Want to Start a Revolution?

Gore, Dayo, Theoharis, Jeanne, Woodard, Komozi

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From Communist Politics to Black Power

The Visionary Politics and Transnational Solidarities of Victoria "Vicki" Ama Garvin

Dayo F. Gore

As recounted in this collection's introduction, when listing the key figures in Ghana's expatriate community during the 1960s, writer Leslie Lacy referenced Vicki Garvin, a longtime labor activist and black radical, as one of the people to see "if you want to start a revolution."[1] While several recent studies on Black Power politics have acknowledged Vicki Garvin's activism and transnational travels, she is often mentioned only as a representative figure, a "radical trade unionist," or a "survivor of McCarthyism," with little attention given to the specific details of her life and political contributions.[2] Yet Vicki Garvin played a leading role in the six decades of struggle that marked the shift from Negro civil rights to black liberation. Politicized in the upheavals of Depression-era Harlem and active in the U.S. left well into the 1980s, Garvin provides an important window for understanding the significant channels of influence between the Old Left and the New Left and between black radicalism and the black freedom struggle.

Vicki Garvin arrived in Africa in 1961 as a single woman, a seasoned organizer, and a radical intellectual, who persevered through McCarthyism (the government-supported political repression of the U.S. left during the late 1940s and 1950s) with her political commitments intact, even as her spirits were tattered. She had served as leadership in several national organizations, including as staff for the Congress of Industrial Organization's (CIO) United Office and Professional Workers of America Union

Victoria "Vicki" Garvin preparing to speak at the founding convention of the Harlem Trade Union Council, 1949. Courtesy of Miranda Bergman, Vicki Garvin's stepdaughter.

(UOPWA), a founding member of the National Negro Labor Council (NNLC), and a member of the editorial board of Paul Robeson's *Freedom* newspaper. In 1970, after almost ten years of living in Ghana and China, Garvin returned to Newark and New York to work alongside a younger generation of activists in the New Left and Third World solidarity movements.

Recent scholarship has begun to acknowledge the role of black leftists such as Harry Haywood and Nelson Peery, or journals such as *Freedomways* in the development of student radicalism and the New Left in the 1960s and 1970s.[3] However, few scholars have addressed the important influence that Vicki Garvin, and other black women radicals, had in channeling political knowledge from the U.S. Communist Party–affiliated black left to transnational solidarity efforts in Ghana and China and back to Marxist factions in the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and black nationalist politics of the National Black United Front (NBUF). Garvin's life is part of the untold story of black liberation politics in a global arena. Her distinct political legacy rests not in official titles but in revolutionary experience and solidarity efforts that always combined local organizing with a global vision.

Garvin has remained an illegible figure in black radicalism, in part because her activism does not fit neatly into the convenient paradigms of the black freedom struggle. Garvin was a skilled theorist and strategic thinker, who wrote for movements and organizations but never produced a definitive text outlining her own political philosophy. She worked as a labor activist and was a proponent of black nationalism and Marxist-Leninism, even though these movements are often seen as incompatible. Garvin joined the Communist Party (CP) and served as a leader in New York's black left during the height of McCarthyism. She continued to be politically active in the U.S. left amid these anticommunist attacks and well beyond her own departure from the Communist Party in 1957.[4] She became an expatriate and international activist as the U.S. civil rights movement exploded onto the national arena and worked diligently as a behind-the-scenes mentor, strategist, and advocate for unity during a Black Power movement that often celebrated charismatic male leadership and a New Left embroiled in factional debates. Along the way, Garvin could count such luminaries as Paul Robeson, Claudia Jones, Harry Haywood, W. E. B. Du Bois, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Robert Williams, and Malcolm X as allies and mentors. Such diverse political engagements and sustained activism reveal Garvin as a central figure in the post–World War II struggle for black liberation, even as they speak to the reasons she has remained invisible within the historical record.

In examining Vicki Garvin's long history of activism, this chapter challenges some of the dominant narratives that inform the historiography of black radicalism. First, Garvin's ability to operate as a significant radical voice during the height of Cold War anticommunism and remain politically active well into the 1980s not only calls for a more nuanced

understanding of the impact of U.S. Cold War politics on the black left but also highlights some central continuities in black radical politics from the 1950s to the 1970s. Second, Garvin's lifetime of engaged activism provides a powerful example of a "long-distance runner" and the difficult (and at times costly) work that is crucial to sustaining a radical movement in the United States. Finally, Garvin's leadership and radical vision, as reflected in her organizing work, present an important counterpoint to the still dominant tendency to depict black radicalism more as an ideology defined by great texts and fiery speeches than as a movement sustained through institutions and organizing.

The evidence supporting these interventions emerges in the details of Vicki Garvin's life as an activist and strategist in the black freedom struggle. She articulated a brand of radicalism that always carried with it a critique of white supremacy and capitalist exploitation, as well as a dedication to building community, an investment in transnational solidarity, and a deep belief in women's equality, if not explicit feminist politics. Garvin's commitment to the protracted struggle for revolutionary change led her to join with those who shared her overall political goals even if they were not always in tune with her specific political strategy. This is not to imply that Garvin was politically malleable or ideologically uncommitted but instead to highlight a political vision that was expansive, intersectional, and responsive to changing conditions. She valued political debate as a necessary part of building a radical movement and learned to negotiate the personal, ideological, and organizational differences that arose during this process. Garvin developed her politics and ideology not only in theory but also in action. She applied her ideas on the terrain of actual struggle in such political arenas as labor, socialism, civil rights, Pan-Africanism, and Black Power politics. Such broad political reach allowed Garvin to remain politically relevant for more than six decades.

