

THE SOAPBOX

The Challenge of Garveyism Studies

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The past two decades have witnessed a resurgence of work on Marcus Garvey, Garveyism, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the American academy.¹ Building on a first wave of Garveyism scholarship (1971–1988), and indebted to the archival and curatorial work of Robert A. Hill and the editors of the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, this new work has traced the resonance of Garveyism across a staggering number of locations: from the cities and farms of North America to the labor compounds and immigrant communities of Central America to the colonial capitals of the Caribbean and Africa.² It has pushed the temporal dimensions of Garveyism, connecting it backward to pan-African and black nationalist discourses and mobilizations as early as the Age of Revolution, and forward to the era of decolonization and Black Power. It has revealed the ways that Garveyism, a mass movement rooted in community aspirations, ideals, debates, and prejudices, offers a forum for excavating African diasporic discourses, particularly their contested gender politics. It has revealed that much more work remains to be done in Brazil, West Africa, Britain, France, and elsewhere.

¹In addition to a slew of important articles and book chapters, a number of books on Garveyism have been published since the turn of the century. See Ronald J. Stephens and Adam Ewing, eds., *Global Garveyism* (Gainesville, FL, forthcoming); Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton, NJ, 2014); Kenneth S. Jolly, “By Our Own Strength”: William Sherrill, the UNIA, and the Fight for African American Self-Determination in Detroit (New York, 2013); Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens, OH, 2012); James G. Spady, *Marcus Garvey: Jazz, Reggae, Hip Hop & the African Diaspora* (Philadelphia, 2011); C. Boyd James, *Garvey, Garveyism, and the Antinomies in Black Redemption* (Trenton, NJ, 2009); Ramla Bandeale, *Black Star: African American Activism in the International Political Economy* (Urbana, IL, 2008); Mary G. Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920–1927* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007); Claudrena N. Harold, *The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South, 1918–1942* (New York, 2007); Ula Y. Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002).

²Books published during the first wave of Garveyism scholarship include Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion* (Trenton, NJ, 1988); Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan, eds., *Garvey, His Work and Impact* (Mona, Jamaica, 1988); Rupert Lewis and Maureen Warner-Lewis, eds., *Garvey: Africa, Europe, the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1986); Tony Martin, *The Pan-African Connection: From Slavery to Garvey and Beyond* (Dover, MA, 1983); Tony Martin, *Marcus Garvey, Hero: A First Biography* (Dover, MA, 1983); Tony Martin, *Literary Garveyism: Garvey, Black Arts, and the Harlem Renaissance* (Dover, MA, 1983); Emory J. Tolbert, *The UNIA in Black Los Angeles: Ideology and Community in the American Garvey Movement* (Los Angeles, 1980); Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement: The Institutionalization of a Black Civil Religion* (Metuchen, NJ, 1978); Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Dover, MA, 1986); John Henrik Clarke, ed., with the assistance of Amy Jacques Garvey, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa* (New York, 1974); Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (Berkeley, CA, 1971). The first ten volumes of the remarkable Garvey Papers were published by the University of California Press between 1983 and 2006. Since 2011, an additional three volumes have been published by Duke University Press. All of this work has been conducted under the direction of the world’s preeminent Garveyism scholar, Robert A. Hill.

None of this should be surprising. Garveyism revived and expanded the possibilities of black nationalism as a popular politics during the interwar period.³ Garvey's message of race unity, black pride, anti-colonialism, institution building, and self-sufficiency resonated widely, generating an unprecedented mass movement across the African diaspora. And yet Garveyism has always sat uncomfortably within the prevailing frameworks of American historiographical thought. Garvey's post-World War I movement remains little more than a sidebar—a colorful and briefly distracting oddity—in many surveys of African American history.⁴ For all of their inclusive ambition, works on the “long civil rights movement” have pointedly excluded Garveyism from their genealogies of the twentieth-century black freedom struggle. New works charting the transnational contours of black politics have largely focused instead on alliances between African diasporic subjects and the global communist movement, or pan-African activists who are viewed as eschewing, rather than building upon, Garveyism's pan-African formulations. Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, the most important black political organization of the 1920s and the largest mass organization in the history of the African diaspora, continues to suffer the indignity of being frequently mislabeled the *United Negro Improvement Association*.

This essay is less focused on highlighting what the new Garveyism studies allows us to see than on exploring some of the reasons why our profession has done such a poor job of looking. As it turns out, investigating the neglect of Garveyism by American historians shines an unflattering light on the profession's uneven incorporation of African American history into mainstream narratives more generally. Through the first half of the twentieth century, white scholars dominated the historical profession, a field rooted in a range of racist and chauvinistic assumptions. Black scholars worked in the shadows of this world and on the margins of the white academy, forging a dynamic historiographical tradition that was virtually ignored by professional associations and by faculty at predominantly white institutions. During the decades following World War II, civil rights struggles, student protests, and Black Power mobilizations brought new students to white campuses, prompted the hiring of black professors, and gave mainstream recognition to the perspectives of black historians for the first time. By the end of the 1980s, argues David Levering Lewis, African American historiography had “reached full adulthood.” That decade, writes Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, can be considered “a golden age of African American history.”⁵

But the emergence of African American history as a “legitimate” field was not accomplished without a fight or without compromising concessions. If the 1980s was a golden age, these years also marked a moment of foreclosure. During the late 1960s and 1970s, proponents of a new black history, aligned with the burgeoning Black Studies movement, had sought not merely

³At the root of black nationalism is the belief that race has been the fundamental category shaping the emergence of the modern world, beginning from at least the inauguration of the Atlantic slave trade. Black nationalists share a profound skepticism that this modern world system, which is defined by European political, economic, and cultural hegemony, can be reformed from within, via integrationist or universalist strategies. They thus embrace strategies that seek to build centers of autonomous power that might better resist or confront the racialized power of the West. For further discussion of black nationalism, see Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (Chicago, 2001), 21–2, 85–134. For another helpful working definition of black nationalism, see Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia, 2018), 5–6.

⁴See, for example, two excellent recent surveys of African American history: Thomas C. Holt, *Children of Fire: A History of African Americans* (New York, 2011), 260; Stephen Tuck, *We Ain't What We Ought to Be: The Black Freedom Struggle from Emancipation to Obama* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 163. See also Kevin Gaines's framing of African American historiography in “African-American History,” in *American History Now*, ed. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr (Philadelphia, 2011), 400–20.

⁵Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, *African American History Reconsidered* (Urbana, IL, 2010), 3–5; David Levering Lewis, “Radical History: Toward Inclusiveness,” *Journal of American History* 76, no. 2 (Sept. 1989): 471–4, here 472, quoted in Dagbovie, *African American History Reconsidered*, 4.

legitimacy within the mainstream historical profession, but to revolutionize the profession at its core. The reaction to the new black historians and to the emergence of Black Studies by established historians was defensive and often hostile. In particular, the association of the new black historians with black nationalism had a chilling effect on the serious study of black nationalist perspectives. Thus, even as African American history gathered growing legitimacy, the politics of black nationalism, both as an historical practice and as a perceived threat to the field's professional standards, was simultaneously delegitimized. A breach was opened between the fields of History and Black Studies, and the historical profession embraced a "liberal-integrationist" framework that limited scholars' understanding of African American and African diasporic belief and politics.⁶ The continued marginalization of Garveyism studies demonstrates that the effects of this historical rupture remain with us, and that the recognition of black historical perspectives remains conditional.

Writing Garveyism *in* thus entails far more than simply acknowledging a vibrant subfield of study. It requires foregrounding political traditions that have resisted the universalizing, rationalistic formulations of Western philosophy and American national mythology. It invites a revisiting of the integrationism-nationalism dyad that has been obscured in recent work. It moves us closer, most of all, to achieving what was only partially pursued a half-century ago: an American historiography fully committed to documenting the experiences and visions of African Americans in the twentieth century.

The Rise of the New Negro History

From a racist society emerges a racist historiography.⁷ The establishment of the American historical profession in the last decades of the nineteenth century coincided with the high tide of romantic nationalism, with the era of sectional reconciliation and Lost Cause mythologies, with an age of imperial expansion and white man's burdens. Leading historians of the day accepted the conclusions of scientific racism—that, as Columbia University's John W. Burgess put it, a "black skin means membership in a race of men which has never of itself succeeded in subjecting passion to reason; has never, therefore, created any civilization of any kind."⁸ Rather than consider African Americans as historical actors, American historians played their part in the ongoing construction of the "Negro"—an invented non-agent, as Cedric J. Robinson observes, who existed outside of time and space, who "had no civilization, no cultures, no religion, no history, no place, and finally no humanity that might command consideration."⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois ruefully observed that "one fact and one alone" could explain the attitude of his white historian contemporaries: "they cannot conceive Negroes as men."¹⁰

⁶I am borrowing the notion of a liberal-integrationist framework from Steven Hahn. See Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 6; Steven Hahn, *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 159–60.

