

3-27-2020

Between Harlem and Paris: Haitian Internationalism in the Interwar Period, 1919-1937

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

BETWEEN HARLEM AND PARIS: HAITIAN INTERNATIONALISM IN THE
INTERWAR PERIOD, 1919-1937

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

by

Felix Jean-Louis III

2020

To: Dean John Stack

Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Felix Jean-Louis III, and entitled *Between Harlem and Paris: Haitian Internationalism in the Interwar Period, 1919-1937*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgement.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Minkah Makalani

Jean-Robert Cadely

Chantalle F. Verna

Alexandra Cornelius

Okezi T. Otovo, Major Professor

Date of Defense, March 27, 2020

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Florida International University, 2020

DEDICATION

Pour les ancêtres:

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(October 12, 1956- April 20, 2018)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation project, like all other major endeavors one will take on in life, could not be realized without the help and support of others. I am greatly indebted to several people and organizations without whom I would have never completed this work. It was funded in its early stages by a travel allotment from the African and African Diaspora Studies Program at Florida International University (FIU). My dissertation research was funded by a generous Dissertation Evidence Acquisition Fellowship offered by the Graduate School at FIU. I am thankful to Dr. April Merleaux, for working to get an exemption to apply for this fellowship. The dissertation writing process was funded by the Dissertation Year Fellowship another grant offered by the Graduate School at FIU. Both awards were supplemented by assistantships given by the Department of History at FIU. I am thankful for the professors who wrote me recommendations for these endowments and those who supported my applications.

To Dr. Okezi Otovo, chair of my dissertation committee who guided this project to its finish, without whom this project would not have whatever value it does. Her encouragement and support provided me with the much-needed courage going into the defense. This project fell into your lap and you nurtured it as if you had been there from the beginning. I thank you dearly for your commitment to this project.

To Dr Alexandra Cornelius, my rock at the university, without you I would have never completed the master's thesis that catapulted me to this point. You have been there throughout my graduate career at FIU, and I could not imagine my time at the university without you. Our conversations, often impromptu, over cups of coffee or just when you were in your office were important to maintaining my soundness. Some of the talks were serious, some were light-hearted, and when we disagreed your

respect of my opinions as an emergent scholar made your office a space where I could be myself. You were always at the ready with words of support and encouragement, and I deeply appreciate your presence in my graduate career.

To Dr. Chantalle Verna, this dissertation starts in your class, without your project I would have written about slave revolts. You took me under your wing and introduced me to many scholars that continue to be in my network today. You have always made me think about my research and to deepen my analysis. I thank you for all of that.

To Dr. Jean-Robert Cadely, Ayisyen. Mesi anpil. Pis pase yon relasyon akademik, nou gen yon zamitye kit e enpòtan anpil nan peryòd mte nan inivestite a. Pòt ou te toujou ouvri pou mwen e pawòl nou te edem anpil pandan karyèm nan FIU a. Tout longè Kreyòl men se sou kont ou mapran li. Mesi anpil mè lan.

To Dr. Minkah Makalani, outside member of my committee. I thank you very much for your willingness to participate on my dissertation committee for a student not in your department or university. You took a chance on a student for whom you had no reference for his abilities, and you committed yourself to deepening my analysis and strengthening my project overall. I am appreciative for your openness and your willingness to engage me.

To my editors, my niece Alexandra Prosper Blissett and my cousin Stephanie Lilavois, you took jumbled words and unintelligible ideas and you rendered them into something that is not only legible but comprehensible. You know how much I am loathed to thank either of you for anything.

Family is very important to me and mine has supported me in the pursuit of the doctorate. To my mother, Chantal Jean-Louis, Ma, your support is immeasurable. You believed when others didn't, even when there was nothing on which to base your

support. To my father, Felix Jean-Louis II, Coucou, you set a set an example that this dissertation is part of the effort to meet. I thank you. To Liliane Lilavois and Carine Merceron Baez, aunts who gave me support on many levels, I am indebted to your belief in me. To Raymond “Billy” Baez, and Pierre “Pedro” Lilavois, uncles by marriage, but uncles in the truest sense of the word, thank you for your support, guidance, and friendship. To my siblings, Chris, Danni, Manu, Buddha, and Christophe and to my extended siblings Pat, Steponme, Gnatalie, and Maggie thanks for never letting me forget that I wasn’t all that; I needed and appreciate it. Also, thanks for the support. To Jeanmi Sada, in the time this came to realization, we rekindled a familial relationship and I grew close to your family. Thanks for being a refuge during the strenuous moments of graduate school. To Richie, thanks for hooking it up when I was in D.C. To the Baez Boyz, thanks for always looking out for your older cousin while I was in Miami.

To the Prosper, Blissetts, and Ramseurs we became family in the course of making this dissertation. Thank you for the support, encouragement and the belief. And thank you for welcoming me with open arms. You are the best in-commitments a guy can have.

To my sister Christine, her husband Crosby, Cadi-Cakes and Mr. Carter I abused your hospitality while you lived outside of Washington D.C. to access the archives in the nation’s capital. Thanks for opening your home to me and the inherent support. To my cousin Isabelle Dupuy and family, I also took advantage of your hospitality to reduce the cost of a research trip to London. I am grateful for your generosity and I am happy that my time at your house allowed us to bond. To April and Derek Merleaux and children- Ezra and “the other Felix”- you opened your home to me to allow me to access the archives in Amherst, thank you. To Ricardo and

Vanessa Dellagiovanna, due to our lifelong friendship you also gave me a place to stay while I did my research at the Schomburg, thanks. To Allison Arauyo, we met as I was staying at your apartment in Paris, over the course of the next month we developed a friendship that I anticipate will last a long time. Thank you for your hospitality and your friendship. To Walter and Jill Hill, and by extension Askia, you all gave me a place to stay while I was at Tuskegee, thank you. And to the Hylton-Daniel clan who gave me a tastefully decorated room at their home in Durham to help me complete the final leg of my research journey, I thank you as well.

To my partner Mamyrah Prosper, words cannot say how indebted I am to you. Before we fell in love, you were a friend who I turned to as I struggled as a master's student. You visited me when I was in the hospital after having a stroke and from there you have always cared for me. At a dark time, you convinced me that I had the merit to complete the MA program. Since we have been together you have always remained an inspiration and a source of support in the moments when insecurities came to dominate me. You never wavered in your belief I would complete the project. You put up with me, which should qualify you for sainthood. I am beholden to and appreciative of your love. Mwen renmew.

To Azali Jean-Louis Prosper, aka Bébs Mon Amour, you are everything. You came into this world in July of 2016 and you opened up a cache of love and patience I did not know I had. Your arrival and subsequent presence in my life has been defined by disruption. You've brought me sickness, you demanded my attention, you didn't sleep well and so neither did I. Even as I write this you refuse your bedtime and come to ask me what I am doing. I thank you for all of it (except the foot and mouth disease, that was painful!) and I would not trade any of it for all the peace, quiet, and sleep in

the world. I hope you forgive me for my time away doing research and the other times
I was home stuck in front of my computer. I love you forever.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

BETWEEN HARLEM AND PARIS: HAITIAN INTERNATIONALISM

BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS, 1919-1937

by

Felix Jean-Louis III

Florida International University, 2020

Miami, Florida

Professor Okezi T. Otovo, Major Professor

This project locates the transnational contributions of elite Haitians to the efforts to remake blackness and mitigate the racial subjugation of people of African descent between 1919 and 1937. The arguments forwarded here are founded on archival materials such as letters, newspapers, personal documents, and the reports of government agents. Through my engagements with these documents, at times reading against the grain, I explore the ways in which my actors directed the course of events and shaped the discourses of major organizations that sought to affect Pan-African solidarity and promote anti-colonialism. It locates their participation two major sites interwar black internationalism: Harlem, New York City and Paris France. I argue elite Haitian men were central actors in the major initiatives launched by people of African descent to redefine blackness away from racist tropes and build a global community of people of African descent committed to abating racial and colonial subjugation.

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Preface

This dissertation is the culmination of my graduate experience at Florida International University(FIU). The project began during my time as a master's student in the African and African Diaspora Studies Program (AADS) and continued into the doctoral career in the Department of History. Throughout, I have been challenged and supported by the professors who engaged various parts of this work. More than a submission in fulfillment of requirements for a Doctoral degree, it reflects my evolution as a scholar and the molding of my scholarly approach by the departments in which I have evolved. I am entirely indebted to the various intellectual communities I have participated in at FIU and this dissertation reflects their influences on my thinking.

The dissertation was born during my time in the AADS program. It has its origins in a first semester course taken with Dr. Chantalle Verna for which I wrote an annotated bibliography on the literature on the migrations of Haitians to the United States. One of the references cited the arrival of about five hundred Haitians to Harlem during the U.S. occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934. This group piqued my interest and I continued to explore the subject. In the following semester, I drafted a paper on the occupation for a class with Dr. Jean-Robert Cadely, parts of which appear in my dissertation. Also, in that second semester, I produced an examination of the writing career of Haitian intellectual, author, activist, and ethnographer Jacques Roumain for a class I took with Dr. Alexandra Cornelius that introduced me to diasporic internationalism. Continuing, I composed a work comparing the Haitian *indigenism* movement to the Harlem Renaissance drive to valorize African American folk culture for Dr. Victor Uribe. As well as a paper on the post-colonial currents of the Harlem Renaissance for Dr. Vrushali Patil. I also composed a historiography of Caribbean

migration to Harlem in the period between the two World Wars for another class. And, in fulfillment of the methods requirement for the M.A., I formed a research proposal in a seminar given by Dr. Ken Lipartito. Parts of all these writings appear in the pages of my dissertation. My career as a master's student culminated with my thesis, "Haitians, Harlemites and the Black International, 1920-1934." The committee was chaired by Dr. Cornelius and included Dr. Verna.

I entered the PhD. program in the History department with the aim of elaborating on my thesis. In a two-semester research seminar with Dr. Lipartito I wrote an article length piece on the race based economic relationship inaugurated between Haitians and African Americans in the post-occupation period. It was in an Atlantic history course with Dr. Kirsten Wood that I first considered the region as a unit of analysis. In a subsequent class with Dr. Jenna Gibbs that I began reflecting on the circulation of people, ideas, and print culture that define Atlanticism. And, in a course with Dr. Okezi Otovo, I produced an essay on the intra-racial tensions inherent in black internationalism that I presented at the 2015 Cuban Research Institute Conference held at FIU. The relationships built in the History Department helped develop my thinking on the subject. An important conversation with Dr. April Merleaux helped formulate my approach to my comprehensive exams and my dissertation project. Drs Merleaux, Otovo and Cornelius, all with joint appointments in AADS and the History Department, served on my comprehensive exam and dissertation proposal committees. My proposal, and the research agenda for my dissertation project, have their roots in the methods class I took with Dr. Lipartito.

My dissertation reflects my experiences and production while at FIU, and my committee is indicative of the relationships I built in that time. Parts of the essays mentioned above appear in the dissertation, in one form or another. My M.A. thesis is

the basis for the second chapter of the dissertation, “A Les Plus Capable: Haitians and International New Negro Political Activism in the Age of Occupation, 1919-1934.” More importantly, the professors that nurtured the embryonic stages of this project continued into my dissertation committee. Dr. Otovo served as its chair along with Drs Cornelius, Verna, and Cadely. I forged a relationship with Dr. Minkah Makalani, Associate Professor of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin that started at a seminar I was invited to by Dr. Verna. While I accept all responsibility for what transpires across the following pages, this project was incubated, nurtured, and shaped by the intellectual community I participated in while at Florida International University.

I. Introduction

The years between the two World Wars witnessed the largest movement of people of African descent around the Atlantic since the slave trade. In the colonial European metropolises, citizens and colonial subjects alike arrived drawn by the lure of employment and education, in search of new horizons and possibilities and compelled by the intensifying violence and meagre economic prospects in the colonies. For those under the domination of the French empire, Paris along with Marseille and Bordeaux became major destinations for those from their possessions in Africa and their overseas departments in the Caribbean. In the United States, African Americans fleeing escalating Jim Crow violence and legal entrenchment and drawn by job opportunities and the possibilities of starting life anew, arrived in cities in the Midwest and Northeast drastically changing the racial make-up of the places they arrived. One such locale was New York City, where the space north of 110 Street, Harlem, became the center of black life due to the influx of migrants. Much writing has been done on the blackening of the area and its renown as a home for people of African descent. Its celebrity attracted people from across the Afro-descended world and drew the attention of still even more members of the diaspora. Jean Price Mars, Haitian scholar, politician, activist and statesperson described Harlem as the “greatest black city in the world,” although there is no record of him ever visiting.¹ In these spaces--along with Chicago, London, Lisbon, and Brussels-- disparate groups of people of African descent, confronted each other for the first time, were forced to reconcile the differences inherent in their blackness and forge an identity that encompassed all members of the community. More pressingly, this community-building project was

¹ Jean-Price Mars, “A Propos de « La Renaissance Nègres aux Etats Unis, » *La Relève* 1 (Vol 3): 8 ; Martin Munro, *Different Drummers: Rhythm and Race in the Americas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 73.

imbued with a greater significance as it aspired to further the shared aim of the liberation of Afro-descended people globally. Haitians were included in these dialogues and efforts as citizens of the only independent black republic and descendants of the enslaved Africans that had overthrown their colonial masters slightly more than a century before the juncture explored here. This dissertation explores the ways Haitians, neither subjects nor citizens of a colonial power, were part of this global movement, contributors to the discussions about blackness, and participants in some of the major initiatives aimed at ending the subjugation of people of African descent.

This dissertation maintains that Haitians were lead actors in the pan-African, anti-colonial activism that defines interwar internationalism on both sides of the Atlantic. In Harlem, I locate the migrants as central figures in two initiatives that were antagonistic to one another: the Marcus Garvey led Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the W.E.B. Du Bois spearheaded international New Negro political agenda. Within the former, I show how, at the height of its influence, Haitians were essential to the international current of the Garveyist agenda, and central to the management and running of the Association. Further that Garvey deployed their successes as fodder for his speeches that were designed to draw adherents and elicit donations. I locate Haitians in collaboration with the Du Bois led New Negro campaign as lead actors in a global effort to demonstrate the fitness of Afro-descended people for self-rule in an effort to abrogate the U.S. military presence in their country. I demonstrate that they were, simultaneously, influential in the early Pan-African movements in Paris that forwarded the project of racial solidarity and anti-coloniality while emerging as a galvanizing element when the fragile ties threatened to splinter along ethnic lines. Further, as the movement matured and

became dominated by groups connected to the Communist International (Comintern), I reveal that Haitians helped to bring the Afro-Francophone community into a relationship with the international proletarian movement yet resisted the complete subsuming of their efforts by arguing for the primacy of race over ideology. More than emphasizing the importance of my figures to the objectives of the various organizations and projects they initiated, joined, or pledged fidelity to, I hold that training our gaze onto their participation and contributions draw into relief important elements about those institutions and organizations. Such a maneuver reshapes the contours of black internationalism, revealing the vectors that came to bear on critical moments, the strengths and successes of particular initiatives and the barriers that limited the reach of various programs.

Haitians, I demonstrate, could be found in both Paris and Harlem as central actors in the various anti-colonial Pan-African organizations that emerged between the end of the First World War and the second European round of global belligerence that ultimately rendered France inhospitable. Haitian elites moved from the capital city of Port-au-Prince to either Harlem and Paris, sometimes moving between both, drawn from their home for educative, economic, and political reasons. Haiti, then as Saint Domingue, was a former French colony until January 1, 1804 when Dessalines, the leading figure of the final phase of the insurrection, declared the country free after a more than thirteen-year protracted struggle. While the official colonial ties had been severed, Haitian elites continued to take cultural and social queues from their former masters (and relatives) and the practice of sending their children to France to receive their education remains until today. Harlem became a terminus for Haitian displacement as the United States, extending its hegemony into the Caribbean, began a nineteen-year military and financial occupation of Haiti in 1915 that lasted until 1934.

The American military presence displaced the former colonial power's influence in the country and opened an avenue of immigration to the United States, largely to Harlem. While Haitians were never represented in great numbers in either metropole, they were at the center of some of the most important initiatives designed to ameliorate the conditions of people of African descent and influential in ways that belied their limited numbers.

Research and Sources

The research agenda for this dissertation reflects the nature of internationalism itself and was conducted in fourteen repositories dispersed across two continents and four countries. Those who have written on interwar black internationalism have emphasized the centrality of the written word in forging diasporic connections and the quintessential role of movement to shaping the consciousness and intellectualism of the figures involved. Thus, a plan to uncover the multitudinous efforts of people in forging a global community of Afro-descended people necessitated visits to sites containing the words produced by these activists, collections that are as dispersed as the people of African descent themselves. The arguments made here, and their supportive evidence build from a diverse collection of written documents, across two languages, comprising personal letters, newspaper articles, intelligence reports, personal and professional memos, organizational notes, speeches, and missives exchanged between state officials. The materials for this dissertation have been drawn from archives, in France, England, the United States and Haiti that retrace the journeys of my subjects emphasizing the polyphonic, transnational, and inter-imperial nature of Pan-African efforts.

This source material, as all source material, is charged with inherent biases. The question of whose works are preserved and made accessible is central to the shape

of my research. For example, the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois have not only been culled, organized and given their own reading room at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, but a large portion has been digitized. However, the remnants of his assistant and influential actor Jessie Fauset's letters, diaries, clippings and personal exchanges are not housed anywhere, if they still exist. What we have of her comes from her published novels and articles as well as what has been preserved from the conversations with Du Bois and other men, despite her significant role in the Harlem Renaissance and, of importance here, the anti-occupation movement and the Pan-African Congresses. This case also points to the masculine construction of the archives. For example, when researching Leo Sajous, a Haitian doctor in Paris who was a central figure in the Pan-African movements, I found a document that notes his arrival at a meeting along with two unnamed women, who are described as being on his arms. Those women, I imagined, were Jane and Paulette Nardal, pan-Africanists of consequence and primogenitors of the Négritude movement.²

In France, I visited four archives that are central to understanding the movements of the Afro-descended community during the interwar years. At the Francois Mitterrand National Library (*Bibliothèque Nationale Française*) I located several periodicals, *La Race Nègre*, *Les Continents*, and *Le Voix des Nègres*, which were the journalistic organs of the major Pan-African associations in Paris. The publications help elucidate the ideology of the organizations that published them. I also visited the National Archives that relate to the French colonial possessions,

² See Jennifer A. Boittin, "In Black and White: Gender, Race Relations and the Nardal Sisters in Interwar Paris," *French Colonial History* 6, no 1. (205): 120-135; E.M. Church, "In Search of Several Sisters: A Biography of the Nardal Sisters of Martinique," *Callaloo* 36, no 2 (2013): 375-390; Carole Sweeney, "Resisting the Primitive: The Nardal Sister *La Revue du Monde Noire* and *La Dépêche Africaine*" *Nottingham French Studies*, 43 (2004): 45-55; T. Denean Sharpley-Witting, "Femme Négritude: Jane Nardal, *La Dépêche Africaine* and The Francophone New Negro," *Sould Critical Journal of Back Politics and Culture*

Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer (ANOM) in Aix-en-Provence, referencing the SLOTFOM collection, an eponymously constructed name drawn from the acronym of the *Service de Liaison avec les Originaires des Territoires Français d'Otre Mer*, (The Outreach Service for those Originating in the French Overseas Departments). The SLOTFOM was the coordinating French agency that gathered, summarized and disseminated raw intel from the various uncoordinated surveillance and policing groups comprised of handwritten notes, typed reports, and official updates produced by numerous agents of the French state. These agents were embedded within the pan-African, anti-colonial organizations in the 1920s and 30s. These sources serve as the foundation for all research on the Pan-African organizations in France during time, and I used them to draw into relief the role of Haitians in the organizations. My research expands on the existing scholarship in its engagement of the holdings in the *Archives Nationales Pierrefitte* (National Archives at Pierrefitte) in Paris that houses the collection of Soviet related documents, providing more nuanced insights on the major organizations that sought to forge a black community in Paris. Similarly, I turned to the collection of the Prefecture of Paris Police to add new information to the existing literature set. This site provided me with detailed information about several of my subjects and insight on the nature of the surveillance. All three sites contain materials produced by the French security apparatus that emerged in reaction to the increasing presence of colonial subjects in the metropole and in response to the burgeoning international proletariat movement.

Any research on anti-colonial black organizations in France during the interwar period must rely on the records of spies and informants who infiltrated these associations. In the wake of the First World War, the French Ministry of the Colonies, as well as other colonial agencies in Western Europe, grew progressively disturbed by

the increasing number of colonial subjects and their activities in the capital. These agencies developed transnational policing forces that followed their targets as they moved within and between continents and empires.³ Beginning in 1919 the first government agency to surveille colonials in the metropole was founded to monitor the Vietnamese.⁴ In early 1920s this concern came to bear on the Pan-African associations created by Caribbean and Africans migrants. This coincided with the rise of Comintern and the forming of the *Union Intercoloniale* in 1921, that merged the threats of anticolonialism and international communism.⁵ This led the French state to form the *Service de Contrôle et Assistance des Indigènes* (Control and Assistance Service for the Colonial Natives) founded on December 12, 1923. The SLOTFOM was the mature version of the CAI and, ostensibly, created to aid the assimilation of the foreign population into French society.⁶ The second part of their mission, which seems to have occupied the majority of the Service's energy, was surveillance and repatriation of those they deemed to threaten the national security.⁷ Local police, spies, colonial agents and others that formed the *Sûreté* supported the policing apparatus of the Ministries of the Colonies and of the Interior who colluded to undermine the anti-colonial efforts in the metropole. The interdepartmental and intercolonial memorandums, analyses, notes on meetings attended, police files, and

³ Daniel Bruckenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest: Liberal Imperialism and the Surveillance of Anticolonialists in Europe, 1905-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6.

⁴ Phillippe Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres en France, 1919-1939* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), 21.

⁵ Bruckenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest*, 83.

⁶ Jennifer Boittin, "Black in France: The Language of Politics and Race in the Late Third Republic," *French Politics, Culture & Society* Vol 27 (Summer 2009):25.

⁷ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 22. Jennifer A. Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Undergrounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2010), xxv.

personal notes of embedded agents serve as the basis for my arguments about Haitian participation in the anti-colonial, Pan-African groups.

Membership or connection to Marxist and militant anti-imperialist organizations was just cause for monitoring. Those in the cross hairs of the security apparatus were keenly aware of the scrutiny, spoke candidly about spies in their midst, and, thus, forwarded clear declarations of their politics. These acknowledgements were, of course, recorded by those very operatives; and, I argue, the proclamations were sometimes performed for the agents' benefit. Those who infiltrated the organizations were not white French people; they were migrants themselves, originating from the very colonies their targets sought to liberate. At times, they were coerced into service as a result of an arrest for an infraction, and their loyalty to the state was ensured by exposure or repatriation.⁸ Many held key positions and were trusted members of these organizations. Dewitte's revelation that Agent "Joe" was in actuality Edmond Thomas Ramananjato was personally unsettling having come to note the important role he played in the organizations he joined.⁹ The reports of agents such as "Joe," "Claude," "Désiré," and "Paul" spanned years as they became intimates of those they surveilled and that familiarity, in turn, allowed them entry into the private spaces, parties, café discussions, and homes of those whose activities they exposed. This brings to the fore new questions about reading "against the grain." Rather than remaining attuned to the subtleties of the implicit racism of a white agent, one must now consider the intra-racial and intra-colonial divides: colonial position--whether citizen or not; phenotypical prejudices; Antillean versus African contentions; political ideology; and social aspirations of those who penned the overwhelming

⁸ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, xxvi.

⁹ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, xxvi.

number of reports. In the documents used to construct the narrative, those embedded in the organizations hurled essentialist invectives about mixed-race people, Africans of specific origins, lamented the pretensions of those from the French Caribbean, and clearly exhibited prejudices marked by class. The amount of paperwork produced by this initiative, reproduced in nauseating redundancy and representing an ecological disaster, is astounding

The chapters that locate Haitian participation in movements centered in Harlem are drawn from several archives with holdings dedicated to preserving the materials of various organizations and influential people that were at the forefront of the New Negro Movement. This period in African American history has been well documented and the personal holdings of several of its leading exponents are preserved in major repositories. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Studies located in Harlem and named after Arturo Schomburg--the leading bibliophile of works on people of African descent, houses the papers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This collection serves as the basis for much of the chapter on the anti-occupation movement. The Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University holds the James Weldon Johnson and Grace Nail Johnson papers as well as the Walter White and Poppy Cannon papers which augment the NAACP materials. The discussion on the Pan-African Congresses is built largely on the W.E.B. Du Bois papers held at the University of Massachusetts Amherst Library, which holds more than 100,000 of his correspondences. In addition to his letters, the collection also includes clippings gathered from newspapers from across Europe and the United States, as well as memorabilia and ephemera related to the conventions. The Morland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University in Washington D.C. houses the personal documents of Rayford Logan intellectual and Francophile, of the

later generation of New Negro actors, who emerged on the scene as an assistant to Du Bois during the second Pan-African Congress. Logan's papers contain an unpublished autobiography detailing his efforts in coordinating the gathering. This includes his reflections on Dantès Bellegarde, Haitian star of the Paris session, a person Logan admired and developed a friendship with that outlasted the convenings.

The other Harlem based organization where I locate Haitians as being in prominent positions is the Marcus Garvey led UNIA. The "hazardousness" of researching Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, as Judith Stein has pointed out, is tripartite. First, after indictments were issued against leading members of the organization in 1922, the U.S. government collected and destroyed many of the documents related to the Association. Secondly, the factional contests between individual chapters that erupted after Garvey's deportation caused the documents to scatter. And thirdly, those documents that remained in Garvey's possession were destroyed in the bombings of London in 1941.¹⁰ Robert A. Hill, foremost archivist for the UNIA and its leader, was the lead editor of a thirteen-volume collection that encompasses most of the history of the organization at its peak based on materials he and his researchers collected across their disparate holdings. Across the collection, he gathered documents that range in provenance from agents embedded within the organization, personal and business letters as well as transcripts of speeches sent by Garvey and his agents, testimony of subpoenaed witnesses against Garvey and a host of other materials pulled together from far ranging sources. In addition to the sources reprinted in the volumes, the Robert A. Hill Collection held at Franklin Center at Duke University contains the items that did not make it into the collection. These

¹⁰ Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1986), 2.

sources sometimes served as background information for the footnotes and comments in the collection, but also contained detailed information about my subjects. In addition to these, I have used a digital site run through the Schomburg Center, *Black New Yorkers*, that houses the existing numbers of the *Negro World*, the official organ of the UNIA. These materials are bolstered by archival materials from sites in France and England and nuanced by research I conducted in Haiti. These sources afford me the platform to make the argument that Haitians were central to the UNIA's functioning and growth and that Garvey relied upon them to further his international agenda.

My time in the Haitian archives is markedly different than my experiences at the other sites of research, which speaks to the neo-colonial relationships that were born in the period under review here. The institutional differences are marked by the ability of a government under neo-liberal siege to allocate funds to preserve and organize its patrimony. In Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital, I visited three repositories: *L'Archives Nationale* (The National Archive,); *L'Institution Saint Louis de Gonzague* (The Institute of Saint Louis of Gonzague), a facility tied to a Catholic school run by the Brothers of Christian Instruction, and *Bibliothèque Nationale d'Haïti* (the Haitian National Library). The most productive location was *Saint Louis Gonzague*, a private collection, where I was able to locate editions of *L'Essor*, a Haitian newspaper from the early Twentieth century, where Haitians associated with the UNIA published their articles and advertisements. Similarly, the *Bibliothèque Nationale* also offered access to newspapers from the same period. The *Archives Nationales d'Haïti*, the repository for official government documents and correspondences of its foreign ministry was a more complicated site of research. The holdings were not well organized and in disarray after the earthquake of 2010; the archivists were not able to locate all the material and admitted there were boxes of

documents in need of sorting. There is a second site where materials had been moved after the seismic catastrophe that has yet to be cataloged. The same applies to the private holdings of the *Bibliothèque des Pères du Saint Esprit* (Library of the Priests of the Holy Spirit) whose edifice (as of the summer of 2018) had not finished being reconstructed, eight years after the seism. In July of 2018, after Haitian president Jovenel Moïse, acceding to the demands of the International Monetary Fund, raised fuel prices, the country was thrown into a political contest, colloquially known as *Peyi Lòk* (the national lockdown) that effectively shut the country down for the next several weeks. The demonstrations and actions that followed were a repudiation of the stagnant minimum wages and rising food prices that render the cost of living prohibitive; the corruption that has afforded the private sector the right to pillage public funds; and the internationally imposed presidency of Moïse. The climate, which included frequent strikes of the public transport drivers, among those greatly affected by the fuel increases, effectively ended my ability to access archives.

In all, the research conducted across such a broad set of archives has afforded the foundation to make valuable contributions to several bodies of literature and trace the contours of the major movements that sought to bridge the divides that separated people of African descent and to liberate the global community. The dissertation makes contributions to works that have explored the interwar black international as well as adds to the works that have explored the movements and collaborations of Haitians across the Atlantic in forging solidarity with other people of African descent. I assert that, although they were never represented in any great number in any site of diasporic formation in the years between the two World Wars, Haitians played influential roles in the organizations they joined and collaborated. It adds to research done on the UNIA, arguing that Haitians were key agents in the international agenda

of Garvey, and that their achievements spurred its unprecedented popularity and growth. It responds to scholarship done on the anti-colonial, Pan-African movements that emerged in Paris in the wake of the First World War. I maintain that the few Haitians who were in those circles played critical roles in forging cohesion of people of African descent across potential ethnic divisions and directed the drive toward international communism. Approaching the various phases of Afro-Francophone community building through the lens of the contributions of Haitians also reveals the limitations of the leaders whose masculine intransigence threatened unity even more than cultural differences did. Additionally, the project makes contributions to the scholarship on the global initiative inaugurated by elite members of the New Negro movement centered in Harlem that projected an image of blackness that was fit for self-governance. By inserting Haitians into this campaign, I demonstrate their centrality to the movement and connect this project, defined by the Pan-African Congresses, to the collaborative effort to abate the U.S. military presence in their home country. I argue that, as evidenced in the person of Dantès Bellegarde, Haitians were at the forefront of the initiative to present blackness as suitable for self-determination and celebrated, by members of the cohort, as its foremost exemplar. In summation, I offer that Haitians were transnational, polyphonic, and trans-imperial actors, central to the movements that sought to affect the cohesion of the disparate groups of people of African descent as a means of liberating the global Afro-descended community, including their own homeland.

The Literature

This dissertation engages and contributes to literature relating to black internationalism, black Atlanticism, the New Negro Renaissance, the UNIA, and the history of Haiti. It adds to these various historiographies by demonstrating the

centrality of Haitians to movements definitive in forging a global community committed to ameliorating the conditions of people of African descent. Following the efforts of these transnational Haitians serves as a micro-history of the causes and associations of which they were part. It draws our attention to specific elements, considered here under new light, affording me the space to make nuanced interventions on existing understandings of events, groups, and ideological practices.

In many cases, highlighting the presence and impact of Haitians in international black organizations is itself an addition to our knowledge of the past. For example, Brenda Gale Plummer has noted that Elie Garcia's Spanish surname has obscured his nationality which has silenced the fact, as I document here, that a Haitian was one of the most influential members of the UNIA in his dual role as director of the Black Star Line (BSL) and Auditor General of the entire Association.¹¹ But, more importantly, for our purposes here, uncovering his role in the organization, as well as that of other Haitians, throws into relief the centrality of the managers of the Garvey-led movement in propelling the cause to its greatest heights. Similarly, I show Haitian participation in the international projections of the New Negro, and thus, link them to a projection of blackness that was cosmopolitan, erudite, and fit for self-governance. I illustrate how Bellegarde became the leading exponent of the movement and should be considered along with W.E.B. Du Bois as one of cause's definitive figures. Moreover, in connecting the Pan-African Congresses of 1919, 1921, and 1927 to the collaborative Haitian/African American anti-occupation movement, I reveal how the two impetuses were part of the same initiative, linked by overlapping actors, platforms, and ideology. Furthermore, by highlighting the Haitians' role in the anti-colonial, Pan-African efforts in Paris, I reveal their critical influence in steering the

¹¹ Brenda Gale Plummer, "Garveyism in Haiti During the U.S. Occupation," *The Journal of Haitian Studies* vol 21 no. 2 (Fall 2015): 71.

course of the movement over a ten-year period. Critically, I argue that following the Haitians reveals the ways the stewards of the various organizations were as much an impediment to the cohesiveness of the Afro-Francophone community as ethnic or ideological differences. Ultimately, in locating Haitians at the major sites of blackness making and in the most important organizations dedicated to the forging of an international black community in the pursuit of liberation, I seek to resituate them at the forefront of the century's long black emancipatory and anti-colonial movement, a position they held since the success of the revolution that culminated in the emancipation of the enslaved people and the independence of Haiti in 1804. In what follows I engage the historiography of the major currents engaged in this dissertation. Furthermore, throughout the analysis of the writings, I insert my arguments thereby connecting my interventions to the major themes of the literature, divided, as is the dissertation, by the site of migration.

Part I: Harlem, Garveyism, and New Negroism

The first part of the dissertation (chapters 2 and 3) follows Haitians as visible Caribbean actors in Harlem as a site of blackness making. It places them in the two major movements that emanated from the space, the Marcus Garvey led UNIA and the Du Bois dominated NAACP program. Caribbean migrants were central to the construction of Harlem as a black enclave. The impact of these migrants was long obscured by the literature perhaps, as Irma Watkins Owens argued, to preserve the era as the apogee of African American intellectual and cultural production.¹² Despite this, many point to "If We Must Die," a poem by Claude McKay, a transplant from Jamaica, as a foundational and era-defining moment for the artistic rejection of the

¹² Irma Watkins Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 4.

subjugation of people African descent. The literature on the presence of Afro-Caribbean participants in the movement begins during the Renaissance itself. Works by McKay and W.A. Domingo, one time editor of the *Negro World* also born in Jamaica, reveal the conspicuousness of the transplants in Harlem.¹³ Ira Reid's seminal sociological work, *The Negro Immigrant* (1929), quantifies the number of people who arrived to Harlem from the Caribbean, delineating their countries of origin while also providing a qualitative assessment of their experience. Reid was one of the few to note the presence of Haitian migrants. This dissertation moves the scholarship forward by locating Haitians in two of the major themes of the New Negro elements originating in Harlem, anti-colonial and anti-racist denunciations.

Beginning in the late 1970s, works by Dennis Forsythe (1976) and Keith Henry (1977) throw into relief the centrality of Caribbean-born activists in the political climate of the era.¹⁴ The first monograph on the impact of Caribbean migrants in the Harlem Renaissance is Watkins-Owens *Blood Ties* (1996) which locates migrants' contributions to shaping the phenomenon, including revealing, for the first time, the importance of West Indian women.¹⁵ Subsequent works have nuanced our understanding of their significance.¹⁶ Winston James's *Holding Aloft the Banner of*

¹³ See Claude McKay, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (New York: Harvest Book, 1968); W.A. Domingo, "Gift of the Tropics," in *The New Negro*, ed. Alain Lomax (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

¹⁴ Dennis Forsythe, "West Indian Radicalism in America: An Assessment of Ideologies" in *Ethnicity in the Americas*, ed Frances Henry (Paris: Mouton Publishers, 1976); Henry, Keith S. "The Black Political Tradition In New York: A Conjunction of Political Cultures," *Journal of Black Studies* 7 (4, Facing North America: Caribbean Political and Cultural Definitions) (Jun 1977).

¹⁵ Irma Watkins-Owens, "Early-Twentieth-Century Caribbean Women: Migration and Social Networks in New York City," in *Islands in the City: West Indian Migration to New York*, ed Nancy Foner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

¹⁶ See for instance: Francoise Charras, "The West Indian Presence in Alain Locke's *The New Negro*," in *Temples for Tomorrow: Looking Back at the Harlem Renaissance*, eds Geneviève Fabre and Michel Feith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Heather Hathaway, *Caribbean Waves: Relocating Claude McKay and Paule Marshall* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999).

Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America (1999), Robert Philipson's article "The Harlem Renaissance as Post-Colonial Phenomenon" (2006), Carole Boyce-Davies's monograph on the Trinidadian activist, Claudia Jones, *To the Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (2007), and Minkah Makalani's *In the Cause of Freedom* (2011) all argue that Caribbean migrants contributed the anti-colonial discourses in Harlem and expanded the movement internationally. Building on these works, I argue that Haitians were part of this tradition. I locate how their activism served to merge anti-colonial and anti-racist tropes and project them internationally by training African Americans' attention not only to the presence of the American military in Haiti, but also revealing its racially driven violence. Never numerically significant, roughly 500 Haitians arrived in Harlem during the occupation years, including Jean Lamothe and Joseph Mirault. The two established a branch of the Union Patriotique-the Haitian organized anti-occupation group- on 135th Street in Harlem to facilitate their efforts to by drawing the black American population into the project.

Perhaps the most famous Caribbean anti-colonial, anti-racist activist was Marcus Garvey who launched the most popular black uplift movement, almost literally, from a street corner. The literature on the UNIA has centered on Garvey himself as the catalyst for the organization's success, a theme I counter by drawing into relief the role of managing agents. The historiography has characterized him as either a tragic Macbethian figure whose commitment to liberating people of African descent sealed his doom or as a demigod equally committed to self-aggrandizement as he was dedicated to overturning the conditions of people of African descent and as guilty of self-importance as he was of mismanaging his organization. The two leading

texts both foundational to the construction of my argument are Tony Martin's *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (1976) and E. David Cronon's *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (1955). The latter, while a foundational text, *avant la lettre*, in its excavation of the Jamaican organizer and his movement, is critical of the entire endeavor. Cronon characterizes Garvey as an opportunist who told his constituents "what they wanted to hear," and succeeded through an "emotion[ally]" driven program that achieved little more than to highlight the dissatisfaction of black people globally.¹⁷ Conversely, Martin's work is a defense of Garvey and the movement he launched.¹⁸ Writing specifically in response to "counter arguments of Garvey's ineptitude" he argues, perhaps directed at Cronon, that racism has distorted Garvey's legacy and that the opposition he faced during his life was manifestation of those who feared his nationalism.¹⁹ Throughout, Martin espouses that Garvey's program was a well thought-out agenda that eclipsed claims for social equity by demanding global liberation of the race that he sought to achieve through his various ventures. The two texts agree that Garvey was a master propagandist and used this talent to draw adherents and spread his program. Both assert that a major short coming of the cause was its managers who both authors describe as having failed Garvey- Cronon states

¹⁷ E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Milwaukee Press, 1955) 4.

¹⁸ Tony Martin has written several works that examine Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, from these monographs he is an advocate for the movement.

¹⁹ Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976), ix.

Garvey surrounded himself with “fawning sycophants,” while Martin argues he was betrayed by intimates.²⁰ My research complicates this notion.

Other important texts locate the arch of the UNIA within larger global currents. Judith Stein’s *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (1986) takes a middle road approach. While acknowledging the failures of the program, she argues that Garvey’s and the UNIA’s popularity stemmed from addressing the real issues affecting people of African descent.²¹ Using then newly available government documents, Stein situates the Garvey led movement in the context of the racial currents of its era and argues that its success was the result of the economic prosperity it offered, and its failure due to antagonistic forces and poor planning.²² Similarly, Adam Ewing in his *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (2014) further distances the analysis of the UNIA away from Garvey as individual by exploring the reach of the ideology away from its progenitor and parent body. Ewing’s work is part of a larger corpus of production that explores the impact of Garveyism, that spread throughout the black world, and that continues until today, existing longer without the Jamaican’s direction than it did under his command.²³ Ewing argues that the success of the program drew more from “organic mass politics” based on “Garveyist organizing” that flourished upon realization of the “possible.” That organic politics

²⁰ Martin, *Race First*, 164; Cronon, *Black Moses*, 76.

²¹ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 3.

²² Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 273.

²³ See Emory Tolbert, *The UNIA and Black Los Angeles: Ideology and Community in the American Garvey Movement* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA, 1980); Mary G. Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Claudrena N. Harold, *The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South* (New York: Routledge Press, 2007).

confronted the white power structure and thrived due to the organizing agents.²⁴ In an essay review on Colin Grant's *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (2008), Ewing calls on researchers to move away from Garvey as the main focus of their analysis and move to the "Garveyist organizers" who acted far and away from the "epicenter."²⁵ While remaining trained on the locus of activity, this dissertation adds to the works that decenter the story of Garveyism away from its namesake.

I argue that the spread of Garveyism was due less to the propagandizing and incendiary rhetoric of the supreme leader, but that it was built on the tangible successes of the management of the organization which served as fodder for his bravado. My focus on Haitians has brought this to the fore. It adds to the literature on Haitians in the UNIA by moving past demonstrations of the Association's abortive attempts at securing a footing in the black republic.²⁶ As well as adding Louis La Mothe's efforts to the literature that locates Haitian migrants mass participation in the Cuban UNIA chapters.²⁷ Haitians were unique amongst the potential administrators in that they had a much-needed international perspective that Garvey employed to further his global designs. The chapter counters the writing on the movement that put the onus of its shortcomings on managers that were either negligent and criminal or too servile and ingratulatory to be effective. What it does, by locating Haitians at all levels of management, from those at the heights of power to low-level administrators,

²⁴ Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 7.

²⁵ Adam Ewing, "Garvey or Garveyism?," *Transition: Blacks, Jews and Black Jews* v. 105 (2011): 132.

²⁶ See Brenda Gayle Plummer, "Garveyism in Haiti During the U.S. Occupation," *Journal of Haitian Studies* Vol 21 (Fall 2015): 68-87; Leon D. Pamphile, *Haitians and African Americans: A heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001) 130-132.

²⁷ Philip A. Howard, *Black Labor, White Sugar: Caribbean Braceros and their Struggle for Power in the Cuban Sugar Industry* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015).

is demonstrate that the aims and platform of Garvey were realized by those who materialized his lofty ambitions. Recognizing Garvey's propagandist tools as central to the spread of the movement, I assert that the leader used the successes of the managers, in this case Haitians, as fodder for his assertions of the vigor and righteousness of the organization. It was this characterization, in the earliest moments of the Association's life, that drew adherents attracted to the accomplished elements of the scheme, elicited donations that allowed agents to further the plan, and caused Garveyism to spread and take on a life of its own.

Frank Guridy, in exploring the impact of the UNIA in Cuba has noted the performative nature of the Association, especially as it manifested in the *Negro World*.²⁸ Using the periodical, I draw into relief the way Haitians were used, either in their own words, Garvey's enunciations, or the announcements of the editors, to project images of racial progress and organizational strength, both at the apogee of the Association's influence and during its decadence. Haitians could be located initiating and championing the central tenants of Garveyism: confronting white supremacy at the international level; securing a continental base for his African redemption program; and materializing the Black Star Line. The accomplishments of the Haitians were used by Garvey as validation of the justness of his mission. He also used the Haitian's gains in his contest for supremacy waged against the W.E.B. Du Bois led anti-Garvey current that vied for the same constituency.

The literature on the Harlem Renaissance has emphasized the efforts of people of African descent to recast the image of the African American community through social, political, cultural, and economic programs that sought to change its material

²⁸ Frank Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 89-90.

conditions and prospects. Du Bois led the most celebrated initiative, seeking to undermine racist tropes about black people founded in defense of slavery and replace them with a dignified, bourgeois image of blackness. Martha Jane Nadall, Jeffery O.G. Ogbar, and others have demonstrated the very conscious race-making project that worked to project an image of blackness as complex and complementary, countering stereotypical tropes tied to the plantation, despite internal fissures as to the nature of those images.²⁹ David Levering Lewis in his classic work, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (1981), characterized the movement as an “elitist response” to racial subjugation.³⁰ George Hutchinson analyses the project’s collaboration with whites in advancing the agenda of the New Negro.³¹ While popular class and other alternative sexual and gendered realities complicated the elite’s attempted efforts to characterize blackness as mainstream, the gatekeepers of the movement worked to promote victorian values of temperance, thrift, chastity, social purity, and patriarchal authority.³²

More recently, writers have sought to characterize the New Negro movement as a global phenomenon that connected people of African descent across the Atlantic. Authors such as Minkah Makalani, Davarian Baldwin, and Brent Hayes Edwards, Micol Seigel, and Lara Putnam have expanded the parameters so that Harlem becomes

²⁹ Martha Jane Nadall, *Enter the New Negroes: Images of race in American Culture*(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 3. See also Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2007), 59; Jeffery O.G. Ogbar, “Afterward,” in *The Harlem Renaissance Revisited: Politics, arts and Letters*, ed Jeffery O.G. Ogbar (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2010), 245.

³⁰ David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1989), xvi.

³¹ George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Back and White* (Cambridge: Belknap Harvard University press, 1995), 2.

³² Shane Vogel. *The Scene of the Harlem Cabaret: Race, Sexuality, and Performance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 4.

but a site of a global New Negro movement.³³ They have revealed how the elite members sought out connections and collaborations throughout the Afro-descended world to further their project of uplifting the global black community. In the chapter centered on this movement, I locate Haitians as willing confederates, invested in the success of the cause for the liberation of their home country—occupied in this period by the U.S. military.

This aforementioned elite, led by Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Jessie Fauset, and Walter White sought to project the respectable, bourgeois image internationally as well as domestically. The latter three Levering Lewis says were half of “the six responsible” for the literary movement that has defined the era. All four operated on a global level and sought out similarly minded people of African descent to forward an image of blackness fit for self-determination in a project that merged local aspirations with global currents.³⁴ I connect these central Renaissance figures to my subjects in an effort to situate them within the international New Negro political agenda. I not only locate Haitian participation in this effort, but I demonstrate how they were lead exemplars of the image and proponents of the cause having recognized its efficacy in restoring their sovereignty.

I make two additions to the literature: firstly, I argue that Haitians were at the forefront of this effort, and secondly, by following them, I show that the Pan-African Congresses and the anti-occupation drive were part of the same impetus. The

³³ See: Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of the Black International* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Minkah Makalani, and Davarian L. Baldwin eds, *Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance Beyond Harlem* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migration and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013). Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Duke University Press, 2009).

³⁴ Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue*, 121.

forenamed gatekeepers emerge as main actors in both projects along with Haitian elites such as Dantès Bellegarde, Sténio Vincent, Georges Sylvain and others who found class and ideological synergy with their African American counterparts. The outward facing, anti-colonial impetus of the Harlemites was bolstered by the presence of Caribbean migrants in the Harlem mix. The Haitians, in advocating for their second emancipation, provided the cause with a target to effect, on a small scale, the change they sought at the global level. In engaging these two currents, anti-occupation and pan-Africanism through the Haitian lens, I reveal the repetition of arguments and the overlap of actors linking the two movements.

The literature on the Pan-African Congresses is scant and in need of augmentation so that we can truly grasp their pathbreaking influence on the 1945 iteration in Manchester, England and the decolonization of Africa that followed. Central to the global efforts to abrogate black subjugation and ameliorate the conditions of people of African descent were the four Pan-African Congresses that transpired from 1919 through 1927. They were the brainchild of W.E.B. Du Bois, then editor of *The Crisis*, the monthly review of the NAACP, that sought to cast an elite image of blackness that was sophisticated and cosmopolitan. There are few works on the first four congresses, and the 1945 iteration is more celebrated and more thoroughly examined in the literature. Clarence G. Contee's two articles published in the 1970s focus on the 1919 and 1921 installments emphasizing the role played by W.E.B. Du Bois. Contee's "The Statutes of the 1921 Pan African Congress," forwards the adroit notion that the 1921 manifestation was the most successful, while eliding the tensions that marked this generation of Pan-African activists.³⁵ Immanuel Geis, in

³⁵ See Clarence G. Contee, "Du Bois the NAACP and the Pan-African Congress of 1919," *The Journal of Negro History* Vol 57 (Jan 1972), and "The "Statutes" of the 1921 Pan-African Congress of 1921: A Document," *African Historical Studies* Vol 3. (1970).

The Pan African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe, and Africa (1974), argues that the movement was unsuccessful due to its “vague” and “loos[e]” construction of the global black community. He does credit the meetings for uniting Francophone and Anglophone members of the Afro-descended community in cooperation, if only for a moment, and “keeping the idea alive” in reference to the forerunner held in 1900.³⁶ However, I resist this characterization and assert that the strength of these conferences was to announce the arrival on the world stage of a generation of black leaders who were representative of the race’s fitness for self-governance. More recently, Sarah Claire Dunstan has similarly noted that the 1919 Pan-African Congress was a success in the forging of an Afro-diasporic identity, not merely judging it by its inability to accomplish its geopolitical aims.³⁷ Importantly, she connects the first affair to the post World War moments noting that the claims made by the participants played on the renewed call for international cooperation, respect for humanity and the right for self-determination.³⁸

Elaborating on these works, I maintain that these congresses served to forward an elite and erudite image of blackness, steeped in Western intellectual discourse and, consequently, fit for self-governance and seeking charge of the entire back world. For the Haitians, most notably Dantès Bellegarde, who participated in the 1921 and 1927 convocations, the congresses afford them the opportunity to voice a distinct notion of sophisticated blackness, asserting their ability to self-rule and denounce the U.S. Occupation while voicing a critique of the inconsistencies of the West’s claims

³⁶ Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe, and Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1974), 261.

³⁷ Dunstan, “Conflicts of Interest,” 146.

³⁸ Sarah Claire Dunstan, “Conflicts of Interest: The 1919 Pan-African Congress and the Wilsonian Moment,” *Callaloo* Vol 39 (Winter 2016): 134.

towards freedom and democracy. Moreover, by linking the overlapping participation of Haitian and African American actors in both the Congresses and the anti-occupation movements, along with repetition of ideology in both projects, I make the claim that they were not discrete manifestations, but intimately connected drives.

The advent of the U.S. military and economic control of Haiti served to reinvigorate the relationship between the Haitians and African Americans. As Frank A. Guridy has argued in *Forging Diaspora* (2010), empire forges “routes” that foment “social, political, and cultural” diasporic connections.³⁹ Considering this, I argue the anti-occupation movement was born out of these unencumbered pathways. I reveal that the fact of the military domination, coupled with the international political agitation, created an avenue for Haitian elites to collaborate with their counterparts in the United States to regain their independence. Many works have explored the connection between Haitians and African Americans in this period, including my M.A. thesis which I expand upon here. I build on Leon D. Pamphile’s work, that situates this collaboration as an element of the New Negro Renaissance in Harlem. I continue his analysis by nuancing the race based anti-occupation relationship and exploring the ways both groups collaborated to remake race during this period. Millery Polnyé, who also credits Pamphile as a forerunner, argues in *Dougllass to Duvalier* (2011) that “racial-uplift” is a salient dimension ungirding the collaborations between the two groups. He characterizes these concerted efforts as dedicated to ameliorating the “conditions” and the reputation of the black Republic.⁴⁰ In harmony with Polnyé’s position ,but in tension with his distancing from pan-Africanism as an

³⁹ Frank A. Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a Worlds of Empire and Jim Crow* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ Millery Polnyé, *From Dougllass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti, and Pan-Americanism 1870-1964* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2011) 14.

apt nomenclature for describing the relationship, I argue that Haitians and African Americans strengthened their historic relationship in order to “uplift” the conditions of Haiti while also working towards the betterment of the conditions of black people globally in the name of racial solidarity.

Scholars have begun to situate the migration of Haitians into broader contexts, pluralizing the routes traveled by Haitians outside the country. These works emphasize a salient feature of Haitian internationalism; that it has always transcended the cleaves of nationality, empire, and language. Matthew Smith explores the 19th century currents that informed the movement of people of African descent between Haiti and Jamaica. In *Liberty, Fraternity, Exile* (2014) Smith argues that a historical connection linked the people in the two countries in ways that influenced the development of both locations.⁴¹ He explores the ways in which Haitians of all classes, for a variety of reasons, traveled to Jamaica and influenced events there. His work adds to a growing literature set that demonstrates that intra-Caribbean movement is a vital thoroughfare of the Atlantic World and complicates our notions of Afro-diasporic formation.⁴² Similarly, Matthew Casey explores the movements of hundreds of thousands of Haitians to Cuba during the U.S. Occupation of Haiti. In *Empire’s Guest Workers* (2017), Casey explores the Haitian migrants who traveled to Cuba as contracted workers in the sugar plantations and asserts that Cuba was the original site of mass Haitian movement. Central to his argument is that the two countries were linked by United States hegemonic control.⁴³ Moreover, he situates the Haitian

⁴¹ Matthew Smith, *Liberty, Equality, Exile: Haiti and Jamaica After Emancipation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 2.

⁴² Smith, *Liberty Equality, and Exile*, 8.

⁴³ Matthew Casey, *Empire’s Guest Workers: Haitian Migrants in Cuba during the Age of Occupation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 5. See also Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean*

movement within a global circulation of bodies.⁴⁴ Building on Lara Putnam's work, *Caribbean Migrations*, Casey employs a "bottom up" approach, forsaking the writings of elites, instead locating the struggles of popular class Haitians.⁴⁵ This approach affords him the platform to explore how race was made through alliances between Afro-Cubans and Haitians in the Eastern portions of Cuba.

Following the lead of Casey and Smith, I expand the scope beyond the bilateral, North-South hemispheric framework employed by both Polnyé and Pamphile to demonstrate how Haitians participated in a broader movement, alongside African Americans, and other elite members of African descent drawn across all shores of the Atlantic. This community asserted themselves as an international "talented tenth," and therefore those best suited to lead the amelioration of the condition of the global black community. Central to my thinking is Polnyé's construction of "Black Modernity" as an existential reality of those who simultaneously critiqued and lauded the Enlightenment project in attempt to free themselves from its racially oriented strictures. Along these lines I show how Haitians engaged in "imagined community building" as people oppressed as a result of their African descent. And that this project was buttressed by transnational and translingual "alternative cultural and political" connections that transcended empire, and critiqued hypocritical applications of Enlightenment discourses, while steadfastly making claims to others.⁴⁶ Elements of Haitian activism in this period exist within

Migration and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

⁴⁴ Casey, *Empire's' Guest Workers*, 16.

⁴⁵ Casey, *Empire's' Guest Workers*, 19.

⁴⁶ Polnyé, *From Douglass to Duvalier*, 15.

Hemispheric dynamics, while others concurrently moved East and West in participating in the international New Negro political agenda.

More recently, Chantalle Verna has published a work tracing Haitians' opportunism in their relationship with their North American neighbors. Countering notions of U.S. hegemonic domination and Haitian submission, in *Haiti and the Uses of America* (2017) Verna reveals Haitian agency in navigating the power imbalance for individual and national gains.⁴⁷ While the work focuses largely on the period after the departure of the Americans, she devotes a chapter to the occupation period demonstrating how many Haitians used the arrival of the Americans to further their interests and realize "reforms in Haitian society."⁴⁸ Her work brings to the fore questions on the expedience of race. While the literature has revealed that Haitians and African American have a long-standing relationship, here I want to build on Verna's argument to suggest that Haitian actors capitalized on the race making project and sought to use it to affect their national liberation.

