INTRODUCTION


6. See, for example, Theoharis and Woodard, eds., Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980 (New York: Palgrave, 2003), which has essays by Self (on Oakland), Bates (on Detroit), Theoharis (on Boston), and Woodard (on Newark). See also Matthew Countryman’s Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); and Biondi’s excellent To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). Although the story I want to tell begins well before World War II and the immediate postwar period, these studies have greatly enriched my own thinking and approach in the years since I finished my dissertation in 1995.


16. Dade, Oral History Interview with Jim Keeney and Roberta McBride, September 17, 1969, Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs [cited hereafter as ALHUA], Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. 4. As I argue in chapter 2, the relationship between Black ministers and the Ford Motor Company was always complex.


25. Williams, “Hell-Brewers of Detroit,” The Protestant, April–May 1943. On Williams’s background and career, see Anthony Dunbar, Against the Grain: Southern Radicals and Prophets, 1929–1959 (Charleston: University Press of Virginia, 1981); and Cedric Belfrage, A Faith to Free the People (New York: Dryden Press, 1944), which focuses more on Williams’s political theology. See also Belfrage’s earlier biography of Williams, South of God (New York: Modern Age Books, 1941).


27. Stanley and Margaret Nowak to Dr. Leslie Bechtel, December 5, 1944, Nowak Collection, Box 4, ALHUA.

28. Hill to Reverend Burnett Magruder, February 4, 1943, Williams Collection, Box 18, ALHUA.


30. A good overview of Williams’s theology can be found in Bill Troy, with Claude Williams, “People’s Institute of Applied Religion,” copy in Williams Collection, Box 18, ALHUA. See also, Belfrage, A Faith to Free the People, esp. 221–81.


33. Detroit Commission on Community Relations, “Inter-office Correspondence, Re: UHURU,” September 15, 1963, DCCR Papers, III, Box 21, ALHUA.


40. Ibid., 142.


45. Young, *Hard Stuff*, 44.

46. Detroit NNC File, Labadie Collection, University of Michigan; and NNC
Records, Microfilm, Reel 6. On the CRF, see “Constitution of the Conference for the Protection of Civil Rights (1935),” Civil Rights Congress [CRC] Papers, Box 1, ALHUA; and John Bollens, “Why a Civil Rights Federation?” Civil Rights Federation News, November 8, 1938, copy in CRC Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.


48. Daily Worker, September 19, 1954. Thanks to Alan Wald for bringing this cartoon to my attention.


50. Lichtenstein and Korstad, “Opportunities Found and Lost,” 811. A similar argument is put forth in Johnson’s Maurice Sugar, 302: “In looking at the Left and labor before the victory of Reuther and his conception of trade unionism we are dealing with a sharply defined era in U.S. labor history, one that began with the Depression and ended with the Cold War.”


52. The commentator is Detroit Free Press reporter William Serrin, quoted in Georgakas and Surkin, Detroit: I Do Mind Dying, 33. The Georgakas quote is at p. 5. See also Thompson, Whose Detroit?


54. Cleage quoted in Ward, Prophet of a Black Nation, 42.


57. Brooks Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent, 49.
CHAPTER ONE

2. Ibid., 130–31.
3. Ibid., 178.
4. Ibid., 180.
8. Hill’s birth certificate, Hill Papers, Box 1, Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan (cited hereafter as MHC).
10. Webster to Forrester, June 9, 1916, DUL Papers, Box 1, MHC.
18. “A Brief History of St. Matthew’s Church,” n.d., St. Matthew’s/St. Joseph’s Collection, Box 1, MHC.
20. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto*, 140–41; Bethel AME Papers, Box 1, MHC.
23. A copy of Hill’s transcript was supplied courtesy of the Records Department at Cleary; his diploma is included in the Hill Papers, Box 1, MHC.


34. Certificates from the teacher training course (1919) and the National War Work Council (1919) in the Hill Papers, Box 1, MHC; on the Sunday school movement in America, see Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 23–25.


37. Locke, “The New Negro,” in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Atheneum, [1925] 1992), 3. Whether Locke’s New Negro was the same as Randolph’s is the source of some debate. Barbara Foley argues that by the time Locke’s 1925 volume was published the movement had been taken over and essentially deradicalized and that the postwar Negro Movement had been co-opted and replaced with the Harlem Renaissance. See Foley, *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).


43. On Bradby’s background see “Subject of a Sketch,” n.d., Second Baptist Papers, Reel 3. “Pastor’s Papers,” MHC; and Second Baptist Church of Detroit Eyewitness History (Detroit, 1976), copy in author’s possession.

44. Bermecia (Hill) McCoy Interview; the quotation is from “Mrs. Georgia Hill: Mother of the Week,” Michigan Chronicle, n.d., Hill Papers, Box 2, MHC.

45. A Brief History of Hartford Avenue Baptist Church (Detroit, 1945), Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library (cited hereafter as BHC).

46. Hill quoted in 1917–1962: 45th Anniversary of Hartford Avenue Baptist Church (1962 program), Hill Papers, Box 1, MHC.

47. Georgia Hill’s obituary, Detroit Free Press, September 24, 1983; Georgia Hill Red Squad File, copy in author’s possession; “Mrs. Georgia Hill: Mother of the Week,” Michigan Chronicle, n.d., Hill Papers, Box 2, MHC.


49. Charles A. Hill Jr., interview with author.


51. Georgia Hill, Oral History with Charles A. Hill, ALHUA, 23.

52. The close observer here is Coleman A. Young, who would prove to be very successful in courting the political loyalties of Black ministers during his successive campaigns for mayor of Detroit. See Young, Hard Stuff, 38.


54. Michigan branch report, Crisis, 8 (July 1914); Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 98–99.


57. This information is scattered throughout the Detroit Urban League Papers, MHC, Boxes 1 and 11; see also Martin, Detroit and the Great Migration, 55–56.

58. J. H. Porter to Detroit Board of Commerce, March 11, 1918, DUL Papers, Box 1, MHC.

59. Good Citizenship League pamphlet, “To Colored Men and Women Voters of Michigan” (1922), DUL Papers, Box 1, MHC; “Annual Report of the Good Citizen-
ship League” (1921), also in Box 1. On the GCL in general, see Levine, *Internal Combustion*, 122–24.


61. Garvey quoted in ibid., 102.


64. The exact numbers are difficult to ascertain. For instance, in a 1924 address at a UNIA convention in New York, J. A. Craigen and F. E. Johnson claimed a membership “7,000 strong,” which made the Detroit division “a power in Detroit” that local politicians “were now courting.” See “Convention Report [New York, 5 August 1924],” in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 5:661–62.


67. Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1976), 75–77, includes a discussion of Muhammad’s relationship with the UNIA, as well as the possible interrelationships between the UNIA and Islamist groups such as the Moorish-American Science Temples, which also had a presence in Detroit.


75. On the BTWTA and the Housewives League, see Walcott, *Remaking*
Respectability, 176–83; Smith, Dancing in the Streets, 60–62, 67–68; and Thomas, Life for Us, 214–21.

76. Constitution and By-Laws of Housewives League of Detroit and Declaration of Principles of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Booker T. Washington Trade Association 1937, both in Housewives League of Detroit Papers, Box 1, BHC.


78. Walcott, Remaking Respectability, 295, n. 15.


80. Ibid., 20.


82. Grigsby, An X-Ray Picture of Detroit (Detroit: Snow Grigsby, 1933), copy in MHC; see also “Grigsby Goes Gunning,” Detroit Tribune, December 19, 1933.

83. Thomas, Life for Us, 241–43; Detroit Tribune, May 27, 1939, June 10, 1939, September 23, 1939, and October 14, 1939.

84. Roger Keeran, The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Union (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), chaps. 5 and 6; Auto Workers News, July, September, and October 1927, copies in ALHUA.


88. Prickett, “Communists and the Automobile Industry,” 193–94. Among the evidence cited are one, reports from the Worker that the largest membership was in Detroit, two, a report to the party’s Political Committee by Earl Browder claiming that the “struggle against eviction” was more advanced in Detroit than elsewhere, and three, the sheer size of hunger marches in the city in the early 1930s.

