and black cultural artists as a threat to the stability of American national security during the late postwar period into the 1950's and shortly after. I will argue that African American artists who used their cultural platforms and celebrity to voice concerns over racial inequality in America were often subjected to the criticisms and attacks by the two leading proponents of McCarthyism – the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I will also argue that the popularity and commodification of black culture were seen as a useful propaganda tool to display American modernity; however, to many anti-communists it could also be used as a subversive force to influence white American citizens towards ideals based in communism and racial integration. Black culture has always been a powerful political tool to disclose and overcome African American repressive conditions in American society. Yet, those outside of black society often negatively misunderstood black culture. Though the Cold War initiated a creative response to anticommunist repression of black expression in certain aspects of black culture (i.e black literary circles), this creativity came at a cost of subversive accusations and coercion. The influence of renewed Red Scare political and

social inquisitions is a telling example of the intimidation, misinterpretation and derailment of African American freedoms in the era of Civil Rights.

It is my view that black culture and politics are fundamentally entangled. In order to reach prominence in their professions, black artists dealt with immense discrimination that was based within the politics of their country. This discrimination often forced black cultural figures to confront power structures with the power of their talents and artistry. African American artists were overly politicized no matter what, even if they weren't being especially political, because their presence in mainstream American society threatened the racial status quo.[11] The presence of black entertainers on white suburban TV screens, black literature in schools or black derived music on the radio essentially integrated black Americans into American society on a cultural level, thus, forcing Americans to confront the way blacks were treated on a political and social level.

This chapter makes use of selected biographies and memoirs as the main source base material to portray the experiences, thoughts, and imaginations of individual black cultural activists within Cold War America. Though these sources are subjective in nature they provide a memory of American subversive culture and its impact on black lives that is often excluded from Civil Rights and Cold War historiography. These sources reveal the personal battles and opinions of the individual and collective case studies presented throughout this chapter, allowing the reader to connect with the sense of frustration and ambivalence African American cultural figures encountered owing to the impact of American anticommunism. The incorporation of official Federal and House Un-American Activities documents offer a balance to my source base,

[11] Brundage, *Beyond Blackface,* 2.

through official culture, and often substantiate the claims within the autobiographical and biographical sources employed in this chapter.

The Repression of Black Literature

This section will present examples of black intellectuals who spoke out about subversive attitudes towards their race during the Cold War and Long Civil Rights movement and the ways in which their open criticism brought them under investigation, and in some cases public scrutiny. Focusing particularly on the works and experiences of Richard Wright, James Baldwin and Amiri Baraka, I will illuminate the continual inquiries by anticommunist agencies into the works of the three authors who represented varying approaches towards achieving civil rights for Black Americans, but were all connected by accusations of subversion. I will argue that the three literary icons, as vocal political actors, were intimidated and discouraged from using their intellectual platform and written work to benefit Civil Rights due to the claims of powerful American anticommunist and national agencies that generalized black thought under the label of subversion.

Counterintelligence probing on black intellectuals and their writing dates back to the first Red Scare when numerous writers of the Harlem Renaissance came under investigation for their so called "revolutionary" sentiments including Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright.[12] During this period the FBI (then called the BOI) failed to grasp the distinctions between an array of ideologies including anarchism, socialism and communism. Thus, as a result any radical ideology that was perceived by the Bureau as a force behind the Red

[12] Maxwell, *F.B Eyes"*, 4; Henry Louis Gates and Evelyn Booths Higgenbothom, *Harlem Renaissance Lives: from the African American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 386-386.

Scare became subject to FBI counterintelligence.[13] This is significant because during the Second Red Scare the FBI would fail to differentiate African American politics, as well. Coincidentally, some of the same writers Hoover targeted in the 1920s and 1930s came under FBI watch again in the Cold War era. For example, Langston Hughes' FBI file was first opened in 1940, however the file notes Hughes' activity from the early 30s because the Bureau was interested in noting, "Negroes are growing in international consciousness".[14] It can be argued that the Bureau was surprised by black American intellect and the motives behind their growing political activity. Moreover, investigations into Hughes' life continued up until the 1960s; historians attribute Hughes' retraction from his former leftist opinions and the limited political commentary in his later work to accusations of communist affiliations he received from the FBI and later Joseph McCarthy.[15]

Black intellectuals had long been the voice of their community, expressing struggles the average African American could not due to societal restrictions, including criticizing high powers that sought to silence this expression. *F.B. Eyes* writer William Maxwell comments on the connection between intellectual voice and Cold War subversion stating "the long haul of Afro-modernism was steered by literary intellectuals […] who were convinced that nonfictional government intelligence agents watched them like hawks".[16] In this vein, J. Edgar Hoover retells a story *in Masters of Deceit* about a black man named Ralph who was "proud of his race and eager to help better its status in America". Ralph, according to Hoover, was a well-educated "Negro" who wanted to write about improving black social conditions, but his intentions became

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[13] John Noakes,"Racializing Subversion: The FBI and the depiction of race in early Cold War movies". *Ethnic and Racial Studies 26* no. 4, (2010): 745.
[14] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Langston Hughes File, 3 June 1947.
[15] Singh*, Black Is A Country,* 169*;* Laurie F. Leach, *Langston Hughes: A biography*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 118-119.
[16] Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes,* 221.

skewed when he *naively* joined the Communist Party because they claimed to "work zealously for the Negro".[17] I mention this excerpt from Hoover's Cold War manual because he singles out a black man who was an intellectual and supposedly used his intellect for "deceptive propaganda appeals to advance the communist cause".[18] Thus, this highlights that anticommunists like Hoover were wary of the influence of writers in the African American community. My intention is to highlight how national security agencies, right wing organizations and other proponents of the anticommunist consensus vilified the content of specific African American works and rhetoric on the domestic Cold War and Civil Rights. By using examples from the literature that spoke out against subversion we can get a clear picture of the reality of blacks fighting for civil rights whilst combating pressures of the American Cold War uniformity.

I spoke about Wright as a champion of black transnational strategy in my first chapter, and thus it is no surprise that he was one of the key intellectual leaders who exposed the Bureau's restriction on black written expression. Richard Wright championed not only black rights in the U.S. but human rights for the world's oppressed, which brought him in direct conflict with an American expansionist agenda overseas. In his aptly titled 1949 poem "The FB Eye Blues" he satirizes the experience of those victim to U.S. espionage:

> Woke up this morning
> FB eye under my bed
> Said I woke up this morning
> FB under my bed
> Told me all I dreamed last night,
> Every world I said. [19]

Wright doesn't associate the attention that the FBI gives him to his race, but he does illustrate the impact surveillance had caused to his personal well-being. The fact that the poem is titled "FB

[17] Hoover, *Masters of Deceit,* 110.
[18] Ibid, 110.
[19] As quoted in Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes,* 216.

Eye Blues" suggests discontent. Additionally he writes in another section of the poem that the "Old jealous FB eye ain't ended yet", hinting that the agency watched him for a long time. He also illustrated that this disruption of his privacy - "Breaks my heart in two". It is clear that the interpretation of Wright as a subversive intellectual took a toll on him, and may account for the reason he moved out of the United States by the 50s, ending any further impression he could make on the domestic movement in the U.S. Additionally, biographers like James Campbell attribute Wright's early death from a heart attack to the suppression he felt under constant watch by counterintelligence agencies.[20]

By contrast, James Baldwin linked the impressions of his race to his first experience with the FBI. While in Woodstock, New York in 1945 Baldwin was approached and questioned by two FBI agents because of his friendship with blacks in leftist literary circles. Baldwin assumed that his color had already made him "conspicuous enough in that town".[21] Two things are to be noted about Baldwin's revelation. The first is that Baldwin was being approached by FBI agents prior to becoming a household name. The second is that this happened in 1945, at the beginning of the Cold War. It can be argued that the Bureau's interest in Baldwin sprung from the history of targeting black Americans even prior to the Cold War and the simple fact that his skin warranted him a "conspicuous" image in society. Baldwin notes in his reflective essay *The Devil Finds Work* that the FBI threatened him stating, "what they could do with smart niggers like me". Not only do they use racist terminology to describe his skin colour, but also his position as a "smart" black man. Educated blacks were seen as particularly subversive because of the ways in which they could influence the masses through their writings. This attitude stretches back to

[20] James Campbell, *Exiled in Paris: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Samuel Beckett and others on the Left Bank* (New York : Scribner, 1995), 244.
[21] James Baldwin, "The Devil Finds Work" in *Collected Essays* (NY: Literary Classics Inc, 1998), 547.

the era of slavery when it was illegal for a slave to know how to read all because of the fear that this would bring enlightenment to their oppressed situation; to quote from Horace Mann "education beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of man".[22]

From the early 40s the Federal Bureau of Investigation had made Wright a person of interest. Their initial suspicions were justified by the fact that up until the Second World War Wright was a member of the Communist Party of the USA. However, the FBI continued to be interested in Wright's work after he left the Party. His FBI file in 1942 examined several of his works including *Native Son* and *Twelve Million Black Voice*s and connected them to communist ideas. In the report on *Twelve Million Black Voices* a large section of the book is quoted which focuses in particular on galvanizing the activism of black Americans. The FBI concludes that the material "appeared to be seditious in nature", but doesn't identify the reason behind this assumption.[23] This is quite significant because it shows how anti-subversive agencies thought of expressions of inequality that were fervent in Wright`s work. Bureau investigation into his life continued shortly after Wright left the Party and proclaimed himself an anticommunist. He even contributed his story to *The God that Failed*, a 1949 edited compilation of stories from public intellectuals who were ex-communists; however this did not deter countersurveillance activity on Wright.[24] Although later in his life Wright's focus centered on transnational black liberation movements in Africa, he still continued to articulate that one of the greatest obstacles created for the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. was government surveillance and the expectation of Cold War conformity. For instance, in a 1957 interview in the Parisian magazine *La Nef*, Wright stated

[22] Horace Mann, "Twelfth Annual Report to the Board of Education of the State of Massachusetts (1849)" in Lawrence A. Cremin, ed. *The Republic and the School: Horace Mann and the Education of Free Men* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1957), 86.
[23] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richard Wright File, 8 December 1942.
[24] Arthur Koestler ed, *The God That Failed,* (1949; reis. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 115-163.

that, "due to the Cold War, America declared that she officially had no Negro or racial problem. Any Negro who said the contrary was dubbed "insane" or a Red".[25] His persistent denunciation of the American Cold War sensibility while he was living in Paris drew the attention of the CIA who maintained observation on Wright's activities for the entire time period of his self-appointed exile in France. Both Wright and Baldwin lived a large portion of their lives in Europe in order to escape the racist reality of their birthplace. Baldwin, like Wright, switched between FBI eyes to CIA eyes while he traveled between the U.S and his life as an "exile writer" in France.[26] James Ziegler in his composition on "Richard Wright Following, The God that Failed" attributes Wright's voluntary exile to the "political and racial climate" that he felt had become extreme "as a result of the social values promoted by postwar consumerism and Cold War anticommunism".[27]

Even towards the end of his life Wright continued to use Cold War themes in his novels in order to creatively inform his readers of the anticommunist campaign against black intellectuals. For example, his 1959 novel *Island of Hallucination* was based on black informers and spies for the CIA in Paris. In 1960, the last year of his life, Wright held a lecture for the American Church in Paris where he described the "Situation of the Black Artist and Intellectual in the United States" as a "nightmarish jungle" in which the American government makes routine efforts to silence black artists who use their profession to speak out against the racial

[25] "Are the United States One Nation, One Law, One People?" in Kenneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre**,** *Conversations with Richard Wright* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 175.
[26] Campbell, *Exiled In Paris*, 68.
[27] James Zeigler, *Red Scare, Racism and Cold War Black Radicalism,* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 88. To add, Wright said in 1949 that he felt living away from the U.S allowed him to write freely, "I am especially happy to live in France, in a climate of liberty and tolerance where I can carry on my work." See Michel Salomon, "An interview in Paris with - Richard Wright: On U.S politics", *Labor Action,* May 30, 1949, 3.

status quo.[28] Here, Wright is clearly acknowledging the repressive nature of the Cold War on black cultural political actors who preferred to use their cultural platforms to advance their race. Therefore, Cold War subversion played a large role in Wright's literary work from *Black Boy* to *Island of Hallucination*. It also played a part in forming his disillusionment with the possibility of black liberation in the United States.

James Baldwin, one of the most popular black writers of the late 50s and into the 1960s, was arguably the most publically involved African American writer in the Civil Rights movement in the era of Dr. King and enduring into the Black Power crusade. Historian Douglas Field claims that Baldwin "became the most prolific African American writer of the civil rights era".[29] Singh speaks on Baldwin's significance as well, calling him "perhaps the signal black intellectual of the post-World II era".[30] His visibility in the movement along with many other factors may explain for Baldwin's 1,884-page FBI file. Baldwin was black, gay and ideologically indefinable, a mixture that made him susceptible to Bureau's suspicions. Additionally, Baldwin's public condemnation of the FBI and anticommunist mislabeling of black America contributes to his hefty documented history with the Bureau. As stated earlier, Baldwin had come in contact with the soldiers of anticommunism in his early career. His experience then no doubt shaped his public criticism of state surveillance throughout his career. In 1963 Baldwin contributed to a publication called "A Quarter-Century of Un-Americana: The Tragic-comical memorabilia of HUAC" where he reflected on the absurdity of American censorship.[31] The following year in

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[28] Richard Wright, "The Situation of the Black Artist and Intellectual in the United States" in *American Hunger* (New York : Harper & Row, 1977), 197.
[29] Douglas Field, *All Those Strangers: The Art and Lives of James Baldwin,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 54.
[30] Singh, *Black Is A Country*, 56.
[31] James Baldwin, "A Quarter-Century of Un-American: The Tragic comical memorabilia of HUAC" in Randall Kenan ed. *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings of James Baldwin.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 221.

1964 he wrote the foreword to Anne Braden's book *House Un-American Activities: The Bulwark of Segregation,* where he called the institution "one of the most sinister facts of national life".[32] Baldwin's willingness to speak frankly on the wrongdoings of anticommunist personnel and their insidious ties to black America shows his consistent experience with these agencies, and subsequently helps to highlight why his opposition wanted him silenced.

Proof of Baldwin's public condemnation of domestic Cold War surveillance can be found in his FBI file in September 1963 after Baldwin made two offences against the Bureau. First, he went on national TV and blamed J. Edgar Hoover for the problems in the Civil Rights movement and second he told the *New York Times* that he blamed "J. Edgar Hoover in part for the events in Alabama" in reference to the Birmingham church bombing.[33] The fact that his statements are filed reveal that the FBI was mindful of the image black intellectuals were painting of the Bureau and its stance on black America. Baldwin connects the violence in the South to the FBI's negligence towards black communities. He hints that their interests resided in silencing the movement instead, and as a result the subversive accusations that black cultural leaders received become exceedingly questionable. Douglas Field supports this argument stating that Baldwin's comments often "called attention to claims that the Bureau was not invested in supporting participants in the civil rights movement".[34] Also, historian John Noakes contends, while the country was moving forward in racial progress, Hoover and his men were reducing Civil Rights activism to "communist agitation".[35]

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[32] Anne Braden, *House Un-American Activities: The Bulwark of Segregation* (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1963), 2.
[33] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, James Baldwin File, 11 December 1963.
[34] Field, *All Those Strangers,* 56.
[35] John Noakes, "Racializing subversion: The FBI and the depiction of race in early Cold War movies", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26:4 (2003), 743.

A large majority of Baldwin's work focused on the daily hardships of being black in America based on his personal experiences. Baldwin was often hailed and criticized for his ambiguous nature when it came to Civil Rights strategies. Throughout his career he engaged with the liberal, nationalist, and leftist sides of the movement and reiterated this in volumes of his work from the 1950s into the 1970s. Baldwin's social and political fluidity in the movement is showcased in his Bureau file as the FBI marked him as a communist, nationalist and revolutionary in their efforts to pin him to a subversive label. The Bureau generalized Civil Rights strategies so recklessly that as early as 1963 they claimed that Baldwin campaigned for the objectives of King and the "Black Muslim leader" Malcolm X - black leaders who shared opposing Civil Rights strategies.[36] Moreover, what was it about Baldwin's literary work that deemed him so threatening to antisubversive agencies? Many of Baldwin's books became national bestsellers at the same time that the momentum of the Civil Rights movements was at its peak; hence, any texts that highlighted the inequalities blacks experienced in day to day life like Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* or *Another Country* could be seen as a political tool to incite social change and galvanize white American support for the Civil Rights movement. Consequently, black writers were considered precarious because many illustrated an uncensored depiction of black life, which as a result could ruin the American patriotism that Hoover insisted upon in American life ushered in by the domestic Cold War and the Bureau's tight policing of American life.

What is significant about Baldwin's position in the movement is that his work reflected every stage of black protest. For example, one of Baldwin's most famous works on race

[36] U.S, Federal, James Baldwin, 6 June 1963.

relations, *The Fire Next Time,* received significant attention by the FBI.[37] In the book there are hints of subject points that would be deemed subversive to the anticommunist agency, namely Baldwin's transnationalist view on the similarities between liberation movements overseas and liberation movements at home:

> The word "independence" in Africa and the word "integration" here are almost equally meaningless; that is, Europe has not yet left Africa, and black men here are not yet free [...] The Negroes of this country may never be able to rise to power, but they are well placed indeed to precipitate chaos and ring down the curtain on the American dream.[38]

Baldwin's threat to the American Dream was a threat to American democracy in Cold War terms. The promise of the American dream was one of America's most pervasive Cold War weapons;[39] the assurance of democracy and abundance was promoted around the world, enticing other nations to choose America as a superpower example instead of communist Russia. Thus, his implication that "negroes" were "well placed" to cause "chaos" and "ring down" the American dream through the direction of the Civil Rights movement or a human rights movement could be seen as a disruption to the U.S. national image, giving conservative groups the grounds to quell Baldwin's voice and the movement he advocated. The agency's comments about *The Fire Next Time* filed under "Negro Question Communist Influence in Racial Matters" includes noting in two separate memorandums that the book "strongly advocates integration" and that Baldwin was "very active and vocal in the integration movement".[40] The FBI investigator also highlights that "Baldwin does not regard the Negro as inferior to whites and says the only thing the white man has that the Negro needs is power".[41] Baldwin's clear rejection of societal conceptions of black inferiority was in itself subversive to the Bureau.

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[37] U.S, Federal, James Baldwin, 3 October 1963.
[38] James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*. (Reissue 1995, New York, NY, Modern Library, 1962), 88.
[39] Ryan, "Mapping Containment", 63.
[40] U.S, Federal, James Baldwin, 3 October 1963.
[41] U.S, Federal, James Baldwin, 3 October 1963.

In his 1972 social biography *No Name in the Street,* Baldwin refutes labels that his name had become synonymous with integration as he recalled, "in those great days I was considered to be an "integrationist" -- this was never, quite, my own idea of myself".[42] In other words Baldwin, and his work by association, became exploited as "integrationist" due to the fact that his voice proved to be instrumental in publicizing the non-violent side of the Civil Rights movement that had come to dominate black activism in the late 50s and throughout the 60s. Yet, no matter what ideology Baldwin was affiliated with, the Bureau and others deemed this irrelevant when it came to subversively labelling Baldwin, as his crime was simply lending his career to Civil Rights causes.