I will show how the figures studied here collaborated with elite African Americans in the NAACP, an emergent black institution, to achieve the abatement of American military domination. They realized, whether sincerely or not, the efficaciousness of joining with the ascendant African American community to affect their liberation. Moreover, with the NAACP crowd they found a brand of blackness that intersected with their own: one that was steeped in Enlightenment traditions and demanded recognition as equals to whites based on their mastery of Western forms, whether it be the production of literature, mastery of French, or proper masculine

⁴⁷ Chantalle F. Verna, *Haiti and the Uses of America: Post-U.S. Occupation Promises* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 3.

⁴⁸ Verna, *Haiti and the Uses of America*, 5.

comportment. These Haitians joined in the project inaugurated by Du Bois to ameliorate the conditions of people of African descent, globally, in order to realize their own independence. The overlapping actors and themes reveal that for the Haitians anti-occupation and the Pan-African congresses were linked. Haitian participation across these platforms reveals that they conceived of this race making project as a vehicle to recapture their independence.

Part II: Race-making in Paris

The second part of the dissertation centers on the race making project that occurred in Paris, among members of the Afro-Francophone world, and reveals the central role played by Haitians in the arch of the movement, spanning 1924 through the advent of German belligerence in the 1930s. Pan-African unity and anti-colonial organizing drove the movement in Paris. The literature has stressed that Paris was a hotbed for anti-colonial activity with representatives from across the empire agitating for the abatement of colonial status—most notably Ho Chi Minh. Standout works by Tyler Stovall, Michel Fabre, Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Brent Hayes Edwards have all demonstrated that Paris was also a center for the formation of transatlantic black identities.⁴⁹ These works reveal the international contributors to the race making project in Paris from the continent and from the Caribbean. This dissertation adds to their analyses by drawing into relief the role played by Haitians as coagulant elements that fomented unity in the face of potential splintering. I point to Haitians as neither colonial subject nor citizen to reveal their centrality in forging a

⁴⁹ See Michel Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Lights* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1996); Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of the Black International* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Bricktop's Paris: African American Women Expatriates in Jazz-Age Paris and The Autobiography of Ada Bricktop Smith, or Miss Baker Regrets* (SUNY Press, 2015). Sharpley-Whiting has several monographs on the subject as well as many more chapters, and articles on the subject.

black community bound by their experiences with the French empire. Yet, I show how the Haitians used the fact of the U.S. occupation to link themselves with the colonized in French world, furthering the community building project.

The project contributes to the work that has explored the efforts of Africans from the French possessions on the continent and Afro-descended people in the overseas French departments in forging a diasporic community. J.S. Spiegler's dissertation, "Aspects of Nationalist Thought Among French-Speaking West Africans, 1921-1939" (1968) built on extensive research and interviews with several of the main actors, argues that the Pan-African movement in Paris during the interwar years served as an incubator for the nationalist movements that emerged in the post-Second World War period. J. Ayodele Langley, in a publication coeval with Spiegler, similarly seeks to recast the beginnings of anti-colonial Francophone Pan-African activism away from the *Négritude* movement of the 1930s, relocating its genesis to the 1920s.⁵⁰ In his monograph *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945* (1973), Langley centers on African colonial subjects and connects Paris to West African nationalist agitation on the continent and argues that there were several forms of Pan-Africanisms, along with the radical variety, that sought to undo white supremacy and colonial oppression.⁵¹ Phillippe Dewitte's *Les Mouvements Nègres en France, 1919-1939* (1985) is the foundational text for all analysis of anti-imperial, Pan-African activity in France. Dewitte's monograph argues that post-war Paris was a site of mass migration of Afro-descended people that coincided and colluded with a growing anti-imperialist sentiment in the metropole articulated by both white and

⁵⁰ J. Ayodelle Langley, "Pan-Africanism in Paris, 1924-36," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol 7. (April 1969): 74.

⁵¹ J. Ayodelle Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 3.

black French citizens and the unincorporated colonized of all races. He forwards that this environment incubated black movements that included assimilationists, reformers, nationalists, and radical revolutionaries.⁵²

The central themes that emerge from these works is that Pan-African solidarity was stunted by intra-colonial rivalries that pitted the subjects from the Caribbean—who were French citizens—against the more recent subjects of French imperialism from the continent who were cast as interlopers in the metropole. Additionally, they reveal that many of the groups that sought to forge Afro-diasporic cohesion dissolved under ideological differences based on adherence to or rejection of Marxist ideology and the financial support of international communist sources. While these authors stress that ideology and ethnicity were the impediments to diasporic institution building, in following Haitians I counter this argument and assert that various projects aimed at uniting people of African descent stalled under the intransigence of their leaders. More importantly, I reveal that Haitians were a unifying element in the circles they participated in, arguing for unity across ethnic lines at critical moments of disintegration.

With their narrower focus, other authors have illuminated elements central to understanding the complexities of radical black activism. These works have pointed to the idiosyncrasies of the activists and the site of the cleaves. Francois Manchuelle's article "*Le Rôle des Antillais dans l'Apparition du Nationalisme Culturel en Afrique Noire Francophone*" (The Role of Antilleans in the Appearance of Cultural Nationalism in Black Africa) (1992) relocates the discussion on black cultural politics in France to Caribbean subjects. Noting their historical presence in the French empire, he argues that Caribbean subjects have long fought for the rights of Afro-descendants

⁵² Phillippe Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres en France*, 12.

in the metropole which is directly linked with the emergence of decolonization and Negritude.⁵³ Jonathan Derrick's *Africa's Agitators* (2008) employs a transatlantic lens in exploring the efforts of people of African descent in dismantling colonialism, adding the Europe-to-Africa current that is missing in the literature.⁵⁴ Together, these two works point to a central tension in Afro-Parisian circles between the old subjects and citizens from the Caribbean and the newly colonized and interlopers in the metropole, the Africans. This point has been stated repeatedly in the literature, yet what my research in its focus on Haitians reveals, is that this tension has been overstated and that leaders used their influence in their respective communities as leverage in amassing power.

The power struggles in these organizations reveals the centrality of gendered performances in the meetings where solidarity was being forged and anti-colonization was being theorized. Jennifer Boittin has written extensively on the imbrication of race, gender, and coloniality in Paris in the 1920s and 30s.⁵⁵ Her work has demonstrated that radical back activism (as well as other efforts) were grassroots in nature, differed between the capital and the provincial port towns, largely masculinist in constituency, and emotional and volatile in nature. I demonstrate that the Haitian men examined here who participated in the capital city set this tenor, often engaging in belligerent debates that at times descended into physical confrontations. Moreover,

⁵³ Francois Manchuelle, "Le Rôle des Antillais dans l'Apparition du Nationalisme Culturel en Afrique Noire Francophone," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* Vol. 32 (1992): 377.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Derrick, *Africa's Agitators: Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918-1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 4.

⁵⁵ Jennifer Anne Boittin has several important works that inform this chapter: "In Black and White: Gender, Race Relations, and the Nardal Sisters in Interwar Paris," *French Colonial History* Vol. 6 (2005): 120-135; "Black in France: The Language of Politics and Race in the Late Third Republic," *French Politics, Culture & Society* Vol 27 (Summer 2009): 23-46; *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Undergrounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2010).

in locating Haitians role in the proceedings and the reconciliations, I forward a critique of the performance of masculinity as threatening to these circles and fundamental to the fraying of several organizations. Not that Haitians were above the conflicts, but their attempts at quelling the contests, and their own instances of belligerence, draw into relief that neither ethnicity nor intracolonial contests threatened unity as much as the refusal of the leaders to share the stage.

The literature separates the pan-African, anti-colonial efforts in France into two parts, divided by the rise of the influence of the Communist International. Boittin along with argues that black activists in Paris sought to undermine the imperialist project through Pan-African unity while searching for a vehicle that would elide “other factors” that divided Afro-descended people, which some identified as international communism.⁵⁶ Nuancing this argument I argue that Haitians were at the forefront of bringing international Marxism into the Pan-African conversations of France. I argue that Camille Saint-Jacques, member of the Communist Party in the first part of the 1920s and a vocal and active member of the Pan-African circles, helped bring Comintern support to the movement. Moreover, in following Saint-Jacques, I demonstrate how international communism was an influence in the anti-colonial, Pan-African moments from the beginning. However, as the literature discusses, 1927 was a pivotal point in Francophone circles as Comintern influence grew in the wake of the League Against Imperialism Conference in Brussels. Here, I again locate Saint-Jacques in the deliberations that published a direct statement that facilitated the rapprochement between the black organizations and those connected to international proletarianism.

⁵⁶ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 80.

In this way, I contribute to the growing list of works that show that international communism emerged as a vehicle for liberation in the eyes of Afro-descended activists, however problematic or tenuous the alliance was in actuality. Cedric Robinson has argued as much, asserting that the black intellectuals were drawn to communism's critiques of capitalism, which they located at the heart of slavery and colonial exploitation of people of African descent, but that the ideology and the International itself had limited value and efficaciousness for their desires of liberation.⁵⁷ The earliest works on radical black activism in the interwar period center almost exclusively on either the French or the English settings. George Padmore, himself a celebrated radical black activist of the period, if not the most, penned an auto-historical account of the experience of members of the African diaspora in Comintern circles, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?: The Coming struggle for Africa* (1956) that pointed to his own experience navigating between the demands of international Marxism and his commitment to changing the conditions of people of African descent.⁵⁸ Hakim Adi's works are also foundational to understanding this movement. His chapter "The Negro Question: The Communist International and Black Liberation in the Interwar Years" (2009) sketches the arc of the relationship of Comintern to people of African descent and the former's commitment to the "liberation of all peoples... including those of African descent."⁵⁹ Specifically, he points to the decision of the fourth congress in 1922, where Comintern voiced its

⁵⁷ Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism; The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

⁵⁸ George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism? The Coming Struggle for Africa* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 19.

⁵⁹ Hakim Adi, "The Negro Question: The Communist International and Black Liberation in the Interwar Years," in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International Since the Age of Revolution*, ed Michael O. West, William G. Martin, & Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 155.

support for anti-colonial black movements in Africa and in the Americas as genesis of its allure.⁶⁰ I add to this assertion by drawing into relief the influence of the French Communist Party in the early anti-colonial, Pan-African movement as promulgated, in part, by Haitians. Moreover, I demonstrate how they voiced clear Marxist critiques of the colonial project early on in the pan-African, anti-colonial moments and paved the way for the dominance of communist ideology in Pan-African circles.

Yet, the fidelity of people of African descent to the ideology of Marxism and the international proletariat movement has been questioned. Brent Hayes Edwards points to Marxism as one of the key perspectives engaged by Afro-descended people in overcoming the disjuncture separating them.⁶¹ Edwards maintains that the emergence of radical black activism in this period was caused, not by the attractiveness of Comintern politics, but by the exigencies of colonialism and the role of capital in black subjugation. He argues that international communism provided people of the African diaspora a platform to (re)unite, compare experiences, and formulate a definition of blackness based on capitalist exploitation. Similarly, Minkah Makalani's *In the Cause of Freedom* (2011) explores the connection of radical black Caribbean activists in Harlem and London during the period and argues that international Marxism marked the "moment" of radical black activism. He states that those who sought to undo colonial subjectivity joined Comintern because they found it an "efficacious" vehicle in furtherance of their aims.⁶² These authors agree on the point that Comintern's dictates and demands proved too much for these activists who

⁶⁰ Adi, "The Negro Question," 158

⁶¹ Edwards, *The Practice*, 11-12.

⁶² Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from London to Harlem, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 4-5.

were more concerned with undoing the subjugation of people of African descent than international proletarianism as informed by the USSR's geopolitical agenda. I add to these writer's contributions by revealing that Haitians in France were drawn to the platform for ideological and financial reasons. I note how they forwarded Marxist critiques of colonialism and, particularly, the U.S occupation of Haiti. Unlike these authors, I show that some of my subjects, and others around them, were stalwarts of the Communist Party and did not turn to the platform simply as a vehicle for black liberation, despite whatever criticisms they may have of its ineffective support of their causes. I also continue these authors argumentation by showing how the lure of Marxist ideology and dependence on the international had its limits for some. Furthermore, I argue that Haitians in Paris also served as bulwarks against the complete subsuming of the Pan-African cause under the dictates of international communism.

Chapter Summaries

This dissertation is comprised of four chapters and divided into two sections, one for Harlem and the other for Paris, covering fifteen years of overlapping activism across two continents. The first two chapters, comprising the first part, explore Haitian contributions to and participation in the Garvey's UNIA and the Du Bois led international New Negro political agenda, respectively. The second part consisting of the third and fourth chapters explores the roles of Haitians in the pan-African, anti-colonial movements in Paris. Chapter three explores their contributions in the emergent early anti-colonial and Pan-African movements. The fourth chapter explores the more mature manifestation of the organizations when international communism dominated. The work is so constructed as to isolate the developments emanating, but not confined to, the two major sites of blackness making.

While the causes explored here should not be considered in isolation, in fact they were rarely discreet in their attempts to forge a global community, the project is divided this way to clearly demarcate the avenues of pan-Africanism traveled by Haitians, and in respect to the periodization. The events in Harlem begin before those in Paris. By the time the UNIA had passed its height of organizational influence with Marcus Garvey on his way to prison in 1924, the Pan-African project was just emerging in Paris. Similarly, the Pan-African Congresses in Paris came and went before the earliest body uniting people of African descent was founded. Yet, here is overlap and connection, as this dissertation will demonstrate. Isaac Beton who was a central actor in the second Congress was also a pivotal figure in the Pan-African organizations that dominated the scene in the second half of the 1920s. Kojo Tovalou Houénou who co-founded the first organization dedicated to the issues of people of African descent in Paris had a flirtation with the UNIA in 1924. There is periodic overlap as well: the anti-occupation effort, 1920-1934, runs concurrent with the apex of anti-colonial and Pan-African movements in Paris. The division of chapters is ultimately designed to evidence Haitian contributions to the specific movements that are the subject of each chapter.

Chapter two explores the role of Haitians in the UNIA locating them at the epicenter of the major initiatives imagined by Garvey. This chapter shows that Haitians held important positions and were instrumental in the operational side of the organization. Moreover, the chapter forwards the notion that the success and impact of the UNIA could not have been realized without the committed efforts of Haitian, and other, administrators and executives. Haitians in the UNIA were drawn to the platform and allure of its architect and, through their commitment to the cause, helped to cement the various pillars of Garveyism that catapulted the organization to the

forefront of black liberation movements in the interwar years. Garvey, in turn, found the Haitians' international pliability valuable for his global project. Additionally, I demonstrate that Garvey used the various successes of the Haitians, which he embellished through hyperbolic half-truths, to bolster his position, draw adherents, and elicit pecuniary contributions in the form of dues or shares in his various endeavors. This chapter follows several figures who operated at all levels of Association business and endeavors: operating the Black Star Line, establishing Liberia as the capital of the UNIA in Africa, and projecting the Association's demands in defense of black people on the international stage at the League of Nations. It asserts that Haitians were valuable members of the organization who helped further the central aims of the Association globally.

The third chapter locates the role of Haitians in advancing the international New Negro political agenda that argued in defense of colonized people of African descent and made declarations as to the fitness to rule of the race's elite members. It follows several actors from 1920 through 1937. This chapter maintains that elite Haitian men traveled from Port-au-Prince to Paris and Harlem participating in a global blackness making project that sought to appeal to liberal values and demonstrate, by deign of their acumen, the fitness of the race to self-govern. This version of blackness sought inclusion into the fraternity of powerbrokers, dominated exclusively by the white leaders of the colonial powers, as the representative leaders of the community of African descended people. Haitian engagement in this program traveled across and transcended the lines of empire. In this moment, Haitians forged relationships with leading African American figures first to undermine the occupation and, upon its end, to capitalize on this alliance to further economic development in the country.

I employ the term the “international New Negro political agenda” to describe a transnational initiative led by elite men of African descent, arguing for the enfranchisement of the “civilized members of the race” in order to ameliorate of the conditions of people of African descent using liberal notions of democracy and capitalism. For the Haitians, this program was of the utmost importance as the liberation of their homeland from American rule depended on it. The Haitians who sat before the League of Nations and the United States Congress sought to undermine the underlying causes for the occupation through their reference of international law, performance of proper comportment and eloquence. By linking actors across initiatives founded on racial solidarity, I argue that anti-occupation, the Pan-African Congresses, and international economic enterprises were all part of the efforts of the global New Negro elites to assert their fitness and the merit for self-governance. For the Haitians this meant the end of the occupation and their restoration as directors of their country’s fortunes.

The fourth chapter begins in 1924 and locates the importance of Haitians in the early moments of Pan-African coalescence in Paris, ending in 1927. The chapter explores the movement from its anti-colonial beginnings in the *Union Intercolonial*, which united all colonial subjects, until its disintegration in early 1926 and the uneven march toward pan-black organization. It argues that Haitians played a powerful role in establishing an anti-colonial discourse that sought to unify all colonial subjects in dismantling the French empire. Despite this broad lens, the chapter reveals that the subjects followed here employed a clearly Afro-diasporic lens, arguing in defense of people of African descent globally. As the pan-colonial group splintered, I argue that Haitians were key actors in the regrouping of people along racial lines. And, when the initial Pan-African associations began to dissolve, it was a Haitian, Camille Saint-

Jacques, who defended the cause of group cohesion. Following the Haitians in this chapter exposes critical elements of activism in this period. First, it reveals that the emergence of racially oriented groups did not emerge out of black dissatisfaction with the *Union Intercoloniale*, as the literature holds but that all groups had left. Secondly, it reveals that the tensions that threatened the unity of people of African descent were not intra-racial or intra-colonial, but rather stemmed from influential figures vying for supremacy. Finally, it argues that the influence of international communism was felt much earlier than previously held, and that it was Saint-Jacques --a leading proponent of international proletarianism--who dominated the landscape in the more mature manifestation of the cause.

Chapter five continues in Paris, resuming in 1927 with Haitians as lead agents in the Comintern influenced Pan-African organizations. This period has been marked in the literature as the dominance of the radicals. Here I show that Haitians were lead adherents to the discourse that explained and derided colonialism in Marxist terms. They, along with their comrades, described the domination of people of African descent as necessitated capitalists' insatiable need for natural resources and exploitable labor. Tracking their movements, I show how these Haitian activists were central participants in meetings, contributors to influential periodicals, and defenders of the interests of the groups when confronted with dissenters. Yet, in this period Haitians continued to be supporters of Pan-African unity in the face of disintegration. From this position Haitians represented a bulwark against complete subsumption of the cause of people of African descent under the dictates of Comintern. In these moments, following the Haitian participation reveals several critical elements of Pan-African activism. First, it reveals that despite ideological differences, the groups did not rive under the pressure of intellectual differences, but rather that coherence was,

again, undermined by obstinate leadership. Secondly, it draws into relief the lengths at which the French national security apparatus infiltrated Pan-African circles and how, through their commitment to undermining the movement, Haitians emerge as both targets and agents of surveillance . Finally, it reveals the limits of international Marxism in furthering the cause of Pan-African unity.

Conclusion

The work makes contributions, big and small, to a wide set of literatures asserting the centrality of Haitians in the major organizations and projects aimed at undermining black subjugation in the years between the two world wars. In doing so, it also makes an intervention into the scholarship on interwar black internationalism. This literature has stressed the need of a dispersed community of people of African descent to surmount the differences in order to unify and propel the liberation of the community. Works that have explored Haitians in blackness making projects or in race-based international networks have done so along one axis either hemispherical or regional. This project places them simultaneously in multifaceted, multilingual and transnational activism transcendent of the lines of imperialism in their contributions. It forwards the claim that Haitians held a Pan-African lens in their activism serving as cohesive elements in the various movements they joined. Haitians were a group apart. Unlike Anglophone Caribbean migrants in Harlem or Antilleans in Paris, they were never part of a mass movement of people or represented a numerically significant block. And, unlike the rest of the Afro-descended world, they were not colonial subjects, tied to a colonial power that afforded them a natural destination. France represented a lingual home and had historical lure; Harlem was the site of migration due to neo-colonial incursions. They were an occupied people and they used this status to forge connections with other members of the Afro-descended community.

Furthermore, they used their positions in the associations they joined to denounce the U.S. military presence in their country and make it one of the causes that united the community of people of African descent. Following the Haitians also serves as a micro-history of the organizations to which they were connected, thereby highlighting central elements previously unconsidered.

II. Materializing Universal Negro Improvement: Haitian Managers and the International Program of the UNIA

This chapter explores the role of Haitians in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) founded and led by Marcus Garvey. It departs from the position that the success of the UNIA cannot solely be attributed to the magnetism and charisma of Garvey and the allure of his program for the upliftment of the global Afro-descended community. I argue that to understand how and why the program grew in influence and reach so quickly one must turn to the managing agents, from senior officials who worked closely with Garvey to middle managers who headed divisions or initiatives and to low-level officials who handled seemingly insignificant tasks at the front lines of the organization. To draw into relief the centrality of these officials to the UNIA's growth and popularity, I locate the contributions of the few Haitians who served in critical positions as the Association grew into the largest movement of people of African descent, globally, before or since. For Garvey, Haiti, the only independent black republic, was an example of his vision for a black empire. In building his provisional government, Garvey turned to Haitians as representatives of the Association abroad and as agents to secure the central tenants of his plan; they were experienced, malleable international actors whose language dexterity and passports afforded them unique ability to assert the Association's positions internationally and expand its reach, globally. The Haitians, and the managing members in general, acted as more than mere extensions of Garvey's bidding and through their efforts the central tenants of the Association's agenda were able to be realized.

There is no Garveyism without Garvey.

The minor privileges of Marcus Garvey's upbringing served as the launching point for his impact on the African descended community. He was born into a relatively comfortable peasant class Jamaican family. He was educated through public and private schools that, along with apprenticeships and his father's extensive library, helped to shape his mind outside the norms of education for those in his class. By all accounts, his father was well-read and possessed a library from which a young Marcus indulged and acquired knowledge on a broad range of subjects. His mother, who also worked outside of the home, provided Garvey with the support that he needed to flourish. Eventually, at the age of sixteen, Garvey left the Jamaican countryside for the city where he began an apprenticeship at a newspaper as a printer. In Kingston, through his work in the press, Garvey began to engaging popular class politics that imbricated the subjugation of people along racial and class lines. It is in this period that Garvey came to feel the strictures of Jamaican somatic currents where an aspirant "brown" class of Jamaicans emerged as a buffer class between the white colonizers, whose practices they emulated, and the darker skinned proletariat, who they sought to distance themselves from by demonstrations of privilege and deign of their phenotype. Garvey's restless activism continued; he never seemed to stop moving in the period covered here with the exception of the month long UNIA conventions held in August from 1920 through 1923, and with his incarceration in 1925, and at the age of 23 in 1909 he left his native land for Costa Rica.

Garvey's first period outside of Jamaica served to deepen his knowledge of the subjugation of people of African descent and introduced him to international activism. In Costa Rica, Garvey continued his work in journalism, founding the periodical *La Nacion*, and joined in labor agitation against the dominant United Fruit company.

Leaving Costa Rica, he traveled along the Caribbean coast of Central and South America. Along the way he continued his print work noting the conditions of people of African descent, many of whom were Anglophone Caribbean migrants. The group, and working-class people of African descent, globally, were his target constituency and their experiences served as fodder for his rhetoric. Garvey briefly returned to Kingston en route to London where his internationalist perspective matured, and his sense of mission emerged. Upon arrival in 1912, Garvey began working in the Bristol docks until he landed a position with the *African Times and Oriental Review* edited by Dusé Mohamed Ali, a Sudanese- Egyptian actor and activist with whom he began a relationship that vacillated between fraternity and disparagement. The association proved quite beneficial for the Jamaican. The connection sparked ideas in Garvey about Africa as a homeland for black people globally.¹ It was Ali's willingness to vouch for the Jamaican that garnered the latter a reading card at the British Library that afforded him the privilege of a space to read and access to a wide range of materials that explored the history and culture of the African diaspora. Included in his reading list was *Up from Slavery* (1901) the autobiography of Booker T. Washington. It was this book, combined with his experiences traveling around what Lara Putnam described as the circum-Caribbean migratory sphere, that Tony Martin, Garvey biographer and UNIA scholar, argues instilled in Garvey the "doom" of the mission of having to lead the Afro diasporic community into glory.² Destitute, Garvey returned in

¹ E. David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 15.

² Tony Martin, *Marcus Garvey, Hero: A First Biography* (Dover: The Majority Press, 1983), 26; Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migration and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 4

1914 to Jamaica where he committed himself to the path of activism for the betterment of Afro-descended people.

Upon his return to his native land, Garvey began to realize the many elements that matured into the phenomena that swept the black world. Five days after his arrival, Garvey went about establishing the UNIA. On August 1, 1914, along with some associates from his previous efforts in Kingston, Garvey founded the Association as a vehicle for the unification of people of African descent, the rehabilitation the “fallen race,” the establishment of agencies in various countries dedicated to the defense of all “negroes,” and the administration of a worldwide business network among people of African descent. These central elements of Garveyism have driven the largest Afro-diasporan movement before or since.³ Yet, the future president in exile of Africa, ever the wanderer (Garvey never stopped moving and, often, it was in his absence that his managers went about realizing the work set out by him), realized the movement could not be confined to Kingston or Jamaica as a whole and he set his sights on the United States to raise funds and build networks. In 1915, Garvey sent a letter to Booker T. Washington- in advance of a speaking tour of thirty-eight States- seeking to visit Tuskegee and in search of sponsorship and support. The latter replied politely and offered modest assistance but died before the former left Jamaica. Undeterred, Garvey embarked for the United States arriving in Harlem and staying with a migrant family, one of the scores of Anglophone Caribbean folks that immigrated to the country in this period that shaped the landscape of the area above 110th street in Manhattan, New York City into a black

³ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 19.

enclave.⁴ This family was part of the nameless, faceless numbers that lived black internationalism and, as Putnam argues, succored the more famous agents of transnational black solidarity.⁵ Garvey arrived in Harlem as it was incubating the various elements that emerged as the New Negro Renaissance.

Garvey realized the potential for success in Harlem and stayed on after his speaking engagements to build his organization there. Harlem was a melting pot of blackness; in addition to the Anglophone Caribbean arrivals, African Americans from the Southern states were arriving in large numbers, in search of economic opportunity, along with people of African descent from all across the diaspora.⁶ This mix of people, which was never entirely harmonious, produced a politicized climate where anti-colonial and anti-Jim Crow sentiments merged. Haitians were part of gumbo of ideologies. The landscape of Harlem was teeming with activists who reached out for the potential adherents in organized meetings of the multitudinous organizations that emerged or in informal setting like the famous street orators that set up on ladders across the section. For the loquacious, passionate, powerful and determined Garvey, the setting was ripe for his brand of proselyting and by 1917 he was a known commodity in the community.⁷ He caught the notice of fellow British West Indian transplant, Hubert H Harrison, from St. Croix, who gave Garvey his

⁴ For a complete story of British Caribbean movement to Harlem see Irma Watkins-Owens *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1945* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996), which includes a chapter on Garvey.

⁵ Laura Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migration and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 8.

⁶ Ira Reid, *The Negro Immigrant: His Background, Characteristics and Social Adjustment 1890-1937* (AMS Press, New York. 1970).

⁷ Cronon, *The Story of Marcus Garvey*, 39.

break allowing him to speak at the inaugural meeting of his Liberty League.⁸ In 1918, Garvey established a branch of the UNIA in Harlem, incorporated in New York, and relocated the Association's headquarters to the new chapter. He also founded the *Negro World*, the journalistic organ of the body and the dissemination point for Garvey's own views, and the African Communities League, the business current of his program.⁹ Within the first few weeks of incorporation, between 1500 and 3500 people joined the new organization.¹⁰ The Black Star Line, the shipping venture that launched the Garveyite platform, and landed the founder in prison, was founded in 1919. That same year Garvey survived an assassination attempt which added a current of persecution to his growing reputation and propelled him to the forefront of black protest. His program now set and his notoriety ascending to its apex, Garvey was on the way to becoming the most powerful black voice across the Afro-descended world and the most feared proponent of black liberation politics of the colonial powers and assimilationist people of African descent. He now needed a cadre of agents to act in his place to realize the various programs he set forth as the basis for the redemption of the Afro descended community. But Garvey had a problem; he found the pool of potential representatives in the United States too provincial in their world view for his international agenda; enter the Haitians.

⁸ Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement & Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 71.

⁹ Tony Martin *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggle of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*

¹⁰ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 43.

Enter the Haitians

Haitians were central actors in spreading the reach and affecting the early successes of the UNIA. They can be located at the forefront of the important programs and at the center of the Association platform and committed to the realization of the Garvey agenda for global black liberation. In the Haitians, Garvey found a group of adherents who could represent the organization on the international scene. Because of this, the Haitians that drive the arch of this chapter experienced rose quickly in the organization. By 1919, the fundamental elements of Garvey's plans that spurred his and the organization's meteoric rise had been established, and Haitians were entrusted with their realization. Tony Martin, Garvey and UNIA scholar, argues that Garvey's platform was appealing because it went further than civil rights with its focus on race as a definitive factor of subjugation and the pursuit of an African homeland and the business ventures as a vehicle for transcending subjugation through "self-sufficiency."¹¹ This chapter heads a 2008 call by Adam Ewing to turn our gaze away from Garvey to understand the real impact of the UNIA. While it turns away from the "spectacular" and towards the "mundane" as he suggests, it redirects attention away from the pulpit and towards those who sat on the dais to locate the role of the emissaries of Garvey in spreading his doctrine and developing its central tenants.¹² Both Martin and E. David Cronon, whose *Black Moses* is a foundational text of the literature on the subject, have argued that it was the "sycophantic," inept, fraudulent and treacherous representatives of Garvey that ultimately precipitated the diminishing of the central body of the organization.¹³ Contrary to this, I argue, with a nod to Alfred

¹¹ Martin, *Race First*, 23.

¹² Adam Ewing, "Garvey or Garveyism?" *Transition: Blacks, Jews and Black Jews* v. 105 (2011): 145.

¹³ Martin, *Race First*, 164; Cronon, *Black Moses*, 76.

Chandler's seminal work *The Visible Hand*, that Haitians were efficacious middle managers in the UNIA that forwarded the Association's major goals in the international arena and were loyal to Garvey and the program. Garvey was the propagandist, the idea person, but it was his trusted agents who materialized those plans that he then pointed to attract more dues paying members and stockholders.

During the build-up to and through the apogee of the UNIA and Garvey's influence, 1919-1922, it was Haitian bureaucrats, acting on the international and domestic stage that furthered the Association and its leader's schemes that pushed it to its heights. Garvey was setting up his provisional government and often emissaries were dispatched in his name to act as ambassadors would in nations with geopolitical borders.¹⁴ Haitians frequently operated on the largest international stages. He turned to them, instead of the available African American candidates, because he found the latter provincial in the political outlook, and resistant to expanding their framework.¹⁵ Moreover, unlike his adherents from the Anglophone Caribbean, the Haitians were citizens of an independent republic and not subjects of an imperial power. Additionally, the Haitians who participated in the highest levels were fluent in multiple languages. The Haitians that joined the UNIA did so because they were drawn, like millions of others in the Afro-descended world, to Garvey's approach to ending black subjugation by fostering black pride, asserting self-reliance, and speaking of the rehabilitation of Africa. They fit the much-needed role of international agents deployed to announce the Association's arrival on the international scene, secure its footing abroad, and defend its interests, globally. And, they did so faithfully, seemingly, without receiving much, if any, remuneration for their efforts. Their role

¹⁴ Martin, *Race First*, 51.

¹⁵ Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York: Octagon Books, 1963), 140.

was more important if you consider that Garvey was not heading an American civil rights organization but building a global black empire.

Eliezer Cadet: From Port de Paix to the Paris Peace Conference

Eliezer Cadet, a Haitian immigrant to the United States, was one of the early converts to the emergent Garvey program. Cadet was born in Port-de-Paix, a port city in the Northwest department of Haiti, in 1897. His father was a successful merchant and Cadet was sent to an elite Catholic School, *L'Institute Saint Louis de Gonzague*, in Port-au-Prince, the Haitian Capital city located in the Western department, further south. It was at St. Louis that he learned how to speak English and after graduating in 1916, he migrated to the United States where he studied and received a diploma in “mechanics.”¹⁶ After earning his degree he went to work at a munitions factory in Nitro, West Virginia that at its peak was producing 100,000 pounds of “high explosives per day.”¹⁷ It was during this period that Cadet saw his first copy of the *Negro World*. Reading the bi-weekly publication instilled in Cadet the notion that people of African descent were getting together for the rights of the race. He used to also visit Brooklyn, New York, then home to a small Haitian community, where he attended meetings of the UNIA. It was when he noticed a dearth of articles about the U.S. Occupation of Haiti that he wrote an op-ed that exposed the truths about the occupation and argued that the African American had been deceived about the Black

¹⁶ Footnote, Robert A. Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers (MGP)* Vol I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 308; Legba Eliezer Cadet Interview Robert A. Hill, July 1979, Robert A. Hill Collection, Duke University, Research Collection (RE) Box 147, cassette 10993-C50085: 30:15-31:28.

¹⁷ Charles Caldwell Hawley, *A Kennecott Story* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2014) 98-99.

Republic.¹⁸ The letter caught the editor's attention and soon Cadet would become a member and key agent of Garvey's plans on the international stage.

Cadet, who believed in the UNIA mission, became a one of the Association's parent body's international representatives. It was a quick ascent; by December of 1919, he had been selected to represent the UNIA at the Paris Peace Conference as the delegation's interpreter. His appointment was announced in what would become typical Garvey manner, in front of a large audience of supporters, the announcement used to bolster support and encourage donations. On December 10, 1918 Garvey held a mass meeting, a forerunner of his month-long August Conventions, that drew 6000 people to the Palace Casino located on 135th street in Harlem.¹⁹ This reveals the significance of the envoy, announced as it was, before such an audience. It was the initial foyer into the geo-political arena. The delegation was critical to a central UNIA aim, their mission was no less than to gain a hold onto a part of Africa.²⁰ Cadet was the third, along with Ida B. Wells, who had cautiously supported Garvey in the nascent years of his efforts, and A. Phillip Randolph, also an early proponent who eventually became a leading figure in the "Garvey must go" effort only a few years later, both having been elected to be representatives.²¹ However, the government in Washington was denying African Americans passports to Paris (W.E.B. Du Bios had to travel under the guise of being a journalist) which impeded Wells and Randolph from attending. A few meetings and a letter later, Cadet, due to his Haitian passport,

¹⁸ Cadet, interview, 38:00-40:01; Brenda Gayle Plummer, "Garveyism in Haiti During the U.S. Occupation," *Journal of Haitian Studies* Vol 21 (Fall 2015): 71.

¹⁹ Letter, Eliezer Cadet to Marcel Herard, December 11, 1918, *MGP VI*, 319.

²⁰ Martin, *Race First*, 122.

²¹ Colin Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 174.

emerged as UNIA's *entire* contingent to the Peace conference, and now had the title of "High Commissioner" bestowed upon him.

Cadet's rise was noted in a December 1918 edition of the Haitian newspaper *L'Essor*, edited by Henec Dorsainville, for whom Cadet served as a correspondent. The periodical often published his letters and reports of his activities in the UNIA. The issue also an open letter penned by the High Commissioner to Haitian President Dartignanave imploring him to join in the Negro Renaissance in which Haiti was to be at the vanguard, by seeking to develop its agriculture and industry.²² Surely, Cadet's missive was to be an opening overture to future UNIA interests in Haiti. By January 1919, he had written in reply to Dorsainville where he asserted that after the Peace conference, the latter would be the Association's point person and his newspaper a vehicle in furthering the program of the Association in the occupied republic.²³

Cadet proved to be an asset in forwarding the UNIA's agenda in Europe. He sought to locate supplemental funding for the mission from Haitian sources. Before departing, Cadet sought out financial assistance from the Haitian consulate in New York. The consul turned Cadet away rebuking him for the argument in the *Negro World* article. Writing to Dorsainville, in an open letter ostensibly to be published in *L'Essor*, Cadet denounced the Haitian representative as "anti-African" further declaring that they racist system that pits Afro-descended people against each other will be undone. Citing his guiding motive to be the unity of the 400 million people of African descent for the upliftment of the race; a frequent talking point of Garvey's. As

²² Eliezer Cadet, "Lettre Ouvert A Son Ex. Le President Sudre Dartignanave," *L'Essor* December 17, 1918, 1.

²³ Eliezer Cadet to Henec Dorsainville, January 13, 1919, *MGP V. I*, 358-359.

Cadet prepared to embark on his journey, he was cautiously optimistic about the possibilities of the mission. If he was able to successfully present the peace aims to the League, and they were adopted, he envisioned that it would thrust the UNIA to the forefront of the effort to rehabilitate the black race. And, he envisioned, the recognition would kickstart the Garveyite economic self-sufficiency program.²⁴ Within a week after the incident at the Haitian Consulate, armed with letters of introduction written by Garvey, Cadet sailed for Europe, stopping in London on the way to Paris.

As the representative of the Association abroad, Cadet was a tireless advocate who sought to disseminate the UNIA's mission as far and wide as he could. On his way to the Paris Conference, he stopped in London and spoke before a sympathetic audience. He tried, unsuccessfully, to get articles about the UNIA resolutions for the Peace conference published and resorted to leaving them in the charge of Garvey's former employer Mohamed before he set off for Paris. He arrived in the French capital on March 1, 1919, and immediately got to work. He met with representatives from Haiti and former associates, seeking entry into the conference proceedings, to no avail. He met with representatives from Japan and Brazil, towards the similar end with the same inefficaciousness. Continuing his efforts to broadcast the resolutions of the Association, he sought out writers from the major French newspapers, still he found no quarter that would provide him a platform.²⁵ He did manage to attend one session of the Conference, taking the seat of a Haitian representative who was unable to attend due to illness. He wrote to Garvey about his realization that the invitation extended to the small nations were a formality, and that the major powers, led by the United States

²⁴ Cadet to Dorsainville, January 13, 1919, *MGP V. I*, 360.

²⁵ Cadet to UNIA, April 19, 1919, *MGP V. I*, 408-410.

and Woodrow Wilson, who Cadet described as “Jupiter” in the conference setting, had their agenda set and provided little space to the others.²⁶ Despite these setbacks, Garvey used Cadet’s travels serve as fodder to aggrandize the reach of the UNIA. The frontpages the *Negro World*, said to be the where Garvey forwarded his most important messages during this period, presented the mission as a success, and that Cadet had presented the resolutions to the League.²⁷ Garvey used Cadet’s “successes” as a basis to attack Du Bois in a speech given to an audience of 3,000 people at the Mother Zion AME Church, on March 22.²⁸ Cadet’s time in Paris was panning out to be a failure, until an unplanned meeting resulted in a success, of sorts, one that redirected the course of the UNIA for the five years that followed.

While in Paris, Cadet took the initiative and broached a relationship with the Liberian delegation, one that sparked Garvey’s interest in Monrovia as the capital for his African empire. Before 1919, Liberia had not been the focus of Garvey’s plans, he had sent Cadet with designs on the former German colonies ceded after the War. It is not that the African colony for repatriated African Americans was wholly outside of the sphere. Garvey was another within a long line of black Nationalists who looked to the redemption of Africa as the foundation for the uplift of the race, and Liberia loomed large in the 19th Century tradition. Moreover, UNIA members such a John E. Bruce had connections in the country, and the ex-president of Liberia, Arthur Barclay, was the Association’s legal representative in the country.²⁹ But it was Cadet, who took

²⁶ Elizer Cadet, “This Man is Jupiter,” *L’Essor* June 10, 1919, Institute St. Louis Gonzague.

²⁷ “High Commissioner of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities’ League Speaks in France and England,” *Negro World* March 1, 1919, 1 Robert A Hill Collection, Duke University, RE 23.

²⁸ “Address Denouncing DU Bois,” in *MGP V. I*, 304-399; Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 181.

²⁹ Martin, *Race First*, 122.

it upon himself to leave several copies of the *Negro World* with the Liberian delegation, each edition containing a salacious headline that emphasized the violence African Americans were subject to. Going further, Cadet gained an audience with C.B.D. King, future president of Liberia, to solicit support for the movement. This is when King makes the oft cited rhetorical question asking why African Americans did not emigrate to Liberia if they were subject to such brutality in their home country.³⁰ While the comment has been described as flippant or, at best, insincere, Garvey took it to heart, and within a year, sent another Haitian, Elie Garcia, to survey the possibilities, and until 1924 envisioned Monrovia, the Liberian capital, as the heart of his black empire.

Cadet remained in Europe and continued to work for the organization, however, he was abandoned by the Association without payment and was forced to provide for his own room and board and secure his own return. He remained loyal to Garvey and worked for the betterment of the movement. In this period he made an overture to Lloyd George, British Prime minister and delegate to the Peace Conference, entreating him to join in the efforts to ameliorate conditions of people of African descent in the United States and the Caribbean.³¹ During his time in Paris, it is thought that Cadet attended the 1919 Pan-African Congress organized by Garvey antagonist and foil, W.E.B. Du Bois. However, in a 1979 interview conducted by Robert A. Hill, he denied attending the gathering on the grounds that Du Bois and Garvey were feuding. Du Bois adds to this when, in a powerful rebuke of Marcus

³⁰ H.F. Worley, and C.G. Contee, "The Worley Report on the Pan African Congress of 1919," *The Journal of Negro History* Vol 55 (April 1970): 141; Martin, *Race First*, 122.

³¹ Letter, Eliezer Cadet to Lloyd George, 3/31/1919, British National Archives FO 608/219.

Garvey in the December 1920 edition of the *Crisis*, claims to have never met Cadet.³² Du Bois' piece included a denial of the claim made by Garvey that he had impeded Cadet's efforts in Paris, and had downplayed racial violence in the United States in order to ingratiate himself to the powers that be. It is doubtful that Du Bois would ever diminish the level of racial violence in the United States, as, by this time, the NAACP was working to combat lynching. Garvey did make the claim along with forwarding the idea of Du Bois' obstruction, which is a less dubious charge, at a Harlem rally to build support, mobilize his constituency, and raise \$200 to bring Cadet back to the United States. Cadet either never received the money, or it was insufficient to bring him back.

In December of 1919, Garvey was still boasting of the Haitian's successes in Paris and announced that his emissary was soon to return. Cadet spent the next year in Paris working as a mechanic, having never been paid by the UNIA. In an unreferenced footnote, Colin Grant claims that Cadet returned briefly to the United States to meet with Garvey; however, in an interview conducted by Hill, Cadet makes no mention of his return to the United States.³³ Cadet returned to Haiti to open a pineapple and mango cannery. He demurred and skirted the question when asked by Hill about why he never mentioned the lack of compensation. In December of 1919, Garvey proclaimed that Monrovia would be the capital of the UNIA's efforts to rehabilitate the continent and he dispatched Garcia, to survey the landscape and build relationships with the power brokers of the country.

³² W.E.B. Du Bois, "Marcus Garvey," *The Crisis* Vol 21 (December 1920): 60.

³³ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, note 131, 483.

Furthering Association Business on the Continent: Elie Garcia

Elie Garcia figures prominently in the histories of the UNIA and in the trajectory of Garvey's efforts in the United States; but the depths of his contributions, and his nationality have been understated and overlooked. Garcia was educated in Haiti and France and came to the United States for the first time in 1916. He returned in 1917, settling in New York, where he sought engage in the trade of logwood. Unsuccessful in this endeavor, he went to work in the same munitions factory as Cadet (it is unclear if the two were acquainted). Brenda Gale Plummer has asserted that because of his Spanish surname, Garcia's Haitian roots have been overlooked.³⁴ Grant describes the Haitian as being "neat," "nimble," and "puckish."³⁵ Garcia met Garvey in Philadelphia in July of 1919 and became an agent of the Black Star Line (BSL).³⁶ His involvement in the Association deepened and first rose to the rank of Secretary of the Philadelphia chapter. By June of 1919 until April of the following year, he served as the Secretary General of the Philadelphia Division. By this time, he was a very visible member, appearing alongside Garvey a Newport News, Virginia rally to raise investments for the shipping venture.³⁷ Garcia, ultimately, reached the heights of administrative responsibility in the UNIA. He served simultaneously as Director of the BSL, a position he was appointed to in July of 1920, and as Auditor General of the entire Association, a position he was elected to in August of the same year, he held both positions until 1923. He was unrivaled by most in the organization

³⁴ Plummer, "Garveyism in Haiti during the U.S. Occupation," 71.

³⁵ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 279.

³⁶ Uncredited document, Robert A Hill Papers, Duke University, American Volumes (AM) Folder AM6; Footnote n.1, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers Volume II*, ed Robert a Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 120.

³⁷ "Stirring Speech Delivered by Honorable Marcus Garvey in the South," *Negro World*, October 25, 1919, p 6, Robert A Hill Collection Duke University Research Folder RE 23, Uncredited document.

in terms of influence and responsibility and was the employee with the fifth highest salary. He served valiantly in his role and was indicted and stood alongside Garvey at the trial in defense of the organization's alleged malfeasance. It was in his charge as emissary to Liberia where Garcia first emerged as a central figure in realizing the Garvey's plans.

Garcia left New York on April 17, 1920 tasked with sowing the seeds of what was to become the foundations of Garvey's plans for an African base for the Association. For Garvey, support from an African government was paramount. He held that people of African descent could only make the case for equality within a strong African nation where they were the majority population. And he believed that repatriation would only be possible after "technical experts" had been deployed to make the way for the others. Garcia was given the title of "UNIA Commissioner to Liberia" and was responsible with building relationships in the country, strengthening the base already present, and securing some degree of support from its government for the Association's plans. Grant describes Garcia as approaching this duty with "forensic gusto."³⁸ The question begs asking: Why did Garvey bestow such an important role to a BSL stock salesperson? The answer may lie in Garcia's nationality and Liberian prejudices. During this period, it had been rumored that Liberia was resistant to African American immigration and, perhaps, Garvey recognized that Garcia's Haitian nationality proffered a more enticing image.

On his way to Liberia, Garcia made two additional stops to further UNIA business. His first stop was in Liverpool, arriving on April 27th, where he held

³⁸ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 279.

meetings with the local chapter at Ethiopian Hall.³⁹ He made a second stop, in Sierra Leone where he held his first meeting with a contingent in Waterloo before holding a large rally in the capital of Freetown. At this meeting, he outlined the Association's plans for Africa and used the opportunity to sell stocks of the BSL using the specter of potential returns to induce purchases.⁴⁰ On May 24th, after two frantic days attending to Association business, he set sail for Monrovia where he engaged the task of strengthening the links that had been forged by Cadet.

His time was not without its difficulties. Garcia used diplomacy and tenacity to effect positive results bolstering the existing UNIA presence in the country and securing favorable assurances from the Liberian leadership. Upon arrival in Monrovia, Garcia was greeted by competing factions of UNIA chapters of Monrovia, at the harbor he was literally pulled in two directions and had to settle the matter. Garcia, seeking to ensure the Association took root in the capital, resolved the tensions, and relocated one of the leaders to establishing another division outside of the capital, expanding the organization's presence in the country.⁴¹ News of Garcia's mission had spread, and anti-Garvey interests began a campaign that preceded his arrival. He was confronted with a hostile missive published in the *Liberian Commercial News* by Abraham A. Butler that questioned the motives behind Association designs on the African country. Butler was a journalist, educated in the United States and backed by

³⁹ "Report" to Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, *MGP V. II*, 660; "Statement of Elie Garcia" January 13, 1922, in *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. IV*, Robert A Hill eds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) , 391.

⁴⁰ "Report" to Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, *MGP V. II*, 661.

⁴¹ "Report" to Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, *MGP V. II*, 662.

an Anglo-Liberian entity tied to Leo Weintal, editor of the *African World*.⁴² Garcia and Butler had an acrimonious meeting where the former walked out without any resolution; it was James Barclay, Secretary of State, UNIA member and advocate, who repudiated the reporter as a “fool,” for underestimating the significance of the Association.⁴³ Antagonisms quelled, Garcia was now able to go about UNIA business in the country; namely, forging relationships with the government and inducing the Liberians to buy stock in the BSL.

Garcia’s mission to Liberia was ultimately successful. Upon his departure, he had expanded and enlivened the UNIA’s base and solidified the presence of the Association in the country and received the blessing and assertions of support and cooperation from the President, King. Garcia’s efforts were buttressed by the members of the Monrovia chapter. The more prominent members included G.M. Johnson, son of a former President, the Mayor of Monrovia, uncle to the wife of the president and the future “Supreme Potentate” of the UNIA as well as Barclay. They facilitated a “standing room only” reception in Monrovia and arranged for well attended meetings throughout the surrounding areas, that Garcia traveled to by boat, train, car and foot so that he could build support and sell stock. The most important development from his visit came from the session with C.B.D. King, president. Garcia had written the President upon his arrival seeking to gain an audience, and after some scheduling conflicts, was able to meet with King, along with Barclay and Johnson, on June 9th. At the gathering Garcia presented the position of the UNIA and Barclay gave his support to the program. King’s response was promising; he

⁴² Abraham A. Butler, “To the Satellites of Marcus Garvey,” *Liberian Commercial News*, May 8, 1920, reprinted in *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers Volume VIII* (Unpublished) ed Robert A. Hill, Robert A Hill Collection, Duke University, African Volumes, folder AF 28.

⁴³ “Report” to Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, *MGP V. II*, 663.

welcomed the UNIA plan to make Monrovia the capitol of its African base and assured Garcia that there would be land granted for the Negro Factories initiatives.⁴⁴ He left Liberia with the support of the government on June 27th. His efforts had secured for the UNIA a receptive government in African and its greatest potential for realizing a central tenant of Garveyism. Garcia issued two reports, one public and one private. The former spoke of the great possibilities for Liberia to serve the UNIA's ends; the latter painted a bleaker picture, one that was critical of the African nation and called for caution in proceeding with Association plans. The *African World* ultimately published Garcia's private report critical of Liberians in 1924 which, ultimately, derailed all possibilities for the UNIA in Liberia.⁴⁵ Specifically, Garcia highlighted the Liberians' predisposition to resist domination by foreigners, white or black.⁴⁶ Anxious for action, and unmoved by the Haitian's warnings, Garvey set out to realize some of the possibilities Garcia had outlined in his public assessment, and used the Haitian's results to fuel the image of a efficacious and vital organization.

Navigating the Currents of the Black Star Line

The Black Star Line was the cornerstone project of Garvey's plan for racial uplift. The shipping endeavor was to be the economic engine behind his self-reliance platform. It was to be the literal and figurative vehicle that connected the diaspora in business and social initiatives, lead the rejuvenation of Africa and carry the returning transplants home. Like everything else with Garvey, the BSL's ships and representatives were tools of propaganda and deployed to promote sales of BSL

⁴⁴ "Report" to Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, *MGP V. II*, 664.

⁴⁵ Abraham A. Butler, "To the Satellites of Marcus Garvey," *Liberian Commercial News*, May 8, 1920, reprinted in *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers Volume VIII* (Unpublished) ed Robert A. Hill, Robert A Hill Collection, Duke University, African Volumes, folder AF 28.

⁴⁶ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 120; see also Elie Garcia, "Notes: Part 2," in *MGP V. II*, 668.

stocks. Adam Ewing has termed it “the flashiest” of all of Jamaican’s propositions.⁴⁷ In fact, as Judith Stein has pointed out, the coalescence of the assassination attempt on the leader’s life and the launching of the Yarmouth, the first ship in the line, propelled stock sales that drove the enterprise for its first years.⁴⁸ Like much of the program, the shipping line was targeted at enfranchising the economically disempowered community of African descent that, to various degrees, sought inclusion into the ranks of the financially secure.

More than just the opportunity to engage in black owned and operated businesses, the venture offered the possibility of great returns on investments. The structure of stock sales was such that shares could be purchased on installment plans affording even the most modest investor an avenue to participate. In this vein, Nicole Marie Brown has conceived of the undertaking as an exemplar of “racial consumerism” that existed at the intersection of several desires of the global Afro-descended community.⁴⁹ What Brown points to is true, within three months of the first incorporation, the UNIA had sold enough stakes in the company to purchase their first ship, *The Yarmouth*, unofficially renamed the *Frederick Douglass*.⁵⁰ The grandiosity and ambitiousness of the idea drove its early successes. Those who organized its daily operations, which certainly did not include Garvey, are the forces that both maintained the line’s solvency, and, ultimately, brought about its demise.

At this juncture, the BSL represented a shining success of black managed capitalist projects directed by a cadre of Afro-descended managers. The initiative was

⁴⁷ Ewing, *The Age of Garvey*, 83.

⁴⁸ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 79-80.

⁴⁹ Nicole Marie Brown, “Freedom’s Stock: Political Consumerism, Transnational Blackness and the Black Star Line,” *Critical Sociology* Vol 4 (2015): 243.

⁵⁰ Martin, *Race First*, 153.

forwarded by Garvey, possibly at the behest of black seamen, and from there his influence on the BSL evolution was minimal. It was lauded, in the *Negro World* and at various meetings by Garvey and others, as evidence of the potential of plan, but also as result of black run business that fed the “race first” ideology of the platform. Most importantly, it was the most powerful piece of propaganda used to draw members, and their dues, to the Association.⁵¹ While he was the lead propagandist, the shadow Garvey cast drew support from the potential shareholders, it was others who realized the tangible elements. The initial prosperity of the line was driven by its organizational structure. Agents from the local chapters sold stocks to its membership that was then funneled to the central parent body in New York. From there the purchasing of ships, the securing of contracts, the incorporation of the venture, the selling of stocks, and the navigation of the ships were the result of the management. In all, there were four ships: the *Yarmouth* (Frederick Douglass) purchased in September of 1919; the *Shadyside* acquired in April of 1920, the *Kanawha* (Antonio Maceo) procured in May of 1920, and the *Phyllis Wheatley*, that was never secured. The *Yarmouth* was the initial purchase that had an extraordinary impact on the perception of the company driving stock sales and converting skeptics of the initiatives’ efficaciousness, however temporary. The saga of the *Phyllis Wheatley*, the purchase of which was never finalized, was in the end the demise of the UNIA from its peak influence and landed Garvey in jail.

As with all organizational structures, there are different levels of administration, and Haitians can be found at all levels of management of the line. Their experiences are endemic of UNIA officials in the brief history of the concern; they went far and wide selling stocks and were forced to deal with the day to day

⁵¹ Martin, *Race First*, 152.

operational aspects of the enterprise. Martin, Garvey biographer and UNIA historian, has forwarded the notion that it was the carelessness of the management of the shipping line that brought about its failure. While this may be true of other agents, Haitians were valuable assets that advanced the cause or sought to correct the failures of others. Louis La Mothe served on the *Yarmouth*, worked in the home office, dealt with securing ships' registry and proper outfitting for the classification, and was a salesman of BSL shares in Cuba. Garcia, in the dual role of Secretary of the Line and Auditor General of the UNIA was rivaled by few in the Association in terms of power and influence, was more than a capable manager that sought to keep the company in good legal standing and sought to head off the *Phyllis Wheatley* controversy that was used to silence Garvey.