89. Oral History Interview with Joseph Billups (and Rose Billups) by Herbert Hill, Shelton Tappes, and Roberta McBride, October 27, 1967, Detroit, ALHUA, 6. Used by permission of Herbert Hill.


91. Billups (and Rose Billups) Interview, ALHUA, 8. Billups himself was a frequent speaker at these outdoor forums.


94. Baldwin quoted in Sugar, The Ford Hunger March, 73; Detroit ACLU Collection, Box 1, ALHUA.


96. Moore quoted in Babson et al., Working Detroit, 60.

97. Biography, Chris and Mart Alston Collection, ALHUA.

98. Billups, Oral History, ALHUA, 10; Baskin, “The Ford Hunger March,” 357; “Ford Victim to Be Buried Today,” Daily Worker, August 13, 1932. Mayor Frank Murphy received dozens of telegrams from residents over the Williams affair (Mayor’s Office Papers, 1932, Box 4, BHC).


100. Wilson Record, Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 76–77. For a broader perspective on the CP’s race work, see also Naison, Communists in Harlem during the Depression; and Kelley, Hammer and Hoe.


105. The campaign literature is in the Sugar Collection, Box 11, ALHUA. In 1961 Hill was the designated honoree at the Buck Dinner. The poster, with the signatures and best wishes of those in attendance, became a highly prized possession. The Hill family keeps it prominently displayed at its summer home in Harbor Beach. See “The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Buck Dinner” (1979), brochure in Supplement, Sugar Collection, AHLUA.

106. Johnson, Maurice Sugar, 152–53.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 10. The original source for this story about the lunch meeting is an unpublished term paper (for a class at the University of Michigan) by David Lewis, “History of Negro Employment in Detroit Area Plants of Ford Motor Company, 1914–1941,” 17–18, which is, in turn, based on interviews and materials subsequently removed from the Ford archives.


4. Bradby to Mr. Weston, August 10, 1926, Second Baptist Papers, Reel 3, “Pastor’s Papers,” MHC.

5. Bradby to Whom It May Concern, April 21, 1931: “This is to certify that the bearer, Mrs. Myrtle Jackson, is a member of the Second Baptist Church of which I am the minister, and has been for a great number of years. It is our understanding that she is now seeking a position with the Welfare Department of the City of Detroit, and we are very happy to add our word of recommendation to her character and worthiness”; Bradby to Miss Velma McDonald, September 25, 1926. Both letters are in Second Baptist Papers, Reel 3, “Pastor’s Papers,” MHC.


7. Claude and Martha Fisher to Daniel, October 12, 1929, St. Matthew’s/St. Joseph’s Papers, Box 1, MHC; see also Vestry Minutes, December 5, 1927, Box 1.


14. On the priestly and the prophetic dimensions of African American Christianity, see Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 10–16. On a more cautionary note Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham observes: “Arguments over the accommodationist versus liberating thrust of the Black church misses the range as well as the fluid interaction of political and ideological meanings represented within the church’s domain” (*Righteous Discontent*, 18).


16. Ibid., 15.


19. White’s obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, February 11, 1958; *Detroit Tribune*, November 4, 1940; NAACP Files, Gloster Current Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.


23. The Proletarian Party was one of the most militantly Marxist groups associated with the Socialist Party in Michigan. As a supporter of the Bolshevik revolution, it was among the first of many left-wing groups expelled (in May 1919) from the SP. While it took part in the founding of the Communist Party, disagreements soon caused a breach and the Proletarian Party remained independent, forming the Proletarian University in Detroit and specializing in educational communism. Its members were active in the 1933 Briggs Auto Body strike and in the sit-downs in Flint and elsewhere. Several, such as Emil Mazey and Frank Marquart, went on to become top officials in the UAW. See Allen Ruff, “A Path Not Taken: The Proletarian Party and the Early History of Communism in the United States,” in Culture, Gender, Race, and U.S. Labor History, ed. Ronald C. Kent, Sara Markham, David Roediger, and Herbert Shapiro (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993); as well as the entry in Buhle, Buhle, and Georgakas, Encyclopedia of the American Left, 641–42.


27. Ibid., 63.


38. Johnson, *Maurice Sugar*, 152. Sugar’s campaign notebooks detail the range of his support within the city’s Left. They can be found in the Sugar Collection, Box 10, ALHUA. See also “Maurice Sugar, Labor Candidate vs. W. P. Lovett’s City League,” *Detroit Labor News*, March 1, 1935.


41. The pamphlet is in the Sugar Papers, Box 2, ALHUA; see also Johnson, *Maurice Sugar*, 151–52.


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45. “Constitution of the Conference for the Protection of Civil Rights” (1935), CRC Collection, Box 1, “CFPRC Files,” ALHUA.


49. “Speakers Outline, Civil Rights Federation Organizational Approach,” [n.d.] CRC Collection, Box 1, ALHUA.

50. Ibid.


52. CRC Collection, Box 1; Ernest Goodman Collection, Box 3; National Lawyers Guild Collection, Box 1, all in ALHUA.


54. McPhaul, Oral History Interview with Norman McRae, April 5, 1970, ALHUA, 9; interview with author, April 9, 1994, Detroit.


59. Randolph to White, April 8, 1936, and White to Davis, March 3, 1939, both in NAACP Collection, Library of Congress, I, C, Box 383, “NNC Folder.”


61. NNC File, Labadie Collection, University of Michigan. The “Detroit Files” of the FBI file on the NNC lists Stanley Nowak; Reverends Hill, White, and John Miles; and unionists Chris Alston, Hodges Mason, John Conyers, Luke Fennel, and Senator Diggs as among those who sponsored the Michigan section of the NNC. C. LeBron
Simmons also attended the founding convention and served for a time as president of the Detroit chapter (Simmons, Oral History Interview with Norman McRae, ca. 1969, ALHUA, 1, 5–6).

62. See also Link, Labor-Religion Prophet; Ralph Lord Roy, Communism and the Churches (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), chap. 5; and Dunbar, Against the Grain, 39–40.

63. Roy, in Communism and the Churches, 159–60, also reports that Knox became disillusioned with the various “Communist fronts” that he had worked with and that he remained a bitter opponent of the CP. See also Jack Raskin, Oral History, ALHUA, 2, 20.


68. Civil Rights Bulletin, July 27, 1938, in CRC Collection, Box 2, ALHUA.


72. “Report on the Activities of the Civil Rights Federation, 1938–1939,” CRC Collection, Box 1, “CRF Files,” ALHUA. See also Report of the Mayor’s Committee on Race Relations (Detroit: Bureau of Governmental Research, 1926); and Thomas, Life for Us, 164–66. In 1939, the ACLU ranked Detroit as one of the worst major cities in the area of rights violation by police (Civil Liberties in American Cities, 3).

73. United Automobile Worker, December 24, 1938; Thomas, Life for Us, 282.


76. Bollens to La Follette Committee, March 23, 1937, Record Group 46, Box 86, National Archives. The committee, organized in 1936, grew out of a series of National Labor Relations Board hearings and limited itself mainly to company abuses. See Jerold S. Auerbach, Labor and Liberty: The La Follette Committee and the New Deal (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).


78. Bollens to Martin Dies, July 16, 1938, CRC Papers, Box 31, ALHUA.

79. U.S. House of Representatives, Hearings before a Special Committee on Un-American Activities, 75th Cong., 3d sess., vol. 2, October 11, 12, 13, at Detroit, Michigan.
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(Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1938), 1239–486. There is an extensive clippings file from the hearings in the Sugar Collection, Box 49, ALHUA.

80. Ibid., 1356–57.
81. Ibid., 1334–35.
82. Young, *Hard Stuff*, 112.
83. Flyer, CRC Collection, Box 11, ALHUA.


85. The full text of the encyclical, issued on May 15, 1891, can be found at http://www.osjsrpm.org/cst/rn.htm.

89. Though short-lived, *Equality* was a fascinating magazine. Many of the issues have been collected and reprinted in *Equality* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1970), with an introduction by Jack Salzman.


91. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 6–8. In general this is still the best source on efforts to unionize Ford and involve the Black community; see also Thomas, *Life for Us*, chap. 8.

93. Mason, Oral History Interview with Herbert Hill, November 28, 1967, Detroit, ALHUA, 9 (used by permission of Herbert Hill); interview with author, Detroit, January 16, 1994.


98. Tappes, quoted in Babson et al., *Working Detroit*, 104.
CHAPTER THREE

7. See, for example, “Hill, McClendon Supporters in Clash,” Michigan Chronicle,

8. “Rev. C. A. Hill Announces His Candidacy,” *Michigan Chronicle*, December 5, 1942. On the paper’s pro-Hill bias, see a “We Honor” segment featuring Hill and highlighting his accomplishments as an activist and organizer on December 5, the same day that Hill officially announced his candidacy, as well as the paper’s decision to print a scathing letter by Shelton Tappes on the front page criticizing the conduct of the elections (December 19, 1942).

9. The December 19 issue of the *Michigan Chronicle* carried extensive coverage of the elections and the aftermath under the banner headline “McClendon Wins Election in Stormy NAACP Elections.”

10. “Reserve Officer Told to Resign or Face Quiz,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 30, 1951. As I detail in the next chapter, Hill’s son faced difficulties because of his father’s involvement in supposedly “un-American” activities.


22. The national office of the NAACP was worried that the Detroit branch and the movement there were in danger of being taken over by communists. In a typical correspondence, Walter White writes: “Does [state senator] Diggs know of the widespread belief that John Davis and the NNC are reputed to be Communist? . . . I wish you would write me confidentially about Diggs’ knowledge of the political implications of this whole situation and his affiliations.” White to McClendon, May 5, 1941, NAACP Papers, II, C, Box 86, Library of Congress.

23. The best spin on the CP’s opposition to the MOWM after the United States entered World War II is that the party believed that the MOWM’s attacks on Roosevelt and its all-Black composition would “lead to the isolation of the Negro people from their most important allies” (Keeran, The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Union, 231). A less rosy picture is provided by Albert Parker in “Why Communist Party Attacks ‘Double V’,” Militant, April 4, 1942, which is also an example of the types of critiques mounted by the Socialist Workers Party during the war. On the complicated question of whether the CP abandoned the struggle for Black rights during the war, see Maurice Isserman, Which Side Were You On? (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), in which he challenges the perspective of total abandonment yet recognizes that the CP argued that “a too militant defense of black rights at home would interfere with the war effort” (119). On the MOWM in general, the best source remains Herbert Garfinkel, When Negroes March (New York: Athenaeum, 1969).


35. Hill quoted in *Detroit Tribune*, January 22, 1940.


39. A brief history of the founding of the organization is given in “Who’s Who on the Executive Board of the Metropolitan Detroit Fair Employment Practice Council,” December 10, 1945, in ACTU Papers, Box 18, ALHUA.


42. *Michigan Chronicle*, November 21 and December 5, 1942; Minutes of Detroit NAACP Executive Board, November 9, 1942 and February 1, 2, 1943, in Gloster Current Papers, Box 1, ALHUA; Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 114–16.

43. “The Social Dynamics of Detroit” (December 3, 1942), report for the Bureau of Intelligence, Office of War Information, Record Group 44, Box 1814, National Archives.

44. “Citizen’s Committee Gathers Cases for F.E.P.C. Hearing,” press release, January 6, 1943, ACTU Papers, Box 29, ALHUA.

45. FEPC, “Complaints Based on Religious Discrimination” (n.d.), Record Group 228, Box 404, National Archives.

120–37. Rosswurm nicely chronicles the changes in the Catholic Church’s position after 1945 from a previously “positive” approach to anticommunism that allowed it to align itself with progressive labor unions and groups to “an entirely negative one as its CIO activity became synonymous with the effort to destroy communism” (120).


49. Gabin, Feminism in the Labor Movement: Women and the UAW, 1935–1975 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 88–89; Shockley, We, Too, Are Americans, 2–3; Michigan Chronicle, November 14 and 21 and December 5, 1942; Ford Facts, December 1, 1942. For a good summary, see Meier and Rudwick, Black Detroit, 151–53.

50. Jones estimates that as many as twenty-five thousand Black women may have remained unemployed (Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, 240).

51. Current to White, July 24, 1943, NAACP Papers, II, C, Box 86, Library of Congress; Meier and Rudwick, Black Detroit, 116–17; Minutes of Detroit NAACP Executive Board, February 1–2, 1943, Current Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.


54. Young, Hard Stuff, 112.


58. Friedlander, The Emergence of a UAW Local, 1936–1939: A Study in Class and Culture (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975), 121–31. Friedlander pays close attention to the problem of White southern racism and anticommunism, insisting that both dynamics led southern Whites to support Homer Martin and his rival UAW-AFL union in the elections to the National Labor Relations Board in 1940. See also Berry, Southern Migrants, Northern Exiles, chap. 2.


66. Howard Hill et al., “Survey of Religious and Racial Conflict Forces in Detroit” (September 30, 1943), Jewish Community Council [JCC] Papers, Box 685, 6–7. According to the key provided, Howard Hill conducted most of the interviews. The other research team members were: Dr. Gertrude Duncan, Judge Herefried Dugan, A. L. Campbell, and Barbara Krenger. The document is typeset but unbound. Another copy is located in the papers of the Civil Rights Congress, Box 71, ALHUA.


71. The split between evangelicals and fundamentalists, who began as the conservative wing of the evangelical community, took place between 1870 and 1920 and continued to develop and harden throughout the twentieth century. For an admirably clear summary of these developments, see Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. On Norris, see Barry Hankins, *God’s Rascal: J. Frank Norris and the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996).

72. Dispensational premillennialism is a belief that we are living in an age, or dispensation, of decline and decay for Christian civilization, which is manifested in the spread of secularization and apostasy. In each age, human beings are tested and fail. Each age, we are now living in the sixth, thus ends with a catastrophic divine judgment. Our age will follow this pattern; after seven years of war, destruction, and calamity, Jesus will return to establish a literal kingdom in Jerusalem from which he
will reign for a thousand years. See Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 39–41.


74. Ibid., 104–5. Both the CRF and the JCC kept extensive clipping files on Norris.


76. On Smith’s background, see Glen Jeansonne, *Gerald L. K. Smith: Minister of Hate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); and Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*.


80. Smith quoted in Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*, 89. Copies of *The Cross and the Flag* may be found in the Smith Papers, Box 5, MHC, Bentley Library, University of Michigan.


82. Tappes, “Detroit’s Negro Housing Problem” (March 31, 1944), “Miscellaneous Publications,” ALHUA.


85. The fullest treatment of the controversy can be found in Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit*.


92. Martin, *Michigan Chronicle*, February 14, 1942; telegrams in Mayor’s Office Papers, 1942, BHC.

93. C. E. LaReau to Hill, March 20, 1942, and Hill to LaReau, March 24, 1942, Hill Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.

94. “To Loyal and Patriotic Polish Americans Living Near Sojourner Truth Homes” (1942), in Hill Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.


96. Belfrage, *A Faith to Free the People*, 260–61; Stanley and Margaret Nowak to Dr. Leslie Bechtel, December 5, 1944, Nowak Collection, Box 4, ALHUA. Fr. Malcolm Dade was also a supporter. He invited Williams to give the annual Labor Sunday address at St. Cyprian’s in 1943. See Dade to Williams, July 5, 1943, as well as Dade to Williams, January 26, 1945, Williams Papers, Box 4, ALHUA.

97. Hill to Reverend Burnett Magruder, February 4, 1943, in Williams Collection, Box 18, ALHUA.
98. On the reordination ceremony, see Detroit News, May 2, 1965. For their correspondence, see, for example, Hill to Williams, January 7, 1948, and October 17, 1965, and Williams to Hill, April 1, 1965, all in Williams Papers, Box 10, ALHUA.


100. Naison, “Claude and Joyce Williams,” 2–3; Dunbar, Against the Grain, 29–33.

101. Dunbar’s Against the Grain provides a collective biographical portrait of these southern radicals and their impact on labor, especially the STFU, and civil rights, especially the Highlander Folk School.