Up until the release of his 1972 book *No Name in the Street*, the FBI was analyzing the content of his work and updating Baldwin's file. At the level of historiography, this fact is quite important to justifying the existence of a long Civil Rights movement in relation to Cold War studies. The FBI was still concerned over the atmosphere of discontent in black society because they continued to monitor Baldwin even when Civil Rights issues were relatively muted in American politics during the 1970s. Significantly, in 1972 a memorandum in Baldwin's FBI file sums up why the Bureau paid great attention to Baldwin and other writers like him:

> It is believed that the subject, due to his position as an author, is likely to furnish aid or other assistance to revolutionary elements because of his sympathy and/or ideology.[43]

The statement clearly shows the agency's generalization and their dearth of a nuanced understanding of black thought and protest. Their failure to understand the movement's varying political strategies exposes its disinterest in black rights. Field, in *All Those Strangers,* furthers this suggestion by stating that we can learn a lot about how the FBI views the Civil Rights

[42] James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* (New York, NY: Dial Press, 1972), 94.
[43] U.S, Federal, James Baldwin, 14, July 1972.

movement by looking at how they treated the figureheads of the event.[44] Also historian Natalie S. Robins stresses that the Bureau tended to pay attention to blacks who were in the public eye and could influence the masses; their attention to intellectuals sprang from the rooted mistrust of black voices and the ways in which their expression could sway sympathy, or as anticommunists justified it: "revolution".[45]

Similar to Wright and so many other black social critics who were subjected to the witch hunts of anticommunist agencies, Baldwin felt burdened by the persistent mislabelling of his thoughts. In his 1976 essay *The Devil Finds Work*, Baldwin reflects on his troubled relationship with the FBI stating that the agency "frightened me, and they humiliated me—it was like being spat on, or pissed on, or gang-raped".[46] The personal turmoil Baldwin faced as a result of Bureau spying was tremendous, the language in his essay is hard to swallow, yet his determination to make black realities public indicates that black expression was deemed so taboo because it exposed disturbing truths that America did not want public. The FBI's interest in black intellectuals provides an understanding of how they perceived the Civil Rights movement and black liberation. The fact that the Bureau kept numerous files on the main faces and spokespersons who spoke out in defence of their race reveals deep-seated misunderstandings of black America. Black cultural expression about freedom and revolution was being labelled as subversive by a major government institution that held incredible, if competing, power in the overall bureaucracy. This fact highlights the strength of the Civil Rights movement and individual actors because they were able to survive such formidable opposition.

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[44] Field, *All Those Strangers,* 50.
[45] Natalie S. Robbins, *Alien ink: the FBI's war on freedom of expression* (New York: W. Morrow, 1992), 228.
[46] Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work,* 93.

As demonstrated in Baldwin's story, the investigations of black intellectuals justified by their possible connections to communist influence continued after the years of McCarthy's Red Scare. In Wright's and Baldwin's case the FBI's interest in both men was quite questionable, however does this mishap in their cases prove that other investigations of avowed black communists or leftists were unwarranted? If we take into consideration the career and literary work of Amiri Baraka, the position of anticommunist agencies and suspicions surrounding black literature could be defended to a degree, but not completely justified.

Baraka (born Leroi Jones) was an African American, a Pan-Africanist, a socialist and one of the main writers of the Black Power movement. He is often credited for beginning the Black Arts Movement of 1965 -1975, a branch of the Black Power movement focused on African American artistic expression. This movement, according to James Edward Smethurst, was a direct product of conformity of the McCarthy years and the ensuing disillusionment with non-violence Civil Rights tactics.[47] The Black Arts movement was directly influenced by the respectability strategies of the early Civil Rights years when the NAACP kept timid on issues to adhere to the call of Cold War liberalism. Daniel Widener, author of *Black Arts West,* also discusses how the black arts movement that spread to Los Angeles was shaped by the political right who were convinced that "the arts, education and mass communication" played a hand in "internal subversion".[48] In Baraka's early work, *Blues People,* published in 1961, he spoke on the misinterpretation of black expression under the domestic Cold War lens stating, "the term democracy was blackened by ambitious, but hideously limited men, who thought it simply meant

[47] James Edward Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 34.
[48] Daniel Widener, *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2009), 54.

anticommunism".[49] Evidently, the quotation shows that the Cold War played a role in the development of black literary culture as the African American freedom struggle went on.

A number of Baraka's poems, plays and books during the 1960s touch on conformity in the movement and offer a solution for black inequality through radical socialist reforms. Baraka blended his position on the Civil Rights movement and his appeal to leftist ideologies in his reflective book *Crisis in Boston*, which may account for anticommunist tracking throughout his career*:*

> People who talk about defeatin racism without talking about destroyin capitalism are just tryin to get in to this system; they don't want it eliminated […] That's what happened to the civil rights movement. The masses marched and the middleclass got over […] Our liberation, the total defeat of racism and capitalism demands a socialist solution.[50]

Moreover, Baraka's position at the head of the Black Arts Movement undoubtedly drew suspicions and monitoring from the FBI. By the 1960s, J. Edgar Hoover's Bureau project, COINTELPRO, was in full force. The covert program was basically the 1960s version of McCarthyism; the only difference is that COINTELPRO fixated itself almost exclusively on black activism as the black freedom struggle became a major issue in U.S. politics in the first half of the 1960s.[51] In 1965 Baraka opened the Black Arts Repertory/ Theatre School (BARTS) that aimed to promote black arts in Harlem. However, the BARTS Harlem chapter was only open for a year due to rumors of the organization's misuse of federal antipoverty funding.[52] At BARTS, Baraka encouraged the attitudes of the Black Power movement and revolutionary style self-determination methods that arguably drew the attention of COINTELPRO. The suspicious nature surrounding the closing of Baraka's arts institution is highlighted in his FBI File. The

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[49] Quoted in Singh, *Black Is A Country*, 172.
[50] Amiri Baraka, "Crisis in Boston" in *Crisis in Boston.* (Newark, NJ: Jihad Productions, 1973) 17.
[51] O' Reilly, *Racial Matters*, 104.
[52] Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes*, 117.

Bureau received separate complaints on December 2nd 1965 by two individuals. One anonymous complaint claimed that Jones was using "white tax money to teach colored children to hate us".[53] The other demanded that "immediate action" be taken place to "see that federal anti-poverty funds be not made available to such a cause".[54] Hoover responded to the complaints stating that he would forward them to the "Director, Office of Economic Opportunity for review".[55] Thus, it can be said that the Bureau leader played a significant hand in the closure of BARTS by the end of the year.

I want to address the language used in these complaints as they blatantly show discriminatory attitudes by asking the FBI to prioritize the concerns of "white" taxpayers which embodies a refusal to see black citizenship as African Americans were taxpayers, too. This fact brings into discussion whether simple racism motivated FBI interests in Baraka's career or if the ideological motivation of Cold War subversion was still at play. Perhaps, however, it is difficult to disentangle these motivations, as the BARTS FBI File brings into question the interrelation of racist Bureau attitudes and Bureau anticommunism.

Were Bureau concerns warranted in regards to the content of Baraka's literature? In BARTS' FBI file, documents list several left wing organizations including the Progressive Labor party, Socialist Workers Party and the Revolutionary Action Movement as funders and main promoters of BARTS, warranting FBI suspicions that Baraka's organization affiliated itself with the subversive ideology of communism and black nationalism.[56] Furthermore, if we examine Baraka's poetry and literature, the content checks every description of subversive material. First, his 1966 poem *Black Art* expresses the rising separatist ideology after the death of Malcolm X

[53] United States: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Leroi Jones File, 2 December 1965.
[54] U.S, Federal, Leroi Jones, 2 December 1965.
[55] U.S, Federal, Leroi Jones, 7 December 1965.
[56] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Black Arts Repertory Theatre File, 24 September 1965.

and the passing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. His tone correlates with the disdain of liberal non-violence methods and the promotion of Black Power aesthetics:

> […]We want "poems that kill".
> Assassin poems, Poems that shoot guns.
> Poems that wrestle cops into alleys take their weapons leaving them dead.[57]

His words reflect the contextual atmosphere of the mid 1960s when the momentum of inner city riots across the country saw the Civil Rights movement taking a dramatic turn away from the non-violence of Dr. King and towards confrontational militant black protest, which I will discuss more in the next chapter. His reference to black feuds with law enforcement would surely be regarded as a threat to Bureau Officials, hence explaining for the Bureau's year after year counter surveillance of Baraka's activities. Dialogue like Amiri Baraka's was seen as revolutionary by blacks as well as whites, especially those whites on the right who feared race riots were the beginning of a communist revolution.[58] For example, writers in the right wing *American Opinion* newspaper argued that "sit-ins, shop-ins, lie-ins, mass parades, and the like," led the way for riots to take place so that the "third phase" in the communist five-phase program for taking over the United States could begin. [59]

Though Baraka's violent Black Power expression could be used to paint him as subversive and a danger to America's national security, his work also displayed the continuing grievances of black urban classes who felt that their lives were not changed by the civil rights non-violent strategies in the South. Baraka and the works of the Black Arts movement contained content that revealed that America had not solved its race problem and therefore its position as

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[57] Paul Vangelisti, ed. SOS: Poems 1961 - 2013, Amiri Baraka, (New York: Grove Press, 2014), 149.
[58] See Edward G. Griffin "Anarchy USA: In the Name of Civil Rights*"* in *Hidden Agenda, Vol. 4,* 1965. DVD.
[59] Gary Allen and Bill Richardson, "Los Angeles: Hell in the City of the Angels" *American Opinion* Vol 8, September 1965, quotes on 2 and 10.

an example for the rest of the world was illegitimate. In his 1966 book entitled *Home: Social Essays*, Baraka spoke out candidly on the limitations afforded to black expression due to pressures to uphold a rosy image of American society:

> The most serious problem facing Negro writers, it has seemed to me, and again it is pretty much the same problem that faces any Negro, is that for so long now the white man has told him that his, the Negro's, version of America and the world is shameful fantasy. That such an America, or world, does not really exist.[60]

The deep interests into the lives and work of leading black writers demonstrate that the keen awareness that these public figures could have a tremendous impact on the public. Their work spoke boldly about the infiltration of anticommunist agencies into the black arts scene and made white establishments uncomfortable through their popularity. In truth these black writers were all working towards one goal: the end of black oppression in America. The three writers' experiences with anti-subversive agencies are all different, but they all demonstrate the consequences of open black dialogue on the forces of the domestic Cold War. Each of their FBI files contained memorandums that tried to connect them to perceived communist fronts including the Progressive Party, Workers Party and Artist's Unions. In Baraka's case he was an avowed Marxist but both Wright and Baldwin had disavowed their connections to the radical left, yet under the interpretation of the Bureau, all three works and public comments on race relations were communist in nature and all three had to be censored.

Black Music as a Cold War Weapon

This section will address the contradictory interpretation by white power structures that saw black musical forms as subversive owing to their social commentary and popularity amongst white audiences during the 1950s, whilst using black musical forms as an international

[60] Amiri Baraka, *Home: Social Essays* (New York, NY: Morrow, 1966), 165.

commodity and diplomatic tool in the fight against communist expansion. Through this analysis I will conclude that black culture, as a tool for political expression and as a commodified form, was subjected to accusations of subversion because it could generate the sympathy and attention of mainstream American society, perhaps at a deeper level than politics.

Music was another powerful art form that was used to express black experience in the United States. Amiri Baraka's early work *Blues People* is an interpretive history of African American music and its social impact on America. Baraka states that blacks "could not participate in the dominant tenor of the white man's culture. It was at this juncture that he had to make use of other resources […] that provided the logic and beauty of his music".[61] Baraka argues that African American music styles were greatly influenced by the exclusion of blacks from white society. Similarly, in Baldwin's 1957 short story, *Sonny's Blues,* the main character used music as an artistic expression of his frustrations with the oppressive conditions of African American life and its staunch separation from white society.[62] The cultural impact of black music traditions is often contradictory. African American artists were sometimes revered as symbols of American culture as a whole but the inherent 'blackness' of popular music styles were contained in order to be fully be accepted by mainstream white listeners. Samuel A. Floyd mentions that beginning in the 1950s black musical traditions were threatened by the domestic Cold War. He argues that in this period there were "claims and perceptions that much of the black-oriented cultural and artistic activity […] had been Communist inspired", opening investigations and accusations from the HUAC and right wing journals like *Red Channels*.[63] *Counterattack*, a right wing news media outlet possessed great influence in the HUAC and FBI, and from the height of

[61] Amiri Baraka, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York, NY: Morrow, 1963), 80.
[62] James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" in *Going to Meet the Man* (New York: Dial Press, 1965). 120, 122.
[63] Samuel A. Floyd, "Continuity and Discontinuity: The Fifties." In *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 161.

McCarthyism *Counterattack* assumed that entertainers were using the "fight for justice and civil rights as an excuse for underhanded support of the CP".[64]

A black dominated music genre that was considered to have a subversive message was traditional folk music that originated from spirituals. From the era of slavery, 'Negro spirituals' uplifted the plight of African slaves and the lyrics often contained hopes for religious deliverance and freedom. Slave masters considered this music subversive as it conflicted with the concept of slaves as their property. In a 1950 issue of *Science and Society,* Russell Ames wrote a study on "Protest and Irony in Negro Folksong", which commented on the long history of the "secret cultural and political life of oppressed" African Americans.[65] Ames argues that there has long been a secretive message in traditional black music from its earliest American origins, "specifically political songs of slaves".[66]

It's interesting that Ames wrote about the secret political motives of black folk songs within the early Cold War period as black musicians were being singled out by anticommunist agents who perceived that black music contained pro-revolution or pro-communist content. Similar to the days of slavery, contemporary black music voiced hopes for a better tomorrow; Brundage states it best: "their quest was to create an expressive culture that acknowledged, in ways that were previously inconceivable, their full and complex humanity."[67]Into the 20th century black folk musicians kept up tradition by singing about racial history, work life and the color line. In Harry Belafonte's early career as a folk performer he stated that for him "Going into folk music was originally a study of tradition, of my own people's tradition".[68] For

[64] *Counterattack*, March 23, 1951.
[65] Russell Ames, "Protest and Irony in the Negro Folksong" *Science and Society*, Vol.14 (Jan 1, 1950): 194.
[66] Ibid, 194.
[67] Brundage, *Beyond Blackface*, 4.
[68] Arnold Shaw, *Belafonte: An Unauthorized Biography* (Philadelphia: Chilton Co., Book Division, 1960), 86.

Belafonte folk music was about connecting to the past, whereas other singers lyricized issues of the present. For instance, singer Josh White, in his folk song *Trouble,* exposed the injustice of America's judicial system when it came to race:

> Well, I always been in trouble, 'cause I'm a black-skinned man.
> Said I hit a white man, [and they] locked me in the can
> They took me to the stockade, wouldn't give me no trial
> The judge said, "You black boy, forty years on the hard rock pile.[69]

White's song illustrates the treatment of a "black-skinned man" under a system that claimed it awarded every American a fair trial. It was considerably dangerous for blacks to question American power structures through their music within the changing social climate of the mid-20th century. Brian Ward notes that the conservative censorship that arose on behalf of Cold War America was committed to preserving the domination of "all-American values".[70] Black music was becoming exceedingly popular amongst white America, therefore songs like White's "Trouble" could influence mainstream America into shaking fixed establishments, causing an unstable American image during the years of Cold War conformity.

White, a blues/folk singer who gained fame in the 1940s, was one of the many targets of HUAC subversive accusations in the cultural realm. Folksingers in White's circle entertained at many civil rights and labour union rallies in the mid-1940s that were often organized by the popular left.[71] This made entertainers, speakers and attendants susceptible to the charge of communism. Entertainers were then elevated in the cultural-political area and were many times forced to speak upon their ideas and ideologies openly. Looking closely at his HUAC hearing we can get a clearer picture of the struggle to sustain a career as a musician whilst relaying a message of equality. White was featured on the *Red Channels* list of 1951 as a blacklisted artist,

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[69] Josh White, "Trouble", 1944. http://members.home.nl/zowieso/blues/josh%20white%20lyrics.html#Trouble
[70] Ward, Just *My Soul Responding*, 16.
[71] Jeff Smith. *Film Criticism, the Cold War and the Blacklist: Reading the Hollywood Reds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 85.

namely because of his participation in public performances financed by left wing groups. The way in which White presented his case before the court exposes deeper hesitations towards racial equality heeded by the HUAC. White opens his statement before the HUAC hinting at the overbearing interpretations of subversion surrounding black liberation:

> There are some communist among Negroes **as I am told** just as there are among other Americans. But they don't speak for the rest of us any more than **white communists speak for white Americans**.[72]

As with black literary culture, White's HUAC statement shows that anticommunist agencies either grouped black thought together or mislabelled black ideological strategies towards equality. Both leading anticommunist institutions, the HUAC and the FBI, approached their accusations against famous African Americans by assuming one black communist equalled an entire race of left leaners.

Moreover, White, like so many other black artists, declared his allegiance to America, claiming his association with subversive groups as simply accidental coincidence, while at the same time justifying his musicianship:

> A folk singer, it seems to me is the voice and the conscience of his time and his audience. He tries to put into words and music what those around him feel. This I shall continue to do with God's help as long as there is suffering and discrimination around me and freedom and equality to be won…but that's not communism […] my wife and I are trying to bring up as patriotic and religious Americans.[73]

White's statement in front of the House Un-American Activities highlights several factors that resonate with a Cold War sensibility. White practices respectability rhetoric by noting his Christian beliefs several times in order to showcase that he doesn't share the same values as communists. Also, White mixes patriotism with black respectability religious traditions as a way

[72] Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-first Congress, first session, "Hearings regarding communist infiltration of minority groups: Testimony of Josh White", (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 2838.
[73] "Testimony of Josh White", 2837.

of painting himself as a true American.[74] Though White plays into the instructions of Cold War liberalism he also makes a point to declare before the HUAC that as a folk artist and as a black American his role was to "voice" the "suffering and discrimination" around him.[75]

White's hearing is intriguing because he fights to prove that his songs and performances are pro-civil rights, not pro-communism, but at the same time he wants to highlight that just because communists are interested in black protests that doesn't make the fight for black freedoms illegitimate: "The fact that Communists are exploiting grievances for their own purposes doesn't make those grievances any less real".[76] White demonstrates his awareness that anticommunist agencies were affiliating equality activism with communism in their domestic Cold War. It is important to point out that White's file in the HUAC was stored under the name "Hearings regarding communist infiltration of minority groups," as similar to the FBI, the HUAC made it a priority to single out non-white Americans as targets of subversion. Although the HUAC told White he made "a strong case" for his innocence, White's name stayed on the HUAC blacklist for several years. This in turn tarnished his career and contributed to his rapid decline as a popular American folk singer.[77] White declared to the HUAC that he was "proud of the fact that under our system of freedom everyone is able to speak out-or in my case, to sing out," against injustice. However, his fate is an example of the consequences black artists faced using cultural forms as a way to voice concerns that were deemed subversive in the eyes of Cold War American democracy.

