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ARTICLE

Harlem, Addis, and Johannesburg: African Solidarity and African American Internationalism in Harlem from the 1960s to the 1990s

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Abstract

This 2021 ASA Presidential Lecture combines sociopolitical history with personal reflections on Black Harlem during African decolonization. It begins at the turn of the twentieth century and traces Harlem's transformation into an international center of pan-Africanist activism and cultural production. Brown explores solidarities that grew as Harlem politicians, grassroots leaders, and residents encountered political exiles and cultural leaders from the continent, the diaspora, and aligned political movements worldwide. These alliances and modes of protest facilitated a hardening of militant activist traditions and cultural cohesion that shaped an anti-imperialist pan-African movement and ultimately a multinational Black political movement in the 1960's to 1990s.

Résumé

Cette conférence présidentielle 2021 de l'ASA associe l'histoire sociopolitique à des réflexions personnelles sur le Harlem noir [Black Harlem] pendant la décolonisation africaine. Elle commence au tournant du XXe siècle et retrace la transformation de Harlem en un centre international d'activisme panafricaniste et de production culturelle. Brown explore les solidarités qui se sont développées au fur et à mesure que les politiciens, les dirigeants locaux et les résidents de Harlem rencontraient des exilés politiques et des dirigeants culturels du continent, de la diaspora et des mouvements politiques alignés dans le monde entier. Ces alliances et ces modes de protestation ont facilité le durcissement des traditions militantes et la cohésion culturelle qui ont façonné un mouvement panafricain anti-impérialiste et, en fin de compte, un mouvement politique noir multinational.

Resumo

Esta palestra presidencial da African Studies Association (ASA) de 2021 conjuga elementos da história sociopolítica com reflexões pessoais sobre a "Harlem Negra" ao longo da descolonização africana. Começando no início do século XX, nela se reconstitui o processo de transformação do bairro de Harlem num centro internacional de ativismo e produção cultural pan-africanista. Brown analisa as solidariedades que se foram desenvolvendo à medida que os políticos, líderes comunitários e residentes de Harlem estabeleceram contacto com os exilados políticos e os líderes culturais vindos do continente africano, da diáspora e de movimentos políticos alinhados com o movimento negro a nível internacional. Estas alianças e formas de protesto facilitaram um endurecimento das tradições ativistas e da coesão dos militantes, as quais deram origem a um movimento anti-imperialista pan-africano e, em última análise, a um movimento político negro multinacional.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism; Harlem; African diaspora; decolonization; CUNY; colonialism; Black Internationalism; Black Power

Introduction

Note: This speech was delivered in November 2021 at the 64th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, which was held in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been some adjustments to the original text by way of explanation (https://vimeo.com/82911147).

On June 21, 1990, Nelson and Winnie Mandela marched in triumph into Harlem's Riverside Church to the sound of African drums, following master drummer Babatunde Olatunji. Mandela's face beamed with pride when a contingent of South Africans broke out in the Toyi-Toyi protest dance of Free South Africa.[1] *A triumphant and prideful Harlem was celebrating one of its most honored and sacred heroes—a moral champion who had defied the world's most racist regime—apartheid. To us, he had come home! – CAB*

Welcome to the 64th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA). We've struggled through yet another year of the COVID-19 pandemic but we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel.[2] We hope that this will be our last virtual conference, and that we will be together in Philadelphia next year (2022). This organization—the African Studies Association—has been a leader in promoting the study of Africa in the United States for over sixty years. It has been an important support for my own intellectual development and my decision to become a historian of Africa. As I rotate off as President of the Association, I thank all of you for entrusting me with leadership in these challenging times. I pass the Presidential baton to Ousseina Alidou, a wonderful colleague from Rutgers University.

I begin my talk with a reference to a visit to Harlem by two of late decolonization's most influential leaders, Amílcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau (1924–1973) and Nelson Mandela of South Africa (1918–2013). Both thanked Harlem for supporting their struggle against European racial colonialism and the most virulent regimes of settler dominance on the continent—Southern Africa and the Portuguese Empire. Each leader recognized the profound importance of the African American diaspora in the historical trajectory of the Black freedom

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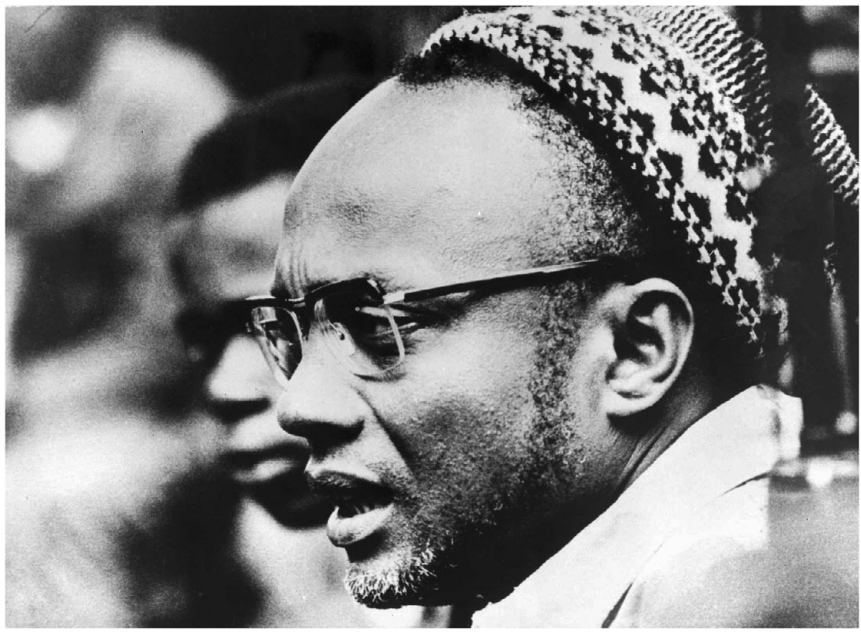

Figure 1. Amílcar Cabral [Wikimedia Commons].

struggle from the late nineteenth century conquest and colonization of Africa to the establishment of majority rule in the 1990s.

On October 20, 1972, I attended a talk by Amílcar Cabral [see Figure 1] at the Black Economic Research Center, a Harlem-based think tank, three months before his assassination.[3] That conversation, "Connecting the Struggles: An Informal Talk with Black Americans," is published in *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amílcar Cabral* (Cabral 2023). It was an important theoretical statement that linked diasporic and continental struggles. As the leader of the *Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC), his encouraging message—a statement of Black Internationalism—spoke to the common purposes of the African and African American liberation struggles.[4] He noted:

> All the achievements toward the solution of your problems here are real contributions to our own struggle. And we are very encouraged in our struggle by the fact that each day more of the African people born in America become conscious of their responsibilities to the struggle in Africa...We think that all you can do here to develop your own conditions in the sense of progress, in the sense of history and in the sense of the total realization of your aspirations as human beings is a contribution for us. It is also a contribution for you to never forget that you are Africans... (2023:76)

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This was a profound statement of Pan-Africanist aspiration. Tragically, Cabral was assassinated in Guinea Conakry three months later, on January 20, 1973.[5]

This talk is a very personal narrative of my experience living in Harlem during an extraordinary period of international Black radicalism and optimism about the possibilities for global social justice. It reflects my awakening to Harlem's historical role as a site of political radicalism in the early twentieth century. I was a young African American scholar living in Harlem from the 1960s through the 90s. This was a violent phase of Africa's decolonization as the negotiated independence movements were eclipsed by those populations that encountered the power of white settler states—Algeria, Portuguese African Empire, and the southern African states of Rhodesia, South Africa, and German Southwest Africa. There was a similar transformation in the freedom movement of the diaspora—Black Power—in the US and the Caribbean. As I reflected on this period for my Presidential Lecture, I realized the richness of Harlem's political formation as a Black political and cultural center. This led me to appreciate the political synergies between pre-WWII Harlem and these militant collaborations that followed the war. As an African historian, my work was cut out for me. I launched an exciting—though substantively cursory—perusal of Harlem's political history. This presented a considerable challenge for a historian of Africa, even living in the midst of African American history.

The collaboration between radical African nationalists and militant Harlem residents had a lasting impact on both communities and created connections that continue to this day. This talk represents a brief outline of my larger project to document the politics, challenges, and victories of a generational movement that began in the 1960s. This was an invigorating decade of global political activism. This was when the Black movement "practiced diaspora" in especially meaningful ways and worked in solidarity with other people seeking social justice. [6] We organized and attended each other's demonstrations, launched fundraising campaigns, sponsored educational programs, and devoted many hours to reading about liberation struggles in radical study groups. Harlem attracted militant political celebrities from around the world, from Cuba's Fidel Castro to Grenada's Maurice Bishop.

This was a period of international solidarity beyond the Black World. Latin America and Asia were both in the throes of radical transformation. The 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam increased local opposition to the war. The Cuban Revolution linked the Caribbean and African struggles to anti-imperialist movements in Chile, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. In the US, the Black Panthers brought a new generation into the militant struggle for civil rights. Throughout the nation, students protested the Vietnam War and demanded educational reforms that included Black Studies. The *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR) in Chile, the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) in Nicaragua, and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador had formidable solidarity movements throughout the US. Similarly, Grenada's New Jewel Movement launched the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), the first militant movement in the English Caribbean. In 1968, France tottered on the brink of civil war as French students led

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general protests involving trade union strikes, factory and university occupations, and demonstrations against capitalism and American imperialism. This period revived Harlem's mythical standing, which had been established in the early twentieth century, as a center of radical Black liberation politics. We debated the strategies, goals, and meanings of Black struggle, enthusiastically followed the political cultures in each region, and essentially crafted a radical form of Pan-Africanism.

As I move toward my retirement in 2024, I am concerned to document what an extraordinary period this was for me, personally, but equally for a generation defined by the political protests of the 60s and 70s. The political energy and unrest of this period also catalyzed the emergence and professionalization of African Studies as an academic field in the US. This talk represents a brief outline of my larger project to document the politics, challenges, and victories of a generational movement that began in the 1960s. It is only a beginning.