103. Dunbar, Against the Grain, chaps. 4 and 5; Naison, “Claude and Joyce Williams,” 4–5. On the STFU and southern radicalism in general, see Kelley, Hammer and Hoe, chap. 9.

104. Niebuhr to Ward Rogers of the STFU, September 5, 1934; Ward to Niebuhr, September 15, 1934; Niebuhr to Williams, January 17, 1935; Williams to Niebuhr, January 2, 1935, all in Williams Papers, Box 1, ALHUA. See also Naison, “Claude and Joyce Williams,” 4–7.

105. Naison, “Claude and Joyce Williams,” 6–7; Williams and Troy, “People’s Institute of Applied Religion,” 48–50. Copies of many of the charts developed during this period and later are collected in Williams Papers, Box 18, ALHUA. In subsequent years, the charts were produced by Visual Education Press (VEP) in New York City. VEP to Williams, April 9, 1943, Williams Papers, Box 2, ALHUA.

106. Williams and Troy, “People’s Institute of Applied Religion,” 50–51; Naison, “Claude and Joyce Williams,” 9–11. The correspondence between Uphaus and Williams is extensive and scattered throughout the Williams Papers. Pope is listed as a PIAR sponsor on letterhead from 1941; see Pope to Williams, n.d. (ca. 1943), Box 2, Williams Papers, ALHUA.


109. Williams to Henry D. Jones, April 3, 1942, in Williams Papers, Box 2, ALHUA.

110. Hill et al., “Survey of Religious and Racial Conflict Forces in Detroit,” 116–17. One of the survey’s authors, A. L. Campbell, had joined the PIAR in the South and come to Detroit with Williams during the war.


112. Babson et al., Working Detroit, 118.


121. Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR


3. Hill, campaign radio address transcript (1945), Hill Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.


14. Current took copious notes at the meeting. See his “Negro Participation in August 7 Primary,” chap. 4 (the quotes are from an anonymous source cited on p. 32). See also “Charles C. Diggs Indicted in 1941 Race Track Plot” and “Hill Named to Run for Council,” which appeared on the same page of the *Michigan Chronicle*, March 31, 1945.

15. Simmons’s letter was printed in the *Michigan Chronicle*, May 5, 1945; the editorial is from the issue of May 12, 1945. See also Current, “The Detroit Elections,” 320–21.


17. Hill’s campaign literature, quoted here, is spread throughout his Red Squad File; and Hill Papers, Box 1, ALHUA. See also Hill Papers, Box 2, MHC, which has photocopies of some of the Red Squad file.


28. Smith and Sarasohn, “Hate Propaganda,” 42–43; Jeffries, drafts of radio address, Mayor’s Office Papers, 1945, Box 6, BHC. A similar sentiment is expressed in a Jeffries campaign letter, on official mayoral stationery, October 10, 1945, Frankensteen Papers, Box 2, ALHUA.


30. *Home Gazette*, October 31, 1945, in Hill Papers, “Clippings,” Box 1, ALHUA.


32. “Frankenstein and Father Coughlin: Facts Every Jewish Citizen Should Know,” *North Detroiter*, October 31, 1945, copy in Frankensteen Papers, Box 3, ALHUA; Smith and Sarasohn, “Hate Propaganda,” 40–42. There was, however, some justification since the two men had at one point been allies. *First Year Book and History of the A.I.W.A.* (December 1935), the program for an event held on December 14, was dedicated “To our advisor and supporter Father Charles E. Coughlin, the friend and educator of the masses.” Copy in Frankensteen Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.


36. Horace White had seen it as more of a clash of personalities, a view he presented in his Michigan Chronicle column, December 26, 1942. This time around, McClendon declined to run for reelection and Hill was easily elected. See Michigan Chronicle, December 22, 1945.


38. “Detroit NAACP Cuts Left Link,” Wage Earner, December 20, 1946. That same year Gloster Current left Detroit to become director of branches and Edward Swan took over his job as executive secretary. By 1947, apparently, the “communist threat” had dissipated. See “Detroit NAACP Swan Has the Commies Mad” (1946), Michigan AFL-CIO Collection, Box 185, ALHUA; and Wilson Record, The NAACP and the Communist Party (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), chap. 5.


40. Campaign literature, Hill Red Squad File; and Hill Papers, Box 1, ALHUA. Hill’s various campaigns also got ample coverage in the Daily Worker, whose local correspondent, William Allen, was a friend and a political ally. See, for example, the issues of August 29, 1948; June 2 and 6, 1949; and August 11 and September 12, 1949.


42. Campaign Literature, Hill Red Squad File; “Copy of the Post Ordinance to Establish a Loyalty Investigating Committee,” October 17, 1949, Michigan Committee on Civil Rights Papers, Part 3, Box 15, ALHUA. The list of individuals and organizations opposing the so-called Loyalty Amendment was long. It included members of the CRC and the Lawyers Guild, as well as the Michigan Federation of Teachers and the ADA. See the flyer “We Urge You to Vote No on 144 City Charter ‘Loyalty’ Amendment,” Michigan Committee on Civil Rights Papers, Part 3, Box 15, ALHUA.

43. Hill was one of the signers of a national petition urging a ban on the use of atomic weapons and the control of atomic power by the United Nations, where its use would be subject to vetoes by the United States and the Soviet Union. The measure was advocated by the Soviet Union and supported by the American Communist Party. See “23 From Michigan Sign A-Bomb Plea,” Detroit Times, December 14, 1949.

44. “Open Letter to U.S. Senator Homer Ferguson: What the Rearmament of Western Germany Means to the American People” (1951), signed by Hill, Stanley Nowak, and Isadore Starr, a local attorney. Copy in Hill’s Red Square File. The letter was more than likely part of Hill’s support of the leftist American Peace Crusade, an organization that opposed the Marshall Plan and the Korean War. Hill was one of the sixty-five initial sponsors of the group. See Michigan Worker, February 1, 1951; and “City Wide Conference Sets Program for Peace,” Detroit Times, February 4, 1951. On

45. For a more extensive analysis of the relationship between the MDCP and the Michigan CRC, see Edward Pintzuk, “Going Down Fighting: The Michigan Communist Party after World War II,” PhD diss., Wayne State University, 1992, 91–96. My operative definition of a “front group” is one initiated and/or guided, though not necessarily “controlled,” by the CP. The term need not have a negative connotation. In fact, as Pintzuk demonstrates, there is ample evidence that the Michigan CRC and the older Civil Rights Federation were also arms of the MDCP.


49. Hill, “Press Release,” September 14, 1946, CRC Collection, Box 50, ALHUA.


51. Dorothy Johnson Interview; “Progress Report, Initiative Petition Campaign” (n.d.), CRC Collection, Box 50, ALHUA.


53. Anne Shore to Jeffries, “Draft of the Proclamation for FEPC Day,” November 9, 1946, CRC Collection, Box 50, ALHUA; Mayor’s Office Papers, 1946, Box 7, BHC. The proclamation was issued on April 17, 1946, and declared a Fair Employment Practice Week from April 22–29, 1946. Jeffries also joined the National Committee to Abolish Poll-Tax and issued a proclamation declaring March 24–29, 1946, Abolish the Poll-Tax Week.


56. On the lobbying efforts of the Michigan Manufacturers’ Association see Fine, *Expanding the Frontiers*, chap. 1, which has a good overview of the entire campaign.


62. Among the best studies of the postwar strike wave is George Lipsitz, A Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), chaps. 5, 6, and 7.


68. Horace Sheffield, Oral History Interview by Herbert Hill and Roberta McBride, Detroit, July 24, 1968, ALHUA, 8–9, 10.


70. Daily Worker, August 15, 1948.


72. White and Maze’s Henry A. Wallace does a better job than most with the religious and spiritual dimensions of Wallace’s life. Henry A. Wallace, Statesmanship and Religion (New York: Round Table Press, 1934), is a fascinating volume that reveals the extent of Wallace’s engagement with Old Testament prophets, especially Amos and Isaiah.