Separate from the HUAC cases of black political actors in music, FBI files on United States Information Agency's black ambassadors who were entrusted to represent America

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[74] White Jr., *The Rise to Respectability*, 5.
[75] "Testimony of Josh White", 2838.
[76] "Testimony of Josh White", 2837.
[77] See Elijah Wald. *Josh White: Society Blues* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 201.

overseas, unveils a racist skepticism that presumed that blacks weren't American enough to complete patriotic tasks internationally and could cripple democratic missions on behalf of race issues on the home front. "Negro ambassadors" for the United States have been a subject of interest for historians studying American foreign policy tactics during the first stage of the Cold War.[78] In order to present a harmonious image to the world and quell criticism of America's race issues, the U.S. government enlisted numerous black entertainers and public figures to promote their racial progress internationally. However, black musical traditions were also regarded as a subversive tool because of their popularity amongst white audiences. Yet, this popularity could also be used as a commodity around the world and as a way to combat international criticism of America's race problem. Baraka's essay "The Great Music Robbery" focuses on this same issue as he states, "now that the music and the culture are no longer termed inferior or primitive as articles of faith, the notion in the last few years has been simply to claim it!".[79] Within the frames of America's postwar consumer culture, black music and musicians had a "purpose": the art form could be commodified and marketed to showcase the advantages of capitalism. In *The Black Culture Industry* author Ellis Cashmore argues that popular black music was often used "in the interests of white-owned corporations […] blacks have been permitted to excel in entertainment only on the condition that they conform to whites' images of blacks".[80] The State Department and American embassy officials took on the same frame of mind when it came to Cold War cultural diplomacy in the 1950s to the early 60s. They concluded that sending African Americans around the world would showcase American cultural capital and also would be effective in countering international criticism. In the book *Jazz Diplomacy*, Lisa Davenport

[78] See Dudziack, *Cold War Civil Rights,* 66*;* Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up The Worlds: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 27-58; Lisa Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009). 27-37.
[79] Vangelisti, *S.O.S Poems,* 330.
[80] Ellis Cashmore, *The Black Culture Industry* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 1.

argues that culture was a powerful way of promoting America's beliefs, including racial equality. With the onset of the Cold War and building criticism towards America's race relations, "American officials reevaluated the American mission: they reinforced the idea that racial equality and survival of American values were not mutually exclusive" by employing black cultural ambassadors.[81]

The United States Information Agency, an organization in charge of promoting the American image and culture around the world, was especially interested in promoting jazz music. Historian Penny Von Eschen, in her work on black Americans and anticolonialism, notes that the State Department employed Jazz Ambassadors in order to show the "progress" the country was making against discrimination and to present a positive image to emerging non-white nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.[82] Musicians like Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington were all persuaded to promote America's rising racial equality overseas while showcasing jazz music for American profit. Similar to the politics of Cold War liberalism discussed in the previous chapter, black intellectuals commented on other manifestations of the "exaggerated" American. Franklin Frazier's article in the *Negro Digest* speaks critically on this period in which blacks were used as cultural diplomacy tools. In the article he exposes the hypocrisy of this American program that presents "blacks for sale" and "running around the world telling Africans and others how well-off Negroes are in the United States and how well they are treated".[83] Frazier points out the irony of black culture in relation to American society, in that it was up for "sale" yet at the same time discouraged because of its content. Black musicians were used to spread Cold War cultural diplomacy globally, but were

[81] Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy,* 28.
[82] Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up The World,* 177.
[83] Franklin Frazier, "The Failure of the Negro Intellectual", *Negro Digest,* February 1962, 31.

deterred from relating their experiences of oppression to subordinated peoples overseas. Instead, black musicians were questionably put under the watchful eye of American counterintelligence agencies. This is another example of the Cold War as a convenient guise to cover opposing views towards racial unity.

In particular, Louis Armstrong, a regular employee of the USIA ambassador program, was perceived as an "Uncle Tom" figure by many in the movement because he was largely accepted by white society, having limited his position on race relations and politics in the United States unlike his contemporary Paul Robeson .[84] His position was often criticized by black activist and cultural political actors who saw his cartoonish style of performance as reverberating with a black stereotype for white economic and cultural capital.[85] For example his Jazz contemporary Dizzy Gillespie stated in an *Esquire* interview "I violently disagree with [Louis Armstrong] because of his Tom-like-subservience - nowadays no cat should be a Tom".[86] However, in the midst of moves to desegregate the South, Armstrong shook up America's perception of him, threatening the legitimacy of the country's overseas cultural diplomacy tours. Armstrong served multiple ambassador missions throughout the 40s to 50s for the USIA circuit. Thus, it was a surprise when he brought the realities of America's race dilemma and the U.S. international cultural efforts to thwart communism together in 1957 after the National Guard blocked black students from entering a Little Rock high school. Armstrong publicly criticized Eisenhower for being "two faced" towards the cause of Civil Rights and opted out of his jazz ambassador tour to the U.S.S.R. stating:

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[84] The term "Uncle Tom" originated from the 1852 anti-slavery book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* whose protagonist was based on a stereotypical representation of a black male slave that was dutiful to white authority and has neutral feelings towards his subservient position.

[85] Daniel Stein, *Music Is My Life: Louis Armstrong, Autobiography, and American Jazz* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 227**;** Brando Simeo Starkey, I*n Defense of Uncle Tom Why Blacks Must Police Racial Loyalty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147.

[86] Dizzy Gillespie and Ralph Ginzburg, "Jazz Is Too Good for Americans" *Esquire,* June 1957, no page number.

> The people over there ask me what's wrong with my country. What am I supposed to say? The way they are treating my people in the South, the government can go to hell.[87]

Armstrong's reaction is significant in multiple ways. First, he refuted career long claims by black peers and activists that he was an Uncle Tom figure who said little about racial equality. Second, Armstrong criticized the President and exposed the false image of America's Cold War propaganda overseas. The impact of one of the world's most famous black musicians exclaiming that the "government can go to hell" would have enormous repercussions on America's cultural diplomacy as well a celebrity boost to the Civil Rights movement. Penny M. Eschen summarizes this view by stating, "Armstrong's coming out publically against Eisenhower and overtly linking his own willingness to represent the U.S. government to its position on Civil Rights hardly made him the ideal ambassador in the government's eyes".[88]

The fact that the FBI opened a new file on him after his statements reveals that Armstrong's condemnation of his country rose suspicions in the leading domestic antisubversive agency. One particular entry in his file labelled him a "communist" and asked the Bureau to push the State Department to seize his passport.[89] Anticommunist agencies knew that Armstrong held tremendous power, as he was popular amongst whites and people of color around the world. The State Department was aware of his popularity as well; hence their efforts to keep him as a goodwill ambassador after 1957.[90] Though Armstrong did not lose his career for his outspoken criticism of the government's handling of integration as Josh White did, the mere fact that an FBI file was opened after his statements were made indicates anticommunist suspicions over vocal Civil Rights support. It can be argued that investigations of black music ambassadors

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[87] "Satchmo' Tells Off Ike, US!", *Pittsburgh Courier,* September 28 1957, 3. Note the title of the article claims that Armstrong's statements are not only an attack against Eisenhower, but also America.
[88] Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World, 63.*
[89] Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 66.
[90] "Armstrong May Tour: U.S Hopes He'll Visit Soviet Despite Segregation Issue," *New York Times,* September 26 1957, 15.

exposed anticommunist institutions' heavy ambivalence towards the Civil Rights movement that went beyond fears of subversive influence, but suggested instead possible fears of a profoundly changing American society under the banner of racial equality. This provokes the question: Were the FBI and American government officials who brought accusations against black cultural figures motivated by what they thought was an infection of communism in the country or did it have more to do with the deeply ingrained mistrust of blackness and the fear of black advancement? Josh White's case was a testament to elite anticommunists' fears of black advancement thanks to a 'manipulated' white populace.

Historian James Jennings states that the relationship between black culture and politics helps us understand clearer the "evolution of race relations in the United States". His statement that "culture and art can be utilized by wealthy and powerful interest to manage race"[91] is astute, as powerful institutions like the State Department and the FBI used black culture to project a particular hypothesis that either branded black culture a tool to eradicate communism or a tool to spread it. Additionally, Dudziak describes the clash between traveling black musicians and the U.S. government and the Cold War "etiquette" that was expected when it came to race politics:

> Domestic problems were to be shielded from outside ears. And the discourse on civil rights was bounded by the terms of Cold War liberalism. Some level of liberal activism would be tolerated, but only if articulated in a way that did not challenge the democratic order .[92]

The "liberal activism" that could be "tolerated" was the type of Cold War liberal rhetoric that the State Department could benefit from by acquiring jazz ambassadors like Armstrong and encouraging them to speak in ways that did not "challenge the democratic order". However,

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[91] Cashmore, *The Black Culture Industry,* 1.

[92] Mary Dudziak, "Josephine Baker and the Cold War" in Michael L. Krenn ed, *The African American Voice in U.S. Foreign Policy Since World War II* (New York & London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998), 568.

when Armstrong condemned President Eisenhower and when White used his lyrics to express his yearning for freedom these artists articulated civil rights issues in a way that challenged the "democratic order", and as a consequence they were categorized as subversive.

Subversion and Black Hollywood

Post-war American films expressed the anticommunist sentiment that had pervaded American life in the setting of the Cold War. For many Americans fearful of communist menace, film was also thought to be a device used by the "Fifth Column" of Moscow".[93] During the 1940s, American propaganda agencies educating the public about communism employed certain assumptions about who and what was communist. In a few films made by the United States Information Agency, minorities, namely Jewish Americans and African Americans, were stereotyped as the main perpetrators of subversive activity. For example, in the 1949 film *Red Menace,* about the chaos within the Communist Party of America, one of the main characters is a black party member named Sam Wright. Sam joins the Communist Party because of the organization's promise to commit to black grievances. Wright later quits the CPUSA on account of his faith and the CP member's exploitation of his gullible nature.[94] The film assumes that African Americans are likely to consider communism due to issues of equality and civil rights. American Cold War propaganda films were making the connection between blacks and the postwar communist zeitgeist as early as 1949. John Noakes presents a study on the early Cold War period and blacks in film in his article "Racializing Subversion". In the article Noakes presents several examples of films made in the 1940s and early 50s that came under investigation by the FBI and the HUAC because of their progressive portrayal of black characters and race

[93] Jewish Women's Archive. ""Don't Patronize Reds!" Advertisement by Anonymous." (Viewed on July 19, 2016) <http://jwa.org/media/dont-patronize-reds>.
[94] R.G Springsteen, *Red Menace.* Republic Pictures. 1949.

relations in their plots. Noakes argues that Hoover and his Bureau singled out these films because equality was a communist concept, but equality was also a concept many white American were not willing to accept, thus proving a racialized agenda within domestic Cold War frames:

> In its analysis of the subversive content of movies the FBI moved beyond the assignment of guilt by association. By explaining not only that a script was subversive, but also why, the FBI revealed its association of whiteness with Americanism and blackness with subversion.[95]

Noakes' argument suggests that the Cold War and communism were used as a guise to hide opposition towards black equality. In this vein, actor Harry Belafonte reflected on this period in which he and those in the industry became privy to subversive accusations stating, "to Hollywood it (movies about black life) seemed radical, to us it wasn't that radical".[96] Noakes focused his study on the blacklisting of Hollywood films containing progressive content about race; however, the blacklisting of Hollywood's African American actors and actresses in the advent of McCarthyism also presents important insight into the clash between anticommunism and black culture. By highlighting the experience of Black Hollywood under the investigation of the FBI, HUAC and other anticommunist agencies from the late 40s into the 1960s, I will demonstrate that anticommunists clearly feared the impression black actors and actresses could make on the American public in regards to racial equality.

It is well known that in the age of McCarthyism several Hollywood actors and actresses were infamously blacklisted due to their suspected communist sympathies. Several black entertainers found their names on Hollywood blacklists or came close to being named.[97] In June

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[95] Noakes, "Racializing Subversion", 745.
[96] Quoted in Steven J. Ross, *Hollywood Left and Right: How Movie Stars Shaped American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 194.
[97] Daniel J. Leab ed, *A Guide to the Microfilm edition of Communist Activity in the Entertainment Industry: FBI Surveillance Files on Hollywood, 1942–1958* (Bethesda, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1991), v-xi.

1950 *Red Channels,* a right wing report, released a list that outlined over 100 artists, entertainers and public figures who were suspected to be communist supporters. The pamphlet was issued by *Counterattack*, a right wing organization that had close ties to the House Un-American Activities as the HUAC based their Hollywood investigations on the *Red Channels* subversive suspicions.[98] Though only a few black entertainers were listed in the *Red Channels* official pamphlet, its publishers at *Counterattack*'s journal voiced its suspicions towards several black entertainers in television and film. The subversive claims on black entertainers is important to my overall thesis because the blacklisting of African American celebrities brought added difficulties to the already narrow opportunities presented to them in the industry.

Prior to 1945 movie roles for black actors were quite stereotypical. Many had to settle for background roles as clowns, mammies, and uncle toms, all characters that rarely had any opinions. The subservient place black actors and actresses had in Hollywood limited the impact they could make in civil rights politics. In fact prior to the Second World War, then President of the NAACP Walter White argued against entertainment figures participating in Civil Rights issues, as stereotypical black roles hindered the advancement of the black public image through the movement.[99] However, into the McCarthy era the NAACP and other social critics began to pressure Hollywood to drop their stock depictions of blacks in order to advance the positive influence film mediums could have on white audiences.[100] For example, in a 1959 issue of *Film Quarterly*, editor Albert Johnson argues that the U.S. Motion Picture code of racial representation was "notoriously outdated" and left questions about race relations in America

[98] Ross, *Hollywood Left and Right*, 117.
[99] Emilie Raymond, *Stars for Freedom: Hollywood, Black Celebrities, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 49; Jenny Woodley. *Art for Equality: The NAACP's Cultural Campaign for Civil Rights* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014) 97-126.
[100] Noakes, "Racializing Subversion", 72.

"vague, inconclusive and undiscussed".[101] During the same time that the NAACP worked to advance the black position in the industry, the FBI, in collaboration with anticommunist agencies in Hollywood, were racializing their investigations of subversion in movies and television. Progressive portrayals of blacks in movies like *Body and Soul* and *Hazard* were an indication that communists had infiltrated Hollywood. [102]

On the surface these agencies cautioned that their popularity could incite the public towards communism, but underneath it can be argued that famous celebrities lending their face and voice to a growing Civil Rights movement would garner widespread support from a sympathetic white America, and therefore force a radical change in the landscape of American society. Celebrity faces of the Civil Rights movement such as Sidney Poitier, Harry Belafonte and Lena Horne held enormous power in that they could increase the visibility and publicity of the black struggle because of their public status and celebrity. By looking at the story behind the activism of some of black Hollywood's most famous faces and their struggles to promote Civil Rights while sustaining a credible career in the business we can get a clearer perception of the subversive nature of Cold War policies and institutions of the day and their impact on another facet of black culture in age of Civil Rights.

Beginning in the late 1940s further pressure was put on black entertainers and actors to voice their stance on anticommunism after the issue of *Red Channels* blacklist of Hollywood elites and Paul Robeson's public controversy. People in the entertainment industry were particularly targeted because of their left wing affiliations and the anticommunist belief that the movie and television industry would be the easiest ways for the U.S.S.R. to implement a fifth column by influencing Americans through media. For African American entertainers, the target

[101] Albert Johnson, "Beige, Brown, or Black Fall" *Film Quarterly,* 1959, 39.
[102] See FBI commentary in Noakes, "Racializing Subversion", 738.

on Hollywood was another obstacle in the struggle to be a successful black artist in a business tailored for white faces. Emilie Raymond notes that persistent racism and Cold War political culture made life difficult for black actors in Hollywood.[103] Likewise, Jenny Woodley demonstrates that anticommunism and its collision with race in Hollywood "would provide a tricky course to navigate" for black entertainers".[104]

Many black stars were pressured into signing loyalty oaths where they declared that they were not members of the Communist Party and renounced any type of communist activity in order to continue working in their profession. Noakes' study pointedly emphasizes the strength and significance of sources written by African American cultural figures of this period as well as the work of scholars that have dedicated their research to narrate the life of these celebrities. He argues that though the Hollywood Red Scare was not seen as a "racialized historical phenomenon," [105] biographies and autobiographies of black Hollywood stars challenge that notion. For example, prior to the production of the film *Bright Road* released in 1953, lead stars Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte were required to pass anticommunist issued loyalty clearances in order for the film to be made.[106] The film was rare for its time, as its plot focused on an African American elementary school and starred an all-black cast in an industry hesitant to promote diversity to the American public. The film was made during the time of Brown vs. the Board of Education and the fact that the film revolved around the education system for African Americans may contribute to the reason why Dandridge and Belafonte had to sign anticommunist loyalty oaths in order for the film to be released.

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[103] Raymond, *Stars for Freedom,* xv.
[104] Woodley, *Art for Equality,* 145.
[105] Noakes, "Racializing Subversion", 737.
[106] "Belafonte States His Case", *Counterattack*, February 12, 1954, no page number.

Not all black actors agreed to sign loyalty oaths or denounce other black actors suspected of subversion. For example, Sidney Poitier refused to sign an oath, and according to his 2011 autobiography he was "blacklisted" because of his friendships with Canada Lee and Paul Robeson.[107] Guilty by association would be a prominent argument used by the HUAC and FBI to accuse Hollywood actors of subversion. It is arguable that the same can also be said in the case of black actors as on American anticommunist interpretations of black literary ideology, in that black opinion and thought were often generalized rather than individualized. Hence, the FBI and HUAC consistent use of guilty by association arguments. Numerous African American actors were pressured to publically proclaim the infamous statement that they were "not now nor had they ever been members of the Communist Party" in order to sustain their careers.

Robeson's public declaration supporting socialism and denouncing American capitalism put a target not only on black Hollywood, but also on entertainers and popular artists. *Counterattack,* the journal in charge of the *Red Channels*, had labeled stars like Dorothy Dandridge, Harry Belafonte, Sammy Davis Jr, Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee "unpatriotic" because they refused to drop their affiliations with Robeson.[108] Many of Robeson's friends, including actor Harry Belafonte, were approached by the HUAC to testify against Robeson, but refused to do so.[109] The careers of actors who refused to denounce the Communist Party or Robeson's vocal criticism of the U.S. were sometimes threatened; in the case of Canada Lee his refusal to conform to the status quo led him to meet the same fate as Robeson. As we have seen in the sections on black literature and black music, anticommunist agencies drew whatever ties they could between the political activity of black cultural icons and communism, no matter how

[107] Harry Belafonte and Michael Shnayerson, *My Song: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 2011), 117.
[108] Raymond, *Stars for Freedom*, 14, Harry Belafonte and Michael Shnayerson, *My Song: A Memoir.* 187.
[109] Ibid, 187.

tenuous the link may have been. In Canada Lee's case he was a black actor who pioneered roles for other black actors in Hollywood while participating in various activities that promoted civil rights and black arts in the 1940s. From the 1930s the FBI held a file on Lee but investigations escalated as his career became more prominent and Lee was given the opportunity to shine in roles that refuted black stereotypes in film. His race, his profession and friendship with Robeson drew the suspicions of the FBI and committee members of the HUAC.