My Family Context: Locating Our People in the Broader Historical Themes

A memoir is a story both of a person's experiences and of their context—the broader contours of the historical processes that shaped the experiences of individuals. In this case, I benefitted from a phenomenon that captivated the Black communities in the US. The miniseries *Roots* (1977) encouraged thousands of Black families to locate their origins within broader historical events that shaped the nation's history. There was an insatiable attempt to reconstruct the roots of kinship scattered by slavery and the post-slavery migrations of millions of our people escaping Jim Crow in the South. As a professional historian, I am drawing upon the contributions of my relatives to this popular history that led African Americans to recover family connections. Both my paternal family, through Stephen Jenkins Senior (1785–?) of Ahoskie, North Carolina, and the maternal wing, through John Mallory Phillips (1857–1922) of Hampton, Virginia, have embraced family reconstruction with a level of expertise and professionalism that is remarkable in its sophistication. I owe them a debt of gratitude, as their commitment to these efforts encouraged me to launch a memoir project of my own.

I belong to an African American family whose commitment to higher education began in the nineteenth century. I was born in Hampton, Virginia, to parents who—only several generations removed from slavery—were graduates of two HBCUs. My father was an alumnus of Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and my mother an alumna of North Carolina College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central). My maternal grandmother, Helena Major Phillips, whose father came from British Guiana soon after Reconstruction, also graduated from Hampton Institute in 1898 and became a schoolteacher. My father's family, who were from Ahoskie, North Carolina, were descended from an extraordinary man, Stephen Jenkins, who came out of slavery with money which he used to purchase property for a church and the

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Black hospital. [7] My mother's family patriarch, John Mallory Phillips (1857–1922), was a freeperson who founded an oyster business in Hampton, Virginia (Erickson 2013). In the 1890s, he and several other entrepreneurs established a resort called Bay Shore on Hampton Roads and founded a bank (Peoples Building and Loan) to finance Black homes.[8] I have also recently discovered familial ties to several political activists: Jarvis Tyner of the Communist Party and his brother, the jazz pianist McCoy Tyner; Bree Newsome, who took down the Confederate Flag on the South Carolina State House grounds after the Charleston church shooting; and Bree Newsome's father, the Rev. Clarence Newsome, who served as President of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

While writing my memoir, I realized that I had been raised with a very positive view of Africa, a view that was based on over a half century of Black American education and commitment to an internationalized program of "racial uplift." Both branches of my family—in Hampton, Virginia, and Ahoskie, North Carolina—valued education as a way of overcoming racism, segregation, and white supremacy. The roots go back to the founding of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) immediately after the Civil War, and the evidence was from my grandmother, Helena Major. She enrolled in one of the first Black colleges after the war—Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute.[9] I found a letter in the archive that she wrote in 1901 thanking the white benefactors who sponsored her education. She spoke positively about Booker T. Washington and the doctrine of "racial uplift" that he espoused. Her career plans were to be a teacher and a missionary in Africa. This was not at all unusual, as the turn of the century was a period of great interest in Africa, and Black leaders led major debates about the place of Africans and their descendants in the hierarchy of races. Both Hampton and Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute were institutions associated with Washington's advocacy of technical education as a means of character building and uplift for Black people throughout the world. He always had a vision that included Africa, and his institutions—Hampton and Tuskegee, as well as the many others—became centers for the study of Africa. In fact, they were the first centers of African Studies. Many South African missionaries were especially interested in having their mission-trained Africans visit these institutions to see how quickly they were able to train a professional class. Several mission-educated South Africans visited, including John Dube, a founder of the ANC, and John Jabavu, the editor of South Africa's first Xhosa newspaper. The Hampton Singers followed the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who toured South Africa singing "Negro Spirituals."

By the time I was born in 1944, the whole colonial project was undergoing scrutiny. World War II shook the foundations of imperialism and enabled Africans to create mass political parties that demanded independence. By this time, over a half century of African Studies was an entrenched part of the curriculum in most Black colleges, and the general public followed developments in their clubs, political organizations, and churches. The Black public was enriched by coverage of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, and the Black press carried articles about apartheid as well as the independence of Ghana. By the time I entered college, the Civil Rights movement had meshed with the independence struggle in Africa. I was primed to study Africa.

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Building a Legacy of Radical Internationalism: Black Activism in Harlem before the Cold War

The African political exiles who arrived in Harlem in the 1970s and 1980s found an informed community sympathetic to international struggles for social justice and anti-imperialism. Harlem had participated in decades of political activism and ideological development mobilizing around issues of African decolonization and racial discrimination. Harlem began as a rich suburb for the growing middle class of European migrants. It was during World War I that it became a multi-class and multinational Black community. Harlem had a unique militant political culture of radical Black internationalism that benefitted from the intermixing of Black people from a range of countries. Each community contributed its own form of political activism and analytical perspective arising from its historical trajectories. But there was one convergence—a strong conviction that Africa, as a sophisticated contributor to world civilization, deserved to be free of imperialist control. Between 1890 and 1914, the Black population of New York increased dramatically and moved from lower Manhattan to San Juan Hill and finally to Harlem (Cordasco & Galatioto 1970). But the largest migration—called the Great Migration—occurred in two phases: first from 1910 to 1930, and again from 1941 to 1970.[10]

African Americans fled rural communities in the south to escape the boll weevil cotton plague as well as lynching and the Klan and came to large cities in the North and West. There, they were able to find jobs that were vacated when World War I brought European migration to a halt. Similarly, Caribbean people—both unskilled workers and literate professionals—escaped the sugar plantations, and Black Latinos from Cuba and Puerto Rico sought a better life. East Harlem—bounded in the south by 96th Street from Fifth Avenue to the Harlem River and in the north by 125th street from 5th Avenue to the East River—was initially populated by European immigrants. These included Italians, Irish, Germans, and Jews, each arriving (and leaving) during periods from the late nineteenth century until after World War II. Jews were the largest group inhabiting the elegant townhouses in Central Harlem in the early twentieth century, but Italian and Black populations pushed them out (Cordasco & Galatioto 1970). As East Harlem changed from "Little Italy" to "Spanish Harlem," white populations evacuated the area.

New York's population increased 66 percent, and Harlem had some 200,000 residents by the 1920s. The Great Migration of southern Blacks escaping the terror of lynching and the harsh penal system coincided with a similar migration of skilled and unskilled workers and professionals from the Caribbean. As Harlem grew, it became a multinational Black community with a patchwork of ethnicities and national identities, all of whom brought a rich tradition of radical political action and radical Black internationalism. The Black population of Central Harlem originated from diverse sites across the Black diaspora. Winston James, writing about the period from 1900 to 1960, calls Harlem a "black contact zone," a space where the "people of African descent from different geographic spaces, meet, interact, and commingle with one another for the first time" (James 2018).[11] The demography of Spanish and Central Harlem facilitated an

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internationalization of Blackness. This was a well-established aspect of Harlem's political culture that encouraged the integration of African political exiles into an activist environment that included both the domestic population as well as foreigners.

The timing of this migration coincided with the European conquest of Africa and the violent loss of African sovereignty. This was the "New Imperialism" that Lenin recognized in his *Imperialism: The Highest State of Capitalism* (1916), in which monopolies and finance capital led to claims of spheres of influence that partitioned the continent. The technological inventions of the Industrial Revolution accelerated the mechanization of weapons. All were appropriated in this brutal conquest. New weaponry and military strategies, scientific discoveries in medicine and industry, and racist ideas about human development—scientific racism and Social Darwinism—fostered unlimited levels of violent brutality. The New Imperialism dehumanized the Black race as a sub-human species, an intermediary being between "mankind" (white) and "beast" (animals). Slaughter was rationalized as the only way to pacify Africans, who were considered savage, inferior, and "not quite human." The Gatling Gun—a true colonial weapon—enabled Lord Kushner to allow several hundred troops to kill 12,000 Sudanese (Young 1994:92). Crawford Young argues that total military victory was crucial in the conquest "to foreclose any semblance of residual civil rights," an important element of the colonial state (Brown 2003:62, 92).

Scholars and political activists in Harlem and other Black communities watched the conquest of Africa with anger and indignation. Europe's rationalization of Africa's conquest drew upon eugenicist and white supremacist discourses. For this reason, many prominent intellectuals and activists wrote extensively to challenge white supremacy and worked to spread the defense of Black humanity to broad sectors of Harlem. Their detailed awareness of the violence of European conquest encouraged them to develop racial consciousness in Harlem as a defense against the white supremacy that they also recognized in the lynching and murder of Black people in the American South.

Harlem was emerging as a self-confident international center whose intellectual sophistication and scholarly culture produced a fierce community of public intellectuals. Scholars and worker-intellectuals were conversant with the leading debates on colonialism, socialism, and communism even before the Russian Revolution. Many of them argued that only socialism could provide a framework for the masses to understand the forces of their oppression and the oppression of colonized people in Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Public intellectuals such as Hubert Harrison from the Virgin Islands and Cyril Briggs from Nevis were strong advocates of both socialism and Black consciousness. Both attacked white supremacy by urging a Black racial consciousness founded on self-reliance and self-respect, and they championed Africa as a center of civilization. They were connected to the major sites of radical intellectualism and activism in Latin America, Asia, India, Africa, and Europe. Their sophisticated discourse reflected a mixture of working-class intellectualism and academic erudition. They recognized that American racial oppression resembled the European racism that dominated European colonialism in the Caribbean and Africa. Minkah Makalani argues that this context developed a vision of pan-

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African freedom, a Black anti-colonial discourse which followed the brutality of conquest, annexation, and colonization of the continent (Makalani 2014).

Harlem had a significant level of literacy (40 percent), which nurtured a distinct political culture enabling the circulation of vibrant printed materials such as pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers. These facilitated cross-class coalitions of skilled and unskilled workers, artists, professionals, and educators. Together, these coalitions spearheaded numerous campaigns of international and local significance. This period also saw the expansion of the Black Press from local distribution in the nineteenth century to the rise of major national newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* (1905), *Pittsburgh Courier* (1910), *New York Amsterdam News* (1909), and the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* (1916).[12] These were important sources of the political information that was discussed in Harlem's beauty parlors and barber shops. They helped mobilize migration to the north and were essential contributors to the political development of Black communities in major urban centers.