⁷William Strickland, "On Genovese," Institute of the Black World Papers, William Strickland Collection, box 3: Addresses, Articles, and Essays, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York City, NY [hereafter Schomburg Center, NYPL].

⁸Burgess is quoted in Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, UK, 1988), 75. See also August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Urbana, IL, 1986), 3–4; Earl Lewis, "To Turn as on a Pivot: Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (June 1995): 765–87, here 767–8; Ian Tyrrell, "Making Nations/Making States: American Historians in the Context of Empire," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (Dec. 1999): 1015–44, here 1021–2.

⁹Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983; Chapel Hill, NC, 2000), 81–2. This point is made by Robin D. G. Kelley, "But a Local Phase of a World Problem': Black History's Global Vision, 1883–1950," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (Dec. 1999): 1045–77, here 1062.

¹⁰W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Propaganda of History," in *Black Reconstruction in America 1860–1880* (1935; New York, 1969), 726.

The exclusion of African American history from the profession had obvious consequences for black historians. Before World War II, only two black scholars—W. E. B. Du Bois and Monroe Work—presented papers at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association. Of the nearly two thousand doctorates awarded in history at white universities before 1935, only six were granted to black students. By 1960, that number had risen to only seventeen.¹¹ Black scholars pursued their own strategies of professionalization. Many of the pioneering black historians of the twentieth century—Benjamin Brawley, Leila Amos Pendleton, Drusilla Dunjee Houston, John Henrik Clarke, Lerone Bennett, Jr.—were self-trained. Carter G. Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH; now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, or ASALH), established in 1915, and its publications, the *Journal of Negro History* (now the *Journal of African American History*) and the *Negro History Bulletin* (now *Black History Bulletin*) provided a dynamic collaborative ground for the sharing and dissemination of their work.¹² Scholars like Merze Tate, Ellen Irene Diggs, and Charles Wesley built a complementary institutional foundation at the nation's historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). As Robin D. G. Kelley has shown, the tenuous space occupied by black historians—both as citizens and as scholars—fostered a dynamic counter-historiography, shorn of the racial chauvinism of the white academy and distinguished by its global and diasporic focus. In this space, radical black scholars like Du Bois, C. L. R. James, and Oliver Cox—along with a handful of white allies like Herbert Aptheker—published visionary works that were either ignored or derided in their time and have only come to be celebrated decades later by the mainstream profession.¹³

For most black professional historians in the first half of the twentieth century, the aim of their work was not to defy the established standards of the white profession but to redirect those standards to anti-racist ends. This was a classic integrationist strategy, a politics of respectability. In legitimizing their field in the late nineteenth century, American historians had adopted three founding ideologies: a faith in the “scientific method” of German historian Leopold von Ranke and the conceit of the objective, dispassionate researcher; an adoption of the nation-state as the proper unit of analysis; and a belief in universalism, in a “great stream,” as Columbia professor William M. Sloane fashioned it, of human civilization that followed from the same source and culminated in the emergence of Western society.¹⁴ Black historians argued that an honest commitment to this three-pronged methodology would reveal the valuable historical contributions of African Americans, as well as the impossibility of understanding the nation's past without accounting for the role played by black men and women. The reclamation of the African and African American past would shatter the invention of the Negro and demonstrate the fitness of African Americans for full citizenship in a modern Western society. Woodson carefully courted interracial and philanthropic support, and aligned his organization with the conservative wing of black politics. The association would not employ “spectacular propaganda or fire-eating agitation,” explained Woodson: “The aim of this organization is to set forth facts in scientific form, for facts properly set forth will tell their own story.”¹⁵

¹¹Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 97–8; John W. Blassingame, “Black Studies and the Role of the Historian,” in *New Perspectives on Black Studies*, ed. John W. Blassingame (Urbana, IL, 1971), 207–26, here 217.

¹²Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 8–74.

¹³Kelley, “But a Local Phase,” 1058–9. Du Bois's magisterial *Black Reconstruction in America* was not reviewed in the profession's flagship journal, the *American Historical Review*. See Tyrrell, “Making Nations,” 1019.

¹⁴Tyrrell, “Making Nations,” 1015–20; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 469; David Thelen, “The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History,” *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (Dec. 1999): 965–75, 965–7; William M. Sloane, “History and Democracy,” *American Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1895): 1–23, here 4.

¹⁵Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 11, 118–20; Robert L. Harris, Jr., “Coming of Age: The Transformation of Afro-American Historiography,” *Journal of Negro History* 67, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 107–9; Sterling Stuckey, “Twilight of Our Past: Reflections on the Origins of Black History,” in *Amistad* 2, eds. John A. Williams and Charles F. Harris (New York, 1971), 261–96, here 277–8.

The work of Woodson and his disciples was mostly ignored by white scholars before World War II. But by the 1950s and 1960s the struggle against Nazi Germany—and, subsequently, the propagandistic demands of the Cold War—had eroded the intellectual legitimacy of the most extreme varieties of racism. Gunnar Myrdal's influential study, *An American Dilemma* (1944), completed with the heavy assistance of black scholars like E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Bunche, and Charles S. Johnson, elevated to public policy prescription what Woodson and his allies had been saying all along: that Americans, white as well as black, would greatly benefit by shedding their ancient prejudices and reinvesting in the nation's egalitarian creed.¹⁶ "The task," wrote John Hope Franklin in his landmark synthesis, *From Slavery to Freedom* (1947), is "to tell the story of the process by which the Negro has sought to cast his lot with an evolving American civilization." By 1957, Franklin was cheering the arrival of a "New Negro History." The nation's major (white) historical associations, he observed, were finally giving serious attention to the study of the black past. Path-breaking monographs by white scholars like Kenneth Stampp and C. Vann Woodward were beginning to confront the old racist historiography. "For the first time," wrote Franklin, "there is a striking resemblance between what historians are writing and what has actually happened in the history of the American Negro."¹⁷ In 1956, Franklin sanctified the shift by accepting a position at Brooklyn College, becoming the first black historian to receive a regular faculty position at a predominantly white institution. In 1966, he joined the editorial board of the *Journal of American History*, a first for one of the three major white historical journals.¹⁸

The New Black History

This is where things stood when the revolutionary tremors of the 1960s shook the academic world to its core. At the start of the decade, as Houston A. Baker recalls, American college campuses had largely been "pastoral gardens of Western knowledge indoctrination ... quiet, decorous, white." But the political pressures and legislative victories of the civil rights movement opened the doors of predominantly white institutions (PWIs) to unprecedented numbers of black students, many from working-class or migrant families. "No one had imagined that if blacks were admitted to the university, they would be anything other than grateful for such an 'opportunity,'" writes Baker. "It was assumed that blacks, like compliant colonial subjects, would swear allegiance to Western civilization and quickly take up the business of assimilating white behavioral codes and intellectual fare." To the contrary, black students at PWIs, joined by their brethren at HBCUs, demanded an overhaul of departmental curriculums, campus culture, and student life that would more adequately center—rather than marginalize—their experiences and needs. Departments rushed to hire faculty members to teach new courses in African American history and literature. The Ford Foundation pledged its support for the new field of Black Studies as programs, departments, and centers emerged across the country. Publishers rushed to capitalize on the burst of interest in African American history. In 1969, more than eighty CBS affiliates aired *Black Heritage: A History of Afro-Americans*, a remarkable series of 108 thirty-minute lectures, many delivered by leading figures in what series mastermind Vincent Harding called the new "Black History."¹⁹

¹⁶Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 134–73.

¹⁷John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (New York, 1947); John Hope Franklin, "The New Negro History," *Journal of Negro History* 42, no. 2 (Apr. 1957): 89–97.

¹⁸Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 472; Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 173. The other two major journals comprising the "big three" were the *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of Southern History*.