Lee's response to FBI agents in 1949 who threatened to blacklist him if he didn't give up information on Robeson likely may have caused him his career in the business:

> I am not going to divide my people […] I may not agree with everything that Robeson says, but I'll be damned if you're going to get me to fight another great American Negro.[110]

His rhetoric is important not only because he refuses to conform to the witch-hunts of the day and condemn his peers but it also reveals a sense of pride in black identity that was deemed threatening to the racial makeup of America. By calling Robeson "another great American Negro", Lee upholds the dignity of black identity that had in many ways been threatened by the anticommunist agenda that made some black actors afraid to sustain their position as political actors in the face of Cold War pressures. The statement "all you trying to do is split my race" is even more significant as it substantiates my argument that anticommunism was used as a specious pretext to cripple the growing black rights movement. Three years later Lee would die from a heart attack. His biographer Mona Z. Smith attributed his death to the threat of the blacklist and the dramatic fallout he faced in Hollywood as a result of his vocal opposition to the HUAC.[111]

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[110] Mona Z. Smith, *Becoming Something: the Story of Canada Lee* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2004), 295.
[111] Smith, *Becoming Something,* 368.

Scholarship on the subject of Cold War and Civil Rights tends to place all its focus on Robeson's case. However, other black celebrities vocal about the repression of blacks in the United States faced the same ostracization as Robeson did before the House Un-American Activities. Hazel Scott Powell's slow fade out of the public eye in the 1950s was a direct cause of her trial in front of prosecutors in the HUAC that officially labeled her a communist and enemy to American democracy. Powell was a rising black actress/entertainer in the 1940s who was also very involved in promoting equal treatment for black Americans alongside her husband, politician Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Her growing popularity garnered her a self-titled television program in 1950, making her the first African American woman to have her own TV program.[112] However, her increasing celebrity brought her a few enemies, including the editors of the *Red Channels* publication who placed her on its infamous blacklist. The vilification of Powell's involvement in any political activity is an example of how anticommunist agencies felt threatened by the influence black entertainers could have on public opinion and how hard it was for blacks to dissuade subversive accusations.

Whereas most people who were suspects of subversion were instructed to appear in front of the HUAC, Hazel Scott, on September 22nd 1950, requested an appearance to testify before the HUAC committee in order to defend her political position and end rumours of her communist affiliation perpetrated by *Red Channels* blacklist. Powell approaches the HUAC hearing by proposing "positive methods" to deal with "communists in the entertainment profession".[113] Powell labelled the methods of anticommunists who have attempted to root out communists in the entertainment industry as "mud-slinging and unverified", a bold statement to make in front of

[112] Louis Robinson, "Hazel Scott Comes Home to the 'Action' " *Ebony,* March 1968, 96.
[113] "Testimony of Hazel Scott Powell. Hearing."*Testimony of Hazel Scott Powell. Hearing* 1 (1951), 3612. http://www.heinonline.org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/HOL/Page?handle=hein.cbhear/cbhearings0138&collection=congrec&id=1

the HUAC who upheld the same suspicions that *Counterattack* did. In particular her direct criticism of *Counterattack* shows how powerful the organization had become in influencing who were communists in the American mainstream:

> Typical of the wrong, mud slinging approach are the activities of an organization called *Counterattack*, which publishes an index of alleged Communist and Communist sympathizers in the entertainment world…In spite of these claims, *Red Channels* does include persons completely devoted to democracy, and does label them subversive in the minds of the public.[114]

Her statements are quite relative to this subject as she points out that the anticommunist agency has framed Civil Rights initiatives led by activists "devoted to democracy" as 'subversive', therefore affecting the support equal rights could accumulate amongst "minds of the public". In her testimony Powell does not shy away from voicing the unfair nature of communist allegations and how these accusations have hurt people in her profession. At one point she states that "as it stands now, if they get a few phone calls you are dropped from your job".[115] Her association with leftist Civil Rights leaders and organizations is brought up throughout her hearing. Affiliations with communist Benjamin Davis, Paul Robeson and the Civil Rights Congress seem to be interpreted by these HUAC figureheads as a clear indication of her communist sympathies.

Powell calls out the nonsensical methods of the right wing journal, particularly how they interpret any contact with a leftist as an indication of communist sympathies. Significantly Powell addresses her association with black communist Benjamin Davis in 1943 who was running for New York Council. She argues that her continued support of Davis in 1943 "would not be proof of Communist sympathies" as he was popular amongst Democrats in the districts. Also she notes that Davis was the only "Negro running" and blacks in New York supported him wholeheartedly because it was an opportunity rarely presented to African Americans "in the

[114] Ibid, 3612.
[115] "Testimony of Hazel Scott Powell", 3614.

North" due to racism.[116] Powell was appearing before the HUAC to bring an end to the missed job opportunities in the entertainment industry as a result of the anticommunist crusade.

Like Josh White in his HUAC testimony, Powell appeals to a pro-American, pro-democratic rhetoric typical of African American respectability strategies when defending her profession. She makes it known that entertainers have played their part in promoting the American way around the world, therefore their loyalty is clear. Powell's HUAC testimony adheres to the "exaggerated" American concept by referring to her fellow peers as a "loyal troupe of patriotic, energetic citizens, ready to give their all for America", yet she also is not shy to renounce the inaccuracies in HUAC accusations. She boldly states that if the organization continues to scapegoat the entertainment industry they will "demoralize them and end up with a dejected, wronged group whose creative value has been destroyed".[117] Additionally, throughout Powell's statement she presents proof of her nonsubversive affiliation, including telling the committee that she voted for Harry S. Truman, that she donates to several Christian churches and that she performed several times for the American military.[118] Scott positions herself away from subversive behaviour by taking up respectability tactics that prove her dedication to standard American values such as religion and militarism.

Yet despite her efforts, a week after her appearance in front of the committee her pioneering television show was cancelled and for the years that followed she was dropped from several projects for continuing to denounce McCarthyism and racial segregation in the industry.[119] The mix of her open opposition to racial segregation of any form and her acute

[116] "Testimony of Hazel Scott Powell", 3621.
[117] "Testimony of Hazel Scott Powell", 3620.
[118] "Testimony of Hazel Scott Powell", 3622-24.
[119] Donald Bogle, *Primetime blues: African Americans on Network Television* (New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 520.

criticism of Cold War influenced purges in America arguably accounted for Hazel Scott Powell's fallen career in Hollywood. Aram Goudsouzian, a biographer for Sidney Poitier, mentions that during the 1950s Cold War culture hung "the specter of communism" over basic "liberal reforms" making it difficult for any Civil Rights activity to progress.[120] That being said, Hazel's story shows that African Americans who attempted to speak out against racism and the "mudslinging" of anticommunist campaigns risked the possibility of encountering consequences in their personal and professional lives due to the paradox of American Cold War culture.

Though many blacks in Hollywood did not lose their prestige, as did Robeson and Powell, a large number of them were threatened by conservative attitudes that hindered the way in which entertainers participated in the Civil Rights movement. Taking into consideration a case study of Harry Belafonte, we can get a better understanding of the impact of the Cold War in America as it related to famous black faces who were involved in black liberation. Belafonte was becoming a rising star in the 1950s as an entertainer and actor; he was also very much involved in advancing black arts and society. Similar to Powell, as Belafonte gained more public notoriety, *Counterattack* made him a feature figure in their weekly newsletter. On January 8th 1954 the right wing newsletter declared Belafonte "A Communist fronter" because of his leading role in John Murray Anderson's Broadway play *Almanac.* [121]The popularity of the play escalated anticommunist suspicions due to the great reviews and building status Belafonte was receiving for the production. [122] The media outlet named numerous performances delivered by Belafonte prior to 1954 for supposed communist front audiences including the Distributive Workers Union and National Council of Arts. *Counterattack* also states that "Belafonte also entertained with

[120] Goudsouzian, *Sidney Poitier*, 65.
[121] "Facts to Combat Communism Issue," *Counterattack,* January 8 1954, no page number.
[122] Ibid.

Robeson at the first convention of the Committee for the Negro in Arts," clearly using his association with Robeson as an incentive to connect him to communism.[123] *Counterattack's* interest in Belafonte's career is an example of the challenges black entertainers faced in efforts to achieve success while promoting the value and political nature of black culture. This is significant because in the 1950s inequality in show business was rampant and to have another force that obviously had a serious influence on national security agencies adding to black hardships reveals the larger implications of the Cold War in America.

Counterattack's influence was so pertinent that Belafonte felt the need to respond to these accusations in order to curtail any consequences they could have on his career. Responding to accusations of left wing affiliation was a common action pursued by black entertainers such as Lena Horne in order to sustain their rare position in the limelight. In the February 12th 1954 issue of the newsletter under the heading "Belafonte States His Case" the editor states:

> Belafonte has since approached Counterattack to clarify his stand in regard to the Communist Party and its fronts. He says he is not and has never been a member of the Communist Party and has never knowingly associated with any Communist front. He also states that as a Roman Catholic, a Negro and an American he hates Communism and everything it stands for. [124]

The fact that Belafonte includes his race as an indication to prove his non-affiliation with communist ideologies may show his awareness about subversive charges on black Americans, especially those in the movement who were outspoken about inequality. He also appeals to his religion and his American citizenship much like Josh White and Hazel Scott Powell to prove how spurious the accusations that tied him to communism were. Again, Belafonte's employment of his Christian heritage and patriotism emphasizes the role of respectability in black thought and strategy.

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[123] Ibid.
[124] "Belafonte States His Case", *Counterattack,* (February 12 1954), no page number.

In his autobiography, *My Song* written in 2011, Belafonte explains his position and the "scary time" during the blacklist years. He recalls that he became a "suspicious character" after the publication and that he basically told them what they wanted to hear. He expressed that he was "tainted by the mutterings of these self-appointed judges, who were, in fact, former FBI agents…the slightest whisper of communist sympathies hung in the troubled air".[125] In the quotation Belafonte outlines the rising atmosphere of Cold War suspicion and how these alleged communist sympathies became a legitimate threat in his life. Despite signing a loyalty oath and defending himself to *Counterattack*, Belafonte found himself "blacklisted" for the rest of the 1950s. Into the 1960s Belafonte continued to be eyed by the FBI as he became a central figure in the movement. His dilemma shows the interactions of black entertainers with the Cold War atmosphere and how this affected their prominence in the Civil Rights movement. It wasn't until the beginning of the 60s that more entertainers became vocal and visible in denouncing racism in America. For example, black actress Diahann Carroll recalled that after the period of McCarthyism and public anticommunist terror on blacks and Civil Rights groups "It was wonderful to be able to verbalize all this and not be afraid because there were so many of us doing it".[126] In addition, Hazel Scott Powell kept low-key on black inequalities after her public shaming by the HUAC; she only began to speak out in support of the movement when the era of non-violence protests led by Dr. King became too large to refute.[127]

The black celebrities who survived McCarthyism and dodged the prying eyes of the FBI were able to bring in a wider audience to the Civil Rights movement. It can be argued that celebrities possibly had the same amount of influence and power that helped sway public opinion

[125] Belafonte and Shnayerson, *My Song*, 114.
[126] Quoted in Raymond, *Stars for Freedom*, 128.
[127] "Hazel Scott Comes Home to the 'Action'", 96.

on the Civil Rights movement as Civil Rights organizations did. Steven J. Ross contends that celebrities like Belafonte were often successful at using their "stardom" to serve their "politics".[128] To emphasize the impact of famous faces on public opinion, in 1963 after the March on Washington, the United States Information Agency organized a Civil Rights panel discussion consisting of popular cultural icons Belafonte, Baldwin and Poitier. Notably, these actors also brought in the support of white Hollywood, as beloved white actors Charlton Heston and Marlon Brando were present in the Civil Rights discussion.[129] As popular public figures that have gained trust and acceptance with American audiences these individuals could command more attention on Civil Rights issues. White Americans enjoyed the movies and television programs that starred the likes of Poitier, Belafonte, Sammy Davis Jr. and so many others, and as a result they could become sympathetic if the rights of these entertainers were being restricted. The power that supportive celebrity voices had was undeniable; they were projected in news segments and front-page pictures of political protests such as the March on Washington. If we consider the hurdles thrown by the surreptitious work of anticommunist and other American Cold War agencies that resulted in a few black actors losing their prominence and careers, the success of the movement through the help of popular black entertainers can be appreciated on a larger scale.

Black culture as well as black cultural icons had the power to influence attitudes about race in America at a time in which the America's race problem was a popular and much discussed topic nationally and internationally. To those forces fighting subversive and communist sources within America, aspects of black culture were seen as suspicious because of

[128] Ross, *Hollywood Left and Right*, 185.
[129] *Hollywood Roundtable: Civil Rights, 1963*. 2008. Accessed July 11, 2016. http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=99232&xtid=48826.

its power to influence. Historian Robert E. Washington sums up this perspective perfectly in his book *The Ideologies of Black American Literature:*

> The first assumption, that American society was moving toward liberal racial reform appeared to be confirmed not only by the growing white American interests in black American life […] but also, and more important, by the attraction of many younger white Americans…to black American culture.[130]

As I have demonstrated the FBI, the HUAC and other domestic Cold War warriors targeted African American writers, singers and entertainers under the notion that they were sympathetic to communism or working for a communist front, using the repressed position of their race as a way to coerce the masses. However, it can be argued that from the end of World War Two into the 1970s that these forces used the banner of anticommunism to repress black activism that exposed the world to the contradictions in American democracy. Black subordination and concerns were being ignored, as they had to settle for concessions mentioned in my previous chapter. Black writers who illustrated black life untarnished by white opinion were persecuted by counterintelligence agencies for refusing to be silent. Black entertainers who devoted time to advancing black visibility in the film mediums as well as Civil Rights causes had their careers threatened by the HUAC and red-baiters in *Counterattack*.

It can be said that the treatment that black cultural icons received from the agents of Cold War anticommunism within America perpetrated the age-old racist expectation that blacks should remain voiceless in politics and submissive under the established white power structure. Historians such as Kenneth O'Reilly and Gerald Horne have argued that the Bureau especially held up the processes of institutional racism as they were concerned that equality legislation

[130] Washington, *The Ideologies of African American Literature,* 25.

would subvert the American way of life.[131] However, the FBI operated within a network of other anticommunist institutions like the HUAC and *Counterattack*, who also circulated subversive accusations on black artists who spoke out about race issues or were progressing their status making their presence known within white dominated cultural fields. This tells us that there was a larger underlying fear of black cultural expression in the 20th century.

The fear of influential black figures in American public life went beyond those African Americans in cultural spheres. As the movement was increasingly pushed to the forefront of American life during the 1960s, leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. achieved tremendous influence over the way divergent black communities as well as white Americans thought about and approached Civil Rights protest. Progress for the Civil Rights movement and black activists reached new heights in the climate of the 1960s, which in turn aroused recurrent concerns from those claiming to fight subversive influences in the United States.

[131] O 'Reilly, *Racial Matters*, 358; Gerald Horne, *Black liberation/red scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party,* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 315.

The Death of the "exaggerated" American

> These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wounds of a frail world, new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. We in the West must support these revolutions. – *Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence* - Martin Luther King Jr., 4th April 1967.

In my first chapter I spoke briefly about the change from Cold War inclined Civil Rights litigation methods to direct action that was prevalent in the South, which shaped the movement in a more radical form; this radicalism deepened substantially into the mid 1960s. This chapter will continue my focus on the ways in which America's Cold War affected the long Civil Rights movement. Here I am especially interested in the ways in which the resurgence of transnational views on black liberation influenced by the popularity of Black Power philosophies, frustrations over black respectability strategies, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s opposition to the Vietnam War threatened the fixed position of Cold War liberalism and ushered in a new age of black radical perspectives towards American democracy.

The 1960s in Civil Rights historiography is largely considered to be the height of the movement. In many narratives of this social phenomenon, the movement begins and ends in this decade due to major feats such as the March on Washington, the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act.[1] In Cold War Civil Rights historiography, the narrative tends to end here. By doing this, scholars erase a number of international and national Cold War processes that were prevalent in the 1960s and into the 70s. The long 1960s, a term coined by social movement, economic and Cold War historians, starts from the mid 1950s and goes on to the mid 1970s,

[1] Adam Fairclough, *Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 387; Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement", 1233.

encompassing major moments in Civil Rights.[2] According to scholars of 1960s culture, this is also the period in which youth's attitudes towards moral codes and the perceived repressions of society of the postwar years transformed. The movement against the Vietnam War in the U.S. provides as a key example of the general attitude of dissent by American youth. The antiwar movement was largely headed by young educated Americans who felt polarized by postwar American values and conformist culture of the 1950s, and inspired by the social activism of popular protest movements in the 1960s.[3] Young Americans disillusioned by American militarism and "expansionist nationalism"[4]confronted the American government incessantly by 1967.[5]

Moreover, Jon Ager suggests that the 1960s social climate in America was largely influenced by the Cold War. Ager states that the Cold War was a "continuing and primary organizing process" that changed American domestic and foreign policy.[6] The atmosphere of protest and dissent allowed for mass action black strategies and later Black Power positions to take root in the 1960s. Specifically, American Cold War politics began to be questioned with the rise of the Civil Rights movement led by King, and later by dissent against the Vietnam War, which divided the nation. As the Civil Rights movement reached its popular peak in 1965, the age of further racial discontent continued on an aggressive scale with race riots in America's urban cities and the anti-war movement. But how did the changing social and political climate in the United States shape the movement in the public eye during and after its pinnacle moments?

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[2] Jon Ager, "What Happened in the Sixties?" *The British Journal for the History of Science* 41, no. 4 (2008): 568; See Introduction in Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States 1958-1978,* (New York: Oxford University Press , 1998).
[3] Benjamin T. Harrison, "'Roots of the Anti-Vietnam War Movement" in Walter Hixon, ed. the *Vietnam Antiwar Movement*. (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 104-109.
[4] Singh, *Black is A Country,* 173.
[5] Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam A History: The First Complete Account of Vietnam at War*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1983), 545.
[6] Ibid, 560

The Civil Rights movement went from being seen by many as the picture of American hope to being somewhat overshadowed, in the public conversation, by the national controversy surrounding the Vietnam War.[7] Also conservative white Americans became increasingly alienated by the notion of black rights once Black Power strategies and organizations rivalled non-violent entities.[8]African Americans that followed non-violent positions of activism attempted to separate the movement from Black Power sentiments, yet the genesis of Black Power was in essence a refashioned form of the radical mass action protests practiced by non-violent activists.[9] The Black Power movement frightened the American mainstream because it produced a style of black rhetoric that was based in the deliberate use of uncensored criticisms about white America and black self-determination through militant means if necessary.[10] Both liberal and far right groups failed to understand the frustrations behind the resurgence of black radical thinking and activism and at times attributed the transition from the righteous non-violent struggle for racial integration to more militant means as motivated by black communist sympathies. Subsequently, anti-Vietnam and African American radical protest changed the image of the Civil Rights movement in the public eye by the late 60s.