"I Began to Get My Formal Training in Marxism-Leninism"

Born Victoria "Vicki" Holmes on December 18, 1915, in Richmond, Virginia, Garvin grew up in a working-class family where both parents labored outside the home. Her father, Wallace J. Holmes, worked as a plasterer in a black trade union, and her mother worked as a domestic for white families. The Holmeses migrated north in 1926 with hopes of providing better opportunities and education for their two daughters. Arriving in New York City, the family joined the swell of southern migrants settling

in Harlem just as the Great Depression hit and struggled to sustain themselves through the downturn. Garvin's father found it impossible to continue his trade as a plasterer and could only support his family with menial jobs, while Garvin's mother continued to work as a domestic, sometimes even bargaining for wages on a street corner in the brutal New York day laborers' market, often referred to as the "slave market."[5] In oral interviews, Garvin vividly recalls her father's humiliation at his limited job opportunities and her mother's stories about the harsh working conditions and disrespect she suffered at the hands of her white employers. The feelings of embarrassment and anger Garvin experienced witnessing her parents' exploitation and the family's descent into poverty had an indelible impact and fueled her desire to understand the intersections of labor and race.[6]

It was in the radical milieu of Harlem that Vicki Garvin began to develop her early political voice and analysis. Her family joined Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church (ABC), and Garvin became active in its youth program run by left-leaning future congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr.[7] Formal education also proved an important part of Garvin's political development, as it helped to deepen her knowledge of black history and radical resistance. At the age of sixteen Garvin graduated from Wadleigh High School in Harlem and began attending Hunter College for Women full-time. While at Hunter, Garvin served as president of the black history club, named the Toussaint L'Ouverture Society, and encountered a range of radical student organizations, including a very active CP-affiliated Young Communist League.[8]

After graduating from college in 1936, Garvin found employment as a switchboard operator for the American League for Peace and Democracy, a broad-based antiwar and antifascism group with ties to the CP, and became an active member in the CIO's United Office and Professionals Workers of America union. She also continued her activism with ABC and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. In fact, Garvin joined her first picket line in Powell's "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" protest that fought to gain employment for black workers in the shops along 125th Street in Harlem.[9]

In 1940 Garvin decided to move to Northampton, Massachusetts, to pursue a master's degree in economics at the elite all-women's Smith College. It was during her two years at Smith that Garvin garnered a "formal introduction to Marxism-Leninism" and emerged with what she considered a "qualitative" change in her viewpoint on world politics and economics.[10] Garvin worked closely with faculty member Dorothy Douglass, a progressive economist who proved a radicalizing influence on a number

of undergraduate women attending Smith during the 1940s.[11] Garvin produced a thesis entitled "The American Federation of Labor and Social Security Legislation" that reflected her growing commitment to labor organizing and radical politics.[12] As she studied Marxist economics, Garvin also participated in student activism, serving as a Smith representative at the Congress of Negro Youth held in Washington, D.C., in 1941.[13] Armed with a master's degree, Garvin returned to New York City in the midst of War World II. She took up a position with the National War Labor Board (NWLB) that directed her toward a career in labor. At the NWLB, Garvin gained familiarity with the national labor scene and became involved in local labor activism, helping to organize an independent in-house union of the professional and clerical staff and serving as union president.[14]

With the war's end, Garvin moved on to a union staff position as the national research director and co-chair of the Fair Employment Practices Committee of the UOPWA. It was within this left-leaning CIO union that Garvin became immersed in CP-supported activism. In early 1947, recruited by a former coworker in the NWLB, Garvin officially joined the Communist Party. Later that year she would also marry Clinton Arthur Garvin Jr., a black union activist. Garvin's decision to join the CP during a period many historians mark as a time of increasing isolation for the Party, as well as her marriage to a fellow activist, reflected her own idealism and growing political commitment to working-class struggles.[15] Nearly forty years later, in recounting her decision to join the CP, Garvin remembers it as a "key development" in her life. "I knew from that point," recalls Garvin, "where my focus would be in terms of work . . . certainly something related to white workers and black workers or the general working-class movement."[16]

Throughout the late 1940s, Vicki Garvin emerged as a central player in New York's black left. Thelma Dale (Perkins), the acting executive secretary of the National Negro Congress (NNC) from 1943 to 1946, remembers her as a key leader within the labor movement and black left more broadly.[17] As an active member of the CP, a leading labor organizer, and executive secretary of the Manhattan Council of the NNC, Garvin brought her political skills to a range of organizing efforts. In all these spaces, Garvin presented herself as a strong advocate for black women workers and black liberation, and a powerful voice of resistance to emerging Cold War policies. Yet, even as she found a political home in the CP's Harlem chapter, Garvin also encountered conflict in the Party, including negotiating the racism of some white members and political disagreements over strategies

for fighting anticommunist attacks. Garvin's decision to remain in the CP despite these conflicts reflected not only her belief in radical organizations but also her political philosophy of building unity with those who shared her political ideals and goals, if not her strategic vision.

As the decade came to a close, Garvin encountered increasing anticommunist pressure for her union activism. In 1949, the UOPWA joined a list of left-led unions expelled from the CIO for communist affiliations. While the CP encouraged its members to work within established procedures, Vicki Garvin, along with many other leftists, refused to accept the purging of her union without a fight.[18] During the 1949 convention, Garvin took the floor to read from a six-page prepared speech. She delivered an incisive critique of the CIO, including its move away from supporting the "militant struggle for the rights of Negro workers" and its failed leadership in building a southern organizing drive.[19] Although her fellow labor activists praised Garvin for her "extremely courageous leadership" during the convention, the expulsions went forward.[20] This more or less marked Garvin's final days as trade union staff.

"I Never Felt Surrounded by Better Comrades in My Life"

Faced with narrowing opportunities as a union activist, Garvin, alongside other black leftists, turned to community-based labor organizing. In 1950, Garvin joined black radicals Paul Robeson, William Alphaeus Hunter, and Louis Burnham as a founding board member of *Freedom* newspaper. In the paper's inaugural issue Garvin penned an article focused on African American women workers. The piece addressed the combined impact of race and gender oppression that positioned black women at the "very bottom of the nation's economic ladder." "Raising the level of women generally and Negro women in particular," Garvin argued, served as an "acid test for democracy at this crucial point" in U.S. history. Such language reflected a common theme among black activists who challenged the United States' Cold War positioning as the model of democracy. Garvin saw the failures in U.S. democracy reflected in the plight of black women workers who were "forced into the dirtiest, least desirable jobs," earned the lowest wages, and were often excluded from leadership in and the benefits of workplace unions.[21] She concluded the article by calling on "progressive trade unions and women's organizations to spearhead" a program that would address the concerns of black women workers and promote "Negro women leadership at all levels of trade union activity."[22]

As the *Freedom* article suggests, Garvin remained invested in union activism, yet her work increasingly emphasized the fight for racial equality. She was an active member of the Harlem Trade Union Council (HTUC), a mass-based black labor organization founded in 1949 with radical labor leaders Ferdinand Smith as executive secretary, Ewart Guinier as chairman, Revels Cayton as co-chairman, and Pearl Laws as treasurer. The work of the HTUC would lead directly to the formation of the NNLC, a nationwide labor organization supported by black leftists like Paul Robeson and led by black workers and activists.[23]