Louis La Mothe is an example of another Haitian immigrant who joined the UNIA and who rose in the organization's ranks emerging as a valuable manager of BSL, and international agent. La Mothe was born in Port-au-Prince in 1893 and migrated to the United States in 1917, at the age of 24, along with his wife and child.⁵² Prior to that he worked in various capacities as a journalist. La Mothe also had a nautical background having sailed throughout the Caribbean. La Mothe knew of Garvey and the UNIA before coming to the United States from his travels and joined the organization upon arrival.⁵³ He was an active member of the Association serving at assemblies and reading "selections" from the lectern. In front of the packed audience at Liberty Hall, on October 25, 1919, he recited "A Call to the Negro," an original poem delivered at the first UNIA meeting in which Garvey spoke after the

⁵² Registration Card, Louis La Mothe, June 5, 1917, Robert A Hill Papers, Duke University, American Series, Folder AM7.

⁵³ Mortimer J Davis, Interview Louis Lamothe, March 6, 1922, FBI records, Robert A. Hill Papers, Duke University, American Series Folder AM7, 1.

attempt on his life.⁵⁴ He was introduced to Garvey by Cyril Henry, a Jamaican born agriculturalist, drawn to the UNIA in hopes of applying his skills to the rejuvenations of Africa.⁵⁵ Garvey, keen to make use of La Mothe's seafaring past, to then introduce him to Cockburn who hired the Haitian as a purser for the *SS Yarmouth*. La Mothe was a member of the crew when the ship, unofficially rechristened as the *SS Frederick Douglass*, made its maiden voyage for the UNIA.

The *Yarmouth* was besieged with issues from the initial moments of its deployment, representative of the short comings of the BSL as an endeavor, and La Mothe was charged with making the ship seaworthy. The success of the *Yarmouth* was intimately linked to the future of the UNIA. Its acquisition had enticed many people of invest in the BSL and converted many Garvey sceptics into supporters, however much reserved.⁵⁶ Garvey continued to use the ships movements as the basis for many speeches delivered to spur the sales of BSL shares. However, the ship was not worth the price that had been paid. It was launched on October 31st yet traveled about six miles before it was moored. Before it could leave New York for its maiden voyage, the vessel was in need of much repair and refitting; apparently it had been a cattle ship and had to be rendered suitable for human transportation. As Ramala Bandele has argued, the shipping industry was a complex one with various regulations needing to be met.⁵⁷ Garvey drew on La Mothe's seafaring experience to realize the launching of the flagship vessel of the most ambitious element of his platform. La Mothe handled

⁵⁴ Hill, *MGP V. II*, 101.

⁵⁵ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 77.

⁵⁶ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 56; Martin, *Race First*, 153.

⁵⁷ "Understanding African Diaspora Political Activism: The Rise and Fall of the Black Starline," *Journal of Black Studies* vol 40 (March 2010): 754

the modifications needed to make the ship seaworthy and fit for human cargo.⁵⁸ The *Yarmouth* finally set sail on November 24, 1919, almost a month after its launching. The initial voyage was beset by mechanical difficulties and issues with the crew; yet, the ship made it back to New York, and was quickly turned around for another haul.

The second passage was shrouded in nefarious dealings from the beginning. It had been commissioned, apparently without Garvey's approval, to ship a cargo of whiskey to Cuba in advance of the application of prohibition laws. Shortly after setting sail, once again, the ship encountered mechanical difficulties, this time attributed to sabotage on the part of a crew member. While stalled, U.S. Customs officials seized the ship. There was an issue of missing liquor that Cockburn ordered dumped overboard and may have been recovered by smaller vessels conveniently nearby. It was only through the efforts of Garvey, who was forced to leave his honeymoon to pay for the repairs, and Lamothe both of whom spent hours in dealings with the US Attorney's office, that the ship was released with no proof of any sales of liquor having been found.⁵⁹ After the second voyage of the ship, La Mothe left its crew.

After leaving the *Yarmouth*, La Mothe came to hold a series of management positions. To put it differently, La Mothe left the field for a desk job. The reasons why are not exactly clear. Perhaps it was his experiences on at sea with the UNIA owned ships. Due to the multitudinous difficulties faced by the vessel, whether mechanical or legal, La Mothe was away for longer than expected. On top of the mechanical difficulties the *Yarmouth* once spent an unscheduled month in Havana Harbor due to poor planning. Bandele has argued that one of the causes of the fall of

⁵⁸ Davis, Interview Louis Lamothe, 1.

⁵⁹ Hill, *MGP V. II*, 209

the BSL was the intricacies of international shipping, while she locates her critique on ship configuration and seaworthiness, both valid analyses, it seems that more proper planning would have avoided the congestion that kept the ship at bay for an extended period of time.⁶⁰ La Mothe took issue with the rationale behind the movements of the ship. He told FBI agent Mortimer J. Davis that he disagreed with the decision to extend the second embarkment for a propaganda tour, to Norfolk and Boston, while it was carrying perishable cargo it had picked up on its second voyage. La Mothe voiced his reservations to Garvey, only to be disregarded. The outcome of the excursion was claims filed against the organization because the freight, coconuts, had expired in transit. Due to the terms of the contract, the BSL was liable for the loss.⁶¹ Or, perhaps more senior management thought his talents were better suited elsewhere; as we will soon see O.M. Thompson, Vice-President of the line, and foil of Garvey and Garcia's, placed La Mothe at an important role at the center of the business operations in Harlem. In his new role, La Mothe came to realize the limitations of the organization.

La Mothe's new role placed him at the center of organizational governance and through his experiences the vicissitudes and intransigence of the BSL become apparent. His first appointment was as "Passenger Agent" at the central offices on 135th street in Harlem. In this role he was charged with selling tickets for the *Yarmouth* and the *Kanawha* (in his account of events to Davis, he specified that he never sold tickets for the *Phyllis Wheatley*, an act for which Garvey and associates were charged with mail fraud).⁶² In his role he was charged with engaging the complexities of shipping and securing the seaworthiness of the *Kanawha*, the

⁶⁰ Bandele, "Understanding African Diaspora Political Activism," 755-756.

⁶¹ Davis, Lamothe interview, 3; Martin, *Race First*, 156.

⁶² La Mothe Interview, 4.

Yarmouth's successor. For the newly acquired vessel, *Kanawha*, La Mothe headed the refitting and the legal paper work required both for its reclassification and the transferring of ownership to the BSL's Canadian subsidiary, and British registry, from its parent body and United States documentation.⁶³ He also witnessed what he claimed was an instance of Garvey graft. According to La Mothe, a customer walked into the offices inquiring on the whereabouts of his family for whom he had paid passage from St. Kitts, a destination the BSL had neither cause nor plans to travel. La Mothe recounts that when confronted, Garvey admitted to taking the money to balance operational costs. Whether or not the events transpired as told or even if they happened at all is debatable, La Mothe offered to provide Davis proof that has yet to be located.⁶⁴ But what is clear is that La Mothe was subsequently relocated to the Havana office to manage operations there.

In Cuba, La Mothe was the point person for the BSL, and continuing the sales of stock and coordinating efforts with the home office. Cuba was a very important place for the UNIA, it had fifty-two divisions, the largest number outside of the United States.⁶⁵ In July of 1920, as the UNIA was preparing its biggest celebration, the August 1920 Convention, La Mothe was given \$300 by Garvey, and put on a train heading to Key West where he then traveled to Cuba; however, not aboard a BSL vessel, because the company did not have one that could make the journey. La Mothe

⁶³ Louis La Mothe to Secretary of U.S. Shipping Board, June 28, 1920, *MGP V. II*, 399.

⁶⁴ La Mothe Interview, 4.

⁶⁵ Martin, *Race First*, 17. For the history of the UNIA in Cuba, see Frank Guridy, Chapter 2: "Un Dias, Un Fin, Un Destino," in *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a world of Empire and Jim Crow* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Philip Howard, Chapter 5: "Garveyism without Garvey: A Counter Ideology in the Black Caribbean Communities," in *Black Labor, White Sugar: Caribbean Braceros and Their Struggle for Power in the Cuban Sugar Industry* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015); Andrea Queeley, *Rescuing our Roots: The African Anglo-Caribbean Diaspora in Contemporary Cuba* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2015).

was to operate, as per Garvey's orders as a salesperson of stocks for the line. Once in Cuba, he became a de facto manager for the operations there. When the *Kananawha* was initially scheduled to arrive in Cuba, as Garvey was heralding the success of the line in front a record setting audience, La Mothe had been appointed by Thompson the point of BSL operations and was charged with facilitating the ship's business while in port.⁶⁶ Yet, the ship never made it, suffering repeated mechanical issues across four aborted efforts to reach the Caribbean.⁶⁷ La Mothe expressed his skepticism of the fitness of Capitan Richardson to shepherd the vessel, in a letter to Thompson. Thompson discounted his concerns and absolved the operator of culpability in the difficulties.⁶⁸ La Mothe was ultimately correct on Richardson, who ended up fighting Garvey, twice, and drew a gun on him in one instance. The *Kanawha* was in poor condition to begin with, but its poor shape was exacerbated by the Richardson's ineptitude.

Haitians on Parade at the UNIA Convention

The first UNIA Convention was held in August 1920; the celebration marked the apogee of the organization's influence and was used as a platform to celebrate its achievements and draw new members. The month-long celebration, officially known as the International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World, drew attendees from across the Afro-descended world from the Continent through Latin America for a total exceeding 25,000 people.⁶⁹ It was a grand affair, full of the pageantry and showmanship that defined Garvey's propagandizing. Haitians were highly visible, and

⁶⁶ Letter O.M. Thompson to Louis La Mothe, August 23, 1920, *MGP V. II*, 624.

⁶⁷ Martin, *Race First*, 158.

⁶⁸ Letter, O.M. Thompson to Louis La Mothe October 1, 1920, reprinted in *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers Volume III*, ed Robert a Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 38.

⁶⁹ Tony Martin, *Marcus Garvey, Hero: A First Biography* (Dover: The Majority Press, 1983), 60.

their role in the Association added to the triumphant atmosphere.. On the third day of the festivities, Napoleon Francis, representative of the nascent Haitian chapter, was called forward and announced Haiti's commitment to serving the rehabilitation of Africa, pledging "every available Haitian officer" to the cause, which drew applause from the audience.⁷⁰ On the fourth day of the convention, Francis gave a speech about Haiti and how foreigners had worked to divide the citizens of the black republic in order to benefit from the schisms. In the spirit of the convocation, he called on Afro-descended people across the globe to lend their support in helping his home and regain its independence.⁷¹ When the representatives from the Boco del Toro, Panama division, led by Reverend A.N. Willis, rose to give accounts of their chapter's struggles against the United Fruit Company, they thanked a delegation which included Marie Duchatillier for her work in bringing their local organization into the support of the UNIA.⁷² Duchatillier was a Haitian domestic worker who migrated to the United States and rose to the presidency of the New York division. Duchatillier, was a supporter and confidant of Garvey, to what degree is not discernable. But when John Bruce, one-time Garveyite, implored her to convince Garvey to mitigate his incendiary speech, she replied that it was "pent up feelings of the ancestors" emanating from Garvey, and refused to accede to the request, "even if she could" convince him to tone down his inflammatory language.⁷³

⁷⁰ "Report of a Meeting at Liberty Hall," August 3, 1920, *MGP V. II*, 496.

⁷¹ "Report of a Meeting at Liberty Hall," August 4, 1920, *MGP V. II*, 531.

⁷² "Reports of the Convention," August 3, 1920, *MGP V. II*, 516.

⁷³ Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1971), 110, 154, 268.

It was Garcia's Liberian mission that loomed the largest of all Haitian contributions to the adulation of the UNIA's month long congratulatory gathering. Garvey teased Garcia's talk to the eagerly awaiting audience. On August 15th Garvey teased Garcia's impending speech for later in the week announcing the success of the "ambassador and minister plenipotentiary."⁷⁴ When Garcia spoke before the convention goes, he read for them the first report of his successes in Liberia. And as the conference was closing, Garvey was announced the results of the elections of the senior officials of the UNIA, and he pointed out Garcia, newly elected to the position of Auditor General, seated with his wife, a member of the Women's Division. Garvey compared the Haitian to William Ewart Gladstone, stalwart of 19th century British politics, as the person who, above all others, helped "rebuild the British Empire."⁷⁵ Both Garcia and Francis were signatories of the Declaration of Rights of the Negro people of the World, Garvey's proclamation to the world of the rights of people of African descent.

Napoleon Francis was the UNIA's point person in Haiti, he worked to secure the presence of the Association in the country; however, Haitian realities limited its impact. Garveyism had a short moment where it sought to flourish in the country. The U.S. Occupation had sparked in Haitians the need to forge alliances with people of African descent outside the country, and the UNIA represented an avenue toward ending the American domination. There was some attraction to the UNIA by the descendants of Anglophone Caribbean migrants to Haiti.⁷⁶ Garveyism faced two insurmountable challenges to establishing itself in Haiti. First, the Haitian iteration of

⁷⁴ "Report of a Meeting at Liberty Hall," August 15, 1920, *MGP V. II*, 583.

⁷⁵ "Report of a Meeting at Liberty Hall," August 31, 1920, *MGP V. II*, 652-653.

⁷⁶ Plummer, "Garveyism in Haiti," 76.

the laboring class that his program appealed to the most throughout the globe were non-literate Creolophone speakers whose wages made the five U.S. dollar investment in the BSL prohibitively expensive, even with the possibility of installments. Second, the light skinned Haitian elite had come to be aware of Garvey's biases. Moreover, they dismissed Garvey because of his lack of sophistication, as they favored the "Latin culture" that separated them "all the other Negroes in the world."⁷⁷ These impediments kept many from joining and hindered the rooting of the Association in the country, despite efforts to the contrary.

In Haiti, the UNIA was championed by two agents who sought to establish the Association in the first back Republic, Luc Dorsainville and Francis. For Garvey, Haiti was to be a gem in his crown. He frequently referenced the country in his speeches both for its place in Afro-diasporic history and to denounce the American occupation. In his conversations with Cadet, Dorsainville was interested in establishing the UNIA in Haiti. Francis, who represented Haiti at the 1920 convention had also tried to secure a foothold for the UNIA in Haiti. He was officially given the title of the manager for the BSL in Port-au-Prince.⁷⁸ In this position he took out several ads in *L'Essor* inviting people to come purchase stock in the company. And, it seems as if he held meetings for the organization, at least in the second half of 1919. One such meeting included members of the country's elite including: George Sylvain, founder of the *Union Patriotique*, Barnave Dartiguenave brother of the sitting Haitian President, Berthomieux Danache, a member of the Presidential Cabinet, and Churchstone Lord, a missionary from St. Vincent. In the call, Francis invoked the

⁷⁷ Quoted in Leon D. Pamphile, *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (Gainesville University of Florida Press, 2001), 133.

⁷⁸ Napoleon J. Francis, "Ligue de l'Etoile Noire," *L'Essor*, November 25, 1919, Robert A. Hill papers Duke University, American Series, Folder Am 6.

grand possibilities that would come from solidarity with African Americans.⁷⁹

Dorsainville, of *L'Essor*, was an early advocate for the Association in Haiti, and had set up “agencies” for the shipping line throughout the country in various port towns, facilitating the shipping of goods and movement of people. His efforts led to the arrival of the *Yarmouth* in Haiti. When it docked, it was greeted by “enthusiastic crowds.”⁸⁰ Despite the adulation, Dorsainville and the ship’s Captain, Cockburn, were soon embroiled in a conflict, which instilled in the former a distrust of the organization.⁸¹ Ultimately, the UNIA was never able to take root in the black republic.

Accounting for the Variances in the Management of the Organization.

By the end of 1920 cracks in the BSL veneer were becoming apparent to La Mothe from his position in Cuba. The shareholders were clamoring for evidence of the company’s financial solvency. During his four months in Cuba, La Mothe purportedly sold more than \$3,000 worth of stock, \$1000 on installment plans. Garvey wrote to La Mothe asking him to forward whatever profits to the New York office. La Mothe was only able to send \$500, having spent the rest to pay for the expenses of the Havana office, which included rent and the salary of an interpreter.⁸² Thompson, vice president of the line, who was already planning his exit from the BSL before the company crashed, wrote to La Mothe voicing his own doubt as to the viability of the line.⁸³ The financial difficulties had been apparent to La Mothe, as early as his time in the New York office. Clarifying the matter even further, La Mothe received no

⁷⁹ Undated *L'Essor* article, Robert A. Hill papers Duke University, American Series, Folder Am 6.

⁸⁰ Martin, *Race First*, 156.

⁸¹ Plummer, “Garveyism in Haiti,” 74.

⁸² Lamothe, Interview, 4.

⁸³ “Report by Special Agent P-138” in *MGP V. II*, p 37; Letter, O.M. Thompson to Louis Lamothe October 1, 1920, *MGP V. III*, 38.

remuneration, the salary of \$30 a week Garvey promised him outstanding to the tune of \$450. La Mothe closed shop calculating that the cost of maintaining an office in Cuba outweighed its profitability. Further considering the increasing uncertainty of the continued existence of the line he decided to return to the United States, having been away from his family for four months. If La Mothe was already a disgruntled employee, from his time on the *Yarmouth*, from his perch in the management positions he occupied, he eventually soured on the Garvey headed initiative. However, he continued to be a member of the organization after Garvey had been deported and Garveyism began its life in the United States apart from its namesake.

By the end of the summer of 1920, Garcia ascended to the top of the organizational structure of the UNIA as the organization was at its peak, but, simultaneously, machining into decadence. While Garcia was in Liberia, working to secure a UNIA foothold in an African nation, he had been elected to the Board of Directors of the BSL. At the convention he had been selected as Auditor General. Simultaneously holding both positions catapulted Garcia to the upper echelons of power in the Association, rivaled only by a few others. But the power brought with it the responsibility of balancing the finances of transnational organization, as Auditor General, and ensuring the prosperity of the central pillar of the UNIA program in the BSL. Adding to this was the fact the parent Association was in financial disarray, as was the shipping venture. The line also suffered from several poor purchases that had left it with only one marginally functional vessel and stockholders who were clamoring for financial reports, worried about the viability of the enterprise. Adding to the hurdles was that his boss, Garvey, mixed the finances of the various UNIA projects, drawing revenue from one source to balance out short comings in other enterprises, and he also used the coffers as his own bank account. Further

exacerbating all of this was the loudening drum of the “Garvey must go!” movement which was spurred by an article written in the December 1920 edition of *The Crisis* by Du Bois, that exposed the precarious fiscal condition of the Line. Compounding all the aforementioned difficulties, for the first half of 1921, Garvey was out of the country touring Caribbean and Central American strongholds in attempts to build donations; his trip was extended by U.S. officials’ efforts to deny him reentry. Garcia had much to surmount as one of the principle actors in the UNIA efforts.

In his role of Auditor General, Garcia was to account for the declining financial shape of the UNIA and its various enterprises. Assuming the position in fall of 1920, he was faced with a business model that was unraveling. In fact, he and the others who had been elected to official positions during the convention, after not receiving salaries for two months, agreed to forgo their wages due the fiscal condition of the company.⁸⁴ By 1921, the UNIA was in a financial crisis. In the initial thrust, every new achievement drew more members which increased the revenue from dues, and with the presentation of every new BSL ship, came increased stock purchases which allowed great flexibility in how that money was spent. But an economic downturn in 1920 had disproportionately affected the African American community, which dried up the sources of income for the Association.⁸⁵ Worsening the problem was that all the money went into one pool, described by Colin Grant mode of business operation known as ‘kiting.’⁸⁶ This matter would eventually come to a head in reference to the sale of the *Negro World* from the New York Division to the UNIA Parent body, a transaction that left more than \$46,000 missing. The sale seemingly

⁸⁴ “Statement,” Garcia, January 13, 1922.

⁸⁵ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*

⁸⁶ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 321.

never occurred but was an accounting trick were money was circulated through several interconnected subsidiaries. In addition, Garcia found the UNIA and its various ventures extremely indebted.⁸⁷ The major cause of the outstanding transactions in need of settlement was payment for the expenditures for repair on the various ships of the Black Star Line.

In his other position of Secretary General of the Black Star Line, Garcia became the head of a project that was severely indebted due to repair costs on three ships that should have never been purchased. How much so was difficult to discern, because in the year preceding Garcia's tenure, there had been no records kept of financial accounting.⁸⁸ Moreover, to avoid accountability for the outstanding liabilities another company, the *Black Star Shipping Company of New Jersey* was founded.⁸⁹ Early in his tenure he was confronted by the failure of the *Yarmouth* and its disgraced Captain, Cockburn, who sought outstanding payment after having defrauded the company. The more pressing crisis was the need for liquid assets. In order to raise more money, Garcia decided to travel to Virginia, a UNIA stronghold, to incorporate the BSL there in order to sell stock in the state. When Garcia arrived at the clerk's office to file the paperwork, he was met by a federal agent. There, he was denied the right to sell stock in the state, because the company had illegally done so to the tune of \$9,000. Furthermore, the federal agent warned Garcia that if Garvey traveled to the state he would be arrested on the count of the nine warrants out for his arrest.⁹⁰ Garcia had now been alerted to the government scrutiny that was bearing down on the

⁸⁷ "The Second Annual Report of the Black Star Line," in *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. III*, ed Robert A. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 555.

⁸⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 114.

⁸⁹ Stein, *The Word of Marcus Garvey*, 97.

⁹⁰ "Report by Bureau Agent L.H. Kemp, Jr.," January 3, 1921, in *MGP V. III*, 120.

Association, and, as a result, he sought to correct the way the line was managed. He focused his attention on the biggest liability of the company, the acquisition of the *Phyllis Wheatley*.

As head of the shipping venture, Garcia understood that the realization of the *Phyllis Wheatley* would spark a much-needed boom in stock sales while simultaneously relieving it from impending liability. The story of the acquisition of the vessel to be rechristened after the 18th century African American poet is a convoluted one that encompasses no less than three potential purchases and the loss, or theft, of considerable sums of money. Moreover, Garcia as a dedicated agent of the line, responsible to its shareholders and to Garvey, had to overcome the nefarious maneuverings of Thompson. Thompson's machinations in the deliberations around the acquisition overpowered Garcia's reservations as he had been delegated by Garvey to supervise the purchasing of the new boat.⁹¹ The *Phyllis Wheatley* was to be the fourth ship in the BSL stable and it was to travel between the continent and the Americas. It had been promised since the inauguration of the company yet had never materialized; Francois had advertised it in a 1919 advertisement for the line published *L'Essor*.⁹² As late as April of 1921, there was a rally held at Liberty Hall in April of 1921, which Francois and the presidents of several divisions attended, in order raise money for the line.⁹³ The shipping company never directly engaged the owners of the prospective ships. They, at Thompson's behest, went through an agent, Rodolph Silverstone, who, along with Thompson, ultimately stole more than \$10,000 of

⁹¹ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 287.

⁹² Advertisement, *L'Essor*, December 4, 1919, Robert Hill Papers, Duke University American Collection, AM 6.

⁹³ "Report of UNIA Meeting," in *MGP V. III*, 350.

investor money. Silverstone was to be the go-between who would deliver the down payment of \$25,000 and navigate the red tape of the United States Shipping Board who approved or denied such purchases.

From the beginning of the year through the start of the convention, the agents of the BSL tried and failed to purchase three ships to be the *Phyllis Wheatley*, to no avail. Each time, it was Garcia who uncovered improprieties that caused him to direct the Line away from the purchase. In April of 1921 the point the focus of the shipping company was the S.S. *Hong Keng*. The representative of the BSL had signed a contract of intent to purchase the craft. however, Garcia discovered that the ship would not be delivered as promised and urged the company to break the contract. Concerned about the inability to fulfill the promises of a new ship, Garcia suggested issuing a letter to the public to inform them of the difficulties.⁹⁴ The BSL redirected its interest first to the *Porto Rico*, which fell through, and finally to the *Orion*, as the ship that would become the *Phyllis Wheatley*.⁹⁵ UNIA money had been given to Silverton at Thompson's suggestion that a ship would be delivered in July. In advance of the launching, Garcia and others began organizing campaigns to celebrate the ship's launching.⁹⁶ But, by July of 1921, no ship had appeared. Garcia, as Secretary General of the line, wrote and hand delivered a letter of inquiry to Harry Philbin, Manager of Shipping Sales for the United States Shipping Board. Garcia discovered that the bid had been rejected and that the ship had been sold to another interest. Dismayed, Garcia returned and informed the board of directors who asked for the

⁹⁴ "Bureau of Investigation Summary of the Minutes of the Black Star Line Board of Director's Meetings October 20, 1920-July 1921," in *MGP V. III*, 784.

⁹⁵ Martin, *Race First*, 160; Cronon, *Black Moses*, 95.

⁹⁶ "Bureau of Investigation Summary of the Minutes of the Black Star Line Board of Director's Meetings October 20, 1920-July 1921," in *MGP V. III*, 785.

return of the deposit. Thompson, and accomplice to the theft, tried to assuage the committee and convince them to continue with Silverstone.⁹⁷ The irresolution of the acquisition of the *Phyllis Wheatley* would loom large in the arch of the UNIA, ultimately landing Garvey in prison, despite the best efforts of Garcia.

In between trying to sort out the finances of the entire operation, and securing a ship for the line, Garcia continued in his role of securing the Association's connection to Liberia. Despite Garcia's warnings of the problems inherent to Liberia, Garvey, true to form, went headlong into promoting and realizing an UNIA presence in Liberia. Garvey had used Garcia's mission to launch a two-million-dollar fund raising campaign to fund the first wave of colonization and selected a group to establish a UNIA legation in Monrovia.⁹⁸ With Garvey gone, it was left to the Haitian to prepare the second wave of UNIA emissaries to the African country. The 1921 delegation to Liberia consisted of Cyril Crichlow, who was to be the head of the legation once established, Gabriel Johnson, who had been appointed Potentate of Africa at the 1920 August convention, and George O. Marke, a Sierra Leonian who had been elected to Supreme Deputy at the same event. Garcia was charged with making arrangements for the travel, and provided the group with funds for travel, and gave specific directions on how the money was to be allocated, including monitoring the expenditures of Marke.⁹⁹ Garcia, drawing on his own travels to the country, also instructed the mission to organize new divisions.¹⁰⁰ The men were forced to travel second class to Africa, due to the financial condition of the Association, a fact that

⁹⁷ Letter, Elie Garcia to J Harry Philbin, July 2, 1921, note 1, *MGP V. III*, 5050

⁹⁸ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 125.

⁹⁹ Letter, Cyril Chrichlow to Marcus Garvey, June 24, 1921, in *MGP V. III*, 485.

¹⁰⁰ Letter, Gabriel M. Johnson to Marcus Garvey, March 11, 1921, in *MGP V. III*, 248.

didn't sit well with Johnson who felt Garcia had tried to humiliate him with such undignified accommodations. The trip had mixed results. They were able to solidify relations with Barclay and others but faced financial difficulties and negative criticism from the anti-Garvey factions. Frustrated and defeated Critchlow, unable to locate Garvey, wrote to Garcia, as the point-person, about the failures of the mission and announcing his premature departure.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, the Liberian President, King, had traveled to the United States to engage the government for a loan. Garcia, the lead representative for the UNIA, met with the head of state at an impromptu meeting at the Waldorf-Astoria. The contingent was well received and reported that King was pleased with the information regarding the work of the UNIA.¹⁰² News of the meeting was carried on the front page in bold headlines of the March 12, 1921 *Negro World*.

Perpetuating the Fallacy at the August 1921 Convention

The climate of the 1921 Convention was less celebratory than its predecessor. Garvey and Garcia, as well as other BSL officials, were under pressure to account for the financial conditions of the company, the reality of which they dared not reveal. The 1921 gathering was significantly less flamboyant than its predecessor, revealing the diminishing confidence in the organization. In the previous year, three ships had been purchased and, despite difficulties, had offered the promise of a successful black owned venture. Whereas the previous gathering is discussed in the literature, the 1921 convening is barely mentioned. In the year that had elapsed, none of the ships that fueled the optimism of 1920 were operational and the fourth, the *Phyllis Wheatley* the

¹⁰¹ "Letter," C.A. Crichlow to Elie Garcia, in Robert A. Hill ed. *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. IX* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 399.

¹⁰² "Delegation from Universal Negro Improvement Association Visits President King of Liberia at Waldorf Astoria Hotel- Given Warm Reception by His Excellency," *Negro Word*, Saturday March 12, 1921, 1; "report by Special Agent P-138," in Robert A. Hill ed, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA papers V. IV* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 558.

promised crown jewel, had yet to materialize. The parade route had also been truncated; it stretched just seventeen blocks, from 128th street through 145th street. There was still an ostentatious procession filled with UNIA leadership in full regalia, Garcia and wife included.¹⁰³ BSL shareholders had been unsuccessfully clamoring for transparent fiscal accountability. The frustrations of which led to the final Board of Directors meeting had ended in violence.¹⁰⁴

Garvey used the convening of supporters to present a stable, strong and profitable enterprise, and Garcia did his part to further the fallacy. On top of the line's very public failures, shareholders had yet to receive the promised returns on their investments. The event, designed as a propaganda tool, served to distract from the problems of the Association. In his characteristic manner, he spoke of the strength of the organization, and the determination to realize the rejuvenation of the race, and he took the time to denounce the Pan-African Congress, held earlier that year by Du Bois. Garcia took part in projecting a false image of fiscal strength. In his dual role of Auditor General and Secretary General of the BSL, Garcia spoke on the fifth day of the convention and gave an account of the Association's net worth. He projected a positive sum of \$82,390, when all liabilities and expenditures being reflected which was not true.¹⁰⁵ Thomas P. Merrilees, Auditor for the U.S. Government in the case against Garvey, revealed that at the time the BSL was indebted \$200,000 and that the UNIA had a balance of \$592.05 based on the books for the fiscal year that ended on July 31, 1921; and that the BSL had a balance of only \$1,648.10 as of June of 1921.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ "Convention Parade of the UNIA," *Negro World*, August 6, 1921 in *MGP V. III*, 566-568.

¹⁰⁴ "Reports by Special Agent P-138," July 30, 1921, in *MGP V. III*, 559.

¹⁰⁵ "Universal Negro Imp. Association Auditor General's Report," *Negro World*, August 13, 1921, 9.

¹⁰⁶ "Thomas P. Merrilees to William Heyward, United States Attorney, New York," Oct 31, 1922, in Robert A. Hill ed, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. V* (Berkeley: University of California

Garvey's vision was dissolving before the reality of financial insolvency. In his presentation, Garcia had reminded those in attendance that financial health of the Association depended on the remittance of dues and other fees to the central office, but the downturn in the economy had depleted that source of revenue.

The Mounting Case and Indictments

The government's mail fraud case against the UNIA was building and in the beginning of 1922 subpoenas were issued for the leadership of the UNIA. Garvey, Garcia, Tobias Harris, Thompson, Hubert H. Humphry and others were called before the Post Office authorities, as the government sought to build a case against the Association trying to bring down its leader. At the center of the question was the outstanding purchase of the *Phyllis Wheatley*. Garcia was seemingly aware of the impending actions of the government. His trip to Virginia had alerted him to the government's building case against his boss. Further, he and Garvey had been at the central office when an inspector from the Post Office had visited, his line of questioning seemed to alert Informant 800, who had infiltrated the UNIA, and who was also present at the time of the interrogation. The embedded agent later wrote that a short time after the governmental agent's inquiry the headquarters, Garcia was seen leaving with a box of papers under his arm for the purposes, the operative supposed, of destroying or obscuring evidence of maleficence on his part. Garcia's efforts were quite timely, and soon the government would act on the UNIA and its representatives.

In January of 1922, the government acted, they arrested Garvey and sought to indict others along with him, to do they had to discern who was else was culpable of having participated in illegal activity. The case against Garvey and it the UNIA

Press, 1983), 125; "Statement of Elie Garcia," January 13, 1922, in Robert A. Hill ed, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. IV* (Berkeley ; University of California Press, 1983), 399.

leadership was weak. They sought to indict members of the organization for violating section 215 of the United States Criminal Code, using the mails to defraud. Garvey was clearly the target of their investigation and was arrested on the 12th and held on \$2,500 bond. This was not the first charge brought against Garvey. In 1920, during the convention, he was tried unsuccessfully for criminal libel.¹⁰⁷ The government's charges needed corroboration and the officials sought defectors from the more senior officials of the BSL to capture their target. Garcia, Thompson, and James D. Brooks, Secretary General of the UNIA appeared on the 13th of January before the post office inspector adhering to the stipulation of the summons; Frederick Toote, Director of the Line, and George Tobias the Treasurer appeared on the 16th. Mortimer J. Davis and James Amos, two Bureau of Investigation agents that had been following the UNIA for some time, led the confrontational interrogations. The agents sought to play the officials against each other, attempting to implicate as many as possible. Garcia's testimony was defiant, he was recalcitrant and did not participate willingly, which led the examiners to be more aggressive and patronizing. Conversely, Thompson and Toote's testimonies were more compliant. Thompson implicated Garcia in perpetuating the falsehood that the *Phyllis Wheatley* had been acquired as one of the people who doctored the image that suggested it was in BSL possession.¹⁰⁸ Toote implicated both Thompson and Garcia as principle actors in the fraud.¹⁰⁹ Brooks defended Garvey, omitting Thompsons' involvement, and placed the onus on Garcia.¹¹⁰ On February 15, 1922 Garcia, Thompson, Tobias, Garvey and Toote were

¹⁰⁷ Martin, *Race First*, 187

¹⁰⁸ "Statement of Orlando M. Thompson," January 13, 1922, in *MGP V. IV*, 382.

¹⁰⁹ "Statement of Frederick A. Toote," January 16, 1922, in *MGP V. IV*, 419.

¹¹⁰ "Statement of James D. Brooks," January 13, 1922, in *MGP V. IV*, 407.

indicted on charges of defrauding people who bought shares based on the notion that the *Phyllis Wheatley* had been secured.

The Association was reeling in the wake of the indictments and those in the government's crosshairs sought to protect themselves from further action. The loyalty of Garvey's closest associates was tested, as was their trust in him. Shortly after the group had made bail, it was revealed that Garvey was to place blame for the fraud on Thompson.¹¹¹ Garvey used the *Negro World* platform to lambast all involved in the operation as traitors.¹¹² Thompson, sensing the impending convergence of the government's case, came forth to provide a secondary statement; this time, one that implicated Garvey as the central figure in the deception.¹¹³ Garcia, on the other hand, maintained his commitment to the organization and on February 20th issued a call to cease the selling of stock and return all unsold shares.¹¹⁴ The news of the interruption of the Black Star Line was delivered in an address given by Garvey at Liberty Hall on March 26th and carried in the April 1st edition of the *Negro World*.¹¹⁵ For Garvey and the faithful, the August convention was critical in helping the Association recapture its recent glory. recapture the celebrity of the past.

¹¹¹ "report by Special Agent Mortimer J. Davis," in *MGP V. IV*, 541.

¹¹² See *Negro World* January 21, 28, February 4, 11, 19 of 1922.

¹¹³ "Statement of Orlando M. Thompson," February 21, 1922, in *MGP V. IV*, 546.

¹¹⁴ "Bureau of Investigation Report," March 4, 1922, in *MGP V. IV*, 529; "Chronology," in *MGP V. IV*, liii.

¹¹⁵ "Garvey Assures People at Liberty Hall Nothing Can Fail that is Connected with the UNIA," *Negro World*, April 1, 1922, 7.

The Defiant 1922 Convention

If the 1920 convention had been the height of optimism, then the 1922 iteration was a declaration of Garvey's recalcitrance toward those who sought to unseat him as the most influential voice in the global black community. In advance of the gathering both Garvey and Garcia had donated to the convention fund. In addition to the government indictments, the growing "Garvey Must Go!" movement besieged the Association. The anti-Garvey actors held events parallel to the UNIA convention, which caused tension and clashes in Harlem.¹¹⁶ Additionally, there were growing schisms within the organization. Garvey faced a challenge from Dr. James Eason, a person he once named Leader of the American Negroes, who now saw folly in the Jamaican's international agenda arguing that the UNIA should focus on domestic issues. During the proceedings, the two men clashed on stage in front of the convention goers almost to the point of physical confrontation. Eason was subsequently excommunicated from the UNIA in a lengthy and public impeachment.¹¹⁷ Garvey used the 1922 gathering to reaffirm his position. In a show of humility staged to draw the sympathy of his followers, Garvey resigned from his position. In an act of solidarity several cabinet members, including Garcia, followed suit.¹¹⁸ Both men were reelected by their constituents and Garvey took the cue to

¹¹⁶ Martin, *Race First*, 322; Cronon, *Black Moses*, 108.

¹¹⁷ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 109. Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 346; Eason Expelled for Disloyalty to Universal Negro Association: Review and Summary of Fourth Week's Proceedings," *Negro World*, September 2, 1922, 3.

¹¹⁸ "Garvey Removes Misunderstanding as to Resignation from Office in UNIA," *Negro World*, August 26, 1922, 3.

mean a mandate for his rule.¹¹⁹ At the conference a new Haitian figure emerged, Jean Joseph Adam, who served the UNIA on the international stage.

Jean Joseph Adam and the 1922 League of Nations Delegation

Jean Joseph Adam was a migrant who had experiences with other black uplift programs before joining the UNIA. He received a primary education in Haiti then traveled to Europe where he was further educated and, finally, to the United States to attend Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee University.¹²⁰ He had planned to return to Haiti and apply what he had learned at the black institution, but the political conditions of the country kept him in the United States.¹²¹ By 1920 he had joined the San Francisco chapter of the NAACP where he participated in the campaign to liberate Haiti from the U.S. Occupation. Central to his activism was the recognition of the right and ability of people of African descent to self-govern.¹²² In a letter to James Weldon Johnson, Adams voiced an internationalist view of the occupation stating that the American presence in Haiti revealed a larger goal of global domination of people of African descent.¹²³ When NAACP's moderate organizational practices proved less than satisfactory, or inefficacious, Adam looked for a more militant approach. He found the outlet for his politics with the UNIA.¹²⁴ Adams first garnered the attention

¹¹⁹ Marcus Garvey, "Great Success of International Convention," *Negro World*, September 2, 1922, 1; "The Great Convention," *Negro World*, September 9, 1922, 6.

¹²⁰ Biographical Footnote, *MGP V. IV*,

¹²¹ "Distinguished Workers whose Names will Adorn our Honor Role, No. 2," *Negro World*, August 25, 1923, 7.

¹²² "Letter" Jean Joseph Adam to James Weldon Johnson, September 24, 1920, *Papers of the NAACP*, Part 11, Reel 8; Leon D. Pamphile, *Haitian and African Americans a Heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 115.

¹²³ "Letter," Jean Joseph Adams to James Weldon Johnson, December 7, 1920, *Papers of the NAACP*, Part 11, Reel 8; Pamphile, *Haitian and African Americans*, 115.

¹²⁴ "Distinguished Workers," *NW*, 7.

of U.S. Government officials on the stage at a rally where Garvey was speaking in San Francisco. He had been personally dispatched in the summer of 1921 by Garvey to the branch to right the discord between rival factions within its membership. The troubles reflected larger tensions within the Association, as to whether it is best served to by a domestically or internationally oriented group, as voiced by Eason at the 1922 convention. By June of 1922, he was already president of the San Francisco chapter. With the Haitian, who had traveled extensively, Garvey knew he had an ally in his plans for the global rehabilitation of the race. More importantly, in Adams he had a militant activist who had eschewed the moderate approach of his rivals, and who had the training, tools, and travel experience to help project the UNIA internationally.

Adams was introduced to the rest of the UNIA at the 1922 convention as a member of the delegation to the League of Nations, sent to represent the Association on an international stage, and further Garvey's claims to the continent. Adams was nominated by Garvey himself to serve at the interpreter for the delegation to the League; Garvey surmised that it was better to send someone who was "in line with the objective of the race" then secure a translator in Europe.¹²⁵ Adams would prove to be more than the measure of his lingual skills. The delegation included G.O. Markey and William Sherrill who were the two lead representatives of the UNIA to the international body. His departure was part of a larger sendoff included in the program of the month-long convention; and Adams was the focal point of an evening session on the 22nd of August. The celebration of his departure was interestingly sandwiched between the UNIA trial of Eason in the morning session and his expulsion on the following day; perhaps as an uplifting moment in the face of the removal of a popular

¹²⁵ "Summarized Report of First Week's Proceedings of the Convention," *Negro World*, August 12, 1922, 5.

member. The event was lavish with several singers, and the Universal Choir and a speech by Garvey. In his disquisition he stated that the mission of the emissaries was to forward the UNIA's position that the forfeited German colonies ought to be governed by people of African descent as part of his vision for the rehabilitation of Africa. Following Garvey was Bessie Coleman, the first woman of African descent to be a certified pilot, warmly greeted by those gathered. Adams then spoke and asserted his fidelity to the UNIA platform and his commitment to getting a foothold in Africa.¹²⁶ He set sail the following day, in advance of the rest of the group in order to secure lodgings.

The 1922 Delegation to the League of Nations worked to bring the UNIA's demands to the League with little success but was used by Garvey as a tool for propaganda. Adams had secured arrangements and established contacts in advance of the arrival of the others, he was joined by his colleagues on September 1.¹²⁷ Armed with letters of introduction from Garvey to the Eric Drummond, Secretary General of the League, the trio set about conducting the UNIA business. The primary goal was to gain access to the League sessions, as in the episode with Cadet, the UNIA as a fraternal organization had no invitation to participate alongside representatives from sovereign nations. On September 12th, G.O Marke, chairman of the delegation, reached out to the Secretary General of the League in an attempt to in order to present the mission of the UNIA to him so that it would be presented in front of the delegates.¹²⁸ Drummond deferred, citing an overburdened schedule, and directed the

¹²⁶ Eason Expelled for Disloyalty to Universal Negro Association, Review and Summary of Fourth Week's Proceeding of the Convention," *Negro World*, September 2, 1922, 3.

¹²⁷ William L Sherrill, The League of Nations and the Impressions of a Delegate," *Negro World*, June 18, 1932, 6.

¹²⁸ "Letter' G.O. Marke to Eric Drummond, September 12, 1922, in *MGP V. IV*, 11.

committee to his subordinate William Rappard, Director of the Mandates Section. A minor breach of diplomatic protocol ensued. On September 16th, Adam, along with Sherrill, located Rappard, before an official meeting was established, and, unaware of the communication exchanges, presented him with the request of the Association to have the forfeited German possessions turned over to the UNIA and that a person of African descent be appointed to the Permanent Mandates commission.¹²⁹ The petition, of course, was never brought before any body of the League, but Garvey used the moment as a tool for publicity. At a Liberty Hall rally held on September 17th, Garvey used the mishap as a demonstration of the success of his representatives, and he admonished those who suggested that the delegation had not even travelled to Geneva. He further distorted the reality forwarding the falsehood that the contingent had presented the demands of the Association in front of the league.

While in Geneva, the delegation had the chance to meet with Dantès Bellegarde, Haitian Minister to the league. Speculation as to the outcome of that meeting added to the rivalry between Garvey and Du Bois. Bellegarde was the Haitian Minister to France as well as the country's delegate to the League. Additionally, he was also a delegate to the 1921 Pan-African Congress held in Paris, and a colleague and collaborator of Du Bois. At the 1921 gathering he lent his voice to the chorus of attendees who repudiated Garveyism. It is at the 1922 League of Nations that Bellegarde called on the League to turn over the German mandates to a black organization. Where Bellegarde drew his inspiration for the request became a matter of dispute and an instrument of discreditation between the warring factions. On the front page of the September 16th *Negro World*, Garvey heralded Adams for

¹²⁹ "Letter," William Rappard to G.O. Marke, September 16, 1922, in *MGP V. IV*, 17.

convincing his “countryman... to sponsor a plea for the native Africans.”¹³⁰ In response, Bellegarde wrote from Paris a letter dated November 8th that appeared in the February 1923 edition of *The Crisis* in the “Opinion of W.E.B. Du Bois” column, contradicting the assertions of the UNIA. In the missive, he forwarded that he had already given his speech by September 9th before he received the UNIA delegation; moreover, he stated that when he confronted the delegation about the discrepancy, they admitted to the misunderstanding at the heart of the UNIA’s assertion.¹³¹

Other accounts further confound the issue. One such report written by Charles Hallaert, Belgian Vice Council, reprinted in Volume IX of the Robert A. Hill edited *Marcus Garvey and UNIA* papers suggests that the UNIA delegation led by Adams “succeeded in convincing Bellegarde,” in forwarding the rebuke.¹³² Whether or not the report can be taken at face value is a question yet to be determined. The Belgian Government was exceedingly worried about the influence of the UNIA in their colonies and the representative may have been speaking out of paranoia; it remains unclear how he came to know that the UNIA delegation had influenced the Haitian minister. Conversely, the French Ministry of the colonies who had been following the contingent since Paris thought that the UNIA members had no impact on the Bellegarde denouncement; especially considering his vehement rejection of the Garvey platform at the 1921 Pan-African Congress.¹³³ True or not, for Garvey the mere appearance trumped the reality. After a cataclysmic year, Garvey used Adam to

¹³⁰ Marcus Garvey, “Delegation to League Scores First Victory,” *Negro World*, September 16, 1922, 1.

¹³¹ Dantès Bellegarde, “At Last the Truth,” *The Crisis*, February 1923, 162.

¹³² “Report by Charles Hallaert,” September 19, 1922, in *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. IX* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 605.

¹³³ French Ministry of Colonies, “Garveyisme,” *Archive Nationales Outre-Mer (ANOM)*, 3SLOTFOM 56, 13.

project a picture of an internationally successful and influential Association, especially useful as the trail for mail fraud loomed large on the horizon.

1923: Self-Cannibalization and the Trial of the Leadership of the Black Star Line

As 1922 gave way to 1923, the UNIA faced the prospect of losing its leader, and Garvey resisted vigorously, ensnaring Garcia in the carnage. In response to the indictment, Garvey lashed out at his associates. Garcia himself was worried. Government officials were looking into him for defrauding the UNIA in his dual position as Auditor General of the UNIA and the Secretary General of the Black Star Line. Harry Watkins, a Black Star sock salesman, had accused Garcia of graft ranging into the thousands.¹³⁴ Garvey, seeking to defame and further implicate his subordinates, charged Garcia with embezzlement. Garvey accused Garcia of passing two checks under the UNIA name and taking the funds for his own use.¹³⁵ When Garcia learned that Garvey had discovered his malfeasance, he was hurt and asked for forgiveness and implored him not to divulge the information. Unmoved, Garvey barricaded the Haitian's office, and went forward with the prosecution.¹³⁶ Garcia counter sued on the basis that he had been owed over \$1000 in unpaid loans.¹³⁷ He further suggested that Garvey was "scared of him," because he knew where the money was.¹³⁸ Compounding this was the murder of Eason. Eason, banished rival to Garvey,

¹³⁴ Special report by James Amos," May 24, 1922, *MGP V. IV*, 641.

¹³⁵ "Report by Bureau Agent William e. Dunn Jr.," in Robert A. Hill ed, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. V* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 173

¹³⁶ Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 367; Robert Hill and Barbara Bair eds, *Marcus Garvey, Life and Lessons: A Centennial Companion to the Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 83.

¹³⁷ Elie Garcia Deposition in Rudolph Smith Vs. Universal Negro Improvement Association, January 25, 1926, Robert Hill Papers, Duke University, American Collection, Folder AM6; Report by Special Employee Andrew M. Battle," March 15, 1923, *MGP V. V*, 274.

¹³⁸"Report by Special Employee Andrew M. Battle," March 15, 1923, *MGP V. V*, 275.

was murdered on January 1, 1923. The Federal agents who had been investigating Garvey assumed he had ordered the assassination to silence a potentially damaging witness. Eason had been an integral member of the Association, an intimate of its leader, and presumably, aware of some malfeasance as a result. Garcia, as a function of his role as Auditor General, held a vital piece of information. Garcia had made to payments to Esau Rasmus, the suspected killer; he paid him once before the shooting of Eason and once posthumously.¹³⁹ Garcia threatened to testify against his former boss at the height of he and Garvey's litigatory turmoil. Stein argues that Garcia held this as a chip to keep Garvey from further accusations.¹⁴⁰

Whether or not Garcia stole money is a matter of debate. There is evidence that Garcia did misappropriate funds. There is also the indication that suggests he did so with Garvey. Cronon, when discussing the failures in management of the UNIA, asserted that Garcia kept the monies from the Philadelphia chapter and those from sale of BSL shares in his personal account.¹⁴¹ What remains is that, after reviewing the UNIA's ledger that Garcia may have doctored, the U.S. Government's auditor declared no evidence of embezzlement and revealed that Garcia had not been paid by the Black Star Line in his tenure with the company.¹⁴² Garcia won his countersuit against Garvey and was awarded the back pay. Of the two criminal suits Garvey filed, Garcia was convicted on the minor offense of having fraudulently taken \$40; a

¹³⁹ "Report by Special Agent Mortimer Davis," Feb 14, 1923, in Robert A. Hill ed, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. V* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 245.

¹⁴⁰ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 197.

¹⁴¹ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 81.

¹⁴² "Summary of the Report of the Books and Records of the Black Star Line and UNIA by Thomas P. Merrilees, Expert Bank Accountant," in *MGP V. V*, 100.

decision that was overturned on appeal.¹⁴³ News of the conviction was carried in the March 23, 1923 edition of the *Negro World* in an article suggesting further potential graft, and furthering the Association line that Garvey had been undermined by his emissaries.¹⁴⁴

Despite the tension between the two, Garcia stood trial alongside Garvey, and remained loyal to his former employer. On May 18, 1923, after more than a year of delays, the mail fraud trial of Garvey, Garcia, Toote, Tobias, and Thompson began. The trial of the UNIA leadership was an opportunity for the U.S. Government to rid themselves of one of the most powerful activists for the enfranchisement of people of African descent in the world. The prosecutor revealed as much in his opening statements focusing largely on Garvey as the perpetrator of the fraud and that the co-defendants were merely acting in his “spirit.”¹⁴⁵ Garvey dominated the proceedings. From the beginning he made his presence felt, accusing the presiding Judge Julian Mack of conflict of interests as he was a member of the NAACP, the association led by Du Bois, chief rival of Garvey.¹⁴⁶ Garvey subsequently fired his attorney and represented himself for the rest of the trial.¹⁴⁷ His comportment as his own counsel has been described as “bumptious” by Cronon and “flamboyant” by Martin. Ultimately, Judge Mack issued a standing “objection” from Garvey in attempts to preempt the

¹⁴³ Bair and Hill, *Marcus Garvey Life and Lessons*, 386.

¹⁴⁴ “Elie Garcia, Auditor General of the UNIA, Convicted for Larceny of Fund of the Organization,” *Negro World*, March 24, 1923, 9.

¹⁴⁵ “Marcus Garvey and Principles of the Universal Negro Improvement Association on Trial Through the Case Against the Officers of the Black Star Line-Interest World-Wide,” *Negro World*, May 26, 1923, 6.

¹⁴⁶ “Marcus Garvey and Principles of the Universal Negro Improvement Association on Trial,” *Negro World*, May 26, 1923, 2. Martin, *Race First*, 192; Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 366; Cronon, *Black Moses*, 112.

¹⁴⁷ Cronon, *Black Moses*, 113.

latter's frequent interruptions. Garcia, his codefendant, along with Tobias, had seemingly reached an accord and throughout the trial all three refrained from attacking each other, instead they all levied accusations at Thompson. During the proceedings Garcia did not call any witnesses.¹⁴⁸ Garcia stood by Garvey until the end and approved of Henry Lincoln Johnson, his attorney, presenting a final argument that spent more time absolving the UNIA leader than it did his subordinate.¹⁴⁹ On June 18th the verdict was returned absolving Garcia and the BSL lieutenants of any culpability, while finding Garvey guilty. News of the conviction was carried in the June 30th edition of the *Negro World* which also contained a small insert that announced, for the second time, Garcia's expulsion from the UNIA.¹⁵⁰

A Haitian in Paris

One of the few bright spots in an altogether difficult year for the Association was Adam. After the "success" of the previous year, emerged as one of its stars. There was no convention held in 1923; the trial had depleted the organization's funds and Garvey was incarcerated, awaiting bail after filing an appeal. Yet, the UNIA pushed on, thanks to its managers who continued to forward the agendas of the organization, just with less fanfare. Adam had risen in stature in the course of the year and was the subject of a *Negro World* spotlight piece that detailed his background and highlighted his role in the 1922 Geneva meeting.¹⁵¹ Adam was reelected to his position as delegate in front of a large audience at Liberty Hall. The leadership of the UNIA was present,

¹⁴⁸ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 197.

¹⁴⁹ "Report of Closing Address to the Jury by Henry Lincoln Johnson," June 14, 1923, in *MGP V. V*, 323.

¹⁵⁰ "Like other Great Leaders Garvey Pays the Price," *Negro World*, June 30, 1923, 2; for the initial announcement of Garcia's departure see:

¹⁵¹ "Distinguished Workers whose Name Will adorn Our Honor Roll," *Negro World*, August 25, 1923, 7.

signifying the importance the Association placed in Adam's mission. Writing from the Tombs, a New York City detention center located in Manhattan, Garvey appointed Adam the "First Provisional Ambassador of the Negro Peoples of the World to France" and defined his position as generally a representative of the UNIA to Continental Europe. Adam rose to speak, to great applause, and affirmed his support for the incarcerated leader. He continued voicing his fidelity to the UNIA's platform of securing an African base where the Association could demonstrate its sincerity and commitment to the continent's redemption.¹⁵²

Adam's deployment marked a redirection in the UNIA's approach, one that witnessed increasing overtures to Francophone Africans. Already in 1922, Garvey had written to the French Ministry of Colonies warning them of the day of reckoning where France would have to account for its colonial past. To avoid this fate, he invited the French Government to the table to discuss amicable solutions to move towards the redemption of Africa.¹⁵³ Garvey had caught the attention of the French, and the 1921 Pan-African Congress held in Paris revealed the government's concern. At the congress, Blaise Diagne, Senegalese representative in the legislature, in the name of the government, repudiated the Garveyite agenda. In its concern, the Ministry had a representative sent to the 1922 UNIA convention.¹⁵⁴ At the gathering Garvey proclaimed that France was "scared," because it had in the metropole a revolutionary force, the immigrants from its colonial possessions, that they would have to deal with. The ministry grew increasingly concerned about its spread in the country. Their

¹⁵² "The UNIA sends it First Ambassador to Represent the Negro Race," *Negro World*, August 25, 1923, 3.

¹⁵³ "Letter," Marcus Garvey to the Secretary of the Ministries, April 21, 1922, ANOM, SLOTFOM 84, 1.

¹⁵⁴ "Le Mouvement Pan-African aux Etats Unis," August 12, 1922, ANOM, SLOTFOM 84, 1.

consternation only deepened with the inauguration of the French section of the *Negro World* in 1924.¹⁵⁵ The French pages were in existence for about as long as Garvey's flirtation with the French. It was edited by two Haitians, Theodore Stephens, from January 1924 through January 1925, and Theodora Holly, daughter of famed African American emigrationist Episcopal Church Bishop Theodore Holly, from January through February 1925.¹⁵⁶ According to Phillipe DeWitte, despite French fears, the racial climate of France, with its illusions of racial equity, did not foment the same militant anti-colonialism that Garvey expounded (by that time) limiting the program's possibilities for diffusion in the communities of people of African descent.¹⁵⁷ However, for a moment the UNIA had found a suiter from the French colonies in Africa, one that arrived at a serendipitous juncture in the Association's history.