¹⁹Houston A. Baker, "Black Studies: A New Story," in *Africana Studies: A Disciplinary Quest for Both Theory and Method*, ed. James L. Conyers, Jr. (Jefferson, NC, 1997), 29–44, here 32–4; Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on*

Black Studies programs, departments, and centers were the product of hard-won, sometimes dramatic struggles fought by black students and their allies. In turn they became dynamic staging grounds for the pursuit of a more complete rethinking of the university itself.²⁰ One of the primary intellectual interventions pursued by scholars aligned with the Black Studies movement was a multi-pronged critique of the American historical profession. Harding, who in addition to his duties with the *Black Heritage* series was founder and director of the influential Atlanta-based collective, the Institute of the Black World, viewed the new black history as an enterprise that would offer a fuller and richer investigation of the black experience. Paying homage to “our fathers of Negro history,” such as John Hope Franklin, Harding nevertheless argued that their historical vision had been limited by a blind faith in the nation’s founding promises. Just as the civil rights struggle (of which Harding had been a part) was propelled by a push for black people “to be accepted on the terms by which this nation defined itself,” “Negro History,” going back to the days of George Washington Williams in the late nineteenth century, sought to “reveal the ‘contributions’ of blacks to the American saga.” The new black history had been emancipated from this framework by political momentum: by the transition in the United States from a struggle for “inclusion in America as America defined itself” to a “political struggle for power of self-definition and self-determination”; by “the rising surge of anticolonialism throughout the nonwhite world”; and by the identification of African Americans with “the formerly colonized, the wretched of the earth.” An honest study of “our bleeding countrymen through the widely scattered documents of American history,” argued Harding, suggested “that the American past upon which so much hope has been built never really existed, and probably never will.” Only by a “hard and unromantic reading of the experiences of black people in America,” he wrote, only by setting “our own vision upon the blindness of American historiography,” might a more hopeful future, a new nation, be glimpsed.²¹

The new black history pioneered by Harding and his allies—Sterling Stuckey, Mike Thelwell, Julius Lester, John Henrik Clarke, Lerone Bennett, Jr., and others—attacked the root of established historical practice. Objectivity, they argued, was not foundational to the discipline but delusional, given the lie by the racist erasure of black agency from American history since the founding of the profession. Just as the prevailing historiography was inherently political, so too must be its redefinition. Many of the new black historians went further, arguing that the conventions of the profession were rooted in an “Ivory Towerism” that erected artificial barriers between academics and the communities they wrote about. Rather than valorizing impartiality, scholars had a responsibility to their “human sources.” “We cannot,” urged Harding, “write with detachment from the agonies of our people.”²²

The new black historians challenged not only the idea of historical objectivity, but also the primacy of the nation-state as a unit of analysis. Harding called on scholars to place their work “firmly in the context of the larger Pan-African scene,” to conceive of history in the tradition of Du Bois and C. L. R. James, who had drawn no hard boundaries around nations, and who viewed their work from the perspective of a global liberation struggle. New black historians

Campus (Berkeley, CA, 2012), 4, 201–5; Vincent Harding, “Beyond Chaos: Black History and the Search for the New Land,” in *Amistad 1*, eds. John A. Williams and Charles F. Harris (New York, 1970), 267–92.

²⁰Baker, “Black Studies,” 36.

²¹Harding, “Beyond Chaos,” 268–89. Sterling Stuckey took more care to root this “new” history in the ground tended by older black scholars on the margins of the academy, particularly W. E. B. Du Bois: Stuckey, “Twilight of Our Past,” 264.

²²For other examples of this thinking, see Stuckey, “Twilight of Our Past,” 290; Nathan Hare, “The Challenge of the Black Scholar,” *The Black Scholar* 1, no. 2 (1969): 58–63; Nathan Hare, “What Should Be the Role of Afro-American Education in the Undergraduate Curriculum?” in *New Perspectives on Black Studies*, 3–15; Mike Thelwell, “Black Studies: A Political Perspective,” *Massachusetts Review* 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1969): 703–12; Harding, “Beyond Chaos,” 279.

firmly rejected the “narrow particularism” of the Western perspective and strove to reveal the “false universality of white concepts.” Prevailing “intellectual instruments” had been designed expressly to keep us from seeing,” wrote Lerone Bennett, Jr. “We must abandon the partial frame of reference of our oppressors and create new concepts which will release our reality, which is also the reality of the overwhelming majority of men and women on this globe.”²³

Some assumptions, of course, still stood. The new black historians accepted without question the primacy of male scholars and perspectives in the profession. If the new black history offered a new framework with which to center the black experience, it decidedly imagined that experience through the prism of black men and their work. Of the forty-one participating lecturers in the *Black Heritage* series, only five were women, and only three—Joanne Grant, Elsie M. Lewis, and Linda Housch (then a student)—were historians.²⁴ It did not occur to the leading figures of the new black history that an “honest” reassessment of the American past required not only a spirited challenge to white presumptions, but a rethinking of the profession’s gendered assumptions as well.²⁵

In the late 1960s, the insurgency of the new black historians sparked a series of personal and institutional clashes within the historical profession. At a conference at Wayne State University in May 1969, and then at the annual meeting of ASNLH that October, white historians were shouted down and challenged about their ability to effectively write black history.²⁶ Critical of the exclusionary leadership of the African Studies Association (ASA), John Henrik Clarke led a group of black historians out its annual meeting that same year and into the newly formed African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA). Members of the AHSA attacked the neo-colonial implications (and interrelationships) of Cold War-era area studies and the tendency of African studies to examine emergent nation-states and localities divorced from their broader diasporic and global contexts. They called for the study of Africa to “be undertaken from a pan-Africanist perspective,” one that “negates the tribalization of African peoples by geographical demarcations on the basis of colonialist spheres of influence.”²⁷

For many scholars watching these developments, the new black history was inseparable from Black Power; immediately discredited by the association with a partisan black nationalist perspective; and viewed as monolithic, emotional, and irresponsible. This was a troubling and revealing reaction. As Martha Biondi has shown, Black Studies scholars at the time were engaged in lively and thoughtful disagreements about the intellectual direction and proper form their discipline should take. They were pioneers in interdisciplinary study and in promoting global and diasporic perspectives that would only later be “discovered” by other American

²³Vincent Harding, “The Vocation of the Black Scholar and the Struggles of the Black Community,” in *Education and Black Struggle: Notes from the Colonized World* (Atlanta, 1974), 3–29; Aimé Césaire, “Letter to Maurice Thorez,” *Social Text* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 145–52, here 152; Lerone Bennett, Jr., “The Challenge of Blackness,” *Black Scholar*, Feb. 1971, quoted in Clovis E. Semmes, *The End of Black Studies: Conceptual, Theoretical, and Empirical Concerns* (New York, 2017), 71; Bennett is also quoted in Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 178.

²⁴The other women lecturers were the writer Toni Cade (Bambara) and National Black Theater founder Barbara Ann Teer. See the “Black Heritage is Us” pamphlet in the folder 39, box 28, John Henrik Clarke Papers, Schomburg Center, NYPL.

²⁵For recent work that centers black women within black nationalist politics and ideology, see Blain, *Set the World on Fire*; Ashley D. Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2017).

²⁶Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 474–6; Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 290–3; Robert H. Wiebe, “The Sixty-Second Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians,” *Journal of American History* 56, no. 3 (Dec. 1969): 621–37, here 635.

²⁷William G. Martin and Michael O. West, “The Ascent, Triumph, and Disintegration of the Africanist Enterprise, USA,” in *Out of One, Many Africas: Reconstructing the Study and Meaning of Africa*, eds. William G. Martin and Michael O. West (Urbana, IL, 1999), 85–105; Guy Martin and Carlene Young, “The Paradox of Separate and Unequal: African Studies and Afro-American Studies,” *Journal of Negro Education* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 257–67; Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 251–5.

historians during the “transnational turn” of the late 1990s. By centering black people in their interdisciplinary work, Black Studies scholars “aimed to unmask the pretense of universalism in Euro-American intellectual thought and teaching.” Along with pioneers in gender and women’s studies and ethnic studies, Black Studies scholars helped “marginalized experiences, perspectives, and identities to find their own space in higher education.” Indeed, as Robert Allen noted, the demand for Black Studies was “in essence democratic and even integrationist.” It was a call for “a widening of American democracy” by “widening educational democracy.”²⁸

What these scholars wanted, however, was a truly expansive and egalitarian vision of integration—a commitment that extended beyond simply opening doors for black faculty and black students. The wanted, as Houston Baker put it, “a revocabularization of academic discourse to reflect a genuine redistribution of space, time, and energy.” What occurred instead “was moral panic as a function of territorial contestation.” Indeed, if many of the new black historians who aligned with Black Studies were sympathetic to black nationalist perspectives, it was because their personal and professional experiences, as well as their intellectual exploration, had led them to doubt that, to paraphrase Audre Lorde, the master’s tools would be able to dismantle the master’s house. They believed that an appeal for fairness within the context of an unjust system was futile. They believed that the promise of “integration” being offered in the post-civil rights era was an integration that granted entry to “mainstream” American society on terms defined by the dominant—and in their view, colonial—culture.²⁹

And indeed, the reaction to Black Studies from established members of the academic community did much to prove their point. It demonstrated that a push for a model of integration shorn of Eurocentric hegemony and universalist pretense was indeed a revolutionary demand in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and that the articulation of a truly interracial democracy, at the very least, remained a distant prospect. Facing significant challenges (not the least of which, the immediate need to hire hundreds of qualified faculty members to staff the new programs in a country where less than one percent of the Ph.D. holders were black), and needing patience and support, Black Studies programs instead endured volleys of attacks from critics at the first sign of strain or weakness. A single poor hire became evidence of a critical lack of standards across the entire field. The demand by black students for standing committees and other forms of input in departmental governance was likewise deemed by critics to threaten the intellectual integrity of the faculty and the university. The whiff of violence—at Cornell, Harvard, and much more seriously at UCLA—served as evidence of the recklessness of the new crop of black students arriving on college campuses. Scattered calls for the exclusion of white students from certain courses, for the exclusion of white professors from Black Studies departments, or for all-black dormitories, was viewed as evidence of creeping black-on-white racism, of “apartheid,” of a new “Jim Crow.”³⁰

The most vocal and successful critics of the Black Studies movement tended to be established scholars, black and white, who shared a genuine commitment to the success of the young field but desired to tame its more radical impulses. These critics—Martin Kilson at Harvard, John Blassingame at Yale, Sir Arthur Lewis at Princeton, Eugene Genovese at the University of Rochester, Kenneth Clark at the City College of New York, and others—warned that without the proper guidance, the young programs would slide into the muck of ideological purity, serve

²⁸Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 175–9, 249; Robert L. Allen, “Politics of the Attack on Black Studies,” *Black Scholar* 6, no. 1 (Sept. 1974), 2–7, here 3.