Putting aside her work with *Freedom*, Garvin dedicated much of 1951 to organizing the first NNLC convention to be held in Cincinnati.[24] Introduced at the October 1951 gathering as the person "who has done more . . . than any one individual in order to make this Convention possible," Garvin took the stage to present the opening remarks. "We are making history here today in the struggle of the Negro people for freedom and equality," Garvin boldly proclaimed.[25] The impetus for her enthusiasm could be traced to the broad appeal of the founding convention. The gathering drew more than 1,000 delegates, a third of them women, from major cities throughout the nation, including Cleveland, Birmingham, San Francisco, and Denver.[26] Such success came despite surveillance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and pressure from a number of forces, including the Cincinnati City Council, which passed a resolution condemning the convention.[27]

Merging the struggle for black civil rights and the fight for "better jobs," the NNLC became one of the most significant black-led labor organizations of the 1950s. It also emerged as an important space for black women labor radicals. Unlike most labor organizations, the NNLC proudly counted a number of black women labor activists among its national and regional leadership, including Garvin; Viola Brown, who had been a leader in the Food, Tobacco and Allied Workers Union (FTA-CIO) in Winston-Salem; and Pearl Laws of New York's Fur Workers Union (FWU-CIO).[28] Such welcoming gender politics were visible from the first day of the NNLC's founding convention, which included a resolution titled "Negro Women's Equality" and a report on the need to organize domestic workers.[29]

Garvin would put her on-the-ground organizing and leadership skills to great use in the NNLC. Serving as a national vice president, she helped spearhead the council's first national campaign directed at garnering clerical and sales clerk positions for black women in the Sears-Roebuck

department stores. The campaign made its first breakthrough in San Francisco in early 1952, soon after Garvin completed an organizing visit out west.[30] Bill Chester of the International Longshoremen's Union in California praised Garvin's contributions, declaring, "We were very glad to have had Vicki here. . . . she did work among the women that no man could have done and she straightened out a lot of things."[31] By March 1952 Garvin would also be appointed executive secretary of the New York Labor Council. In this position she not only continued to shape national campaigns but also became a visible face of the NNLC and its prominent New York chapter.

Although the NNLC proved supportive of black women organizing, and Garvin argued that the male leadership "never tried to run roughshod over me," she did encounter sexist tendencies. Garvin laughingly remembered having to assert herself to have her voice heard beyond "women's issues": "I wanted my say not in a pigeonholed way only on certain issues . . . you know I would stand up and fight for my position."[32] Thus Garvin pushed the NNLC to accept black women's leadership not only when addressing the concerns of women workers but in all aspects of building a radical labor movement.

For Garvin, the NNCL represented "a very high point" of her development and "the closest collective" she had ever experienced. Reflecting her belief in building unity through an organized struggle, Garvin recalled, "I never felt surrounded by better comrades in my life, where we would have really strong ideological fights, really sharp but we would leave as friends." Such a positive recollection stands in sharp contrast to many of the accounts of the U.S. left during the 1950s and the intense surveillance and harassment the NNLC endured from the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB) that eventually led the council to close its doors in 1956. Despite its short life span, the sense of accomplishment Garvin, and many of her fellow activists, found in the NNLC and the vibrant range of labor activists drawn to its work highlight the ways that many African American leftists produced powerful moments of resistance and lasting bonds with one another in spite of, or perhaps as a protective measure against, anticommunist attacks.[33]

Such bonds provided a central impetus for Garvin's work with *Freedom* and the community of New York–based black leftists who rallied around the newspaper and a number of other CP-affiliated black organizations throughout the early 1950s. This community of activists provided an important base of support for Paul Robeson, W. E. B. Du Bois, and other

black radicals, who faced intense government surveillance and travel restrictions.[34] Garvin gained important sustenance from these allies, and in return she provided a warm welcome for many activists as her apartment often served as both a formal and an informal meeting place for the black radicals. Thelma Dale recalls with great fondness Garvin's generosity; Garvin even offered her a place to stay when Dale arrived in the New York City in 1943 to start work with the National Negro Congress.[35] These investments endured as Garvin negotiated continued anticommunist pressures and political setbacks.

With the support of her fellow activists and a resolve honed in the CIO purges, Garvin steadfastly refused to let the threat of government surveillance silence her political beliefs.[36] She often pushed the CP to provide stronger resistance to McCarthyism, particularly attacks on organizations and activists within the black liberation movement. Thus, it is not surprising that Garvin took the stage alongside Paul Robeson and previously jailed CP member Elizabeth Gurley Flynn during a 1954 May Day rally in New York City's Union Square, to call for peace and the freeing of jailed CP members. Or that Garvin also joined NNLC activists in leafleting the AFL-CIO merger convention in 1956, urging the new organization to continue the CIO tradition of supporting black workers.[37] These moments of resistance illustrated not only Garvin's dedication to radical politics but also her refusal to temper her political beliefs.

Such sustained resistance did come at a cost, both personally and politically. Days before the founding of the NNLC, Garvin was not only putting in long hours on last-minute details but also negotiating the painful dissolution of her four-year marriage to Arthur Garvin. "This was a crisis for me in terms of my personal and family relations," recounted Garvin, "but I had no real choice so I remained at my post."[38] Less than a year later, in 1953, Garvin was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Her testimony was brief as she followed the Party members' practice of invoking the Fifth Amendment when asked about their political views, yet her appearance reflected the encroaching pressure of anticommunism.[39]

By 1956, at the age of forty-one and in the prime of her career, Garvin found herself closed out of union work, disillusioned with a Communist Party experiencing major political upheavals, and invested in a range of black left organizations, from the NNLC to *Freedom*, that were unable to sustain financially. A recently-divorced Garvin also felt the increased "psychological, social, and financial insecurity as a single woman."[40] Struggling

to chart a new path for employment and political organizing, Garvin moved through a range of clerical and temporary office jobs. She worked as a cashier at New York's progressive-owned restaurant the Cooker and even briefly returned to graduate school to study marketing at New York University.