Beginning in 1923, Garveyism had a curious potential suiter in the person of Kojo Houenou Tovalou, who spurred the Association's interest in France. Tovalou was the scion of a Dahomey royal family, whose experience in France had fomented in him a militant rejection of colonialism. He began to take an interest in the rhetoric of the UNIA, not its virulent anti-racism, but in its analysis of the racism and its valuation of the back past.¹⁵⁸ For the UNIA, this came just as the Liberian possibilities were dissolving. The 1922 mission had been a failure and a subsequent disastrous envoy in 1924 ended any opportunity for UNIA establishment in the country.

¹⁵⁵ "A.S. de L'Association Universelle pour l'Avancement de la Race Noire," Le Directeur du Bureau Français de Renseignements aux Etas Unis A Monsieur Poincare, President du Conseil, May 13, 1924, ANOM, 3SLOTFOM 84, 1.

¹⁵⁶ "Staff of Negro word," Robert A. Hill Papers, Duke University, American Series, Folder AM10.

¹⁵⁷ Phillipe DeWitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres en France, 1919-1939* (Paris : L'Editions Hartman, 1985), 86.

¹⁵⁸ DeWitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 88; see also «Paris Cœur de la Race Noire : Discours de Touvalou devant le Congres de UNIA » *Les Continents*, October 1, 1924.

Additionally, Garcia's second report, where he critiqued elements of the Liberian Government, and wrote candidly how to affect UNIA presence in elected offices had leaked.¹⁵⁹ The Liberian dream was over, and the Association sought out other partners. Adam was part of a delegation that sought rapprochement with *Liga Africana*, a Portuguese anti-colonial group, in order to find alternative alliances.¹⁶⁰ Tovalou, represented another potential suitor, and one that came with much needed funds. He was invited and spoke at the 1924 UNIA convention.

The August 1924 convention marked the pinnacle of the UNIA's efforts to woo the Afro-descended Francophone community, and Haitians were at the forefront of this venture. It also marked the triumphant return of Garvey, out on bail, pending the outcome of the appeal of his sentence, who used the 1924 convening to present an image of unaffected strength in the face of persecution.¹⁶¹ The UNIA was also finally able to announce the purchase of a new ship, the *S.S. G.W. Goethals*, under the newly founded Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company.¹⁶² On August 8th in the afternoon session, Theodore Stephens took the stage as representative of the Haitian delegation. He denounced the occupation and spoke about the virtues of Toussaint Louverture, one of the leaders of the Haitian revolution. He shifted and introduced Tovalou, showering him with praise and detailing his efforts at launching the *Ligue Universale de Defense de la Race Nègre* (LUDRN).¹⁶³ Tovalou was further wooed at

¹⁵⁹ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 212; Martin, *Race First*, 123.

¹⁶⁰ Jose de Magalhães, "The Pan African Movement in 1923-1924," *Correio de Africa* September 25, 1924, reprinted in Robert A. Hill eds, *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers V. X* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 265.

¹⁶¹ "President-General's Report to the Convention," *Negro World*, August 23, 1924, 2.

¹⁶² "New Negro Steamship Company Secures First Ship for Africa," *Negro World*, August 23, 1924, 1.

¹⁶³ "Proceedings of Fourth International Convention," *Negro World*, August 16, 1924, 14.

a gala held at Liberty Hall, in his honor, where he was toasted by Garvey.¹⁶⁴ Tovalou offered a welcome to the Association in the name of Africa and suggested the organization would find a warm reception on the continent.¹⁶⁵ Adam, who remained in Europe for the festivities, took full advantage of Tovalou's interest and published an article in the June 1924 *Les Continents*, a periodical founded by the African, to further the Association's call to secede the mandated German territories.¹⁶⁶ He continued this line of advocacy for the UNIA's agenda, detailing a plan for the establishment of a foothold in Paris that would serve, in cooperation with the French Government, the immigrations of Afro-descended people to the continent.¹⁶⁷ But, the project ended in acrimony. Garvey feuded with Tovalou before he began serving his sentence for mail fraud in 1925. And in 1925, Adam returned to the United States and filed a lawsuit against the UNIA, having never been paid for his service to the Association.¹⁶⁸

Conclusion

Marcus Garvey died sort of posthumously on June 10, 1940, a few weeks after reading George Padmore's mistaken and maliciously reported obituary.¹⁶⁹ The Association which had, at one point, dominated a landscape cluttered with organizations dedicated to ending the subjugation of people of African descent carried on in his absence. It had persevered through his incarceration, deportation, relocation to London, and Garvey's shrinking relevance all due to the strength of the managing

¹⁶⁴ "Third Court Reception a Roaring Success," *Negro World*, August 30, 1924, 2.

¹⁶⁵ "Closing of Mass Meeting at Carnegie Hall," *Negro World*, September 20, 1924, 7.

¹⁶⁶ Jean Joseph Adam, "La Cession du Jubaland," *Les Continents*, June 15, 1924.

¹⁶⁷ Georges G-Joutel, "Le Mouvement Pan-Noir," » *La Presse Coloniale*, November 5, 1924, 1.

¹⁶⁸ "Jean Joseph Adam v Universal Negro Improvement Association," April 13, 1926, New York State Supreme Court Records no 6966.

¹⁶⁹ Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey*, 271; Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, 2.

agents that continued their work. Much has been written about the UNIA that has centered on Garvey; he was the idea man who served as the catalyzer and lightning rod that propelled the organization to its height. However, Garvey could have never realized any semblance of his vision without the committed labor of his subordinates.

What following the Haitians reveals is that Garvey had an international agenda for the UNIA that was forwarded by those who realized the central tenants of his plan. While Garvey incessantly traveled, stuck for months on end outside of the country, it was the managers of the UNIA that carried on with the plans. These were the agents, who believed in the cause and were caught in the orbit of Garvey, whose efforts served as the foundation for the success. At the organization's influential peak between 1919 and 1921, it was Haitians, along with others, that helped achieve some of the goals set forth by the leader. And it was their successes that Garvey used to project an image of a strong organization. This image of power drew crowds and, in turn, donations and membership dues. Poignantly, Haitians forwarded Garvey's ultimate aim of forging a global empire that connected people of African descent across all shores. They were internationalists whose transnationalism, that elided cultural and lingual boundaries, represented a much-needed dimension to the UNIA's cadre of officials. This accounts for the meteoric rise of the Haitians in the organization. Recognizing their capacity for impact abroad, Garvey personally promoted the Haitians to frontline positions in affecting his global empire. Following the contributions of Haitians reveals the centrality of the managing agents in creating the largest mass movement of people of African descent before or since. And, it draws our attention to the international face of an organization that has often been studied within an American context.

III. A Les Plus Capable: Haitians and International New Negro Political Activism in the Age of Occupation, 1919-1934

This chapter argues that Haitians were central activists in the international New Negro political movement, one that upheld a version of blackness that was cosmopolitan, sophisticated and fit for self-governance while confronting white supremacy. Haitians contributed to the impulse in two ways: first they engaged the race making project to affect the abatement of the U.S military and financial occupation of their country and, second, they used their position to argue in defense of people of African descent globally. I demonstrate how my subjects participated in and defined the political, social, and intellectual currents of the New Negro phenomenon. The central tenant of their political agenda was to demand integration into the societies they lived in and to announce that people of African descent were fit to govern themselves. This was to be achieved through demonstrations made by its exemplars of their fidelity and mastery of bourgeois Western values; namely, their liberal democracy, the free exchange of ideas, and their faith in capitalism. These positions were particularly salient in the moments following in the First World War as the world powers grew increasingly concerned with the specter of a global communist movement, emanating from the newly christened Soviet Union, and the rise of the black nationalism of the Marcus Garvey led Universal Negro Improvement Association. To highlight the Haitian contributions to this global movement, I locate their efforts in the anti-occupation movement, spanning from 1920-1934, and the Pan-African congresses that were held in 1919, 1921, and 1927. Haitians not only connect both drives but are the focal point through which we can realize the connectivity of both projects.

Focusing on Haitian participation in the moment reveals that both the Pan-African Congresses and the collaborative anti-occupation movement were part of the same impetus: the latter was the locus at which ideas of the former were directed. The overlap of actors and the echoing of themes reveals that both movements were manifestations of the same program, that operated at different levels. Both projects converge in Harlem beginning with the fourth Pan-African Congress held in 1927 and through Dantès Bellegarde's anti-occupation service and contributions to the race making project. In the moments captured here, I trace the travels of Haitian elites from Port-au-Prince between Harlem and Paris, two major centers of internationalist activity in the interwar years. While several people in this period are important actors, Bellegarde emerges as the most important *Haitian* figure in the New Negro project, and, as this dissertation argues, at one point the leading representative of the initiative. In his role as a statesperson- he was the Haitian minister to France and the United States and its representative at the *League* of Nations meetings- Bellegarde was active in both centers of diasporic reunion linking both sides of the Atlantic, and in the process became one of the chief architects and exponents of the philosophy. Locating Haitian activity in projects on both sides of the Atlantic reveals a central feature of their participation: that it transcended the cleaves of empire and language to further the cause of international New Negro political activism buttressed by Pan-African solidarity.

The chapter moves chronologically from 1919, and the first installation of the Pan-African Congress, through 1937, with the disappearance of the *Goodwill* to demonstrate how Haitian elites worked to forge connections and shape blackness on both sides of the Atlantic. Through their efforts to affect the withdrawal of the American dominance of their country, and in their defense of the rights of people of

African descent globally, Haitians worked to forward an image of blackness that undermined notions of barbarity and the need for tutelage that undergirded the colonial project. Moreover, the movement sought to demonstrate the potential for the race, by pointing to its *talented tenth*, in order undercut the pretexts for continued colonial dominance, including the occupation of Haiti. Haitians participated in the Pan-African congresses on multiple levels. They added to the discourse of elite Afro-descended concern for the fate of oppressed people of African descent, globally. They articulated critiques of various governments that held them accountable to the hypocrisies in the tensions between their liberal values and the oppression of black people. And, they served to cast the United States domination of their home country as a cause for people of African descent. The transnational anti-occupation movement entered into between the NAACP and the *Union Patriotique* worked to define the anti-colonial politics of the era while also expanding U.S. African American's concept of blackness; moreover, the effort helped to further the NAACP's work to politicize the racialized violence inherent in the white supremacist project. As the military occupation withdrew, I show how Haitian elites, businessmen and statesmen, along with their African American counterparts in the States, collaborated to translate the racial solidarity that undergirded the anti-occupation movement into an economic relationship. In opposition to the rise of Comintern, the New Negro movement defined itself by fidelity to Capitalism; in contrast from the Garvey movement, it stressed inclusion instead of separatism. In totality, I argue that Haitians were key participants project to unite elite members of the African diaspora in projecting an image of blackness fit for inclusion into the fraternity of officials who led nations, defending the rights of the most down-trodden members of the community along the way in efforts to establish themselves as those most capable to lead the race into modernity.

Race and Fraternity in The Time of War and Occupation

In July of 1915 all corners of the colonized world were locked in a global imperial contest that would come to bear on Haiti and jump start Pan-African solidarity. A series of events the previous year exploded into the First World War that pitted stalwart colonial powers France and England against the insurgent German plans for global territorial domination. Meanwhile, the United States, another aspirant to planetary domination, and soon to enter the European fray, was securing hegemony in its immediate area affecting military and economic control in the greater Caribbean region.¹ On July 27, 1915, the United States invaded Haiti and began a nineteen-year military domination that affected control over Haitian customs houses and the nation's finances. The occupation itself was the realization of several initiatives paramount to Washington, D.C. First, it was one of the earliest sites of the country's self-appointed aims of manifest destiny and its taking up of the so-called "white man's burden" of "civilizing" the non-white people of the world on the path to empire. Second, the occupation operated as bulwark against increasing German influence in the country. who were placed in internment camps and had their businesses seized during the occupation.² Third, it was key for national defense as it allowed the U.S. military to

¹ There are many classic texts on the subject of U.S. hegemonic expansion in the region see: Lester D Langley, *The United States and the Caribbean in the Twentieth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988); Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990); Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001); David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean 1898-1917* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988). More recent works have nuanced this by focusing on the impact on individual nations: Teresita A. Levy, *Puerto Ricans in the Empire: Tobacco Growers and U.S. Colonialism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015); Harvey Neptune, *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Espinosa, Mariola. *Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever and the Limits of Cuban Independence 1870-1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009; Glenn A. Chambers, *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010);

² Shannon, *Jean-Price Mars, The Haitian Elite and the U.S. Occupation, 1915-1935* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 1997): 7.

control or at least prevent another foreign power from controlling Mole Saint Nicholas which guarded the entryway to the Panama Canal. Finally, it allowed the continued financial domination of the countries in the region.³ Unintentionally, it also had the consequence of facilitating a rapprochement between Haitians and African Americans who had a long and rich history that had soured in the run-up to the occupation.

When the U.S. Marines landed in 1915 their arrival enjoyed the support of both the African American community and a segment of the Haitian elite. The years leading up to the occupation had a been a period of political tumult for the independent black republic with a succession of nine presidents in the first fifteen years of the 20th century, none of whom completed their terms. The apogee of the instability came in July 1915 with the mass murder of upwards of 160 jailed dissidents under order of President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam (March-July 1915) and the violent reprisal against him and the General he charged with killing the prisoners by a Haitian mob. This violence was given as the pretext for the incursion and elites of African descent in both countries hoped that the presence and tutelage of the U.S. military would serve as a corrective for the ills that plagued the nation.⁴ The black press in the United States was largely in favor of the military effort – Brenda Gayle Plummer has demonstrated how the most influential periodicals in the African American

³ See Plummer, Brenda Gayle. *Haiti and the Great Powers 1902-1915*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988, and her dissertation “Black and White in the Caribbean: Haitian-American Relations 1902-1934,” PhD. diss., Cornell University, 1981; see also Rosenberg, Emily S. *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999; Peter Hudson, *Bankers and Empire: How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017) and “The Nation City Bank of New York and Haiti, 1909-1922.” *Radical History Review* 115 (Winter 2013):91-114.

⁴ For the reaction of the Haitian elite to the U.S. Occupation see: Chantalle F. Verna, *Haiti and the Uses of America: Post-U.S. Occupation Promises* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017) 45. Magdalene W Shannon, *Jean Price-Mars, the Haitian Elite and the American Occupation, 1915- 1935* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 25. For the U.S. African American response see: Brenda Gayle Plummer, “The Afro American Response to the Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934,” *Phylon* Vol 2 (1982): 127.

community voiced their support. Even *The Nation*, a weekly publication that came to denounce the occupation, supported the incursion and enlisted African Americans into the cause of tutoring their Caribbean brethren in “lessons in citizenship and governmental stability.”⁵ In November 1915 the two nations signed a treaty formalizing the terms of the occupation which continued largely unnoticed in the African American community until 1920. Unbeknownst to the Afro-descended supporters of the action, the United States had tried to impose terms similar to the 1914 convention on the Haitians the year previous, and that Sam had resisted conforming to U.S. American desires, a topic the anti-occupation movement repeatedly stressed. The occupation continued, largely unnoticed in the African American community until 1920.

In 1919 two bodies of deliberation were inaugurated that aimed at fostering dialogue across nations and fomenting an international community to defend democracy and promote self-determination: the *League* of Nations and the Pan-African Congresses. By the end of 1918 the European belligerence had ceased, and the United States had imposed a new constitution on Haiti. Western Civilization had been shaken to its core by the conflict, leaving many to reconsider its failings and contradictions. The leaders of the victorious combatant nations sought to implement geopolitical safeguards against a repeat of the violence. The *League* of Nations was founded during six months of deliberation of the Paris Peace Conference that marked the official end of the first World War, concluding in June of 1919. In the same moment, the leaders of the elite members of the Afro-descended community took the opportunity to make their own claims for equality and liberation from colonial control.

⁵ Quoted in Tabe Ritsert Bergman, “Polite Conquest? The “New York times” and “The Nation” on the American Occupation of Haiti,” *The Journal of Haitian Studies* Vol 17 (Fall 2011): 40.

Invoking similar themes espoused in the post-war meeting, elite members of the race convened in Paris at the first Pan-African Congress. By this same time, Haitians, irrespective of class, had largely come to reject the U.S. American presence, realizing that its promises of uplift were masks for oppression, and turned outwardly for help in abating the domination. All these currents converged in Paris in February of 1919. Neither caucus was ultimately able to realize their stated goals and whatever their achievements towards their ends were surpassed by their successors that emerged in 1945: the United Nations and Pan-African Congress in Manchester, respectively. But if the *League* set a precedent for an international body of deliberation between sovereign nations, then the 1919 congress must equally be appreciated as a nascent moment in forging connections across the Afro-descended world that matured into the anti-colonial movements that liberated Africa decades later.

We can also locate the genesis of the international New Negro political ideology in the same 1919 Parisian climate. The New Negro differed from its predecessor in that it was more militant in its resistance of racial subjugation while rejecting tropes of black inferiority. The inaugural meeting took place the same month the 369th Brigade marched triumphantly in Harlem and the same year as the “Red Summer” and Claude McKay’s response “If We Must Die” – two events that mark the New Negro’s arrival in the American context. The Pan-African Congress of 1919 represents the advent of the international expression as it was called so members of the African descended community could petition the world powers to further the cause of black liberation. While attendance included black leaders from across the diaspora, it was not entirely reflective of the global black community as few continental Africans and fewer women were present. However, those present did represent the educated, socioeconomic elite of their respective communities. The Haitians in Paris

took this opportunity to influence the anti-colonial discourse of the conference and contribute to the making of elite blackness that was the success of the gathering. In this moment of nascent elite bourgeois race-making, Haitian elites inserted the American domination of their country into the program. They established their cause as a central issue in the congresses' efforts to demonstrate their fitness to rule. Similarly, within the transnational anti-occupation movement Haitian participation nuanced efforts against global manifestations of racism by pluralizing notions of blackness, away from the plantation and barbarism that justified colonialism, and casting an anti-imperialist message.

Both causes were predicated on several principles fundamental to bourgeois New Negro. First, global racial solidarity was imperative in the cause of undermining white supremacy on an international level. Secondly, that is was the elite male members, the so-called talented tenth, of the Afro-descended community that were to lead the charge against black subjugation Thirdly, that this would be achieved in demonstrating the latter's ability to self-govern. The totality of the first three positions come to bear on the fourth point that to undermine sites of imperial repression the leaders must make overtures to Enlightenment values of governance thereby enlisting sympathetic liberal whites into their cause. For the next fifteen years that followed Haitians, along with their counterparts across the Afro-descended world, repeatedly voiced these positions on the global stage in order to secure, again, the liberation of Haiti from colonial subjectivity and, by extension, undercut the colonial domination that plagued black people worldwide.

To Make the World Safe for Blackness: The Talented Tenth Congregate in Paris

W.E.B. Du Bois conceived of the 1919 Pan-African Congress to bring together an elite cadre of activists who would act on behalf of Afro-descended people worldwide. Du Bois sought to hold the conference as representatives of the colonial powers arrived in Paris to engage in peace talks. He decided to hold the conference in Paris to insert the demands of people of African descent into the post-War deliberations that presented an air of possibility for change and to try to influence the fate of the German colonies ceded to the victorious Allied Powers. The Wilsonian Moment, as characterized by Erez Manela, was a period of hope for the marginalized people of the West, those subjugated by colonial subjectivity abroad and those oppressed by social norms in the Euro-American societies.⁶ Du Bois was a veteran of pan-Africanism, having played a major role at the 1900 conference inaugurated by Trinidadian Lawyer Henry Sylvester Williams, participating alongside Haitian activist, scholar, journalist and publisher, Benito Sylvain.⁷ He wanted the members of the talented tenth of the diaspora, largely imaged as male, to come together to influence the fate of the rest of the 150 million.⁸ Du Bois's curiosity about the fate of Africa predated the conclusion of the First World War. He maintained that colonialism in Africa should be ended and that the transference of forfeited German possessions to another imperial power was a continuance of the issues that led to the

⁶ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York; Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

⁷ David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 248.; Clarence Contee, "Du Bois, The NAACP and the Pan-African Congress on 1919, *The Journal of Negro History* 57.1 (1972): 13.

⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Note," Undated, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B15 F1; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part Africa has Played in World History* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 9-10.

initial belligerence. Furthermore, he argued that that the tutelage of the former German holdings assigned to “civilized Negroes,” a cadre that included both those on the continent and the diaspora.

Yet, he felt stymied in his pan-Africanist program, facing resistance from the NAACP and the U.S. American government.⁹ As Dunstan has pointed out, the Association was concerned about its image and its bourgeois leadership did not want their evolved image to be conflated with those who had not benefited from their engagement with Western Civilization.¹⁰ It was only through the help of Blaise Diagne, who petitioned and received permission from his friend, French Prime Minister, Georges Clémenceau, that the Pan-African Congress was realized under the condition that it remain unadvertised.¹¹ The governments that held the majority of people of African descent within their borders be it colonial or national made it difficult to travel to Paris. Du Bois was only able to do so under the guise of being a journalist sent, ostensibly, to report on the black troops who had fought in the war. Despite the impediments and the limitations, the conference was successfully held in February of 1919.

The Congress was largely a gathering of Afro-descended people set about asserting their racial unity and denouncing the colonial status and racial oppression faced by the members of the race to the governing bodies of the colonial world. Most of the attendees had not traveled to Paris for the event but were instead already

⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 289; Sarah Claire Dunstan, “Conflicts of Interest: The 1919 Pan-African Congress and the Wilsonian Moment,” *Callaloo* no. 1 (Winter 2016): 136; Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, 10.

¹⁰ Dunstan, “Conflicts of Interest,” 137.

¹¹ Manning Marble, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 101.

residing in the city or serving as delegates to the Paris Peace conference.¹² Seven of the fifty-eight delegates to the congress were Haitians. Tertullien Guilbaud, Haitian Minister and delegate to the peace conference, was appointed President of Honor along with C.D.B. King, Liberian delegate to the Paris meeting and future president (1920-1930). Six other Haitians were noted in attendance though it is not yet clear who they were. In retelling the events of the conference, Candace emphasized that attendees were citizens drawn from the “civilized countries of the world.”¹³

The 1919 installation served to unite a group of elite black men in a loosely synchronized effort to alleviate the political, moral, intellectual, and economic conditions of the African diaspora. There were four sessions held between February 19th and the 21st at the Grand Hotel in Paris.¹⁴ The majority of speakers spoke about reforming colonial practices, the various manifestations of inequality in their respective countries, and how liberal republican values and the “rights of man” should be applied to all. Representatives from Liberia and Portugal as well as colonial administrators from Belgium spoke of the necessity to reform the practices of the colonial powers. Du Bois and William E. Walling denounced U.S. American racism. In stark contrast was Diange who spoke favorably of French colonial practices in the hope that racial fraternity would continue after the congress. The Congress was widely covered in periodicals in France, England and in the United States where even a Minnesotan newspaper carried the news. However, colonies remained under European control and the leaders of the colonial powers objected to receiving

¹² Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, 10.

¹³ Gratien Candace, “Le Congrès Panafricain,” *Actualites* February 27, 1919, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B15 F5.

¹⁴ “Invitation to Pan-African Congress,” W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B15 F1.

representatives from the meeting. David Levering Lewis, author of a two-part biography on Du Bois, has called the congress “largely symbolic,” as none its resolutions reached the Paris Peace Conference in any meaningful way. While the Pan-African Congress failed to have an immediate impact, it did have the effect of announcing the accession of a generation of people of African descent who demanded inclusion into the global power structure based on their fidelity and mastery of Western values.

It was at the 1919 meeting where the international New Negro political agenda was first clearly enunciated with the cause of Haiti at the forefront of its concerns. The gathering served as an incubatory moment for the transnational political actions of the elite men of the yet coalescing African descended community. Haiti had been victim of negative press that exaggerated its failings and therefore resulted in the black community accepting its occupation. But, the Black republic’s representatives’ denunciations of U.S. military presence served to link the incursion to the global colonial order. Haitians in Paris, whether in exile or on diplomatic assignment undermined the U.S government’s stated altruistic aims, Haitian need of democratic tutelage, and claims of barbarism and retrogressive society that was the result of black governance. In the lead up to the conference several Haitians began communicating with Du Bois, Diange, and others connected to the organizing of the conference and stressed the anti-democratic nature and malevolence of the occupation. In a missive written by a D. Borricand to Diange, he notes how the Americans had come to impose a dictatorship on “the little black country belonging to the black race.”¹⁵ Dr. Leon Audain, former Haitian Secretary of Public Education exiled in Paris, made the rounds through the Afro-descended community and shared his account of coming into

¹⁵ Letter D. Borricand to Blaise Diange, January 27, 1919, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers MS312.

conflict with the American military for questioning the occupation with Issac Beton.¹⁶

Whether or not Borricand or Audain attended the conference is unclear but what is known is that when the conference made its declarations it called for full recognition of the independent government of Haiti.¹⁷

In the resolution we find the central principles that governed the international New Negro political agenda, ideas that were echoed in the anti-occupation movement. The nine principles of the resolutions passed by the body reflects the patriarchy of the shepherds of the movement and their desires to be the ones entrusted to ameliorate the conditions of people of African descent. They denounced colonization while affirming the supremacy of western civilization. The declaration criticized the economic exploitation of the colonial project, without denouncing capitalism. Instead, they called for a reinvestment of the profits into the colonies for their development and an end to forced labor regimes that drove extraction. They called for the indigenization of the local governments by those who were best equipped to manage the colonies, and that those who demonstrated “civilization” be accorded the rights of full citizenship. The final point insisted that person of African descent be included in the deliberative bodies of the League of Nations.¹⁸

The occupation of Haiti provided the leaders of the movement with a place to apply its philosophies. Elites from Port-au-Prince society collaborated with African Americans to launch an anti-occupation movement that echoed several major points of the “Resolutions” passed in Paris. They denounced the financial motivations that they argued drove the incursion. They repudiated the violence of the U.S. Marines, and the

¹⁶ Letter Isaac Beton to W.E.B. Du Bois January 28, 1919 W.E.B. Du Bois Papers MS312.

¹⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B15 F1.

¹⁸ “Resolutions,” W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B15 F3, 3.

conscripted of unwilling Haitians in work regimes. And, they condemned the anti-democratic nature of the occupation as evidence colonial nature. The sophisticated and cosmopolitan elements of the Haitian upper-class were highlighted make claims to the self-determining rights of citizenship. In doing so, they made the parallel proclamation of fitness for self-governance. Dantès Bellegarde, Haitian delegate to the League earned a seat on the on its Temporary Commission on Slavery in 1924. Bellegarde emerged at the 1921 congress as a leading exponent and architect of the international New Negro political agenda. The anti-occupation movement and the Pan-African Congresses shared actors and ideals, linking them as part of the same program. They converge in 1931 when Bellegarde becomes the leading Haitian actor in the collaboration to abate the American control. The anti-occupation effort should not be separated from the Pan-African Congresses; both were part of a global movement forging racial solidarity to ameliorate the conditions of people of African descent.

Translation, Building Racial Solidarity and Undermining the Occupation

When conceiving of the initial congress, Du Bois, co-founder of the Association and editor of the NAACP's journalistic organ, *The Crisis*, sought to recognize, affirm and defend the rights of the only independent nations of people of African descent: Liberia, Abyssinia, and Haiti.¹⁹ The Haitian cause provided the NAACP with the opportunity to assail American racist practices, which was part of its mission statement, and merge this impetus with the growing anti-colonialism current of its agenda informed by the Caribbean migrant experience and the Pan-African Congress. The Association's board decided to send an emissary to investigate claims

¹⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Memorandum to M. Diange and Others on a Pan-African Congress to be Held in Paris in February 1919," W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B15 F3, 1, 2.

of the violent, repressive, and anti-democratic nature of the Haitian occupation deciding on James Weldon Johnson as their agent. For Johnson, then Secretary General of the NAACP, the Haitian occupation represented the exportation of overseas of American racism.²⁰ By 1920 elites in both countries had grown distasteful of the occupation with news of its violence, which included sexual assault of women and girls, and anti-democratic nature circulating in the African American.²¹ A year after the conclusion of the congress, Johnson set off to Haiti to investigate rumors of the abuses of the military occupation, as part of global anti-racism campaign aimed at fostering global racial solidarity. He used his time in transit to acquaint himself with Haitian history, away from the negative stereotypes propagated a just cause for the occupation.

In many ways he was the perfect candidate for the trip as his experience, political connections, eruditeness, and relationship to the island ensured the fruitfulness of his mission. Johnson had an ancestral connection to the island: his great grandmother, Hester Argo, had emigrated from Haiti in 1802. Fluent in French, the language of the Haitian and its elite, Johnson also had international political experience, serving as a consul in both Venezuela and Nicaragua.²² More significant were his connections with the Republicans, the Party of Lincoln that drew the majority of votes cast by African Americans. Part of the strategy of the anti-occupation effort was to press the candidate into a position on Haiti as a central concern of the African

²⁰ Léon D. Pamphile, "The NAACP and the American Occupation of Haiti," *Phylon* 47 (1986):92.

²¹ Grace Louise Saunders, "Le Voix des Femmes: Haitian Women's Rights, National Politics, and Black Activism in Port-au-Prince and Paris, 1934-1986," (PhD. diss., University of Michigan, 2013), 59.

²²Rayford W. Logan, "James Weldon Johnson and Haiti," *Phylon* 1960 vol. 32 (4th qtr. 1971): 92; James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way: The Autobiography of James Weldon Johnson* (New York: Viking Press, 1933), 3.

American community. He was a member of the National Advisory Committee which gave him access to presidential-candidate Warren G. Harding. Before even publishing his findings, Johnson met with the Harding to present the “facts” on the ground²³ As Mary Renda tells us, this was a boon for Harding who used the intel against his rival Wilson in the election. Additionally, Johnson understood the fates of people of African descent to be linked. At the Annual Meeting of the NAACP in 1919, Johnson had argued for greater international consciousness in African Americans and called on them to enlighten themselves on the history of Africa which he said had been maligned.²⁴ As we shall see, Johnson used the same reasoning when it came to Haiti.

During his time in the country Johnson uncovered the violent and repressive nature of the occupation drawing into relief the hypocrisy of its stated aims. From his discussions with Haitians, he concluded that they had come to resent the American presence because of the way it had been carried out.²⁵ Johnson traveled extensively in the six weeks spent in the country, meeting with members of the urban elite in both Port-au-Prince, the nation’s capital, Cap Haitian, its second largest city, and becoming acquainted, from second hand sources and at a distance, with popular class realities in the city and rural settings. He also met with American representatives and U.S. military personnel whose candid remarks confirmed that racism that had arrived on Haiti’s shores. This information served as the foundation for the critiques he would later voice in the press. Johnson’s mission to Haiti sparked a race-making project that

²³ Johnson, *Along This Way*, 357.

²⁴ James Weldon Johnson, “Africa at the Peace Table and the Descendants of Africa in Our Americans Democracy,” speech given at NAACP Annual Meeting, Carnegie Hall, January 16, 1919 in *the Selected Writings of James Weldon Johnson Vol II* ed Sondra Kathryn Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 201.

²⁵ “Inquiry into the Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo,” Part 2, 780.

would undergird the anti-occupation movement, one where Haiti and its citizens were cast as part of the same racist system that enslaved people of African descent and continued to oppress them in unyielding ways.

Johnsons' time in the country would ignite the anti-occupation effort in both countries in three ways. First, it provided him with fodder to denounce the military's actions emphasizing the brutality and the racist oppression of Haitians at the hands of the Americans. Second, it afforded him the luxury of becoming more acquainted with Haiti and its people, culture and history. This had the effect of countering notions of Haitian retrogression and instilling in him that realization that the elite were fit for self-governance. In coming to better understand Haitian history drew parallels to the African American experience of racial subjugation. His internationalist perspective was affirmed, and he was convinced that both peoples were united in the cause of black liberation. Lastly, his conversations with members of the elite laid the foundation for the transnational collaboration between the NAACP and the Union Patriotique, the anti-occupation activist group. The lines of communication inaugurated served as the channels through which the anti-occupation movement was coordinated. The racial solidarity, the rebuke of imperial repression, and the concerted efforts between elite men to affect the sovereignty of the nation in the hands of its most erudite and cosmopolitan men are the fundamental principles of the international New Negro political agenda.

The anti-occupation was launched through a print campaign that denounced the occupation. Johnson reached out to sympathetic whites through four articles printed in the *The Nation*. The periodical, which, by 1918, was under the editorial direction of Oswald Garrison Villard, member of the Anti-Imperialist *League* and

vocal critique of the military presence in Haiti.²⁶ Villard had been in contact with Du Bois about Haiti since 1915.²⁷ Ernest Gruening, a journalist at the publication, was a committed ally in the struggle to abate the occupation, and used his connections to bring progressive and liberal white gaze to the matter.²⁸ Published over the course of a month in beginning with the August 25 edition, Johnson's pieces were designed to undercut the stated purposes of the incursion as a vehicle of civilization and characterize it as an anti-democratic repressive force driven by the interests of capital. The international political agenda of the New Negro's platform was a salient theme of Johnson's writings. Johnson also made similar arguments based on his findings in *The Crisis* which served to reintroduce the Haitian people to African Americans as a people who they had a duty to support.

The pieces in *The Crisis* were written to enlist the African American community at large into supporting the nascent anti-occupation effort. In this period, as Brent Hayes Edwards has demonstrated, translation of culture was central to the project of building a transnational black community. Moreover, he argues that the forging of diaspora required an "articulation" of disparate elements.²⁹ In the case of the occupied Haitians, the bridging of the divides required not only to relocate them into the larger struggle for black liberation, but to also undo the negative characterization that informed African American support for the military landing. Undoing the colonial project required undoing its foundational myths. For the

²⁶ Bergman, "Polite Conquest?," 39.

²⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois to James Weldon Johnson March 31, 1915 James Weldon Johnson and Grace Nail Johnson Papers, Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, JWJ MSS 49 B 6 F 136.

²⁸ Robert David Johnson, *Ernest Gruening and the American Dissenting Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 31-44

²⁹ Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation and the Rise of the Black International* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2003), 14.

NAACP to take up the defense of the dominated black Republic, it needed to be sure of the worthiness of the cause. If the NAACP had fretted before supporting the Pan-African Congress because it did not want to be associated with the “uncivilized” Africans, it is safe to assume that it felt similarly about the supposedly “retrogressive Haitians” who, only a few years earlier, had been fit for American tutelage. Thusly, his mission was to not only find the truth about the occupation but to also uncover the *truth about Haiti*. The articles in *The Crisis* were designed to convince its readership of the righteousness of defending Haitians. The articles were based on notes kept by Johnson during his time in Haiti. Across its pages we note the ways he put the two societies in conversation.

Reading Johnson’s personal diary is to be witness to an act of translation in process, where we can note his reactions to his experiences, finding parity and solidarity with the Haitian people across all classes. His diary is the site where the cleaves of diaspora are surmounted. His return to the land of his ancestor reads with amazement and pride. Upon arrival to the coast Johnson was impressed by Haiti’s landscape, the mountains in particular. Once in Port-au-Prince he was quickly impressed calling it “the finest city of all the Latin American seaports” he had ever visited.³⁰ His amazement continued as he toured the city’s urban bourgeois circles and found a level of sophistication among the elites which paralleled Harlem in the period. At a soiree at the home of Seymore Pradel he repeatedly notes the refined conversation of the men and the comportment of the women.³¹ When he visited the

³⁰ Johnson, *Along This Way*, 346.

³¹ James Weldon Johnson, “Haitian Notes,” Yale Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library JWW MSS 49 B85 F646, 27.

Bellevue Club, a high-society haunt, he found it unrivaled when comparing it to similar places frequented by African Americans, those in Harlem included.³²

Johnson also came into contact with members of the urban and rural popular class with whom he again found similarities noting how Haitians had outdone their African American counterparts. Johnson witnessed a “feast day” celebration he found reminiscent of those he had seen in the “African village in Nassau” and the “ring shouts” of the Southern African American religious tradition.³³ He perceived the thatched roofed homes of the Haitian peasant as “superior” to “traditional log cabin” homes in the South.³⁴ Johnson notes how cleanliness is the rule of the Haitian home juxtaposing it to the “filth and the squalor” found in black and white households in the South. In rural Haitians he finds independent individuals who work their own land, owning their own homes as opposed to the “industrialized slaves” with mortgaged homes in the United States.³⁵ Johnson took a copious number of notes that served as the basis for his articles and served as a way to forge reciprocity from African Americans for their occupied brethren. Across these copious notes, we note Johnson’s admiration for the Haitians that served as the foundation for the solidarity he worked to forge in African Americans through *The Crisis*.

The September 1920 edition of *The Crisis* should be considered a landmark pressing in the circulation of periodicals of the period that were aimed at fomented a united community of Afro-descended. It aimed at forging solidarity for the Haitians in the African American community based on their shared experience of subjugation in

³² Johnson, “Haitian Notes,” 67.

³³ Johnson, *Along This way*, 350.

³⁴ Johnson, “Haitian Notes,” 46.

³⁵ Johnson, “Haitian Notes,” 49-50.

the West and present confrontation with the Jim Crow racism. The issue began with an entreatment by Du Bois for African Americans to consider the Afro-descended population in the Caribbean as brethren divided only by geography the particularities of their sites of dispersion, and represented and allies in the struggle for “black Democracy.”³⁶ It also included a laudatory analysis of Haitian literature by Jessi Fauset, including the works of Georges Sylvain, a collaborator of Johnson’s. Interestingly, Fauset’s column, echoed a sentiment made elsewhere by Johnson that refinement in the arts advanced the cause of racial equality and that a “a people that produces great art and literature has never been seen as inferior.”³⁷

The two articles on Haiti in the September edition of *The Crisis* were which were constructed to rehabilitate the country’s image and connect its people and history to that of African Americans. This project was critical to building the racial solidarity critical to the anti-occupation movement which depended upon the African American vote, however marginalized, to influence a presidential candidate to repeal the U.S. military occupation. The issue cast the events of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) and one of its leaders, Toussaint Louverture (therein described as “the greatest of all American Negroes), as tied to the liberation of all people of African descent.³⁸ Johnson’s article not only championed the successes of the black Republic but undermined the stated reasons for the occupation. In a section titled “Fitness to Rule” Johnson highlighted the cosmopolitanism and sophistication of the Haitian elite. Moreover, the pieces revealed that Port-au-Prince was not a degraded space but the

³⁶ W.E.B. Du Bois, “Opinion of W.E.B. Du Bois,” *The Crisis* vol. 20 no. 5 (September 1920):214

³⁷ Ann Douglass, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 313.

³⁸ “Haitian History,” *The Crisis*, September 1920, 217.

equivalent of the major cities in the Americas.³⁹ In constructing this image, he hoped to convince Haitian counterparts in the elite of African American society of supporting the Haitians. This piece aimed at characterizing the Haitians as worthy of citizenship rights and privileges that included self-governance.

He also exposed the violence of the American military in the “Caco Wars”, the Marines’ violent reprisal to the only armed insurrection against the U.S. military presence. The Cacos, a militarized segment of the Haitian political landscape led by Charlemagne Peralte and Benoit Batraville, took up arms against the forced labor used to build a road touted as one of the successes of the occupation.⁴⁰ It must be remembered that militant rejection of the southern brand of racial violence was a hallmark of the New Negro and the NAACP had attuned its effort to documenting and prosecuting instances of brutality.⁴¹ Johnson’s centering of this violence, his descriptions of the southern racists who populated the occupation forces and highlighting of the “white Mississippians” in charge of bringing “law and order” worked to cast Haitians as victims of the same violence inflicted upon their American counterparts.⁴² Whereas the Pan-African Congress cast Haiti with the rest of the black world as a colonized space, here the connection was forged over the exporting of the American white supremacy. For Johnson and his African American readership, the exportation of Jim Crow was an imperial project that could not be stomached. The

³⁹ James Weldon Johnson, “The Truth About Haiti,” *The Crisis* Vol 20 (September 1920), 220-221.

⁴⁰ Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 100-102.

⁴¹ Andrew B. Leiter, *In the Shadow of the Black Belt: African American Masculinity in the Harlem and Southern Renaissances* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 51; See also Johnson, *Along this way*, Chapter 35 for a full discussion of Johnson’s effort toward getting an anti-lynching bill passed.

⁴² Johnson, “The Truth About Haiti,” 224.

exposed the exportation of Jim Crow racism and its violent manifestation further linked the two groups as victims of the same regime. The discussion of the violence of the occupation resonated with other news of the violence, especially against black women, circulating in the African American press. Saunders reveals that as of May of 1920 when Johnson was conducting research in Haiti, the Chicago Defender carried news of sexual violence committed against black women. In “La Voix des Femmes,” Saunders details the extent of to which Haitian women of all classes were subjected to this brutality, a reality that merits one sentence in Johnson’s telling.⁴³

Resisting the Occupation at Home and Abroad

While in Haiti Johnson made valuable connections with members of the Haitian elite, whose point of view served as the basis for his arguments and who would lay the predicate for the anti-occupation effort. Johnson built relationships with some of the most influential members of society, including executive members of the *Union Patriotique*. Johnsons notes reveal the elitist patriarchal nature of his travels. While he met Haitians across all classes, he only discussed the political climate with elite men.⁴⁴ He met with Percival Toby, Pauléus Sannon, Emile Faubert, Charles Rosemond, and Jean Price Mars, all inaugural members of the *Union* who played major roles in the transnational effort. M. Seymour Pradel, a lawyer, politician, and former Secretary of the Interior, informed Johnson that there is no intelligent Haitian “who does not oppose the occupation.” Pradel claimed that had the occupation been carried out in the spirit of aid and through a commission then it may have benefitted the country; however, that it was executed by “rough ignorant men who view

⁴³ Saunders, “La Voix des Femmes,” 67.

⁴⁴ “Inquiry into the Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo,” Part 2, 780.

themselves better than the most cultured Haitian” lead to discontent.⁴⁵ He also met with ex-president Francois Deny Légitime (1888-1889) who had been approached by the occupation leaders to be the head of state in 1915 but refused on nationalistic principles. He met twice with then president Phillippe Sudre Dartinguenave (1915-1922) who had initially volunteered to be the figurehead leader but had come to regret his decision by the time of the meeting.⁴⁶ While in the country Johnson implored those he met to unite across political and ideological division to form an anti-occupation organization.⁴⁷

The person with whom Johnson had the most “far reaching” relations was Georges Sylvain.⁴⁸ Sylvain founded the *Union Patriotique* (UP) in 1915 as a nationalist organization designed to resist the occupation but had little success.⁴⁹ The Haitian was the epitome of New Negro cosmopolitanism. A writer of poetry, his *Crick? Crack!* is often heralded as one of the foundational works in the rendering of Haitian Creole into a written language. Sylvain founded a theater company and was an intellectual and professor of law who had studied in France and returned to his home country to practice his trades.⁵⁰ The purpose of the *Union* was to defend national sovereignty in the face of the imperialist incursion and to further this aim Sylvain

⁴⁵ Johnson, “Notes,” 14.

⁴⁶ Schmidt, *US Occupation of Haiti*, 72; Johnson, *Along this Way*, 347; “Inquiry into the Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo,” Part 2, 779.

⁴⁷ Rayford W. Logan, “James Weldon Johnson and Haiti,” 396.

⁴⁸ Johnson, *Along this Way* 347.

⁴⁹ His posthumously published memoir of the anti-occupation movement, *Dix Années de Lutte pour la Liberté, 1915-1925*, contains extracts from his newspaper, writings from his personal journal, and reproductions of letters exchanged with Haitians and African Americans and provides a nationalist’s account of the occupation and the effort to unseat it.

⁵⁰ Daniel Supplice, “Georges Normil Sylvain,” in *Dictionnaire Biographique des Personnalités Politiques de la République D’Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: C3 Edition, 2014) 686-687

founded a newspaper he christened *La Patrie* (translated as “the fatherland”, perhaps a reference to a line in “*La Dessalinienne*,” the national anthem of Haiti adopted in 1904).⁵¹ The publication was to be the UP’s organ to disseminate information and build support against the occupation in order to affect what Sylvain called “the second independence” of the country.⁵² Within its pages Sylvain implored Haitians to remain vigilant and called for action against the invaders. At one point he seemed to adopt one of the positions of the international New Negro’s political approach of calling on the rule of international law to denounce the occupation. In the October 1915 edition Sylvain cited Charles Sumner, the U.S. Senator and abolitionist who heralded the call for the American government to recognize the Haiti’s independence and abate the occupation under the principle that all men are created equal, irrespective of race, and that one should not dominate another.⁵³ Jean Price-Mars, revered figure of Haitian ethnography and statesperson, was a member of the *Union*’s inaugural central committee. Price-Mars called on the Haitian elite to resist the occupation in his “Postulates of Education.” He excoriated their mimicry of French literature and customs as cause for the occupation and praised Sylvain’s attempts at unification in a collection of lectures that comprised his seminal work *L’Ansi Parle l’Oncle*.⁵⁴ Ultimately, Sylvain was unsuccessful in uniting the elite in any efficacious effort at the start of the occupation. As Chantalle Verna has noted, some Haitians saw

⁵¹ Unknown author, “Georges Sylvain Est Mort,” *La Post August* 2, 1925, reprinted in Georges Sylvain, *Dix Annees de Lutte Pour la Liberte, 1915-1925* (Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, nd), vii.

⁵² Sylvain, *Dix Annees*, 3.

⁵³ Georges Sylvain, “Au Temps Jadis: Charles Sumner- Nissage Saget,” *La Patrie* No 16 (October 1915), reprinted in Georges Sylvain, *Dix Annees de Lutte Pour la Liberte, 1915-1925*, 37; David Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1970), 52

⁵⁴ Magdalene W Shannon, *Jean Price-Mars, the Haitian Elite and the American Occupation, 1915* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 44.

the American presence as a useful for nationalistic and personal concerns. However, time would soon expose its nefarious underpinnings.

The person with whom Johnson had the most “far reaching” relations was Georges Sylvain.⁵⁵ Sylvain founded the *Union Patriotique* (UP) in 1915 as a nationalist organization designed to resist the occupation but had little success.⁵⁶ The Haitian was the epitome of New Negro cosmopolitanism. A writer of poetry, his *Crick? Crack!* is often heralded as one of the foundational works in the rendering of Haitian Creole into a written language. Sylvain founded a theater company and was an intellectual and professor of law who had studied in France and returned to his home country to practice his trades.⁵⁷ The purpose of the *Union* was to defend national sovereignty in the face of the imperialist incursion and to further this aim Sylvain founded a newspaper he christened *La Patrie* (translated as “the fatherland”, perhaps a reference to a line in “*La Dessalinienne*,” the national anthem of Haiti adopted in 1904).⁵⁸ The publication was to be the UP’s organ to disseminate information and build support against the occupation in order to affect what Sylvain called “the second independence” of the country.⁵⁹ Within its pages Sylvain implored Haitians to remain vigilant and called for action against the invaders. At one point he seemed to adopt one of the positions of the international political approach of the New Negro,

⁵⁵ Johnson, *Along this Way* 347.

⁵⁶ His posthumously published memoir of the anti-occupation movement, *Dix Annees de Lutte pour la Liberte, 1915-1925*, contains extracts from his newspaper, writings from his personal journal, and reproductions of letters exchanged with Haitians and African Americans and provides a nationalist’s account of the occupation and the effort to unseat it.

⁵⁷ Daniel Suplice, “Georges Normil Sylvain,” in *Dictionnaire Biographique des Personnalités Politiques de la République D’Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: C3 Edition, 2014) 686-687

⁵⁸ Unknown author, “Georges Sylvain Est Mort,” *La Post* August 2, 1925, reprinted in Georges Sylvain, *Dix Annees de Lutte Pour la Liberte, 1915-1925*, vii.

⁵⁹ Sylvain, *Dix Annees*, 3.

calling on the rule of international law to denounce the occupation. In the October 1915 edition Sylvain cited Charles Sumner, the Senator and abolitionist who heralded the call for the American government to recognize the Haiti's independence and abate the occupation under the principle that all men are created equal, irrespective of race, and that one should not dominate another.⁶⁰ Ultimately, Sylvain was unsuccessful in uniting the elite in any efficacious effort at the start of the occupation. As Chantalle Verna has noted, some Haitians saw the American presence as a useful for nationalistic and personal concerns. However, time would soon expose its nefarious underpinnings.

Johnson's meeting with Sylvain reignited the latter's organization and launched a transnational anti-occupation effort that lasted fifteen years. The collaboration outlived Sylvain who died in 1925 without witnessing the liberation of his beloved country. Johnson found Sylvain to be a passionate nationalist who provided him with much of his information regarding the implementation of the occupation. During their meeting, Sylvain asked about the possibilities for action against the military forces whereby Johnson encouraged him to relaunch the *Union* along the model of the NAACP. Furthermore, Johnson explained that international pressure could only be applied if local steps were taken to counter the military presence.⁶¹ Sylvain, rejuvenated by these discussions and the possibility for collaboration, resuscitated the moribund *Union*, holding its first meeting in November 1920. After three gatherings of the original eighteen members, the decision was made to relaunch the organization on December 5th of that year. More than a thousand

⁶⁰ Georges Sylvain, "Au Temps Jadis: Charles Sumner- Nissage Saget," *La Patrie* No 16 (October 1915), reprinted in Georges Sylvain, *Dix Annees de Lutte Pour la Liberte, 1915-1925*, 37; David Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1970), 52.

⁶¹ Johnson, *Along This Way*, 348.

people answered the call and filled the seats of the Parisiana Theater past capacity, revealing the opprobrium of the once compliant Haitian elite towards the military presence.⁶²

The first meeting established the tone for the organization and the politics forwarded by the central committee echoed the values of the international New Negro's political agenda. Sylvain's speech, an impassioned called for action, makes up most of the record we have of the meeting. The pronouncement rejected the rule of the occupation forces and criticized the five years of occupation. He denounced the anti-democratic practices of the occupation drawing into to relief the imposition of the covenant between the two countries on the Haitian legislature. Sylvain continued, lamenting the fact the power of the executive position had been reduced to a shell of its former self. All, he argued had been subsumed under the control of the agents who had come to control the Financial Advisor set up by the Americans government. Sylvain noted that while the rest of the world was at peace, a reference to the post World War armistice, the U.S. originated belligerence continue in Haiti and that the violence, had emerged from an occupation that had declared itself to be peaceful.

This landmark event established the operational mechanisms and the ideological orientation of the *Union Patriotique*. It's constitution now declared a commitment to reestablish normal political relations between Haiti and the United States. A central committee comprising "fifty-five members" was formed in Port-au Prince among those who signed their name to the constitution. This was helmed by a fifteen-member bureau which met monthly and was charged with executing central committee decisions and relating the information to those "interested in Haitian question." The *Union* was to employ all "practical ways and take all measures to

⁶² Sylvain, *Dix Annees*, 79.

enable” the ousting of United States military control.⁶³ In his call to action Sylvain underscored how there were few Haitians who had not been victims of the excesses and repression of the occupation and that the press had been stifled along with the electoral process. He also noted that the action had to take place in the United States. The meeting ended with a list of demands: the end of martial law, the reorganization of the Haitian armed services, the abrogation of the 1915 convention, and a convocation of the legislature (all central tenants of international New Negro’s political agenda).⁶⁴

Sylvain’s talk also revealed some of the phenotypical biases of his class which were echoed in New Negro prejudices. Here we can point to another form of translation, where Sylvain was situating African Americans, Johnson and Du Bois, within the Haitian racial framework. He celebrated the efforts of Johnson who he described as a member of “our race,” nuancing his description as a *griffe de nuance*. This is one in a myriad of somatic distinctions that elide exact translation but suffice it to say it was a term noting Johnson’s “vaguely” African features. Similarly, Sylvain parsed Du Bois’s writings in *The Crisis* to find mention of his mixed-race ancestry as well as his relation to a Haitian named Elie Dubois. Sylvain compared the American troops to the invasion force sent by Napoleon in 1801 to reimpose slavery in the colony after Toussaint Louverture and the freedom-seeking enslaved population recaptured and asserted their identity as free people. Sylvain also asserted that the *Union* operated on the soil where “brave patriots” such as Christophe, Rigaud, and

⁶³ NAACP Papers Part 11, Ser. B, Reel 8, frame 896.

⁶⁴ Sylvain, *Dix Annees*, 80-89, Georges Sylvain “Deciderata,” *Bulletin Mesnuel de L’Union Patriotique* Vol 1 (Nov 1920): 20.

Chavannes were buried. To cite these three in the course of Haitian history is a speaks to the racialized, elite, and phenotypical prejudices of the *Union* members. Chavannes was a leader of the failed mulatto uprising of 1790-1791 that explicitly precluded the participation of enslaved people in their ranks. Along those same lines, Rigaud led a contingent of mixed-race members of the French army that resisted Toussaint Louverture's rise to power and was part of the contingent that returned to reimpose slavery. And, Toussaint remains to this day a symbol for moderation in the face of the militant Jean Jacques Dessalines. Dessalines, excluded from the speech, the radical rebel who rose through the ranks of the insurgent enslaved population, realized the independence of Haiti, secured the liberation of the Afro-descended population, rebuked the French presence in the colony, and notably came into conflict with the mulatto elite who sought to conform Haiti to liberal currents.⁶⁵

While the leadership of the *Union* was comprised of men, former government officials and foreign ministers, women took up the effort and, in many ways, supported the cause. Saunders has traced the history of the feminist movement in Haiti back to the founding of the *Union Patriotique* arguing that the American soldiers' sexual assaults on women's bodies compelled them into action.⁶⁶ Elite women connected to *Union* leaders such as Eugène Malbranche-Sylvain, wife of Georges, Alice Garoute, who along with her husband had been a opposed the American landing before the military arrival, and Thérèse Hudicourt, wife of Pierre, and the wife of Perçeval Thoby were all active members. Over 200 women participated in the

⁶⁵ Sylvain, *Dix Annees*, 80 ; Georges Sylvain "Discours de M Sylvain," *Bulletin Mensuel de L'Union Patriotique* Vol 1 (Nov 1920): 7-10.

⁶⁶ Saunders, "Le Voix des Femmes," 60.

effort.⁶⁷ These women united to establish an anti-occupation women's collective. Furthermore, the inexpensive and "flexible" membership dues payment schedule allowed for the participation of popular class women as well.⁶⁸ These women were charged with securing donations that would pay the way for a delegation of the Union's men to travel to the United States in furtherance of the cause. Together they raised one hundred dollars on their first day of collection. This prompted Georges Sylvain to encourage Marie-Dugué, Anna Toussaint, Edmonde Questel, and Marjorie Dejoie to do the same in Cap Haitian.⁶⁹ The pecuniary services of the women afforded them the opportunity to collect examples of assaults endured by Haitian women of all classes, which served as an indictment of the occupation forces during the McCormick Commissions investigation. The experiences of the Haitian women activists mirrored experience of Southern women in NAACP, erased by scholars of the Association, and whose grass root activists built support for the organization.⁷⁰ In fact, the stories of the gendered abuse collected and reported by the Haitian women served foment ties with the same African American women and their organizations.⁷¹ Their fund-raising efforts supported the emissaries travels to the United States.