Historians have separated black power, black panthers and Black Nationalists from the Civil Rights agenda, interpreting their rise in prominence as the end of the Civil Rights era.[11] However, recently historians have pointed out that black activists of all positions believed that they were working to advance the Civil Rights movement, and therefore the Black Power movement was just a new phase within the fight for black freedom. Peniel E. Joseph, a leading

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[7] Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam A History,* 247-269.
[8] Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 210.
[9] Peniel E. Joseph, "Rethinking the Black Power Era." *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (2009): 707
[10] Ibid, 707.
[11] Joseph, "Rethinking the Black Power Era.", 709; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle*, 19.

scholar in Black Power historiography argues that non-violent mass action during the "heroic" years of the movement directly contributed to the formation of Black power. Therefore, the presence of Black Power within instead of outside of the Civil Rights movement is credible:

> Power activists advocated various strategies and tactics that drew from black nationalist and liberal integrationist traditions to promote political, economic, and cultural power.[12]

Additionally, scholars such as Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Nikhil Pal Singh, and Manning Marable argue that the mid 1960s was a new era in Civil Rights strategy, which contributes to the understanding of long Civil Rights movement scholarship. Nikhil Pal Singh argues that the Cold War continued to make its mark on political strategies of the freedom movement into the 1960s. Singh states that the patriotic opportunism prevalent within the lines of Cold War liberalism "collapsed under the weight of its own inner contradictions, as black ghettos exploded across the nation, and the U.S. experienced defeat on the battlefields of Vietnam".[13] Moreover, Adam Fairclough argues that the silencing of leftist black liberation groups in the early Cold War period resulted in a lack of focus in black poverty, which had not been the main focus of middle class black NAACP aligned groups. And as a result this contributed greatly to the "ghettos riots of the 1960s" and the rise of Black Power groups.[14]

Arguably, Civil Rights in many ways became refashioned, as repressed equal rights strategies rose in popularity in the sixties. In particular, transnational bonds between anticolonial efforts worldwide and the African American struggle resurfaced, a phenomenon that was labelled red in the previous decade. Brenda Gayle Plummer *In Search of Power* demonstrates that in the late 1950s merging into the 1960s black activism deepened questions of America's "democratic traditions" and were frustrated over the "lack of statist support for them (African

[12] Joseph, "Rethinking the Black Power Era.", 709.
[13] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 173.
[14] Fairclough, *Race & Democracy,* 390.

Americans)". As a result there was a "renewed African-American foreign policy interest and the partial recovery of earlier forms of radicalism that significantly clashed with nation-state authority".[15] Hence, the continuing ideological and political concerns of the Cold War found its way into the new decade of Civil Rights.

This chapter argues that the 1960s brought about a transformation in Civil Rights strategies that resisted and opposed the anticommunism of Cold War liberalism and respectability practices of the wider movement. Within this transformation transnational and human rights motives were re-embraced and opposition to American Cold War endeavours like Vietnam was more of a central focus in this new era of black protest. I will demonstrate that the rise of the Black Power branch of the Civil Rights movement largely represented the escalated strategies towards liberation in the black community. However, Martin Luther King Jr's deepening world perspective on equal rights due to the Vietnam War provides the main anchor of my argument on how black radicalism caused the death of the "exaggerated American" after 1965.

The extract that begins the chapter comes from one of Dr. Martin Luther King's most well known speeches. Unlike "I Have A Dream" and "We Shall Overcome" that emphasized the progress towards equality led by the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., "Beyond Vietnam" engaged with domestic black grievances as well as the international situation in Vietnam, placing movement objectives in direct conflict to American foreign policy. Focusing particularly on Martin Luther King Jr's internationalism and response to the Vietnam War I will demonstrate how transnationalism and human rights ideas were brought back into the forefront of African American thought and culture in the second half of the 1960s.

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[15] Plummer, *In Search of Power African Americans in the Era of Decolonization*, 344.

Along with highlighting the changing strategies in the fight for black freedoms in America, I will also illustrate how reformed black protest strategies in the 1960s still called forth the attention of forces that continued to hold onto anticommunism as an ideology. The movement was larger and more complicated than ever in the 1960s, which allowed opposing forces to continue to group all factions of the movement within subversive classifications. Scholars have pointed out that Civil Rights lost its steam after 1968 as Martin Luther King Jr's death brought about a decline in black leadership and the Nixon administration ushered in a revival of American conservatism.[16] However, by discussing the rebirth of transnationalist and human rights strategy and anti-Vietnam protests within the movement, I will nonetheless emphasize that established principles birthed from the domestic Cold War fight contributed to mainstream America's disinterest in and discomfort with the unrelenting experiences of inequality within African American society throughout the 1960s and beyond.

Transnationalism and Human Rights Revamped: Black Power and the Vietnam War

In my first chapter I spoke of transnationalism and human rights strategies that were downplayed for the sake of the domestic movement. The respectability practices were a preferred strategy of survival for the black activist in the movement that was looking to avoid Cold War purges. However, a heightened form of radicalism was surfacing within the black freedom movement and a return of global perspectives to African American oppression. The Black Panther Party, Nation of Islam, Black Arts Movement and other Black Power inspired groups were motivated by independent movements overseas like those in Ghana and Cuba which

[16] Timothy Thurber N. 2007. "Goldwaterism Triumphant? Race and the Republican Party, 1965–1968." *Journal of the Historical Society* 7 (3): 368.

connected their struggles to the oppression blacks faced in America.[17] In this new decade of protest African Americans were less hesitant to criticize the U.S. and their democratic expansionist agendas in countries that were seeking self-determination.[18] Thanks to the new universal tide of radical social protest and action oriented Civil Rights strategies, a new generation of black Americans became more open in their connections to African and Asian liberation.[19]

Historian Komozi Woodward illustrates that into the early 1960s the American government "was attempting to intimidate and condition black leadership to accept its exclusive hegemony over foreign affairs, including colonialism and independence in Africa"[20], a strategy that the government had employed in the two previous decades and found successful with the NAACP's compliance. However, this was not successful once the movement transformed itself in the 1960s. In 1953 Du Bois predicted that the neglect of Pan-African issues due to American Cold War political protocol was a temporary phase in African American rights activism as "American Negroes freed of their baseless fear of communism, will again begin to turn their attention and aim their activity towards Africa".[21]Du Bois' prophetic vision of movement strategy would take root in the Black Power movement.

Young black activists concluded that race issues were not being solved around the country in advent of desegregation of the American South in the early 1960s. They also saw black pragmatism in regards to achieving racial progress as a deterrent from the African

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[17] Joseph, *The Black Power Movement,* 255.
[18] Ager, "What Happened in the Sixties?" , 578.
[19] Joseph, *The Black Power Movement,* 14-15.
[20] Komozi Woodard, "Amiri Baraka, the Congress of African People, and Black Power Politics from the 1961 United Nations Protest to the 1972 Gary Convention" in Peniel E. Joseph ed, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power era,* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 57.
[21] W.E.B. Du Bois "American Negroes and Africa." *National Guardian,* February 14, 1955, 5.

American position in global politics in the wake of African and Asian independence movements in the 50s and 60s. Thus, many black Americans disposed of the "baseless fear of Communism" which dominated the strategies of older generations of black activists and embraced radical politics. Manning Marable illustrates the transition of young participants of non-violence strategies to Black Power directives after America's obsession with the Cold War and anticommunism in the postwar era:

> They [young black protestors] could not comprehend the meaning of the Cold War, the capitulation of the NAACP to the anti-communist Red Scare, and the devastation of legitimate black activism during the 1950s. They were, at this point, militant reformers.[22]

Black radicals essentially based a portion of their strategies and ideologies on a globalized movement as Du Bois and Paul Robeson did before them in their Pan-African and socialist works. Malcolm X's role, for example, has been well studied by scholars who have pointed out his dedication to human rights activism. Malcolm X saw the social and political situation of the sixties as a "global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor".[23] Malcolm X often spoke about the importance of treating racism in the U.S. as a human rights issue so that it could be brought before the United Nations, a move clearly influenced by Du Bois's efforts to do so in 1945 and 1947. In his 'The Ballot or the Bullet' speech in April 1964 Malcolm X stated:

> Expand the civil-rights struggle to the level of human rights; take it into the United Nations, where our African brothers can throw their weight on our side, where our Asian brothers can throw their weight on our side, where our Latin-America brothers can throw their weight on our side! And where 800 million Chinamen are sitting there waiting to throw their weight on our side.[24]

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[22] Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black, 1945-2006*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 63.
[23] Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention,* (New York: Viking, 2011), 343.
[24] Malcolm X, "Ballot or the Bullet" in George Breitman, ed, *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 35.

This was rhetoric almost directly taken from the thoughts and action of transnational figures such as Du Bois and Robeson. Global civil rights first popularized by these pioneers came back resoundingly in the late 60s.

Samuel Moyn, a human rights scholar attests that human rights was truly defined and employed during the 1970s due to a universal moral liberal consensus that ushered in a peaceful push to place human rights directives in countries around the world.[25] However, Moyn's theory can be tested by the specificity of the African American experience and the appeal to human rights solutions by Black Power leaders and supporters. Though Black Power radicalism was shaped by international movements fighting global racism, Black Power was also dually shaped by national components that saw a frustrated portion of the African American community react against continued systematic racism across America, despite the success of the non-violent Civil Rights movement led by Dr. King and leading black liberals. Many black activists of the radical persuasion in the 1960s agreed that racism could not be solved through domestic law as these institutions created racism in the first place. Black protests organizations like the SNCC and the Black Panther Party that increasingly distanced themselves from the mainstream domestic focus of Civil Rights increasingly saw human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an important tool to dismantling oppressive power structures in the U.S. [26] Manning Marable furthers this interpretation by emphasizing how Malcolm X saw black rights as human rights:

> During a period when many African-American leaders were preoccupied with efforts to change federal and state policies about race relations, Malcolm X saw that for the domestic struggle for civil rights to succeed, it had to be expanded into an international campaign for human rights. The United Nations, not the U.S Congress or the White House, had to be the central forum.[27]

[25] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 7-10.
[26] Woodard, "Amiri Baraka, the Congress of African People, and Black Power Politics from the 1961 United Nations Protest to the 1972 Gary Convention", 69.
[27] Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention,* (New York: Viking, 2011), 484.

The fact that Black Power radicals saw their style of achieving equal rights in America as apart of a move towards human rights perspectives challenges Moyn's argument. Moyn's perception that a universal liberal consensus ushered in a global movement towards human rights by the 70s, essentially removes revolutionary black groups and activists who stood apart from non-violence as participants of a human rights movement. In actuality the 1960s phase of black thought and strategy in the Civil Rights Movement clearly held human rights objectives.

One of the biggest demonstrations of African Americans voicing their solidarity with people of colour under colonialism/imperialism came as early as 1961 after the U.S. backed assassination of Congo independence leader Patrice Lumumba. Amiri Baraka led a sizeable protest in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York.[28] The event mirrored the divide in the former decade as old moderate leaders like Roy Wilkins condemned their protests. Baraka saw the connection between the U.S. sanctioned killing of a powerful black African leader overseas to the terror and intimidation black Americans were experiencing at home. Crossing national borders to connect to independent movements overseas was perceived as a threat to American Cold War geopolitics that insisted on conditioning Third World countries to the American way. As I have demonstrated in the case of the "exaggerated" American, Cold War Liberalism had circumscribed Civil Rights strategies within national bounds. However, this didn't last long as historians like James Jennings and Nikhil Pal Singh have acknowledged that black militancy and Black Power movements "would expose the limits of contained racial liberalism when confronted with the vicious defence and accumulated history of racial

[28] Woodard in *The Black Power Movement,* 59.

inequality".[29] These historians bolster my argument, as the rebirth of transnational strategy that connected Black Nationalism and other Black Power ideologies to independence movements all over the world was, I suggest, at least in part a reaction to Cold War liberalism.

Tensions between transnational strategies and Cold War liberals still remained in the early 60s as demonstrated by responses to the UN Riots in 1961. Active black moderates like UN Ambassador Ralph Bunche and NAACP leader Roy Wilkins condemned the riots and argued that this new form of black protest had no reflection on the domestic black movement.[30] In response Baraka exclaimed that he was "scandalized and ashamed" of their "negroass tom antics",[31] a clear reference to the Uncle Tom stereotype given to African Americans who were susceptible to white influence on black life. Interestingly enough, Baraka had similar sentiments towards Martin Luther King Jr's association with white liberal and American elites, having hinted in his 1966 poem *Black Art* that King was "Another negro leader on the steps of the white house, one kneeling between the sheriff's thighs negotiating coolly for his people".[32] Baraka's harsh illustration of King's relationship with the Johnson administration represents the general Black Power consensus on integration.

By the mid 60s there was a rejection of integration between whites and blacks amongst radical black activists, as with those in the Black Panther Party who believed self-determination would personify true freedoms.[33] A main goal of transnational and postcolonial circles was to focus on self-determination in order to become truly independent of foreign powers;[34] for Black

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[29] James Jennings, *The Politics of Black Empowerment: The Transformation of Black Activism in Urban America,* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 100; Singh, 173.
[30] Woodard in *The Black Power Movement,* 60.
[31] Amiri Baraka, *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka*. (New York: Freundlich Books, 1984), 182.
[32] Vangelisti, *SOS: Poems*, 149.
[33] "The Black Panther Ten-Point Program". *The North American Review*. Vol 253 no. 4 (July-August, 1968): 16–17.
[34] Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier ed, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid–19th Century to the Present Day* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 249.

Power activists like Baraka integration meant compromise and continued power over African Americans by white America. James Roark sums up Black Power directives that activists like Baraka upheld:

> In the 1960s black militants in America established a new relationship with the Third World. Freer to express dissent with government policies, and contemptuous of alliances with white liberals, black militants rediscovered the colonial analogy.[35]

Though Roark is right to point out the transformation of black militancy, were black militants the only activists in the movement to rediscover the colonial analogy? Were those who aligned with "white liberals" least likely to support international views on inequality and race? One answer can be found in an analysis of Martin Luther King's role in anti-colonial sentiment and U.S foreign policy critiques. Though King only deepened the emphasis of his worldview of oppression to the public after the 1965 Voting Rights Act, he had always encouraged the idea to expand the understanding of the effect of militarism and poverty outside of the American community and U.S borders.[36] King and other black activists retained their position on integration while still voicing solidarity with independence initiatives in Asia and Africa.

James Baldwin's comments on the UN incident, for example, showcase the revival of the African American transnational perspective, the abiding legacy of the Cold War and the death of the exaggerated American. In March 1961, Baldwin told the *New York Times* that he was astonished that the prevailing view was that Baraka and the rest of the black protesters who stormed the UN were "a handful of irresponsible, Kremlin-corrupted provocateurs". Instead he interpreted the protests as the following:

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[35] Roark, "American Black Leaders", 270.
[36] Lewis V. Baldwin *A Single Garment of Destiny: A Global Vision of Justice – Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Boston Beacon Press, 2012), xiv-xvi.

> The American Negro can no longer, nor will he ever again, be controlled by white America's image of him. This fact has everything to do with the rise of Africa in world affairs.[37]

First, Baldwin highlights that there was an assumption that black demonstrative support of international affairs was proof that black protest was communist influenced because independence movements overseas were eradicating Western imperialism in their countries. Baldwin was no stranger to this accusation and arguably underscored it because the anticommunist agenda was still misinterpreting the movement. Historian Kevin Gaines substantiates this analysis as he points out that Baldwin found the accusation of communism "deeply insulting" as it suggested that blacks would be passive about internal and external race affairs if it wasn't for the international conspiracy of a Soviet led communist front in America.[38] Baldwin makes it a point to clarify that Cold War conspiracies had nothing to do with the new state of black thought by exclaiming that instead this was a result of the "rise of Africa in world affairs". Baldwin's statement is important because he demonstrates that transnationalism wasn't solely a Black Power phenomenon. Baldwin, who was once criticized by Black Power players like Baraka for being too integrationist, was eager to globalize the struggle. He was a part of the intensifying radical and critical reaction to American Cold War conformity that deepened into the 60s.[39]

There was a shift not only from non-violence strategies, but in the way African Americans saw and perceived their blackness. Black Americans were not being treated like Americans, therefore young black youth began to gain pride through their history beyond

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[37] As quoted in Allan Morrison, "The Angriest Young Man" *Ebony* , October 1961, 23.
[38] Kevin Gaines "The Crisis of Historical Memory: Harold Cruse, Julian Mayfield and African American Expatriates in Nkrumah's Ghana, 1957 – 1966" in Jerry Watts ed., *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual Reconsidered: A Retrospective,* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 194.
[39] Howard Brick, *The Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 44-66.

America; a history that started before slavery and began in Africa.[40] Acknowledging their roots meant connecting stronger to African issues, thus the move towards Pan-Africanism, Black Nationalism, and other developments amongst the African Diaspora.

Black Anti-Vietnam Sentiment and MLK's global 'Dream'

Blacks engaging with transnational rhetoric reveals a disjuncture from former strategies of respectability. Black radicalism in the 1960s offered a more critical take on America's Cold War policy that differed from the earlier years of the movement. By looking at commentary from anti-Vietnam black protestors we can get an idea of how open blacks were in their criticism of American foreign policy and their acceptance of early Cold War era inflected strategies. First, many SNCC members took up an anti-Vietnam stance; this was the non-violent organization that birthed some of the youngest protesters in the movement who went on to embrace Black Power ideologies. Robert Moses, who later got involved in African independence movements, was a former member of SNCC who drew comparisons of the thoughtless murders of black youth by white police to the "napalm bombing of nameless people in Vietnam".[41] Similarly, Andrew Young, a young member of the SNCC was one of the most vocal members of the non-violent movement who opposed Vietnam. In a 1970 interview Young reflected his thoughts on how America's oppression of people of colour at home reflected their imperialist intentions in Vietnam, "I am convinced that our foreign policy is racist". [42]

Young's comments echo the influence of a former critic of American foreign policy in the early Cold War era– Paul Robeson. In 1946, Robeson voiced his views on America's initial

[40] Jennings, *The Politics of Black Empowerment*, 22.
[41] Jack Newfield, "The Question of SNCC," *Nation,* July 19, 1965, 41.
[42] Thomas H. Baker, "Interview of Andrew J. Young, Jr, June 18, 1970" in *Interview of Andrew J. Young, Jr. by Thomas H. Baker, June 18, 1970* (1970;reis, Austin, TX: Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, 2004), 19.

involvement in Indochina, showcasing the origins of anti-Vietnam sentiment in the movement as he states:

> Now we are told that soon it will be 'advisable' to send America GI's into Indo-China in order that the tin, rubber and tungsten of Southeast Asia be kept by the "free world"- meaning white Imperialism.[43]

The American government worked all through the Truman and Eisenhower years to convince the world that Robeson's assumptions were not true. Yet, in the wake of continual racial unrest at home during the 1960s, accusations like those of Robeson's and Andrew Young's were becoming all the more popular in the black community and the American baby-boomer generation. This sentiment is expressed in the words of Muhammad Ali, title-winning boxer, influenced by his relationship with Black Nationalism. When he was asked by the American press why he avoided enlistment to Vietnam, Ali famously quoted the SNCC anti-war slogan in 1966, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Viet Cong—no Viet Cong ever called me Nigger".[44] The fact that the statement became a slogan popularized by black youth protesting the draft was not only attributed to Ali's fame, but also due to the growing transnational sympathies and kindred connections in the freedom movement. The new wave of social protest drew direct connections across national and international bounds, pointing out the contradictions of African American men fighting for U.S. democracy, when that democracy was limited to them at home.

In *Selma to Saigon* author Daniel S. Lucks bolsters my argument on the death of the exaggerated African American when he says that:

> By the mid-1960s, the more cautious older generation, steeped in the Cold War zeitgeist, was faced with a more emboldened cohort of youthful African Americans who were born

[43] Paul Robeson. *Here I Stand.* (New York: Dobson Books Ltd, 1958), 378.
[44] Daniel S. Lucks, *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War,* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 107.