Despite these hard times, Garvin's experiences present a more nuanced example of the impact of Cold War anticommunism on CP-affiliated activists. For Garvin, being called before HUAC clearly limited her job opportunities. The decline of left institutions after 1955, however, appeared to have a greater impact as it left Garvin with employment options that made little use of her skills and education. In addition, this work often did not reflect her politics or her desire to avoid the boredom of a conventional nine-to-five job. Furthermore, although battered by "the difficulty and despair of the McCarthy period" and frustrated with her paid work, Garvin still remained committed to radical politics and connected to a supportive community of New York–based black leftists.[41]

"While I Was a Pan-Africanist, I Was a Proletarian, Working Class, Internationalist"

As the decade came to a close, Garvin discovered an opportunity for political rejuvenation when her close friend Thelma Dale Perkins approached her with an offer of employment in the newly independent African nation of Nigeria. The job, working for a Nigerian businessman, was available through Perkins's uncle Dr. Frederick Patterson, the former president of Fisk University. Relocating to Nigeria proved an enticing option.[42] Vicki Garvin arrived in the country in May 1961, just one year after the nation gained formal independence from Britain. She hoped that living in Nigeria would, in her words, "reinforce my resolve and confidence in our ultimate victory."[43] Such hope was captured in Garvin's writing, as she remarked on feeling "a real sense of being at peace with myself" upon landing in Africa.[44] Her optimism for the trip was also fueled by the enthusiasm of her new employer, a well-established businessman and parliamentary official named Chief Ayo Rosiji, who assured Garvin that "you are coming here to your true home and to your own people."[45]

Garvin's desires for a rejuvenating homecoming would be tempered by the political and gendered realities of daily life in Lagos, Nigeria's capital city. Garvin's brief diary entries, written sporadically during her initial months on the continent, provide some insights into her struggles

to adjust to the cultural and economic demands of life in Lagos, including disorganized work conditions, the demands of being an "Amer[ican] woman living alone," and her consequent loneliness. She was also forced to negotiate the realities of neocolonialism as she noted "beggars, men with facial tribal marks, people lying and sleeping on streets (unemployed, homeless)" alongside "many modern bldings [*sic*] big Chase Man. Bank & other, Amer. oil companies, etc & remaining big British firms."[46] Garvin's stay in Nigeria lasted two trying years. In recounting her time in the country Garvin succinctly noted, "2 years in Nigeria neocolonialism-disillusionment."[47] This shorthand can be read as her critique of the simmering internal political divisions and concessions to Western Cold War interests, which would soon send Nigeria into civil war.

Yet it also speaks to the limited community and political opportunities she found in what she had imagined as her "homeland." Garvin noted this point in her diary. "It is interesting (and significant I think)," she wrote, "that I (& possible other American Negroes) who feel while in the U.S. a kinship with brother-sister Africans experience some preliminary difficulty in assimilating." During her time in Nigeria, Garvin had come to realize that even with the "intellectual-political sympathy" between African American and African activists that she believed to be "theoretically true," there was still "nothing automatic" about building such diasporic solidarity.[48] Throughout her stay in Nigeria, Garvin struggled to not "remain aloof" from local culture, yet ironically she found her strongest community among a number of African American women working with the U.S. State Department. By 1963, faced with unstable employment, Garvin decided to head back to the States with a quick stopover in Accra, Ghana, to meet up with W. E. B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois, who had recently arrived in the city.

By 1960, Ghana had emerged as the site for black activists from throughout the diaspora. Kwame Nkrumah broadly defined Pan-African politics as unity among continental Africans, as well as solidarity with the struggles against racial discrimination faced by Africans in the diaspora.[49] In this vein, unlike Nigeria, Nkrumah argued that Ghana faced "neither East nor West but forward." The African nation's central positioning in the diaspora was amplified for communist-affiliated African Americans with the growing number of leftist expatriates, particularly William Alphaeus Hunton and W. E. B. Du Bois, who settled in Ghana as Nkrumah's invited guests.[50]

The possibility of reconnecting with allies from New York clearly fueled Garvin's attraction to Ghana, and she soon decided to stay on in

Accra. Garvin settled into sharing a house with two single African American women, Alice Windom and Maya (Angelou) Make. Although both Windom and Make were younger than Garvin, all three women could be counted among the group of African American radicals with a history of association with the U.S. black left. These activists, generally in their thirties and forties, became known in Ghana as the "politicals" of the Afro-American set—or, as one expatriate described them, "professional protestors."[51] Disquieted by the domestic Cold War, they refused to embrace defeat and instead turned to newly independent African nations as vital sites for sustaining a black radical movement.[52] As a result, they held a profound loyalty to Nkrumah's project of African socialism and cheered his sharp critiques of U.S. domestic and foreign policy. In contributing their skills and talents to Ghanaian development, these African American radicals sought to do their part to "hasten socialism and African unity."[53]

In Africa, Garvin hoped "to be really useful, to represent the best of thinking Negro Americans."[54] However, the gender and political dynamics of life in Ghana made it impossible for Garvin to find work that made use of her skills as a labor activist and organizer. Believing she "had no special skills to contribute to Ghana," Garvin could only find employment as an English teacher through the Foreign Language Institute.[55] Nonetheless, her claims of "no special skills" ring false given Garvin's history of activism and contributions to strengthening the bonds of solidarity between African nationalist struggles and black liberation organizing in the United States. One example of this activism was the August 1963 protest at the U.S. embassy. As the civil rights March on Washington occurred in the States, Garvin, alongside Alice Windom and Alphaeus Hunton, organized expatriates in Ghana to participate in a solidarity protest picketing the embassy. The demonstration criticized U.S. intervention in Vietnam and Cuba and included a declaration against racial discrimination addressed to President Kennedy.[56] Such activism unnerved U.S. policy makers, who from the early years of decolonization feared Africans' exposure to African Americans critical of U.S. racial policies, especially those who invoked connections between domestic and international politics.[57] The State Department placed these activities and activists under intense surveillance. This scrutiny, however, did not prevent the protest from receiving extensive coverage in Ghana and among black radical publications in the United States.[58]

Garvin also worked to politicize the visits of a growing number of black activists seeking to experience for themselves one of the first independent

black nations in Africa. The local community of black radicals served as a welcome center of sorts for newly arriving African Americans. Malcolm X, who arrived in Ghana in May 1964, became the most celebrated of these African American activists. Pulling together an ad hoc committee that included Vicki Garvin, Alice Windom, Maya (Angelou) Make, Julian and Ava Livia Mayfield, and several others, the expatriates organized a "refugee night" for "Afro-Americans" to meet and talk with Malcolm X. Vicki Garvin recalls of Malcolm's visit that "Maya, Alice and I became his guardian three musketeers—mother hens who accompanied him to many affairs."[59]