Political discussions flourished all over Harlem, even on the sidewalks. West Indian militants brought the "Street Corner Speaker" tradition that they had developed in the Caribbean to avoid print censorship (Makalani 2014). Street corner philosophers set up stepladders and engaged in political debates and discussions of racial issues with crowds at the Speakers' Corner on Lenox and 135th Street. Today, this corner is the site of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, part of the New York Public Library. The Speakers' Corner was an important resource for Harlem residents—both literate and illiterate—to develop and share political views.

Political energy also led to a multiplicity of voluntary associations. Together, these formed a rich network of institutions that spread new ideas, articulated communal responses to discrimination, and socialized recent migrants. There was a dramatic expansion in the numbers of churches, hometown associations (similar to the urban ethnic union in Africa), and other voluntary associations (such as political clubs, sororities, and fraternities), which together constituted a rich tapestry of information, communication, and collective organization and advanced political education across all sectors of the population. The Communist Party held special appeal, especially for the artists and writers of the period.

Harlem was shocked by the anti-Black riots that raged through the country at the end of the war. But there was a new resistance in the Black communities throughout the country. As communities fought back, many saw this as a major shift in Black consciousness. Black men assumed that they would be rewarded with the rights promised after the Civil War because of their role in World War I. In fact, they remained the target of lynching and persecution. During the "Red Summer" of 1919, white racists in 36 cities across the US and one county in Arkansas killed hundreds of Black residents (McWhirter 2011). One of the most dramatic examples of Harlem's political mobilization was the 10,000-person Silent March in protest of the 1917 East St. Louis massacre of several hundred African Americans. This is memorialized in a famous photograph (Lumpkins 2008; Wells-Barnett 1917) [see Figure 2].

The migrations of the 1920s and 1930s brought a wide range of artists, musicians, and politicians together and made Harlem a vibrant cultural-political

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Figure 2. Silent March 1917 [Underwood & Underwood/Wikimedia Commons].

space, whose nature and character was defined by the social, intellectual, and artistic energy of the Harlem Renaissance.[13] One of the key figures of the Renaissance was the Black Puerto Rican Arturo Alfonso Schomburg (1874–1938), who came to New York City at the age of seventeen and participated in the Cuban and Puerto Rican independence movements. During the Harlem Renaissance, Schomburg devoted his life to collecting Black memorabilia and printed works to refute a claim made by a teacher in Puerto Rico that Black people lacked culture and history. In 1926, he sold his archive of over 10,000 items, including Frederick Douglass' newspapers, poems, the correspondence of Haiti's liberator Toussaint L'Ouverture, and music by Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the eighteenth-century Black French composer and revolutionary.[14] Schomburg's interest in the African diaspora and the collection itself continued to cement the linkage between East Harlem and Central Harlem, both areas with Black populations and an interest in deepening the knowledge about the important role of Africans in shaping the Caribbean and the Americas.

By the 1920s, socialism held a special appeal for West Indian, Latino, and African American activists who came to Harlem just after WWI. In 1910 W.E.B. Du Bois created *The Crisis,* the official publication of the NAACP.[15] *The Crisis* became a powerful organ for political protest and research and frequently featured the major Black writers of the day. There were early socialist organizations such as the African Brotherhood for African Liberation and Redemption, a Black radical

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organization founded in 1919 by two West Indian socialists, Cyril Briggs (1888–1966) and Richard B. Moore (Makalani 2014). The US Communist Party was founded in 1919 and attracted many Harlem residents. Briggs also founded the *Crusader*, a black communist New York magazine of the New Negro Movement of the 1920s.[16]

Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) founded the largest organization of the time, The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) [see Figure 3]. UNIA mobilized thousands to protest racism and colonialism, and to assert the value of African civilization and the importance of economic self-reliance. Garvey, alongside the intellectuals, politicians, and cultural workers of the Harlem Renaissance, transformed Harlem into a center of cultural and political energy that fostered a radical pan-Africanism. This was also a period of lively debate, as communists, socialists, Garveyites, and others debated the best ways to advance the Black Liberation Struggle and African independence.

The interwar period had vast mobilizations in response to the Great Depression and Mussolini's invasion and occupation of Ethiopia (1935–1941).[17] Harlem's anti-colonial mobilization led to volunteer campaigns, fundraisers, and propaganda dispersed through a network of Black newspapers. Protest erupted with a rage

Figure 3. Marcus Garvey, 1922 [AP/Wikimedia Commons.].

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that spilled over into the diaspora as well as the continent. The NAACP, the Communist Party, and the Garvey movement were not necessarily distinct. Members blurred organizational boundaries despite sharp contradictions between their leaders. Thousands joined the 1935 campaign against Italy's invasion. Harlem's opposition was massive and visceral [see Figure 4]. Ethiopia, led by Emperor Haile Selassie, was the "beloved kingdom" mentioned in the Bible and the only African state to effectively repel European conquest. Harlem newspapers carried weekly bulletins from the war front that highlighted Italy's war crimes, especially the use of mustard gas. Residents boycotted and destroyed Italian stores in East Harlem, led fundraising drives, and even volunteered to fight.[18]

The Garvey Movement co-existed, in considerable tension, with socialist and communist organizations and activists. One notable socialist organization was The Council of African Affairs, founded in 1937 by Paul Robeson, W.E.B. DuBois, and Alphaeus Hunton, Jr.[19] It played a major role in keeping Harlem informed about colonial oppression and the decolonization of Africa. The Council operated into the 1950s for the liberation of African countries [see Figure 5], and benefitted from an alliance and eventual merger with the Communist Party, which joined them in launching educational initiatives regarding the exploitative nature of colonialism.

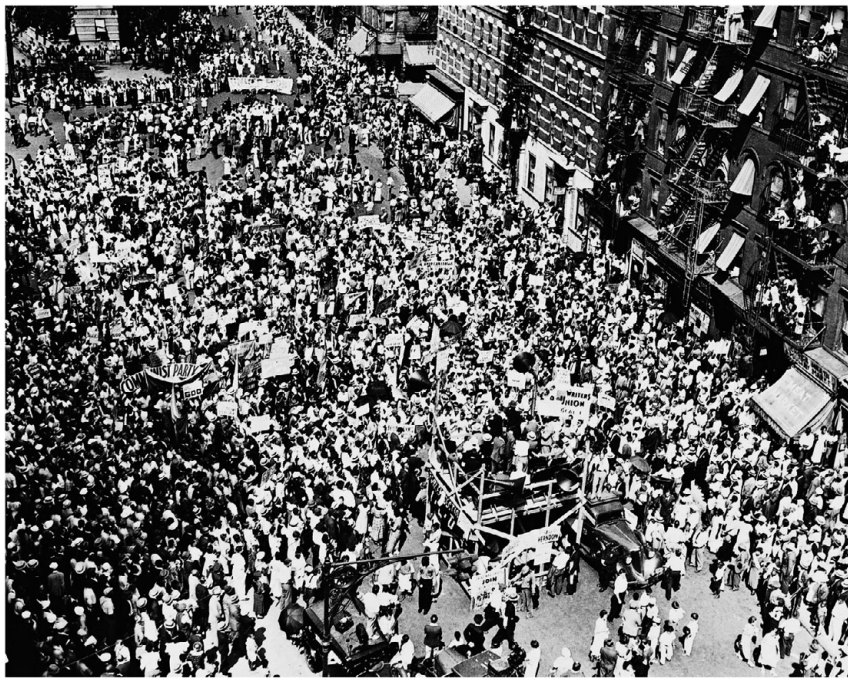

Figure 4. Thousands of Harlem residents protest Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, 1935 [Scherl/Süddeutsche Zeitung Photo/Alamy Stock Photo].

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Figure 5. Alphaeus Hunton with his wife, Dorothy, Paul Robeson, and W.E.B. Du Bois [Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture/NYPL].

These decades of political activism helped to strengthen Harlem's ideological independence for half a century. Residents resisted the anti-communist thrust of US foreign policy. Even in the midst of the McCarthy hearings, Harlem continued to support Paul Robeson and other members of the former Council of African Affairs. Harlem twice elected Harvard-educated Communist lawyer, Benjamin J. Davis (1903–1964) [see Figure 6] to the City Council (Gilmore 2008; Horne 1994). Davis was arrested and jailed for violating the Smith Act but never renounced his beliefs.

Harlem's political culture was progressive and historically based. This is the Harlem that I encountered as a largely ill-informed graduate student from the South. What I did notice was the political attitude of many residents and organizations. The militants of previous generations were still alive, and their presence was a great benefit to the next generation.

Becoming an Africanist during Decolonization: The Birth and Transformation of African Studies (The Columbia Experience)

I came to New York in 1966 to get a master's degree at Columbia's School of International Affairs (now the School of International and Public Affairs [SIPA]). Soon after my arrival, I had an encounter with a Black student that was an omen of the shifting political landscape within the Black liberation movement. He

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Figure 6. Benjamin Davis stands with supporters [World Telegram & Sun photo by C.M. Stieglitz/ Library of Congress].

asked "Sister, I hear you believe in integration." I was completely stunned. "Weren't we all struggling for this?" I asked myself. This was my introduction to Black Power and a dramatic example of the transition underway in the Civil Rights movement. The classrooms at SIA were astir with conflict and debate between radical students (often Peace Corps returnees from the Teacher's College) and the complacent majority training for positions in international corporations or the State Department. Predictable debates about the Vietnam War and imperialism erupted in classrooms, and conservative faculty were vehemently challenged. These debates percolated and combined with Black student activism concerning Columbia's relationship with Harlem, culminating in the 1968 Columbia Strike.[20]

I began to be aware of the close relationship Columbia had to many prominent and controversial political figures in foreign affairs. It wasn't until I arrived at SIA that I recognized just how compromised the university was with some of the most disastrous events in Africa.[21] The Dean of International Affairs at Columbia was Andrew Cordier, who, as United Nations Undersecretary to Dag Hammarskjold, had facilitated the coup against Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Because Cordier denied Lumumba's forces access to airports and radio stations at a critical time, he was, in essence, directly responsible for Lumumba's death. My knowledge of Africa was so elementary that I was only introduced to the

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Lumumba affair while at Columbia. I participated in a study tour that Cordier organized in the summer of 1967 and visited a series of international organizations in Europe. While we were there, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war erupted, igniting vigorous debate among the participants, many of whom were from countries that sided with the Arab nations. This exposed me to yet another international controversy that broadened my knowledge of foreign affairs.