²⁹Baker, “Black Studies,” 37; Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1984; Berkeley, 2007), 123.

³⁰Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, 188–200; Thelwell, “Black Studies,” 703–8; Kenneth B. Clark, “A Charade of Power: Black Studies at White Colleges,” *Antioch Review* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1969): 145–8; Martin Kilson, “Whither Black Higher Education?” *School Review* 81, no. 3 (May 1973): 427–36; Martin Kilson, “Anatomy of the Black Studies Movement,” *Massachusetts Review* 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1969): 718–25; Martin Kilson, “Reflections on Structure and Content in Black Studies,” *Journal of Black Studies* 3, no. 3 (Mar. 1973): 297–314; Allen, “Politics of the Attack on Black Studies,” 6.

as bastions of psychological escape, and offer a second-class, substandard education for their students. The threat, most critics agreed, was black nationalism—an ideology, in Kilson’s telling, defined by “anti-intellectualism and antiachievement,” stifling healthy intellectual discourse in favor of a kind of “black magic,” the “idea that miracles are possible if blacks display fidelity to black nationalism and its antiwhite attitudes and rituals.” Black Studies had been “seized,” argued Kilson, by the newly arriving black students, “the typical lower-class Negroes,” who had found the “rigor and discipline of academic competition” with white students “quite alien,” suffered “emasculatation,” and thus turned to black nationalist ideologies and “rebellious postures” to repair their wounded egos. For Kilson, black nationalist perspectives offered nothing more than “therapeutic” relief. They allowed black youth “to salve wounds stemming from dehumanizing encounters with white racism” without asking them to adapt to “frustrating and confusing situations on white campuses.”³¹

The only path forward, these critics argued, was the path back to respectability. Black Studies promised to bring important new voices to campuses, to bring important new courses to curriculums, and could do so effectively only by demonstrating its legitimacy as an academic discipline. This meant foregoing the “politicization” that was associated with a black nationalist perspective, deemphasizing experimental and community-based pedagogies, and making peace with the accepted standards of the status quo. “Black studies is too serious an intellectual sphere, has too many exciting possibilities of finally liberating the racially shackled American mind, for intellectuals to shirk their responsibility to organize academically respectable programs,” argued John Blassingame. Black Studies, Eugene Genovese agreed, had an opportunity to correct past injustices on American campuses, provided that universities were not compelled to surrender “basic standards of competence.” Sir Arthur Lewis, the Princeton economist, cheered the arrival of courses on “African life” and “Afro-American life” to campus, but argued that these courses should enroll mostly white students. Black students, Lewis reasoned, would make much better use of their time refocusing their attention and studying business or engineering or medicine or law. The university, he argued, was not a place for black students to learn more about “the neighborhood side of American life” but rather “the integrated part of American life.”³²

Academic historians responded to the challenge of the new black historians by engaging in similar acts of gatekeeping. White and black supporters and practitioners of African American history cheered what I. A. Newby described as “the white man’s new awareness of Negro history”—the willingness to examine with clarity and honesty the nation’s dark history of racial oppression. But whereas the new black historians viewed this acknowledgment as a starting point, a wedge that would occasion a broader rethinking of the field, powerful voices within the academy insisted that the arrival of black history was an end in itself, a necessary historiographical course correction. The failure of “objective” research to account for black Americans in the past was not a reason to abandon the concept of objectivity; the illumination of the sins of the American past was all the more reason to affix the study of black history to the study of the nation. Rather than accept the interventions of the new black historians as an occasion for intellectual discourse and debate, leading members of the profession simply refused to begin the conversation. To do so, argued Benjamin Quarles, would be to entertain the “polemics” of the “revolutionary black nationalists,” the “exponents of functional research, issue laden and action oriented.” It would be surrendering the integrity of the profession, concurred John Hope Franklin, to “narrow political purposes.” It would, in Blassingame’s thinking,

³¹Kilson, “Whither Black Higher Education?” 432–3; Kilson, “Anatomy,” 721–2.

³²John W. Blassingame, “Black Studies: An Intellectual Crisis,” in *New Perspectives on Black Studies*, 149–66, here 161–2; Eugene Genovese, “Black Studies: Trouble Ahead,” in *New Perspectives on Black Studies*, 104–15, here 112–3; W. Arthur Lewis, “The Road to the Top Is Through Higher Education—Not Black Studies,” *New York Times Magazine*, May 11, 1969, SM34.

“swap realism for mythology.” Faced with black nationalist perspectives deeply critical of the profession’s founding paradigms—objectivity, the nation-state as the natural unit of analysis, and the conceit of Western universalism—established historians retreated to their bunkers. The long overdue arrival of African American history affirmed—rather than called into question—the best practices of the discipline.³³

The outlines of this rebranded consensus were traced by two of the great stalwarts of the profession: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and C. Vann Woodward. In a keynote speech, titled “Nationalism and History,” at ASNLH’s annual meeting in the fall of 1968, Schlesinger, a member of the *Journal of Negro History*’s executive council, hailed the end of the shameful era of black history’s neglect and the dawn of a new era in which it would be possible “to know in its majesty and terror the real history of the United States.” But in an age when nationalism “is the most powerful political emotion in the world,” great caution was warranted. If one could abide a “rational nationalism”—the “affirmation of the identity and integrity of one’s own people,” of which the “invocation of history” formed an organic part—historians must be on guard for expressions of the “aggressive nationalism” such as Nazism and communism. In the United States this also meant repelling the “mystical nationalism” of black nationalism “which yearns for an American system of *apartheid*.” If the desire to vindicate one’s people by utilizing mythmaking is understandable, Schlesinger argued, historians must be careful to differentiate the “noble lie” from “historical truth.” As “custodians” of “the ideals of critical analysis, accuracy, and objectivity,” they had an obligation not to respond to bad history with “more bad history written from a different viewpoint.” Historians must stand tall against the “spread of irrationality” and “preserve the integrity of the historical discipline.” They must never “degrade history” by using it “merely as a weapon in political struggles.”³⁴

Woodward was even more direct in his presidential address at the meeting of the Organization of American Historians the next spring. Observing a “certain moral obtuseness and intellectual irresponsibility regarding the Negro people ... in our most respectable historical literature,” like Schlesinger, he welcomed the arrival of “Negro critics or colleagues” who might look “over one’s shoulder” and preempt “embarrassing” expressions of white supremacy or “ethnocentric gaffes.” If black historians properly took advantage of their “opportunity” and their “duty” to offer an “essential corrective in line with the tradition of countervailing forces in American historiography,” the profession would greatly benefit from this “infusion of ‘soul.’” But temptations abounded and needed to be resisted: the urge to overstate the achievements of a people who “were kept in chains and illiteracy and subject thereafter to crippling debasement and deprivation”; impulses among white historians “of self-flagellation and guilt that encourage the deprecation of all things European or white”; and among black historians “the temptation to gratify the white liberal’s masochistic cravings.” But most of all, he argued, black historians must resist the “cults of black nationalism” that are “seeking lodgement in the academies,” defined by their rejection of the “White Devil,” their valorization of the “mystique of skin color and exclusiveness, of alienation and withdrawal,” and their yearning for “an inverted segregation, a black apartheid.”³⁵

What is notable here is not that proponents of black nationalism came under attack. Like all political formations or ideologies, black nationalism is rent with blind spots and contradictions, and should be subject to rigorous interrogation.³⁶ What is significant is that black nationalism

³³I. A. Newby, “Historians and Negroes,” *Journal of Negro History* 54, no. 1 (Jan. 1969): 32–47, here 32; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 470; Benjamin Quarles, “Black History Unbound,” *Daedalus* 103, no. 2 (Spring 1974): 163–78, here 167; Franklin is quoted in Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 285–6; Blassingame, “Black Studies and the Role of the Historian,” in *New Perspectives on Black Studies*, 222.

³⁴Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “Nationalism and History,” *Journal of Negro History* 54, no. 1 (Jan. 1969): 19–31.

³⁵C. Vann Woodward, “Clio with Soul,” *Journal of American History* 56, no. 1 (June 1969): 5–20.