Garvin, however, proved more than a "guardian." As historians Gerald Horne and Kevin Gaines have noted, Malcolm X's visit to Ghana and exchanges with black radicals broadened his ideas of coalition and the importance of unity in the black liberation struggle.[60] Garvin played an important role in facilitating Malcolm's introductions to these politics as well as a range of international revolutionaries. She arranged meetings for Malcolm X with officials at the Algerian and Cuban embassies and with the Chinese ambassador, Huang Hua. She also served as the interpreter during Malcolm's meeting with Algerian officials. For both Garvin and Malcolm X, such connections proved crucial in shaping their future transnational travels and alliances. Soon after these meetings, Ambassador Hua extended an invitation for Garvin to visit China, while Malcolm X's meeting with Algerian officials would soon lead him to visit that nation.[61] These conversations also seemed to mark an important exchange between Malcolm and Garvin as she shared her political wisdom with and learned from the powerful young leader. Garvin admired Malcolm's ability to take in other people's insights, "he believed in listening to other people. He was not a know it all. I greatly appreciated that."[62]

Garvin's description of herself as a "mother hen" when discussing her organizing around Malcolm X's visit suggests some of the limits on and possibilities for African American women radicals negotiating the complicated politics of gender and nation in Ghana.[63] On the one hand, such a statement can be read as downplaying her role by embracing a more acceptable gendered construct to define her political work. Intertwined within the work of this community of expatriates was a gender politics that reflected a male dominance, which shaped many of these diasporic networks. African American activist Sylvie Boone angrily addressed this exclusion, contending that in Ghana it was "fixed so that there is no meaningful way for an Afro woman to participate."[64] On the other hand, such

framing also defined an important mentoring relationship with Malcolm X. In this context Garvin's use of the term "mother hen" reflected an effort to mark her role as knowledgeable elder (a role long gendered male) within the black liberation movement, mentoring a younger generation just as she had been mentored.

In this context, African American women expatriates encountered and negotiated a range of masculinist politics in their travels. However, there is little evidence that these women organized against such exclusionary gendered politics. This is surprising considering that many of them, Vicki Garvin in particular, had incorporated a strong gender analysis within their U.S.-based activism and championed black women's equality as a crucial part of black liberation. Such gender dynamics reflected the complicated ways masculinist politics also shaped transnational black liberation activism in the 1960s, erecting barriers to black feminist politics even as black women proved crucial political voices, leaders, and organizers within these movements.

Nkrumah's efforts at building African socialism and Pan-African unity "officially" ended on March 3, 1966, as a military coup ousted him from power. Many African American radicals experienced the coup as an opportunity lost.[65] "Nothing seems possible to me," bemoaned Alice Windom following the coup, "all the purpose has gone out of being in Africa now that it has turned into a bloody minstrel show, but I can't yet face going back to the States."[66] Vicki Garvin joined those who read the writing on the wall and left Ghana before the coup occurred. In 1964 Garvin turned her hopes to China, moving there to take up the offer from the Chinese ambassador to work as an English-language teacher in Shanghai.[67]

Although Garvin would arrive in the People's Republic of China alone and not knowing the language, she would not remain isolated for long. In traveling to China, Garvin joined with a number of African American radicals who sought to develop ties with the communist nation. Shirley Graham Du Bois would continue to strengthen her connections to China, traveling there frequently although she remained based on the African continent. In addition, Robert F. Williams, the black radical from North Carolina who was forced into exile for advocating armed self-defense, also found a new home in China in 1965. Although Garvin's reputation as a revolutionary and behind-the-scene strategist did not garner her the lavish treatment afforded Graham Du Bois and Williams, they all contributed to solidifying China's reputation as a powerful supporter of the black liberation struggle. In turn,

China provided these black radicals a base from which to continue to participate in transnational communist politics and stay connected to the emerging U.S. Black Power movement that advocated Third World solidarity and a revolutionary nationalist vision inspired by the Chinese Revolution and the writings of Mao Tse-tung.[68]

While in Shanghai, Garvin honed her skills as a teacher working at the Shanghai Institute of Foreign Languages teaching advanced classes in English and establishing her own course on African American history. By 1966, as the Cultural Revolution brought the closing of schools, Garvin found herself out of a job and one of the few foreign visitors still residing in Shanghai's Peace Hotel. After meeting and marrying Leibel Bergman, a fellow American living in Beijing, Garvin relocated to the bustling capital city to work for the English-language translation of the *Peking Weekly Review*. In Beijing she became "close friends and allies" with Robert and Mabel Williams and with Gerald (Gerry) Tannenbaum. During these years they "shared countless hours recounting the history of the revolutionary struggle" as together they watched, debated, and honed their analysis of the social and political upheaval occurring in China and the United States.[69]

In all, Garvin spent six years in the People's Republic. One of Garvin's most powerful experiences in China was being invited by students back to the Shanghai Institute of Foreign Language in 1968 to address a pre-rally meeting to celebrate Chairman Mao's second statement on the black liberation movement, "In Support of the Afro-American Struggle against Violent Repression," issued after the assassination of Martin Luther King. Recounting the experience, Garvin remembers it as a "privilege" and a moment of overwhelming support that moved her to tears. Such experiences led Garvin to view China as "a valuable resource for exploited and oppressed peoples everywhere who have so much in common."[70] Thus Garvin's embrace of China reflected not only her continued commitments to socialist revolution and her broad vision of transnational solidarity but also an attendant black nationalist politics that led her to frame herself as "a pan-Africanist," and "a proletarian, working class, internationalist."[71] Although Garvin wrote about her experiences in China, she rarely addressed the turbulence she must have witnessed during the early days of the Cultural Revolution. Garvin simply credited her time in the country with teaching her much about "the working of imperialism, neo-colonialism and socialism" and remained a staunch supporter of the Chinese Communist Party.

"Whatever as a So-Called Veteran You Can Add . . . Do It"

In 1970, Vicki Garvin returned to the United States and to a markedly changed country and political scene. Yet Garvin's credentials as a longtime black radical and Third World internationalist would find strong resonance with the radical politics taking shape in the 1970s. Garvin and her husband initially settled in Newark, New Jersey. As she adjusted to living in the States again, she would reconnect with members of New York's black left, including allies from the NNLC and *Freedom*, and deepen her commitment to mentoring a younger generation of activists. In New Jersey, Garvin worked with former NNLC comrade Ernest "Big Train" Thompson, replacing an ailing Thompson as director of the Tri-City Citizens Union, a community organization based in New Jersey that he had helped to develop.[72] The job introduced Garvin to the vastly different political landscape of 1970s urban life, yet stymied by the intricate terrain of New Jersey politics, she left Tri-City after several years. Garvin moved on to work as area leader of community action at the Center for Community Health Systems at Columbia University. Hired to connect with neighboring black and Latino communities, Garvin was excited to be back in New York City and for "a chance to move around and sort of get up to date with what was happening in Manhattan."[73] The Columbia job also proved short-lived, as her mother's impending death forced Garvin to take a leave of absence.