During my second year at SIA, I moved to Harlem. I have lived on my current block in Sugar Hill/Hamilton Heights ever since, for over 50 years [see Figure 7]. The shadow of the Harlem Renaissance was still visible in the presence of several luminaries, including Langston Hughes and the communist Richard B. Moore. Looking back on these years, I realize that I had the unique opportunity to meet hundreds of people responsible for some of the major political strains of Black Internationalism. This was an important period of my intellectual and political development, most especially as I moved toward a professional specialization in African history. My life intersected with many major events involving Africa, African political exiles, and militant movements in North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the US.

This is when I became aware of the Black Canadian movement. I attended the 1968 Montreal Congress of Black Writers Conference, which included a roster of prominent Black writers and activists, among them C.L.R. James, Robert Hill, and Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael). It was there that I learned about the descendants of the Jamaican maroons who relocated to Halifax, Nova Scotia. I met

Figure 7. West 147th St. between St. Nicholas Ave. and Convent Ave. [Photo courtesy of the author].

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Burnley Allen "Rocky" Jones (1941–2013), who was an emerging political activist in the Black Canadian movement. I also met Walter Rodney, whose participation precipitated his expulsion from Jamaica and led to a major uprising (*Gleaner* 2023). That same year, the Black Canadians demonstrated at the joint meeting of the ASA and the Canadian African Studies Association against white control of knowledge about Africa. Around the same time, the West Indian students' occupation of Concordia's Sir George Williams' Campus destroyed the University's computer center.[22] These mobilizations stimulated a wave of radical anti-imperialism in the English-speaking Caribbean, including the formation of militant political parties in Trinidad, Jamaica and Antigua, and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada, the only party to succeed, if only briefly, in establishing a revolution.[23] This was a new form of West Indian anti-colonial militance, then associated with Black Power.

This was also the time of two major assassinations of Black leaders. On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem.[24] When Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, Harlem was thrown into a violent chaos. In deep grief, I wanted to be with neighbors, and I ran to 125th Street to mourn in the midst of the riot.[25]

Several weeks later I joined the Columbia Strike, which took place from April 23 to 30, 1968.[26] Coming on the heels of King's assassination, the authorities were afraid that Harlem would explode. The strike originally began in opposition to Columbia's research for the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) during the Vietnam War. The Black Student Association occupied Hamilton Hall to protest Columbia's plan to seize part of Harlem's beautiful Morningside Park for a segregated gym that would restrict community access. Attorney Robert Van Lierop of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund became our self-appointed lawyer and ensured we were not brutalized by the New York City Police when we were arrested. He would later become a co-founder of the African Information Service and the director of two very important films on the liberation movements in Portuguese Africa—*A Luta Continua* (1972) and *O Povo Organizado* (1975).[27] The Black student occupation attracted many Black activists. Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Touré) and H. Rap Brown (Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin) both visited the Black students on strike in Hamilton Hall, as did several other activists, including Julius Lester of SNCC and local politicians.[28] Major Black politicians in the city met with the mayor to ensure that the Black students were not attacked by the Tactical Police Force, the NYPD unit that "cleared" the campus. We were escorted to Amsterdam Avenue through the tunnels. I remember looking back as we entered the paddy wagons. The police were shoulder to shoulder from Amsterdam to Broadway. They moved slowly, swinging their billy clubs. Behind them were wounded students, many nursing substantial injuries.

While in SIPA I concentrated on Africa, taking a range of African studies courses in a variety of fields. The new scholarship reflected the confidence of a generation of nationalist scholars, and international debates about socialism and underdevelopment in their regions. I was exposed to this new scholarship in my first African history course at Columbia, taught by a young Dr. Marcia Wright, with a focus on East and Southern African History. Trained in School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London in a cohort with Shula Marks and

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Walter Rodney, she introduced us to how African scholars challenged old colonial African history scholarship.[29] The new African scholars rejected the Eurocentric biases of colonial histories and invented a new scholarship based on innovative research methodologies, such as the valuation of oral traditions and histories and the appropriation of new theoretical frameworks such as historical materialism. They were committed to bringing "ordinary people" into their historical narratives. The struggle over the control of knowledge about Africa was just one platform of decolonization that enlightened my experience in graduate school.

I was fascinated by the new, radical historiographies emerging in the field. They represented the popularity of Marxist analysis in the decolonization movement and a disillusionment with the lack of transformation in newly independent African states. In many respects this was a new iteration following that of the nationalists—influenced by socialist scholarship. I became interested in African social and labor history. I was deeply influenced by Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), which introduced me to historical materialism and Marxist analysis of African history. My interest in Marxism led me to join one of the many radical study groups; my group—predominantly populated by sociology majors—read the first volume of *Capital* over the course of one year. I was fascinated by studies of African mineworkers, but they largely concerned South Africa, and apartheid made this a forbidden subject. I then consulted with Walter Rodney, who suggested my dissertation project on Nigerian coal miners in the Enugu Government Colliery.

For me, Rodney united a commitment to social change with scholarly rigor and produced work that was easily applicable to political activism. This was the period when "dependency theory" was reshaping the analysis of Latin American oppression. The debates occurring within that activist community were shaped by their political struggles and enabled Africanists to adapt their ideas to fit the African context. Rodney did not apply rigid Eurocentric typologies to an analysis of the historical processes shaping African history. In 1972, Bogle L'Ouverture Publications, an independent London-based press owned by Guyanese activists Jessica and Eric Huntley, published Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, which reshaped the field of African history.[30] This volume showed the rising importance of anti-imperialist discourse. Rodney's framework encouraged dialogue between African scholars and their counterparts in Latin America, Asia, and Europe.

Rodney's research led me to the Huntleys in London. In 1974/75, I had a Ford Foundation grant to spend three months in the colonial archives in London and seven months conducting fieldwork and archival research in Nigeria. The Huntleys introduced me to the Black activist community and arranged accommodations for me (that hosted Walter Rodney when a student) and my 4-year-old son, Dedan Anderson. Due to a political conflict between Nigeria and the US over visas, I was forced to spend seven months in London and three in Enugu—completely the opposite of my original plans. Still, being in London during this period was very enriching, and it familiarized me with the vibrant political activism of the Caribbean and African diasporas. Steve McQueen (2020) captured this period in his anthology film series *Small Axe*, which documents the real experiences of London's West Indian community between 1969 and 1982. Seven

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months in England was enough to give my little son a British accent! It also exposed me to the difficult and rich life of the West Indians who were shaping, and being shaped by, England. I spent many hours talking with people who knew Rodney when he was a student at SOAS. Rodney himself often visited, and he attended several gatherings at my Harlem home with friends from Latin America who were especially familiar with his work through the Cuban connection. By the time I left for Nigeria I had exhausted virtually every major source available in the UK on the Nigerian miners.

"Making" and "Practicing" Black Internationalism in the Age of Decolonization

It is very difficult to exaggerate the excitement of Harlem during this period. It was as if anyone who was anyone wanted to be in Harlem, which had become an epicenter of Black political revival and Black Internationalism. The year 1960 was a benchmark in the mobilization of anti-imperialist activism and Black internationalist coalitions in Harlem. The victory of the Cuban Revolution alerted oppressed people in the colonial territories and those dominated by the "informal imperialism" of the United States, that the time was ripe for challenging US dominance. In South Africa, the Sharpeville Massacre caused a shift in anti-apartheid tactics. The movement struggled to reconstruct strategy after the banning of both the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress. In Asia, the US, fearing the expansion of Communist China, gradually became involved in Vietnam after the French defeat in 1954. The anticommunist, Cold War framing of this intervention fostered a growing anti-imperialist movement in the US and generated a powerful opposition movement that was reflected in Harlem.

Fidel Castro's trip to Harlem has reached a legendary status. Neighbors still talk about the ten days (October 19 to 29, 1960) when Castro stayed at the legendary Hotel Theresa. He was allegedly invited uptown by Malcolm X [see Figure 8], who criticized the undiplomatic way that the US government was treating Castro at a mid-town hotel. The move gave Harlem an opportunity to demonstrate its political independence and willingness to expose the failure of the US policy on civil rights. Castro handled the visit like a theater production on race and international politics held on a Harlem stage. And Harlemites skillfully played their part, hailing Castro as a hero in the anti-imperialist struggle. Hundreds greeted him in the streets. Castro "held court" at the Theresa [see Figure 9], hosting dinners that brought many leaders uptown for the excellent cuisine of the African American chef.[31] Khrushchev, Nasser, and Nehru all visited him at the hotel. When Nasser came to Harlem, Black Muslims stood at attention to greet him. Castro returned to Harlem in 1995, delivering an important speech at Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church.

In the 1950s Puerto Ricans began to come to East Harlem, changing "Little Italy" to "El Barrio." The migration was a goal of the US-sponsored development project—Operation Bootstrap—which transformed Puerto Rico into a center of light assembly manufacturing and destroyed the agricultural sector. Rural

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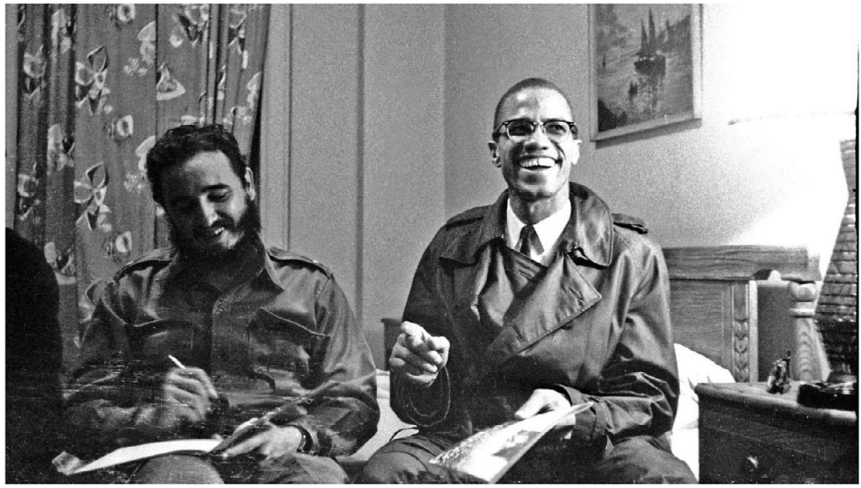

Figure 8. Fidel Castro with Malcolm X [Carl Nesfield/Public Domain] "The photographer Carl Nesfield, who tried and failed to sell the images of Fidel and Malcolm to "a lot of white newspapers" right after the meeting, told Mealy in 1993 that he had no idea his photos would end up possessing such historical cachet. "It's only been recently that I was made aware of how the picture that I took has been used over the years," Nesfield said. "I recently tried to get the picture copyrighted, but the copyright lawyers said 'After all of these years, you might as well forget it.'"