³⁶For example, much trenchant criticism has been written about black nationalism’s often problematic gender politics. See E. Frances White, “Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counter Discourse and African-American

came under attack in a manner that achieved intellectual censure. Prominent historians did not merely disagree with the arguments of the new black historians; they rendered those arguments outside of the boundaries of rational discourse, expressions of emotional and politicized irrationality that served as a foil for the supposedly hard-headed and dispassionate rigor of their own historical praxis. During the 1960s and 1970s, African American history was granted the legitimacy for which its proponents had steadfastly fought. But its acceptance into mainstream historiography was brokered on exacting terms. In the bargain, students of black nationalist perspectives found themselves precisely where nearly all proponents of African American history had resided before the Second Reconstruction—historiographically exiled.

The Madness of Marcus Garvey

Attitudes toward Marcus Garvey and his movement during the 1920s prefigured these later arguments. Garvey's contemporaries in the black intelligentsia viewed him as a "demagogue" who attracted "the lowest type of Negroes" by appealing to their "emotional nature."³⁷ For W. E. B. Du Bois, Garvey's movement was a tragedy because it diverted attention away from the more "practical" pursuits of the NAACP and his own Pan-African Congresses.³⁸ For leftists like Chandler Owen, A. Philip Randolph, and C. L. R. James, Garvey was a "reactionary," and his program "pitiable rubbish" and a distraction from the supposedly more scientific rigors of socialism.³⁹ For black radicals associated with the international communist movement, the UNIA was a movement to be co-opted or a threat to be defeated. "The struggle against Garveyism," wrote George Padmore while he was the leading black spokesperson for the Comintern, "represents one of the major tasks of the Negro toilers in America and the African and West Indian colonies."⁴⁰

After Garvey's death, the most dogged and important chronicler of his life and work was his second wife and leading Garveyite, Amy Jacques Garvey. From her base in Jamaica, Jacques Garvey generously sat for long interviews and shared her records with the white American historian E. David Cronon, who was researching what became the first published biography of Garvey, *Black Moses*. But when Cronon's book appeared in print in 1955, Jacques Garvey was shocked by Cronon's interpretation of the material she had shared.⁴¹ Garvey, argued Cronon, sold "an unrealistic escapist program of racial chauvinism" to "the unsophisticated and unlettered masses." He was "a tragic, even a pathetic figure," who had big dreams but no "practical accomplishments." Garvey, argued Cronon, failed because he did not understand

Nationalism," *Journal of Women's History* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 73–97; Carol Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (London, 1994), 49–50; Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004). Keisha N. Blain's new book examines the dynamic efforts of black nationalist women to move to the center of black nationalist praxis. See Blain, *Set the World on Fire*.

³⁷"Interview with Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph by Mowbray White," August 20, 1920, and "Interview with W. E. B. Du Bois by Charles Mowbray White," August 23, 1920, in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. II: August 1919–August 1920, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley, CA, 1983), 609, 620.

³⁸Du Bois, who had once demanded that Garvey either be "locked up or sent home," later softened his views on his long-time rival. See Du Bois, "A Lunatic or a Traitor?" *The Crisis* 28, no. 1 (May 1924): 8–9; and Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940; New Brunswick, NJ, 2011), 277–8.

³⁹C. L. R. James, *A History of Negro Revolt* (London, 1938), 69–70. James, like Du Bois, came to recognize the scope of Garvey's achievement and, more importantly, the significance of his message in rousing mass action: C. L. R. James, "From Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro," in *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. rev. (New York, 1963), 391–418, here 396.

⁴⁰George Padmore, *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers* (London, 1931), 6.

⁴¹Amy Jacques Garvey to E. David Cronon, Mar. 28, 1955, folder 1, box 29, John Henrik Clarke Papers; Jacques Garvey to John Henrik Clarke, Apr. 10, 1969, folder 3, box 29, John Henrik Clarke Papers, Schomburg Center, NYPL.

the race problem in the United States. He “sought to raise high the walls of racial nationalism at a time when most thoughtful men were seeking to tear down these barriers.” By viewing Garvey’s movement as an exercise in escapism, Cronon rendered meaningless the mass following that Garvey had acquired. The masses, apparently, had their dreams of liberation figured out wrong.⁴² When Jacques Garvey responded with her own history of the movement, *Garvey and Garveyism*, she was unable to find a publisher, and was ultimately forced to self-publish the volume. In one of the only reviews commissioned for this now-classic book, Cronon dismissed the volume as a “book of reminiscence” and “not a work of scholarship.”⁴³

Cronon’s work, in many ways, flowed logically from the assessment of Garveyism presented by Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma*. Working from a memorandum composed by Ralph Bunche, Myrdal argued that Garveyism presented two lessons: one, that “the Negro masses can best be stirred into unity by an irrational and intensively racial, emotional appeal”; and two, that such movements had no chance of success. Deeming it “an evident matter of fact” that “the power situation is such in America that Negroes can never hope to break down the caste wall except with the assistance of white people,” Myrdal counseled African Americans to place their faith in the NAACP and the Urban League, and a “more effective version” of the southern Commission on Interracial Cooperation. The success of Garveyism at attracting a mass audience thus became not a building block for political engagement but a barrier to progress; not reflective of a vibrant tradition of black resistance but rather of fatalism and chauvinism that worked against the “interests of the Negro people in winning unabridged citizenship in American society.”⁴⁴

The political and intellectual climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s generated renewed interest in Garveyism and ensured that its study would become a flashpoint in the emerging African American historiography. This was a good moment to revisit old assumptions about that movement, which had mobilized masses of women and men against colonial rule and white supremacy across the Americas, Europe, and Africa, and which had left a legacy that deeply affected successful liberation struggles across Africa and its diaspora. As Tony Martin sardonically observed in his groundbreaking study, *Race First* (1976), “no one could have organized and built up the largest black movement in Afro-American history, in the face of continuous onslaughts from communists on the left, black reactionaries on all sides, and the most powerful governments in the world, and yet be a buffoon or a clown, or even an overwhelmingly impractical visionary.” After decades of accounts written by Garvey’s political and ideological opponents, *Race First* was a deeply researched, sympathetic brief for Garvey and his myriad accomplishments. It became a widely respected standard bearer for the nascent field of Garveyism studies.⁴⁵

Among non-Garvey scholars, however, *Race First* made little impact. Critics acknowledged the “extraordinary” nature of Martin’s research but determined the author’s partisanship not merely limiting but entirely disqualifying. Elliott Rudwick deemed the book “a disappointing backward step” because it “places Garvey on a pedestal,” suffers from “distortions and

⁴²E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA* (Madison, WI, 1955), 203, 220–2.

⁴³E. David Cronon, “Review of *Garvey and Garveyism*, by A. Jacques Garvey,” *Caribbean Studies* 5, no. 2 (July 1965): 74–5. As far as I am aware, there was only one other review of *Garvey and Garveyism* published: Gordon K. Lewis, “Review of *Garvey and Garveyism*, by A. Jacques Garvey,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (Sept. 1964): 50–2. Lewis, the great Caribbean scholar, is nearly as dismissive as Cronon, deeming the work “a labour of love and an act of dedication,” not “a critical book in the academic sense.” For an account of the marginalization of *Garvey and Garveyism* by scholars, see Ula Yvette Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002), 223–4. See also Karen S. Adler, “‘Always Leading Our Men in Service and Sacrifice’: Amy Jacques Garvey, Feminist Black Nationalist,” *Gender and Society* 6, no. 3 (Sept. 1992): 346–75.

⁴⁴Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944; New Brunswick, NJ, 1996), 746–9, 814, 819, 834–6, 852–7.

⁴⁵Martin, *Race First*, ix.

exaggerations,” and thus cannot be considered “a serious history of his movement.” Rayford Logan found Martin “imprisoned by his determination to prove” Garvey’s greatness. August Meier dismissed *Race First* as “filiopietistic” cheerleading “rather than a truly scholarly monograph.”⁴⁶

More generally speaking, the emerging field of Garveyism studies was impugned (and thereby set aside) for its partisanship. The accusation, of course, revealed a different type of partisanship—a reflection of the discipline’s redoubled commitment to Garveyism’s irrationality and impossibility. Surveying works on Garveyism in 1990, the historian Judith Stein argued that the work of pioneering Garvey scholars—Martin, Rupert Lewis, Emory Tolbert, and others—was a product of the “political sensibilities” emerging from “the resurgence of black nationalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s.” Echoing Meier, Stein argued that this “unanalytic” work could be ignored because it was guided by “passionate advocacy” and in search of “simplistic answers” rather than “evidence and careful argument.” Stein’s own volume, *The World of Marcus Garvey* (1986), sidestepped the work of Garveyism scholars and instead joined Myrdal’s thesis with the old Comintern line. Stein’s Garvey was an unscrupulous striver whose movement owed its success to “the fatalism of the powerless, the utopias of hustlers and charlatans, the promises of mass movements, and the ideologies generated by the new social transformations of World War I and the 1920s.” Garveyism did not demonstrate the racial consciousness of the black masses, but rather the bourgeois roots of black nationalism and the uniform impracticality of such appeals as mass politics. (“However much the mass of blacks were outraged by racial injustices and atrocities such as lynching, discrimination in the United States Army, race riots in other cities, and imperialism in Africa,” writes Stein in a remarkable passage, “these phenomena were not directly connected with their daily lives.”) Garveyism stood in her portrait as a reactionary break on productive politics in the United States and the Caribbean, and made “limited inroads” in Africa. It was “swept away” in the 1930s, thankfully, “by the historical tide of black class formation.”⁴⁷