As Garvin recovered from her mother's death, she sought to reestablish her political activism. A longtime member of the U.S. China Friendship Network, in 1974 she joined the editorial committee of *New China*, a journal published by the newly reconstituted US China Peoples Friendship Association (USCPFA). Perhaps not surprisingly, fellow American expatriates Gerald Tannenbaum and Shirley Graham Du Bois also worked with the USCPFA. In addition, Garvin reached out to black activists she had worked with in supporting Paul Robeson, such as author Alice Childress, who penned an article on Robeson for *New China*.[74]

In the late 1970s, Garvin relocated to Chicago to live with her husband, Leibel Bergman. There she began to put into practice her skills as a mentor honed from her time in Ghana and China, as she join Bergman in the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), one of the largest of the New Left party formations. Garvin had reservations about the RCP, a Maoist-oriented organization made-up of young activists from the Revolutionary Union and the SDS. Still a committed communist, Garvin hesitated

in joining the Party because of her sense that it lacked a clear theory on the struggle for black liberation in the United States and that it was "basically a young movement." Nonetheless, Garvin's commitment to mentoring a younger generation of radicals proved one of the driving forces in her decision to join. As she recalled, "I said, maybe don't work on it 100 percent of your time, but whatever as a so-called veteran you can add and stories you can share and to whatever extent you can participate, then do it."[75] Garvin's decades of political knowledge and experiences proved a vital resource as she mentored young activists, theorized black liberation, and advocated for left unity. "I use to be a sprinter and she made me into a long-distance runner," stated one black man and former member of the RCP who credited Garvin with helping him to sustain a lifelong commitment to revolutionary politics. This guidance proved crucial as Garvin helped younger activists to weather a split in the RCP in 1977 and the founding of the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWH).[76]

By 1980, with her marriage coming to an end and her father's health deteriorating, Garvin left Chicago and the RWH to return to her parents' home in Jamaica, Queens, New York. Garvin soon reconnected with former CP comrades such as Harry Haywood, a leading theoretician on the "national question." She began working with a new group of black leftist and revolutionary nationalists active in the National Black United Front (NBUF). Founded in June 1980, NBUF sought to bring together the disparate array of black radicals, from communists to black nationalists, who had helped to build black revolutionary politics during the 1960s and 1970s. NBUF activist Komozi Woodard credited Garvin with bringing an invaluable range of talents to the organization: "You would see her at meetings doing the on-the-ground work, and she would be providing behind-the-scenes leadership." Woodard remembered Garvin as a central adviser in the NBUF founding convention, providing keen insights during tense negotiations over ideological differences and the vagaries of building political unity. "She had one of the most strategic minds," declared Woodard.[77]

Some thirty years after her fight for black women workers, Garvin also continued to advocate for women's equality and workers' rights. She guided the NBUF's Women's Committee, urging women in a March 1981 article to "insist on the elimination of all fetters to our functioning in equality and dignity as full human beings alongside men" and to resist being pitted against "black men and other oppressed women."[78] Garvin also participated in the formation of the Black Workers Committee of the NBUF. She not only provided detailed feedback on initial drafts of the

organizational statement but also helped to organize a workers conference and served as a keynote speaker for the conference's opening plenary on women's activism.[79] In 1985, almost twenty-five years after she first visited the continent, Garvin, now seventy, joined the NBUF's Women's Committee on a trip to Nairobi, Kenya, to attend the United Nations World Conference on Women.

Conclusion

By the mid-1980s, Garvin had "retired from paid employment, but not political activity."[80] She carried on her role as a mentor and activist throughout the 1980s, and in doing so maintained her long-standing investments in black radical politics and black women's activism. Garvin continued to participate in on-the-ground organizing, lending her support to numerous activities from Sisters Against South African Apartheid and the Black Workers for Justice to the Committee to Eliminate Media Offensive to African People and the 1998 founding convention of the Black Radical Congress. Garvin also shared her insights with larger audiences, contributing an essay titled "Step Up the Offensive Today for Victory!" to the collection *In Defense of Mumia* (1996), which lent support to Mumia Abu-Jamal, a political prisoner on death row and former Black Panther Party member. Garvin viewed such broad-ranging work as a necessary part of contributing to the ongoing struggle for liberation. "One must educate, organize, and agitate," Garvin proclaimed in a 1977 video interview, and this slogan encompassed the multiple threads of her political life.[81] Vicki Garvin struggled with declining health during the later years of her life and passed away on June 11, 2007, at the age of ninety-one. Garvin's decades of political engagement and mentoring made real the bonds that connected black radicalism of the 1950s to the transnational solidarity efforts and Black Power politics in the 1960s, and the New Left in the 1970s and 1980s. Such longevity reflected not only Garvin's expansive political vision but also the significant continuities that shaped black radical politics after World War II.

NOTES

1. Leslie Alexander Lacy, "Black Bodies in Exile," in *Black Homeland/Black Diaspora: Cross-Currents of the African Relationship*, ed. Jacob Drachler (London: Kennikat Press, 1975), 143.

2. Recent books that mention Garvin include Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in*

America (New York: Holt, 2006); and James Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787–2005* (New York: Penguin, 2006). Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), includes a more extensive discussion of Garvin's labor activism, with little attention to her other radical politics or her membership in the CP.

3. Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (New York: Verso, 2002); James Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Ian Rocksborough-Smith, "'Filling the Gap': Intergeneration Black Radicalism and the Popular Front Ideals of *Freedomways* Magazine's Early Years (1961–1965)," *Afro American in New York Life and History* 31 (January 2007): 7–36; Esther Cooper Jackson and Constance Pohl, eds., *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in Their Own Country* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); Robin D. G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, "Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution," *Souls* 1 (Fall 1999): 6–41; Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978); and Nelson Peery, *Black Radical: The Education of an American Revolutionary* (London: New Press, 2007).

4. Historians have long marked the rise of McCarthyism and the Cold War, as decimating the U.S. left and limiting black civil rights activism. See Ellen Shrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Fraser M. Ottanelli, *The Communist Party of the United States from the Depression to World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991); and Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Where You On? The American Communist Party during the Second World War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982).