Figure 9. Journalists greet Castro at the Theresa Hotel in Harlem [Henri Cartier-Bresson/Magnum Photos via Flickr].

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migrants were encouraged to come to the US to alleviate the labor shortage in agriculture. Operation Bootstrap provided a cover for an unethical experiment resulting in the first human subject test of birth control pills. No one knew if the pills were safe for humans, and they used Puerto Rican women as guinea pigs (Vargas 2017). Thousands were involved. The experiment was coordinated by leading eugenicist and reproductive rights advocate Margaret Sanger, who felt that poverty would best be alleviated if poor people were prevented from having children. Sterilization was used so extensively in Puerto Rico that between 1930 and 1970, fully a third of all women had been pressured to comply.

East Harlem confronted many of the same problems as the Black residents of Central Harlem. Two new organizations were founded for Puerto Rican and other Latinx communities to fight for Puerto Rican independence and demand an end to racism. El Comité-MINP (*Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional Puertorriqueño*) was a radical socialist movement in El Barrio that protested exploitation, championed international solidarity, and demanded Puerto Rican independence (Pastor 2021). The other organization was the Young Lords, who adopted the tactics and iconography of the Black Panthers and attracted Puerto Rican youths, African Americans, and Latinx New Yorkers. Like the Panthers, they organized against poor conditions in East Harlem and the Bronx and launched a struggle against the substandard Lincoln Hospital, which serviced the Latinx and Black populations of the Bronx. The Party (Fernandez 2019) and the growing Latinx population encouraged networks of solidarity that joined Black internationalism with anti-imperial movements in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuba played an important role in encouraging these networks, which became a bridge to liberation movements in white settler areas of the continent.

The Young Lords and El Comité-MINP were important promoters of an alliance between the Black freedom struggle and the anti-imperialist organizations of Latin America. The most important local organization to promote solidarities between Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia was CASA Las Americas, a center created by Cuban immigrants to support Cuba and solidarity with international political movements.[32] The 1970s and 1980s were an international period of militant movements in both the Global South and North.[33] CASA was the site of many activist events that permitted a convergence of anti-imperialist solidarity groups. The impact of these collaborations was visible in Harlem, where movements supporting the anti-apartheid struggle in Southern Africa worked with solidarity groups against the coups in Chile, Argentina, and Guatemala. This created a broad front in which participants joined in activities against dictatorships in Latin America and the Caribbean and for self-determination and racial justice in the US and Africa. CASA also reflected Cuba's engagement with the struggle in Angola. There was a broad anti-imperialist front composed of solidarity groups, political exiles, and local organizations for social change.

I witnessed one example of the impact of these collaborations. In September 1983, the Grenada Revolution imploded when Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard put the Prime Minister Maurice Bishop under house arrest. Supporters called an emergency meeting at the Methodist Church Center for the United Nations that was attended by representatives of many Latin American,

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Caribbean, British West Indian, and African groups. The mood was very solemn when representatives of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) stood up and, holding back their grief, said that Bishop was a "dead man." A militant had been killed in a similar crisis in their movement, and they paid a heavy price for allowing an internal conflict to reach this point. It was a disaster that set their movement back several years. The English Caribbean movement had never had a revolution, and attempting to create a viable movement at a time when the US was responding to the "threat of communism" in Central America proved too difficult. The Sandinistas were fighting in Nicaragua, the Panamanians were demanding control over the Panama Canal, and guerilla movements were active throughout Central America. I was in Grenada with a group of Stony Brook students several weeks before the crisis and can attest to the impact that US pressure had on the small group of militants in the New Jewel Movement. Every few weeks the US would threaten an invasion and send ships to circle the island. The Grenadians would mobilize their army, station people on the beach, and prepare for an invasion that didn't come. The real invasion happened after Bishop was murdered. The excuse given was to rescue American students attending St. Georges University Medical School. It began on October 25, 1983, and hundreds of Grenadians were killed or injured, including people who had coordinated our trip. This was a difficult lesson on the power of imperial violence.

The decolonization movement in Africa coincided with a radical shift in the Black liberation movement against segregation in the US, in which a younger generation of students and others took a more aggressive stance against segregationist policies that blocked Black populations from accessing full political power. This movement brought together organizations such as SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), SCLC (The Southern Christian Leadership Conference), The Black Panthers, CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality), and the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).[34] All of these groups were present in Harlem. CORE's headquarters was on 135th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. In 1963, SNCC established an office at 100 Fifth Avenue to assist with fundraising for campaigns in the South. On several occasions I visited the director, James Forman, who was often involved in events in Harlem. In late 1965, SNCC made its move to Black Power and Stokely Carmichael informed the New York Office that no white people could work in the office.[35] This abrupt shift was in many ways the "official" proclamation of "Black Power." Its impact would be felt throughout the Civil Rights movement.

There was also an important cultural component of Pan-African influence. The political movements of Black Power also encouraged cultural developments that reflected the strong identification with Africa felt by Harlem residents and Black Americans. Cultural efflorescence took a natural form in Harlem in large part thanks to the entrepreneurial initiatives of the Brathwaite Brothers (Kwame and Elombe).

The "Black Is Beautiful" Movement was a national phenomenon that hit Harlem like a storm. Residents wore Afro hairstyles, African clothes, gave their children and "themselves" African names, "invented" African holidays such as Kwanza, and studied Swahili. Kwame, a photographer, introduced The Grandassa

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Models, a Harlem modeling agency established to highlight and promote Black beauty as an aesthetic and political challenge to the dominance of white beauty standards in the modeling industry.[36] The Grandassa models, whose "skin was the color of chocolate," (to borrow Chimamanda Adichie's words), achieved cultural prominence and fame by touring college campuses and communities nationwide.[37] The models popularized (and politicized) "natural" hair styles and wore African print clothes. The Brathwaite Brothers held "Miss Natural Standard of Beauty Contests" on Marcus Garvey Day (August 17). They also brought Africans from the U.N. to "African Ambassador's Dinners," which afforded Harlem residents the opportunity to have direct contact with representatives of independent African states.

In 1975, Brother Elombe founded the Patrice Lumumba Coalition to support Angola's struggle against Portugal.[38] The Coalition's focus expanded to include the Southern Africa struggle, especially after the Soweto Uprising in 1976; it was a vital venue for African activists and exiles [see Figure 10]. Elombe was a journalist who organized protests against apartheid, invited South Africans to speak with the community, and promoted the liberation struggle. Together with Gil Noble, a prominent TV host, he co-produced the popular Black public interest television program *Like It Is*, which ran on WABC from 1968 to 2011. *Like It Is* had a major impact on politics within the Black community. The program focused on Pan-Africanist coverage and included interviews with prominent militants as well as famous Black musicians, artists, politicians, and scholars.

Ethiopia again became a concern for Harlem. In 1975, a somewhat confused Harlem greeted a group of Ethiopians fleeing the Ethiopian Revolution (January–September 1974), which abolished the monarchy of Haile Selassie and established The Derg (1974–1991), a Marxist-Leninist government that radically changed Ethiopia's political configuration.[39] When these Ethiopians came to the US, they joined the wider community of exiles in Harlem. Many of us did not understand this new political shift, but their presence gradually updated the community.

This was also a period when Harlem Hospital became an important site for experimentation with new systems of mental health care.[40] Psychiatrists in Harlem Hospital adopted treatment protocols in mental health that were invented by Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), the Marxist psychiatrist and philosopher from Martinique. Specifically, Fanon's research on the mental/emotional impact of colonial racism on the psyche of the colonized, developed during the brutal Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962), resonated with the experiences of Harlem clinicians treating patients affected by racial discrimination in the US. The idea that the Black population in the US was a racially colonized population gained ground within the mental health and the broader activist communities. The psychiatry department was headed by Dr. Hugh Butts, Chief of Service for the Inpatient Psychiatry Service. Dr. Butts found Fanon's models especially effective in the treatment of patients in Harlem Hospital. He reorganized the department and introduced Fanon's "therapeutic community model," which brought a community approach to the treatment of patients. The distribution of Fanon's writings, especially his dissertation, published as *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), complemented the research of Black practitioners such as Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clarke, whose experiments using dolls documented the

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Figure 10. Patrice Lumumba Pamphlet [Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture/Public Domain].

negative impact of segregation on Black children.[41] Harlem Hospital became an important center of new scholarship and treatment, making Fanon's relevance a very specific form of "Black Internationalism" that recognized the damaging impact of racism for Africans on the continent and the diaspora.[42] In both cases there was a psychological impact. These two threads of racial psychological research forged a Pan-African community of Black mental health specialists and

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a new sub-specialization in Black Psychiatry. Today, Harlem Hospital has practitioners from the continent who express this collaboration.