The reception of Stein’s book, like the reception of Martin’s, was deeply revealing of the conceptual divide it illuminated between Black Studies and Garveyism scholars on the one hand, and those working within the currents of mainstream historiography and aligned with history departments on the other. Garveyism scholars Rupert Lewis and Tony Martin excoriated Stein’s work for its presentation of Garveyites as gullible dupes, for its revival of the Garvey-as-buffoon thesis, for its doctrinaire class analysis, and for its lack of appreciation of race as a dynamic category of identity and analysis. Her portrait of Garvey, observed Lewis, repeated “many of the stock racial and social prejudices against the movement” and it ignored “the basic fact that post-Emancipation Blacks in the Americas and colonized Africans had to forge instruments to re-control their lives.” By contrast, most reviewers hailed Stein’s work as the first serious scholarly monograph on the subject, a welcome departure from the work of Garvey scholars who “brought to their work a strong ideological charge.” “Future discussions and polemics about Garveyism’s role and character undoubtedly will have to contend with

⁴⁶Elliott Rudwick, “Marcus Garvey’s Revenge,” *Reviews in American History* 5, no. 1 (Mar. 1977): 92–9; Rayford Logan, review of *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* by Tony Martin, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 429 (Jan. 1977): 174–5; August Meier, review of *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* by Tony Martin, *American Historical Review* 82, no. 1 (Feb. 1977): 205–6.

⁴⁷Judith Stein, review of *Garvey: Africa, Europe, the Americas*, by Rupert Lewis and Maureen Warner-Lewis, *New West Indian Guide* 64, no. 1/2 (1990): 67–9; Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1986), 6, 53, 221, 275. For Stein’s other dismissals of black nationalism as “too abstract to form the basis for a popular movement” and unable to connect to the masses’ “concrete needs and hopes,” see Judith Stein, “The Ideology and Practice of Garveyism,” in *Garvey: His Work and Impact*, eds. Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (Mona, Jamaica, 1988), 199–213, here 202.

Stein's skillful analysis of its class basis and ideological orientation," argued Eric Arneson. "To a field of study colored by intense emotional commitments," explained John Higham, an author like Stein "who wields a scalpel instead of a paintbrush brings an invigorating intellectual challenge." *The World of Marcus Garvey*, viewed as deeply flawed by scholars of the movement, became the most-cited and most highly regarded work on the subject among non-specialists. It also became the last monograph on Garveyism published by an American academic press in the twentieth century.⁴⁸

By this time professional historians were dancing on the graves of the new black historians. In their history of the professionalization of black history, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick noted with satisfaction that the perspective of Vincent Harding and others had made little lasting impact on mainstream scholarship.⁴⁹ The "nationalist impulse" that had seemed so threatening in the 1960s had proven transient; black scholars were now replacing ideology with professionalism—trading the "nationalist position" for "the more complex realities" of historical analysis. In a passage that was quite a bit more revealing than Meier and Rudwick intended, the authors indicated that the "socialization experienced by the younger black publishing scholars in predominantly white history departments" had encouraged them to adopt "a more universalist outlook." The "very legitimization and institutionalization of black history encouraged a shift away from radical objectives to non-ideological and professional ones." Based on their interviews with black historians, Meier and Rudwick believed they had discovered the strategy. "Today a black nationalist position is no longer considered 'professional,'" they observed. "That is, it neither accords with the self-image of scholarly competency that all historians desire to have nor helps one get ahead in the predominantly white professional world that is by now largely committed to affirmative action but is also desirous of hiring blacks with scholarly credentials." By the 1980s—that "golden age" of African American history—black nationalist perspectives had been excised from history departments, sustained in black studies departments which were themselves disdained for the association, and largely missing from the historiography of the African American experience.⁵⁰ When the rise of Afrocentrism in the 1990s rehashed many aspects of these struggles, and Afrocentrists once again challenged the universalistic pretensions of Western intellectualism, opponents summarily dismissing them as a descending into fantasy, mythmaking, and anti-intellectualism. Once again, rather than being engaged in debate, the intellectual bearers of the black nationalist tradition were denied legitimacy, placed beyond the boundaries of reason, and rendered "unthinkable."⁵¹

⁴⁸Rupert Lewis, review of *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*, by Judith Stein, *Social and Economic Studies* 39, no. 3 (Sept. 1990): 195–9; Tony Martin, review of *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*, by Judith Stein, *Journal of American History* 74, no. 3 (1987): 1082–3; Nathan Irvin Huggins, review of *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*, by Judith Stein, *American Historical Review* 94, no. 2 (1989): 536; Eric Arneson, review of *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*, by Judith Stein, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 31 (Spring 1987): 104–7; John Higham, "The National Question in Black History," review of *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*, by Judith Stein, *Reviews in American History* 15, no. 2 (June 1987): 285–9.

⁴⁹See, for example, Meier's and Rudwick's dismissal of Harding's history of American slavery, *There Is a River* (1981), as describing nothing but "a long memory of ineradicable and only modestly modifiable white racism, and an equally constant deep river of black protest, glorious in itself, but largely futile": Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 228–9. See also August Meier, "Whither the Black Perspective in Afro-American Historiography," *Journal of American History* 70, no. 1 (June 1983): 101–5; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 490; and Nell Irvin Painter's rebuttal to the negative reception of the book in "Who Decides What Is History?" *Nation*, Mar. 6, 1982, 276–8.

⁵⁰Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, 299.

⁵¹My thinking on Afrocentrism has been greatly clarified and aided by my discussions with Sarah Balakrishnan. See Balakrishnan, "Afrocentrism Revisited: On Black Nationalism and the Politics of African History," unpublished manuscript. For "unthinkable" history, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 1995), 70–107.

The foreclosure of perspectives on black nationalism has obvious consequences for how historians think and write about the black freedom struggle today. Despite the importance of black nationalist activism and ideology across the centuries of slavery and freedom, and despite its continuing importance in shaping what political scientist Michael Dawson calls the “black counterpublic,” historical expressions and manifestations of black nationalism remain, in Dawson’s words, “systematically underrepresented.”⁵²

In recent years, proponents of the “long civil rights movement” thesis have sought to deepen our understanding of Black Power by extending its chronology, by broadening its application beyond the “riots and rebels” declension narrative, and by blurring the boundaries and stressing the overlap between civil rights and Black Power activists and activism.⁵³ This literature has revealed much about the diversity of Black Power initiatives, particularly at the local level, and it has given voice to previously obscure activists, many of them women. But “long movement” historians have also made the mistake, as Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang have argued, of reducing Black Power to a subset of a broader and eclectic national struggle, of defining it as a collection of tactics rather than the product of its own intellectual tradition.⁵⁴ Most of all, long movement historians have fashioned the outlines of the struggle in a way that obscures black nationalist varieties of Black Power, those which encouraged civil rights activists not merely to shift strategies but to embrace a different conception of the problem: to reject the universalizing premises of integration in both their reformist and their radical varieties. In the hands of some long movement proponents, in other words, Black Power is legitimized by exorcising its black nationalist manifestations. If long movement historians have productively encouraged us to think of Black Power as something far broader and deeper than “apocalyptic visions of black revolution,” they have also asked us to view it as something far less than some of the movement’s most audacious members had hoped.⁵⁵

This impulse is also evident in Peniel Joseph’s groundbreaking work in the young subfield of Black Power studies. As with long movement histories, the impact of Black Power studies has been monumentally positive, illuminating the breadth, depth, and multiplicity of the Black Power movement. It has replaced the association of Black Power with declension and tragedy with richness and ingenuity. It has highlighted voices and agents working in the shadows of the movement’s charismatic (and mostly male) figureheads. It has moved Black Power from the dark recesses of the nation’s past to the center of its political drama, where it properly belongs.⁵⁶ Once again, however, the effect of offering what Joseph calls a “more holistic account

⁵²Dawson, *Black Visions*, 30, 133. See also Akinyele Umoja, “Searching for Place: Nationalism, Separatism, and Pan-Africanism,” in *A Companion to African American History*, ed. Alton Hornsby, Jr. (Malden, MA, 2005), 529–44, here 530; and Rod Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (New York, 1999), 2.

⁵³Jeanne Theoharis, “Black Freedom Studies: Re-imagining and Redefining the Fundamentals,” *History Compass* 4, no. 2 (Mar. 2006): 348–67, here 353. The “long civil rights movement” was coined by Nikhil Pal Singh in *Black Is a Country*, 6, and popularized by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall in her influential essay, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (Mar. 2005): 1233–63. For other examples of the conceptual blurring of civil rights and Black Power, see Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999); Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York, 2008); Dayo F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Want to Start a Revolution? Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle* (New York, 2009), 2–17.