5. "Biography Resume," box 1, Biographical Information, Vicki Garvin Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library (hereafter VGP); Vicki Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 1, n.d., Oak Park, IL, Freedom Archives Collection, San Francisco; Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke, "The Bronx Slave Market," *Crisis* 42 (November 1935): 330–331, 342.

6. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 1; and Vicki Garvin, "Celebrating Women's History Month with Vicki Garvin," transcription of speech on February 14, 1996, Women's Commission of the Black Workers for Justice, in author's possession.

7. "The Young People's Forum," *ABC Advance*, March 10, 1929.

8. "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *Wistarion: Hunter College of the City of New York* 34 (1936): 171, Hunter College Archives, New York; "Biography Resume," VGP. The YCL was the youth wing of the CP.

9. Miranda Bergman, interview with author, June 28, 2007; Garvin, "Celebrating Women's History Month"; Wil Haygood, *King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell Jr.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993).

10. Vicki Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 2, n.d., Oak Park, IL, Freedom Archives Collection, San Francisco; "1942 Smith College Commencement Program," box 1, Education and Accomplishments, VGP.

11. Betty Friedan, who graduated with a B.A. in 1942, was also influenced by Douglass's teachings. Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of "The Feminine Mystique": The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 50–55.

12. Victoria Holmes Best, "The American Federation of Labor and Social Security Legislation: Changing Policy toward Old Age Pensions and Unemployment Insurance, 1900–1932" (M.A. thesis, Smith College, 1942). Best was Garvin's last name from her first marriage, although she rarely mentioned her first husband.

13. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 1; author interview with Miranda Bergman; "V. Best Represents Smith at Negro Youth Congress" and "V. Best Will Be Interviewed about Anti-strike Legislation," *Smith College Weekly*, n.d., box 1, newspaper articles, VGP; Ernest E. Johnson, "Youth Group Assails Hitlerism," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 22, 1941, 1.

14. A. M. Wendell Malliet, "Race No Barrier—They Made It on Merit," *New York Amsterdam News*, January 29, 1944, 3A.

15. Historians point to the CP's support of failed presidential candidate Henry Wallace in 1948 and its "ultra-left" turn that emphasized organizing for an impeding downturn in the U.S. economy. Ottanelli, *Communist Party*; Isserman, *Which Side Where You On?*

16. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 2.

17. The NNC was one of the leading and most inclusive mass-based black organizations during the 1940s. Vicki Best to Dear, September 11, 1946, part 2, reel 24, National Negro Congress Papers, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Thelma Dale Perkins interview with author, October 3, 2007, Chapel Hill, NC. I would like to thank Martha Biondi and Erik Gellman for directing me to Perkins.

18. Vicki Garvin, "The Participation of UOPWA in This Conference," n.d. 1, box 1, Trade Union Writings, VGP; Robert H. Zeiger, *The CIO, 1935–1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 253–293; and Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1981* (New York: International Publishers, 1974), 281.

19. Garvin, "The Participation of UOPWA in This Conference," 1.

20. Thomas Richardson to Vicki Garvin, November 7, 1949, box 1, Trade Union Correspondence 1949–1951, VGP.

21. Vicki Garvin, "Negro Women Workers: Union Leader Challenges Progressive America," *Freedom*, November 1950, 5; Vicki Garvin, "The New South," *Negro History Week*, box 1, Trade Union folder, VGP; Vicki Garvin, "The Economic Status of Negro Women in the U.S.A.," n.d. (1952?) box 1, Trade Union folder, VGP.

22. Garvin, "Negro Women Workers," 5. Similar language is found in Garvin, "The Economic Status of Negro Women in the U.S.A.," and "Announce Job Action Meeting for Saturday," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 8, 1952, 2.

23. "Initiating Sponsors" exhibit no. 148C-D, *Communist Political Subversions Part 2: Appendix to Hearing before the Committee of Un-American Activities House of Representatives 84th Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1956), p. 7366; "Harlem Trade Union Council Meet Planned," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 21, 1950, 19; Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 294.

24. Woodard, *Nation within a Nation*, 36; *Proceedings of the Founding Convention of the National Negro Labor Council*, 1951, p. 9, box 1, folder 1, Ernest Thompson Papers, Rutgers University Archives, New Brunswick, NJ (hereafter ETP).

25. *Proceedings of the Founding Convention of the National Negro Labor Council*, 79.

26. Yvonne Gregory, "'Big Train' Speaks of the 'New Negro,'" *Freedom*, November 1951, 4; *Proceedings of the Founding Convention of the National Negro Labor Council*, 12; Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 299–300.

27. "Labor Unit Set Up for Negro Rights," *New York Times*, March 2, 1952, 41.

28. *Second Annual Convention Yearbook, National Negro Labor Council*, 1952, box 1, folder 2, ETP. National leadership included William Hood of Detroit's UAW Local 600 as president; labor activist and future mayor of Detroit, Coleman Young, as executive secretary; and Ernest Thompson from the independent Union Electric union as director of organizing.

29. *Proceedings of the Founding Convention of the National Negro Labor Council*, 31, 69–71; "NNLC Officers Elected," *Freedom*, November 1951, 4; "New Council Maps Negro Job Battle," *New York Times*, October 29, 1951, 12; Mindy Thompson, *National Negro Labor Council: A History*, Occasional Paper no. 27 (New York: American Institute for Marxist Study, 1978).

30. "Brownwell Adds to Our Country's Shame," 1956, 7, box 1, folder 5, ETP; Jane Gilbert, "Negro Women and Jobs," December 23, 1951, box 1, NNLC, VGP.

31. Vicki Garvin, "Some Pertinent Facts on the Economic Status of Negro Women in the U.S.," box 1, Trade Union Writings, VGP; National Negro Labor Council, "The Truth about the FEPC Fight," 5, box 1, folder 5, ETP; Bill Chester to Revels Cayton, February 8, 1952, box 1, Trade Union Correspondences, VGP.

32. Vicki Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 3, n.d., Oak Park, IL, Freedom Archives Collection, San Francisco.

33. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 2; and "Summary of the Reunion of Former Leaders of the NNLC," December 12 and 13, 1970, box 1, folder 7, ETP.

34. Thelma Dale Perkins interview with author; Vicki Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 4; Vicki Garvin, "To Eslanda and Paul Robeson," *New World Review*, October 1954, 3.