⁶⁷ Sylvain, *Dix Années*, 102.

⁶⁸ Saunders, "Le Voix des Femmes," 61.

⁶⁹ Sylvain, *Dix Années*, 92.

⁷⁰ Lee Sartain, *Invisible Activists: The Louisiana NAACP and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 56-57.

⁷¹ For a full history of the transnational birth of the Haitian Feminist movement and their connections to African Americans see the Grace Louise Saunders, "Le Voix des Femmes: Haitian Women's Rights, National Politics, and Black Activism in Port-au-Prince and Paris, 1934-1986," (PhD. diss., University of Michigan, 2013),

The fight for Haitian independence was taken up in the United States by what was called the “Haitian Mission”. The group selected to represent the *Union* was drawn from the highest levels of Haitian patrician circles comprising Sténio Vincent, former chairman of the Haitian Senate; Pauléus Sannon, former Haitian minister to the United States; and Perceval Thoby, former Secretary of the Haitian Legation at Washington. The three men were New Negro emissaries par excellence, elite and credentialed representatives of the Haiti’s capacity to self-rule charged with bringing the Haitian cause to the American public, both white and black. The trio arrived in late February and stayed in New York City’s Union Square Hotel.⁷² Though they also attended functions held by “liberal” whites, the NAACP hosted dinners and social functions for the delegation.⁷³ In a statement issued by the NAACP, the Haitian Mission reiterated the four objectives of the *Union* claiming that it voiced the “want[s]” of the Haitian people.⁷⁴ Almost immediately upon their arrival, members of the contingent gave interviews to the black newspapers. This became their standard mode of operation: the Haitians would meet with various media outlets, often in the black media, and the NAACP would use its press services to spread contingent’s pronouncements across its networks.

For eight months the delegation made use of NAACP channels to voice indictments of the occupation in line with the geopolitical prerogatives of the New Negro. Much like Vincent Ogè (co-conspirator of the aforementioned Chavannes) before the National Assembly during the French Revolution, the Haitian Mission

⁷² James Weldon Johnson letter to Pauléus Sannon, March 12, 1921 NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, and Frame 501.

⁷³ Mark A. Schneider, Mark A. “*We Return Fighting:*” *The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 88.

⁷⁴ NAACP Press Release dated February 15, 1921. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 501.

sought to position themselves as evolved leaders capable of managing their home country. Various statements made by the trio echoed the international New Negro political agenda. They repeatedly argued that the occupation was anti-democratic and that it had repressed the liberties of Haitians, especially in its censorship of the press and exercise of martial law. They revealed how the military had undermined the Haitian democracy by subverting the nation's legislative and electoral processes and detailed the violence of the military forces and the abuses levied against the Haitians. They also pointed to how financial administration by foreign hands had not fomented stability but only served to enrich American investors and financial organizations, namely, City National Bank.⁷⁵ Playing to the vicissitudes of American politics, the trio portrayed the occupation as representative of the duplicitous machinations of the Wilson administration. Knowing that Harding had championed their cause during the election they waited for the transition of power before reaching out to Washington.⁷⁶

In June 1921, the *Union* contingent was able to meet with members of the Harding Administration to redress the issues of occupation, ultimately hoping to bring about its end. The group was not afforded an audience with the President but instead met with members of the State Department and the foreign relations committees of the Senate and the House.⁷⁷ They issued the "Haitian Memorial," a document that summarized their grievances against the military rule which dovetailed perfectly with

⁷⁵ *The New York Globe* March 3, 1921. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B. Reel 8, Frame 597; Sténio Vincent interview, *New York Age* March 5, 1921 NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 602; *The New York Call* March 22, 1921 NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 606; NAACP Press release May 9. . NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 72; NAACP Press release May 9. NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 721; NAACP Press release May 20, 1921. NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 744; NAACP Press release June 11, 1921. NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 760.

⁷⁶ Sténio Vincent interview, *The New York Age* March 5, 1921. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 602; Plummer, "The African American Response to the Occupation of Haiti," *Phylon* (1960) 43 (1982): 134.

⁷⁷ NAACP Press release May 9. NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 8, Frame 721.

the international political agenda of the New Negro. The Memorial continued the argument of how economic profiteering was linked to the subversion of the democratic order and militaristic domination of the Haitian government. One such example was the theft of Haitian gold on the eve of the occupation by a special military force under the cover of night.⁷⁸ The document exposed the violence of the occupation citing the deaths of nearly 10,000 Haitians at the hands of the Marines in the aftermath of the Cacao uprising. The delegation's successful efforts in the United States coupled with those of the NAACP and Ernest Gruening at *The Nation* eventually led to the formation of a senatorial body of inquiry, led by Senator Medill McCormick.

The McCormick Commission, as it came to be known, was charged with investigating claims levied against the military forces in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Commission was charged with investigating claims levied against U.S. military forces in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Now that the realities of the occupation had been exposed, by the Haitians and their allies Harding who used his opposition to the occupation to win African American votes, was forced into action. The commission set about interviewing representatives of the Haitian people and the military apparatus to discern the veracity of the claims. The inquiry took two forms: a set of hearings held in Washington in August 1921 and interviews with Haitians and Dominicans in their respective countries.⁷⁹ In Washington members of the committee

⁷⁸ The theft of the gold was part of a larger intellectual approach to regional imperial domination that was forwarded by Edwin Kemmerer, economist at Princeton university that served at the foundation for Dollar Diplomacy, the establishment of the Gold Standard, and undergirded the thinking for many of the incursions into Caribbean, Central and Latin American countries in the period by the U.S. Military forces. See Emily S. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy 1900-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) and Peter James Hudson, *Bankers and Empire: How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

⁷⁹ Shannon, *Jean Price-Mars*, 54.

met with military and civilian personal, including Johnson, Gruening, and Vincent. In Haiti, they met with several members of the *Union Patriotique* as well as victims of the gendered and racially motivated violence.

The effort to impact the senatorial delegation was the apogee of the first push of the transnational *Union* and NAACP collaboration. Everything had led to this moment since Johnson's arrival in Port-au-Prince eighteen months prior. Through the relaunching of the *Union* and the gathering of stories of violence, the Haitian delegation had worked to bring a critical eye on the occupation forces and expose the undemocratic and violent nature of the occupation. Once the commission was announced, the *Union* in Haiti, its representatives in the United States, the NAACP and liberal whites represented by Gruening and Villard of *The National* plotted through an exchange of letters on how to best expose the excesses and failings of the military and financial domination. They shared tactics on how to best prepare and impress the incoming senators.⁸⁰

The Commission arrived in Haiti on November 30, 1921. Upon landing, the Senators were greeted with signs linking the American presence with other instances of global imperialism denounced after First World War such as: "Will Haiti be your Belgium?," "Shall Haiti be your Ireland?," and "Shall Haiti be your Congo?"⁸¹ The Haitians had a limited amount of time to impact the visiting representatives as they were only scheduled to stay in the country for four days, a fact that betrayed the insincerity of the mission to many. Another element that signaled the partiality of U.S. officials is that they chose to lodge at the homes of occupation officials as opposed to

⁸⁰ See Sylvain, *Dix Annees*, 117-128. In this period Sylvain exchanged letters with Johnson, Gruening, and Villard.

⁸¹ Ernest Gruening, "The Senators Visit Haiti and Santo Domingo," *The Nation* Vol 94 (January 1922): 7.

staying in independent hotels. Sylvain and the *Union* organized across all segments of Haitian society to offer testimony to the Commission's inquiry board.⁸² Sylvain presented the senators with people drawn from across the country – priests, lawyers, journalists, and a former senator all gave their accounts of heinous acts of violence committed by the military forces.⁸³ The women who spoke of sexual violence were those whose accounts had been collected by the women of the *Union*.⁸⁴ Jolibois, many times in conflict with the occupation administration, was in regular correspondence with Johnson and Du Bois and testified before the commission.⁸⁵ The inquiry ended with a report thousands of pages in length that called for a change in the administration of the occupation but not an evacuation. Mark Schneider claims that the efforts of Farnham and sociologist Carl Kelsey, who wrote a report in favor of the occupation, “carried the day.”⁸⁶ With the ruling, the anti-occupation movement was momentarily stifled, yet Haitians and African Americans continued their efforts to expose the colonial nature of the military presence in the Caribbean country.

Despite their disappointment over the inquiry, the Haitians continued to fight for their second independence adding to the choir of Caribbean voices denouncing colonial subjectivity in Harlem. In Haiti, the UP continued to press the issue engaging in letter writing campaigns, protesting the continued disempowerment of the government, and seeking allies in the also-occupied Dominican Republic. They sought to counter the defeatist attitude they felt emerging among its membership after the

⁸² Logan, "James Weldon Johnson and Haiti," 401.

⁸³ NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 139.

⁸⁴ Saunders, "La Voix des Femmes," 77.

⁸⁵ Gruening, "The Senators Visit Haiti and Santo Domingo," 7.

⁸⁶ Schneider. "*We Return Fighting*", 89.

disappointing decision of the McCormick Commission.⁸⁷ Another setback to the cause was the NAACP's scaling back of its financial commitment to the Haitian cause and international engagement in general, focusing their funds on domestic issues.⁸⁸ Despite the shift in priorities, the Association continued to allow the *Union* access to its press services. The joint effort of the Haitians and the NAACP had increased awareness and, as Brenda Gayle Plummer has pointed out, the migration of West Indians to Harlem in the 1920's added to the number of Afro-descended people agitating against the occupation.⁸⁹ The activists used their placement to continue to lambaste the military presence and highlight the repressive and exploitative nature of the military. They brought imprisonment of several journalists to the fore demonstrating how the Americans were operating against the fundamental democratic processes they claimed to be in Haiti to install. Upon his ascension to power Louis Borno in 1922 became a target of the anti-occupation movement as a puppet of the military regime. Abroad, the UP established itself in the center of the black world and opened a branch in Harlem, New York City.

In Harlem the UP representatives were better suited to work with NAACP officials and reach out to an African American community ready to denounce racist foreign policy. On November 16, 1923 the NAACP issued a statement on the arrest of Haitians in opposition to the occupation government. This continued the New Negro's defense of the right of Afro-descended people to freely dissent and engage in free speech and the practice of the free press, both central values of liberal democracies.

⁸⁷ Georges Sylvain *Dix Annees de Lutte Pour la Liberte, 1915-1925, Tome II* (Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, nd), 7.

⁸⁸ Schneider, "*We Return Fighting*," 89

⁸⁹Plummer, "The Afro-American Response to the Occupation of Haiti", 138.

The statement also charged military forces with censoring information and opening all letters being sent to the United States in an effort to suppress negative information about the occupation.”⁹⁰ The information found in the NAACP’s statement came from a letter to addressed to Johnson from Joseph Mirault dated November 12, 1923.⁹¹ Mirault, was now in New York living on West 147th Street. Mirault, acting on behalf of the *Union*, sought assistance from the Association in raising funds “through the colored people” of the United States for the Haitian cause.⁹²

From this period forward, Mirault was a major agent in keeping the issue of Haiti alive in the American press. While working part-time as a Pullman porter, Mirault had been the New York correspondent for *Le Courier Haitien* (one of the Haitian periodicals most fervently opposed to the American domination) whose editor, Constant Vieux, had been member of the *Union* since 1920.⁹³ However, in the wake of the disappointment over the Senate investigation, the editorial board of *Le Courier* had taken a subservient position strenuously countered by Sylvain. This may have been why Mirault left his post at the newspaper and began to work for the New York branch of the UP where he eventually took a leadership. (It is interesting to wonder if Ray, a Haitian patriot in Claude McKay’s *Home to Harlem* published in 1928, who was a porter was based on Mirault) Mirault eventually took a leadership role in the New York branch of the *Union Patriotique*.

⁹⁰ NAACP Press Release November 16, 1923 NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 319.

⁹¹ Joseph Mirault to James Weldon Johnson November 12, 1923 NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 312.

⁹² Joseph Mirault to James Weldon Johnson December 6, 1923 NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 330.

⁹³ Plummer, “The Afro-American Response to the Occupation of Haiti, 1915-34”, 138.

The decision to open a UP office in New York was born out of James Weldon Johnson's response to Mirault's letter where he expressed a lack of confidence in the ability to fundraise vis-a-vis the papers but nonetheless pledged his personal assistance in the matter. The NAACP had redirected its efforts on national issues and so the *Union* was left to its own accords. Johnson expressed the efficacy of a New York UP outpost which could disseminate "literature and appeals" on the experience of the Haitians.⁹⁴ On December 28th Mirault informed Johnson of the first meeting of the New York *Union Patriotique* to be held on January 1, 1924 (Haitian Independence Day), at 8 p.m. at the Young Women's Christian Association.⁹⁵ The organization's New York staff came to include "Secretary General" Jean G. Lamothe who issued releases from the headquarters located at 61 East 133rd Street in Harlem.⁹⁶ Following the NAACP's model, the *Union* issued press releases highlighting the conditions of the Haitians through its own "Information Service". While the Harlem bureau of the *Union* organized itself, both it and its Haitian counterparts continued to use the services of the NAACP to promote their cause.

Over the course of the next few years Mirault and Lamothe were the point people for disseminating information on the occupation in the hopes of compelling governmental action. Their press releases maintained the international New Negro political agenda highlighting the hypocritical, anti-democratic nature of the occupation while asserting the fitness of Haitians to self-govern. Simultaneously, they continued

⁹⁴ James Weldon Johnson letter to Joseph Mirault December 11, 1923. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 330.

⁹⁵ Joseph Mirault to James Weldon Johnson letter December 28, 1923. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 337.

⁹⁶ NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 10, Frame 25.

entreat the NAACP to act in the name of racial solidarity for their cause.⁹⁷ One of their main issues was the continued repression of Haitian dissenters which ran counter to the post-war climate that sought to promote democratic practice. Many of the anti-occupation actors and newspaper editors had been arrested for their objections. Sylvain, Chauvet, editor of *Le Nouveliste*, Joseph Jolibois (he was arrested no less than eight times in the course of his anti-occupation activism), and Edouard Pouget were all incarcerated on various charges that *Union* representatives in Harlem decried or labeled as false.⁹⁸ A second theme of the organization's activism was the economic exploitation of the country. A second theme of the organization's activism was the economic exploitation of the country. The United States had imposed a \$40 million loan on the nation that served to enrich Americans who had bought devalued government bonds. A fact used to underscore the financial interests that drove the initial American landing.⁹⁹ The economic exploitation was further exacerbated by the alienation of Haitian peasants from their lands to satisfy American agro-business interests.¹⁰⁰ This outrage over financial profiteering at the expense of the Haitian

⁹⁷ See for example: Joseph Jolibois to James Weldon Johnson August 8, 1924. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 400; NAACP Press Release January 9, 1925. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 492.

⁹⁸ For example, see: Joseph Jolibois to James Weldon Johnson August 8, 1924. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 400, NAACP Press Release September 13, 1924. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 425.

⁹⁹ For example, see NAACP Press release March 9, 1922, NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 143; NAACP papers Press release May 21, 1923 NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 267 NAACP Press release July 28, 1922. NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 215; NAACP papers Press release May 21, 1923 NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 267; See Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 164. For more on the financial motives of the U.S. occupation see: Brenda Gale Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902-1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Emily S Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Peter Hudson, *Bankers and Empire: How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

¹⁰⁰ For example, see: NAACP Press Release January 9, 1925. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 492; NAACP Press Release January 9, 1925. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 492. NAACP Release March 3, 1926. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 563.

economy merged with the final theme of the UP's anti-occupation activism at the time: the excoriation of Louis Borno.

Undermining the legitimacy of Borno's presidency proved successful in forcing a change of occupation administration. Borno was not a newcomer to those in activist circles.. He had served in various governmental positions alongside some of the *Union* members who now assailed his character and questioned the legality of his appointment. In fact, Borno had published a poem "Le Chant du Centenaire," an homage to the heroes of the Haitian Independence movement, alongside an ode to "John Brown" by Georges Sylvain in a Paris publication edited by Haitian nationalist Benito Sylvain.¹⁰¹ However, the unfolding of the occupation antagonized acquaintances. Borno in his capacity as Secretary of Foreign Relations had signed the treaty that ceded control of the Haitian state to the Americans in 1915.¹⁰² Anti-occupation activists repeatedly questioned his citizenship, assailing his legitimacy to be in the position. They pointed to the fact that Borno's parents, both French citizens by birth, had not been naturalized by the time he was born. Moreover, they accused Borno of being the head of a client government designed to serve the interests of the occupation administration who had thrown the country into economic ruin to the benefit of American financial concerns.¹⁰³ Perceval Thoby, member of the *Union*, denounced the election of Borno as a farce made possible through "intrigue, corruption, and pressure." Thoby further attested that Borno ascended to the executive

¹⁰¹ Benito Sylvain, "Etoile Africaine," Vol 1 (January 1906): 96-97.

¹⁰² Chantalle F. Verna, *Haiti and the Uses of America: Post Occupation Promises* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 45.

¹⁰³ NAACP Release March 3, 1926. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 562.

position only after he agreed to ratify the \$40 million loan extended to Haiti by the U.S. government.¹⁰⁴

The assault on Borno was tied with a Lamothe-led campaign to hold the American government to the values of democratic governance, noting that former's installation had been achieved without the consent of the governed. This project was decided on by the *Union* central committee in Haiti.¹⁰⁵ To affect this Lamothe and other members of the UP directed their efforts to U.S. government officials arguing that the practices of the occupation stood against the Haitian constitution drafted in 1918 by the Americans. They pointed to a clause that called for the election of the head of state through a vote from the legislature and argued that every person who held that office hitherto had done so illegally. The Americans resisted holding elections knowing it would usher in an anti-American legislative body.¹⁰⁶ Haitian activists reached out to various U.S. officials, calling on them to hold the occupation its stated democratic aims, and had those overtures published through the NAACP's services. In a letter to Senator William King, Lamothe referred to Haitians as victims in a "conquered country" and that holding elections was a critical step in returning legitimacy to the government of Haiti and restoring the reputation of the United States globally.¹⁰⁷ These efforts to advertise the illegitimacy of the government culminated in the 1930 resignation of Borno and subsequent elections.

¹⁰⁴ NAACP Release March 3, 1926. NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9, Frame 562.

¹⁰⁵ Sylvain, *Dix Années* Tome II, 81.

¹⁰⁶ Schmidt, *The United States Occupation*, 156.

¹⁰⁷ Jean Lamothe Letter to Senator William H. King. December 11, 1929 NAACP Papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 9 Frame 765.

Dantès Bellegarde and the Pan-African Congresses

Parallel to the anti-occupation movement were the Pan-African Congresses which, through the participation of Haitians, linked the occupation to the colonial condition of people of African descent, globally. While the initial gathering had set the stage for New Negro geo-political activism, the 1921 convening was by far the most successful. In the years following the first congress, Du Bois had received countless letters from across the Afro-descended world praising him for the effort and expressing general interest in the movement. Included in the number was James Weldon Johnson, in the early moments of his work with the *Union*, who wrote to Du Bois on November 4th, 1920, to forward support for the allocation of the NAACP funds, in his position as Secretary General.¹⁰⁸ The success of 1919 spurred the creation of the Pan-African Association, founded as one of the key resolutions of the convention in order to keep the cause alive.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the organizational structure, the movement at this time was still being financed, in part, by the NAACP who allocated \$2,600 dollars towards the realization of the project. To secure the funds, Du Bois argued that “no Negro problem like ours or that of Haiti,” could be resolved without resolving the problem of Africa.¹¹⁰

The second congress was broader in scope and more representative of the global community of people of African descent and tensions in approaches to black organizing and liberation. The event was held successively in three locations beginning in London from August 27 -29, then moving onto Brussels from August 31-

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum from James Weldon Johnson to W.E.B. Du Bois, November 4, 1920, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers MS 312 B16 F16.

¹⁰⁹ “Resolutions” 1919 Pan-African Congress, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B15 F1.

¹¹⁰ “Memorandum to the Board of Directors from the Director of Publications and Research,” 1920, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B16 F16

September 2, and concluding in Paris on September 4th and 5th.¹¹¹ Unlike the first meeting, Africans constituted the majority of attendees with forty-one representatives, followed by thirty-five from the United States, twenty-four from Europe, and seven from the Caribbean. Of the seven, I have confirmed five as being Haitian: Dantès Bellegarde, Villius Gervais, and an unidentified person named Couba. The fourth, Leo Sajous a medical student who was emerging in Parisian Pan-African circles and who would publish *Le Revue Du Monde Noire*, a seminal periodical in the New Negro circulation of letters.¹¹² Despite the overall success of 1921, controversies over the influence of the Garvey Movement and the specter of international Marxism, both of which had grown in favor in the black community by this period, almost derailed the proceedings. The tensions came to a head at the Brussels sessions, and threatened to derail the Paris sessions, saved in part by Dantès Bellegarde.

After the events in Brussels, Diange and the French contingent were eager to steer the dialogue to more moderate subjects. By the time the conventioners arrived in Paris, news of the radical discourse forwarded in Belgium had drawn attention to the Paris sessions. They steered the conversation towards subjects that were more acceptable to the French government. The governors in the Paris capital had interdicted any criticism of the government and threatened all who did with expulsion.¹¹³ Diange and Candace both affirmed their Francophilia and voiced their support of French colonial system as well as race relations in the Republic. And The former scuttled a resolution critiquing capitalism. African Americans were also at the third installation Du Bois and Walter White both addressed the audiences. Fauset, was

¹¹¹ "Note," Undated, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B18 F7.

¹¹² Lamine Guèye, *Itinéraire Africain* (Paris: Présence Africain, 1966), 52

¹¹³ Levering Lewis, *Du Bois*, 45-46.

also in attendance, was forced to question the fruitfulness in the repeated glorification of French nationalist and the valorization of the French Republic.¹¹⁴

It is at the Paris sessions where the Haitian participants in the congress made their presence felt. For the most part, those who attended were already living in Paris, like Sajous, Bellegarde, and Couba.¹¹⁵ Georges Sylvain, writing to Du Bois in advance of the London meetings, confirmed Villius Gervais's attendance as the representative of the *Union Patriotique*. In this role, Gervais denounced the occupation and highlighted the imprisonment of Joseph Jolibois, and other journalists, as an example of the anti-democratic nature of the occupation. He called for a resolution to denounce the American presence in the country that was ultimately adopted.¹¹⁶ Sylvain's attention to the conference coupled with the declaration by Gervais reveals the imbrication of anti-occupation and pan-Africanism. Coupled with Du Bois' reasoning for calling the conference that the liberation of black people anywhere depended on the emancipation everywhere, reveals that liberal minded people of African descent in the period understood the political need for a global black community to undermine colonial subjugation. The Haitian representative who most embodied this position was Dantès Bellegarde. Bellegarde, already in Paris as Haitian minister to the French government, League of Nations and the Holy See, was a celebrated participant of the Paris sessions and as a result emerged to the forefront of the international New Negro political ideology after the conference.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Fauset, "Impression of the Second Pan-African Congress," 16.

¹¹⁵ Lamine Guèye, *Itinéraire Africain* (Paris: Présence Africain, 1966), 52.

¹¹⁶ "La Fin du Congrès PanAfrican," *La Depeche Coloniale*, September 7, 1921; "Le Congrès Pannoir," *Le Petit Parisien*, September 6, 1921, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B18 F3..

¹¹⁷ Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, "Dantès Bellegarde and Pan-Africanism," *Phylon* (1960) Vol 42 (3rd Qtr. 1981): 234.

Bellegarde was the quintessential representative of Haiti's talented tenth and his ideological positioning was well suited for the proceedings.¹¹⁸ Du Bois and Bishop Hurst had personally gone to see Bellegarde to secure his participation in the Paris sessions and appointed him honorary President.¹¹⁹ His beliefs dovetailed perfectly with those of Djange and Du Bois with whom he formed a lasting friendship. More specifically, the Haitian "doubleness" or *tirallemments* as Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, his grandson and author of several works about Dantès has noted, pulled Dantès between his blackness and his Frenchness, a point he articulated during his speech at the congress. There Bellegarde affirmed his and Haiti's fidelity to French cultural traditions while critiquing colonialism, toeing the fraught line between the warring camps. However, Rayford Logan, who also forged a fraternal affection and admiration for Bellegarde, described him as Haitian and Negro first before he identified as a Frenchman, tying his identity more closely with Du Bois's New Negro's position of integration than Diange's framework of assimilation.

In Paris, Bellegarde's talk catapulted him to the forefront of the international New Negro political movement where he served as a critical agent in promoting the resolutions of the conference. Bellegarde's disquisition was hailed as most eloquent and praised for its impact across much of the reporting on the session. His call for the establishment of a permanent body charged with advocating for the rights and defending the interests of people of African descent was ultimately adopted by the congress.¹²⁰ He declared that "none of us want to follow Garvey into Africa" and

¹¹⁸ Rayford Logan, Unpublished Autobiography, Chapter VII, 17, Rayford Logan Papers, Morland-Spingarn Research Center 166-32 F 5.

¹¹⁹ Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, *In the Shadow of Powers: Dantès Bellegarde in Haitian Social Thought* (Knoxville; Vanderbilt university Press, 2019), 72.

¹²⁰ "Le Congrès Pannoir," *Le Temps Paris*, September 6, 1921, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312 B18 F6.

called for people to stay where they were and to seek the liberation of people of African descent through “peaceful means,” adding to the anti-Garvey tone of the proceedings. Bellegarde also drew into relief the role played by Toussaint Louverture in facilitating the United States’s purchase of Louisiana from France in an effort to assail the occupying power. He reinforced the francophilic current of the deliberations asserting that Haiti was both a French outpost culturally and historically.¹²¹

Bellegarde’s affinity for French cultural practices has been well documented. However, a quote by Lèon LaLeau reveals much nuance about his position. LaLeau argued that while Bellegarde affirmed Haiti’s European heritage, he never did so at the expense of the African contributions.¹²² Additionally, Bellegarde-Smith argues that in this period Bellegarde sought economic and political rapprochement with the French as a counterbalance to the American power that occupied his country.¹²³ His overtures to Frenchness in this period, while authentic, were politically charged. Given that Dantès had been a member of the reformed *Union*, it stands to reason that he sought to forward the cause of Haitians before an audience such as the Pan African Congress. Bellegarde’s commitment to the movement helped forward the positions of the movement into a larger platform, and his role in the Haitian foreign ministry gave his pronouncements more weight.

Bellegarde brought the resolutions to the League of Nations where he served as the Haitian delegate. His ministerial duties afforded him the privilege to bring the resolutions to the floor of the deliberative assembly. While other New Negro

¹²¹ Charles Tardieu, “Le Congrès des Noirs a Paris,” *Le Figaro* September 5, 1921, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 3 12; “Le Congrès Pannoir,” *La Depeche Coloniale*, September 6, 1921. ANOM SLOTFOM 84.

¹²² Quoted in Bellegarde-Smith, *In the Shadow*, 55.

¹²³ Bellegarde-Smith, *In the Shadow*, 68.

luminaries such as Du Bois and Johnson had some connections to power, Bellegarde was imbued with the authority of his position and acted on the international stage as evidence of the Haitians' fitness to self-rule. While Du Bois and Fauset had journeyed to Geneva, Switzerland in hopes of getting the declarations of the congress presented before the League of Nations, Bellegarde, was able to get the second resolution of the congress to be adopted. The resolution which called for self-government, a position that directly affected Bellegarde and his beleaguered homeland, was well received and released as an official document of the League. It was brought before the following session of the international organization to be passed as an official resolution; is doubtful the resolution was ever adopted.¹²⁴ Another point that was presented to the international audience called for a "Negro" member to be included in the mandates commission; the appointee, in classic New Negro parlance, was to be "properly fitted in character and training." This construction of such a person to be included, fit Bellegarde, and in his role as Haitian representative, he may have been the only viable candidate.

After the conference Bellegarde was extolled by his peers as a statesperson of the highest order and was greatly celebrated in New Negro circles. Prior to 1921, Bellegarde had never left Haiti and his appointment to Paris was his first internationally-facing position. Bellegarde rose to fame not only for his eloquence but also for his comportment and integrity. According to Edward Jones, Bellegarde dominated rooms by the sheer force of his personality.¹²⁵ Those who celebrated him did so as admirers and he forged friendships with many, building lasting relationships

¹²⁴ Bellegarde-Smith, *In the Shadow*, 68; Fauset, "Impressions of the Second Pan-African Congress," 17.

¹²⁵ Edward Jones, "Phylon Profile XX: Dantès Bellegarde—Miracle of Haiti," *Phylon* Vol 11 (1st Qtr. 1950): 16.

with Du Bois, Walter White, Jessie Fauset, and Rayford Logan to name a few. LaLeau, a Haitian who was himself a radical activist in late 1920s and 1930s Paris, called Bellegarde the “first among us” who placed “race” ahead of citizenship. Du Bois, paying respects to Bellegarde’s efforts on the international stage, called him the “spokesman of the Negroes of the world.”¹²⁶ In a 1923 edition of *Imperium*, an understudied publication that emerged out of the congresses, Isaac Beton called Bellegarde the best type of man of politics whose opinions are of such value that they necessitate attention. He argued that Bellegarde would be an apt defender of the people of his race and all the other downtrodden people of the world.¹²⁷ Finding himself catapulted to the front of the international efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people of African descent, Bellegarde used his influence and celebrity to bring attention to the causes of his constituency and affirm the New Negro’s claim that cultured and sophisticated members of the race should helm its reform.

In the wake of the Paris convening, Bellegarde continued to defend people of African descent and denounce the occupation in Haiti to a global audience. For Bellegarde the mission to liberate Haiti and the efforts to ameliorate the conditions of people of African descent were inseparable. One of the most notable aspects of his activism came in his role in the League of Nations where he issued a valiant reproach of the organization for not defending South Africa’s Bondelswarts. The indigenous population had been aeriually bombed while protesting a tax that forced them to abandon their own subsistence planting to work on settler farms.¹²⁸ When a Swedish delegate reneged on their promise to bring the cause before the League, Bellegarde

¹²⁶ Bellegarde-Smith, “Dantès Bellegarde and Pan-Africanism,” 233.

¹²⁷ Isaac Beton, “M Dantès Bellegarde,” *Imperium* Vol 3 No 1 (January 1923): 47.

¹²⁸ “Bombing Hottentots,” *The Nation* vol 96, May 30, 1923.

was forced to take charge.¹²⁹ As former subjects of German colonies, the Bondelswarts fell under the purview of the League's mandates and Bellegarde urged the body to adhere to its charge of protection. Furthermore, he demanded that the Union of South Africa government submit to oversight in judgement of their actions.¹³⁰ Bellegarde had gathered information through his connection Sir John H. Harris, a member of the British Aboriginal Society who attended the London sessions of the Pan-African Congress and stayed at the same hotel as Bellegarde in Geneva following the Swiss installment.¹³¹ The issue was supposed to have been brought to the *League* by the Swedish member of the League who reneged on their promise, causing Bellegarde to take charge.¹³² Bellegarde used the moment to renew the request to have a person of African descent included in the Permanent Mandates Commission.¹³³ His efforts gave Du Bois cause to celebrate for his work in the name of people of African descent.

His work on the global stage had gained him notoriety and prestige, with members of the New Negro, and white liberals. In 1924 he was appointed to the League's eight-person Temporary Commission on Slavery due to his "eloquent interventions" at previous meetings. Bellegarde had gained the respect of his European peers. Hjalmar Branting, Prime Minister of Switzerland and representative to the League believed having Bellegarde as the representative from Latin America

¹²⁹ Bellegarde to W.E.B. Du Bois, November 25, 1946.

¹³⁰ Tilman Dederig, "Petitioning Geneva: Transnational Aspects of Protest and Resistance in South West Africa/Namibia After the First World War," *Journal of South African Studies* Vol 35 (Dec 2009):792.

¹³¹ Fauset, "Impressions of the Second Pan-African Congress, 17.

¹³² Letter from Dantès Bellegarde to W.E.B. Du Bois, November 25, 1946, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

¹³³ Dederig, "Petitioning Geneva," 792.

would be “precious” in fomenting international goodwill.¹³⁴ During his time on the commission, Bellegarde vehemently defended Haiti against the accusation of perpetuating the practice of parents sending their children into enslavement (possibly referring to the *restavèk* practice) . The accusation was levied by a colleague on the commission who had read about the matter in a work authored by a general in the U.S. occupation. Bellegarde outright denounced the claim and asserted that “no Haitian woman is capable of selling her child.”¹³⁵ His comment was more than a mere defense; Bellegarde’s affirmation was a characterization of Haitian women within the paradigms of proper womanhood and a repudiation any characterization that painted them as barbaric, backward or in need of tutelage at the hands of a civilizing power.

Bellegarde used his position to not only critique the occupation of Haiti but to denounce Borno as the tool of the occupying forces. Echoing arguments made by his fellow *Union* members, he emphasized the administration’s rampant censorship and authoritarian practices before the League’s audiences.¹³⁶ Bellegarde’s protestations coupled with support from Lafontaine, the Belgian representative who had facilitated the Brussels sessions of the 1921 Pan-African congress, led to the passing of a resolution stating that the U.S. occupation in Haiti was a danger to “peace.” As a result of this public outcry Bellegarde was recalled to Haiti and removed from his position by President Borno.¹³⁷ The esteem he has fostered with his League colleagues

¹³⁴ Hjalmar Branting quoted in Bellegarde-Smith, *In the Shadow of Powers*, 74.

¹³⁵ “Importante Declaration de M. Bellegarde a la Sèance de la Ligue,” *Le Nouveliste* Nov 11(?), 1925 W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312. Bellegarde references this date in the footnotes of *In the Shadows*. University of Florida’s collection does not include November 11th.

¹³⁶ “Importante Declaration de M. Bellegarde a la Sèance de la Ligue,” *Le Nouveliste* November 9, 1925.

¹³⁷ “Importante Declaration de M. Bellegarde a la Sèance de la Ligue,” *Le Nouveliste* Nov 11(?) 1925.

made it that his discharge was never accepted.¹³⁸ Bellegarde continued to use his position to rebuke American foreign policy. At the eleventh meeting of the group he spoke against European confederation saying that Latin America's experience with the United States would cause the region to be skeptical of a relationship with a united Europe. In his caution he displayed an adept knowledge of geopolitics and critiqued the United States for furthering its economic agenda on the sails of "dreadnoughts."¹³⁹ In a 1940 article published in *Phylon*, a scholarly journal founded by Du Bois, Mercer Cook (a member of the New Negro generation) championed Bellegarde's "courage" in denouncing the pernicious elements of U.S. foreign policy. In this near decade on the international stage Bellegarde managed to link his service to his country with his commitment to its liberation, frequently denouncing the American presence and working for the defense of people of African descent all the while acting as an exemplar of the New Negro's claims to a class fit to govern the race. statesmanship.

Between the 1921 congress and the fourth installation in 1927, the Pan-African movement had begun to stall. The third convening, held in Lisbon in 1923, had been the least successful due to poor planning, lack of funding, and waning interest.¹⁴⁰ Walter White, by then Secretary General of the NAACP, refused to allocate any resources towards its realization. Additionally, there was an insinuation of misappropriation of existing funds on the part of Gratien Candace. All of these factors almost derailed the convening. Rayford Logan, the American member of the Pan-African Association, thought the 1923 convocation would be the last.¹⁴¹ Du Bois

¹³⁸ Mercer Cook, "Dantès Bellegarde," *Phylon* Vol 1 (2nd qtr. 1940): 130.

¹³⁹ "Haitian Assails US at League Meeting," *The New York Times*, September 12, 1930, 2.

¹⁴⁰ Logan, Unpublished Autobiography, CH VII, 18.

¹⁴¹ Logan, Unpublished Autobiography, CH VIII, 111.

however was committed to the Pan African project and sought to hold a subsequent conference across several sites in the Caribbean. He wrote to Bellegarde to discuss the feasibility of holding one of the meetings in Haiti.¹⁴² The proposed 1925 gathering, which was to be the original date of the fourth conference was forsaken due to continuing financial constraints and apathy. Ultimately, the Fourth Pan-African Congress was held in 1927 in Harlem thanks to the fundraising of African American women's groups.

The 1927 Congress continued the effort to bring together the talented tenth of the black world in political agitation to ameliorate of the conditions of the global community. Curiously held in August, the month the UNIA used to hold their annual congress. (the Garvey led Association having fallen from prominence by this time). The congress was held over four days from August 21 through the 24th in Harlem, New York City. It was sponsored by the Circle for Peace and Foreign Relations, a group of American women "who believed in the universality of the race problem," headed by Addie W. Hunton.¹⁴³ The Haitian contingent was to be the largest with fifteen invitees, all members of the Union, including Georges Sylvain's widow. Not much remains on how many ultimately attended apart from Bellegarde and Georges Normil Sylvain, son of the late *Union* founder.

Bellegarde participated as a special guest of the Fourth Pan-African Congress, and used his platform to denounce the occupation, once again tying anti-occupation and pan-Africanism together. In the buildup to the gathering *The Pittsburg Courier*

¹⁴² Letter W.E.B. Du Bois to Dantès Bellegarde, September 22, 1924, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

¹⁴³ Publicity Committee Circle for Peace and Foreign Relations, "About the Fourth Pan-African Congress," 3, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

listed Bellegarde as one of the notables who were to attend the meeting.¹⁴⁴ Taking the stage during the evening session of August 22 he gave a lecture entitled “The Dispersed Children of Africa.”¹⁴⁵ The following day Sylvain led the morning session on the topic of “Expositions of Conditions in the Caribbean Islands.”¹⁴⁶ Building off claims first issued by Johnson, Bellegarde asserted that more Haitians has died during the forced labor regime than had died in all the national conflagrations combined (An assault on the underline cause for the military presence that Haiti’s political instability reflected a need for American tutelage) in the country.¹⁴⁷ He pointed to the sexual violence committed by the American Marines and denounced the illegitimate presidency of Borno. He called on African Americans to “take more interest in Haiti” to stave off the “extermination” of the people.¹⁴⁸ Operating as an individual citizen, Bellegarde paid his own way to the conference, demonstrating his commitment to the cause. Although promised remuneration, but not been repaid.¹⁴⁹ After 1927 the Pan-African movement stalled, and another congress would not be convened until 1945. It would be that congress’s forwarding of Pan-African unity that would undermine colonial subjugation thus realizing the goal of the decades-long project. Du Bois sought to keep the spirit alive in the interim with a speaking tour and invited Bellegarde to participate however the circuit never materialized. Bellegarde would

¹⁴⁴ “Notables will Attend Pan-African Congress,” *The Pittsburg Courier*, August 6, 1927, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Official Program of the Fourth Pan-African Congress, 3, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

¹⁴⁶ Official Program of the Fourth Pan-African Congress, 4, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

¹⁴⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois, “Pan-Africa, 1927,” W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312

¹⁴⁸ “Occupation in Haiti Scored by Haitian at Pan-African Meet,” *New Journal and Guide*, Sept 10, 1927, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Letter W.E.B. Du Bois to Dantès Bellegarde, April 18, 1930, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

have to wait a few years before returning to Harlem, this time as an envoy of the newly elected Haitian government in 1931.

Pan Africanism and Anti-Occupation Merge in Harlem

Part of the international New Negro's political agenda was informed by Caribbean people's anti-colonial agitation. They provided a global perspective allowing African Americans to understand that the racism they faced in the States was just one iteration of a global phenomenon and that their government was in fact exporting Jim Crow abroad. The establishment of the *Union Patriotique* office in Harlem solidified the organization's voice in the choir of Caribbean transplants agitating against colonialism in general. 1930 marked a very important year for the joint effort. Herbert Hoover's arrival to the presidency in 1928 had originally seemed an ominous sign for those who had sought the abatement of the American presence, but he soon adopted a foreign policy aimed at disentangling national commitments abroad. His actions in Haiti came shortly after a series of student and farmer protests in November 1929 that led to clashes between the Haitians and Marines.¹⁵⁰ The strikes played to Hoover's desire to rebrand the image of the nation abroad he authorized congress to launch an inquiry into Haiti. This resulted in the Forbes Commission which was charged with investigating the occupation and ousting the Borno regime.¹⁵¹ The committee arrived in Haiti in February 1930, meeting with the country's elite.¹⁵² Their findings and eventual call for the recognition of Haiti's

¹⁵⁰ Arthur Chester Millsbaugh, *Haiti Under American Control, 1915-1930* (Westport: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 178 ; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Black and White in the Caribbean : Haitian-American Relations, 1902-1934, 1981* (PhD. Diss. Corbel University, 1982) 670.

¹⁵¹ Edgar Eugene Robinson and Vaugh Davis Bornet, *Herbert Hoover: President of the United States* (Stanford California: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1975), 101; Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 207.

¹⁵² Schmidt, *United States Occupation of Haiti*, 209.

sovereignty helped to realize one aim of the international New Negro's political agenda, and a demand of the anti-occupation effort- the indigenization of national governments.

The Haitians who came to power in the handover were the personification of the New Negro ideal- upstanding male shepherds who would usher the race into modernity. The Forbes Commission had called for elections in the country for the first time since the advent of the occupation. While fraught with questions of who was afforded the privilege of a ballot and the ability to participate in the democratic process, the elections marked a step towards a democratically elected government. On May 15, 1930, in advance of the elections, Louis Borno stepped down a president marking the end of his eight-year hold.¹⁵³ Eugene Roy, the candidate acceptable to both Borno and General John Russell, American High Commissioner of the occupation forces, was selected as interim president.¹⁵⁴ In October 1930 elections were held throughout the country.¹⁵⁵ Bellegarde noted that those who had “most energetically” denounced the “American regime” were elected to the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.¹⁵⁶ The nationalists led by *Union* activists assumed power. For example, Joseph Jolibois, long the bane of the United States military occupation, was the leading candidate for the presidency, but because his age he was not allowed assume the office.¹⁵⁷ His party's electoral victory allowed Sténio Vincent to ascend to

¹⁵³ Cooper, “The Withdrawal of the United States from Haiti,” 94.

¹⁵⁴ Shannon, *Jean Price Mars, The Haitian Elite*, 92.

¹⁵⁵ Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 219.

¹⁵⁶ Shannon *Jean Price Mars, The Haitian Elite*, 96.

¹⁵⁷ Shannon, *Jean Price Mars, The Haitian Elite*. 92.

the executive position and he was sworn in on November 18th.¹⁵⁸ The nationalists focused their effort on “Haitianizing” governmental services, attenuating the foreign military presence, and regaining control over the nation’s finances.

As a result of his service and perhaps membership in the *UP*, Bellegarde was appointed minister to the United States by President Vincent. This delighted his friends from the Pan-African circuit namely Du Bois and Walter White, who was by then Secretary General of the NAACP.¹⁵⁹ Across the next three years Bellegarde and White worked closely to bring about the conclusion of the occupation, denouncing the continued financial control and highlighting the continued intransigence of its regime to cede real power to the administration. The friendship they would come to build ultimately frayed as they diverged in their respective approach to achieve Haitian liberation.

Bellegarde, the *Union*, and White were committed to hastening the full “Haitianization” of the government. They continued their proven model of collaboration with Haitians using the NAACP and its media services to expose the malfeasances of the occupation. This method held sway over black voters and the Association continued to champion the Haitian military domination as an issue central to the black community. Immediately, they pressed the U.S. government to “live up” to the resolutions of the Forbes Commission and place Haitians in positions in the government. At a luncheon hosted by the NAACP, Ernest Chauvet, member of the *Union*, argued that the occupation had privileged unskilled Americans in positions

¹⁵⁸ Schmidt. *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 219; Cooper, “The Withdrawal of the United States from Haiti,” 94.

¹⁵⁹ Letter, Dantès Bellegarde to W.E.B. Du Bois February 22, 1931; Letter Walter White to W.E.B. Du Bois, February 27, 1931; Letter W.E.B. Du Bois to Dantès Bellegarde April 7, 1931, W.E.B Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

where qualified Haitians remained unemployed .¹⁶⁰ In another instance, Bellegarde along with Vincent provided the NAACP information regarding the vindictive delay in payment of Haitians by the Dana Monroe, who had come to head the occupation forces. Based on information provided by the liaisons, Haiti was a central subject at the Twenty-Second Annual Conference of the NAACP. As a result of the deliberations at the meeting Du Bois published a call in the name of the “American Negro” to fulfill the government’s promises to Haiti.¹⁶¹

Bellegarde used his time in the United States to illuminate the similarities between Haitians and African Americans through a series of speeches crafted to strengthen collaboration against the occupation. In a May 1932 speech before an NAACP audience at the home of Frederick Douglass, Bellegarde analogized the life of the revered abolitionist with the history of Haiti. His parallel was predicated on the fact that they were both subjugated on the basis of their blackness, with Douglass being the race’s “finest example.” Rising out of slavery, both entities were scarred but not impeded from achieving their potential. Bellegarde portrayed Douglass as a transcendent figure in spite of what the “barbarous society had denied him”, rising into the ranks of “illustrious men.” Similarly, Bellegarde portrayed Haiti as having risen from the dregs of “servitude” to ascend into membership in the global community of sovereign nations.¹⁶² Bellegarde compared the ways in which both subjects used their position to promote the liberty of others. He connected Douglass to a moment in Haitian history when U.S. armed forces threatened the country’s freedom

¹⁶⁰ NAACP Press Release April 24, 1931. NAACP papers part 11 Series B, Reel 10 Frame 130.

¹⁶¹ W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Twenty-Second Annual Conference, N.A.A.C.P.,” *The Crisis*, August 1931, 284.

¹⁶² Dantès Bellegarde May 22, 1932 Speech NAACP Papers.

historicizing a moment in 1889 when three Navy gunships in Port-au-Prince bay threatened to impose the concession of Mole St. Nicolas on the island nation. Bellegarde noted how Douglass used his position as minister to Haiti and his connections to African American newspapers to popularize the issue. In a room full of the intellectual, political, and moral heirs to Douglass's legacy, Bellegarde, a descendent of Haitian revolutionaries, bridged the history of two of the African diaspora's most unlikely successes. His speech issued a poignant reminder: old oppressions, born in slavery, are still alive.

A few days later on May 25, 1932, Bellegarde addressed members of Harlem Adult Education committee at the opening of a Haiti collection donated by Arthur Schomburg at the Harlem branch of the public library.¹⁶³ Today, that library is the site of the *Schomburg Center for Research in Black Studies*, which still reflects its Haitian connections, replete with selections of Bellegarde's writing. Bellegarde spoke before an audience comprised of the members of the Harlem Adult Education committee forum. His sought to disabuse Haiti's besmirched reputation by valorizing its history and literary output. He asserted that Haiti's image had been maligned because of its "African descent." Furthermore, he contended that the country's history had been unfairly characterized as a series of "bloody operettas" in an attempt to validate notions of the "deep seated" inability of the "black race" to self-govern and be civilized.¹⁶⁴ The African Americans in attendance must have sympathized as they were asserting their own right to rule. Bellegarde declared that the Schomburg collection was the "best propaganda for Haiti" and that it had the possibility to facilitate a more sympathetic understanding of the "black man's soul." In his opinion

¹⁶³ *The New Amsterdam News* June 1, 1932. *Atlanta Daily World* June 5, 1932.

¹⁶⁴ Dantès Bellegarde Speech May 25, 1932, 1.

the assortment of books were powerful tools in refuting and undermining “the critical and unjust aspersions” made against the Haitian people.¹⁶⁵

Abating the Occupation: Racial Solidarity in the Face of National interests

Despite the overtures to racial unity, Haitian-American collaboration began to dissolve around President Vincent’s influence over the course of the anti-occupation movement. The issue began with the signing of a series of accords between Vincent and President Hoover in 1932. Vincent, concerned with the prospect of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s presidency (Roosevelt had boasted about authoring the 1918 constitution imposed on Haitians), signed two accords with Hoover that furthered the “Haitianization” of the government, expedited the formation of the Gendarmerie, and hastened the departure of the Marines. The accords were eventually overturned in the Haitian Legislature because of a clause which allowed for continued American control over Haitian finances. White, who opposed both treaties, sought to assuage Vincent’s concerns about a Roosevelt administration. He wrote to candidate Roosevelt affirming African Americans’ fidelity to the plight of Haitians and urged him to forward a statement regarding his position on the occupation. Once in office, Roosevelt and Vincent signed an “Executive Agreement” on August 7, 1933. Though similar to the terms of the Hoover treaties in many respects it offered several key concessions. One major concession was the full evacuation of United States forces by the end of 1934; three months earlier than previously agreed upon. However, this was in exchange for continued financial administration by the Americans.¹⁶⁶ The arrangement was not subject to legislative oversight and became the mode by which the occupation

¹⁶⁵ Dantès Bellegarde Speech May 25, 1932, 2.

¹⁶⁶ Cooper, “The Withdrawal of the United States from Haiti,” 96.

officially ended. Displeased with the outcome, White, Gruening, and the NAACP sought to affect change.

In a myopic turn, the two Americans engaged in a full campaign against the “Executive Agreement” appealing to all their connections in the Haitian government to abate its terms. White reached out to Vincent to voice his disappointment and drafted a letter to Roosevelt in the name of the Haitian people protesting the accord.¹⁶⁷ He and Gruening confronted Bellegarde in the lobby of New York’s Paramount Hotel in New York asking him to resign from his position in protest. Bellegarde, true to form, referenced his service to his nation and its president (who he cited as a friend) as reasons why he could neither resign nor repudiate the treaty.¹⁶⁸ The tension reflected the conflicting nationalist ends of the race making project.

Both Haitians and African Americans had used the project to forward the New Negro’s geopolitical agenda that used the future of Haiti to apply its two main principles. The liberation of people of African descent from racial subjugation and the existence of a class of descendants fit to govern in the place of the colonizers had meant different things to either group. Millery Polnyé has argued that the salience of racial solidarity paled before the nationalist interests of each group.¹⁶⁹ In this moment this point is clear for both parties with local concerns trumping the global initiative. The Haitians wanted the military presence gone and the African Americans of the NAACP wanted a total victory over the American government which would serve as a victory in their own struggle for full citizenship rights. For the African Americans,

¹⁶⁷ Letter White to Vincent, October 9, 1933 NAACP papers Part 11, Series B, Reel 11 Frame 509.

¹⁶⁸ Letter Gruening to Bellegarde, October 16, 1933 Part 11 Series B Reel 11 Frame 276; Letter Bellegarde to White, October 22, 1933 NAACP papers Part 11 Series B Reel 11 Frame 537; Letter Bellegarde to White, November 21, 1933 NAACP paper Part 11 Series B Reel 11 Frame 59.

¹⁶⁹ Millery Polnyé *Dougllass to Duvalier: Haitians, African Americans and Pan Americanism 1870-1964* (University Press of Florida, 2010), 11.

their disappointment stemmed from the realization that their fifteen years of anti-occupation efforts would not materialize as they had hoped. To be clear, the effort to end the occupation had been a 19 year one for the Haitian nationals. The racially informed paternalism of the American government drove the entire occupation. Although second-class citizens in their own country, African American internationalism had come to be imbued with a similar United States centric view. Pan-Africanism had imbedded into its fabric the power relations that governed the world and, as such, it is not too far to accept that African Americans had been touched with the same air of superiority of that underscored the ascendant political might of the United States. Within the discussions of people of African descent, this American preeminence was always a salient current; it had marred the second Pan-African congress and informed anti-Garvey sentiments.

Bellegarde's fidelity to his nation and its leader eroded his reputation both abroad and at home. While he would not disappear from international life, his career nonetheless stalled. His friendship with White, more than ten years in the making, also suffered as the latter expressed disappointment in Bellegarde's decision.¹⁷⁰ Distrusted on both sides, the Vincent administration believed it was Bellegarde who was behind White's offensive causing him to be recalled by the president. In his published farewell address, Bellegarde, always the diplomat, thanked White for his friendship and the NAACP for their efforts in the name of Haiti. White and Gruening felt compelled to defend Bellegarde in the matter refuting any notion of Bellegarde's subversion.¹⁷¹ But their defense went unheeded and Bellegarde was increasingly

¹⁷⁰ Letter White to, October 25, 1933 NAACP papers Part 11 Series B Reel 11 Frame 536.

¹⁷¹ Bellegarde to White November 21, 1933. NAACP Papers, Part 11, Series B, Reel 11, Frame 591. Gruening

isolated by the government for the rest of the Vincent administration. By 1935, he was publicly attacked by the regime: Vincent denounced the former minister who was now subject to public insult and police harassment. Furthermore, the government had gone as far as to exact its grievances against his children.¹⁷² The comportment that had won him admirers, now left him subject to the retributions and humiliations of a fascist regime.

Building on Good Will: Race and Capital in the Post-Occupation Period.

Haitian leaders sought to capitalize on the Pan-African solidarity of the anti-occupation effort and inaugurated an economic initiative. They invoked racial fraternity to push for economic cooperation in order to develop the Haitian economy away from the financial banking interests of the United States.¹⁷³ The economic development of people of African descent was a central theme of international New Negro political activism, and one of the central points that emerged out of the 1919 Pan-African congress. In April 1934 President Vincent, who had once traveled to Harlem as a member of the *UP*'s delegation to the U.S., spoke at a luncheon "tendered" by the publisher of the New York Amsterdam News, William H. Davis. His talk echoed the economic platform of the international New Negro political agenda. Vincent stressed the need for continued relations between Haitians and African Americans. He affirmed the "parallel" interests of both people and called for a "centralized" union charged with investigating the "common problems" of the two groups. Seeking to promote business relationships he issued a "welcome to any African American delegation that came to Haiti, proclaiming that the country offered

¹⁷² Letter from Dantès Bellegarde to W.E.B. Du Bois, July 31, 1935, W.E.B Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312; Letter from Sadie T.M. Alexander to W.E.B. Du Bois, August 10, 1935, W.E.B Du Bois Papers, UMass Amherst MS 312.

¹⁷³ Polyné, *From Douglass to Duvalier*, 11.

abundant opportunities for “Negro agriculturists.”¹⁷⁴ Arthur Schomburg attended as did other New Negro leaders. An *Amsterdam News* article reporting on the event drew a distinction between Vincent and his predecessor Louis Borno, evoking the latter’s refusal to cooperate with African Americans.¹⁷⁵ Bellegarde, who in this moment was still in service to the government, called for “American Negros” to patronize Haitian agricultural products.¹⁷⁶ Both groups relished to opportunity to realize the New Negroes economic possibilities using racial solidarity to further African American and Haitian’s own aspirations of financial freedom.

Shortly after the Vincent’s call, a committee was established to create lasting economic relations between the Afro-descended people. The project was steeped in racial brotherhood continuing the previous fourteen years of Haitian and African American international collaboration. Helmed by Henri Charles Rosemond, former member of the *Union Patriotique* and now attaché to the Haitian consulate, the committee of seven was charged with investigating possibilities for economic prosperity.¹⁷⁷ Four months after the Haitian president’s invitation, the group set sail for Haiti. As they made their way to the country the majority of U.S. Marines were marking the end of their mission. Upon their arrival the committee was met by government officials and toured around Port-au-Prince in state vehicles. They were taken to a reception held in their honor where they met with Haitian representatives from the business community. At a second reception attended by the Haitian

¹⁷⁴ *The New York Amsterdam News*, April 14, 1934.