For thousands of political exiles, Harlem was a community of sympathetic supporters, a Pan-African "home away from home" with mythical status in the history of Black Internationalism. It was a refuge from the racial antagonisms of Europe or of Southern Africa, a place where uprooted exiles could meet Black people from across the African diaspora as well as the continent itself. This community not only understood the debilitating impact of colonialism and racism but was receptive to the messages conveyed by these exiles and their respective liberation movements. In essence, Harlem was a political community prepared to assist with the struggle in any way possible. In a move reminiscent of Harlem hosting Fidel Castro in 1960, Elombe and the Patrice Lumumba Coalition opened their arms to greet Thomas Sankara, to whom President Ronald Reagan denied an official White House visit. The Coalition arranged for Sankara, the socialist leader of Burkina Faso, to speak in the Harriet Tubman Elementary School in central Harlem. In his speech, Sankara referred to Harlem as "his White House."[43] Sankara spoke about his contact with Maurice Bishop, who was tragically killed several weeks later, on October 19, 1983, in an aborted coup. Four years later, on October 15, 1987, Sankara was also assassinated.[44]

The Soviet Union and Cuba took on a significant role in training and supplying the armed branches of incipient revolutionary movements, especially in Africa and Latin America. The Cuban Revolution changed the ideological and material landscape for those struggling for self-determination and infused such struggles with a newfound sense of possibility. Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were heroic figures in the national liberation struggle. In the US, the Black movement became more receptive to violence as a means of self-defense, and the Black Panthers spread throughout the urban centers of the North. In South Africa, the Nationalist Party government banned the ANC and PAC in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960. In December of 1961, Mandela co-founded the armed wing of the ANC, called uMkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). The Pan-African Congress (PAC), a rival movement to the ANC that had organized the Sharpeville protests, established The Azanian People's Liberation Army. Liberation movements in the Portuguese territories launched similar armed struggles at that time. The subsequent repression of militants in the Portuguese colonies and Rhodesia drew another population with direct political experience into Harlem's political scene. Angola's complicated liberation movement involved several groups, notably the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA.[45] This threw their struggle into a proxy civil war, with Cuba and the US/South Africa supporting different sides of the conflict. Harlem activists were similarly divided; some supported UNITA as the "Blackest" of the movements (despite their support from South Africa), while others allied with Cuba and the MPLA. This complex struggle continued for over a decade.

Many exiles from all of these movements were admitted to local colleges and universities in the US and lent their voices and experiences to the radical student activist movements escalating nationwide. Students agitated for Black Studies programs, for institutional divestment from the Vietnam War, and for curbing the role of universities in military research. The students at the City University of

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New York (CUNY) had a long-established tradition of political militancy, and they initiated a protest against the racialized admissions policies of the community (2-year) colleges and the senior (4-year and graduate) colleges. The racial hierarchy in the city was reflected in the admissions policies at CUNY. Black and Latino students were usually admitted only to the community colleges, while the senior colleges were largely white. When the Columbia Strike began, CUNY students also launched a strike, demanding more representation of Black and Puerto Rican students in the university and forcing the CUNY administration to develop more equitable admissions standards. This was the struggle for Open Admissions that reshaped the enrollment process in CUNY.[46] This context facilitated exchanges of strategy and information between allied activist movements. One outcome of such activism was critically important for me, personally, because this was when I became an adjunct professor at Queens College of the City University of New York. This convinced me that academic work was closest to my heart.[47]

One of the most important aspects of these student movements was the involvement of African and other exiles who were enrolled in the city's various colleges and universities. The connection between the Columbia Strike and the CUNY movement was especially close. In a serendipitous twist, several Black student leaders of the 1968 Columbia Strike were hired to teach in the City University's Queens College SEEK Program, and they continued their student activism as adjunct teachers.[48] SEEK was a CUNY "bridge" program that upgraded the skills of unprepared students and sponsored them through their undergraduate degree. The problem was that virtually all of the courses SEEK students could take were without credit and so prolonged their full entry into college. Many of the students at Queens were non-traditional, recently incarcerated students who had been brought into the program by the SEEK director, a former prison warden.[49]

The SEEK administration allowed Columbia graduate students to assist with recruiting instructors and graduate assistants. A coalition of these new faculty—both exiles and US nationals—joined dissenting Black and Latino students in protesting the bureaucratic barriers that slowed the students' progress toward graduation. When I recently started compiling a list of those who had taught at Queens or who had lived in Harlem, I realized that this extraordinary group of political protestors became an astounding group of contemporary leaders across the African continent. The list of adjunct hires confirms the extraordinary significance of this period for African liberation. See the Appendix for individuals' names, current positions, and the graduate programs in which they were enrolled at the time.

The story of the artist Dumile Feni exemplifies the tragic toll of exile. From 1968 to 1991 Dumile lived in London, Los Angeles, and New York, occasionally holding appointments at universities. While preparing to return home in 1991, Feni collapsed in a music store and died of a heart attack. His work was extraordinarily powerful in capturing the pain and suffering of apartheid. His famous piece *African Guernica* [see Figure 11], completed prior to his exile, is an outstanding example of his work.[50]

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Figure 11. Dumile Feni, *African Guernica* (1967), charcoal on paper. [Photo credit Javett-UP].

The Socio-Geography of Politics: Spaces in Harlem Where Politics Flourished

Today, scholars of African nationalism are asking interesting new questions about the contexts in which political ideas are "invented," debated, "polished off," and then put into action. Where were the likely spaces in which Black internationalists and diasporic activists met socially and interacted during this pivotal period in Harlem? We cannot fully answer these questions until we have collected more interviews from people who lived this history. However, we do know that two of these vital spaces for communication and collaboration were bookstores.

From 1932 to 1974, Lewis Michaux ran the African-National Memorial Bookstore, one of those unofficial sites where activists, locals, and militant exiles met, debated politics, and planned protests[51] [see Figure 12].The store was a meeting place where ordinary people could purchase titles of relevance to Africa and the

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diaspora or just "pop in" to talk to Michaux about whatever protest was currently being organized. It became one of the first casualties of the New York State Office Building—the vanguard of gentrification. For over a year, community activists camped out on the construction site, blocking the bulldozers with their bodies. However, it was a doomed struggle, and the building stands today as a large imposing structure representing the State of New York.[52]

A second location was Una Mulzac's (1923–2012) Liberation Book Store, which was an information center for the Progressive Labor Party [see Figure 13]. Una was the daughter of Admiral Hugh Mulzac, a captain of one of Marcus Garvey's ill-fated ships. The store was one of a series of political bookstores that were established by leftist organizations to stimulate political activism and knowledge about Black history writ large. All these stores served to gather printed materials about Black topics and also acted as dissemination sites for political ideas and community announcements. Tragically, neither location is still standing [see Figure 14].

Often spaces of leisure provide opportunities for political discussion. These are frequently the types of secretive spaces where oppressed people "talk politics." In Harlem, as in other Black communities, bars, bookstores, and street corners featured prominently. In his eloquent study of *Black London* (2015), Marc Matera describes a social geography of the districts (for example, Camden Town) where Nigerians, Kenyans, Trinidadians, and Jamaicans met, debated, and tested anti-colonial ideologies and militant strategies. It is hoped that my project will produce a similar narrative of Harlem's role during this important and unusual period.

Figure 12. Lewis Michaux at his bookstore [Wikimedia Commons].

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Figure 13. Liberation Bookstore original sign [Wikimedia Commons].

Conclusion

This lecture has briefly outlined several key events and processes relating to the interaction of Black exiles from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and Asia with the US-based Black population of Harlem, New York, during the period of decolonization. It also provides an outline of the events, people, and ideas that influenced my development for the several decades of the liberation struggle. What, then, was the impact of this historic period of political collaboration on Harlem and its militant visitors? While the definitive answers must await the execution of my project, which includes surveys of both militant exiles and local leaders, I can offer some tentative observations. The experience of an earlier generation of nationalists—Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe—suggests, for instance, that their sojourn in the US was crucial to their understanding of the complexity of race relations involving African descendants in white-majority states. Both leaders experienced racial humiliations that left scars on their memories and negative perceptions of "US democracy," but enabled them to appreciate the nuances in US (and, by extension, "western") racism.

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Figure 14. View of closed Liberation Bookstore on corner of 131st St. and Lenox Ave. [iStock by Getty Images].

The form of Pan-Africanist engagement between African Americans and continental Africans has changed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The connections forged in the first half of the twentieth century featured a handful of African Americans going to Africa, often as missionaries or educators, to help with the "civilizing mission" and a small number of largely western-educated/elite Africans who came to Harlem. Today, a far greater number of Africans are coming to Harlem to escape political and economic conditions at home, reflecting the impact of structural adjustment policies forced on the continent by the World Bank. Neoliberal policies eviscerated the educated class by devaluating currency, cutting social services, and forcing divestment in education. Additionally, this immigrant population has higher education levels than the local population. The energy that this population introduced has fostered a wide-ranging rehabilitation of distressed areas of Harlem. The Senegalese and other Francophone African populations moved into the area of 116th Street and Eighth Avenue/Frederick Douglass Boulevard, a severely blighted area of Harlem. The area has been dubbed "Little Senegal" in recognition of the prominent role played by the Senegalese, who despite the language challenge, established commercial businesses, mosques, and Koranic schools for their children [see Figure 15]. Before long, people from virtually every French-speaking West African country had established a community within the Harlem neighborhoods

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Figure 15. Participants celebrating the African Day Parade in Harlem on September 23, 2012 [Linda Fletcher/Wikimedia Commons].

and moved into a niche of the economy. However, despite their extensive community-building work and commitment to raising their children in Harlem, they are increasingly being displaced, again, by relentless gentrification.

Now the South Bronx has become the center of French-speaking Africans. These immigrants are increasingly becoming subject to the same type of discriminatory treatment as African Americans as well as being targeted by the anti-immigrant movement. As people of color, they are easily identified by this movement. Although, like Nkrumah and Azikiwe, Black people have similar experiences in diverse regions of the world, African migrants to Harlem are experiencing the new and distinctive forms of brutality and persecution that fall on the domestic Black population. Two examples stand out in tragic detail.

One instance was the police shooting of a young Guinean immigrant in the Bronx named Amadou Diallo in the early hours of February 4, 1999. Four policemen looking for a serial rapist saw Diallo outside his own door and, when he reached for his wallet, they assumed that he was reaching for a gun. They fired 41 shots, fatally hitting him 19 times. The four officers were indicted but ultimately acquitted, sparking an uproar about police conduct. Amadou's parents, Saikou and Kadiatou Diallo, came from a historic Fulbe trading family in Guinea. In the aftermath of Ahmadou's murder, the city became familiar with a prominent African family with international connections. In terms of the incident itself, however, Diallo became a "typical" African American victim of police violence [see Figure 16].[53]

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Figure 16. Ahmadou Diallo's mother visits his newly restored mural [Pacific Press Media Production Corp./Alamy Stock Photo].