74. Rank and File Committee for Wallace, Ford Local 406, “Read It for Yourself!” Nat Ganley Collection, Box 2, ALHUA; Halpern, UAW Politics in the Cold War Era, 443–45.

75. “No Third Party in ’48: Text of a Radio Address by CIO President Philip Murray over the National Broadcasting Company, January 30, 1948,” CRC Collection, Box 97; CIO-PAC, press release, January 22, 1948, and Jack Kroll to Dear Sir and Brother, January 30, 1948, UAW-Political Action Division Papers, Box 1; Reuther et al., To All Members of UAW-CIO Local Unions, October 22, 1948, UAW-Political Action Division Papers, Box 2, all in ALHUA. The letter from Reuther and his colleagues is representative of many that were sent out, stating: “Because we are advised that some of the officers of your Local Union refuse to cooperate 100% with UAW-CIO and CIO-PAC in this election campaign, we are taking this opportunity of coming directly to you to ask your personal participation in the International Union’s political action program.”


77. Young, Hard Stuff, 110–11.

78. Hill ran for Congress in 1951 but did not get beyond the primary. See Michigan Worker, July 22 and 29, September 9, 1951. Hill did have the support of Ford Local 600. See Detroit Tribune, September 9, 1951.


80. Patterson to Wilkins, November 14, 1949; Wilkins to Patterson, November 22, 1949; Patterson to Wilkins, November 29, 1949, all in NAACP Papers, II, A, Box 195, Library of Congress; Record, Race and Radicalism, 180–81.


84. Patterson to Raskin, November 9, 1949, National CRC Papers, Part II, Reel 27, ALHUA.


86. Arthur McPhaul, Oral History, ALHUA, 7–8; Interview with author, Detroit, April 9, 1994.


88. “Minutes and Correspondence, Executive Board Meeting,” September 15, 1950, CRC Collection, Box 95, ALHUA.

89. Schrecker, “McCarthyism and the Decline of American Communism,

90. Pintzuk, “Going Down Fighting,” 98–104; N-CRC Papers, Boxes 81 and 82, microfilm, Michigan CRC Collection, Box 62, ALHUA.


93. Starobin quoted in Schrecker, *New Studies in the Politics and Culture of U.S. Communism*, 133; see also Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972). He had been the foreign editor of the *Daily Worker*. The Michigan Six were Saul Wellman, a Spanish Civil War vet; Thomas Dennis; Nat Ganley; Philip Schatz; Helen Winter, the wife of Carl Winter, who was jailed as a result of the first Smith Act trial in New York; and William (“Billy”) Allen, editor of the *Michigan Worker* and Michigan correspondent for the *Daily Worker*. See press releases, October 19 [1953] and October 27, 1953, CRC Collection, Box 36, ALHUA; and Goodman, Crockett, Eden, and Robb to Anne Shore, November 10, 1953, on payment, or lack thereof, for legal services, CRC Collection, Box 36, ALHUA.

94. McPhaul, “HUAC in Detroit” (n.d.), CRC Collection, Box 75, ALHUA.

95. “Fact Sheet on the McPhaul Case” (n.d.), CRC Collection, Box 94, ALHUA.


102. Dorothy Johnson, interview with author. Johnson was a longtime member of Hartford and served as Hill’s personal secretary during the 1950s. Hill’s Red Squad File does, however, include a few flyers posted near his church asking people to stay
away from his “Red Church,” as well as letters asking for a full investigation of his activities. The source of these flyers and letters, none of which was signed, was never ascertained. Young discusses the circulation of recordings of his testimony in *Hard Stuff*, 130–31; see also Smith, *Dancing in the Streets*, 242–43.


104. Simmons, Oral History, ALHUA, 10.


112. Hill to Members of Hartford (n.d.), Hill Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.

113. Bledsoe, Oral History, ALHUA, 2; “Robeson Sings and Speaks to 6000 in Detroit,” *Freedomways*, May 1953; “Robeson at Rev. Hill Fete, Blasts People’s Enemies,” *Michigan Worker*, November 29, 1953. As late as 1963, Hill’s church was open to communists. See, for example, “Ben Davis Fights for Negro Rights as Red Leader,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 3, 1963, about Davis’s appearance at Hartford. This observation finds its way into most conversations about Hill. In recent years, Hartford has honored Hill’s willingness to stand by Robeson. Until it was destroyed by a fire, a large and beautiful portrait of Robeson was prominently displayed in the Charles A. Hill Chapel at the church’s new facilities on the northwest side of Detroit.


123. Detroit Tribune, August 14, 1951; Detroit Courier, August 4, 1951; Michigan Chronicle, July 28, 1951; Reuther quoted in Foner, Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 295.


125. Fine, Expanding the Frontiers, chap. 2, provides a good overview of how the act was finally enacted.


CHAPTER FIVE


2. In 1956 there were no more than twenty thousand party members in the United States. By 1958, in the wake of Nikita Khrushchev’s 1956 revelations of Stalin’s crimes and the invasion of Hungary, party membership dropped to only three thousand. See Maurice Isserman, If I Had a Hammer . . .: The Death of the Old Left and Birth of the New Left (New York: Basic Books, 1987).


9. When government economists assessed these conditions, they did so in terms of the Metropolitan Detroit region, which presented a rosier picture and tended to obscure the actual conditions in the city proper. See Widick, Detroit, chap. 9; and Darden et al., Detroit, chap. 2.

10. DCCR, “The Negro in Detroit” (1961), DCCR Collection, Series III, Box 12, ALHUA; Joel D. Aberbach and J. L. Walker, Race in the City: Political Trust and Public

11. Darden et al., Detroit, 202–13. Crockett had been in danger of losing his practice because of his defense of communists and suspected communists in the 1950s. He managed to overcome the negative associations and was elected to Recorder’s Court in 1966. William T. Patrick Jr. was the son of the attorney for whom Reverend Hill had apprenticed back in the 1910s before deciding to devote his life to the ministry.


17. Young, Hard Stuff, 144.


23. Hood, e-mail to author, May 29, 2005, in my possession.


25. NNLC, “An Open Letter to the AFL-CIO: The Only Road to Labor Unity Is Equality and Democracy for All” (1955), CRC Collection Box 2, ALHUA.


29. This critique of the southern movement has been put forth in a number of studies, most notably, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail (New York: Vintage, 1979). For a general summary of this argument, see James MacGregor Burns and Stewart Burns, A People’s Charter: The Pursuit of Rights in America (New York: Knopf, 1991), 325–38.


33. Dillard in Moon, Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes, 157–60; Dillard interview with author, Detroit, August 21, 1993.


37. On the NALC see Foner, Organized Labor and the Black Worker, chap. 22; and Nelson, Divided We Stand, 272–75. Copies of the NALC founding program, as well as its constitution, are in Dillard Papers, Box 2, ALHUA.
38. Horace Sheffield, Oral History Interview with Hebert Hill and Roberta McBride, Detroit, July 24, 1968, 7–8, 10 (used by permission of Herbert Hill). Sheffield was reportedly recruited into the SWP by Edward Keemer, a Black Trotskyist and well-known doctor in Detroit who performed abortions. See his autobiography, Confessions of a Pro-Life Abortionist (Detroit: Vinco Press, 1980). See also Erwin Baur to Alan Wald, August 18, 2000 (used by permission of Alan Wald).

39. On the TULC in general, see Thompson, Whose Detroit? 49–59. It is also the case, as Thompson notes on page 51, that “some TULC leaders hailed from the historically combative and left-wing Local 600.”

40. Vanguard, September 1961. The Vanguard was the official paper of the TULC.

41. Dillard in Moon, Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes, 158; Sheffield quoted in Babson et al., Working Detroit, 170. There was an exchange of charges of countercharges in the pages of the Michigan Chronicle, August 4 and 11, 1962.


43. Dillard, interview with author. This lack of public discussion was confirmed by Marilynn Adams (interview with author, Detroit, February 21, 1995). White labor activist and Shachtmanite (yet another group that split from the SWP) B. J. Widick was also active in the TULC and served a stint on its Executive Board (Widick, interview with author, Ann Arbor, Michigan, November 5, 1993).