¹⁷⁵ *New York Amsterdam News*, April 21, 1934.

¹⁷⁶ “Bellegarde Seeks American Support,” *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 15, 1934.

¹⁷⁷ Official Report of the Haitian Afro-American Chamber of Commerce’ Commission to Study the Commercial, Agricultural, and Industrial Possibilities in The Haitian Republic, August 17 to September 4, 1934,” Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1.

president, speakers affirmed the racial solidarity that undergirded the new enterprise. Vincent welcomed the contingent in the name of fraternity and called the Americans his “spiritual countrymen.” Willis D. Huggins, chairperson of the deputation, added to the Pan-African spirit of the gathering, seconding Vincent’s position. In a moment reminiscent of Johnson’s articles, he paid tribute to the leaders of the Haitian revolution.¹⁷⁸ Over the next ten days, the group explored elements of Haitian social, agricultural, and industrial infrastructure to determine the potential for engagement.

Dantès Bellegarde, at this point special representative of the Haitian government, announced the completion of a trade pact between Haiti and African American business concerns in Philadelphia several days after the committee’s September 4th arrival. The accord called for the importation of American soap into Haiti in exchange for Haitian coffee exports to Philadelphia. Bellegarde finalized the pact with Major R.R. Wright with the formal announcement to be made on October 18 during the celebration of the 71st anniversary of slave emancipation in the United States.¹⁷⁹ Wright, born into slavery, was president of Citizens and Southern Bank and Trust Company, member and president of the National Negro Bankers Association, and one of the best known black bankers in the country.¹⁸⁰ Citizens and Southern Bank and Trust company was an example of U.S. African American financial institution, founded during the “golden era” in 1925.¹⁸¹ While many African American banking

¹⁷⁸ “Official Report,” 4.

¹⁷⁹ *The New York Amsterdam News*, “Haitian American Trade Plan Gets Approval,” September 15, 1934, 15.

¹⁸⁰ Alexa Benson Henderson, “Richard R. Wright and the National Negro Bankers Association: Early Organizing Efforts Among Black Bankers, 1924-1942,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 87 (1993): 80.

¹⁸¹ Butler, *Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Among Black Americans: A Reconsideration of Race and Economics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), 143.

operations did not survive the Great Depression, Citizens and Southern persevered, becoming the third largest black-owned bank in the country.¹⁸²

Ludovic Rosemond, cousin of Henri Charles, also participated in the project and was dedicated to interweaving pan-Africanism and capitalist ventures. Ludovic had fled the occupation and arrived in New York on April 3, 1920, a month before Johnson set sail for the Haiti.¹⁸³ He had founded a company *Utilites d'Haiti*, with offices in both Haiti and the United States. *Utilities* endeavored to import Haitian goods, such as coffee and sugar, into the U.S. and promote trade between the two countries.¹⁸⁴ In 1935 *Utilities* developed a private bus line in Haiti heralded as the first African American commercial venture in the country as it had been incorporated “under the state laws of New York” with the vehicles manufactured by the Greenfield Bus company in Ohio, a “Negro corporation.”¹⁸⁵

To further solidify transnational business relationships, he founded the bilingual journal *Goodwill* in December of 1934. *Goodwill* used the platform of cultural exchange to bridge divides across the diaspora. Articles on African Americans such as James Weldon Johnson were carried in French, while pieces on Haitians such as Toussaint Louverture were carried in English. Importantly, articles concerning business prospects in Haiti in pursuit of investment were written in English. The publication was financed by advertisements promoting Haitian businesses and was

¹⁸² Henderson, “Richard R. Wright,” 79.

¹⁸³ Ellis Island Passenger Records, accessed April 22, 2014, http://www.ellisland.org/search/passRecord.asp?MID=14883288530896969088&LNM=ROSEMOND&PLNM=ROSEMOND&first_kind=1&last_kind=0&TOWN=null&SHIP=null&RF=23&pID=603434010501

¹⁸⁴ Ira A. Reid, *The Negro Immigrant*, 96.

¹⁸⁵ *The New York Amsterdam News*, March 9, 1935.

published regularly for the next four years, a rarity for the innumerable number of publications that emerged in the period.

Conclusion

In the period explored here, Haitians engaged in the international New Negro political project that sought to project the talented tenth as the leaders in defense of the race best suited for its governance. Following Haitian participation in this moment reveals how the anti-occupation movement was part of a larger effort aimed at changing the subjectivity of people of African descent globally. The overlap of actors and political ideology between the early Pan-African Congresses and the anti-occupation effort as well as the repetition of themes and principles between the two reveals how they were part of the same impetus. Both efforts forwarded bourgeois values of liberal politics, capitalism, and erudite, sophisticated blackness that sat comfortably with Shakespeare or Montesquieu, and, most importantly, demonstrated fitness to govern the less “civilized” members of the race into modernity. As one of the leading proponents of this position, Dantès Bellegarde represented both his homeland and the race in the international arena. His activism in the name of his country and in the defense of his people was conducted simultaneously from the various platforms he was afforded. Haiti, dominated by the U.S. military, represented a site where the hopes of the New Negro could be realized. If elite Haitians who had the capacity and experience to self-govern were returned the control of their country, then Afro-descended people everywhere, especially in the United States, could make similar claims. In order to affect the end of American dominance Haitians had to distance themselves from negative notions of retrogression. To do so demanded a race-making project where African Americans came to celebrate the accomplishments of the black republic and conceive of its citizens as victims of

similar racial violence and racist propaganda that had beleaguered Afro-descended people in the United States. Like all other efforts at forging unity across national, cultural, and in this case political lines, the project was fraught with tensions. While all agreed that Haitians were part of a larger community of African descent victim to imperialist domination and fit to govern, they were split over the pace at which restitution would be realized. In the aftermath of the occupation Haitians and African Americans continued a relationship marked by misunderstandings and nationalist positions that continue until today.

IV. *L'Union Fait la Force*: Camille Saint-Jacques and Early Francophone Anti-Colonial Pan-Africanism

The history of early pan-Africanism in Paris begins in the wake of the First World War which heralded the reunion of people of African descent in large numbers in the metropole. Colonial soldiers remaining in Europe after their service; laborers traveling to meet the demands of capital; students attending the universities of the colonizing power; adventurers seeking to escape the strictures of the imperial regime and their families all coalesced in these new environs and had the fact of blackness thrust upon them. In France this included people from across the empire as Africans, Antilleans, Middle Easterners, North Africans and Asians all added to the anti-colonial climate. These people, forced to live together as determined by racial and class strictures, began to discuss the nature of their oppression. This fomented deep analysis and ubiquitous critiques of colonial subjugation that, ultimately, merged with the question of race and the seeming natural solidarity that culled people together. In the early phase of Afro-descended community formation in Paris, Haitians were central agents in forwarding anti-colonial sentiments, influencing the tenor and direction of the movement, and played a galvanizing role in fomenting Afro-descended unity across the ethnic and colonial divisions that threatened to divide the black community in Paris.

Community was not an inherent fact; the pragmatism of strength in numbers had to be achieved, forged in the face of impediments whose lure seemed more (or less) natural. The question faced by the Afro-descended community was whether or not they would subsume their nationalist and ethnic struggles into a larger movement, even if it came at the immediate detriment of their own cause. The second current that had to be navigated was the actual forging of blackness; the tensions between those born on the African continent versus the “old” colonial subjects, former slaves and

now citizens from the diaspora largely in the Americas. These people, united under the racialized category of *noire* (black), had different histories and relationships with the colonial apparatus. Their divergent agendas towards dismantling the imperial domination caused them to question the efficaciousness of simple racial unity versus a more localized brand of identifying and agitation. Added to the mix was the question of political orientation; namely, the rise of the influence of the Communist International (Comintern).

The 1917 Bolshevik success in Russia had birthed the first nation governed under the auspices of Marxist ideology, the Soviet Union, which, subsequently, turned its attention to furthering a global anti-capitalist movement. At the start of the 1920s this cause did not offer a concrete program for black emancipation, yet it forwarded a clear ideological orientation in opposition to capitalist oppression as it related to the colonies. It offered solidarity with other exploited workers and, most importantly, presented the lure of much needed funding. While some activists advanced clear economically based critiques were not communist, others, recognizing the pernicious role of capital, sought to join the global proletariat movement. Haitians, most visible in the person of Camille Saint-Jacques, were found in the conversations, cantankerous debates, and philosophy defining instances that sought to unite, and threatened to divide the black Parisian community.

With caution to tired tropes of exceptionalism, I argue that in these moments Haitians were unique actors in the mix of people, and that their singularity within the antagonistic plurality, afforded them the distance to stress efficaciousness of racial solidarity for undermining colonial subjectivity. The story of Haitians in early Pan-African circles begins with Louis Morpeau and Camille Saint-Jacques who navigated pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, and international communism. Morpeau's activism

reached its peak with the *Ligue Universale de Défense de la Race Noire* (LUDRN), an early organization that merged diasporic unity with denunciations of the imperial order. Saint-Jacques played a much larger role in the formation of early Francophone diasporic groups that sought to undermine colonial dependency, while he also worked to bring the movement toward Comintern. It is unclear whether Saint-Jacques was a member of the LUDRN, although, his politics suggest that he would have participated or at least thought about joining.

Saint-Jacques's trajectory marks the path of pan-Africanism in the first part of the 1920s and his involvement reveals the central tensions and concerns of the impetus. He is an important figure in the early days of forging an Afro-descended community as an element that stressed and affected unity, as we will see, in the times of fracture. He is a unique figure in these early moments of diaspora making in that his commitment to forging a global community provided necessitated the malleability to shift with the various organizations that emerged and the influence to affect the course of events in critical moments. His own interests led him to speak on behalf of Malagasy and Nigeriens. He was a decidedly anti-colonial voice whose contributions to the deliberations in the *Union Intercoloniale* (UI), a short lived anti-colonial group that culled members from across the French imperial landscape that called for the upheaval of French entanglements globally. Saint-Jacques was a faithful adherent in the push for global anti-colonialism, and he fought to keep the UI alive long after it had lost its relevance. He was a member of the French Communist party (PCF), his relationship with the organization reflects tensions the left leaning members of the Afro-descended community experienced when engaging the party. His fidelity to the cause of liberating the global proletariat dovetailed with his own interests in the Afro-descended community, led him to represent people of African descent at the first

meeting of the League Against Imperialism in 1927. More than being present, although never in large numbers, Haitians played deceive roles that emphasized the underlying need for unity in the face of such fractious influences. And, led by Saint-Jacques, along with others, directed the movement closer to Comintern.

Early Pan-Africanism and Early Anti-Colonialism

Morpeau was an important figure in the first decidedly Pan-African organization in Paris and was committed to the unity of Afro-descended community. Within the organization he served as one-time Vice-President of the and editor of *Les Continents*.¹ The LUDRN was founded in 1924 as an organization dedicated to the issues of people of African descent and to forging connections between its culturally heterogenous groups. It was founded in May of 1924 by the Senegalese Kojo Tovalou Houénou, scion of the last king of Dahomey and son of a successful trader, and Rene Maran a Martiniquais of French Guianese parents, veteran of the First World War, and celebrated author of *Batouala* (1921).² The organization sought to promote unity and organize people of African descent in order to rehabilitate their nations of origin and to protect them from racial violence inflicted on “people of color.”³ The French security agencies characterized the group as being “violently” opposed to colonialism and perceived them as conforming to the dictates of the Comintern in promotion of colonial revolt.⁴ In the wake of the Bolshevik success of 1917, the specter of class

¹ Louis Marpeau, Open Letter to the Secretary General of the Ligue Universelle de Défense do la Race Noire, *Les Continents* No, September 15, 1924, 2.

² Jonathan Derrick, *Africa's' agitators': Militant Anti-colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918-1939* (Columbia University Press, 2011, 142; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 74-75; Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 81.

³ Office of National Security, memo, June 1924, Archives Nationales Pierrefitte (ANP) 19940500-236.

⁴ Prefecture of the Paris Police, memo, July 1926, ANP 20010216-174.

warfare drove the French Security apparatus to see communists everywhere capitalism was denounced.

Morpeau participated in creating a diasporic community through the written word and inserted Haiti into those discussions through his work in *Les Continents*. His work in the journalistic organ of the organization is the first in the tradition of Haitian involvement in the periodicals launched by French groups. Houénou and Maran founded *Les Continents* to be the organ of the Ligue. *Les Continents*, whose name translates as *The Continents* speaks to the dispersed nature of the Afro-descended community and the diasporic aspirations of its editors. The pressing discussed the issues of people of African descent globally and, by doing so, sought to foster a sense of unity. In its pages, articles about colonial oppression in Africa and the Caribbean coexisted alongside poems by Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes. Morpeau served as its editor for a time.⁵ Writing in the September 1924 edition, he voiced a critique of the US military Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934, characterizing it as a function of the needs of capital.⁶ By doing so, he inserted Haiti into the discussions of African descendants seeking liberation from Western domination fueled by financial concerns in the metropolises. The existence of the *LUDRN* and its newspaper was short lived, fading into extinction by January of 1925 as a result of a successful defamation lawsuit filed against them by Blaise Diange- often described as an accommodationist to French imperial hegemony.⁷ The demise of the *LUDRN* led to the emergence of

⁵ Louis Morpeau, Open Letter to the Secretary General of the Ligue Universelle de Défense de la Race Noire, *Les Continents* No, September 15, 1924, 2.

⁶ Louis Morpeau, "Frontières et Pétrole," *Les Continents* vol 8, September 1, 1924, 3.

⁷ Derrick, *Africa's Agitators*, 146.

L'Union Intercolonial (The Intercolonial Union) as the preeminent anti-colonial group and where many of the former members of the *Ligue* continued their activism.

Camille Saint-Jacques and Militant Anti-Colonial Activism

The *Union Intercoloniale* was born out of the Second Congress of the Communist International during the summer of 1920 where the governing body urged the national parties to reach out to its colonized constituency. It was at this meeting that Vladimir Lenin articulated the “Draft Thesis on the National and Colonial Question,” which centered on enlisting people in colonized countries into the global proletarian movement. For the French Communist Party (PCF) this meant reaching out to a diverse group of migrants from the Middle East, Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as those in the Caribbean. Comintern tasked the PCF with forging alliances that would support and promote rebellion in the colonies.⁸ The *Union* was a pan-racial, pan-ethnic, pan-colonial organization with people of African descent, specifically those from the Caribbean, comprising no small part of the membership.⁹ In fact, in the early days of the organization Antilleans dominated with a Martiniquais emerging as one of the earliest leaders. Early on, continental Africans were less numerous with Lamine Senghor, their most visible representative, ascending to prominence only in 1924.¹⁰ *La Paria* was founded in 1922 to be the journalistic forum for the UI’s platform. Under the auspices of the PCF the UI operated with more pronounced communist ideology. *Union* leadership were members of the party, spoke openly about their affiliations in meetings and understood anti-colonial upheaval as

⁸ Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2013) 19-20.

⁹ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Undergrounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2010) , 41.

¹⁰ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres en France, 1919-1939* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1985), 98-99.

proletariat revolution. The organization even opened a school for communist political education designed to attract membership.¹¹ This connection to the growing international proletariat movement that strained and threatened to divide the black organizations. The UI is important because it is as much the forbearer of the later Pan-African organizations that emerged in subsequent years as the LUDRN. Much of the future leadership of Pan-African groups emerged from the *Union*: Max Bloncourt, Senghor, Stephane Rosso, and Lunion Gothan were all members who became central figures in the Pan-African associations. Included in the ranks was also Saint-Jacques, one of its most visible and vocal members.

Eugène Camille Saint-Jacques is a compelling figure who complicates our understanding of early Pan-African and anti-imperialist spaces. Born in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France in 1902 to an unwed Haitian mother whose first name he carries and of “unknown” paternity.¹² Trained as an engineer, he patented several inventions including the “Saint-Jacques oven,” (four Saint-Jacques) used in the processing of raw minerals. Saint-Jacques was financially secure and appears to have held land in the south of Algeria. Saint-Jacques was a cohesive element in the early Pan-African circles who worked to forge the unity of people of African descent in Paris, even as other tensions sought to fray the nascent cohesiveness. He was a radicalizing force and linked to international Marxism that propelled to the movement’s left leaning participants to dominate the subsequent generation of activism. His tumultuous relationship with the French Communist Party presaged the difficulties later black adherents to the Comintern platform chaffed against. By the mid-1930s Saint-Jacques

¹¹ “Note Sur la Propagande Révolutionnaire Intéressante: Les Pays D’Outre-Mer,” ANOM SLOTFOM 3SF144.

¹² Dewitte, *Les Mouvement Nègres*, 98. Préfet of the Paris Police, “Extrait d’un Rapport,” N.D., Dossier, 122775.

was no longer participating in activist circles. He had moved to Algeria where he headed a mineral exploitation company and his inventions were being sold to Manchurian mining interests as part of a Franco-Japanese treaty of 1938.¹³ Interestingly, his half-brother, who had filed a grievance against Saint-Jacques in 1932, for reasons not entirely clear, had also relocated to Algeria in the 1930s, converted to Islam and became an instructor of the Koran.¹⁴ Saint-Jacques was a member of the Paris division of the PCF and was a member of its Colonial Commission.¹⁵ Because of his activism, Saint-Jacques became the object of scrutiny of the French security agencies beginning in late 1924.

In the 1920s through the early 30s, at least, Saint-Jacques was a Marxist, pan-Africanist, internationalist, militant anti-imperialist whose activist career reveals much about the organizations he joined and the movement in general. Most importantly, he privileged his pan-Africanism before all other causes and at critical moments in the nascent period of consolidation of the Afro-diasporic French community, he is notable for stressing unity over personal or ideological difference. His own role was that of the radical in pan-Africanist circles who sought to link the liberation of people of African descent to the emergent global proletariat movement as he denounced activists that sought inclusion into the halls of the French bourgeoisie. His fidelity to forging a community of Afro-descendent people propelled him to the vanguard of the first two generations of Parisian activist groups. He was an active member of the *Union Intercoloniale* long after its relevancy in anti-colonial activism, he was a

¹³ Prefect of the Paris Police Dossier, 122775, Report, February 7, 1928; Prefect of the Paris Police Dossier, 122775, Memo, November 29, 1939.

¹⁴ Prefect of the Paris Police Dossier, 122775, Information, July 17, 1935; Prefect of the Paris Police Dossier, 122775Memo, August 1935.

¹⁵ Prefect of the Paris Police Dossier, 122775, Memo, June 1925; "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," February 22, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7.

founding member of the *Comité de Defense de la Race Noire* until its splintering in 1926 and played a central role in the launching of the *Ligue de Defense de la Race Nègre* in 1927.

More than just French activism, he participated in anti-colonial and Pan-African activity on a global stage. Saint-Jacques was a representative of the UI at the 1927 meeting of the League Against Imperialism where he served on the committee on the “Negro Question.” He was connected to activist circles in London, as well as being a confidant and collaborator of George Padmore. Throughout, Saint-Jacques forwarded declarations against the imperialist state and called for global revolution while maintaining that the liberation of African descended people as his primary mission. Jennifer Boittin, in an article on the interplay of race and gender in black Parisian activist circles, has noted the emotionality and combustibility of the predominantly male meetings of Pan-African associations.¹⁶ Indeed, many of the leading figures of the Pan-African organizations were prone to shouting contests and physical altercations. Saint-Jacques was prototypical of this type and regularly deployed incendiary language. Often belligerent and in conflict with his comrades, and he was prone to wild denunciations of French imperialism and communist organizations he felt were deficient or insincere in their support people of African descent. His abrasive passions notwithstanding, Saint-Jacques is an exemplar of the interwar Pan-African movement in Paris and its radicalizing current.

¹⁶ Jennifer Boittin et al, “Hierarchies of Race and Gender in the French Colonial Empire, 1914-1946” *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 37 (Spring 2011): 73

Navigating Race and Anti-Colonialism

Saint-Jacques was a dedicated member of the *Union Intercoloniale*, committed to the idea of global anti-imperial revolt. He first appeared in the historical record at a 1924 New Year's Eve party thrown by the Society of Vietnamese Cooks in Paris. Also at the event were Guadeloupians Joseph Gothon-Lunion and Narcisse Danaé, communist party members thought to have received political education in Moscow, who played major roles in French Pan-African activism for the next decade. During the reception, issues of *La Paria* were sold along with twenty subscriptions gathered by Saint-Jacques and Nguyen The Truyen, as a fund-raising effort for the group and its periodical. Truyen took up the position of editor of *La Paria* after Nguyen Ai Quoc, later known as Ho Chi Minh, returned to Viet Nam. The Truyen also returned to his homeland to fight for independence and was subsequently exiled to Madagascar by the French Colonial authorities, ultimately breaking with the CP.¹⁷ Saint-Jacques attended his first meeting on January 4, 1925. By this time the *Union* was the most influential anti-colonial group in France with branches in Marseille, La Harve, and Bordeaux—all cities with large immigrant populations.¹⁸

Attendees to UI convenings often decried various manifestations of imperial oppression. This practice was repeated in the meetings of the Pan-African groups that followed and represented moments of what Edwards has identified as reciprocity, simultaneity, and mutual answerability that was linked a heterogeneous group of people in comradeship in opposition to the French imperial project. The informants of the French security state counted upwards of 300 members at one gathering, held January

¹⁷ Sophie Quinn-Judge, *Ho Chi Minh: The Missing Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 329.

¹⁸ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," January 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 18.

23, 1925. The crowd at the meeting reflected the breath of French colonialism; members were from Vietnam, China, the Antilles, with the majority of drawn from North Africa. Saint-Jacques, neither Antillean by birth nor colonial subject, represented Caribbean people in “favor of revolution” at the event.¹⁹ At the gathering the life and activism of Lenin was traced, and an order was passed, in reassurance to the “Russian Republic,” that the workers from the colonies had adopted a Leninist position.²⁰ From the start, Saint-Jacques was a regular at the reunions and a participant in several of the actions organized and initiated by the association.

Although new to the UI, he had long agitated for colonial subjects at meetings of the PCF. Saint-Jacques’s plight was endemic of the relationship of colonial subjects with the French communists which vacillated between elation at the denunciation of colonial practices and dissatisfaction with the ineffectual support of their causes. In 1923 for example, Saint-Jacques submitted a petition to the party about the Niger Valley and the Destour Socialist party of Tunisia, that went unaddressed.²¹ Comintern came to realize this tension via critiques presented by Gothon-Lunion and Nguyen at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in 1924. At the meeting they derided their French comrades for not building links with the colonial citizens in the capital.²² At a February 1925 meeting of the UI Saint Jacques and several attendees rebuked the CP leadership and its representative for not knowing “anything” about the movements in the colonies. They peppered the representative as to what the party

¹⁹ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” January 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 19.

²⁰ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” January 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 20.

²¹ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” February 22, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7.

²² Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 208.

would do for the various national revolutionary movements. The reply that Moscow was hesitant to support non-communist efforts was vociferously rebuked by Saint-Jacques. For Saint-Jacques, it was of critical importance to liberate the colonies from the “capitalists in the metropolises,” the nationalist bourgeoisie oppressors would succumb to the force of the people afterwards.²³ His passionate support for the dismantling of colonial relations attracted the notice of both the security apparatus and his fellow activists.

Saint-Jacques’ ascent was part of a larger cohort of activist from various corners of the African diaspora that assumed positions of importance in the UI. He was an integral part of its governing structure and central to several of the activist schemes. Saint-Jacques was nominated and elected to a cabinet position as representative of Madagascar less than two months into his membership.²⁴ During this election many important pan-Africanist activists were voted into prominent positions. Max Bloncourt was named to the position of Secretary General; Stéphane Rosso, Guadeloupean PCF member was appointed to the position of Treasurer; and, Lamine Senghor, who had joined the PCF and UI in June of 1924, became representative of Senegal.²⁵ This cohort of officials represented the leadership of the next two incarnations of Pan-African groups. Rosso and Danae continued to lead groups through the into the mid-1930s. And, when the UI needed a new minister of propaganda needed filling, it was Saint-Jacques who assumed the role.²⁶

²³ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” February 28, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 8.

²⁴ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” February 28, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 11.

²⁵ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” February 28, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 12.

²⁶ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 107.

Saint-Jacques quickly became a valuable and visible member of the *Union* representing the voice and issues of importance to the population of African descent. His voice also reflected the Pan-African lens through which he pursued his anti-colonial activism. Saint-Jacques conceived of the Afro-descended world as subject to the same racially driven, exploitative imperialist drives. For example, he presented an analysis of the colonial struggles of Madagascar compared to those of French West Africans. He argued that they were subjugated because of their African descent and showed that both groups' indigenous populations had been conscripted into the service of metropolitan business interests.²⁷ When the UI began to formulate a program to document the capitalist exploitation in the colonies, Saint-Jacques devised a plan that called on the foreign nationals in the capital to lean on connections in the colonies to gather the information that could deepen critiques. He further argued that the information should be disseminated through articles in *L' Humanite*, the journalistic organ of the PCF, and *La Paria*, which would then be transported by sailors to the colonies.²⁸

As the *Union* formulated plans to assail colonialism from within, Saint-Jacques was heavily implicated in their actions. When the UI, as the result of a dictum from the CP, devised a course of action to affect change through infiltration of the French government, Saint-Jacques was one of the members selected to run for office though he declined.²⁹ In this moment, we locate the early disenfranchisement of Senghor, who was denied permission to launch his own candidacy. Ultimately, only

²⁷ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," March 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7.

²⁸ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," February 28, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 13.

²⁹ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," February 28, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7.

Bloncourt won a seat, jeopardizing his position as Secretary General of the *Union*.³⁰ The election cycle ushered in a leftist government known as the *Bloc des Gauches* (the Leftist Block). In another instance, Saint-Jacques was selected to engage the *tirailleurs*, Afro-descended French colonial subjects conscripted into military service during the First World War, in efforts to enlist them into the service of the UI. In the intervening years, the *tirailleurs* had been used to break up protests and labor strikes in the metropole. Saint-Jacques's mission was to affect their defection, to convince them to join in the process, or, at the very least, to stand down if ordered to break up the demonstration.³¹ He was unable to reach his targets, having been spotted by authorities.³² When the march finally occurred, in November, Saint-Jacques and Rosso were at the head of the black contingent of the pan-colonial manifestation.³³ The subject of the black soldiers, particularly those of African descent, was a central issue for the *Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre*, emergent after the UI dissolved, and in which Saint Jacques was a founding member.³⁴

Saint-Jacques often clamored for the dismantling of imperial subjugation on all continents. Despite its avowedly leftist leadership and connections to the communist party, the UI presented itself as open to all colonial subjects, irrespective of ideology

³⁰ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," May 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7.

³¹ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," April 30, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 9.

³² "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," May 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

³³ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," November 30, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 5.

³⁴ Jennifer Anne Boittin, "Black in France: The Language and Politics of Race in the Late Third Republic," *French Politics, Culture, & Society* Vol 27. (Summer 2009): 25.

or religious convictions, which is why Saint-Jacques was such a devoted member.³⁵ He, Senghor, and other Afro-descended members of the UI attended a meeting called by Truyen, in the name of the “Oriental” people, to honor Sun Yat Sen. At this meeting, held at the UI’s colonial school (thought to be a site of communist instruction and propaganda by the security officials) Saint-Jacques called for the insurrection of all colonized people, globally.³⁶ At another meeting, in the post-election period, he argued that the time was ripe to foment international revolt and that the UI must hold the newly elected Prime Minister, Paul Painleve (April 1925-November 1925), head of the *Block des Gauches*, to his promise to bestow on the Algerians their “French citizenship” and attendant rights.³⁷ And, when the UI sought to expand its reach by establishing branches in the colonies, he supported the movement, despite the financial strain on the organization. He argued for the free distribution of the *La Paria* throughout the colonies as a means to unite various colonial subjects in rebellion.³⁸

Saint-Jacques and the Division of the *Union*

Saint-Jacques continued to be a voice for the colonized in the meetings of the PCF and his participation points to the changing landscape of anti-colonial activism. His relationship to PCF reflects the frustrations that marred the relationship of pan-Africanists with organized Marxism. As this literature reveals, black activists who

³⁵ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 9.

³⁶ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” April 30, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 13.

³⁷ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” May 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 3.

³⁸ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” May 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

turned to Comintern, and its representatives in the national parties, eventually chafed under the chauvinisms of the local communist parties and the geopolitical concessions of the international. In June of 1925 these fissures began to emerge and by following Saint-Jacques the root causes are drawn into relief. He accused the leadership of not caring for the plight of colonial citizens and of being uninformed about French colonialism, a sentiment shared by others in the organization.³⁹ As part of the Colonial Commission he helped formulate a plan that would form ethnic-specific cells of the CP, monitored by the commission members and dedicated to the issues of the colonial subjects. The supervising members were to be part of a larger collective that received its directives from the central organization. Senghor thought it sufficed that the existing branches were concerned with the issues pertaining to colonial issues, and that the creation of ethnic specific subsections would render the UI ineffectual.⁴⁰ The resolution was passed, and, in effect, this is what became of the UI.

The historiography on this period in Pan-African anti-colonialism maintains that the Afro-descended members of the *Union Intercoloniale*, feeling their cause neglected, decided to form their own collective effectively ending the relevance of the *Union*. However, what we see here, by following Saint-Jacques, is an organizational restructuring, reflecting a strategic approach, that presaged the division. While the impact of racial division maybe overstated, antagonisms across ethnic lines did exist. They were not predicated on intracolonial or interethnic rivalries, but interpersonal conflict and self-important actors. Saint Jacques's role reveals that the UI's death was not predicated on ethnic or racial rivalries in the organization, as the literature holds.

³⁹ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," June 30, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

⁴⁰ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," July 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 3.

His part in the events that ultimately led to the UI losing its relevancy as an anti-colonial institution draws into relief how Senghor and Hadj-Ali in particular sought to leverage their influence within their own communities without sublimation into a central organization's dictates. In the case of the Senghor, the issue of dictatorship plagued his activism, marred his leadership, and threatened early Pan-African unity.

Central to the argument that racial divisions precipitated the dissolution of the UI is the PCF's support of the North Africans at the cost of attention to the causes of other groups. The CP supported the Riffians (Moroccans) during the early part of their war for independence (1920-1927), first fought against the Spanish and then the French. The attention supposedly further alienated its black membership, who already felt neglected. Specifically, Dewitte, Boittin, and Adi maintain that the UI fell apart when Afro-descended members, jealous of the inattentiveness of the PCF towards their cause in the face of the support given to the North Africans, decided it was time to establish an organization dedicated to their issues. The scholars argue that the PCF had always neglected its Afro-descended contingency both in the metropole and in the colonies.⁴¹ This claim is indisputable although there was never a large African contingent in the UI. Antilleans, however, were well represented, and also left, despite having one of their own as Secretary General, Bloncourt.⁴² Scholars also point the domination of the UI by North Africans as a factor pushing members of African descent away from the organization.⁴³ I maintain, through a revisitation of sources, that by the time ethnic-specific organizations were formed all groups had decided to

⁴¹ See Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 81; Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 209; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 111.

⁴² Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 99.

⁴³ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 80.

leave. As such, the *Union Intercolonial* was no longer a viable organization, and, in fact, the Afro-descended contingent was the last to announce its departure.

Saint-Jacques' central role in the anti-colonial activity allows us to capture the interpersonal and intra-organizational tensions that precipitated the demise of the pan-colonial group. During the height of the Moroccan conflict, individual disagreements surrounding differences in political ideology, the ambitiousness of activists, and the emotionality of the anti-colonial struggle were the splinters that eventually fractured the group. What appears to be an interracial conflict on face value, reveals itself to have countervailing currents underneath the surface. Beginning with a verbal altercation involving Saint-Jacques and Abelkader Hadj-Ali, a North African activist, over communist party politics. During the exchange, Hadj-Ali accused the Saint-Jacques of being a divisive agitator who was in the process of forming a dissident organization.⁴⁴ At a subsequent meeting, Saint-Jacques returned the recrimination and claimed that Hadj-Ali had plotted against communist party leadership and had tried to recruit him into a splinter organization, one that transcended race or ethnicity. The conflict between the two metastasized into a bout of verbal belligerency which interrupted a meeting of the *Union* when the two had to be separated.⁴⁵ Hadj-Ali's claim seems dubious. If he is to be believed, then Saint-Jacques who continued in the organization long after its relevance and represented the UI at the *League Against Imperialism* meeting in 1927, was trying to leave the organization as early as 1925. If Saint-Jacques is to be trusted, then Hadj-Ali was seeking to form a competing multi-racial organization which, ultimately, he did.

⁴⁴ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," June 30, 1925, 3SLOTFOM144ANOM, 3.

⁴⁵ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," June 30, 1925, 3SLOTFOM144ANOM, 4.

Moreover, it must be noted that Saint-Jacques along with Bloncourt, and Danae, all members of African descent, were defenders of the anti-colonial struggle of the Riffians, undermining the racial resentment theory. In supporting the Moroccans, Saint-Jacques was adhering to the Leninist position on colonial insurgency forwarded in the “Draft Thesis” as articulated in 1920 during the Second Congress of the Communist International. The argument stipulated that party members support all struggles against the metropole.⁴⁶ In addition to personal tensions, party politics further antagonized the two men’s issues.

It was Saint-Jacques’s adherence to *Union* regulations that pushed Hadj-Ali away from the pan-colonial organization. The Moroccan struggle had caused the CP to issue a gag order on their members and required that they curtail any activity to avoid further surveillance by the French authorities. Specifically, the UI and its members were to remain dormant during this period in order to not provoke searches from the police. Despite the dictates of the PCF and the UI, Senghor, Hadj-Ali, and Truyen continued to participate in various anti-colonial meetings in the name of the communist party and the *Union Intercoloniale*, without authorization. Bloncourt, Secretary General of the UI, admonished them for not being loyal to party dictates. Saint-Jacques, uncharacteristically taking the diplomatic position, called for a continuance to allow the three members to defend themselves.⁴⁷ At the subsequent meeting, Saint-Jacques returning to form, took the offensive along with Bloncourt and censured the trio for deviating from organizational mandates. Both Hadj-Ali and

⁴⁶ Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 19-20.

⁴⁷ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” July 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144, ANOM, 13.

Senghor responded defensively. Senghor declared that if he, a “militant communist,” was speaking “favorably” about the *Union*, then he should be above admonishment.⁴⁸

This is a crisis moment in the history of the Union when three of its most influential figures felt themselves above conformity to the edicts of the group. Senghor was beginning to fret under the control of the UI and the PCF. He believed the party was using his membership to attract African adherents yet he did not have the power that came with his influence.⁴⁹ Similarly, Hadj-Ali had grown powerful in the North African community and his censuring by the leadership of the UI, including Saint-Jacques, gave cause to his latent desire to found his own organization. Senghor also found the PCF’s efforts too specious and ineffectual. He may have felt some continued resentment from having to abate his run for office during the 1925 elections in favor of the white candidate favored by the PCF. Senghor also smarted after the party decided not to fund his travel to the American Negro Labor Congress that same year.⁵⁰ While he remained steadfast in his commitment to international communism as a vehicle for liberation for the colonized, receiving funding and participating in Comintern initiatives, he preferred to start his own organization that while affiliated with the PCF was not under its auspices. As we shall see, Senghor eventually came into conflict with the members of the Pan-African groups he founded due to his leadership tendencies.

⁴⁸ Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” July 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144ANOM, 14.

⁴⁹ Dewitte *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 109.

⁵⁰ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 111-112.

In addition to the tensions between the leadership and the influential members, the UI found it increasingly difficult to sustain the organization. Two issues plagued radical anti-colonial organizations in Paris during the interwar years: financial limitations and reticent or ideologically wary membership. Many colonial subjects, across all ethnic and racial identifiers, were circumspect Comintern influence, while others, like Saint-Jacques were invested in the program. The *Union Intercolonial* was no exception, in fact, it is the foundational communist affiliated organization that drew some of its funding, organizational support, and training for its members from the International. This, in turn, caught the attention of the French security apparatus keen on stifling the Marxist influence in the colonies and the metropole. Early on in the history of anti-colonial activism members were keenly aware of the French state observing them, because of their connections to leftist organizations. In pursuing global revolt, Saint-Jacques was cognizant of the difficulties presented by the colonial security apparatus. He argued that all colonial citizens would join the UI were it not for the surveillance.⁵¹ Communism, as a platform, seemed to be an element keeping migrants from the colonies away from the UI. Or, perhaps it was the surveillance that it attracted which threatened migrants with loss of livelihood, detention, or deportation. Officially, the *Union* was an organization open to all people from the colonies, but the politics of the leadership was tied to the Comintern. As a result, the UI and CP leaders deemed it “prudent” mask the association’s communist orientation for fear of turning away potential members. The reticence, either ideological or pragmatic, severely limited the membership of the organization and any potential dues it could collect.

⁵¹ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” August 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

As a result, the *Union* was always in dire fiscal straits. It regularly struggled to finance the publication of editions of *La Paria*. In 1925 alone both Bloncourt and Ben Lekahal subsidized its issuance.⁵² At different times Bloncourt and Hadj-Ali used their own funds to pay the rent for the *Union's* meeting space.⁵³ The Colonial School had gone defunct, for lack of financing, and Truyen had begun offering communist political education out of his home. His lessons being reserved exclusively for Vietnamese immigrants, pointing to the ethnic specific plan of the CP, and hinting at the impending egression of different groups from the UI.⁵⁴ The CP, alarmed by the diminishing relevance of the association, called Bloncourt, the president of the organization, to account for its inertia.

By the end of 1925 the moribund *Union* was on its last legs and on the verge of losing total organizational cohesion to the point of irrelevance. Cleaves between its leaders and the institutional issues had rendered its existence unsustainable. What the evidence reveals is that the Afro descended members did not leave the organization because of interracial rivalries; all the groups had left. They had abandoned the UI for the ethnically specific groups model proposed in February of 1925. In December of that year, both the Vietnamese and North Africans contingents of the *Union*, led by Truyen and Hadj-Ali respectively, had announced their intentions to participate in splinter groups.⁵⁵ Their efforts at independent activism had been stifled by the *Union*

⁵²“Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” January 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 20. “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” July 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144ANOM, 14.

⁵³“Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” January 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 20. “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” July 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144ANOM, 15.

⁵⁴ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” July 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144ANOM, 17.

⁵⁵ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” December 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 21.

leadership and in their roles as organizational heads, they set the terms of their activism. The flight of the North Africans from ranks of the UI counters the historiography that claims the erosion of the organization was due to a back exodus. It is only after the others had resigned and taken with them their constituency that Senghor followed suit.

During this time, however, Senghor continued to operate within the UI context despite having resigned from the PCF in November of 1925. When he sought to establish a newspaper dedicated to the issues of people of continental African descent in February 1926, he turned to the *Union* for funding. It was Saint-Jacques, ever the loyalist, that again reproached him. Saint-Jacques, probably reeling from the waning influence of the organization, asserted that the UI was for all colonized people and that if Senghor wanted to establish a race specific periodical he would have to find funding elsewhere. Senghor, rebuked yet again by the UI, brought the assembly's decision to the Senegalese subsection.⁵⁶ In March of 1926 Senghor inaugurated the *Comité de Defense de la Race Noire* (CDRN) arguing that the UI neglected black people.⁵⁷ Standing in contradistinction to this claim were Blouncourt, Saint Jacques, and Danae who remained active in the organization, despite joining the CDRN out of Pan-African solidarity.

By early-1926 the *Union Intercolonial* had ceased to be the locus of anti-colonial organization, agitation, and political organization, and those who led the next iteration of anti-colonial groups sought to apply lessons learned to their next endeavors. The stresses of uniting a disparate group of people, the rigidity of the

⁵⁶ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1925, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 24.

⁵⁷ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," March 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

communist party's platform, the inefficacy of the PCF, the pressure of the security state, and interpersonal conflicts all came to bear on the ties that bound the *Union* together. As the activists who led the CDRN established their base, they did so with the failings of the past in mind. In their opinion, the UI had "vegetated" because colonial subjects were turned off by the Marxist orientation of the organization. The CDRN leadership decided to hide their communist affiliation as to not alienate potential members. Saint-Jacques was a proponent of this position. He held that the *Union* had become a "mousetrap" for the police, further debilitating its ability to hold a base. They continued their activism with the view that once "blacks in the metropole," had been won over, then the real political education would begin.⁵⁸

Perhaps masking the Comintern connection would draw more people of African descent and establish a solid Pan-African community. The Afro-descended migrants worried about Marxist ideology as a praxis in general but there were material concerns as well. Reprisals from the colonial authorities included repatriation for those from the continent who were not citizens and threatened their already tenuous grasp on employment. Saint-Jacques added that during the Riff War party members prioritized ideology over anti-colonial upheaval. In Hadj-Ali and Truyen, he saw activists that had drawn their livelihood from the CP and whose economic dependence had betrayed their political activism.⁵⁹ The impact of government policing keeping away potential adherents and driving away leadership was an issue pan-Africanist organizations had to navigate in the coming years, especially as radical, Comintern related activity intensified. The issue of CP mandates diverging with the politics of the

⁵⁸ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," October 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7.

⁵⁹ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," October 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 14.

activists of African descent had a more profound impact on radical Pan-African organizations.

But, the story of the *Union Intercolonial* does not die with the splintering of the groups. However ineffectual, the organization remained in existence if only through the commitment of former adherents that met irregularly to plot its resurgence, led largely by its Afro-descended leaders. The diehards managed to keep the shell of the organization alive through 1928 in sporadically held meetings as members of the “old colonies and black people” division.⁶⁰ Included in this number was Saint-Jacques. Since early 1926 the *Union*’s meeting space had remained closed; the rent had not been paid, the landlord had filed a grievance against Bloncourt for back due payments. As a result, Bloncourt’s home became the site of UI activity. One of the meetings held on Nov 7, 1926 included five Afro-descended members.⁶¹ Bloncourt, and his wife, Stephane Rosso, Georges Sarrote, and Saint-Jacques, all Afro-Caribbean, all members by that time of the CDRN.⁶² Saint-Jacques attended the League Against Imperialism meeting held Brussels in February of 1927 as a representative of the *Union Intercoloniale*.⁶³

⁶⁰ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 113.

⁶¹ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” November 30, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 10.

⁶² “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” December 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7.

⁶³ Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 304; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 146; Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom*, 142.

However, despite the continued presence of the Afro-descended Caribbean community reinvigorate the group, North Africans, and Vietnamese who refused to participate.⁶⁴ There was, in fact, no black exodus from the *Union*. Yes, Senghor had left, taking with him his Senegalese followers, but his departure came after other ethnic groups had already splintered. It is interesting to note, that the North Africans, whose supposed domination of the organization had pushed the people of African descent out, were no longer interested in participating in the *Union*. The UI crumbled under its own weight; it proved unable to navigate its constituents' distaste for the Marxism of its leadership and succumbed to a contest for power among its most visible partisans. While French imperialism offered a monolithic target, it oppressed a heterogenous group of people who experienced colonial oppression differently and were not committed to the goal of general liberation more than they were concerned with their own objectives. Or, at the very of the least, the realization goal of general liberation took different forms along with conflicting notions of what things would be like once the yokes of imperialism had been lifted. Colonialism had a multitude of manifestations which, surely, informed how those who experienced it resisted. Simultaneity could be established, the fact that "we" all suffer by the hands of the same down presser. However, mutual answerability, that "we" are all responsible for each other's liberation did not transcend the individual desires or the will towards power of the activists and their constituency. Such would be the case in the Pan-African circles.

⁶⁴ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," February 20, 1928, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 12.

The Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre/Noire.

In March of 1926 Lamine Senghor founded the *Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre* (CDRN) as an organization dedicated to the needs and causes of Paris' black population irrespective of colonial status or origin. The *Comité* held its first meeting on March 16, 1926. It was officially recognized on March 26, 1926, after presenting its documents to the Prefect of the Paris police, a requirement for all non-religious organizations founded in France. It announced its launch in the pages of the April 1926 edition of *La Paria*, organ of the, yet to surrender to extinction, *Union Intercoloniale*.⁶⁵ This organization quickly became the central meeting space for Afro-descended people from across the diasporic world. The group was composed of Afro-Antilleans and continental Africans. Although the Caribbean members dominated numerically, the new organization attracted many more Africans than the UI.⁶⁶ Rene Maran, novelist and co-founder of the LUDRN, joined and played an active role in the organization's history, Andre Béton a Guadeloupean lawyer, Louis Morpeau, and Rosolvo Bobo, former Vice-President of Haiti, were also members.⁶⁷ At a July 1926 meeting Morpeau, "saluted" the organization, asserting that unification of people of African descent would force the French government to reconsider its policies.⁶⁸ He participated in the first official action of the organization, a march in celebration of

⁶⁵ "Rapport du commissaire central," July 1926, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216-174.

⁶⁶ Derrick, *Africa's Agitators*, 216; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 130.

⁶⁷ "Rapport du commissaire central," October 4, 1926, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216-174; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 130-131, 135.

⁶⁸ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," July 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 3.

the life of Victor Schoelcher, famed French abolitionist, that ended at his grave site.⁶⁹ Morpeau spoke in honor of a person who fought the freedom of Afro-descended people.⁷⁰ Included in the rank of the membership were Leo Sajous and Jean-Louis Barau both of whom came to play a more prominent role in the subsequent iterations of Pan-African anti-colonial activities.⁷¹ Saint-Jacques seems to have been less active in the CDRN, possibly holding on to the *Union*, perhaps as a result of tens feelings towards him or because he was skeptical of Senghor's leadership or. Saint-Jacques reemerged as the group fractured to ensure Pan-African cohesion.

While the *Comité* was led by several men committed to ameliorating the conditions of people of African descent, it was driven by the efforts of Senghor. His leading role contributed to the early success of the organization yet his refusal to share real power in the organization hastened its disillusion. Senghor's tendency towards "big man leadership" prevalent in this and the subsequent organization that he founded, may also have as much to do with his decision to leave the UI as did his relationship to the French Communist Party and Comintern. The PCF supported the CDRN in its earliest days, including financing the publication of the first issue of its journal, *La Voix des Nègres*, at the end of 1926.⁷² This fact complicates the claim that Senghor left the UI because PCF neglected black issues; what it does point to is Senghor's need for autonomy as a factor in his decision to leave.

⁶⁹ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," July 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

⁷⁰ "Le Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre Commémore Schoelcher: Une Emouvant Manifestation au Père-Lachaise," *L'Humanité*, July 26, 1926 reprinted in ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174; "Memo," unsigned, July 25, 1926, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216-174.

⁷¹ Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism*, 307.

⁷² Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 137; Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 211.

Senghor worked tirelessly in Europe and Africa to expand the networks of the *Comité*- despite a debilitating case of tuberculosis, exacerbated by gas inhaled during his time on the front lines of WWI.⁷³ He is noted to have been a fiery speaker using his denunciations of French imperialism to attract followers in the various ports where Africans dominated the labor force on the docks.⁷⁴ As a result, he became a target of the Sûreté's concern. He was once severely attacked by a person who claimed to have been paid by the Ministry of the Colonies.⁷⁵ Gothan-Lunion, Secretary General of the *Comité*, and Stephane Rosso worked to establish branches throughout France and make connections in Senegal and Nigeria.⁷⁶ The leadership's efforts had produced results, and the CDRN's membership grew to over 1000 adherents in France in less than six months. Despite these successes, the organization's radical public face was met with skepticism from its potential constituency and caused a rift within the *Comité*. Many of the conservative members of Paris' Afro descended community were wary of the organization's revolutionary stance in their racial and political orientation.

In employing *nègre* as the nomenclature by which it identified itself, the *Comité* expressed its confrontational stance on race to the Francophone world. In the francophone lexicon, *nègre*, unlike *noire* is more than a phenotypical referent, like the *Noire*, and more assertion of otherness on the margins of society. From the beginning,

⁷³ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 83 ; Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism*, 302; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 129.

⁷⁴ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," September 30, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

⁷⁵ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," November 30, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 3.

⁷⁶ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," July 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 3; "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," September 30, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 3, 6.

the term caused dissent in the group with one adherent asking for the signifier to be changed to *noire*.⁷⁷ The *nègre/noire* divide has implications on self-identification in inter war Paris, as Jennifer Boittin, has adroitly explained. Her studies of racial currents in interwar Paris have noted the adoption of *nègre* was an act of rehabilitation of the word.⁷⁸ Choosing *nègre* signified an acceptance of non-Europeanness and rejection of assimilationist ideology. As of 1926 the CDRN, like its LUDRN predecessor, antagonistic towards Blaise Diange and Gratien Candace, Afro-descended members of the French Parliament (representing Senegal and Guadeloupe respectively) who advocated assimilation into French society. *Nègre* marked a resistance towards assimilation, a refusal to be colored versions of French citizens, *hommes de couleur*.

The founders of the CDRN chose the term to be inclusive of all people of African descent, irrespective of class practices. In their mission statement they declared themselves to be open to all *nègres* without exception of religion or political ideology.⁷⁹ Brent Hayes Edwards has discussed how *nègre* encompasses Senghor's tripartite formulation of identifying terms for people of African descent. Edwards engages "Le Mot Nègre" Senghor's article in the first edition of *La Voix des Nègres*, in which he undermines the term "*hommes de couleur*," (literally, people of color), and "*noir*," (black) as ineffective terms to reference the wide-ranging Afro-descended community. Drawing on Christopher Miller's chapter "Involution and Revolution: African Paris in the 1920s," Edward claims the choice of *nègre* is at the same time an

⁷⁷ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," July 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

⁷⁸ Boittin, "Black In France," 30.

⁷⁹ Lamine Senghor, "Appel," *La France*, October 2, 1926, reprinted in ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174.

acknowledgement of the oppression faced by black people and an “rally[ing]” cry to unite in “anti-imperialist...solidarity.”⁸⁰ Edwards’ work notes the difficulties in translating terms across cultural and linguistic lines and asks how *nègre*, in this instant, is to be translated. The radicalness of *nègre*, like black in respect to “negro” and “colored,” caused an early division in the community and early on a group splintered away from what it termed to be “scary”(effrayant) association.

The splinter group left in opposition to the politics of both Senghor and Gothan-Lunion, both of whom were militantly radical. The men were former members of the *Union Intercoloniale* and the PCF, and many much of the *Comité*’s leadership had affiliations with communist organizations. Gothan-Lunion had received a scholarship to study in the Marxist schools in London. He held extremist positions such as championing a plan where the *tirailleurs* would turn against their white generals and “shoot” them during the next war.⁸¹ Senghor, for all his bluster regarding the PCF’s specious attentiveness to the needs of people of African descent, never stopped attending their meetings.⁸² Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté, secretary-adjoint, Rosso, Danae and Bloncourt- members of the *Comité*- all had ties to Internationalist organizations.⁸³ Whether international Marxism was a means to an end is irrelevant here, as its leadership at this time affirmed their fidelity to this mode. Their political orientation became a problem as potential members shied away from joining the

⁸⁰ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 30.

⁸¹ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” November 30, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 6.

⁸² Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 137.

⁸³ “Memo,” Ministry of the Interior to the Minister of the Colonies, May 14, 1927, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174; “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” September 30, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 6.

organization because of its radical positions.⁸⁴ As their financial solvency became an issue the *Comité* turned to the FCP for funding, further characterizing the group as a radical organization.⁸⁵ Yet this seeming ideological harmony eventually degenerated into discord leading to the fracturing of the Pan-African organization.

The schism that led to this break was caused by a struggle for preeminence between Senghor and Gothon-Lunion. Both men were radical pan-Africanists who had turned to international Marxism to realize the abatement of colonial oppression of people of African descent. Both denounced French imperialism and forwarded revolutionary positions on blackness. However, each sought to maximize their influence among the leadership and secure unchecked power at the head of the CDRN. The membership was divided between the two camps. Senghor was frequently away during his tenure as Secretary General either building networks and branches of the *Comité* or tending to his health and other personal issues. In these periods Gothon-Lunion was the highest-ranking member of the organization in his role as President. He was described as running the *Comité* as a dictatorship.⁸⁶ This afforded him space to exert his influence and build support around his leadership. During a November 1926 meeting Gothon-Lunion reproached Hanna Charly for continuing relationships with the PCF without “going through the *Comité*’s intermediary.”⁸⁷ Despite having sent a memo to Moscow declaring Lenin to be the “honorary president” of the CDRN, (along with Toussaint Louverture, leader of the Haitian revolution) without consulting

⁸⁴ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” August 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 4.

⁸⁵ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 137

⁸⁶ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” December 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 5.

⁸⁷ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” December 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 3.

the other members of the organization. The central committee only found out about the declaration after reading it in *L'Humanité*. The article declared the CDRN's Marxist affiliations, which undermined the group's position of masking its communist connections.⁸⁸ Even the PCF had its reservations about the Secretary General, they characterized him as a "manipulator," and questioned his commitment to revolutionary activism.⁸⁹

Senghor's equally totalitarian approach to handling CDRN affairs further exacerbated the power struggle between the two leaders. Upon his return to Paris, in December 1926, Senghor, in a unilateral decision, announced the stripping of Gothon-Lunion of his position as Secretary General, replacing him with Kouyaté. Senghor had grown increasingly frustrated with Gothon-Lunion who refused to follow *Comité* guidelines. Senghor had cited the Secretary-General's attitude and alluded to suspected financial misappropriation cause for his expulsion.⁹⁰ Senghor held that the Secretary General was to follow the dictates of the President and that Gothon-Lunion had acted independently of the central committee. Going further he added that Gothon-Lunion had "mistak[en] his position with that of the treasurer."⁹¹ In the January 1927 edition of *La Voix des Nègres*, it was forwarded that Gothon-Lunion's tenure had "risked irreparably compromising" the existence of the organization.⁹² Here, only nine

⁸⁸ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 5, *L'Humanité*, March 30, 1926, quoted in Adi, *Pan Africanism and Communism*, 211.

⁸⁹ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 139.

⁹⁰ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1926, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 5.

⁹¹ Derrick, *Africa's Agitators*, 302.

⁹² "Au Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre: Assemblé General Extraordinaire du Dimanche 16 Janvier 1927," *La Voix des Nègres*, March 1927, 4.

months into the life of the organization marks the moment of fracture from which the Comité would be forever divided.

Following the various events that precipitated the dissolution of the Comité highlights the power play central to the organization's divide. The literature has argued that insurmountable cleaves were a result of either political differences-pitting Comintern sycophants against those wary of the influence of international communism- or intra-racial and intra-colonial tensions as the fissures-pitting citizen Antilleans against the African migrants. Various authors have stressed political divergences, radical vs assimilationists tendencies, and antagonisms between "old" (Caribbean), versus "new" (African), colonials as definitive elements of the rupture. Dewitte argues that it was an ideological conflict between the radical elements of the organization and the "assimilationists;" Boittin forwards that in addition to the ideological divide," a greater strain on the building of a Pan-African movement were the antagonisms between Antilleans and Africans.⁹³ While Edwards, in his exploration of the cleaves of diaspora making resists these as the cause.