Another incident involved a fire on March 7, 2007, at a multistory house in the Bronx. The Magassa and Soumare families of Mali lost eleven members to the fire, including four children [see Figure 17]. The fire spread quickly through the building's stairway and trapped the family inside while the father, Mamadou Soumare, was driving a livery taxi.[54] The city grieved deeply over this tragic loss, and the coverage was on the news for several weeks.[55] A reporter was sent to Mali to cover the funeral, which was avidly followed by people in Harlem. Neighbors in the Bronx, predominantly Latinos, embraced and supported the surviving family members. The 2007 ASA Annual Meeting was held in New York that year, and the Outreach Council gave an award to a book on Mali written by Penda and Baba Diakité (2006).[56] The father and daughter visited the Bronx school where the Magassa and Soumare children had been enrolled and read the book to their grieving friends. Their classmates could see the burned building from their classroom as they mourned their friends. Again, this was a tragedy caused by lax safety standards, so typical for areas inhabited by people of color.

Finally, a Lament

The historic Harlem that I have described is rapidly being destroyed. Soon, it will not be possible to remember the history or visit the structures and cultural institutions that are important reference points for the history of Pan-African activism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As noted above, the Senegalese who revitalized and transformed a blighted 116th street into "Little

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Figure 17. Moussa Magassa stands outside his home in Bronx, NY, where a 2007 fire claimed the lives of five of his family members [ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo].

Senegal" are being forced to relocate to the Bronx. Every year, their street has fewer and fewer African restaurants. The Shabazz Market [see Figure 18], a collection of African vendors on 116th street, has never drawn as many customers to their new location as they did at the initial location in the 125th Street Mart. The Mart itself, across the street from the Apollo Theater and the new Marriot Renaissance New York Harlem Hotel, is being considered by developers for a new multistory apartment building.

At present, Harlem is caught in a vise. On the one hand, Harlem is plagued by developers building prohibitively expensive condominiums. On the other hand, it is treated as a "dumping ground" for methadone clinics serving only 20 percent Harlem clients. Harlem's Black population—both foreign and domestic—is disappearing. We can only try to preserve its history and to ensure that institutions such as the Schomburg Center for Research and Black Culture and

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Figure 18. Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market [Philip Scalia/Alamy Stock Photo].

the Harlem Hospital join us in this work. My present project will involve several people from this formative period and will document and raise awareness of Harlem's rich, radical, and redemptive role in pan-African history.

The connections between Harlem's African diaspora and recent immigrants to this country are strengthened by encouraging political activism, resource sharing, and common understanding. This project, therefore, constitutes an additional phase of Black Internationalism emanating from Harlem. Perhaps Amílcar Cabral's words are becoming even more accurate:

"*It is also a contribution for you to never forget that you are Africans.*"

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Notes

1. Melvin McCray,"Nelson Mandela Visits Harlem's Riverside Church 6-21-90," Melvin McCray, https://vimeo.com/82911147; last accessed April 3rd, 2023.
2. Update, April 2023: It turned out that despite the shortage of vaccines and tests and an inability of African governments to reach the population, there were some signs of success. The Senegalese, for

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example, developed a test for COVID. See Anne Soy, "Coronavirus in Africa: Five Reasons Why Covid-19 Has Been Less Deadly Than Elsewhere," at gdc.unicef.org.

3. BERC (founded 1969) exemplified one characteristic of this energetic political era. Many such organizations were founded in Harlem during this period by Black professionals and academics. Robert S. Brown, a prominent economist and foreign-aid administrator, led the Center in attracting Black economists for development projects and studies of the continent. His Pan-African concerns led him to invite SWAPO to share his office in central Harlem. He led the movement to stop the shrinking of Black land ownership in the South. Records pertaining to BERC are held in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library. For a description, see "Black Economic Research Center Records: 1969–1982," at archives.nypl.org/scm/20542. The Africa Information Service (AIS) was founded by a group of African American activists, led by Prexy Nesbitt of Chicago and Robert F. Van Lierop in New York. The records of AIS are in the African Activist Archive based at Michigan State University. africanactivist.msu.edu.

4. The campaign in Harlem supporting the struggle against Portuguese colonialism usually noted the engagement of NATO as a supplier of the arms being used to decimate the African people (Allman 2008:337). Cabral's influence on the revolutionary movements of the late 1960s and 1970s was profound and crossed the regional boundaries between Africa, Latin America, Asia, and North America. While he was profoundly Marxist, he carefully adapted Marxist principles to the concrete realities of Africa in general and Guinea Bissau, specifically. His ideas spread to the struggles in Latin America. (See Chilcote 1984.)

5. Peoples Dispatch, "Assassination of Amilcar Cabral, one of Africa's foremost anti-colonial leaders," January 20, 2020, at peoplesdispatch.org.

6. For a discussion of the intellectual convergence of Anglophone and Francophone scholars that made the early twentieth century into a period of Black political and literary efflorescence in Harlem and elsewhere, see Edwards (2003).

7. See "Church History" at newahoskiebaptistchurch.org. The New Ahoskie Missionary Baptist Church served as a crucial meeting place for Civil Rights activists during the 1960s and is included in the National Register of Historic Places. "New Ahoskie Baptist Church (1960s)," at aahc.nc.gov.

8. Mark St. John Erikson, "Hampton's Bay Shore Hotel was Vacation Spot for African Americans During Jim Crow Era," at dailypress.com.

9. It became Hampton Institute in 1930 and Hampton University in 1984.

10. Official dating for this migration spans 1910 to 1970, which means I was a part of this movement. Over 6 million African Americans left the south and moved to cities in the North, Midwest, and West.

11. James argues that the population included hundreds of West Africans, Cape Verdeans, and Caribbeans from the British, Dutch, and French colonies as well. James calls this "race-welding," in other words, the time when the various parts of the diaspora experienced transculturation (2018:115–16, 121).

12. Stanley Nelson, the documentary filmmaker who has covered many important themes of the African American presence, has produced a wonderful film *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords* (1999), winner of the prestigious MacArthur Award, rounding out what is perhaps the most valuable library of documentary films on the Black Experience. Additionally, he has founded a mentoring program—The Documentary Lab—that trains new BIPOC filmmakers and assists them throughout their careers. See "Stanley Nelson," at firelightmedia.tv.

13. The Harlem Renaissance was the cultural movement in the 1920s and 1930s in which Black artists, poets, intellectuals, musicians, and writers led a virtual explosion of cultural creativity in the context of The Great Migration, when 6,000,000 African Americans left the southern US and thousands moved north from the Caribbean. The Renaissance also included political movements such as Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the NAACP's anti-lynching campaign, the Communist Party USA, and many other political organizations. It spread from Harlem into the urban areas of the Northeast and Midwest, bringing a new militancy against Jim Crow segregation policies. For a "feel" about the Renaissance see David Levering Lewis (1997).

14. Schomburg became curator of his own collection after serving as curator of Fisk University's Black collection. He worked in the New York Public Library from 1932 to 1938. "Arturo Alfonso Schomburg: Puerto Rican American historian, writer, curator and activist," *National Museum of African*

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American History and Culture, https://nmaahc.si.edu/latinx/arturo-alfonso-schomburg. His collection lives on in the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the largest repository on people of African descent in the world. Just recently the Metropolitan Museum of Art featured Arturo Schomburg as a collector in an astonishing exhibit of the Afro-Hispanic painter, Juan de Pareja (ca. 1608–1670), a slave of the artist Diego Velázquez. Schomburg used the proceeds from the sale of his collection to the Carnegie Corporation to visit Spain in search of Pareja's work (Holton 2021). See Special Issue of *African American Review* 2021.

15. For a thumbnail history of *The Crisis* see History of *The Crisis*, at naacp.org.

16. Briggs was an ardent communist who came to the US in 1905 and founded the African Blood Brotherhood in 1917 to stop lynching and racial discrimination and to encourage Black voting in the south. He thought Wilson would back the Black vote in payment for fighting in the war. He joined the Communist Party in 1921 associating the Brotherhood with the party. But he dissolved the Brotherhood in 1925. In 1929 he joined the Central Committee of the party and stayed until the Popular Front period. He was expelled in the late 1930s because he was a Black nationalist. He rejoined in the 1940s.

17. The literature on this invasion and the response of Black populations throughout the world is extensive. One of the earliest studies on Harlem is William R. Scott (2006).

18. For a description of the Black attacks on uptown "Little Italy" see Scott (2006). For a recent blog on this, see Ruth Ben-Ghiat (2021). Ben-Ghiat's overview includes a number of important photos of both sides. "Rare Clips as African Americans Volunteer to Fight Alongside Fellow Ethiopians Against Fascist Mussolini Invasion of Ethiopia - 1935," *AddisNews* (courtesy of Getty Images and Criticalpost). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPOsCmShUlk; last accessed April 4, 2023.

19. The Council was founded in 1937 as the International Committee on African Affairs; the name changed in 1941.

20. https://www.history.com/news/columbia-university-protest-occupation-1968

21. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja's (2002) book *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila* is a highly readable historical overview by a leading Congolese scholar. Carole Collins's (1992) article "Fatally Flawed Mediation: Cordier and the Congo Crisis of 1960" focuses on Cordier's role in the UN operation.

22. For a study of this sequence of events, see Austin (2013, 2018).

23. The Workers' Party Jamaica was the oldest of these parties. Unfortunately, it played a role in the overthrow of the Maurice Bishop government in Grenada. The US invasion followed and ended a new experiment in radical political formations in the Anglo-Caribbean. I took several groups of students from SUNY Stony Brook to Grenada and was there in 1983, several weeks before the collapse of the government. At that time the political condition was very tense. Several people who helped with my project were killed in the coup, including Maurice Bishop and Jacqueline Creft. For a good description, see "March 13, 1979: The Grenada Revolution," at zinnedproject.org.

24. A note reflective of the current fate of Harlem: the only church which agreed to hold Malcolm's funeral, Childs Memorial Temple Church on the corner of my street and Amsterdam Avenue, was destroyed in 2021 to build a homeless center, which is yet to be constructed. The ultimate tragedy of the destruction was revealed by the corruption of the historic church's minister. See Nick Garber, "Harlem Pastor Sold Church to Developer While Pocketing Cash," at patch.com.