> in the late 1930s and early 1940s and came of age in the heady years of sit-ins and Freedom Rides. As part of the New Left, they embraced a new politics that transcended Cold War dichotomies and their critiques of the Vietnam War were linked to black nationalism. Instead of anxiously sidling away from Robeson's and Du Bois's anticolonialism, these younger activists sought to resuscitate their critiques of American imperialism and preached a similar vision of the interrelatedness of the struggle against racism at home and imperialism abroad. For them, the Vietnam War was merely the latest manifestation of the perennial struggle by people of color to liberate themselves from the yoke of colonial oppression […] These differing perspectives laid the groundwork for the acrimonious debates over the Vietnam War that fractured the civil rights movement during the years of the Johnson administration. [45]

Let's break down Luck's quote to relate to what I have argued so far. Lucks agrees that anticolonialism, transnationalism and human rights re-emerged as central foci after some of its greatest proponents were prevented from developing the perception further and losing their place in the movement. Yet, in the second half of the 1960s, blacks who were alienated and frustrated with American standards of free speech, "resuscitated" turn-of-the-century views on internationalism, using it as a tool to emphasize their oppressive position and ridicule America's Cold War shaped war in Vietnam. However, Lucks fails to point out that the embrace of a transnational human rights perspective on race issues and anti-Vietnam sentiment was not exclusive to those in the postwar baby boomer generation who were attracted by Black Power protests. In Martin Luther King's tribute to Du Bois in 1968 we can get a sense of the rebirth of transnationalism and human rights connections by someone outside Black Power and a leader who was a proponent of nonviolence.

King's decision to speak at the International Culture Evening hosted by *Freedomways* Magazine tells us a lot about how King brought past controversial actions into the vocal protest culture of the 1960s. From the 1940s, Hoover and the HUAC had labeled *Freedomways* a

[45] Lucks, *Selma to Saigon*, 11.

communist news outlet.[46] Thus, the fact that King collaborated with *Freedomways* on the theme of International Culture, while also focusing his speech on Du Bois, is an astonishing declaration of a bold shift in strategy for King in the most explosive years of Vietnam and militant black protest. Moreover, in his tribute to Du Bois, King exposed his alliance with the intellectual's Cold War past. First King acknowledges that Du Bois was one of the first black American activists in the 20th century to recognize the "bond between American Negroes and the land of their ancestors", praising how he "extended his activities to African affairs […] alarming imperialists in all countries and disconcerting Negro moderates in America who were afraid of this restless, militant, black genius".[47] King here was disavowing the reaction of the NAACP to Du Bois' refusal to conform to Cold War Liberalism after Truman agreed to grant concessions to blacks in the late 1940s. It's interesting that King criticizes black moderates during a time when some of his peers in the movement firmly disassociated Civil Rights from the anti-war movement.[48] King clearly denounces preconceptions about his thoughts on radical black activism, even alluding that Du Bois' militancy was "black genius".

Furthermore, it can be argued that by the late 60s Martin Luther King would continue the transnational human rights legacy of Du Bois, similar to how Black Power figureheads did. An indication of this is King's admiration of Du Bois' turn as a peace leader even when he was criticized for taking this role once "imperialism and war arose in the postwar period".[49] King in a way is trying to redeem Du Bois in the eyes of the public. Many in the nation cast Du Bois aside because he refused to remain mute on American imperial motives in Africa and Asia.[50] Not only

[46] See Chapter One.
[47] Martin Luther King Jr, "Honoring Dr. DuBois" *Freedomways,* Vol. 8, no. 2 (Spring 1968), 4.
[48] Adam Fairclough, "Martin Luther King Jr. and the War in Vietnam". *Phylon 45* no 1 (1984): 19- 39.
[49] King, "Honoring Dr. DuBois", 7.
[50] Gerald Horne highlights that after Du Bois' death his legacy as a pioneer of the Civil Rights movement was commended, but former colleagues and the mainstream press acknowledged that the public shouldn't let the last

does King's admiration of Du Bois' aspirations go beyond domestic Civil Rights, he also voices the absurdity of history downplaying Du Bois's impact because of his communist political leanings in his later life. In the 1950s, Du Bois believed that capitalism was the cause of the marginalization and subjugation of people of colour around the world and he saw communism as viable solution to end American and worldwide oppression.[51] This is significant because King in his tribute attempts to differentiate and decouple Du Bois's transnationalism from his communist position in order to protect Du Bois's legacy. King points out that many respected poets and artists of the period were communist and Du Bois should be held with the same respect despite the fact that he embraced an ideology that his nation was trying to destroy.[52]

When Du Bois was still alive he praised King's leadership during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, calling him the "American Gandhi".[53] Here Du Bois draws transnational links between King and the leader of the anti-colonial movement in India.[54] Hence he symbolically points out King's connection to Trans-Atlantic protest theory. King's speech in dedication to Du Bois was given in 1968, weeks before King's assassination. It is quite telling that a few weeks before his life ended, King was identifying with Du Bois, transnationalism and opposing the Vietnam War - all ideas deemed subversive by powerful institutions that wanted him silenced. Nikhil Pal Singh hints at the similarity in the tragedy of both Du Bois' and King's fates in *Black is A Country*

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decade of his life ruin his body of work and they should "forget" his controversial turn as a communist and human rights advocate. See Horne, *Black And Red,* 357.

[51] W..E.B Du Bois, "Negroes and Socialism" *National Guardian,* (April 29, 1957), 12.

[52] King, "Honoring Dr. DuBois" 10.

[53] Quoted in Horne, *Black and Red,* 250.

[54] It should be noted that Mahatmas Gandhi heavily influenced King. His preaching of non-violence was rooted in his embrace of Gandhi's peaceful activism. King stated in 1958 that, "It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months…I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom." Notice King says "oppressed people" not oppressed Americans, therefore indicating his internationalist sensibilities on civil rights and basic freedoms. Though this rhetoric from King became overshadowed in the major years of his career fighting domestic segregation in the South, he would reclaim his older views on racial liberation and human rights during America's war against Vietnam. See Clayborne Carson ed, *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr: Volume IV Symbol of the Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 478.

stating, "In his (King's) last public address, King tellingly identified himself with Du Bois, an activist for peace who had ended his life in exile".[55] King concludes his Du Bois speech by telling his audience to continue the pioneer's legacy in that time of great social action:

> Let us be dissatisfied until our brother of the Third World Asia, Africa, and Latin America-will no longer be the victim of imperialist exploitation, but will be lifted from the long night of poverty, illiteracy, and disease. [56]

Evidently, King felt the need to revive transnational links and infuse human rights rhetoric into Civil Rights objectives after it had been made more subterranean in the previous decades of the mid-20th century.

Dialogue as the above was voiced by Du Bois in "The Color Line Belts The World" where he argued that "we should insist on civilized treatment for civilized men the word over and human sympathy of all human beings".[57] King parallels Du Bois' rights activism for all people around the world in his 1968 speech, suggesting that he wanted to emphasize the global view of the movement by the second half of the 1960s; this direction did not hesitate to support independence movements from American interventionist policies in third world countries. The U.S. intervened in countries like Angola, Vietnam and Cambodia in order to prevent rival powers' economic and political influence from influencing its citizens, whilst these countries preferred self-determination to control by a foreign entity.[58]

King, Conformity and Anticommunism

[55] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 2.
[56] King, "Honoring Dr. DuBois" 12.
[57] Du Bois, "The Color Line Belts the World", 20.
[58] David Harvey, *The New imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

A bolder demonstration of my argument on the refashioning of black thought towards radical critique can be examined in Dr. King's attitudes towards American anticommunism. Like Baldwin, King would make similar criticism to Cold War sensibilities in America and its effects on the life of black activists like Du Bois by the late 60s:

> Our irrational obsessive anti-communism has led us into too many quagmires to be retained as if it were a mode of scientific thinking.[59]

King again aligns his philosophy with Du Bois' political legacy. In 1947 Du Bois stated that anticommunism was distracting the "thought of people of the United States" from issues of inequality.[60] Hence, King charges that this is why mass action was needed to overturn litigation Civil Rights strategies in the 50s and unabashed criticism of American foreign policy affairs was needed in the 60s to express African American alignment with independence movements around the world.

King's rhetoric, as well as Black Power involvement in transnationalist connections and radical observations of American democracy, played into the concerns of anticommunism taking over the popularity of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. In 1966 a public service film entitled *Anarchy USA* warned the American public about the impending communist revolution shrouded in the escalation of the Civil Rights Movement. The film, produced by members of conservatives of the John Birch Society, provides interesting insight on what the movement looked like to the anticommunist and white extremist. The film uses the guise of American Cold War objectives to stop the movement from advancing. The film claims that African American public protests were in reality steps towards a communist revolution. According to the documentary, the first steps were the marches and the sit-ins that led to race riots, which were the

[59] King, "Honoring Dr. DuBois", 10.
[60] W.E.B Du Bois, "Witch-hunting and Red-Baiting" *Chicago Defender,* February 8, 1947, 15.

final step towards revolution. The filmmakers prove this accusation against the Civil Rights movement by quoting Vladimir Lenin's speech on how to bring about a communist revolution, "Riots demonstrations- street battles detachments of a revolutionary army such are the stages in the development of the popular uprising".[61] By the end, the filmmakers use footage of SNCC activist anti-Vietnam statements as ostensible evidence of Civil Rights connections to the communists in North Vietnam. The film is a great example of white, conservative America's persisting paranoia over communism and subversive agendas within the black freedom struggle.[62]

Manning Marable argues that America's fanatical anticommunism did not dwindle after McCarthyism. He contends that at the beginning of the 1960s John F. Kennedy was elected President on the grounds of his outspoken anticommunism.[63] As Vietnam became thrust into the lives of the American public, anticommunist attitudes not only persisted but deepened; hence anyone that diverged from the status quo would face opposition, including America's most recognized Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

King's comments on the culture of anticommunism and American postwar conformity are important to the overall understanding of how the movement refashioned itself in this era, renouncing Cold War liberalism that dominated its bipartisan position on international issues prior to the 1960s. In "Beyond Vietnam" he spoke out about the fallacies in American Cold War democracy and the culture that sprang from it. King states that it is not easy opposing the American government's policy on war because as an American your loyalty is expected to be to your country. And although his criticisms would bring about great backlash "the human spirit

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[61]Edward Griffen, "Anarchy USA: In the Name of Civil Rights*"* in *Hidden Agenda, Vol. 4,* 1965. DVD.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion,* 73.

moves without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world".[64] It is significant that King brings up conformity, as Cold War culture emphasized an ideal image of American consensus.[65] In addition "conformist thought," King could be referring to the strategies of African American respectability, which perceived adapting to majority culture in America as a way of becoming part of the majority.

He furthers this sentiment by stating "this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history".[66] Here, King arguably calls out his own used of "smooth patriotism" in his famous speeches on equality such as "I Have A Dream." King is here saying that there has been a great shift from respectability traditions to emphasize that blacks wanted simply to achieve the privileges of being American towards a reality based "dissent" that relies on the "reading of history" to justify criticisms against oppressors. The mandates of conscience King is hinting at are those presumably set in the realities of American Cold War politics. King is making a larger comment on the cult of American patriotism that expects citizens to have faith in their country when their country isn't returning the favor, especially in the case of African Americans. At his 1956 HUAC testimony, Paul Robeson was asked to vilify his colleagues in the struggle that adhered to leftist ideologies. In response he proclaimed that the HUAC were the real "nonpatriots" and the "un-American".[67] Though King isn't as brash in his criticisms against red-baiting American culture, his comments arguably stem from the experiences of pioneer

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[64] Martin Luther King Jr, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" in Lewis V. Baldwin *A Single Garment of Destiny: A Global Vision of Justice – Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Boston Beacon Press, 2012), 164.
[65] Isaac and Bell, *Uncertain Empire,* 79; Rosenberg, *Consuming Women,* 488..
[66] King, "Beyond Vietnam", 164.
[67] Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, "Investigation of the Unauthorized Use of U.S. Passports, 84th Congress, Part 3, June 12, 1956" in *Thirty Years of Treason: Excerpts from Hearings Before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938–1968*, Eric Bentley, ed. (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 770.

radical speakers like Robeson; and as a result this emphasizes King's radical rhetoric on anticommunism.

Prior to Vietnam, African American participation in American wars was often used to argue equality legislation at home. Once Truman passed the integration act in the American military, blacks seeking further equality were expected to support American endeavours and fight against subversive forces overseas. For example, as stated in my first chapter, the NAACP expressed vocal support of the Korean War, calling for "victory over the corrupt and sinister communist forces".[68] Black Power activists made it a point in their anti-Vietnam speech to point out the fallacies of black participation in American wars. Stokely Carmichael, for example, on April 19th 1967 had this to say to a Seattle, Washington crowd:

> Korea, at last, our chance to fight with our white brothers – "Oh we must stop communism at any price […] our uncles came back to this country with one leg and one arm only to walk into a store and have some foreigner slam the door in his face and say "Get out of my store nigger." Yeah. But we wanted to prove what good Americans we are.[69]

King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech was given 16 days prior to Carmichael's speech, which consequently showcases King's alignment with Black Power dialogue on the inconsistencies in American patriotism. In his speech there is a trace of regret or acknowledgement of black acceptance of American foreign policy, yet King counters that by emphasizing the reawakening of a people. He personalizes the responsibility to object to Vietnam in the language of American patriotism:

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[68] "Along the NAACP Battlefront", *The Crisis,* October 1950, 586.
[69] "Stokely Carmichael, speech at Garfield High School, Seattle, 19 April, 1967", transcript on the IRC's Stokely Carmichael Page. http://courses.washington.edu/spcmu/carmichael/transcript.htm

> This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions.[70]

King is stating that his role as the spokesperson of the movement and a religious leader forces him to present that his "allegiances and loyalties" go beyond nationalism and the "nation's self defined goals". Therefore he simultaneously repudiates the Cold War protocol that saw questioning American objectives overseas as taboo while placing African American concerns as top priority over America's "goals and positions". Kevin Gaines states that starting in the late 1950s blacks involved in Civil Rights activism became increasingly alienated by "Cold War liberals' demand that anticommunism take precedence over their commitment to African American and African freedom".[71] King's critique of American conformity is an example of black strategy in the 1960s that positioned itself in direct opposition to Cold War Liberalism, consensus, and respectability traditions.

To compare, Baldwin, as I have demonstrated, was not shy in his criticism of the American establishment and how it contributed to the repression of black Americans. Baldwin openly condemned the Vietnam War, and again attracted attention from anti-subversive agencies. In 1966 Baldwin wrote an article in *The Nation* on the status of the movement. In the article he painted both African Americans and Vietnamese as victims of American democratic politics and aims:

> It is the bitterest possible comment on our situation now that the suspicion is alive in so many breasts that America has at last found a way of dealing with the Negro problem. "They don't want us—period!" The meek shall inherit the earth, it is said. This presents a very bleak image to those who live in occupied territory. The meek Southeast Asians,

[70] King, "Beyond Vietnam", 168-169.
[71] Gaines, "The Crisis of Historical Memory", 187.

> those who remain, shall have their free elections, and the meek American Negroes—those who survive—shall enter the Great Society.[72]

Baldwin illustrates both Southeast Asians and blacks as the colonized, "those who live in occupied territory". He is engaging with transnational rhetoric that ties imperialist oppression abroad to American racial oppression. Baldwin also demonstrates the building frustration between the movement's efforts for continued equality legislation and the American government's frustration over the continued racial grievances in the South and the North. "America had at last found a way of dealing with the Negro problem." By this statement Baldwin is referring to conscription to Vietnam and the deaths of black men who went there. Those who "survive" will reap concessions given by American democracy; in other words the Vietnamese will get free elections and blacks will get welfare assistance.[73] Baldwin's discussion is powerful as he not only draws transnational ties that were prevalent in black protest against Vietnam, but also highlights the injustice of America's concepts of freedom, justice and liberty, which was the superpower's main Cold War weapon. Martin Luther King Jr. would also take up the same argument against the war, which helps us understand the African American response to this new Cold War themed challenge.

MLK and the Vietnam War: The death of the exaggerated American and the death of the Civil Rights Movement

[72] James Baldwin, "A Report from Occupied Territory" *The Nation,* July 11, 1966. https://www.thenation.com/article/report-occupied-territory/

[73] Baldwin is referring to President Johnson's domestic policy "The Great Society", which once was perceived as promising legislation that would benefit American minorities, but the program's funding was quickly paused by the ferocity of the Vietnam War. See Lyndon B. Johnson *My Hope for America* (New York: Random House, 1964), 47.

"Beyond Vietnam" is widely regarded by many scholars as King's foray into radical rhetoric. It is my argument that King's appeal to human rights rhetoric, his severe criticism of the American government and his wider commentary on the unsteady position of the movement highlights the death of the "exaggerated" American through the emergence of "radical" black activism in the late 60s. King's speech against the Vietnam War in 1967 demonstrates the deep complexities of black thought and the restrictive position leaders like him had to negotiate in regards to Civil Rights politics versus American politics. King's views on Vietnam are also significant because they showcase King's links to Black Power dialogue and rhetoric that also upheld anticolonial activism and linked the struggle at home against the American government to the Vietnamese struggle against the U.S. in Southeast Asia.

Historian Ryan P. Cummings makes it a point to argue that King's anti-Vietnam statements often complement the fiery speeches of Black Power leaders. In particular he argues that Huey Newton, the creator of the Black Panther Party, and King both voiced concern over the common racism African Americans and the Vietnamese people were experiencing at the hands of the United States.[74] Newton stated in the "Black Panthers Ten Point Program" released in May 1967 that "we will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like Black people, are being victimized by the White racist government of America". [75] Though Newton's language is more aggressive, King essentially argues the same point on the problem of global issues of self-determination, especially when it comes to people of colour. Though independence movements in Africa inspired and allowed African Americans to proudly connect with ancestral roots, the transnationalism that black activists practiced from Du Bois to the Black Panthers and

[74] Ryan P. Cummings, *The African American Challenge to Just War Theory; A Christian Approach,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 89.
[75] "The Black Panther Ten-Point Program", 16.

to King were inclusive of all oppressed communities. Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani sum up this argument best stating, "transnational communities are understood to transcend diasporas because such communities may not be derived primarily or indeed exclusively from the forms of co-ethnic and cultural identification that are constitutive of diasporas".[76]

In contrast, unlike many Black Power players like Newton, King does not racialize the American enemy as so many Black Power individuals did. Instead of blaming white men in particular, King in his arguments against Vietnam blames Western thinking and American pride, possibly because he did not want to alienate his white liberal followers and also to ensure that his position as an integrationist was sound. It is important to state that though King did not frame white men as the enemy as his Black Power compatriots did, he did not shy away from pointing out that the American government was in the wrong. Also, by ascribing the responsibility to America, King arguably includes other Black leaders of the movement whose pragmatism aligned them with Cold War liberalism in order to appease the American establishment and traditional Civil Rights.

King's increasing concerns over American foreign policy and its affect on on equality activism was not a departure from his non-violence practices, but it was a departure from black respectability traditions. The essence of non-violence embodied respectability politics as peaceful protest produced the image of respectable social values that appeared good and compatible with mainstream American values.[77] Religious pastors and an intense black Christian heritage drove the community appeal of non-violence.[78] However, more important, non-violence

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[76] Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani ed, *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013), 4.
[77] Walcott, *Remaking Respectability, 6.*
[78] Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984), 4.

strategy appealed to Americanism and democratic principles of freedom, liberty and justice. Debbie Louis in *A History of the Movement as a people* clarifies:

> They captured and held on to the traditional democratic ideals they had been taught, eliminating the inconsistencies between doctrine and reality that they felt had crept into the preceding generation's practical values in relation to those ideals.[79]

Non-violence activists spoke in terms that upheld American democracy as a solution to American racism; therefore supporters outside the movement saw non-violence as the preferred choice of strategy. By contrast, Black Power and transnational human rights tactics emphasized that American democracy was the problem instead of the solution for black oppression. Hence, this is why the shift towards radical black thought and approaches to injustice in the late 1960s were met with such great opposition.