46. “Discrimination Action Committee” (n.d.) and Records of the Committee, Dillard Papers, Box 1, ALHUA.

47. Johnson in Mast, Detroit Lives, 199.

48. Oscar and Dolores Paskal, interview with author, Detroit, March 19, 1994; Dillard, interview with author. See also Boggs in Moon, Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes, 154–55.


50. Marilynn Adams, interview with author, Detroit, February 12, 1994. Adams, whose married name is Dillard, is the author’s mother. She is not related to Ernie and Jessie Dillard, who were nonetheless close friends and mentors.


53. Vanguard, quoted in Babson et al., Working Detroit, 165–66.
57. On Sheffield and Spottswood, see “It Began with a Conversation,” Michigan Chronicle, January 6, 1961; see also Michigan Chronicle, November 11, 18, 1961.
62. TULC flyer and TULC to “Dear Freedom Fighter,” November 1, 1961, Dillard Papers, Box 2, ALHUA; Babson et al., Working Detroit, 162; Thompson, Whose Detroit? chap. 2.
63. Young, Hard Stuff, 168–69.
64. Watson in Mast, Detroit Lives, 88; Smith, Dancing in the Streets, chap. 1; Gerald Early, One Nation under a Groove: Motown and American Culture (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1995).
66. Hamlin in “BWC [Black Workers Congress] Leader Looks at Past, Sees New Strategy,” Guardian, February 28, 1973; also Geschwender, Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency, chap. 4; Georgakas and Surkin, Detroit: I Do Mind Dying, chap. 1; Thompson, Whose Detroit?


74. Shelia Murphy Cockrel in Mast, Detroit Lives, 181; Kenneth Cockrel, Interview with Sidney Fine, Detroit Riot Oral History Project, August 26, 1985, transcript in BHC.


76. Biography of Ravitz in Mel Ravitz Collection, ALHUA.


79. Information on block clubs, including their newspapers and meeting minutes, are scattered throughout the papers of the DUL at the Bentley Library, in the papers of the NAACP and the Ernest and Jessie Dillard Papers in ALHUA, and in the pages of the Michigan Chronicle and Detroit Courier, both of which tended to focus on the social aspects of the clubs.

80. Sims in Mast, Detroit Lives, 34.


87. Boggs, Living for Change, chap. 1; “Biographical Information—Grace Lee Boggs,” James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers, Box 4, ALHUA.

88. The very complicated history of the SWP and Trotskyism in general can be told through a series of factions, tendencies, and splits. At the time when James and
Dunayevskaya formed their own tendency there were two other major factions within the party, which eventually split over the question of the Soviet Union after the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact. The first group, led by James P. Cannon (“Cannonites”), an ex-CP member and one of the founders of American Trotskyism, agreed that while the Soviet Union was a degenerate workers state it still merited defense in the face of Western imperialist aggression. The second group, led by Max Shachtman (“Shachtmanites”) viewed the Soviet Union not as a workers’ state of any kind but as a new form of class society that had developed a system of bureaucratic collectivism. The latter refused to defend the Soviets and adopted a “third-camp” perspective in opposition to both the Soviet Union and the United States. In 1940, the Shachtmanites left the SWP and formed the Workers Party. The Johnson-Forest tendency belonged to this faction until it reentered the SWP in 1947. See Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*; James P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism* (New York: Pioneer, 1944); and Buhle, *Marxism in the United States*, chap. 6.

89. However, their critique of the Soviet Union and Stalinism did not prevent the U.S. government from attacking them as a subversive organization. SWP members were among the first to be tried under the Smith Act, and the failure of the CP to come to their defense increased the bitterness between the two groups. See Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism*, chap. 4. On the persecution of the SWP by the government, see Nelson Blackstock, *COINTELPRO: The FBI’s Secret War on Political Freedom* (New York: Pathfinder, 1988).


94. James et al., *Report and Discussion on Break with S. W. P.* (1951), quoted in Le Blanc, “Introduction: C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism,” 17. The Johnson-Forrest tendency left the Workers Party in 1947 and rejoined the SWP only to leave the Trotskyist movement entirely in 1950. In 1953 the SWP suffered a further split led by Bert Cochran, who rejected Trotskyism as unrealistic in cold war America and rejected the SWP as an overly sectarian defender of a sterile orthodoxy. Like the group led by Max Shachtman, the Cochranites moved closer to the Socialist Party and then to a more diffuse social democratic position. See Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*, 298–304.

95. A number of works note the influence of *Correspondence* and Dunayevskaya’s *Notes and Letters* group in introducing young radicals to some of James’s ideas. See, for
example, Dan Georgakas, “Young Detroit Radicals, 1955–1965,” in a special issue of Urgent Task dedicated to James (summer 1981); Geschwender, Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency, 83–84; and Grace Lee Boggs, Living for Change, 99–109.


98. Once the Boggses left, Martin Glaberman led what remained of the group (twenty-five members nationally with about half in Detroit) until he dissolved it in 1970. Glaberman was himself another important conduit of cross-generational influence. He taught classes on Marx’s Capital, for instance, that were attended by a number of young radicals. See his “C. L. R. James: A Recollection,” in McLemee and Le Blanc, C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism, 45–52.


101. James was the primary author of the SWP’s first resolution, “Negro Work,” which grew out of a series of discussions he had with Trotsky. Both are included in Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination, ed. George Breitman (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1967).


104. Hill’s Red Squad File cites his attendance at four forums throughout the late 1950s.


106. Van Gosse, Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America, and the Making of a New Left (London: Verso, 1993), 152–53. Gosse credits Williams with being in the fore-
front of the Black-Cuban connection, which began to receive a good deal of attention
in the wake of Castro’s weeklong stay in Harlem’s Theresa Hotel. Castro was warmly
received in Harlem and was able to meet with a number of Black political figures,
including Malcolm X and Robert F. Williams. Rosemary Mealy, Fidel and Malcolm X: 

107. Robert Himmel [then the SWP candidate for mayor], “Freedom Rides
Hailed, but Paciﬁm Won’t Stop Terror,” Michigan Militant, June 1961; Gosse, Where
the Boys Are, 153–54.

108. Lynn, There Is a Fountain: The Autobiography of Conrad Lynn (Brooklyn:
Lawrence Hill, 1979), 185 and chap. 13; also the exchange of letters between Lynn
and Williams in the Williams Papers, Box 3, MHC.


110. Lynn, There Is a Fountain, 185 and chap. 16.

111. Boyd in Mast, Detroit Lives, 78–79.


113. See, for example, Michigan Militant, March 6 and 14, April 15, and June 10,
1960, and May 5, 1961. Gosse has an extensive discussion of the Fair Play for Cuba
Committee and the role of the SWP in its development in his Where the Boys Are, chap.
5.

114. Baker in Mast, Detroit Lives, 307; “75 Students Deify Cuba Travel Ban,” Mili-
tant, June 22, 1964. In the wake of the trip they were all investigated by the House Un-

115. House in Mast, Detroit Lives, 83. On the inﬂuence of Cuba on young Black
activists in SNCC, especially Stokely Carmichael, see Clayborne Carson, In Struggle:
SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
1985), 272–77; see also Tony Martin, “Rescuing Fanon from the Critics,” The Pan-
African Connection: From Slavery to Garvey and Beyond (Dover, MA: Majority Press,
1983), chap. 12.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Cone, Black Theology and Black Power.

2. Cleage, Black Christian Nationalism, 16.


4. Ward, Prophet of a Black Nation, 38, 43. The story of the Cleage children not
being allowed to play with darker children was related by Bermecia (Hill) Morrow,
interview with author. The two families lived within blocks of each other.