25. See Alan Taylor, "The Riots that Followed the Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.," at theatlantic.com.

26. See Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzales, "How Black Students Helped Lead the 1968 Columbia U. Strike Against Militarism and Racism 50 Years Ago," at democracynow.org. Paul Cronin directed an epic 4-hour film on the protest, *A Time to Stir* (2008); see also Paul Hond, "Stir it Up," at magazine.columbia.edu.

27. Wilbur C. Rich, "From Muskogee to Morningside Heights: Political Scientist Charles V. Hamilton," at magazine.columbia.edu. Erin Blakemore, "How Columbia's Student Uprising of 1968 Was Sparked by a Segregated Gym," https://www.history.com/news/columbia-university-protest-occupation-1968. Original April 20, 2018, updated July 7, 2020. (I was especially interested in the photo, one of the few with Black students. However it was too expensive to include here.)

28. Rich, "From Muskogee to Morningside Heights."

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29. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, was one of the first European sites in the development of African Studies. Rodney and Wright were both recruited by Roland Oliver, a pioneer scholar of African historian who established the graduate field of African history at SOAS.

30. There is an extensive article about Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications On Wikipedia. It is a comprehensive review of the political movement in Black London, mentioning a number of activists who made the 1970s a critical period in the emergence of a vibrant Black politics that moved throughout the Caribbean diaspora in London and the English Caribbean. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bogle-L%27Ouverture_Publications. For more detailed discussion see Marc Matera, *Black London* (2015).

31. These included Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Nikita Khrushchev. Crowds congregated at the Hotel Theresa on 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. (7th Avenue). (For a description of the Harlem community's response, see Plummer 1998).

32. CASA was located on 14th street until 1998, when it was forced to close because of high rent. It reopened in 2010 in East Harlem (Teresa Guitierrez, 2020, "Casa reopens" *Workers World*). https://www.workers.org/2010/us/casa_0819/.

33. The list of these movements was extensive: Dominican Republic after US invasion, Panama's struggle regarding the Canal, anti- dictatorship movements against Pinochet in Chile, the military in Argentina, the Grenada Revolution, and the Manley government in Jamaica. Central American movements emerged in Nicaragua (Sandinistas), Guatemala, El Salvador, and Haiti. CASA played an important role in linking these movements and in exposing them to the struggles in Africa.

34. SNCC sponsored Freedom Rides, recruited college students to work on voter registration campaigns, and established units throughout the South. SNCC was best known for its role in voter registration during Freedom Summer of 1964, where they concentrated on Mississippi, the most violent of the states repressing the Black vote.

35. For a personal account of a then-high school student working with this office, see Alan Reich (2011), "Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement - In the New York SNCC Office," *Civil Rights Movement Archive* (CRMA) https://www.crmvet.org/nars/reich63.htm.

36. See Raquel Lanen, "How a Harlem Fashion Show Started the 'Black is Beautiful' Movement," at wnyc.org.

37. There was a preference for models with richly brown skin and natural hair.

38. PLC was active in the sports and cultural boycott of South Africa and fostered many coalitions.

39. There is an extensive literature on the revolution that ended the Selassie monarchy and brought thousands of Ethiopian exiles to the United States. New York was often a point of entry and was a center for the organization of opposition. These tumultuous years resulted in wave upon wave of exiles, reflecting the political struggles occurring within the state.

40. Personal Communication from Joan Adams, MSW, psychotherapist, Independent Consultant and Trainer, Racial Equity and Cultural Competence. The Department was affiliated with Columbia University's School of Physicians and Surgeons Psychiatry Dept. She was part of the team who adopted the Fanonian methods.

41. The Clarks' research with dolls, which found that Black children preferred white dolls to Black dolls, was used in the Supreme Court case *Brown vs Board of Education.* They argued that segregated schooling produced feelings of inferiority in Black children that could never be corrected. (See Kenneth Clark and Mamie Clark 1939.)

42. His books included *Black Skin White Mask,* (1952), *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), and *Towards the African Revolution* (1964). Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), which included case studies of torturers and their victims, opened a new field of "Black psychology." See Hugh F. Butts (1979) for a discussion of Fanon's work. For an article on the contemporary relevance of Fanon's work, see https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp-rj.2021.160406.

43. The coverage by the Harlem Neighborhood Block Association describes the event: "Thomas Sankara in Harlem," n.d. A copy of the speech can be found in "Our White House is in Black Harlem," October 3, 1984, Marxist Internet Archive, December 2022. For a video of the speech, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h__k3UuU9BA&t=4s.

44. *The Nation* carried an article about the assassination of Sankara a few years after his Harlem visit. "Who Killed Thomas Sankara" *The Nation* (November 24, 2021).

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45. That is, the People's Movement of Liberation of Angola (founded 1956), the National Liberation Front of Angola (1954), and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (1966).
46. There is a series of relevant documents produced by the CUNY Graduate Center, American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning, on the enrollment struggle: CUNY Digital History Archive (https://cdha.cuny.edu) "1961–1969: The Creation of CUNY Open Admissions Struggle."
47. The CUNY student protest was extensive and persistent. There were strikes virtually every few years, most of which concerned attempts to make the system more responsive to the general population of the city. The city experienced a major budget crisis in the 1970s, and this became an opportunity to follow admission policies that, while preserving the Open Enrollment, undermined the impact of it. In 1976 the city ended the 130-year policy of free tuition. Radical faculty pushed for their union to demand that the state give financial support to CUNY similar to the State University of New York (SUNY) System. Major strikes in the 1980s were a reaction to this protest.
48. The Queens College Revolt, which lasted from 1968 to 1969, was part of the struggle within the City University of New York to bring equity and non-discrimination to higher education. A collective produced a small booklet, "Who Rules CUNY," which became an important contributor to the Open Enrollment struggle.
49. See "1961–1969: The Creation of CUNY Open Admissions Struggle," at cdha.cuny.edu.
50. For a comment on the piece, see https://theconversation.com/under-the-influence-of-dumile-fenis-african-guern.
51. Michaux (1885/95–1976) was a famous bookseller whose business "House of Common Sense and the Home of Proper Propaganda" housed hundreds of thousands of books, ephemera, protest announcements, and similar publications. For a "peoples" discussion, see Micheaux Nelson (2012). Lewis was the brother of the famous early filmmaker Oscar Micheaux. For an introduction to Oscar Micheaux's work, and an overview of his importance as a critic of racist stereotypes in film, see Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Oscar Micheaux: The First Black Indie Filmmaker," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHRBK3Q23Ek; last accessed April 4, 2023.
52. To rebrand this structure in Harlem history, they named it the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building and added a statue of the legendary Harlem politician Adam Clayton Powell. https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.loc.gov%2Fitem%2F2020704544%2F&psig=AOvVaw2qzDxDlt36LumNi9UQyruw&ust=1705171251675000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=2ahUKEwjrvZWHwNiDAxXAj4kEHdJpBD4QjRx6BAgAEBc.
53. Since I gave this speech, there have been TWO instances of police violence that killed young African immigrant men. In most such cases the policeman is white, as was the case with Patrick Lyoya in Michigan. See Laurel Bowman, "Family of Congolese Immigrant Killed in Traffic Stop Speaks Out," at citizen.digital.

More recently, Irvo Otieno was killed on March 3 by police officers in Virginia, most of whom were Black. This phenomenon of Black policemen's violence against young Black men has been recognized as a symbol of the culture of violence that has seeped into public safety work. See John McWhorter, "Police Brutality is Not Always About Race," at nytimes.com.
54. The pain of this tragedy was felt by the entire city and especially the community, which came out into the streets in prayer. A reporter followed the cortege back to Mali and broadcast the burial on local news.
55. "Mourners Grieve for Bronx Fire Victims," at nbcnews.com. Coverage of the tragedy was widespread in the US and internationally.
56. http://archives.africaaccessreview.org/aar/detail.aspx?r=1603.

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APPENDIX

Selected list of contemporary leaders with historical connections to Queens and/or Harlem:

President Hage Geingob of Namibia (1941–2024)

- MA, International Affairs, The New School

Alem Habtu (1944–2016)

- PhD, Sociology, The New School
- Founder of the *Ethiopian Student Union*

Dessalegn Rahmato (1940–)

- PhD, Sociology, The New School
- A leading sociologist of Ethiopian land reform

Nigerian Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari (1944–)

- PhD, Columbia Political Science and International Relations
- Taught Yoruba at SEEK while completing his doctorate.
- A scholar diplomat; General and Special advisor on Africa, United Nations Secretariat, former Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Professor at CUNY, John Hopkins, SUNY Albany, and Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria
- Former Chief of Staff 2023 to President Muhammadu Buhari, former undersecretary

Keorapetse "Bra Willie" Kgositsele (1938–2018)

- MFA, Columbia
- Poet Laureate of South Africa, inaugurated 2006. Bra Willie was very active in Harlem's Black Arts Movement along with Larry Neal, Amiri Baraka, and Sam Anderson.

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Mongane "Wally" Serote (1944–)

- MFA, Columbia
- Poet Laureate of South Africa, inaugurated 2018.

Barbara Masekela (1941–)

- English Professor at Staten Island Community College and Rutgers University
- Appointed as South African ambassador to France and UNESCO in 1995 by Nelson Mandela. Appointed as ambassador to the United States in 2003 by President Thabo Mbeki.

David Sibeko (1938–1979)

- PAC representative at the UN and a frequent visitor and speaker at Harlem rallies. He was assassinated in Dar Es Salaam in 1979.

The Honorable Bethuel Setai (1939 –2015)

- PhD, Economics, New York University
- One of the "Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela"; see Thomas Allen Harris' (2005) film of the same name. Prominent political leader holding many government positions and the (clandestine) leader of the ANC underground, based in New York.

Hugh Masekela (1939–2018)

- Anti-apartheid activist and jazz trumpet player from South Africa
- Manhattan School of Music

Abdullah Ibrahim, aka "Dollar Brand" (1934–)

- Capetown, South African, jazz pianist musician and anti-apartheid activist
- Julliard School of Music

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