⁵⁴Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, “The ‘Long Movement’ as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies,” *Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 265–88.

⁵⁵Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 298–9.

⁵⁶Peniel E. Joseph, “The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field,” *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (Dec. 2009): 751–76; Peniel E. Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York, 2006); Peniel E. Joseph, *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama* (New York, 2010); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting ‘Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York, 2006); Peniel E. Joseph, ed., *Neighborhood Rebels: Black Power at the Local Level*

of the period,” of seeing Black Power manifest in “virtually every facet of African American political life in the United States and beyond,” has too often been to minimize the association of the movement with its black nationalist formulations. The legacy of the movement is rooted, in Joseph’s telling, not in its philosophical rejection of the American national project but the part it played in “a larger struggle for radical democracy in postwar America.” In this rendering, Black Power is granted significance and respectability not because it reveals, once again, the vitality and endurance of the much-maligned “racial separatism,” but precisely because Black Power is found to be hardly about racial separatism at all. Instead Black Power becomes a radical variety of the long civil rights movement, a return to the more uncompromising and militant politics of the 1930s and 1940s, before the chilling effects of the Cold War set in. It becomes not a brake on the integrationist project but a more effective iteration of it.⁵⁷

Given the occlusion or minimization of black nationalist perspectives in long civil rights and Black Power movement narratives, it is unsurprising that the chronologies of both begin in the 1930s and 1940s. For long civil rights movement scholars in particular, this periodization lends weight to the animating claim, as Jacqueline Dowd Hall puts it, that the “link between race and class lay at the heart of the movement’s political imagination.” This framing broadens the old Montgomery-to-Memphis narrative by including the voices of unions, laborers, and leftist coalitions at the peak of their influence in the black freedom struggle. It also affixes the story of the black freedom struggle, as Hall eagerly notes, to the story of “the rise and fall of the New Deal Order”—in other words, to the project of state building. By ignoring the crucial years of black nationalist ascendancy that preceded the Great Depression, and that witnessed the rise of the UNIA, the largest mass-based organization of African Americans in the post-emancipation era, nationalism is reduced to an “impulse” (in Thomas Sugrue’s words) to be marshaled and tamed by the more practical politics of “civil rights unionism.” The central ideological and political hinge in the long movement narrative is not rooted in the tension between integrationist and nationalist worldviews that has long characterized black politics, but rather in the tension between interracial coalitions of liberals and radicals. In both cases, interracial coalition building is presented as a prerequisite for the mobilization of transformative politics. If the long movement narrative tells an important story about the black freedom struggle, it imagines liberation in a manner that codifies the black nationalist perspective as ancillary and eventually obsolete.⁵⁸

Black nationalism in general, and Garveyism in particular, have also been given short shrift in studies associated with the transnational turn. This literature has done wonderful work braiding African American history into broader global currents, adding geographical breadth to familiar stories, uncovering new ones, and inviting productive rethinking of the field as a whole.⁵⁹ In particular, the transnational turn has enriched our understanding of the

(New York, 2010). See also Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968–1980* (Durham, NC, 2005); Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women’s Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York, 2004); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ, 2005); Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 2005); and Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*.

⁵⁷Joseph, “The Black Power Movement,” 753, 766, 775.

⁵⁸Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement,” 1235, 1245; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 15; Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth Century South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003). The literature on the labor-civil rights nexus is deep and rich. Other recent works that adopt this chronology include Lindsey R. Swindall, *The Path to the Greater, Freer, Truer World: Southern Civil Rights and Anticolonialism, 1937–1955* (Gainesville, FL, 2014); Erik S. Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow: The National Negro Congress and the Rise of Militant Civil Rights* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012); Gore, Theoharis, and Woodard, eds., *Want to Start a Revolution?*; Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York, 2005).

⁵⁹See Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956–1974* (Cambridge, UK, 2013); Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in 20th-Century Black*

connections that emerged from the encounter between international Communism and the African diaspora.⁶⁰ It has also traced the radical formulations of pan-Africanism and black feminism that developed inside the cauldron of the global Left.⁶¹ And yet Brenda Gayle Plummer's now twenty-year-old observation—that “scholarly literature often fails to link black nationalism to vital world-historical currents”—remains.⁶² The recent literature on pan-Africanism renders Garveyism as antecedent to a story whose heart lies in 1930s London and Paris—and too often frames the movement as a phase to overcome rather than a building block of pan-African praxis. James Meriwether thus explains his decision to begin his study of black American engagements with Africa in 1935 by arguing that Garveyism was a backward-looking movement that trafficked in the “symbolism” of Africa’s “glorious past” rather than “the reality of the colonized present.” Cynthia Young’s study of the American “Third World Left” identifies the roots of the Bandung moment broadly in the efforts of “countless workers, intellectuals, and organizers who worked within Communist Party chapters, New Deal-era unions, civil rights groups, and grassroots organizations,” but not in the global mass movement organized by the followers of Marcus Garvey.⁶³ In many of the studies inspired by the transnational turn, Garveyism is only briefly present, disembodied—a phantom that stalks the past.

Making Black Nationalism Thinkable

In *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967), Harold Cruse famously argued that “American Negro history is basically a history of the conflict between integrationist and nationalist forces in politics, economics, and culture, no matter which leaders are involved and what slogans are used.” Cruse warned that our understanding of this history is compromised because of “a lack of recognition that the conflict even exists.”⁶⁴ Since then, scholars have noted the limitations of Cruse’s dialectic, but have failed to grapple with its enduring relevance; they have participated in the very processes of historical silencing that Cruse sought to identify. If black intellectual

America, Japan, and Okinawa (New York, 2013); Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge, MA, 2012); Theresa Runstedtler, *Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner: Boxing in the Shadow of the Global Color Line* (Berkeley, CA, 2012); Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006); and Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge, UK, 2003).

⁶⁰Susan D. Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich: Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain* (Princeton, NJ, 2009); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York, 2008); Cynthia A. Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham, NC, 2006); Kate A. Baldwin, *Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain: Reading Encounters between Black and Red, 1922–1963* (Durham, NC, 2002); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY, 1997).

⁶¹Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War, and the End of Empire* (London, 2015); Barbara Ransby, *Eslanda: The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson* (New Haven, CT, 2013); Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa, and the Diaspora, 1919–1939* (Trenton, NJ, 2013); Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York, 2011); Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham, NC, 2011); Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011); Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham, NC, 2007).

⁶²Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996), 12.

⁶³James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002), 22; Young, *Soul Power*, 2.

⁶⁴Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership* (1967; New York, 2005), 564; Harold Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York, 1968), 81.

history is fluid and porous, and if black identity is multiple and overlapping, it continues to be shaped in powerful ways by a series of questions that divide integrationists and nationalists: do you believe that white people are capable of making the sacrifices necessary to achieve racial equality? Do you believe that convincing white people in this direction is the best hope for racial equality or a fool's errand? Do you believe that a world system constructed by slavery, racism, and capitalism is adaptable enough to fulfill its universalist rhetoric? Or must a new center—an Afro-center—be devised as a countervailing force?⁶⁵ Is there a path to decolonization that builds upon the last five hundred years of global history, or must that foundation be radically overthrown? Would such a revolution be possible?

Garveyism emerged as a mass movement in the years following World War I by giving powerful voice to the black nationalist side of this debate. During the war, leaders of the black intelligentsia, most famously W. E. B. Du Bois, had enjoined African Americans to “close ranks” and give support to the war effort—part of a strategic calculation that patriotism in this moment of crisis was at worst pragmatic, and at best liable to erode white resistance to democratic reforms.⁶⁶ The racist reaction and violence that met black citizens and soldiers both at home and abroad gave legitimacy to the firebrands of the New Negro movement, who declared that the time for appealing to whites for fair consideration was over.⁶⁷ Marcus Garvey began his rise to the leadership of the New Negro movement by delivering a blistering speech condemning the United States following the massacre at East St. Louis.⁶⁸ Garvey's articulation of “African for the Africans”—his argument that black women and men would never achieve freedom working *within* the labyrinth of the Eurocentric world-system, but must establish a competing center of power and authority as a *precondition* to true relations of equality—drew on a long and rich history that Cedric Robinson has called the Black Radical Tradition and that was rooted in a rejection of the West. This tradition looked backward: to marronage and slave rebellion, to African resistance to colonial encroachment. And it looked forward: to *négritude* and Rastafarianism, to the Afrocentrism of Suzanne and Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Micere Githae Mugo, and Maulana Karenga.⁶⁹

Bringing Garveyism to the center of modern American history thus forces an acknowledgment of the *legitimacy* of black nationalism. It re-emphasizes what the transnational turn has demonstrated, and what scholars working in the diasporic tradition of Du Bois and C. L. R. James have long understood: that the African American struggle has always been bound to the anti-racist and anti-imperialist struggles of Africa, its diaspora, and the non-white world. Such an acknowledgment might push us to start our story not in the 1930s but in 1917, the inaugural year of what James understood as “a period of world-wide revolutionary change.”⁷⁰ This was the year of Garvey's emergence, of the Russian Revolution, of the United States' decisive entry into World War I. The migrations, congresses, and horrors of the wartime era sparked a new phase of mass organization and anti-colonial resistance and changed the calculus of empire building, as European states moved to shore up their crumbling foundations. The global networks established by the Comintern and by black internationalists—of which Garveyites were among the most prominent—converged in the 1930s to form a

⁶⁵Balakrishnan, “Afrocentrism Revisited.”