To expand on this point, King comments upon the fact that American officials and proponents of non-violence respectability questioned his intentions to speak on an American foreign policy topic like Vietnam instead of domestic grievances, stating "for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment, or my calling…their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live".[80] The "they" King is referring to may be the Johnson Administration as well as members of the non-violence movement who were wary of King's shift in protest strategy. Both parties became increasingly distanced from King after his Vietnam protests. For example, the NAACP, led by Roy Wilkins, issued a statement after King's anti-Vietnam speech that said, "We are not a peace organization nor a foreign policy association". [81] The statement by NAACP's leader echoes previous Cold

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[79] Debbie Louis, *A History of the Movement as a People,* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 51.
[80] King "Beyond Vietnam", 164; See the Introduction of Martin Luther King Jr, *Where Do we Go From Here: Chaos or Community*? (reiss. New York, Beacon Press, 2010), ix-xxi.
[81] "Civil Rights in War and Peace: Statement from the NAACP Board of Directors" *The Crisis,* (April 1967), 126.

War liberal point of views from 1947 onwards. Firmly declaring that they are not a "foreign policy association" implies that the NAACP and its members preferred to keep the movement and black thought focused on domestic issues. Simon Paul agrees with this analysis, arguing that the NAACP's response to Vietnam reflected the "anticommunist liberalism the organization had adopted in the early Cold War".[82] Wilkins and many other black leaders were ambivalent towards Vietnam because they believed that they would lose federal government support on Civil Rights. To clarify, Bayard Rustin explained in 1965 that he feared making "enemies over Vietnam and cloud the issue". [83]Activists like Rustin believed that the movement worked best when it stuck to traditional partnerships with liberals, the black church and middle class.[84]

Ryan A. Cummings concurs with the argument that mainstream movement organizers, with the exception of Dr. King, saw changing black strategies towards racial injustice as threatening to the established functional strategies that had been working in their favor. Moreover, Cummings argues that many in the African American community did not want to appear disloyal to the Johnson Administration, which had been sympathetic to the Civil Rights cause. He emphasizes, "Vietnam was too controversial, too polarizing, and many argued too disconnected from the civil rights and the movement at home".[85] Adam Fairclough also relays a similar point of hesitation surrounding black strategies of respectability and adherence to the ideals of Americanism, "The Cold War had produced an anti-Communist consensus; political

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[82] Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 94.
[83] Quoted in Daniel Levine*, Bayard Rustin and the Civil Rights Movement* (N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 196.
[84] John D' Emilio, *Lost prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 475.
[85] Cummings, *.African American Challenge to Just War Theory,* 1.

debate revolved around methods of implementation rather than the soundness of the policy itself".[86]

Black activists who criticized King's stance were not wrong in their fears of alienating Johnson by disagreeing with his foreign policy and sympathizing with a communist influenced Vietnam. In fact, after King's statements, aids to the Johnson administration told the press that Johnson became paranoid about King's reasons for opposing the war, often claiming that King was in the hands of communists.[87] Yet, many like King felt that they had an obligation to speak out against the war, risking backlash from the community and "friends" of the movement.

Despite opposition and red labels, the deepened discontent blacks felt towards American politics furthered radical criticisms and reactions in relation to the failures of U.S. democracy at home and overseas. In 1967 four riots broke out in urban cities across the country, from New Jersey to Minnesota.[88] All the riots occurred because of unequal treatment and opportunity for blacks in urban communities. Thus it is no accident that King felt the need to speak out against a war that was hurting the urban poor:

> We were taking black young men who had been crippled by our society sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools…I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.[89]

The Vietnam War and America's aspirations to combat communism were once again affecting the lives of black Americans as King boldly declares. In 1967, King was arguing that the

[86] Fairclough, "Martin Luther King Jr. and the War in Vietnam", 25.
[87] Fairclough, "Martin Luther King Jr. and the War in Vietnam", 30.
[88] Singh, *Black Is A Country*, 192.
[89] King, "Beyond Vietnam", 166 – 167.

movement was deeply needed, perhaps more than ever, as black soldiers were being forced to fight overseas for democracy but democracy had not been granted to them. Black Americans were expected to exaggerate their patriotism for their country, but they were dying for a "nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools". King here demonstrates the candid rhetoric that dominated black radicalism that denounced authoritative positions instead of abiding by them; he is pointing out how containment foreign policy originating during the Truman administration did not match domestic policy, and he is making ideological connections between Black Power positions and liberals who backed him. Significantly, King states that he "could not be silent" implying a rejection of bystanderism, and that silence surrounding this issue was what was expected of African Americans who still did not have a place in politics outside domestic issues. The bystanderism that King's counterparts and colleagues in the movement practiced suggested to the American public that blacks trusted the American government's foreign interventions and in return the American government would reward the black community for their loyalty. King was thus questioning a fundamental faith in government reciprocity.

From 1965, when King was beginning to voice concerns about the Vietnam issue amongst his peers, President Johnson and U.N. ambassador Arthur Goldberg asked him to keep silent on the war and foreign affairs and stick to civil rights grievances.[90] Daniel S. Lucks notes that "most civil rights leaders and King's white liberal allies derided his naïveté in speaking out against the U.S Cold War policy".[91] This may be because of the certain backlash he would face for venturing outside domestic social issues. Otherwise, it could be that if the United States accepted the input of a national black leader on its international endeavours the government

[90] David Halberstam, "The Second Coming of Martin Luther King", *Harper's,* August 1967, no page number; Fairclough, "Martin Luther King Jr. and the War in Vietnam", 26.
[91] Lucks, *Selma To Saigon*, 7.

would also have to confront the question of their racial attitudes to people of colour around the world, given their negative history of race relations at home. Those who opposed King's position in international politics tended to use words like "naïve" or "inexperience" or to simply state that he should stick to domestic issues. This position harks back to the strategy the Truman administration created for the movement that was still the preferred approach by moderate black activists and the American public, especially when it came to Cold War related issues overseas.[92]

According to American national security agencies, if black activists of the Black Power persuasion like Nation of Islam martyr Malcolm X, Black Panther Party co-founder Huey Newton and Cuban political exile Robert F. Williams had no position in U.S. foreign policy because of their attraction to racial separatism, King arguably did. King was internationally recognized for his peace initiatives once he became the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King argued that the Nobel Peace Prize gave him the responsibility to speak out beyond "national allegiances".[93] Again King was very aware of how perplexed Americans would be because of his widening scope of liberation efforts and interests in the peace movement, hence this is why he used his award to justify his responsibility to do so. He was aware of the expectations that black Americans only give their support and manpower to foreign policy issues and not their opinion. However, by rejecting these expectations, King shared the new militant direction of the movement that rejected Cold War sensibilities and offered up views that would contradict American purpose in Southeast Asia, Africa and other parts of the world seeking self-determination.

[92] For more on black moderates during this era see Paula F. Pfeffer, "The Evolution of A. Phillip Randolph and Bayard Rustin from Radicalism to Conservatism" in *Black Conservatism,* vi.
[93] King, "Beyond Vietnam", 168.

King engaged directly with the Black Power rhetoric and transnational dialogue in his declaration against Vietnam. At one point in "Beyond Vietnam" King justifies race riots and black ideologies that uphold violence as he calls his "own government" "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today".[94] The statement is arguably an explanation of Stokely Carmichael's speeches on the American public and government condemning Black Power radicals for their violent response to white power structures while hypocritically engaging in violent war in Vietnam. The following quotation from Carmichael's 1967 antiwar speech mirrors the previous statement made by King – "The world there exists, especially in this country, a victim and executioner relationship. We are the victims, and white people are the executioners".[95] Again, though King does not vilify white America as Carmichael does, both men conclude that their country has engaged in violence that was directed at people of color at home and abroad. By the end of the decade, the movement pursued a direction that would launch scathing attacks against American society and American politics rather than a nationalistic or unified tactic.

King was comfortable with using transnational rhetoric as a way to shine American interests in Vietnam in a negative light:

> Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not ready for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long.[96]

King clearly is in support of Vietnamese independence. Calling his country's involvement in Vietnam western arrogance puts him in the same realm as controversial activist like Du Bois and Robeson. To compare, during the Korean War, Du Bois declared that the American Century was

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[94] Ibid,168.
[95] Stokely Carmichael, speech at Garfield High School, Seattle, 19 April, 1967, transcript on the IRC's Stokely Carmichael Page, http://courses.washington.edu/spcmu/carmichael/transcript.htm
[96] King, "Beyond Vietnam", 169.

really a call to incite war, "Only by war can China, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East be kept in their (United States) control".[97] Also, Robeson argued in 1946 that American interest in Vietnam was hidden under the intention to keep Southeast Asia within the "free world" which really meant "White imperialism".[98] King draws links to both Du Bois' and Robeson's thoughts on American imperialism, claiming that the country along with the rest of the West had "poisoned the international atmosphere for so long".

Similar to how the Truman administration and the NAACP supported a "political assassination" of Du Bois' influence during the 1950s," Johnson's administration "was now quite willing to take steps towards reducing King's reputation". [99] The consequence of a very public and admired intellectual and cleric speaking against an unfavorable war would, to some, place America in a vulnerable position and make King a traitor instead of a hero. Anticommunists and the American press transformed King into an American antagonist after he declared his anti-war position. For example, on the 6th of April 1967, the *Washington Post* published an article entitled "A Tragedy", which unabashedly criticized King for his anti-Vietnam speech. The writers at the *Post* declare King's emergence within the peace movement as the death of Civil Rights, claiming that he has "diminished his usefulness to his cause, to his country and to his people. And that is a great tragedy".[100] King in the American press became the denouncer of his movement instead of the leader. In 1965 when King first shared his disapproval of the War, his former ally, Democratic senator Thomas Dodd, went further than the *Post* to argue that King will not only make himself an enemy of the movement by empathizing with the Vietnamese but he will become an enemy of the United States:

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[97] Quoted in Horne, *Black and Red,* 148..
[98] Duberman, *Here I Stand,* 239.
[99] Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion*, 104.
[100] "A Tragedy", *The Washington Post,* April 6th 1967, A20.

> The enemies of the civil rights movement have repeatedly made the charge that Dr. King is under Communist Influence. I have myself defended Dr. King against this charge. But by the stand he has now taken on the whole series of vital foreign policy issues, I gravely fear that Dr, King has provided his own enemies and the enemies of the movements he heads with ammunition that they will know only too well to use. [101]

Dodd's comments provide another example of the underlying assumption that black opinions on American foreign policy should remain null, even if only to maintain the front of respectability. Dodd was basically confirming that the "enemies of the civil rights movement" were anticommunists who were using the charge of "communist influence" to discredit King and his cause. King was censured by Cold War dogmas by drawing global lines between black victimhood in the States to the experience of the Vietnamese in the War against America.

In James Ziegler study of King's communism case he argues that in the view of America's political and social climate:

> Whatever King says in actual opposition to US military involvement in Vietnam, the ostensible rationale for the war, fighting communists, meant that in the Red Scare cultural conversation his objections could only express his illicit allegiance to the enemy".[102]

To add, Moyn makes it a point to identify that King in the last years of his life positioned the Civil Rights Movement in a global human rights frame and he did so at the "price of heavy stigmatization". [103] However, this was an issue blacks in the movement had to consider ever since 1945. Activists had to decide whether to adhere to strategies of respectability or responsibility in the case of Civil Rights under the Cold War climate in America. The politics of respectability vs. responsibility is rooted in King's anti-war speeches. For King his responsibility was to black Americans and issues of social and political justice. He was willing to risk his

[101] As quoted in Woods, 229.
[102] Zieger, *Red Scare Racism* 48.
[103] Moyn, *The Last Utopia,* 105.

privileged position amongst the American elite; he was willing to throw away American political respectability when it came to foreign politics to uphold his responsibility to issues in human rights. His reaction was similar to other African Americans who were taking a radical route as opposed to a functional route to freedom. As Adam Fairclough points out, the war, along with systematic racism, were "pushing blacks to the boiling-point", thus heightening cause for a "reactionary political climate". [104]

Historiography that studied and activists that experienced the movement first hand have often divided the movement between radical and non-radical, especially throughout the 1960s. However, as I have demonstrated, King's position as the leading figure of non-violent strategy and his subsequent vocal support of international human rights and anticolonialism defy the notion that there were distinct strategic divides between the movement. Historian Michael Simanga argues in his study on Amiri Baraka's transnationalism that in cities around America local black organizations and black youth were increasingly aligning their demands for power and justice with "African and Third World struggles […] it was even reflected in Dr. King's growing opposition to the war in Viet Nam and the systematic poverty he saw in black communities".[105] Simanga's statement is important because he acknowledges that this was another extension of how the movement changed due to a Cold War related zeitgeist. In *Radical King* Cornel West describes Martin Luther King Jr. as radical due to his anticolonial, anti-imperialist and democratic socialist ideas.[106] Similarly, Manning Marable in *Race, Reform and*

[104] Fairclough, "Martin Luther King Jr. and the War in Vietnam", 27.
[105] Michael Simanga, *Amiri Baraka and the Congress of African People* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 39.
[106] Cornel West, ed, *The Radical King* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), xi.

Rebellion bolsters my argument stating that King followed the example of Du Bois once he recognized the "correlation between his democratic socialist ideals and the peace issue". [107]

The King who I have discussed in this chapter is the King that the American government did not want to share with the public. This is the King that mirrored sides of the movement that were deemed taboo by anticommunists and respectability strategists. This is the King that participated in transnational and human rights perspectives that were often attributed to Black Power positions in the movement, and as a result this is the King that is left out of the history books and American memory.

In conclusion, I have discussed the Vietnam War in relation to the Civil Rights movement because the two events mirrored the other in that they both arguably ended in tragedy. Vietnam's impact on the movement was blatant in that it cast a shadow on black struggles at home. Vietnam stands as an example of how Cold War thinking continued to affect the movement. This is important to point out because it extends the scholarship timeline on the relationship between the Cold War and Civil Rights, and it supports my argument that anticommunism hindered the mobility and success of the long Civil Rights movement, while also inadvertently bolstering a radical perspective. Vietnam is also significant to this thesis as black reactions to the event demonstrate the changing strategies and thought in this new era of 60s protest. Anti-Vietnam sentiment from black Americans involved in the freedom struggle was rooted in the growing popularity of Black Nationalism, in the rebirth of African American internationalist views on race relations and the unceasing neglect of black urban poverty by the American establishment in favour of their overseas objectives.

[107] Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion*, 104.

As I have argued in this chapter, the revolutionary attitude and the Vietnam War propelled the death of the exaggerated American approach to radical forms of Civil Rights strategies in the 1960s and 1970s. Martin Luther King Jr. took up a number of taboo perspectives on black rights and global issues that clashed with America's Cold War objectives at home and abroad. King's position put him in line with Black Power players who rejected his peaceful ideology. Hence, this is why it is so important to demonstrate his thoughts on global politics and their relationship to national race politics towards the end of the 60s. Although Black Power leaders voiced their transnational alignments and anti-Vietnam sentiment long before King did, their reaction to his death, along with the rest of America, proves that King had powerful influence and sway on the public. When King was assassinated a wave of riots broke out across black America that had largely been precipitated and promoted by Black Power activists.[108] Before King's death, Stokely Carmichael stated that King "was a great leader of his people until he came out against Vietnam […] then all of a sudden he's not fit to lead anymore".[109] Opposition to America's Cold War policies only grew in sections of the movement by the end of the 1960s despite anticommunism still being at play. With King's new radical leanings came backlash and alienation from American society and establishments who used the old label of subversion to vilify the movement and its most famous leader.

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[108] Woodard, in *The Black Power Movement,* 70; There have been numerous works on the foul play of Martin Luther King Jr's assassination. The most infamous theory is that the FBI was responsible for his death. Hoover's COINTELPRO listed anti-Vietnam protesters, civil rights activist and spokespersons of social protest groups as his main targets. Martin Luther King embodied all of those descriptions. The Bureau had infamously labeled him the "Black Messiah" and wanted him neutralized from the early 60s. Whether the conspiracy is true or not, Martin Luther King Jr's death came after a string of unpopular opinions he held on the war and global oppressed communities. See Ben Kamin. *Dangerous Friendship: Stanley Levison, Martin Luther King Jr., And the Kennedy Brothers* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2014) 220-221) and Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against dissent in the United States* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 98-99.

[109] Stokely Carmichael, speech at Garfield High School, Seattle, 19 April, 1967, transcript on the IRC's Stokely Carmichael Page, http://courses.washington.edu/spcmu/carmichael/transcript.htm

Epilogue

In September 1962 *Ebony* Magazine issued an article entitled "J. Edgar Hoover – The Negro in the FBI", quite an ironic comment given the larger historical moment. *Ebony* writer Simeon Booker interviewed Hoover on the position of blacks in the FBI and the changing social position of blacks in America.[1] It is peculiar that *Ebony* magazine happened to interview Hoover during a period of great progress for Civil Rights and a period of redirection for the Bureau. By the second half of the 1950s, it was becoming increasingly difficult for institutions and projects that were influenced by the domestic Cold War to make accusations of subversion or treason once the American public and government bodies became increasingly alienated by the lure of McCarthyism that swept the nation. Institutions like the FBI that benefited greatly from McCarthy's methods of public investigation became more covert in their methods in order to continue the anticommunist crusade.[2]

From the late 1950s on, Hoover's Counterintelligence Program, COINTELPRO, became the governing directive of the Bureau.[3] The article tells us a lot about the changing atmosphere of anticommunist strategy in the crux of the Civil Rights era in the 1960s as well as how visible the FBI were in black society. *Ebony* paints Hoover as an ally to black Americans, possibly in an effort to clear up his bad reputation with African Americans dating back to the former decade and beyond. Hoover informs *Ebony* of his intentions to help the black community by molding black men into "models of the clean, manly life";[4] an image formulated in the postwar American nuclear family. *Ebony* Magazine was marketed to the black middle class, having been influenced

[1] Simeon Baker, "J. Edgar Hoover – The Negro in the FBI" *Ebony,* September 1962, 29.
[2] Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A brief history with Documents*. (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994), 239.
[3] Freedom Archives, *Cointelpro 101*. n.p.: MVD Entertainment Group, 2011. Video.
[4] Baker, "J. Edgar Hoover", 30.

by the wholesome American image of *Life* magazine.[5] Thus, it is plausible that Hoover strategized that *Ebony's* black middle class audience would be more susceptible to his campaign for traditional all-American social values. Hoover addresses the challenges between the black community and the FBI:

> The FBI race relations image is an area in which the director is particularly aware and sometimes defensive…Hoover feels that many of the attacks on the FBI are engineered by persons who want to undermine the security of the country since one the agency's functions is to keep an eye on Communistic activity […] FBI records, he contends, carry no racial designations.[6]

The last statement, as we have seen, is specious, as Hoover's 1957 Cold War manual along with Bureau's files on black public figures like Martin Luther King Jr. all contain sections on minorities and their susceptibility to subversion.