Following his lead, I point to the maneuvering of Gothon-Lunion and Senghor as precipitating the disintegration of the CDRN. I argue that the Pan-African group was put in jeopardy here by a power struggle between two men vying for supremacy in the Parisian circles. The *Comité* was in disarray as a result of the censoring of Gothon-Lunion that remained unresolved as various members traveled to the first League Against Imperialism meeting in Brussels in February 1927. A meeting was called upon their return and elections were held. The reunion grew contentious and

⁹³ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 90.

one attendee, Pierre William, of Guinea, verbally and physically assailed Senghor.⁹⁴ William was part of a group of Africans merchants, described by Dewitte as elites and non-radical who would remain in the CDRN after the split.⁹⁵ The results of the election fell along the divide: supporters of Senghor voted for candidates loyal to him and partisans of Gothon-Lunion did the same. Senghor was reelected to his position yet was dissatisfied with the composition of the leadership which included supporters of Gothon-Lunion. In response he resigned and announced the formation of the new *Ligue de Defense de la Jeunesse Nègre Africaine*, a group that was ostensibly composed of migrants of continental African origin.⁹⁶

The CDRN was effectively divided but the fall out reveals that the political and ideological differences were secondary to the contest for supremacy in Pan-African circles. As we have already noted, both Senghor and Gothon-Lunion were, to whatever degree, members of the communist party, participating in meetings and avowing fidelity to the cause of international proletariat revolt. While it is fair to doubt the sincerity of commitment of the latter, as the literature tells us many Afro-descended people turned to Comintern as a means to the end of black liberation. Gothon-Lunion told other radical members of the organization that he was Marxist in ideology. Moreover, Senghor and Gothon-Lunion were sufficiently radical their anti-imperialist positions to cause an earlier group of assimilationists away from the CDRN.

⁹⁴ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 10.

⁹⁵ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 136.

⁹⁶ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 11.

Additionally, the argument that it was intra-racial tensions that spurred the division is also dubious. Reexamining the fracturing of the group we find that the leadership splintered according to allegiances to either leader and not along ethnic lines. The African contingent, who were supportive of Senghor, remained in the *Comité* despite his departure. Furthermore, they were said to be “grateful” that the Martiniquais Rene Maran, considered a moderate, had been selected to replace Senghor as president. As noted above, it was Williams, a Guinean, who attacked Senghor in defense of Gothon-Lunion. And it was Bloncourt, also a Martiniquais, who defended Senghor. Yes, the new launched *Ligue de Defense de la Jeunesse Nègre Africaine* which, on face value, seemed to target Africans. Besides Kouyaté, from what would become the Soudan, who was appointed Secretary General and Pierre Kossul, Cote D’Ivoirean, as one of the Vice-Presidents, the rest of its leadership was not exclusively African. Felicien Manilus, Jamaican, was the other Vice-President, Narcisse Danae, Guadeloupean, was Secretary Adjoint, and Vilfort Poujul, Guadeloupean, was the treasurer. Furthermore, Rene Maran was part of the Control Commission and Bloncourt was a special advisor.⁹⁷ While the reconstituted CDRN, had Samuel Ralimongo, from Madagascar, as its Secretary-adjoint, and Vincent Durand, from Dahomey, as its Vice-President.⁹⁸ What this reveals is that it was Gothon-Lunion’s intrigues against Senghor, his alleged embezzlement and his insubordination that serve as cause for the latter’s move to expunge him from the *Comité* which precipitated the break.

⁹⁷ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 12.

⁹⁸ “Memo,” Prefect of the Paris Police to the Ministry of the Interior, June 18, 1927, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174, 2.

The Return of Saint-Jacques and the Safeguarding of Pan-African Organizing

Saint-Jacques, who had only begun attending CDRN meetings in November of 1926, was an active participant in the fall out of the schism. As we return our gaze to Saint-Jacques we can see that intra-racial or intercolonial tensions were not the cause of the divide and that all parties sought to maintain Pan-African unity. In fact, at the meeting that marked the rupture of the organization, Maran confided in Kouyaté his belief that racial unity needs to be preserved, irrespective of political ideology. In fact, the first meeting of Senghor's new group, *La Ligue de la Jeunesse Africaine*, was led by Maran, Bloncourt, and Saint-Jacques. All three voiced their reticence at forming a new association, arguing for unity along racial line was paramount. Saint-Jacques and Maran pleaded with Senghor to put aside his "personal differences" with Gothon-Lunion in order to preserve a united racial front "against the exploiters."⁹⁹ Kouyaté, also in attendance, argued that the real cause of the split was due to the action of those who sought to earn a living off the backs of others and are otherwise "indifferent" the cause of the race. In this period, Stephane Danae and Blouncourt, Antilleans, as well as Poujul, who held a leadership position in both organizations, moved between the two camps seeking to strengthen the weakened links of diaspora.

What this initial session brings to light is that power struggle between Senghor and Gothon-Lunion could have been avoided with a better organizational apparatus that would have mitigated the power of both the President and the Secretary General. Those in attendance, Andre Béton included, sought to keep the CDRN alive by modifying some of its statues.¹⁰⁰ Senghor was again away, and his absence provided

⁹⁹ Unaddressed and Unsigned, "Memo," March 16, 1927, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174.

¹⁰⁰ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," March 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 15.

an atmosphere for reconciliation. Gothon-Lunion even sought rapprochement with Senghor, to no avail. Senghor accused the leadership of the reformed CDRN of being agents of the French security apparatus.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, both African and Caribbean, Marxist and reformist continued to press on in securing Pan-African Unity.

During the infighting, many of the actors attended the inaugural meeting of the League Against Imperialism (LAI) in Brussels. The first LAI meeting was a highwater mark in the evolution of global anticolonial activity, and Saint-Jacques played a major role in forwarding the agenda of people of African descent. The League Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism issued a global call to all the anti-imperialist groups to meet in Brussels from February 10-15, 1927. Initiated by Willi Munzenberg and “other communists” and organized with the blessing of the Comintern as a front for its anti-imperialist program. Despite this, non-Marxists and communist alike were invited and the CP decided to hide its involvement in the “organizing.”¹⁰² The meeting culled people from across the colonized world. The CDRN represented by Senghor and Danae. Saint-Jacques and Bloncourt were there in the as delegates of the UI.¹⁰³

Much has been made about Senghor’s speech in which he in which he denounced colonialism in general, excoriated the French iteration and characterized the struggle of people of African descent as that of the “most oppressed.” Especially noted was Senghor’s ominous, what Dewitte has termed, “prophecy,” that the black race characterized as having long been “dormant” was soon to emerge not ever to return to its “slumber.” What is important to note, in light of the fragmentation of the

¹⁰¹ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 16.

¹⁰² Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 145; Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 35; Derrick, *Africa’s Agitators*, 172-173; Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 102.

¹⁰³ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 147.

UI the previous year, is that Senghor's speech voiced support, admiration, and solidarity with the cause of the North Africans and Asians.¹⁰⁴ Overshadowed by Senghor's address, Bloncourt's speech also lambasted French colonialism while condemning its supposed "civilizing mission" in Africa and the Caribbean and warned of U.S. American imperial expansion in the Caribbean.

Saint-Jacques was a member of the Negro Commission which issued "The Common Resolution on the Black Question."¹⁰⁵ Adi describes the declaration the "most politically developed" articulation of the grievances of people of African descent.¹⁰⁶ The resolution mirrored Saint-Jacques's pan-Africanism, as the beliefs' of the other members. The resolution chronicled the oppression of people of African descent globally across 500 years of engagement with the West. It denounced the European "civilizing mission" as well as the imposition and use of Christianity in the process. It demanded the liberation of all colonized people of African descent, including Haiti; it called upon the colonized to join in the struggle against the "imperialist ideology;" and petitioned for people of all races to unite in pursuit of international freedom.¹⁰⁷ The success of the inaugural LAI meeting stirred the passions of world-wide colonial revolt. Senghor's speech and the efforts of the Negro Question Commission caused Comintern to commit more completely to the cause of Africans, and Afro descended people in general. Senghor emerged as the leading figure in the Afro-Francophone activist communist which caused him to be the target

¹⁰⁴ *La Voix des Nègres*, "Discours de Senghor," March 1927 vol 1, 2.

¹⁰⁵ I employ the word "black" for "Nègre" in consideration of Senghor's article.

¹⁰⁶ Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 37.

¹⁰⁷ "Les Décision du Congrès: Résolution Commune sur la Question Nègre," *La Voix des Nègres*, March 1927 vol 1, 3.

of retribution from the French state, which arrested him, almost immediately, upon his return.¹⁰⁸

Responding to the new energy, the ancient members of the UI, who had played a major role in the proceedings, tried to resuscitate the organization. Bloncourt was the main actor in this effort and he held a meeting at his home in April of 1927. The invitees were drawn from across the French colonial world, including Ludovic Lacombe, a Haitian, who first appears in radical anti-imperialist circles in this moment. Lacombe went on to be an active member of the *Ligue de Defense de la Race Nègre* (LDRN) and the *Union des Travailleurs Nègres* (UTN) which succeeded the Comité. Danae and Kouyaté were also in attendance and drove the conversation about the revolution that would dismantle colonialism.¹⁰⁹ In December of 1927, the PCF called a meeting of the UI in order to disseminate Comintern directives, which the members of the Afro descended activist community brought back to their organization. Several years after the fact, we can note that the plan to divide the racially heterogenous UI into more ethnic and racially homogenous groups seemed to have been realized, even though the central organization, the *Union*, had lost its permanent status. Moreover, by this time it was only the Afro-descended contingent that attended the meeting, with the North Africans and Vietnamese members having “hostile” and “apath[ic]” feelings toward the association. At the meeting Saint-Jacques, for whom, by this time, the moment of Brussels meeting had lost its sheen, censured the LAI for neglecting the *Union Intercoloniale* and having not called them

¹⁰⁸ Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 213; “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 16.

¹⁰⁹ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” April 30, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 11-12.

to the subsequent meeting, despite having invited Kouyaté of the LDRN.¹¹⁰ Saint Jacques's critique prefigured those of subsequent generation of anti-colonial activist who critiqued Comintern and its institutions for neglecting their causes. The communist party and the black members of the UI tried to keep the organization afloat as a vehicle for dissemination of communist party directives into early February 1928, with Bloncourt and Saint-Jacques at the forefront of the effort. However, the other groups continued to abstain from attending.¹¹¹

Senghor's imprisonment offered an opportunity for Saint-Jacques and others could and strengthen Pan-African unity. Their efforts materialized in the formation of a new association, aimed at uniting Afro-descended people in France. Danae reached out to Forgues, vice-president of the reconstituted CDRN, in attempts to reunite the two sides. The meeting held at a café "degenerated" quickly into belligerence that spilled on the street and was abated by the police. Forgues refused to accept any notion of reconciliation. Both Danae and Kouyaté believed him to be under the control of Satineau, president of the Comité, who they thought to be an agent of the French security apparatus.¹¹² Moreover, Maran, who remained connected to both groups, argued that the divided Afro-descended community constituted a coup for the Minister of the Colonies.¹¹³ William, an antagonist in the moment of the election, continued to meet with Kouyaté and Danae after the split seeking to foment

¹¹⁰ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 13, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 8.

¹¹¹ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," February 28, 1928, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 12.

¹¹² "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," April 30, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 11.

¹¹³ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," April 30, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 15.

reconciliation. The efforts to liaise with the members of the CDRN revealed that at least forty adherents-maintained membership in the two groups including Saint-Jacques and Bloncourt.¹¹⁴ The moment of conflict having subsided, it seemed as if the only parties who refused reconciliation were Senghor, described as “uncompromising,” and who, as we are coming to note, had tendencies toward authoritarianism, and Satineau who may have been an infiltrator.¹¹⁵ By this point Senghor was a lynchpin of anti-colonial activity due to his vigor, commitment, celebrity, and ability to garner support. Kouyaté understood this, and in conversations about committing to a new organization, argued that Senghor was central to building any Pan-African movement in France as his name alone attracted a following.¹¹⁶

Saint-Jacques was extremely active in this period, working as part of the steering committee shaping what would become the Ligue de Defense de la Race Nègre (LDRN). Saint-Jacques’ involvement in the deliberations around Senghor’s new association reveal the importance of pan-Africanism to his beliefs. He, Kouyaté, Bloncourt, and Maran met frequently to shape the governing principles of the new league. Again, Senghor’s absence afforded them the freedom to influence the organization away from his ideals. Senghor had wanted to form an organization that catered to the Africans in the metropole in order to wield the greatest amount of power.¹¹⁷ For Saint-Jacques, it was imperative that the organization unite black people from across the diaspora. He and Maran agreed that a divided Afro-descended

¹¹⁴ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 148-149.

¹¹⁵ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 16.

¹¹⁶ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” April 30, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 16.

¹¹⁷ Unaddressed and Unsigned, “Memo,” March 16, 1927, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174

community in Paris benefitted colonialism and weakened efforts to undermine it. Saint-Jacques argued that the new association should be formed and be linked to the *Union Intercoloniale*-to no avail. Along with Maran and Kouyaté they effectively changed Senghor's *La Ligue de la Jeunesse Africaine* to the *Ligue de Defense de la Race Nègre* (LDRN).¹¹⁸ The new organization, adopted the statues as deliberated by Saint-Jacques and Maran, and held its first meeting on April 20, 1927. The new *Ligue* was open to all members of African descent whether from the continent or the Caribbean.¹¹⁹ Senghor wanted to resume issuing *La Voix des Nègres* as the journalistic organ of the new association, but the PCF declined funding citing poor sales.¹²⁰ In its stead, the LDRN inaugurated *La Race Nègre* as their political organ, and the first edition of the journal appeared in July of 1927.¹²¹

Saint-Jacques, deeply invested in the success of the global diaspora building efforts, as a vehicle to dismantle colonialism, founded his own newspaper. Outside of the strictures of the Pan-African organizations he launched *Le Currier des Noires* (The Messenger of the Blacks) as an independent publication.¹²² The splintering of the CDRN had left a sizable impression on Saint-Jacques and he sought to preserve a space where news of people of African descent could be disseminated apart from

¹¹⁸ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," April 30, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 16.

¹¹⁹ For a full discussion of interracial relationships and the pan-African organizations see Jennifer Anne Boittin, Chapter 5 "In Black and White: Women, *La Depeche Africaine*, and the Print Culture of the Diaspora," in *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris*: Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010; "Black in France: The Language and Politics of Race in the Late Third Republic," *French Politics, Culture, And Society* Vol 27 (Summer 2009): 23-26.

¹²⁰ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," April 30, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 17.

¹²¹ Memo," Prefect of the Paris Police to the Ministry of the Interior, August 1927, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 156.

¹²² Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 150.

political agenda. Chief among his goals for the journal was to broaden the circle of people aware of the “gravity” of activist work engaged by black people.¹²³ He hoped the publication would serve as a vehicle to fostering Pan-African unity throughout the diasporic world and further the project of “international cooperation of black people.” Saint-Jacques sought global reach, and publishing in both English and French, and worked to affect distribution on both sides of the Atlantic. As a publisher he sought out correspondents in the Caribbean, South Africa, North America and Ethiopia. Saint-Jacques’ home served as the offices for the monthly publication. Emile Faure, from Senegal, who came to play an important role in the history of the LDRN and French pan-Africanism, was the treasurer of the newspaper; Isaac Béton, Lacombe, Maran and others LDRN members contributed articles.¹²⁴ While the membership of the LDRN was supportive of his endeavor, he had to find capitalization elsewhere as the *Ligue’s* own periodical needed financing. At a UI meeting the held July 1927 Saint-Jacques announced, that the problem of funding was resolved due to a “generous” donation given by French writer and idealist, Romain Rolland.¹²⁵ The inaugural edition appeared by the end of the year.

The first pressing of the monthly was issued in December of 1927 and was demonstrably Pan-African and anti-colonial, revealing the imprint of its founder. It was published under the name *Le Courrier des Noires: Organe de Défense et de Coopération Internationale des Noires* (The Messenger of the Blacks: Vehicle of Defense and International Cooperation of Black People). The mission statement

¹²³ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” April 30, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 17.

¹²⁴ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” July 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 9.

¹²⁵ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” July 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 12; R.A. Francis, *Romain Rolland* (Oxford: Berg Publishing, 1999), 2.

forwarded that the monthly was to serve as an “intermediary” between the people of African descent, globally and sought to foment racial pride by giving space to what “black people thought of themselves.” It also promised to carry news of the crimes of the imperial states and their agents in the colonies. The first edition was sixteen pages, uncharacteristically long compared to similar publications, and bore the mark of its editor. It included an article on the February 1927 meeting of the LAI and carried a speech given by Josiah Gumede of South Africa, a member of the African National Congress.¹²⁶ Feliciene Challaye, anti-imperialist and member of the *Ligue des Droites des Hommes*, contributed a four-page piece on French imperialism in French Equatorial Africa. Saint-Jacques penned many of the articles in the edition.¹²⁷ He wrote an article entitled “Haiti for the Haitians” and one that detailed the “misery of the Cuban people” which both served to denounce U.S. American imperialism. He even issued a call for help to Liberia and Ethiopia.¹²⁸ The journal was yet another one of his attempts to promote racial unity across the divides of diaspora. As such it presaged the approach of *Le Revue du Monde Noire* which the Haitian, Léo Sajous, launched in 1932 with the help of Jane and Paulette Nardal. The appearance of the first edition coincided with the death of Senghor, marking a new period in the history of the LDRN and Pan-African Parisian anti-colonial activism.

¹²⁶ Adi, *Pan-Africanism*, 36.

¹²⁷ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 62.

¹²⁸ “Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” December 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 14.

Conclusion

Haitians were key participants in the early stages of anti-colonial pan-Africanism in interwar Paris, shaping the contours and furthering the goals of the community. Haitian activists worked to voice an anti-colonial, pan-diasporic message that inserted their country folk into the programs of the larger French speaking black world. Louis Morpeau was an early contributor to the movement and served as a representative of Haiti in the LUDRN. In his contributions to its journalistic outlet, *Les Continents*, he worked to interject Haiti into the pan-Africanist francophone framework which succeeding generations of activists continued to do. The more visible agent was Camille Saint-Jacques, whose politics and commitment to pan-Africanism helped shape the direction and tone of the burgeoning community. Saint-Jacques worked to ensure that the yet fully coalesced notion of Afro-descended unity did not disintegrate when confronted with differing agendas, politics of ethnicity, and the idolatrous designs of the big men of the cause. Additionally, Saint-Jacques sought to affect a global community of people of African descent through his own efforts away from institutional turmoil. Despite his critiques of the communist platform in the wake of the 1927 LAI meeting, Saint Jacques, ever the radicalizing element, linked early pan-Africanism and the liberation of the colonially subjugated Afro-descended community to international proletarianism, a relationship which would define the next generation of activists.

V. Black and the Red in Paris: Haitians Navigating Race and Ideology

After the success of the League Against Imperialism meeting in early 1927, Comintern grew increasingly influential in Paris's Pan-African anti-colonial spaces. Haitians had guided the movement to this point while continuing their role as agents of diasporic unity. In this period, the *Ligue de Defense de la Race Nègre* (LDRN), the most influential Pan-African group of this period, had grown increasingly dependent on funding from internationalist sources. As a result, it was pressured to conform to the dictates and the initiatives of the international proletariat movement. When the LDRN split in 1931, the *Union des Travailleurs Noirs* (UTN) emerged in its wake, led by those most connect to the communist groups, deepened the movement's dependence on Comintern for funding. These organizations increasingly launched critiques of capitalism as the root of colonial exploitation, and their approach to organizing adhered to dictates issued by the Comintern related sources. The intensification of the radicalism of the organizations was shepherded by Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté, who replaced Senghor as the leading activist voice in Afro-Francophone spaces. Like his predecessor, Kouyaté's intransigence alienated other participants in the movement causing the fracturing of solidarity in the afro-descended French community. Haitians to this point had stressed the need for solidarity and affected the entrenchment of the anti-colonial movement within the global proletarian movement continued in this role. Yet, when faced with the choice of subsuming the former within the latter, they demurred, choosing race over ideology.

In this period, Haitians remained at the forefront of Marxist critiques of colonialism within Pan-African spaces. Their experiences in these organizations reveal much about their internal dynamics and opens a window into the relationship of the

Afro-Francophone community to the demands of the global proletariat movement. Saint-Jacques, who had a hand in directing events to this point, fades into obscurity in the period examined here for reasons yet to be discerned. Ludovic Lacombe who joined the UI in the final moments of the organization's existence, emerges as a central figure. Leo Sajous and Jean-Louis Barau both new to the scene, would also be key participants in the currents of this movement. So, too, is Henri LaLeau, sometimes credited as "de LaLeau," exiled from Haiti in 1931 for his activism there in defense of the working class. All four were regular attendees and facilitators of meetings, coordinated and participated in actions, and defended the organizations' platforms against competing and splintering groups. As a result, they became targets of the police state that, in response to the increased influence of international communism, intensified their surveillance and harassment of groups thought to be associated with Comintern.

The Haitians were also more active in the print culture of the movement. Lacombe, Barau, and LaLeau frequently contributed to the journalistic organs of the organizations authoring pieces in *Le Race Nègre*, of the LDRN and *Le Cris des Nègres* of the UTN. In their pieces, they forwarded critiques of capitalism as the cause for the United States occupation of Haiti that resonated with the Marxist analysis of colonization across the publications' pages. By doing so they inserted Haiti, an independent state outside of the Afro-Francophone colonial constellation, into the broader community of African descended people being imagined in Paris. In doing so, they continued the efforts of Morpeau and Saint-Jacques to foster Pan-African solidarity across ethnic and colonial divisions. Moreover, their participation in these organizations highlights Haitians' contribution to Parisian pan-Africanism; namely, to serve as galvanizing elements in Pan-African discourses that privileged the unity over ideological or personal differences.

Haitian contribution to the evolution of this phase of the movement was to forward the project of forging a global, Afro-descended community committed to the overthrow of European domination while resisting complete subsumption into the plans of Comintern.

Forwarding Blackness as Anti-colonial Proletarianism

By November of 1927 the LDRN was in poor financial shape, due to the fiscal malfeasance of Senghor.¹ He was at the pinnacle of his brief career in the moments following the first LAI meeting. However, towards the end of his life Senghor's leadership had come under increasing scrutiny by members of his own organization. Since September 1927 they had not been able to pay the rent on their meeting space.² The publication of *La Race Nègre* was interrupted because the printer refused to press another edition until his bill of service were paid. The question of allocation of the funds, drawn from communist party sources, had come to bear on the Senegalese activist. Senghor had been accused of misappropriating monies earmarked for *La Voix* and other operational costs of the *Ligue*. Kouyaté, Senghor's protégé of sorts, had alleged that he funneled 50.000 francs, promised to the organization by Roger Baldwin after the LAI meeting, to buy personal land in his home country. In response to these incriminations, Senghor simply tendered his resignation in a letter sent from Senegal citing his "failing health" as the cause. However, Kouyaté successfully urged the central committee to reject the demission arguing that it was a ploy to avoid further investigation into his financial

¹ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 13, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 6.

² Philippe Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres en France, 1919-1939* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), 166.

improprieties.³ Senghor passed before he could be confronted by his accusers. Kouyaté announced his death at a December 4th meeting, having been alerted to the former's passing through an article in *L'Humanite*- a leading communist leaning French periodical. The meeting was facilitated by Leo Sajous (yet unknown to the agent who recorded his presence) marking his emergence in the Parisian Pan-African movements.⁴

The death of Lamine Senghor created a power vacuum in the LDRN affording Kouyaté the space to ascend to the leadership of the group and of Pan-African spaces in Paris. He emerged as Secretary General of the LDRN due to his organizing efforts and because the African born membership of the league refused to vote for an "Antillean" as his replacement.⁵ Senghor's passing came at the apogee of his influence and, perhaps, his passing at this point has allowed his legacy to remain largely untarnished. When he died on November 25, 1927, the movement lost one of its most astute, committed, seemingly tireless, and obstinate activists. Perhaps what it lost most was an intellectual activist who could navigate the demands of racial unification while also gaining the support of the radical funders. He was a star of both the Pan-African and radical black Marxist communities. He had succumbed to the tuberculosis, aggravated by exposure to gas during his time as a *tirailleur* in WWI. His frequent absences from Paris were, in part, due to periods of recovery in warmer climates as well as his travels to expand the reach initially of the CDRN and then the LDRN. His efforts to broaden the influence of the

³ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 13, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 8.

⁴ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 14; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 168.

⁵ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1927, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 19.

organizations took him throughout France and into Africa, including his native Senegal as well as other French colonial holdings.

After the passing of Senghor, Kouyaté assumed the mantle of leadership and sought to continue the project of liberating people of African descent from the strictures of racial capitalism manifested through imperial domination. Edwards has called Kouyaté an “institution of French anti-colonial activity.” The characterization is apt if you consider his career spans from his membership in the CDRN in 1926, through late 1930s and the Fall of France in 1940 to his death at a German prison, supposedly in 1942. Born in Segu, Mali Kouyaté was a teacher before traveling to Aix-en-Provence to attend *l'École Normale Supérieure*. As a student he was vocal about his anti-imperialist beliefs. He joined the communist party and was ultimately expelled for “subversive activities.” He was the “most important person of interest” in the eyes of French intelligence in relation to his anti-colonial activity.⁶ Kouyaté, who had a longer run as the preeminent black activist in France, matched Senghor in vigor and breadth of connections and contacts, if he did not replicate his predecessor’s intellectual production.⁷ Kouyaté shared what appears to be an obstinance to conforming to institutional oversight. His refusal to adhere to LDRN and CP regulations led to his ostracization from both groups. Following Sajous, a close collaborator of his during this period, draws into relief the central tensions of organizing the Afro-Francophone community behind Kouyaté’s leadership and around the international communist movement .

⁶ Légation of Copenhagen, “Information Confidentielle sur Le Communisme et les Nègres,” June 10, 1930.

⁷ Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of the Black International* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 249-250; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 174-176.

While Lamine Senghor's death threatened the existence of the LDRN it also provided an opportunity to transcend his dictatorial stewardship. The group was on the verge of decay and he was the cohesive element that bound the *Ligue* together. It was Senghor's networks that had sustained the organization and it was not assured that they would continue in his absence. The African contingent, who had followed Senghor to the CDRN and from there to the LDRN, threatened to leave if another African was not appointed to the top position. The dire financial straits sparked the notion of placing the *Ligue* completely under the auspices of the French Communist Party. On another front, with Senghor no longer an obstacle to unifying the black groups, the LDRN began collaborating with the CDRN.

In March 1928 the CDRN, who had changed the *Nègre* to *Noire* by this point, and the *Ligue* worked in concert to stymie colonial domination. The two groups found common ground in ensuring that colonized subjects were afforded freedom of the press. The *Comité* approached the cause from the point of guaranteeing full civil rights to all. And the *Ligue* sought to ensure that it was able to disseminate its anti-colonial propaganda. In fact, the LDRN had been censured by the colonial authorities which curtailed the distribution of *La Race Nègre*. There were still connections between the two groups that facilitated the cooperation. Kouyaté, Saint Jacques, Beton and other LDRN members still maintained membership and attended the meetings of their old group. Despite the apparent rapprochement, tensions continued between the LDRN and the CDRN. The literature has held that conflict was between the radical elements of the former and the reformists tendencies of the latter. We have already noted the diversity of opinion in the *Ligue* and the number of members who vacillated between both groups. The issue is too complicated to be defined by its extremes. The dynamics of at the height

of the conflict point to an issue of assimilation into French culture rather than a divide over Marxist orientation of Comintern influence. This issue, that had marred the unity before, quickly reemerged despite the recent partnering. After the publishing of the *La Dépêche Africaine* by the CDRN, members of the LDRN who still frequented the former's meetings, which included both moderates and radicals, confronted the leadership of the latter over the content of the publication, with Saint-Jacques and other Haitians at the fore.

The issue that drove the factions further apart was that the assimilationism of the CDRN undermined the anti-colonial discourse of the LDRN. If blackness could be merged into the fabric of Frenchness then the colonies could remain as such and serve as outposts of the metropole rather than realize independence. Those who had remained in the CDRN after Senghor's exodus had renamed the organization *Comité de Défense des Intérêts de la Race Noire*.⁸ When the first edition of *La La Dépêche Africaine* was published in March of 1928, its contents issue reflected the moderate, assimilationist qualities of its publishers. *La Dépêche* has been widely explored as an exemplar of the cultural and feminist production in the Parisian iteration of the International New Negro movement.⁹ Those who have written about it have characterized it as averse to

⁸ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 224; Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 136.

⁹ For more discussion see Boittin, "Chapter 5: In Black and White: Women, La Depeche Africaine and the Print Culture of the Diaspora," in *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); T Denean Sharpley-Whiting, "Femme Négritude: Jane Nardal, La Depeche Africaine and the Francophone New Negro," *Souls: Critical Journal of Black Politics and Culture* 2:4 (June 2000): 8-17; Carole Sweeney, "Resisting the Primitive: The Nardal Sisters La Revue du Monde Noire and La Depeche Africaine," *Nottingham French Studies* 43 No 2 (2004) 45-55.

“controversy.”¹⁰ The periodical was assimilationist in tone and bereft of critiques of the French imperial state. The authors sought to reform the colonial experience by “fortifying” France and that although colonialism was far from perfect it was a “humane and necessary project.”¹¹ Its publishers targeted not only people of African descent but whites as its readership. The authors of *La Depeche* (and its heir, *La Revue du Monde Noire* (1931)) played to the theoretical underpinnings of French liberalism that informed its civilizing mission while benefitting from inter-war primitivism in promotion of the CDRIN’s goal of Afro-francophone absorption into the national imaginary.¹² The periodical and its issuing group were so unthreatening to the French Sûreté that they did not devote much space to them in their reports on the activities of colonial subjects in the metropole, and they did not seem to have any embedded agents monitoring the group. The anti-colonialists rejected this position, which they believed justified the imperialist praxis and French control of the Africans.

This dissonance in approaches to ameliorating the conditions of people of African descent reached a violent apogee at the CDRIN meeting announcing *La Dépêche’s* appearance. Its editorial staff issued a call to all Afro-Parisians to help shape the publication’s discourse and contribute to its financial support. As an agent undercover at the meeting observed the clash that followed when members of the LDRN confronted the

¹⁰ Jennifer A. Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 136.

¹¹ “Notre But-Notre Program,” *La Depeche Africaine*, February 15, 1928, 1, quoted in T Denean Sharpley-Whiting, “*Femme Négritude*: Jane Nardal, *La Depeche Africaine* and the Francophone New Negro,” *Souls: Critical Journal of Black Politics and Culture* 2:4 (June 2000): 8.

¹² Carole Sweeney, “Resisting the Primitive: The Nardal Sisters *La Revue du Monde Noire* and *La Depeche Africaine*,” *Nottingham French Studies* 43 No 2 (2004): 47.

new *Comite*'s leadership. Tensions erupted when one of the participants declared that the long-time members of the "CDRN" had not been included in the discussions that led to the formation of the organization's organ.¹³ The association had not held regular meetings in the lead up except for the editorial staff in planning the publication.¹⁴ Kouyaté denounced the assimilationist current in the journal and called for the "national independence of Africa." Livid, Kouyaté derided the periodical, despite all efforts to reason with him.¹⁵ Santineau, head of the CDRIN, sensing the meeting had veered off course, announce its adjournment and called for a future reconvening to further deliberate the point.

The conflict continued into the subsequent meeting of the *La Dépêche* editorial board. The gathering, led by Isaac Beton, began with a call to unite in the Afro-descended French community, which was met with antagonism by the LDRN members in attendance. Maran, a long adherent of the LDRN, spoke in favor of review while Santineau proclaimed his desire to collaborate with the French. Saint-Jacques assailed the plea and accused the paper of supporting capitalist oppression. He was quickly silenced in favor of other speakers sympathetic to the publication's mission. Lacombe rose in defense of "his countryman" and, along with Emile Faure, denounced the CDRIN members of having betrayed their race. Saint-Jacques confronted Santineau and his friends outside the

¹³ Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," March 31, 1928, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 9.

¹⁴ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, footnote, 256-257.

¹⁵ Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," March 31, 1928, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 9.

meeting hall which degenerated into a physical altercation in which the former was only able to escape with help of Maran.¹⁶

The embroilment continued at April 14th meeting of colonial people called by LDRN where the heterogenous, vacillating nature of radical black spaces in interwar France was on display. Kouyaté issued the call to organize the various groups to march in response to increasing censorship by the colonial administration restricting and interdicting the dissemination of various periodicals. The meeting was attended by Vincent Durand, delegate of the CDRIN, and representatives of other organizations, including the communist party. At the gathering, Durand called for solidarity between the various factions of the Afro-francophone community claiming that their having different approaches, they had the same “end.” Again, indignation emerged from the LDRN members in attendance. Beton, formally a mediating presence, proclaimed his “disgust” at the thought of black people “renouncing” their race in favor of “imitating” the French. An unnamed attendee proclaimed that it was only the communist international that had taken the cause of the black people seriously. In response, Rosso issued an invitation to all colonial subjects to joining the *Union Intercoloniale*, which was supported by the communist party.¹⁷ Saint-Jacques rose, and with the support of Gothon-Lunion, denounced the communist party members for having not sufficiently supported the Chinese revolutionaries. Saint-Jacques was summarily dismissed from his place on the platform and Petrus, another CP member took his place. Petrus assailed Gothon-Lunion

¹⁶ Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” March 31, 1928, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 12.

¹⁷ Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” April 30, 1928, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 10.

for being anti-communist out of spite because the CP overlooked his “talents.”¹⁸

Additionally, Petrus calls the men hypocrites for having earned a living for many years off the salary of the communist party. Both left the meeting, and Saint-Jacques did not return until the following month.

His outburst at the April meeting proved to mark the beginning of Saint-Jacques exodus from the organization. He returned in May for the monthly LDRN meeting called in the run-up to the central committee elections. According and embedded agent, Saint Jacques and Gothon-Lunion had united in opposition to Kouyaté’s leadership. The infiltrators surmised that the duo would have the support of the radical membership of the organization. His palpable racism informed his estimates as he argued that with “the blacks” there is much “volatility” and that in an “instant” their allegiances may change.¹⁹ The challenge was never mounted, and both men disappear from the records of LDRN activities. Gothon-Lunion, never a frequent participant in *Ligue* meetings, was a curious ally for Saint Jacques, his onetime adversary.²⁰ But the collaboration emphasizes how the schism that divided the CDRN the year previous was not all together ideological. This twist underscores the value of following Saint Jacques as he presents a micro history of sorts of early radical pan-Africanism, revealing more dynamism than previously understood.

¹⁸ This maybe a reference to the rise of Senghor as the main Afro-descended agent of Comintern support during the earlier schism The rechristened CDIRN included Gothon-Lunion’s supporters during his conflict.

¹⁹ Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies,” June 4, 1928, 3SLOTFOM 144, ANOM, 3.

²⁰ Gothon- Lunion otherwise disappears from the record, only to reappear in 1932 as the founder of the *Ligue Universelle de Defense des Peuples de la Race Nègre*, an organization which seems to have died upon its inauguration. Memo,” Prefect of the Paris Police to the Ministry of the Interior, August 12, 1932, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 19940500- 235.

Haitians continued to be part of the increasingly militant anti-capitalist Pan-African circles, despite a shift in the active figures. Under the leadership of Kouyatè the LDRN became increasingly dependent on the communist party for funding, and the French-Sudanese Secretary General emerged as a central agent of Comintern internationalist activities. In this period Haitian voices continued to be influential in the anti-capitalist and anti-colonial spaces of diasporic formation in Paris. They remained steadfast in their commitment to unity in the Afro-descended francophone community, and their Marxist critiques of colonialism and imperialism. Nonetheless, they also represented a bulwark against full CP control of the various to which they belonged.

There was some overlap between cohorts of anti-capitalist and anti-imperial Haitian pan-Africanists. As Saint-Jacques receded from influence in the organizations, Sajous, Lacombe and with Jean-Louis Barau emerged as important participants in the LDRN and the UTN that followed. Saint-Jacques attended a December 1929 meeting over which Sajous presided. True to form, Saint-Jacques confronted an attendee at that meeting which escalated into a physical confrontation.²¹ From there, Saint-Jacques disappears from the landscape, reappearing at a 1932 UTN fundraiser at which Barau and Lacombe were also in attendance.²² Lacombe and Barau both contributed pieces to the *Negro Anthology*, edited by English heiress Nancy Cunard to whom Sajous was also connected around the time she was associated with George Padmore and Kouyaté in Paris (during the time the two collaborated with Saint-Jacques). It seems that Saint-Jacques was

²¹ Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1929, 3SLOTFOM 74, ANOM, 3.

²² Report of Agent "Joe," December 5, 1932, 3SLOTFOM 78, ANOM.

a confidant of these pillars of Afro-Marxist activism until their last days in Comintern. It is not altogether clear what happened to Saint-Jacques' activism.

The role of the other Haitians only grew as Saint Jacques' receded. Lacombe was an ardent "black nationalist" and anti-imperialist who matched Saint-Jacques's belligerent temperament. For example, at a 1929 meeting of the reconstituted LDRN, Lacombe declared that all new members ought to make their positions on colonialism clear and that all those any who were not anti-imperialist should be removed from office. His statement was so unequivocal that Kouyaté was forced to temper the sentiment affirming that the *Ligue* was open to a plurality of positions²³ In this period Henri LaLeau emerged as a figure who linked Paris to Haiti, arriving in France having been exiled by the Vincent administration. The Sajous, Lacombe, Barau, and LaLeau participated in different capacities and at different registers but were all important figures as Comintern influence and Marxist praxis came to define the nature of activism in the leading Pan-African anti-colonial spaces. Of the four, Sajous was most connected to the leadership of the organizations, even co-founding his own, and, as a result we know more about him.

Anti-Colonialism as Militant Anti-Capitalism

Leo Sajous was the leading Haitian Pan-African activist from the end of 1928 through his departure for Liberia in 1934. He played a major role in the developments of the black community in Paris continuously working to foment intra-racial solidarity. As of 1929 the French Legation of Copenhagen cited his as a name frequently implicated in

²³ "Memo," Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of the Colonies, January 29, 1929, 3SLOTFOM 111.

the anti-colonial activity in Africa.²⁴ Born in Gonaïves, Haiti in 1892, he arrived in Paris in 1915 where he studied and later practiced medicine for the next two decades. He married a French woman in 1921 and attended the Parisian installation of the Pan-African Congress. By then, Sajous seemed to have been on the Pan-African circuit and included in the number of “Afro Americans” who rejected the assimilationist politics forwarded by Blaise Diagne and Gratien Candace-Afro-descended members of the French Parliament.²⁵ He ran his medical clinic out of his home where he provided discounted and free service to members of the various organizations he joined. Sajous went as far as to place an notice in the periodical *Le Cri des Nègres*, the organ of the UTN, offering medical services for members starting at ten francs.²⁶ Antoine Djene, a Senegalese member of the UTN, said of Sajous that he was available to “help black people in need.”²⁷ Even the embedded agent “Paul” took advantage of Sajous’ services, while under cover, remarking on his “astonishment” at the level of care he received.²⁸ Sajous also allowed his office to be used for meetings. He was a central figure in the LDRN, as we will see, having an influential voice in the internal politics of the organization. Sajous established the *Comité Universel de l’Institute Nègre en Paris* (The Institutional Universal Comite of Black People in Paris) in February of 1930 along with Kouyaté and Emile Faure. He was also a

²⁴ Légation of Copenhagues, “Information Confidentielle sur Le Communisme et les Nègres,” June 10, 1930.

²⁵ Lamine Gueye, *Itinéré Africain* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1966), 52. As quoted in Langley, *Pan Africanism and Nationalism*, 289. Candace and Diagne are central figures in the early pan-African Congresses described in chapter 2.

²⁶ Report of Agent “Joe,” November 13, 1931, 3SLOTFOM 111.

²⁷ Report of Agent “Paul,” December 3, 1932, 3SLOTFOM 78.

²⁸ Report of Agent “Paul,” November 29, 1932, 3SLOTFOM 78.

founding member of the *Union des Travailleurs Nègres* (UTN), the Kouyaté led organization born out of a 1931 split of the LDRN. The French state security apparatus thought him to be a communist, or to have communist “leanings.”

What makes Sajous a most interesting figure is the ideological agility he displayed in his efforts to forge a Pan-African community in Paris. He moved between radical spaces and moderate spaces, Sajous is a prime example of a person interested in bettering the conditions of people of African descent who had no fixed ideology for doing so. He is well known for his part in the publication of *La Revue du Monde Noire*, an important moderate diaspora making review that with a readership on all sides of the Atlantic. His intellectual positioning eludes a definitive characterization. He was suspected to be an agent of Comintern, and even declared his fidelity to proletarian revolt. However, in a letter written to the Prefecture of the Paris police 1931, written at the height of surveillance of suspected communist activists, he disavowed any connections to the communist party or fidelity to Marxist ideology. However, he remained connected to radical circles into the mid-1930s. In 1934 he began to act as an agent of the Liberian government in fostering ties with Poland and eventually left Paris for Monrovia. Following Sajous, and the others in this phase of anti-capitalist pan-Africanism in Paris reveals the tensions of black nationalist activism in organizations that increasingly came under the control of CP. And it also tells the story of the LDRN under the direction of Kouyaté.

Under Kouyaté’s direction, the *Ligue* moved further away from assimilationist moderation and closer to the communist party. It intensified its organizing efforts with dock workers, established cells in Africa and the Caribbean, and became more militant in its rejection of imperialism as a tool of capitalist needs. He used his connections to

Comintern and its related organizations as a source of much needed financial support for the organizations he headed. He also forged alliances with Amy Jacques Garvey and George Padmore in London as well as W.E.B. Du Bois and Roger Baldwin in the United States as part of his efforts to forge a worldwide movement of people of African descent. The LDRN came under intense scrutiny of the French state's surveillance apparatus and became the target for harassment by the police. Additionally, Francois Coty the wealthy, racist, right-wing, parfumeur, and publisher of the conservative newspaper *l'Amie du Peuple*, ran a series of articles denouncing the communist influence in the organization. This eventually drove a wedge in the leadership of the association. Inheriting a financially unstable LDRN, Kouyaté sought alliances from all quarters to fund the organization, the aide was increasingly drawn from international communist sources. The financial support came with the demands that the LDRN and its journalistic organ, *La Race Nègre* adhere more closely to CP lines. This pressure gave pause to Sajous and Lacombe, pan-Africanists and back nationalists first who, although they held Marxist critiques of imperialism, rejected all masters "white or red."

We return to 1929 a pivotal year for the organization, with the *Ligue* having been mostly inactive for most of 1928, it was now tasked with finding support for its efforts. It was in these moments that Sajous emerged as one of its leading voices. Finding himself at a critical juncture, Kouyaté set about solidifying connections in the various locales. He traveled throughout France, and to Russia and Germany, as well as serving as the delegate to the second LAI convention in 1929. The rest of the LDRN leadership was charged with locating funding for the coalition building and for publication of *La Race Nègre*. Because of Kouyaté's travels and through the networks maintained by Stephane Rosso, the PCF had agreed to provide the association with a monthly stipend of 800 francs beginning in

February 1929.²⁹ This period comes in the wake of the sixth meeting of the Comintern that issued the militant directive to break with the enemies of the proletariat, calling on adherents to dissolve all ties with non-communists.³⁰

This directive jeopardized pan-Africanist that sought to unite all people of African descent across political orientation. As we have seen in the CDRIN moment, cohesion across ideology was already a precarious endeavor, and going back to the UI days, Marxist ideology, and the threat of police harassment that it brought, kept away potential members. It was also during this congress that Comintern decided to work to strengthen anti-colonial movements in Africa and call for “self-determination” for all people of African descent.³¹ As the *Ligue* grew closer to Comintern and its satellites, Sajous grew in visibility and influence. The connections to communist elements drew LDRN deeper under the scrutiny of the Sûreté which came with heightened policing and came into more direct conflicts with agents. What is certain is that the French attributed all anti-colonial agitation to one “organism” the League Against Imperialism which it characterized as an “extension of the Third International.”³² Kouyaté, who attended several events and meetings of the international became the target of the various agencies’ surveillance. So too did Sajous who was leading the sessions of the LDRN as President of the Paris chapter.

²⁹ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 189.

³⁰ Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2013.),63; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 187.

³¹ Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 66-70.

³² Légation of Copenhagen, “Information Confidentielle sur Le Communisme et les Nègres,” June 10,1930.

Sajous's activism can be defined by his commitment to the goal of the "liberation of the black race" from under the yolk of colonial subjugation.³³ Sajous's pan-Africanism had not been informed by the imperial rivalries that had marked the tensions of the UI. As the metropole was preparing the celebration of the centennial French conquest of Algeria, the members of the LDRN seemed uninterested in mounting any action against the event (whereas later it would deride another similar colonial exhibit). Sajous sought to compel his comrades into action, proclaiming that the *Ligue* was for the liberation of "African people everywhere." Sajous's argument, seconded by another member and Kouyaté, led to a resolution to organize an action in protest of the festivities.³⁴ At the meeting he also spoke up about the U.S. military presence in Haiti, linking it to European domination of Africa in an act of simultaneity, and attempting to forge solidarity. For Sajous, all people of African descent were included in his vision of anti-colonial activity.

To further his mission, Sajous, founded a mutual aid society for all students of African descent that, at least on its face, was apolitical in February 1930. The organization, the *Comité Universel de l'Institut Nègre a Paris* (CUINP), was born out of a meeting at Sajous' home (which also became the headquarters) attended by Kouyaté, Emile Faure, and Isaac Beton. The organizational leadership was comprised of the leading Pan-African activists. Sajous served as the President; Kouyaté, the Secretary General; Faure the Treasurer; and a Dr. Guerrier, cousin of Sajous, along with André

³³ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," October 1929, 3SLOTFOM 74 ANOM, 5.

³⁴ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," November 30, 1929, 3SLOTFOM 74 ANOM, 19.

Beton as the legal counsels.³⁵ And, in a rare example the inclusion by the operatives of a named woman listed as a participant in the male dominated spaces, Hélien Jadfard, a Haitian, served as the organization's secretary. The aim of the CUINP was to build a meeting place for students of African descent to find financial aid to help them continue their studies, instead of having to supplement with employment. It also aimed to provide them moral and emotional support in times of "distress."³⁶ The organization was modeled after the NAACP, and perhaps a similarly named group in London, and sought to source funding from member donations drawn both nationally and internationally.³⁷ It was open to all people of African descent without distinction of origin, religion or political orientation. Because of his affiliations and suspected political ideology, scrutiny that had come to bear on Sajous' activities, as a result of his affiliation with Kouyatè and the LDRN, had hindered his plans of establishing a space for Pan-African organization. The organization was short lived, aborted before it could mature due to the efforts of the state.

The Sûreté's influence in denying the organization's establishment is endemic of the period and reflective of the scrutiny placed on radical Pan-African organizations. It also reveals the level of fear of subversion that drove the security apparatus of the foreign ministry. The Prefect of the Paris Police perceived the CUNIP as a threat. In their estimation, it was a front for the LDRN and, by extension Comintern designed to collect

³⁵ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," March 10, 1930, 3SLOTFOM 74 ANOM, 11; "Memo," Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of the Colonies, April 8, 1930, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 2001216- 174; Report of Agent "Dèsire" March 15, 1930, 3SLOTFOM 112 ANOM.

³⁶ Report of Agent "Dèsire" March 15, 1930, 3SLOTFOM 112 ANOM.

³⁷ Ayodele Langley, "Pan-Africanism in Paris, 1924–1936." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 7, no. 1 (1969): 88.

and funnel funds to the former's coffers. Per the 1901 Law of Associations, Sajous presented the foundational documents to announce the establishing of a new group. The law necessitated any new secular organization submit its paperwork to the local precinct, and stipulated that only improper documentation was sufficient cause for refusal of recognition.³⁸ However, the Prefect denied the group's petition arguing that the founding members and the "information [he] possessed" about the group revealed its true orientation as a communist front.³⁹ Sajous sensed something was amiss when, after slightly over a month from when he submitted the paperwork, he had yet to receive notice of approval. He knew that it was the varying and suspected communist leanings of the members that was the problem. Already suspected of subversive activities, Sajous was further undermined by an agent of the state embedded in his organization.

The notes of Dèshire, an agent of the security deeply embedded into the Pan-African scene, are intriguing in that they serve as a perfect indictment of Sajous as a communist, anti-imperialist, and anti-France agitator. Dèshire notes an incident which took place at Sajous's clinic where the two discussed the delay in his new organization's recognition by the Paris police. The agent noted that an agitated Sajous freely offered that he was a communist, in the course of the conversation, although he clarified the he was not a member of the party. Dèshire captured Sajous's proffer that although some of his group were members of the PCF they were not "subservient to the party." Sajous's words are endemic of the experience of Afro-francophone anti-colonist activists in this period.

³⁸ Accueil: Légifrance Le Service Public de la Diffusion du Droit, n.d., "Loi du 1er Juillet: Relative Contracté d'Association," <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006069570>.

³⁹ Prefect of the Paris Police, "Memo," April 3, 1930," ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 2001216-174.

They recognized the role of capitalism as the driving principal behind the exploitation and saw international communist as its antithesis and a source of funding for efforts to undermine the subjugation. These benefits aside they did not seek to subsume their identity within another current that sought to dominate them. Dèshire records Sajous as tangentially announcing that the “colonies are in revolt” against the colonizers who “exploit them through forced labor.” Sajous believed that it was the collusion of the Ministry of the Colonies and Francois Coty that affected that prevented the organization’s recognition.⁴⁰ If Dèshire’s account is to be trusted, then Sajous had cause to denounce the Ministry. It had forwarded memos on the founding of the organization to many of the colonial administrators throughout Africa. But are the agent’s notes to be trusted? The utterance seems too perfect of a confession. Was the agent, who had to justify his position, and salary, providing documentation to what the security apparatus already suspected? The comments about the colonies came as non-sequiturs that confirmed the Ministries’ collective fears that radical black organizing in the capitol was driving unrest in the colonies, and specifically to Sajous’s role in fomenting rebellion. What Sajous did not know at the time, the efforts of the state were further by the deception of an intimate.

The organization had been undermined from within, and the activists’ responses make it clear that they knew they were under surveillance. LDRN leadership had come to identify Guerrier, his “mistress,” who worked for the Prefecture, and another black police officer, Couba (another Haitian who had attended the 1921 Pan-African Congress along with Sajous) as the sources of the intelligence that appeared in several of the editions of

⁴⁰ Report of Agent “Dèshire” March 15, 1930, 3SLOTFOM 112 ANOM.

l'Amie du Peuple.⁴¹ Guerrier was thought to have divulged information out of jealousy. Kouyaté believed that the information they provided, which included detailed information about Sajous' meeting with members of the UNIA in the United States that prevented recognition of the organization *Comité Universel de l'Institut Nègre a Paris*. The April 13th meeting of the central committee infiltrated by a spy who captured the deliberations, the leadership debated whether or not expose the infiltrators to the general body of the organization. Danae posed the rhetorical question seeking to discern the number of black doctors who are the informants and "snitches" for the state, perhaps implicating Sajous.

The leadership thought it best not to reveal it to the rank and file as many knew there were police in their midst. Confirmation of such close deception may have undermined the group's ability to draw adherents and keep away others. The attendees acknowledged their awareness presence of agents in their midst. Beton argued that he had always assumed the fact and Lacombe, who sold editions of *La Race Nègre*, voiced his concern that he was subject to expulsion as a foreign national if found to be in possession of the periodical. The league simply announced Guerrier's resignation in the April 1930 edition of the *La Race Nègre*.⁴² This awareness among black activists that they were being watched forces us to reconsider Sajous's earlier declaration captured by Dèsire.

⁴¹ Interestingly, Lamine Guèye locates a Couba at the 1921 Pan-African Congress. See: Lamine Guèye, *Itinéraire Africain* (Paris: Présence Africain, 1966), 52.

⁴² Report of Agent "Joe," July 14, 1930, 3SLOTFOM 111 ANOM.

If such a perfect assertion of political ideology is true, then we may consider it a performance. It is clear by this point that the efforts of *La Sûreté Nationale* and the Paris police, were obvious to the LDRN members and, as we will see, began to bear on the group's cohesion.

Haitian Voices in *La Race Nègre*

As previously stated, *La Race Nègre* was the journalistic organ of the LDRN. It was the inheritor of the politics of the *La Voix des Nègres*, which only published twice before the schism that ended the existence of its parent organization, the CDRN. Much like its forerunners, it was irregularly published, due to financial constraints of the organization, including mismanagement of funds, and the internal divides that fragmented the LDRN. It seems to have had the longest life of Afro-Francophone press, the radical or otherwise, with editions appearing into 1936. What makes any analysis of the publication difficult is the limited existing copies of the periodical. *La Race* was more radical than its predecessors in its pan-Africanism, as noted in by its choice of *Nègre* as its signifier of blackness. It was more militantly anti-colonial, as evidenced by its call for the abrogation of coloniality instead of its reform; and more revolutionary in its political orientation, as evinced by its more pointed Marxist critiques of imperialism. *La Race Nègre*, Boittin points out, targeted “working-class African[s] and largely discussed events that happened outside of the metropole.”⁴³ The periodical first appeared in July 1927 and was thought by the members of the Sûreté community to be a platform for dissemination of CP initiatives. Whether or not it was vehicle to further the world-wide proletarian revolution cannot be answered here. What is clear is that for the first four years of

⁴³ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 136

existence it was edited by people with membership in communist parties or by those who held Marxist beliefs and financed by communist international sources. In addition to carrying news on Afro-descended people, *La Race Nègre* sought to connect those struggles to other anti-imperialist movements in Asia.⁴⁴ This also included Haiti as evidenced in the September 1930 edition where Abdou Koite a CP representative, wrote an article on the oppressed conditions of black people globally which discussed the occupied republic.⁴⁵ Haitian authors, Lacombe and Barau, continued this position and located Haiti and its people within this colonial framework.

The Haitian contributors to *La Race Nègre* inserted the U.S. Occupation of Haiti into the Comintern framework of colonialism. They characterized the military presence as anti-democratic, decadent of Haitian society, exploitative of the nation to the benefit of capitalist interest and buttressed by a sycophantic elite who sought their own aggrandizement. In these pages, Barau and Lacombe emerge as the primary contributors of articles that denounced the U.S. American presence and their Haitian collaborators. Throughout their writings they launched clear critiques of capitalist motives of the occupation, and by doing so located Haiti, once the only independent Black republic, into the landscape of the colonized Afro-descended world. Their articles adhere to the Comintern platform that was anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-clergy, and, in light of the sixth international, antagonistic towards members of the bourgeoisie, in this case the Haitian nationalists who had fought against the foreign domination. Throughout the run of the periodical, these stories were printed alongside colonial atrocities in Africa, the

⁴⁴ Langley, "Pan-Africanism in Paris," 89.

⁴⁵ Abdou Koite, "Le Sort des Nègres à Travers le Monde," *La Race Nègre*, September 1930, np.

Scottsboro case in Alabama, and articles about the International's connection and support of people of African descent, linking them to the other major causes that united the black world.