5. Barbara (Cleage) Martin, phone interview with author, June 23, 2005; “The
Early Outreach Ministry of Jaramogi Abebe Ageyman (Rev. Albert B. Cleage, Jr.),
(Detroit: PAOCC, 2003), 29; Jaramogi Menelik Kimathi, interview with author, June
23, 2005, Detroit.

the declaration of Black inferiority, see Cleage, Black Christian Nationalism, xxv–xxvii.
As early as 1952, Cleage preached a sermon condemning the evils of intraracial color
prejudice as a practice that comes from mimicking white society. “Rev. A. B. Cleage

7. Cleage, “An Epistle to Stokely,” 42–43. Cone and Cleage developed very dif-

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different theological ideas about the Blackness of God. For Cone, the concept became highly abstracted and metaphysical, so much so that everyone is invited to “become Black with God” through an acknowledgment of solidarity with the exploited and dispossessed of the world. This is what it means to be like God since, as Cone put it, “Either God is identified with the oppressed to the point that their experiences become his, or he is the god of racism.” Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (New York: Lippincott, 1970), 120–21.


10. Bowles was also regarded as incompetent and corrupt. In July 1930, voters decided to recall him, facilitating the election of Frank Murphy. Sidney Fine, *Frank Murphy: The Detroit Years* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 206–11. After the change of administrations, Dr. Cleage retained his position. Cleage’s account of being beat up because of Bowles is in *Prophet of a Black Nation*, 40.


14. Ibid., 42; “The Early Outreach Ministry,” 29. Dade’s early admiration for Hill surely helps to account for his strong defense of Hill during the 1952 HUAC hearings. Many others also had fond memories of St. Cyprian’s youth ministry, including future judge Damon Keith. Keith to Dade, February 25, 1983, in Dade Family Private Collection. Especially memorable was the fact that Dade allowed dances at his church at a time when this was rare for African American churches. Margaret Dade, interview with author, Detroit, June 25, 2005.


22. Ibid., 42.

23. Cleage quoted in ibid., 102–3. The critique of King by Black theologians on these grounds was prevalent during the late 1960s and early 1970s. More recently, James H. Cone, among others, has begun to reevaluate their previous assessments. See, for example, Cone, *Malcolm and Martin and America* (New York: Orbis, 1994).


27. Cleage’s assessment of Fisk might be unfair given Fisk’s civil rights work among African Americans and Japanese Americans, not to mention Thurman’s high regard for his colleague. On Fisk, see Ward, Prophet of a Black Nation, 54–55.

28. For Thurman’s description of Tagore, see his autobiography, With Head and Heart (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), 129. That this might also be a good description of Thurman himself is suggested by Vincent Harding in his introduction to For the Inward Journey: The Writings of Howard Thurman, ed. Anne Spencer Thurman (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), ix.


30. Along with Thurman’s autobiography, see the brief biographical sketch in Fluker and Tumber, A Strange Freedom, 1–17.


32. Thurman, Jesus and the Disinherited, in For the Inward Journey, 124–25.


35. Ward, Prophet of a Black Nation, 56; “The Early Outreach Ministry;” 31. Film-making seems to have been the road not taken for Cleage, but once he made his decision to pursue other avenues for reaching the Black masses he apparently never looked back. Years later, in the 1980s, some camera equipment arrived for Cleage and he simply let it sit untouched. Jaramogi Kimathi, interview with author.

36. Ward, Prophet of a Black Nation, chap. 4

37. Quotes from interviews conducted by Ward and reproduced in his Prophet of a Black Nation, 62–64; “Early Outreach Ministry,” 31–32.


39. Cleage quoted in “Early Outreach Ministry,” 37. This phase in Cleage’s career is discussed on pages 36–38.


41. Cockrel Interview with Fine, BHC, 12.

42. “Early Outreach Ministry,” 38.


46. Cleage, Black Christian Nationalism, 75.


48. Cleage was responding to a letter from a White man who insisted that his church was happily interracial. “Reverend Cleage Tells You about Negro Separatism,” Detroit Free Press, September 16, 1968.


61. Fine, Violence in the Model City, 42–45.


68. The quotation is actually from the fall of 1963, when the millage was again up for a vote, but it is wholly representative of the editorials produced earlier that year. “Millage Extremists Follow Path of Chaos,” Michigan Chronicle, November 2,
1963. The attacks on Cleage and GOAL grew worse leading up to the November vote, especially after the paper ran articles on massive layoffs of teachers and crumbling facilities.


70. “We Defeated the Millage,” Illustrated News, April 8, 1963; Detroit Free Press, April 7, 1963. Seeing the glass as half full, the Michigan Chronicle was insistent on the fact that most African Americans seemed to have supported the millage. “Center District Votes 60% for Millage,” Michigan Chronicle, April 6, 1963. It also ran a series of stories and editorials warning of the dire consequences of the millage being voted down by extremists and racists. See, for example, “1,000 Local Negro Teachers Face Loss of Jobs in 1964,” Michigan Chronicle, May 25, 1963; as well as the lead editorial on the same day and on November 2, 1963.


78. Detroit Commission on Community Relations, “Inter-office Correspondence, Re: UHURU” (September 15, 1963), DCCR Papers, III, Box 21, ALHUA.

79. Fine, Violence in the Model City, 27.


81. Detroit Commission on Community Relations, “Inter-office Correspondence, Re: UHURU,” July 15, 1963, DCCR Papers, III, Box 21, ALHUA.


86. B. J. Widick, TULC member and independent socialist, interview with author, April 15, 1995, Detroit. The pickets at TULC are also mentioned in Dukes, “UHURU Leader Says: ‘Must Crush White Man.’”

87. The “Mau Mau Maoist” reference did not originate with Dukes. It is a quote from an unidentified UHURU member: “On the international scene our orientation is Mau Mau Maoist . . . and we support the Cuban Revolution 100 percent” (*Michigan Chronicle*, October 19, 1963). See also “Citizens React against Booing at Ceremonies,” which was published in the *Michigan Chronicle* on the same day. Dukes revisits the parallel subversive elements today and the CP in previous struggles in a November 16, 1963, column.


89. Detroit Supporters of SNCC, “Fund-raising Letter” (September, 1962), Detroit NAACP Papers, Box 19, ALHUA. The group was attempting to raise bail for Watson, Kemp, and two other young Detroiters.


92. DCCR, “Inter-office Correspondence: UHURU” (August 13, 1963), DCCR Papers, III, Box 21, ALHUA.

93. Fine, *Violence in the Model City*, 105–7. As Fine points out (105), before the Scott affair the police department’s Community Relations Board had not received a single brutality complaint in nearly six months.


99. “Rev. C. L. Franklin Continues Attack on Prophet Jones,” *Michigan Chronicle*, June 18, 1955. Prophet Jones was a fascinating and very popular presence in Detroit. Before his ministry was destroyed by his arrest on charges of homosexual solicitation,


101. Salvatore, Singing in a Strange Land, 249. His account of the preparations, negotiations, and difficulties leading up to the march is the best currently available. See also Smith, Dancing in the Streets, chap. 1.

102. “Negro Ministers Vote ‘Hands Off,’” Detroit Free Press, June 12, 1963. To a large extent, much of the dispute over the march was reported on in the press, both Black and white.

103. “Ministers Row over March,” Michigan Chronicle, June 1, 1963. Jose Rames, in “Racial Anatomy of a City,” New University Thought, September–October 1963, which includes a section on the dispute over the march, notes that there were also questions raised about the DCHR’s handling of funds. Word of the dispute also reached King and the SCLC, and there was a suggestion that he “gracefully withdraw” from leading the Detroit march. Branch, Parting the Waters, 842–43.


105. A recording of King’s speech was released by Gordy Records (#906), and distributed by Motown as part of its Black Forum series. Gordy, To Be Loved, 248–50; Branch, Parting the Waters, 843.


109. Worthy was also close to Robert Williams. “ACLU Challenges Government in Conviction of Worthy,” Militant, February 10, 1964, and March 3, 1964. Williams, Lynn, and Worthy were all active in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and supportive of Castro and other Cuban revolutionaries. See Gosse, Where the Boys Are, esp. chap. 5.