⁶⁶W. E. B. Du Bois, “Close Ranks,” *The Crisis* 16, no. 3 (July 1918): 111.

⁶⁷Hubert H. Harrison, “Declaration of Principles, Liberty League,” “The New Policies for the New Negro,” and “Our Professional Friends,” in *A Hubert Harrison Reader*, ed. Jeffrey B. Perry (Middletown, CT, 2001), 90–2, 139–40, 144–7.

⁶⁸“Printed Address by Marcus Garvey on East St. Louis Riots,” July 8, 1917, in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. I: 1826–August 1919, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley, CA, 1983), 212–18.

⁶⁹Robinson, *Black Marxism*.

⁷⁰C. L. R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (London, 1977), 66. This chronology is also suggested by Michael O. West, “Like a River: The Million Man March and the Black Nationalist Tradition in the United States,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no. 1 (Mar. 1999): 81–100.

refashioned revolutionary pan-Africanism, catalyzed by the Italo-Ethiopian War and triumphant at the historic Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945. The aspirations of this revolutionary age were partially met in the decolonization of Africa and the Caribbean and in the overthrow of Jim Crow in the United States. Global Black Power, as Michael O. West puts it, “came to demand their completion.”⁷¹ Instead, the radical aspirations of the 1960s and early 1970s met with defeat in the face of state repression and a newly constituted neo-colonial order. Revolutionary enthusiasm persisted—in southern Africa, Guyana, Grenada—but with rapidly narrowing prospects. The fall of Grenada’s New Jewel Movement in 1983, and the U.S. invasion that followed, decisively brought this period of global reorganization to a close.

Work on Garveyism has demonstrated the ways that this story can be narrated—and perhaps should be narrated—at the local level. The spread of Garveyism was made possible not merely by the propagandistic brilliance of Marcus Garvey but more crucially by the space the movement opened for the articulation and negotiation of local knowledge and strategies of defiance. The growing number of local studies on Garveyism have demonstrated the movement’s flexibility on the ground, and its appeal across the boundaries of nation, colony, language group, class, and gender.⁷² This is not, as Garvey argued, because of the fundamental unity of the race, but because of the manner in which diaspora acquires political valence in practice. As diaspora theorists like Jacqueline Nassy Brown, Keshia Fikes, and Tina Campt have argued, diasporic ideas and identities gathered meaning through their local articulations, structured by their contact with dense relations of privilege, discourse, and exchange, molded by the unfolding dynamics of knowledge and power.⁷³ Garveyism in this reading was a vessel through which local actors could see their struggle in a global context and envision new opportunities for victory. Like other critical interventions, big and small—imperial wars, millennial revivals, slave rebellions, anti-colonial resistance, labor organizing, subversive rumor—it shifted the axis of power relations in the minds of its adherents. The diversity of Garveyism’s manifestations was not a mark of its ideological weakness, but rather a reflection of where its ideological center resided: in the places where Garveyism traveled and took root. As Michael O. West and William Martin have argued, Garveyism was a “pan-African potter’s clay” that “could be molded any which way,” a crucial articulation of a much longer tradition that drew its strength and vitality from the communities it claimed.⁷⁴

From this perspective, it is not surprising that some of the best work on Garveyism has focused on the gender dynamics within the movement. Viewed from a top-down perspective,

⁷¹Michael O. West, “Garveyism Root and Branch: From the Age of Revolution to the Onset of Black Power,” in *Global Garveyism*, forthcoming.

⁷²There are now too many local studies to list. See, for example, Erik S. McDuffie, “Chicago, Garveyism, and the History of the Diasporic Midwest,” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 8, no. 2 (2015): 1–17; Frances Peace Sullivan, “‘Forging Ahead’ in Banes, Cuba: Garveyism in a United Fruit Company Town,” *New West Indian Guide* 88, nos. 3/4 (2014): 231–61; Asia Leeds, “Toward the ‘Higher Type of Womanhood’: The Gendered Contours of Garveyism and the Making of Redemptive Geographies in Costa Rica, 1922–1941,” *Palimpsest: A Journal of Women, Gender, and the Black International* 2, no. 1 (2013): 1–27; Frank Andre Guriy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010), ch. 2; Jarod Roll, “Garveyism and the Eschatology of African Redemption in the Rural South, 1920–1936,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 27–56; Michael O. West, “The Seeds Are Sown: The Impact of Garveyism in Zimbabwe in the Interwar Years,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, nos. 2/3 (2002): 335–62.

⁷³Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton, NJ, 2005); Keshia Fikes, “Diasporic Governmentality: On the Gendered Limits of Migrant Wage-Labour in Portugal,” *Feminist Review* 90 (2008): 48–67; Tina Campt, “The Crowded Space of Diaspora: Intercultural Address and the Tensions of Diasporic Relation,” *Radical History Review* 83 (Spring 2002): 94–113.

⁷⁴Michael O. West and William G. Martin, “Contours of the Black International: From Toussaint to Tupac,” in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*, eds. Michael O. West, William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), 1–44, here 10–11.

Garvey's movement bears the hallmarks of a chauvinistic, misogynistic nationalism, dominated by male voices, male leadership, and male perspectives, organized into gender-segregated roles that, as Barbara Bair writes, were "not separate and equal but separate and hierarchical."⁷⁵ And yet scholars have observed something far more interesting in the places where Garvey's organization grew—spaces where such hierarchies were challenged, debated, and sometimes subverted. Shifting the terrain of intellectual production in the "black international" from the formulations of leaders to the contested terrain in which ideas took root reveals a field in which women resided at the center.⁷⁶ The study of Garveyism thus offers useful lessons for scholars who have begun the necessary work of gendering the political production of the African diaspora.⁷⁷

Amid the insurgency of the new black historians in 1969, Sterling Stuckey observed that a "careful study of the history of Pan-Africanism has yet to be written." Stuckey called for work that rooted the movement in "nineteenth-century Pan-Negroism," and which routed the idea not only through political formulations but also through cultural theories like *négritude* and the African personality.⁷⁸ Stuckey's formulation requires an appreciation of pan-Africanism as something more and much deeper than an Marxist-derived strategy of black liberation mobilized to defeat the challenge of twentieth-century colonialism and racism. It roots the movement instead in the emergence of Black Radical traditions mobilized in response to the inauguration of the modern world system—to the slave trade, colonization, capitalism, and white supremacy. In this story, as Michael O. West has argued, Garveyism was not a sidebar but a crucial *pivot*. It announced the birth of a new age of black internationalism even as it served as an apotheosis of the old.⁷⁹ The transnational turn has finally brought Garveyism into focus in the American historical profession, providing an opportunity for scholars to mend a serious breach. By rethinking our narratives to more adequately respond to the interventions of black nationalism—Garveyism key among them—we can fulfill the aspiration of the new black history to write the history of African Americans fully centered in the black experience.

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⁷⁵Barbara Bair, "True Women, Real Men: Gender, Ideology and Social Roles in the Garvey Movement," in *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History*, eds. Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby (Ithaca, NY, 1992), 154–66, here 155. See also Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*.

⁷⁶See, for example, Nicole Bourbonnais, "Our Joan of Arc: Women, Gender, and Authority in the Harmony Division of the UNIA," in *Global Garveyism*, forthcoming; Keisha N. Blain, "'We Want to Set the World on Fire': Black Nationalist Women and Diasporic Politics in the *New Negro World*, 1940–1944," *Journal of Social History* 49, no. 1 (Sept. 2015): 194–212; Ula Y. Taylor, "'Negro Women Are Great Thinkers as Well as Doers': Amy Jacques-Garvey and Community Feminism in the United States, 1924–1927," *Journal of Women's History* 12, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 104–26; Barbara Bair, "'Ethiopia Shall Stretch Forth Her Hands Unto God': Laura Kofey and the Gendered Vision of Redemption in the Garvey Movement," in *A Mighty Baptism: Race, Gender, and the Creation of American Protestantism*, eds. Susan Juster and Lisa MacFarlane (Ithaca, NY, 1996), 38–61.

⁷⁷Blain, *Set the World on Fire*; Farmer, *Remaking Black Power*; Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, eds., *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2015); Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads*; McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom*; Gore, Theoharis, and Woodard, eds., *Want to Start a Revolution?*

⁷⁸Sterling Stuckey, "Contours of Black Studies: The Dimension of African and Afro-American Relationships," *Massachusetts Review* 10, no. 4 (Autumn 1969): 747–56, here 752.

⁷⁹West, "Garveyism Root and Branch."