Furthermore, Hoover tells *Ebony* that he is aware of the Bureau's image when it comes to race relations. Clearly, he is conscious of the criticism he has received by numerous black activists like James Baldwin, Richard Wright, and Amiri Baraka and later advocates of both non-violence and militant strategies. It's quite questionable that Hoover decided to clear up these allegations while major campaigns like the Albany movement and integration of Southern universities were making their mark on the national and world stage. It may have been a strategic move on Hoover's part to clear up Bureau opposition rumors to the Civil Rights movement so that the COINTELPRO operation could conduct investigations smoothly. What is most important about this excerpt from the article is the connection between race relations and "communistic activity". The *Ebony* article illuminates my overall argument in this thesis, which has highlighted the deceptive nature of anticommunist agents who sought to quell Civil Rights

[5] Todd Vogel, ed. *The Black Press: New Literary and Historical Essays* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 207-208.
[6] Baker, "J. Edgar Hoover", 30.

activity and leaders during the Cold War. Hoover goes on to discuss the tragedy of the black leader in black communities and claims that he has recruited black men into the FBI so they can serve as examples for their community, going as far to claim that "Negroes need more heroes to encourage their youngsters".[7] Hoover is making the case that black youth need more "heroes" in an era in which heroes were produced in droves thanks to the main faces promoting the Civil Rights movement. To Hoover the 'black hero' created in his image is someone serving the motives and ideals of the Bureau that worked against the fight for black advancement in American life during the period of the Cold War/Civil Rights encounter. Hoover employs one of the most popular black magazines to distribute his agenda.

This article is particularly significant as it shows unmistakably how the motives of national security agencies contrasted from the aspirations of the Civil Rights movement and also how little Hoover understood about the movement in general. As Cold War concerns rivalled domestic race issues and as the fear of communist allegations failed to quiet the protests of direct action/ non-violence and later Black Power protestors, a new strategy was employed to try and thwart the positive image of the Civil Rights struggles and its leaders. Hoover's COINTELPRO was put in action and the Red label hung in the air while the 60s became the decade of rapid social changes and relentless criticism of mainstream politics in the United States.

From the earliest COINTELPRO files the Bureau emphasized targeting Black Nationalist groups, which they perceived to be black hate groups. According to COINTELPRO doctrine the Bureau's mission was as follows:

> The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of Black Nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder.[8]

[7] Baker, "J. Edgar Hoover", 34.
[8] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Black Extremist File, 25 August, 1967.

Though the Bureau introduced this operation as "new," COINTELPRO had been in operation officially in the early 60s and pseudo COINTELPRO operations were in order in the late 50s.[9] Though the FBI claimed to target Black Nationalist or hate groups they instructed that "intensified attention" be afforded to "Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference…Congress of Racial Equality and the Nation of Islam".[10] Here is a key example of the FBI's careless labeling of black liberation groups in that the organization categorized Civil Rights groups under subversives, nationalist, or hate-type. The Bureau clearly did not understand or care to understand the ideological and strategic differences of Civil Rights groups - a factor that I have showcased throughout this thesis.

Take the case of the SCLC and the Nation of Islam, which have completely opposing ideologies and foundations. The black community by 1967 was almost split in the direction of nationalist teachings that the Nation of Islam promoted, or the SCLC, which favoured more integration oriented Civil Rights strategies. James Jennings confirms my argument that black thought has often been misunderstood and categorized as a single entity as he argues that "black political thought and ideological range within the black community should no longer be described as simply integrationist or separatist although black political thought has basically been put into one of these two categories".[11] By categorizing the movement, African American activism became divided between the "good" blacks and the "bad" blacks. In the case of the late 60s the good blacks were those who kept silent on issues like Vietnam and independence movements overseas and the bad blacks were those of a Black Power persuasion.

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[9] O' Reilly, *Racial Matters* 104.
[10] United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Black Extremist File, 25 August, 1967.
O' Reilly, *Racial Matters* 104.
[11] Jennings, *The Politics of Black Empowerment*, 51.

This thesis has illuminated the ways in which strategies of respectability affected the direction of Civil Rights protest expression during the first few decades of the Cold War and how these strategies shaped the movement in the long run. The so-called "good blacks" were often those who engaged with respectability tactics that propelled pragmatism such as prominent members of the NAACP, those who were anticommunist in ideological orientation, and those who backed U.S. efforts overseas as in Vietnam. My study then proposes the question: Were strategies of respectability undertaken by black moderates or black Cold War liberals simply a strategy for survival or did they form an actual belief system? Reviewing what I have argued so far, it is possible to conclude that a strategy of respectability, amongst Cold War era liberal activists, was originally a tactic of survival but gradually became a way of thinking and a more all-encompassing sensibility. Martin Kilson, in his study of modern black conservatism, states that black conservatism today is a "reactive not a proactive conservatism".[12] The same can be said about black strategies of respectability during the Civil Rights movement and its understandings of Cold War events. Cold War liberalism was a tactic that many Americans black or white adhered to because in that climate of mistrust and ultra-patriotism, nobody wanted to be the enemy. Organizations like the NAACP that respected Cold War protocol and national standards of behavior did so in the name of concessions and engagement with American elites; these concessions and engagements had never been afforded to Civil Rights projects on that scale. Despite its superficial nature, decrees like President Truman's *To Secure These Rights* motivated African Americans to progress their cause.[13] Once again with Vietnam, after being cautioned by the Truman administration over discrediting American democracy with race issues, those black moderates who were working with the non-violence movement of the 1960s

[12] Martin Kilson, "Anatomy of Black Conservatism." *Transition*, no. 59 (1993): 7.
[13] President's Committee on Civil Rights. *To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights*. (Washington: GPO, 1947), vii-xii.

determined that if they condemned the Johnson administration the movement would lose its momentum, support and its revolutionary legislative gains. Thus, respectability was a strategy of stability for many activists in the movement.

By the later years of the movement blacks in liberal and conservative camps especially employed respectability because they wanted to distance themselves for the image of militant, aggressive and unapologetic blackness expressed by those in the Black Power movement. The Black Power image alienated and made mainstream white Americans uncomfortable, and historically black respectability politics appealed to the value system of the dominant white majority.[14] For Civil Rights activists, white alliances and a positive image of black America was needed not only to gain support for black issues but also to finance initiatives to promote them. Respectability critics like Franklin Frazier have described this philosophy as a type of "conformity to white ideals" or in the case of the reaction to Cold War loyalties, a tactic that created exaggerated Americans.[15] However, it could also be interpreted as a response to achieve equal rights by whatever means. As Bayard Rustin reflected in 1970, "I know that I have changed, but the changes have been in response to the objective conditions".[16]

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's misconception of the beliefs and strategies within the black freedom struggle in the black community would result in a deep divide between Black Power groups and black liberals. Significantly this divide mirrored the break between the black left and the NAACP during the Cold War domestic political consensus years of the 1940s– 50s. After Martin Luther King Jr. died, the movement split down the middle as the Black Panther

[14] Walcott, *Remaking Respectability,* 4-5.
[15] Frazier, *The Black Bourgeoisie,* 26.
[16] Peter Eisenstadt, *Black Conservatism: Essays in Intellectual and Political History,* (New York: Garland Pub., 1999), 223.

Party became the most recognized black rights organization in America.[17] Hoover, with the approval of the Nixon administration, worked to destroy the Panthers through coercion, intimidation and murder.[18] Black activists who did not side with Black Power or Black Panthers assisted the Bureau in eliminating or modifying their opposition so their objectives wouldn't be shrouded by the ideologies of Black Power parties. Former allies like Roy Wilkins and Stokely Carmichael debated each other in the press to showcase what faction of the movement voiced the concerns of black America. The cycle of mistrust and division wrenched the movement, complicating other long-standing divisions, such as the NAACP distancing from the Black left in the early Cold War decades. The movement was no longer a movement. Subversive programs inspired by the fears and anxieties of the Cold War and ambivalence towards black advancement had arguably succeeded in compounding the momentum for further public activism by any strategic force in the movement once COINTELPRO took off and Richard Nixon was elected on a platform of law and order.[19] In his groundbreaking study on the FBI and the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, historian Kenneth O'Reilly makes this conclusion about the national security agency:

> The FBI fed the internal tensions and rivalries among the myriad of groups that made up the mass-based civil rights movement, making it harder for the movement to present a united front during the years of urban riots and white backlash […] the FBI dissuaded others from joining movement groups, from giving money, from otherwise supporting the black struggle.[20]

Agencies that detected subversion had made their mark on the Civil Rights movement from the 40s, and despite mass black support of issues that opposed America's politics, the label of

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[17] Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion*, 110-111.
[18] *Freedom Archives: Cointelpro: 101.*
[19] Timothy Thurber N. 2007. "Goldwaterism Triumphant? Race and the Republican Party, 1965–1968." *Journal of the Historical Society* 7 (3): 369.
[20] O' Reilly, *Racial Matters,* 358.

subversion was too strong to overcome and the movement became lost in the shadows of its glory days. Arguably, the early years of FBI infiltration into movement activism and later the brutal shut down of Black Nationalists in the late 60s and 70s mirrors the complicated relationship between African Americans and law enforcement in recent times and the lingering sensibility that African Americans were and are somehow inherently subversive to existing society.[21]

My analysis of the effects that the Cold War and its subversive culture had on the long Civil Rights movement illuminates three decades. However, decades after Martin Luther King Jr's assassination, the imprisonment of Black Panthers and the death of J. Edgar Hoover, Cold War reasoning continued to influence African American thought and activism. In the 1970s, President Nixon took up a "race neutral approach," in that he limited civil rights discussion after it dominated American domestic politics in the former decade. According to historians Matthew Lassiter and Timothy Thurber, this was in order to satisfy the growing intersection between white Northerners and Southerners in their detachment towards racial matters that stemmed from Civil Rights Bills.[22] Continuing into the 1980s there was a resurgence of American conservatism as Americans across the Sun Belt states yearned for the ostensibly comfortable and wholesome suburban-like days of the 1950s when America prospered immensely from their Cold War image.[23]

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1981 ushered in a new era of consumption, conservatism and the end of the détente between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Additionally,

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[21] *Freedom Archives: Cointelpro: 101*
[22] Thurber, "Goldwaterism Triumphant?", 365.
[23] Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America, (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 79; Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: plain-folk religion, grassroots politics, and the rise of evangelical conservatism,* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 253.

Reagan's administration, influenced by its neoliberal[24] principles, erased initiatives formulated by the Civil Rights movements.[25] Those include affirmative action and regulating tax supported government programs, therefore pushing blacks in urban cities to the extremes of marginalization.[26] Reagan's relationship with domestic black issues was controversial, whether in his reaction to the AIDS epidemic, his anti-Civil Rights positions or the war on drugs.[27]

The President would also clash with black Americans over international issues. Friction between African American criticisms of American foreign policy arose again with the issue of the South African Apartheid and America's ties to the racist segregated government. Reagan was in support of "constructive engagement" with the apartheid government because of economic interests and the threat of Soviet influence in the region – all initiatives steeped in American Cold War interventions around the world.[28] Protest against Reagan's South African policy erupted upon the national stage with the support of TransAfrica, Free South Africa Movement and the Congressional Black Caucus. In consequence, the protest became the most significant act of civil disobedience since the Civil Rights era.[29] Black Americans once again engaged in transnational and human rights discourses. The plight of blacks in South Africa had been an issue of concern for black Americans since the turn of the century as influential black leaders like W.E.B Du Bois and Marcus Garvey made it a point to identify the severe inequalities witnessed

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[24] George Monbiot, "Neo-Liberalism – the ideology at the root of all of our problems" *The Guardian,* April 15, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot
[25] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 10.
[26] Singh, *Black Is A Country*, 10.
[27] In the 1960s Reagan opposed both the Civil Rights act and Voting Rights Act because he believed they would interfere with State rights and individual enterprise. This thinking informed his decisions to deregulate the American government and oppose affirmative action. See Singh, *Black Is A Country*, 9.
[28] Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion*, 182; Nelson George, *Post Soul Nation: The Explosive, Contradictory, Triumphant, and Tragic 1980s as Experienced by African Americans (Previously Known as Blacks and Before That Negroes)*. (New York, NY: Viking, 2004), 105.
[29] Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion*, 214.

by black Africans within the African nation.[30] In fact, a number of Civil Rights activists and survivors of anticommunist blacklists participated in the efforts to end apartheid in South Africa up until its demise. Harry Belafonte, for example, spoke out about apartheid during the 1960s, using his power in the music business to promote black South African protest songs and artists. In 1986 he was arrested along with numerous others for protesting outside the South African embassy in Washington D.C.[31] Similarly, James Baldwin lent his writing talents to the cause; for example, he compared the South's situation with South Africa as early as 1963. In 1985, he continued this comparison by linking South African Bishop Desmond Tutu's leadership to Martin Luther King's.[32]

Furthermore, even in the 1980s there was a sense of ambivalence towards African American opinion on international politics. For example, the D.C. based liberal periodical *The New Republic* urged African Americans to "turn their attention back home…agitation against South Africa is no substitute for the reckoning that American blacks must make with their own political mistakes".[33] Clearly, the transnational activism of African Americans fighting for basic human rights in South Africa was regarded as dubious to American political goals and mainstream liberalism as it had been since the McCarthy years and the Vietnam War.

African American internationalists, like many people of colour and repressed minorities around the world, saw the human rights revolution as the answer to their suffering. Additionally comfort from countries around the world gave black Americans the necessary power to gain America's attention. It can be said that African American internationalism arguably achieved its

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[30] Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2012), 3.
[31] Judith E. Smith, *Becoming Belafonte*, (Austin : University of Texas Press, 2014), 253.
[32] A. Scott Henderson and P. L. Thomas ed, *James Baldwin: Challenging Authors* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2014), 43.
[33] As quoted in Francis Njubi Nesbitt. *Race of Sanctions: African Americans Against Apartheid 1946-1994* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 131.

first victory against the Cold War as Black American collaboration with Africans succeeded in gaining their country's support against apartheid by 1986.[34] Pan-African and transnationalist leaders Du Bois and Robeson were once shunned by major forces in the movement and in their country because of their stance on foreign politics. Yet, the appeal of transnationalism and human rights during and after the Cold War continued to spread within African American thought and activism.

Throughout this study the theme of race and subversion has dominated my arguments on how and why blacks were targeted by anticommunists. The subversive label was an incredibly powerful tool used to discredit Civil Rights advocates and the freedom movement. The strains of Cold War subversive labelling can be noted in the decades after the Civil Rights movement. In the 1980s, the reduction of government regulation programs that provided social assistance for marginal groups as well as the war on drugs produced a racial image and the subversive label of black "welfare queens" and "crackheads".[35] Neoliberalism displaced anticommunism and generated further subversive labels on black citizens.[36] In his book *Beyond Black and White,* Marable draws several interesting connections to race and subversion in the 1980s. Specifically, the following analysis of Reagan's war on black culture and society draws on the legacy of the Cold War subversion:

> With the demise of the Cold War, American conservatives have been denied the threat of communism as the ideological glue which could unify the voices of racism and reaction […] conservatives have launched a "cultural war" against an unholy host of new subversives, such as the proponents of political correctness, affirmative action, Black Studies […] and worst of all, "multiculturalism. [37]

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[34] Nesbitt, *Race of Sanctions*, 123
[35] Singh, *Black Is A Country,* 10.
[36] George Monbiot, "Neo-Liberalism – the ideology at the root of all of our problems" *The Guardian,* April 15, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot
[37] Manning Marable, *Beyond Black And White: Beyond Black and White: Transforming African-American Politics,* (London: Verso, 1995), 118.

Anticommunism was used to veil racist attitudes towards black advancement and demands for equality in America. Once anticommunism was out of fashion as an effective accusation, especially during the demise of the Cold War, a renewed focus on domestic conservatism and new subversive labels continued the racist guise of the Cold War decade.[38]

Moreover, traces of subversive labeling still live on today. In many ways Cold War red baiting still holds resonance in conservative U.S. circles. Most recently, President Barack Obama's 2008 election was riddled with accusations from his opponents that were based on basic Cold War era principles. From popular public figures like Donald Trump to members of the conservative Tea Party, many claimed that Obama was un-American in several fashions. The first African American President has been referred to as a Muslim, a socialist, and a communist by his opposition.[39] James Ziegler argues that members of the Republican Party and other political opponents of Obama used "Red Scare vocabulary" to discredit him as a "traitor to their cause and country" before and during his presidency.[40] It is quite astonishing that the Cold War image of subversive blacks in the American mind endures in contemporary times. This alone proves that further analysis of racial subversion in America needs to be acknowledged by scholars of both Civil Rights and U.S Cold War history.

The growing scholarship surrounding the Cold War waged within America and the Long Civil Rights movement demonstrates a deepening acknowledgement of the correlation of both historic circumstances. Kevin Gaines, in his essay on *The Crisis of Historical Memory,* argues that traditional Cold War scholarship ultimately is responsible for the lack of recognition of the Cold War's negative impact on the black freedom movement. Part of proclaiming America's

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[38] Katheryn Russell Brown, *The Color of Crime,* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 13.
[39] Martin A. Parlett, *Demonizing a President: The Foriegnization of Baraka Obama,* (California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2014), 153.
[40] Ziegler, *Red Scare, Racism and Cold War Black Radicalism*, xiii.

victory in the Cold War through scholarship was to evade any controversial acts the country committed in its quest to defeat the Soviets. As Gaines explains:

> the enduring legacy of the Cold War's constraints on black thought and politics, (is) a legacy dismissed by academic and popular declarations that some domestic repression was regrettable, but ultimately justified by the American victory in the Cold War.[41]

Thus, Civil Rights was just another victim in the Cold War fight, joining the ranks of Vietnamese peasants, repressed Caribbean independence movements and African independence leaders forced into exile or killed under U.S. central intelligence operations like Patrice Lumumba.[42] Other historians mentioned in my thesis including Singh, Marable, Robbie Lieberman, and Penny Von Eschen to name a few, have helped to further the study of anticommunism and its repercussions on the black freedom struggle. America won victory in the Cold War, if there can be said to be a victory in this sort of conflict, but today black Americans are still struggling with the consequences and continued grievances of inequality that were downplayed because of the United States' "justified" fight for capitalism and democracy.

In short, Cold War American anticommunism did transform the Civil Rights movement's tactics, strategies, image and leadership, while also narrowing the movement's international perspective and later compelling a resurgence of transnationalism in response to black dissident and the Vietnam War. With this study I hope to highlight the consequences of American anti-subversive culture in the postwar years and how it affected key events and figures in Civil Rights that have been popularized in mainstream American culture. By re-examining the relationship between the African American freedom movement and the Cold War in American history we allow victims of those repressive, yet contradictory, times to have a voice. In 2011, 20 years after the end of the Cold War and double that of the Civil Rights movement, Harry Belafonte recalled

[41] Gaines, "The Crisis of Historical Memory", 193.
[42] Borstelman, *The Cold War and The Color Line,* 314.

his long history in civil and human rights activism. His words sum up the importance in expanding Cold War Civil Rights narratives as he states, "I think those who anointed me as being villainous and not a patriot have to – they have to go back and exam history again".[43]

[43] *Tavis Smiley Show,* "Actor-Activist Harry Belafonte" *PBS*, November 30, 2011.

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