111. Franklin quoted in Detroit Courier, November 16, 1963; Del Rio quoted in Detroit News, November 10, 1963. Sidney Fine gives a brief overview of the rival conferences in Violence in the Model City, 28–29; see also Smith, Dancing in the Streets, 54–59. Salvatore (Singing in a Strange Land, 260) contends that Cleage’s decision to
resign from the DCHR was sudden, but contemporary sources suggest that the break had a longer gestation period. See “Cleage-Franklin Split Brewing for Long Time,” *Michigan Chronicle*, November 2, 1963.


115. Sterling Gray, “Man of the Year: Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr., Architect of a Revolution,” *Liberator*, December 1963, 8. Dan Watts and Gray of the *Liberator* staff attended the conference and reported on it. Recordings of the proceedings are available in the Audio and Visual Division of ALHUA.


119. Boggs’s letter to Lynn quoted in Lynn *There Is a Fountain*, 185. This was also the critique that Harold Cruse presented, a critique based on the relationship to white leftists and the essentially “integrationist” outlook of the party’s founders. Cruse, *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership* (New York: Quill, [1967] 1984), 414–16.

120. The correspondence between Breitman [GB] and Worthy [WW] about Cleage begins in July with a letter in which Breitman notes the swift change in Cleage’s stature over the previous year and mentions that Cleage is a good FNP candidate because “he doesn’t give a damn about the Democratic Party.” GB to WW, July 27, 1963. The meaning of an all-Black party is discussed in GB to WW, August 30, 1963. On Boggs, see WW to GB, August 4, 1963; on Tripp and others from UHURU,
GB to WW, August 19, 1963; on the difficulty with being Worthy’s representative, GB to WW, August 19, 1963; and on problems with getting Cleage to commit to the FNP, GB to WW, September 19 and 20, 1963. All these letters are in Breitman Papers, Box 47, RFW-NYU.

121. GB to WW, August 19, 1963, Breitman Papers, Box 47, RFW-NYU.


123. Vaughn was still angry about his defeat as well. See, for example, “Jackie Vaughn Takes Potshot at Van Antwerp,” Michigan Chronicle, October 5, 1963.


125. There is a written copy of Cleage’s text in Ernest C. Smith Papers, Box 1, ALHUA, but the audio recording is much richer and Cleage strays from his text. The audio version, available at ALHUA as part of the James and Grace Lee Boggs Collection, is also good for getting a sense of how humorous Cleage could be when addressing a crowd.


134. The particulars of Detroit’s TAP program are beyond the scope of my narrative. For a detailed study of its structure, see Sidney Fine, Violence in the Model City, chap. 4; Mayor’s Committee for Community Renewal, Total Action against Poverty (Detroit, 1964); and Special Committee to Investigate Irregularities in the Total Action against Poverty Program in the City of Detroit, Examination of the War on


136. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, CORE: Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1968 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 205–6, 305. This change of direction was not peculiar to Detroit but was part of a national trend, which Meier and Rudwick discuss at some length. Moreover, community work was the hallmark of SNCC. See Doug McAdam, Freedom Summer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

137. The WCO had sent representatives to Chicago to observe Alinsky’s method. In the fall of 1965, the WCO was engaged in raising funds to bring Alinsky to Detroit for five days to serve as a consultant. Michigan Chronicle, October 2, 1965.


143. Cockrel Interview with Fine, BHC, 6.


CONCLUSION

The opening quotation is from the Detroit Free Press, September 28, 1966. Carmichael, then head of SNCC, spoke at Cleage’s Shrine of the Black Madonna on September 27, 1966, to a crowd of more then a thousand. See also the Detroit News, September 28, 1966.

1. I have no intention of adding to the volumes of literature on Detroit’s rebellion. The best comprehensive study is Sidney Fine, Violence in the Model City; see also The Kerner Report: The 1968 Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Pantheon, [1968] 1988).

2. Ravitz Interview with Fine, BHC, 6–7.

3. Fine, Violence in the Model City, chaps. 3 and 4; Darden et. al., Detroit, chap. 3.


5. Materials on the original chancel stained glass window were supplied by Paul Lee, the unofficial historian of the shrines and the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church, in an e-mail exchange, April 9, 2005, in my possession. When members of
the departing church, Brewster-Pilgrim, asked to take the stained glass window with them, Cleage offered to sell it to them. The glass remained. Kimathi, interview with author.

7. Paul Lee to author, e-mail exchange, April 4, 2005.


9. Cleage, “The Resurrection of the Nation,” in The Black Messiah, 85. The prayer for Dowdell and Baker is not included in the published version of the sermon, but it is in the original recording, “‘Resurrection’ (Unveiling of the Black Madonna), March 26, 1967,” copy supplied courtesy of James W. Ribbron, a longtime member of the shrine.

10. Cleage quoted in Alex Poinsett, “The Quest for a Black Messiah,” Ebony, March 1969, 176. In various sections of the sermons collected in The Black Messiah, Cleage gives detailed historical reasoning to support his claim. Other Black theologians, such as James Cone and J. Deotis Roberts, were less convinced of the literal Blackness of Christ and took a more symbolic approach. See Kelly Brown Douglas’s discussion of this debate in The Black Christ (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), chap. 3; as well as Theo Witvliet, The Way of the Black Messiah: The Hermeneutical Challenge of Black Theology as Black Liberation (Oak Park, IL: Meyer Stone, 1987). As Kelly Brown Douglas notes, there is no ample evidence to suggest that Cleage was on the right track, that Jesus was dark skinned, or that the early Israelite tribes to which Jesus was ancestrally linked were “a mixed group of people with African connections” (The Black Christ, 79). See also Cain Felder, Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989).


14. On Johnson, see Samella Lewis, African America Art and Artists (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 88–95; a photo reproduction of Lamentations, which is now part of the National Collection of Fine Arts at the Smithsonian, appears on page 93.


21. “Constitution of the Inner-City Organizing Committee,” October 2, 1966, Boggs Collection, Box 5:7, ALHUA; also “Detroit: Birth of a Nation,” *National Guardian*, October 7, 1967, in which the Boggeses also discuss the importance of Cleage as “the first Christian minister who has become a leading black nationalist spokesman.”


24. The writings of these and other Black theologians have been collected in *Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966–1979*, ed. Gayraud S. Wilmore and James Cone (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979); see also Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, chap. 8.


27. Cleage, *Black Christian Nationalism*, xvii. See also Kelly Brown Douglas’s interesting comparison of the figure of the Black Christ in the theologies of Cleage, Cone, and J. Deotis Roberts (*The Black Christ*, chaps. 3 and 4).

mittee as part of a larger national trend, see “Negroes See Riots Giving Way to Black Activism in the Ghetto,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1968; see also Fine, *Violence in the Model City*, chap. 16.


35. Sheila Murphy Cockrel in Mast, *Detroit Lives*, 182.


39. For a history of the league’s “outreach” work, as well as its labor activism, see James A. Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency*, esp. chap. 7; Georgakas and Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*; and Thompson, *Whose Detroit?*

40. For the league’s derogatory view of the Panthers and their preemptive organizing, see Geschwender, *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency*, 140–43.


43. On the relationship between the league, and other New Left groups, and the UAW, see Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s*, 75–78. Levy also includes a discussion of the Wallace campaign (182, 191–92). Wallace managed to obtain nearly 10 percent of the votes cast in Michigan, even after the UAW, the state AFL-CIO, and the Michigan Teamsters carried out a massive anti-Wallace campaign to combat pro-Wallace sympathies among workers. Babson et al., *Working Detroit*, 172–73.


45. Frank Joyce in Mast, *Detroit Lives*, 278.

46. “Congressman George W. Crockett, Jr., A Biographical Sketch,” Norman McRae Collection, Box 16, ALHUA; also Crockett’s statement on the incident, August 3, 1969, Norman McRae Collection, Box 16, ALHUA. Georgakas and Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*, has a lively account of the New Bethel incident, the trials, and the aftermath; see also Thompson, *Whose Detroit?* which is particularly interesting in terms of its focus on the legal strategy employed.


48. Hood, interview with author; for a more detailed account of the efforts and successes of programs at Plymouth, see the church’s Web site: http://puccdetroit.org/pages/8/page8.html.


52. Cleage quoted in “Early Outreach Ministries,” 43.