35. Dale Perkins interview with author; Miranda Bergman interview with author.

36. *Proceedings of the Founding Convention of the National Negro Labor Council*, 9.

37. "May Day," *New York Times*, May 2, 1954; Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 4.

38. "Personal History," 7, box 2, Original Drafts/Notes, VGP.

39. Victoria Garvin, testimony, February 15, 1952, *Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act,* 92nd Cong., 1st and 2nd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1952), 205–211.

40. Vicki Garvin, "Personal History-Marriage," 7, box 2, Original Drafts/Notes, VGP; Thelma Dale Perkins interview with author, October 4, 2007, Chapel Hill, NC.

41. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 4; Vicki Garvin, "Personal History," 7, box 2, Original Drafts/Notes, VGP; "Ghana Notes in the 1960s," box 2, Original Draft/Notes, VGP.

42. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 4.

43. "Ghana Notes in the 1960s."

44. Vicki Garvin, "Nigeria Diary," 1961, box 1, VGP; Garvin interview with Gil Nobel, May 23, 1999, transcript, *Like It Is*, show no. 1153, WABC-TV, in author's possession, 4.

45. Chief Ayo Rosiji to Victoria Holmes Garvin, February 10, 1961, box 1, Correspondence, 1952–1992, VGP.

46. Garvin, "Nigeria Diary," Thursday, May 10, 1961, box 1, VGP.

47. Vicki Garvin, "Personal History-Travels," box 2, Original Drafts/Notes, VGP.

48. Garvin, "Nigeria Diary," 2:30 a.m., Saturday, May 27, 1961.

49. George Padmore, *Pan Africanism or Communism: The Coming Struggle for Africa* (London: D. Dobson, 1956), 47; "Harlem Hails Ghanaian Leader as Returning Hero," *New York Times*, July 28, 1958, 4; Ronald W. Walters, *Pan-Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 120; George Hauser, *No One Can Stop the Rain: Glimpses of Africa's Liberation Struggle* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 70.

50. A year earlier, Du Bois traveled to Ghana for its 1960 inauguration as a republic in the British Commonwealth. In April 1962, Nkrumah invited Robeson to settle in Ghana, offering him a chair at the University of Ghana. Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 508.

51. Lacy, "Black Bodies in Exile," 147.

52. See Kevin Gaines, "African-American Expatriates in Ghana and the Black Radical Tradition," *Souls* 1 (Fall 1999): 69; Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana*.

53. Sylvie Boone to Julian Mayfield, 1966, 14, box 1, folder 8, Julian Mayfield Papers, Manuscript Collection, Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture, New York Public Library (hereafter JMP).

54. Garvin, "Nigeria Diary."

55. Garvin interview with Gil Nobel, 4; Campbell, *Middle Passages*, 343.

56. Alice Windom, "Account of the 1963 March on Washington Protest in Ghana," box 6, folder 21, JMP; and Walters, *Pan-Africanism in the African Diaspora*, 120. Such radical critiques were censored from the D.C. March on Washington; see Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

57. Mary Duziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

58. Windom, "Account of the 1963 March"; Gaines, "African-American Expatriates," 68–69.

59. Garvin interview with Gil Nobel, 6.

60. Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 187–188; Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana*, 197–201.

61. Garvin, "Celebrating Women's History Month," 8; Malcolm X with Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973 [1964]), 353; Vicki Garvin, "Malcolm X in Ghana," session 4, Malcolm X: Radical Traditions and a Legacy of Struggle Conference Proceedings, New York, November 1990, at http://www.brothermalcolm.net/sections/malcolm/contents.htm.

62. Garvin interview with Gil Nobel, 6.

63. These limits are discussed in greater detail in Garvin, "Malcolm X in Ghana," session 4, and Alice Windom, "Malcolm X in Ghana," session 4, Malcolm X: Radical Traditions and a Legacy of Struggle Conference Proceedings, New York, November 1990, at http://www.brothermalcolm.net/sections/malcolm/contents.htm.

64. Boone to Mayfield, 14.

65. Alice Windom to Julian Mayfield, August 23, 1966, box 6, folder 21, JMP; Campbell, *Middle Passages*, 70; Lacy, "Black Bodies in Exile," 146.

66. Alice Windom to Julian Mayfield, August 23, 1966, box 6, folder 21, JMP.

67. "Celebrating Women's History Month," 9.

68. Mao wrote the statement in support of the black freedom struggle after numerous requests from Williams. Mao Tse-tung, "Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism," August 8, 1963, in *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, ed. Stuart R. Schram (New York: Praeger, 1969) 409–414; Horne, *Race Woman*, 231–232; Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

69. Mabel Williams, "Memorial Celebration for the Life and Work of Vicki Ama Garvin," September 15, 2007, the House of the Lord Church, Brooklyn, NY, recording in author's possession.

70. Vicki Garvin, "China and Black Americans," *New China* 1 (Fall 1975): 23; Vicki Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 6; and "Personal History," 4a, box 1, biography, VGP.

71. Garvin interview with Gil Nobel, 6.

72. Box 4, folder 10, ETP; Komozi Woodard interview with author, December 21, 2008, Brooklyn, NY.

73. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 6; "Memorial Celebration for the Life and Work of Vicki Ama Garvin," House of Lord Church, September 15, 2007, Brooklyn, NY, recording in author's possession.

74. Alice Childress, "Salute to Paul Robeson," *New China* 2 (June 1976): 40; Helen Rose, "Harry Belafonte: An Exception Wants to Change the Rules," *New China* 2 (June 1976): 17–18. Garvin's support of China placed her in a vibrant Third World solidarity movement, but at ideological odds with the CPUSA, which still supported the Soviet Union.

75. Garvin interview with Lincoln Bergman, tape 6; Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air*, 191–193, 232

76. "Memorial Celebration for the Life and Work of Vicki Ama Garvin."

77. An NBUF flyer for a forum titled "Black Liberation Yesterday and Today" listed Vicki Garvin and Harry Haywood as speakers, box 1, NBUF 1, VGP; Komozi Woodard interview with author.

78. Vicki Garvin, *The Call*, March 1981, 16, box 1, NBUF 1, VGP.

79. "The Time Is Now," August 1981, box 1, NBUF 2, VGP.

80. "Celebrating Women's History Month," 10.

81. Vicki Garvin, "Step Up the Offensive Today for Victory," in *In Defense of Mumia*, ed. S. E. Anderson and Tony Medina (New York: Writers and Readers, 1996), 326–328; "Memorial Celebration for the Life and Work of Vicki Ama Garvin."