The Haitian writers inserted Haiti into the diasporic landscape that was being forged in Paris, while making calls for reciprocity within the coalescing black community. Their contributions defended the Haitian popular class by critiquing first the U.S. Occupation and condemned the bourgeois nationalist that they described as agents of the capitalist order. Barau exposed the violent nature of the American incursion by highlighting the role of the U.S. Marines in a 1929 massacre in Aux Cayes, a city in the southern peninsula, that left twenty-four dead and fifty-one injured.⁴⁶ Moreover, he characterized the tragedy as founded on white supremacist principles arguing that none of the perpetrators were condemned, let alone sentenced to the "electric chair," as they would have if they had murdered a white person in the United States.⁴⁷ In the wake of the aftermath of the 1930 election that ushered in the anti-occupation bourgeois nationalist from the *Union Patriotique* (UP), Barau characterized the results as the ascendance of the "lesser of two evils." In an argumentation that echoed proletarian revolution he characterized the "peasant" as the only "ardent defender" of Haitian independence. He continued this line of argumentation in a 1936 article titled "Haiti: On the Class Struggle" where forwarded that Vincent, former president of the UP, was using the national police (organized and trained by the occupation forces) to violently repress

⁴⁶ Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 200.

⁴⁷ Jean Louis Barau, "En Haïti: Va-t-on Encore Parler de la Poudre ?" *La Race Nègre*, September 1930, 1.

the Haitian popular class. He noted the hypocrisy of the elites who delighted in the popular uprising against the Americans only to denigrate the same group when they sought vindication of their rights before the supposedly nationalist state.⁴⁸ In his writings Lacombe took a similar line, lambasting the elite and the “foreign merchant class” as having welcomed and benefitted from the military presence.⁴⁹ Lacombe also trained his analysis on the Catholic priests, largely French, arguing that they were the “forerunners” of imperialism.⁵⁰

Dissolution of the LDRN and the Birth of the *Union des Travailleurs Nègres*

In December of 1930, the LDRN began to split over a conflict between Faure and Kouyaté. Reminiscent of the CDRN schism, the tension revolved around oversight of the Kouyaté leadership of the organization, exacerbated by the impact of Coty’s *l’Ami* articles and the infiltration and pressure of *Sûreté* agents. The literature has argued that this split was largely predicated on an ideological divide between the radical, communist, elements that supported Kouyaté, and the more moderate contingent that followed Faure.⁵¹ There is some tension in the research around this point. Dewitte holds that Faure had been unaware of the PCF’s funding of the LDRN, and only realized after months of investigation. Once cognizant of the fact Faure spoke out against CP influence in the organization, especially while Kouyaté was away. However, when the CDRN split in

⁴⁸ Jean Louis Barau, “Haïti: Vers la Lutte de Class,” *La Race Nègre*, January -February 1936, np.

⁴⁹ Ludovic Marin Lacombe Les Expropriation des Paysans Haïtiennes, “*La Race Nègre*, September 1930, np.

⁵⁰ Ludovic Marin Lacombe, “L’Opportunisme du Clergé Français,” *La Race Nègre*, November-December 1930, np.

⁵¹ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 210; Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 230.

1927, Faure was a supporter of Senghor, then the African star of international communism, and stayed with the what became the LDRN. Faure not only followed the Senegalese front man but also Danae, Rosso, Kouyaté, central figures in the functioning of the LDRN, and Saint Jacques, who he defended in the CDRIN conflict, all of whom were stalwarts of Afro-communism in France. It does not hold, then, that Faure was ignorant of the relationship between the *Ligue* the PCF, Comintern or Profintern or that a revelation on the matter should be so unsettling as to cause a departure.

I argue that while political orientation surely played a role in the divide and, certainly, the less militant elements distanced themselves for the more revolutionary, it was Kouyate's intransigence and refusal to submit to oversight that frayed the cohesiveness of the group. Had he submitted or the organizational oversight had been implemented before had, the LDRN may not have fractured. Perhaps Faure, and those who followed him, had evolved and no longer viewed international communism a vehicle for Pan-African self-determination. I do not think this to be the case, for two reasons. First, in early 1930, less than a year before the irrevocable split, Faure had joined Kouyaté in the CUIDN. Secondly Faure, in an edition of *l'Ami du Peuple* (oddly enough), admitted that he recognized that "radical organizations" had been the only groups in France that had engaged the demands of people of African descent toward liberation.⁵² By following Sajous' navigation of the divide it becomes apparent that leadership was the central element of the split.

⁵² Quoted in Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 214.

In the fall out that resulted from the fracturing of the organization, it was clear that Kouyaté had been operating outside of any organizational control. The tensions emerged shortly after Kouyaté's triumphant return from his coalition building efforts and LAI meetings in 1929. The agents recorded that Kouyaté, full of the self-importance born from his successes abroad, began to rub his comrades the wrong way. Moreover, in November 1929 Faure and Sangaré Sabia, LDRN President and Treasurer respectively, had discovered that the monthly stipend of 800 francs issued by the French Communist Party. Here one could argue that Faure was unaware of the influence of the party, but he was aware of Kouyaté's travels which point, at least to a relationship to Comintern. By this time the coffers of the *Ligue* had been depleted and the two questioned Kouyaté on his spending. They demanded that he give an account of his travels to Russia, for which Faure had personally secured the funding. When it became clear that the December 1929 edition of *La Race Nègre* would not appear due to lack of funding, the *Ligue* charged Faure with auditing the organization's books. His accounting uncovered that the entire coffers of the LDRN were empty. Immediately, Kouyaté, in a move reminiscent of the machinations of Senghor in 1926, expressed his hurt feelings and thought to leave the organization as his response to insinuations of misappropriation.⁵³ It was this investigation that resulted in the divorce.

In January 1931 the issue came to a head; Kouyaté's obstinance toward any accountability antagonized those who sought to secure the financial outlook of the organization. Undergirding all of this is that Kouyaté and Faure were in a contest for

⁵³ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 7, 1929, 3SLOTFOM 144 ANOM, 7-8; Report of Agent "Claude," June 15, 1931, 3 SLOTFOM 111; "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1929, 3SLOTFOM 74, 9.

supremacy in the organization. The issue finally erupted on January 11th when Faure in his role as auditor, requisitioned documents that Kouyaté refused to turn over. Kouyaté responded by accusing Faure and his supporters of advancing their own “political” agenda.⁵⁴ Responding to the recalcitrance, Faure called on his followers to refrain from participating in meetings until his demands were met. The act was met with approbation and Faure was stripped of his Presidency, removed from his position as editor of *La Race Nègre*, “thanked for his services,” and summarily expelled from the *Ligue*.⁵⁵ As a result the LDRN split, with Faure, Beton and Sajous taking one side, and Kouyaté, Lacombe, Danae, Ramananjato (agent “Joe”) on the other.⁵⁶

The internal dynamics were exacerbated by the role of the police in the matter which rendered any hope of reconciliation specious. Beton called for unity and was charged by the membership to conduct an investigation that would ultimately bring resolution. The inquiry revealed that Kouyaté had misallocated funds and that he and Pierre Kossul, the former Treasurer, had colluded to conceal the fact.⁵⁷ In addition to the censure, it was concluded that more oversight of Kouyaté was needed.⁵⁸ As this tension mounted, the homes of several members of the LDRN, all of the radical leadership, were searched by the police. On January 22, Kouyaté had several documents confiscated, including several that had been sought after by Faure. Several members accused Faure

⁵⁴ “Memo,” Paris Prefecture, January 12, 1931, 3 SLOTFOM 111.

⁵⁵ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 212; “Memo,” Prefecture of the Paris Police, February 2, 1932, 3 SLOTFOM 111; “Memo,” Minister of the Interior to the Minister of the Colonies, January 14, 1931, 3 SLOTFOM 111.

⁵⁶ Note of Agent “Victor,” December 21, 1931, 3 SLOTFOM 111.

⁵⁷ Report of Agent “Joe,” March 29, 1931, 3SLOTFOM 111.

⁵⁸ Report of Agent “Claude,” June 15, 1931, 3SLOTFOM 111.

and Beton of the treacherous act of collaborating with the police and Coty; Faure's article in Coty's newspaper did not help his cause. One of Faure's loudest accusers was Kouyaté. His suspicions, however convenient, were true. Faure had filed a grievance of embezzlement and financial misappropriation with the police against Kouyaté that precipitated the perquisitions and searches.⁵⁹ The Paris police were at the ready to affect the warrants awaiting only a semblance of due cause.⁶⁰ The LDRN split into two, with both camps making claims to the name and the rights to the periodical *La Race Nègre*. During this time, there were two leagues, and a contest for ownership and pre-eminence in Afro-Parisian circles ensued.

Haitians were at the center of the fallout and their participation reveals some of the major dynamics involved in the split. Sajous and Lacombe were active players, albeit in different ways. In the fall out, Lacombe remained with Kouyaté and played an antagonist in the conflict; while Sajous sided with Faure and was mediating element. Edwards has argued that Sajous, among other French intellectuals of the period, had repeatedly "shifted positions" and served as liaisons between the more radical groups and the "more reformist cultural groups." Sajous ultimately worked to keep Pan-African unity, even if group cohesion was not possible. In the early moments of the partitioning, Sajous's clinic served as a meeting space for members of both camps. Faure and Alpha, a member of the Kouyaté faction, had an impromptu encounter where the former denied responsibility for the police traces and searches. In the course of the encounter Sajous sought to mitigate the tensions in favor of intra-racial solidarity. Conversely, Lacombe

⁵⁹ "Memo," Prefecture of the Paris Police, February 2, 1932, 3 SLOTFOM 111.

⁶⁰ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 214.

sought retribution against the Faure faction. Lacombe, who had continued to ship copies of *La Race Nègre* to Haiti via an intermediary during the rupture, had grown frustrated with the conflict. In response to the accusations of Faure's collusion with the police he suggested the LDRN send its own spies into Faure's camp.⁶¹ As the rift grew wider, Sajous continued to toe the line of Pan-African solidarity. In November 1931 he received Danae in his office where the two men, of the Faure and Kouyaté factions respectively, discussed fusion between the two sides. Sajous forwarded a plan where he would operate as the intermediary between both camps as a way to coordinate anti-colonial Afro-Francophone activity in the metropole.⁶² The agent "Joe" (Ramananjato), who was a confidant of Sajous and Lacombe and published various reports based on personal meetings with the two men, seemed to believe that Sajous was seeking to fuse the two leagues as the "invisible hand" controlling the outcome of events⁶³ The centrality of "Joe"/ Ramananjato in these moments as an integral and trusted figure reveals the depths of infiltration that the state security apparatus had achieved.

The impact of the Sûreté's intensified policing of the LDRN further strained the league and informed the course of radical Pan-African politics by dissuading some from affiliating with such organizations. The French government was "hostile" to the LDRN and even was suspicious of their "cultural activities."⁶⁴ The searches, arrests and harassment by the police force had intensified in 1931. Throughout the previous years of

⁶¹ Report of Agent "Joe," May 10, 1931, 3SLOTFOM 111.

⁶² Report of Agent "Joe," November 13, 1931, 3SLOTFOM 111.

⁶³ "Note," January 1931, 3SLOTFOM 111.

⁶⁴ Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism*, 315.

radical activism, I have not seen any evidence of the intense policing tactics of searching, detaining, or arresting the various members of any organization with such frequency and openness in the archival materials. Since the days of the UI it has been an open secret that there were spies in the meetings. Both Senghor and Kouyaté had been in conflicts with police and arrested while establishing branches and strengthening networks across France. But as the state increasingly feared the influence of Comintern, they intensified their observation and harassment.

1931 marked the apogee of surveillance and intimidation yet it seems as if there was not much coordination between governmental agencies. Since Kouyaté's return from the Soviet Union in 1929 he noted an increase in surveillance and saw infiltrators all around him. He was not alone in his suspicions, other members of the organization asserted that they were under constant scrutiny.⁶⁵ Faure's grievance provided the police sufficient cause to search the homes of Danae and Rosso along with Kouyaté's. When the police executed the warrant at Kouyaté's residence, they threatened him with arrest if he attended the Colonial Exhibition. At the exhibit, the monitoring was in full force. The members of the LDRN who attended the exhibition were clearly followed. Ramananjato, "Joe," was arrested and taken to the precinct, his cover, seemingly, a secret to the local officers. But, according to Boittin, he was not detained, and his release drew suspicion to him. Subsequently, Kouyaté announced an inquiry into uncovering the member of the organization who "for years" had been supplying the police with information on the organization.⁶⁶ But the threat was not directed at "Joe," Ramananjato, who continued with

⁶⁵ "Memo," Ministry of the Interior to Ministry of the Colonies, May 19, 1931

⁶⁶ Note, Agent "Foque," 3SLOTFOM 111.

Kouyaté into the more radical UTN which followed the LDRN. The deepening of the monitoring and policing of radical activists had the effect of causing people to distance themselves from the organization, similar to what befell the *Union Intercoloniale* in the 1920s.

Reflecting on the responses of Sajous and Lacombe reveals the impact of surveillance on radical black activists. What is unique about Haitian activists is that they were neither citizens of France like the Antilleans, nor colonial subjects; they could make no claim to any right to be in the country. Unlike Saint Jacques, who was born in France, Sajous and Lacombe were interlopers, connected to France by linguistic and cultural ties founded in a colonial past and subject to repatriation at the French government's discretion. Haiti, occupied militarily by the United States and governed by the reactionary nationalists impugned in the pages of *La Race Nègre* was no haven for those deemed "communist sympathizers." As we have seen, Sajous was implicated in Marxist circles and, as a result, his attempts to establish his own organization were thwarted by the government. Despite his volt face with the more radical elements of the LDRN, the Prefect of the Paris police still assumed he maintained his communist sympathies.⁶⁷ In the wake of the police not recognizing the group he tried to found with Kouyaté, the LDRN searches, Sajous must have sensed that the government was watching him. During the period of heightened harassment, he penned a letter to the Prefect. The missive, dated April 28, 1931, announced his resignation from the *Ligue* and, falsely, backdated his exodus to June of the previous year. He asserted that association had come to engage in

⁶⁷ "Confidential Memo," Prefect of the Paris Police to the Ministry of the Interior, December 6, 1934, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 2001216- 174.

French national politics and that he, a “foreigner” who had never “suffered” in France, should not entangle himself in internal debates.⁶⁸ Despite this, Sajous’s continued to frequent radical associations until he left France for Liberia in 1934.

Lacombe grew increasingly vocal about how the communist orientation of the organization was limiting membership and that he was weary of Comintern’s influence on the LDRN. He has famously been cited throughout the literature for his most declarative statement on his relationship to Marxist ideology. At a January 1932 meeting of the Kouyaté led faction of the *Ligue*, Lacombe proclaimed himself to be a “black nationalist, but anti-communist with no master red or white.”⁶⁹ At first blush, this assertion speaks to the what the literature has held as a rejection of the communist ideology or the heterogenous nature of anti-imperialist Pan-African spaces.⁷⁰ Upon further consideration, the statement carries an air of insincerity, opportunism playing to agents in the audience, or ambiguity as to the exact identity of the red master. As we will see, Lacombe eventually left the UTN because of CP influence. But as Makalani and others have argued, international communism was a means to the end of black liberation for pan-Africanist activists in this period, many chafed under the demands and geopolitical concerns of the Soviet Union. Lacombe’s rejection of CP tutelage, the “red” master, speaks to this. However, his claim of “anti-communism” is dubious. We must recall that Lacombe enters the record at a soiree held by Bloncourt. Additionally, he remained in the LDRN camp that included Kouyaté, Danae, and Rosso- all CP partisans. Faure’s camp

⁶⁸ Leonidas Sajous, Letter to the Prefect of the Paris Police,

⁶⁹ Report of Agent “Victor,” n.d., 3SLOTFOM 111.

⁷⁰ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 87; Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 305;

was decidedly pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist. Looking ahead, Lacombe transitioned into the UTN, the organization that that was more radical and intimately tied to the Comintern. We also know that agent “Joe” (Ramananjato) was in when Lacombe made his declaration which was captured by the agent “Victor.” I argue that the statement should be contextualized in the period of paranoia caused by the intensification of surveillance of radical pan-Africanists. Lacombe remains a mystery as he does not figure in the intelligence reports of the French security apparatus, not even in one specifically on “Haitians in radical black organizations” despite his participation through the mid-1930s. It would seem expedient to note the activities of someone smuggling radical newspapers out of the country. While Sajous’s “demission” was followed by a gradual withdrawal from participating in *Ligue* affairs, Lacombe’s denunciation was accompanied by a further entrenchment in radically oriented organization. And, as Sajous’ role diminished, the roles of Lacombe, Barau and LaLeau became more pronounced.

By 1932 the communist faction of the LDRN was reconstituting and reorganizing itself iteration as the *Union des Travailleurs Nègres*(UTN)and the Haitian membership was central to its growth. After the schism, the two opposing sides laid claim to the name *Ligue de Defense de la Race Nègre* and to proprietorship of the journal *La Race Nègre*.⁷¹ The issue was litigated in court and the that Faure had personally subsidized the publishing of the periodical had, in the eyes of the court, given him ownership of the rights to the journal. There is some disagreement between the primary sources as to when the UTN was founded. Some sources locate the founding in 1931, in the wake of the split, while other documents point to the renaming away from the LDRN upon the heels of

⁷¹ Note of Agent “Victor,” February 28, 1932, 3 SLOTFOM 111 ANOM.

Faure's legal victory in 1932. The regrouping of the members of the radical wing of the Former LDRN occurred by July of 1931, along with the initial publication of their journalistic organ, *Le Cris des Nègres*. Their mission was to establish a global network of black workers and agitate in their name. The UTN sought to engage sailors and dock workers as conduits of the organization that were to spread its publication and propaganda across the piers of Atlantic furthering the union of people of African descent globally.⁷² Among their key issues were: an increased minimum wages, shorter workdays, assistance for the unemployed, and the amelioration of working conditions. The UTN was also to serve as mutual aid society that fomented cultural linkages between members of the African diaspora, similar mission of the group founded by Sajous. It was also designed to bridge the divide between intellectuals and the workers while conducting political education of the latter. The new organization was decidedly anti-imperialist, and according to the files of the security apparatus, expressly communist.⁷³

The new group was slow to fuse, unsettled by Kouyaté's extensive travels. In this period, he was a central actor in building a global network of black workers as part of a new Comintern initiative. Kouyaté was an absentee leader beginning with an organizing trip in Germany, and subsequent travels to Moscow for CP related activities, and then throughout France to foster a network of black workers. It is during this travel to the USSR that he met George Padmore, his Anglophone counterpart and kindred spirit. Upon his return to France, Kouyaté continued to travel around the country forging a network of

⁷² "Memo," Prefect of the Paris Police, March 31, 1932 ANP.

⁷³ "Memo," Ministry of the Interior, February 9, 1935, 2001216-174 ANP; "Memo" French Forgien Ministry, July 29, 1938.

afro-descended workers.⁷⁴ The most active Haitian member of UTN was Henry LaLeau who had been exiled and stripped of his Haitian citizenship for “presenting the [Haitian] Minister of Labor with a petition to increase the minimum wage of workers.”⁷⁵ Jean-Louis Barau, who had attended several LDRN meetings, was also an active participant. Barau and Lacombe were part of the twelve-person committee who met to establish the platform of the *Union*. When central committee elections were held in January 1932, Barau was elected to the position of Judge Advocate for the organization. The UTN was besieged with problems from the beginning and never had the impact or reach of the LDRN in Paris.

During the tumultuous first year of the organization, it was beset by financial insolvency and several crises of leadership. Haitians were implicated throughout the process on both fronts. During Kouyaté’s absence, Danae led the UTN, a role he performed less than effectively losing the confidence of the membership and the coming into conflict with Kouyaté. Part of the issue was the fact the *Le Cri* had not been published during his stewardship.⁷⁶ Moreover, the UTN had been largely inactive for the rest of 1931, which had caused a drop in its membership.⁷⁷ Additionally, Danae was beleaguered by accusations of having betrayed the organization. He had been suspected of being an agent of the Prefecture by the UTN members; and the CP had grown

⁷⁴ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 284 ; Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 254.

⁷⁵ Frederick Moussard, “Haïti: Conditions de Vie et de Salaire des Travailleurs, *Le Cris des Nègres*, November- December 1933, 2.

⁷⁶ Report of Agent “Joe,” January 18, 1932, 3SLOTFOM 111 ANOM.

⁷⁷ Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres*, 294.

suspicious of his connections with the Faure led LDRN members, like Sajous.⁷⁸ Danae defended himself and pointed to the *Union's* influence in fomenting the strike in Guadeloupe in autumn of 1931, as an example of his successes.⁷⁹ He, and Rosso launched a series of attacks against Kouyaté. Lacombe and Ramananjato were charged with investigating the claims levied against leader.⁸⁰ Additionally, the UTN had presented itself as decidedly radical and communist which Lacombe argued kept away other “anti-imperialists.”⁸¹ A central concern of the organization was how to draw membership and establish a revenue stream that did not beholden the organization to the international communism.

Sajous took a lead role in curating the program for a soiree designed to attract new members to the group and draw revenue to the coffers of the organization. The affair was designed to promote civic dialogue and cultural performances. In November of 1932 the UTN began organizing an event designed to bring people of African descent together for an evening of music, food, and political education. Tensions between Danae and Kouyaté were palpable during the planning of the gathering. At one meeting both levied accusations of ethnocentrism in their activist plans. Sajous, in attendance, spoke about the need for Pan-African unity and voiced his opinion that the organization ought not to tie itself to one person or one political party. Sajous was also active in organizing to program and soliciting the main speaker. Held on December 2, 1932, the event was a success,

⁷⁸ Report of Agent “Joe,” November 13, 1931, 3SLOTFOM 111 ANOM.

⁷⁹ Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 233.

⁸⁰ Report of “Victor,” February 17, 1932, 3 SLOTFOM 111 ANOM.

⁸¹ “Memo,” Unattributed, January 1932, 3 SLOTFOM 111 ANOM; Report of Agent “Victor,” January 1932, 3 SLOTFOM 111 ANOM.

drawing over 600 members from the community. Afro-Antillean professor Felix Denis gave a talk about Haiti and diasporic unity where he declared that the Haitian “laboring class” ought to revolt against the bourgeoisie to more effectively affect the overthrow of the U.S. Occupation forces. Afterwards the community danced the Beguine, a Martiniquais musical style, until six in the morning. Denis’ discussion of Haiti reflected a change in the activism of its citizens in the metropole; the period after 1929 marked an increase in the discussion and denunciation of the U.S. Occupation by Haitians in the organization.

Haiti in Paris

In this final phase of radical activity, the Haitian activists frequently voiced clear anti-capitalist critiques of the United States’ presence in the country and admonishments of the bourgeois elite that had come to power after 1930. The U.S. Occupation had been a topic in the meetings of various radical and Pan-African groups, dating back to the *Union Intercoloniale*, and was one of the “causes célèbres” of the Pan-African community in this period. Sajous, Lacombe, and especially LaLeau frequently censured the U.S. military presence in the country during the meetings of the LDRN, UTN, and in their own discussions. Saint-Jacques had penned an article entitled “Haiti for the Haitians” in the inaugural edition of *Le Courier des Noirs*, yet his pan-Africanism trained his gaze to the continent and his anti-imperialism was informed by Parisian circles. The series of bloody conflicts between Haitian protestors and the occupying forces in 1929 that left dozens dead and injured and the subsequent rise of the reactionary nationalists to power in 1930 precipitated the shift in tone.

Activists frequently connected the military presence in Haiti with colonization in Africa. Kouyaté located the contradiction that while African Americans and the Afro-French subjects were dying on the battlefields of Europe in the cause of freedom, Haiti was coming under American military occupation, which was a prelude domination of Liberia and Ethiopia.⁸² On December 20, 1929 the LDRN held a special session dedicated to exposing the details of the events and Sajous took the lead in the discussion. Echoing the talking points of the anti-occupation effort led by the Haitian Union Patriotique (who sent a representative to the 1921 Pan-African Congress attended by Sajous), Sajous undermined Washington's declared mission of pacification of political unrest and pointed to the capitalist motives for the domination. Sajous took a similar position in a *Revue du Monde Noire* article in defense of loan issued to Liberia. Further he revealed how the occupation had affected the displacement of rural Haitians from their land to the benefit of American agribusiness interests. He concluded his oration with an expression of his hopes that the Haitian workers union would be able to "chase the invaders."⁸³ Similarly Lacombe, who had worked to smuggle editions of *La Race Nègre* into Haiti, vilified the occupation and the Haitian government which he characterized as operating at the "pleasure of the Americans."⁸⁴ But it was LaLeau, activist in Haiti, who was the most vocal about the occupation.

⁸² Letter Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté to W.E.B Du Bois, April 22, 1929, 3SLOTFOM 111.

⁸³ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," December 31, 1929, 3SLOTFOM 74. ANOM; "Le Communisme aux Etats Unis: Copie de Deux Dépêche de Moscow, 27 Décembre 1929 et Janvier 1930," ANP 20010216- 0037.

⁸⁴ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," May 31, 1933, 3SLOTFOM 79 ANOM.

LaLeau maintained connections in Haiti despite his exile for his activism against the occupation installed government. He continued his efforts in Paris. LaLeau was the founder of the *Ligue de Culture et de Defense Populaire Haitian* and had been jailed and exiled for his activism in defense of the workers. In Paris, LaLeau used his access to networks of the radical Pan-African organizations to continue agitating for the rights of the Haitian workers. His agenda easily dovetailed with that of radical Marxists. Haiti, during the occupation had long been described as semi-colony, in the Leninist matrix, that was ostensibly independent, but had been rendered dependent on a foreign power, in this case the United States. Additionally, after the 6th International, where Comintern forwarded its class against class ideology, Haitian nationalist elites who had struggled against the U.S. domination, and had come to take control of the government were not exempt from critique. 1930 marked an important shift during the U.S. Occupation of Haiti; the Forbes commission had recommended the Haitianization of the government and elections were held. As we have seen in chapter two, elite members of Haitian Society had formed the *Union Patriotique* and allied with U.S. African Americans to undermine the occupation, and the electoral round was the result of their activism. Many of the UP's leadership emerged as leading candidates for political positions and Sténio Vincent, one such member, was elected president. For the radicals, the indigenization of the state did not manifest any tangible differences. They argued that the Vincent regime was fascist in that it was anti-communist, jailing several Marxist activist; that it was anti-labor, arresting union organizers, silencing and denying the demands of the working class while it established favorable conditions for capital; and, that it was also anti-peasant, engaging in a virulent and violent "anti-superstition campaigns" that destroyed Houmfors (Vodou temples) and dispossessed the rural class of their land for the sake of agricultural projects.

Once in Paris, LaLeau continued to assail the Haitian government on the international stage. He used his position to forge a greater link of solidarity with the activists in both locations. Whereas Lacombe had worked to get editions of *La Race Nègre* into Haiti, LaLeau had now come to facilitate the shipment(however irregular its appearance) of the *Le Cri des Nègres*.⁸⁵ One shipment of the *Le Cris* had been the stated cause for Haitian officials to arrest several activists who had been charged with distributing and reproducing articles from newspaper. Included in this number were Jacques Roumain, famed Haitian Marxist intellectual, Max Hudicourt, and Joseph Jolibois Jr (a frequently jailed critic of the occupation and target of its repression). LaLeau brought the matter to the attention of the UTN membership and took the lead in fomenting a multipronged protest of the actions of the Haitian government. He penned a missive to the Haitian delegation in Paris written on the letterhead of the Secure Rouge International-a worker's service agency founded by Comintern to provide aid to workers in attempts to foment class warfare- that called for the release of the imprisoned and denounced Vincent as working to further embedded the U.S. presence in Haiti to strengthen his position.⁸⁶ As he was building support for the proposed march he called on the workers of Paris to join in solidarity with those in Haiti. At a meeting of the UTN, he classified the machinations of the Haitian government as "terrorist[ic]." Unfortunately, the bonds of solidarity did not extend across the Atlantic, LaLeau was one of four people to arrive at the legation, and the group was rebuffed because the Haitian minister to Paris was away and the assistant was too "busy" to meet them.

⁸⁵ Report of Agent "Victor," January 1932, 3SLOTFOM 111.

⁸⁶ "Dossier," September 18, 1934, ANP Archives Restituées par la Russie, 20010216- 174.

Le Cri des Nègres

Le Cri des Nègres was the journalistic outlet of the *Union des Travailleurs Nègres* and Haitians maintained the place of their home country in the consciousness and discussions of Francophone pan-Africanist discourses. Like its contemporary and antecedent publications, it suffered from intermittent appearance, but between 1934 and 1936 it was issued regularly and had a broad dissemination.⁸⁷ This journal was the most militant in the lineage of pan-African, anti-imperialist publications in Paris. It was funded, in part, by the CP. Cyril Briggs and George Padmore, Afro-descended communist party members of note, contributed pieces to several editions.⁸⁸ The issues considered here run from 1931 through 1934 as only a partial collection exists at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. In these editions Barau had a column that appeared regularly, “de Mon Coin” (From My Point of View). LaLeau, was the most frequent Haitian contributor to the newspaper.

The occupation remained a target in the pages of the *Le Cri* but most frequently it was the governance of nationalists that was most frequently criticized. In these editions articles about Haiti were situated alongside critiques of the Colonial Exhibition, and the Scottsboro Boys case, two events that Boittin argued served to unite the disparate people of African descent in Paris. By this time in the course of the occupation the Americans had ceded daily governance of the country to the Nationalist in May of 1930. Barau was a frequent critic of their governance. He noted the continued suppression of the wages of

⁸⁷ Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 243.

⁸⁸ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 261; Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, 245.

the Haitian labouring class as a fundamental aspect of the capitalists' desires.⁸⁹ Specifically, he points to the terms of the August 7th, 1933 accord signed between the Franklin Roosevelt, the U.S. President and Sténio Vincent, his Haitian counterpart, as facilitating continued of the U.S. control of the country.⁹⁰ Frederick Moussard adds to this interpretation by demonstrating how the Haitian workers had become increasingly exploited, and added that their cause is part of the "struggle of colonial workers, globally."⁹¹ Henry de LaLeau and Saint Juste Zamor, also a Haitian, followed this theme of accusing the Haitian government of acting on behalf of their invaders, even as the withdrawal neared. LaLeau added that "Wall street" had affected the oppression of workers in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. He criticized the U.S. Americans for supplying the Dominican government with weapons and fomenting border conflicts.⁹² The intra-island issue reached its apex in 1937 with a massacre of Haitians that went unmentioned in the Haitian press and not condemned by Haitian President Sténio Vincent. Zamor and Barau characterized the Vincent administration as fascist which resonated with one of the major issues of late 1930s anti-imperialist groups. They cited the repression of the press, abrogation of the freedom of assembly, the silencing of speech and the anti-union/anti-communist efforts of the administration as evidence for the

⁸⁹ Jean Louis Barau, "En Haïti ", *Le Cris Des Nègres*, October 1931, np.

⁹⁰ Jean Louis Barau, "Du Nouvo à l'Ouest" ,*Le Cris Des Nègres*, September 1933, 3.

⁹¹ Frederick Moussard, "Haïti: Les Conditions de Vie et de Salaire des Travailleurs , *Le Cris Des Nègres*, November- December 1933, 2.

⁹² Henry de LaLeau, "L'Impérialisme Yankee Veut Pousser à la Guerre Haïti et la Dominicanie," *Le Cri Des Nègres*, August 1934, 3.

assertions.⁹³ The last point, the authoritarian nature of the Haitian government, was one that connected the gaze of the Pan-African anti-imperialist Parisian press to the rest of the global black press. Central to this issue was the government's imprisonment of Jacques Roumain, which was an issue championed by Langston Hughes in the United States where he was part of an organization that agitated for his release.

Haitian participation in the print culture of the radical Pan-African community further cemented their place in these circles. As with their participatory role in Pan-African organizations, Haitians never predominated as authors in the periodicals. Their contribution to keeping the Haitian occupation on journal pages inserted the country into the anti-colonial struggles of African and Caribbean colonial subjects. As a cause célèbre of the Afro-Francophone world, the U.S. occupation of Haiti was the most consistently discussed subject across the life of all the publications across all organizations. More importantly, the insertion of the capitalist-driven, military domination of the country into the struggles of colonized people of African descent was part of a radical, Pan-African diaspora making process which sought to characterize the widely dispersed people of African descent as occupying similarly "subordinate positions," as people "racialized as black, historically, economically, and politically."⁹⁴

Le Denouement

The objectives of the radical Pan-African groups changed after 1934. The rise of fascism and the invasion of Ethiopia had fostered an air of collaboration and many

⁹³ Saint Juste Zamor, "Les Tractions de Roosevelt et de Sténio Vincent au Sujet d'Haïti," *Le Cris Des Nègres*, July 1934, Jean Louis Barau, "De Mon Coin," *Le Cris Des Nègres*, January 1934, 4.

⁹⁴ Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom*, 18.

activists left Paris as the Second World War loomed on the horizon. The life of the UTN lasted into the late 1930s, however, the group become increasingly less active and the Haitian participation diminished. Yet, Paris remained fertile ground for radical, pan-African, and anti-imperialists. In April of 1933, Ludovic Lacombe left the UTN citing the influence of the communist party in the central committee as the cause.⁹⁵ He continued in pan-Africanist circles participating in the *Comité d'Etudes Nègres* as of September 1933 with Kouyaté and Padmore, the former who by this time had been expelled from the communist party and the latter soon to be dismissed. The new *Comité* included old rivals Faure and Beton, as well as Sajous in its membership.⁹⁶ Sajous continued to attend UTN meetings into 1933 and 1934, even supplying Nancy Cunard (radical English Heiress and publisher) with editions of *Le Cri*.⁹⁷ By the end of 1934 Sajous had begun to consider another venture in Liberia and had travelled there to determine the possibilities. He had already made overtures to act as the country's emissary to Poland and sought a passport from the Haitian government.⁹⁸ By this time Saint-Jacques, forerunner of this movement, was in Algeria. Radical Pan-African and anti-imperialist spaces continued to attract Haitian intellectuals and activist and Jacques Romain was identified at several UTN meetings and at a meeting of *Étant des Associations Noires de Paris* (Unification of the Black Associations of Paris) in 1938

⁹⁵ "Notes on the Revolutionary Activities of Interest to the Colonies," April 30, 1933, 3SLOTFOM 79 ANOM.

⁹⁶ Confidential Memo, Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of the Colonies, December 16, 1933, 3SLOTFOM 34.

⁹⁷ Report of Agent "Désiré," 2 SLOTFOM, 11, quoted in Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 314.

⁹⁸ "Memo," Le Directeur de Renseignements Généraux et des Jeux to Préfet of Paris Police, May 23, 1934.

after his exile from Haiti⁹⁹ The Parisian authorities were alerted of his arrival by the Haitian Legation who warned them of his “terroristic” activities in Haiti against the president which earned him his banishment.¹⁰⁰ The arrival of the Second World War effectively put an end to this generation’s activities when most of the activists returned to their native lands, and Kouyaté was executed by the Germans.

Conclusion

Haitians were important participants in the unfolding of events in the Marxist oriented associations that emerged at the forefront of late 1920s Pan-African activism and lasted into the first part of the following decade. The story they help us tell is of a crusade led by activist intellectuals, dedicated to the global liberation of people of African descent from colonial subjugation, that turned to international communism for funding and a platform. Haitians’ participation reveals the history of an aborted campaign that was never on sure footing. It affords us nuance to question the efficacy of international communism as the panacea for black colonial subjection. The interests that caused the French imperial state to invest in undermining the growth of this current is clear, but the reticence of the afro-descended, and the larger colonialized community, to join CP affiliated and Marxist oriented groups begs further interrogation. What Haitians help us realize is that individual power struggles and big man leadership contests were as much a hindrance to the rootedness of the organizations as was uniting people of African descent across ethnicity, or anti-capitalist ideology. Perhaps, the presence of the Sûreté apparatus becomes an impactful element here. The specter of infiltrators monitoring attendance and

⁹⁹ “Dossier,” February 13, 1937, ANP 19940500-236.

¹⁰⁰ “Memo,” Haitian Legation to the Prefect of the Paris Police, September 23, 1937.

the attendant revenge of the state, whether deportation or “red” listing, may have kept potential adherents away. But, the short life span of these organizations and the dramas that truncated their existences may have also kept membership at bay.

Haitians, numerically least represented in these spaces, were central to the evolution of revolutionary organizations, discussions, and visibility in the metropole. Telling their story is telling the story of radical anti-imperial Pan-African agitation in Paris. Following Haitians in the metropole is a microhistory of a much larger movement that links Franco-colonized Africa to French departments in the Caribbean and subjects in Asia and North America. They were quite well placed and well situated. As members in all the major organizations and their operational hierarchies they were instrumental in the founding of some of these groups helping to define their mission statements and rules. They were also involved participants who took part in and orchestrated planned actions. Haitians, whose solidarity with the cause of international proletariat revolution may have wavered, were steadfast in their anti-imperialism and pan-Africanism. In their activism, especially in the print journalism of the movement, they linked Haiti to the larger struggle of colonized people across the globe. In taking part of the print culture of the radical organizations, they articulated a definition of blackness that was subjugated under the demands of capitalist interests in the colonial metropolises and was inclusive of Haitians, who while neither French colonial subjects like the Africans nor French citizens like the Antilleans were similarly yoked.

VI. Conclusion

This dissertation locates elite Haitian men in internationalist activist spaces in Harlem and Paris in an effort to show their continued defense of people of African descent globally. The project draws into relief the gendered ability for those who could afford to travel to move around the Atlantic. More importantly, unlike their counterparts in the United States who were denied passports to travel to Paris to participate in the 1919 Peace Conference, the Haitians in question had the unique privilege of being citizens of an independent republic, although occupied in this period, which afforded them more freedom to migrate and move. Haitians circulated freely around the Atlantic with no restrictions imposed on them, migrating for educational and economic opportunities, as emissaries of the state, or exiled as enemies of the U.S. installed government. Their movement to and between Paris and Harlem reveals their place between two imperial forces: the waxing U.S. American hegemon that landed on its shores in July of 1915 and the waning French empire whose influence dated back to when Haiti was the colony of Saint Domingue. This intermediate position afforded Haitians the dexterity to connect with people of African descent across geopolitical lines. In the period between the two World Wars, Haitians made use of their mobility to shape and advance the agenda of some of the major movements that aimed at ameliorating the conditions of people of African descent. They were anti-colonial pan-Africanists who sought to unite people of African descent in rebuke of racial subjugation. Although never in great numbers in any locale explored in this dissertation, Haitians were disproportionately influential when they did participate, and following them tells us more about the organizations they joined and the movements to which they contributed.

Any project on black internationalism requires a research agenda that reflects the transnational and polyphonic nature of building a united communing of Afro-descended people. I mapped out an archival agenda that crisscrossed the Atlantic, transcending national and lingual boundaries, to uncover Haitians' roles in the various organizations they entered. The dissertation is founded on materials drawn from fourteen terrestrial archives in France, England, the United States, and Haiti. What my engagement with the primary materials exposes is the centrality of the written word to forging an international community of people of African descent. I employ letters exchanged between collaborators, organizational documents, and newspapers. The print culture of internationalist activism has been widely noted in the literature. Haitians contributed to many of the major publications of the period, as well as founded their own. For the most part, I base my arguments on government records of Haitian migrants. The states were particularly concerned with activism that endeavored to undermine colonialism and reshape the imperial order. In both France and the United States, various governmental security apparatuses sent agents into militant groups to surveil and thwart their efforts. The copious number of documents produced give us detailed insight into the associations they monitored. Haitian activists were frequently cited in reports and summaries of the organizations.

Harlem and Paris were two major loci of internationalist activity in the interwar period. Haitians were pulled to either location because of colonial relationships new or old. Both locations were meeting spaces for people of African descent from the continent, the Caribbean and the Americas. Working to common ends, people of African descent were forced to find similarities and almost universally concluded that they were degraded by the colonial order because of their racial heritage. Haitians were central actors in

attempting to coalesce the Afro-descended community around this point. The activists and their constituencies elaborated different plans for change. Perhaps, the most insurmountable cleave of diaspora was, and perhaps still is, how blackness would be defined. For the Muslim Malian, Catholic Francophone Haitian, or the Anglophone Protestant Jamaican, whether people of African descent were the equals of whites was never in question; neither was there any debate on the need for uprooting the colonial project. What refused cohesion was the shape of things to come. These contests around reconstruing blackness away from degradation played out in both Harlem and Paris, as well as other locales.

Harlem in this period has widely been heralded for the Renaissance that emerged as a result of the migration of people of African descent. The advent of the U.S. occupation of Haiti, (1915-1934) opened up an avenue of migration, and Haitians took advantage of the new thoroughfare to migrate to one of the great assemblage sites of the black world. The area above 110th Street attracted people of African descent from the southern United States, the Caribbean (the largest number coming from the British colonies), and Africa. In this new space, they participated in two great movements of Pan-African anti-colonial blackness: the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) led by Marcus Garvey, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) led by W.E.B. Du Bois and others. For Garvey, the uplift of the black community could only be achieved through a powerful Africa, governed by people of African descent, and fortified by a series of racially organized economic enterprises. Du Bois and the NAACP also sought the augmentation of the Afro-descended community, led by elites, but towards the end of inclusion into the ranks of citizenship denied to them in the West. The antagonism and animosity between these two Associations, and

particularly between Du Bois and Garvey, has been well addressed by the literature and points to differences in temperament, approach, and internalized racial and class ideologies. What has been overlooked and brought to light in this dissertation is the way Haitians participated in the contest for supremacy. Eliezer Cadet and Jean Joseph Adam, both representatives of the UNIA to the League of Nations, and Dantès Bellegarde, Haitian delegate to the League and confederate of Du Bois, were embroiled in the rivalry between the two groups.

For Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, Haitians' cosmopolitanism was deployed to project the Association onto the world stage. Garvey imagined a Black Empire that stretched across all shores of the Atlantic. His commitment to the vindication of the African-descended community, his allusions to racial solidarity, and his militant rhetoric attracted scores of working-class people to his rallies and to the Association. However, he found his constituents too narrow in the worldview. Garveyism was never to be an American platform, it was to project powerful blackness at a global scale. For Garvey, Haitians' linguistic pliability, cosmopolitanism, and international perspective were attractive toward this end. Haitians Elie Garcia, Louis La Mothe, Cadet, Adam and others worked at the management level of the Association to further its aims. Garvey took advantage of their skills and sent them to attend to UNIA business in England, France, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cuba. It was Haitians who worked to bring Garvey's defense of black interests to the League of Nations. It was Cadet and Garcia who initiated and fomented relationships with the Liberian government that cast it at the center of Garvey's African empire. It was La Mothe and Garcia who were at the frontlines of the Black Star Line saga working to steer it towards success. It was Garcia who interceded to right the mismanagement that preceded him and ultimately brought the organization before the

courts. And, when it was time to face judgment for fraud, it was Garcia again, who stood alongside Garvey. Moreover, Garvey, a master of hyperbolic, exaggerated, and half-truth promotion used the successes of the Haitian agents to excite the base, draw new adherents, and elicit pecuniary support from his followers. Following Haitians in the UNIA reveals the global proportions of Garveyism, and it also stresses the importance of management in shaping the course of the Association.

Simultaneously, another group of Haitians engaged Du Bois and the NAACP in a multipronged effort to end European tutelage in their African and Caribbean colonies by demonstrating the fitness of the elite members of the Afro-descended community to self-govern. This program was conceived by Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson who understood the plight of the dominated community of Afro-descended people globally to be tied. Their efforts manifested in two intertwined programs: the four Pan-African Congresses held in 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1927, and a bilateral movement that sought to remove the U.S. American military presence in Haiti. I argue that Haitians put the U.S. occupation of their country on the agenda of the Pan-African congresses, and through their efforts, they made the case for Haiti as a site where the ideologies of the congresses could be applied. Again, Haitian internationalism, cosmopolitanism, and sophistication played into the image of blackness put forth in the Du Boisian campaign. Central to what I term “the International New Negro Agenda” was the projection of a patriarchal brand of blackness steeped in Western traditions and practices that demonstrated fitness to rule. For Haitians, participation in this drive was both self-serving and altruistic. They participated hoping to abate the U.S. usurpation of the sovereignty their ancestors had won in a historic revolution that ended slavery, expelled the French colonizers, and, for the first time in Western history, declared people of African descent imbued with the

rights of their humanity and full citizenship. Moreover, Haitians operated on the international stage and made valiant defenses of people of African descent globally. Bellegarde, a statesperson, is the most visible Haitian player in this project and emerged as the leading exemplar of the agenda. His activism spanned both sites: he operated in Paris and in Harlem in the Pan-African Congresses and as leading figure in the final push to end the occupation. Ultimately, the Marines left in 1934. The accord heralding the departure momentarily fractured the relationships forged through the transnational movement. Paris was another meeting place for people of African descent in the years between the two World Wars. More than Harlem, Paris was a hot bed of anti-colonial activity. Unlike the United States, France was a leading colonial power with holdings that stretched from Asia, through Africa and into the Caribbean and the Americas. After the first World War, colonized people from across the French empire converged in Paris, Marseille, Bordeaux, and other cities drawn by demands of capital, seeking education and in search of opportunities absent in their homelands. Haitians also arrived in Paris. Though the Haitian Revolution had severed formal colonial ties, elite citizens continued to look to France for cultural cues and sent their students to the metropole for their secondary education. This disparately drawn group of people, united by their experiences of French subjugation, quickly forged alliances that targeted the imperial state from within. This led to the formation of the *Union Intercoloniale* (UI), a pan-racial, pan-ethnic, anti-colonial group aimed at fomenting revolution in the colonies. The literature has shown that Paris was a particularly important destination for black people from across the world. In addition to colonial subjects from Africa, and the citizens from the colonies in the Caribbean and South America, France drew African Americans who were attracted by the allure of French racial equanimity. The cornucopia of blackness in Paris sparked a

Pan-African movement that was underscored by anti-colonialism. Nevertheless, this effort to unite people of African descent was not without its hurdles.

Haitians were organizers of the Pan-African movements who stressed the need for unity over ethnic division, personal differences, and political ideology. A succession of Pan-African groups rose and fell in Paris, beginning in 1922 and ending with the start of the Second World War. The first such group was the *Ligue Universelle de Défense de la Race Noire* (LUDRN), which only existed for a year. Louis Morpeau was a key member of the organization who contributed to its periodical *Les Continents* and inserted Haiti into the Pan-African framework. It was succeeded by the UI that culled colonial subjects from across the colonial landscape, including people of African descent. Camille Saint-Jacques emerged in this period as a prominent member of the group, voicing militant anti-colonial indictments of the French state. As the *Union* faded into irrelevance, the *Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre* (CDRN) was formed as a home for people of African descent. It too was short lived and gave way to the *Ligue de Défense De la Race Nègre* (LDRN). Saint-Jacques played a pivotal role in the process of transition from the UI into the CDRN and on to the LDRN. In these early moments of pan-Africanism, interpersonal conflicts and ethnocentrism threatened to fracture the fragile bonds. Saint-Jacques navigated the various schisms to maintain cohesion at critical junctures. Following Saint-Jacques in these moments of disintegration draws into relief that interpersonal issues, rivalries for power, and obstinate leadership threatened group solidarity as much as ethnic or ideological differences. Saint-Jacques also used his influence to bring the Pan-African movement more closely to the international proletarianism sponsored by the Soviet Union through the Communist International (Comintern). The specter of communism further

drove a wedge between the intellectuals who shepherded the movement and their constituency.

People affiliated with communist groups direct the LDRN, the most influential group of the later years of the anti-colonial in Paris. Saint-Jacques facilitated the Comintern influence that dominated the mature phase of Pan-Africanism in Paris. He was a visible participant at the momentous 1927 League Against Imperialism meeting that solidified Comintern support for the LDRN. He faded from the vanguard afterwards, and other Haitians emerged to replace him. They included Leonidas Sajous, who arrived to study medicine and remained in France to practice; Ludovic Lacombe and Jean-Louis Barau whose reasons for migrating are not yet clear; and Henri LaLeau who was exiled for proletarian activism in Haiti. Sajous was the most influential of this generation, rising to the presidency of the LDRN. Lacombe, Barau, and LaLeau were active members who published in the *Ligue's* journal *La Race Nègre*. Their pieces echoed the shifting position of Comintern, voiced clear Marxist condemnations of the military occupation of Haiti, and in by doing so, inserted Haiti into the reciprocal relationships of the Afro-francophone world. In 1931, the LDRN fractured and its radical elements formed the *Union des Travailleurs Nègres* (UTN) in 1932. Haitians were heavily implicated in this fissure. Again, tracking them reveals that struggles for leadership supremacy undermined racial solidarity. Haitians contributed to UTN's periodical *Le Cris des Nègres*, reflecting the dictates on international communism and wrote their pieces about Haiti. Yet, they were not passive adherents. Following the Haitians also unveils the limits of allegiance to international communism. When the demands of Comintern proved too costly for their larger goal of ending Afro-subjugation, the Haitian agents balked and chose to side with the race over political ideology.

Concluding Reflections

Pursuing Haitians in the various internationalist programs in which they participated serves as micro-history of sorts. By centering this small cadre of activists, it clarifies several key aspects of those different causes they too up and gives us insights on interwar black internationalism. That they contributed to some major institutions of the period makes them unique actors found across imperial and lingual boundaries. They were indicative of another salient feature of interwar activism, namely, that agents were malleable and appeared in many, sometimes contradictory spaces searching for the program that would realize their end. Jean Joseph Adam first joined the NAACP in hopes of affecting the liberation of Haiti and then joined the UNIA drawn by its more militant approach. Sajous could be found at the anti-communist, anti-Garveyite 1921 Pan-African Conference in Paris. Yet later on, he was a pillar of Marxist influenced pan-Africanism and thought to have collaborated with the UNIA, all the while frequenting more moderate spaces. Ultimately, he occupied a ministerial position with the Liberian government. Haitians participated in all levels of internationalist activism. While some like Bellegarde and Garcia operated at the highest levels of their movements, as the faces of the causes, and directed the course of events, others such as Saint-Jacques, Lacombe and La Mothe were at the forefront of their groups' actions, involved in the day to day planning and the assaults on colonial authorities. The history drawn into relief in the preceding chapters is as much a story of Haitians acting abroad as it reveals much about the period.

The fundamental pillar of internationalism in the period between the Two World Wars is movement. The collection of activists followed here traveled around the Atlantic to further the goal of liberating people of African descent from the burdens of colonialism. Paul Gilroy, Brent Hayes Edwards, Carole Boyce Davies, Frank Guridy and

others have stressed the importance of routes in defining the Atlantic internationalist efforts.¹ Most of my agents embarked from Haiti to arrive at their sites of involvement. Some, like Garcia, Bellegarde, La Mothe and others repeatedly traveled to multiple destinations in furtherance of the cause. Because they were elite citizens of an ostensibly independent republic, they were able to freely travel. Cadet emerges as the lone representative to the 1919 League of Nations conference because the U.S. American government prohibited the other UNIA delegates from traveling. Famously, Gilroy has employed ships as a metaphor for the Black Atlantic movement. In researching Haitians traveling, I come to settle on the notion of “interconnected system of thoroughfares,” frequently traversed and connected through a series of interchanges. This orientation affords me the ability to make the assertion that the Pan-African Congresses and the anti-occupation movement engaged by Haitians and African Americans are part of the same campaign. While many have described the transnational effort to abate U.S. American presence in Haiti through a North-South analysis, I show that it is linked to the congresses through the shared ideas, ends, and performance of elite blackness and actors.²

¹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 16; Frank Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 4; Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migration and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 3; Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of the Black International* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) 7.

² See; Leon Pamphile, *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001. Millery Polnye, *Douglass to Duvalier: Haitians, African Americans and Pan Americanism 1870-1964*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010; Chanttale F. Verna, *Haiti and the Uses of America: Post Occupation Promises*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017; Felix Jean-Louis, “Haitians, African Americans and the Black International, 1919-1937,” (MA Thesis, Florida International University 2014)

This dissertation also reveals the central role Haitians played in the circulation of letters that defines interwar internationalism. The importance of engaging the written word in exploring efforts of people of African descent to forge a united community has been well documented. What has been understated in the literature is the contribution of Haitians. When Haitians have been discussed, scholars have cited Sajous's collaboration with the Nardal sisters in producing the much-celebrated *Revue du Monde Noire*. Yet Haitian participation was much greater than that. As noted above, they contributed to the periodicals of the major Pan-African groups of Paris. Moreover, staunch pan-Africanist Camille Saint-Jacques launched his own bi-lingual periodical, *Le Courrier des Noirs* (The Messenger of the Blacks) that had a one-year run. Theodora Holly and Theodore Stephens both served as editors of the short-lived French section in the UNIA's *Negro World*. Ludovic Rosemond founded his own journal *Goodwill*, also bi-lingual that sought to further the racial solidarity that undergirded the anti-occupation movement. *Goodwill* had a continuous pressing for the three years of its existence, making it unique amongst many of its contemporaries. Haitian writers role in the circulation of letters affirmed that black internationalism required language dexterity. The cleave of language is one of the major hurdles of diaspora building, and the efforts to render one community legible to another requires lingual agility. Haitians, from a former French colony, in a Caribbean region dominated by Anglophone and Hispanophone speakers, and in the hegemonic sphere of the United States, were adept at multiple forms of communication. Mastery of language afforded elite Haitian men the ability to move between France, the United States, and Cuba, for example.

Pursuing Haitians draws into relief the masculine nature of internationalist spaces. Further, it also acknowledges the gendered gaze of state agents and the archives that serve

as repositories of the movements. Tracey Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Jennifer Anne Boittin, and Carle Boyce Davies have all stressed the major contributions of women to internationalist causes.³ Following these Haitian men stressed the gendered nature of internationalism. More than crowding a room with men, it was activists' masculine performances that defined the era. Boittin has stressed the volatility of the masculinist spaces in Paris. In this dissertation, Saint-Jacques and Lacombe are endemic of this presentation of masculinity. Hence, studying Haitians brought to light how masculinist contests for power, uncompromising leadership, and the refusal to submit to oversight derailed Pan-African solidarity in Afro-francophone spaces. Similarly, the end of the collaboration between Haitians and African Americans was fraught with the paternalism and myopia of male actors, illustrated in their conceptions of the anti-occupation movement.

The Haitians tracked here were quintessential interwar internationalists. They could be found in the major movements, alongside the important figures, and championing the fundamental causes that marked the era. More than that, this dissertation argues that despite low representation, Haitians were disproportionately influential in their sites of activism. In the UNIA, they were at the pinnacle of influence and the vanguard of the international agenda of Garveyism. In the "International New Negro Political Agenda," they emerged as the exemplification of and the leading participants on the global stage. In the Parisian Afro-francophone circles, they stressed the importance of cohesion along racial lines and brought the movement closer to international Marxism. In

³ See; Carole Boyce Davies, *The Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Undergrounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2010); T Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Bricktop's Paris: African American Women Expatriates in Jazz-Age Paris and The Autobiography of Ada Bricktop Smith, or Miss Baker Regrets* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015).

the later period, they forwarded the cause of blackness as international proletarianism; yet, demurred when the demands of the international sought to subsume their black liberationist agenda. In total, they were pan-Africanists who sought to sew together a unified community of people of African descent committed to ameliorating its conditions, Haiti included. In their activism, they inserted Haiti into the anti-colonial fabric. This had the effect of infusing Haiti and its people into the reciprocal relationships that solidify the ties of diaspora.

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