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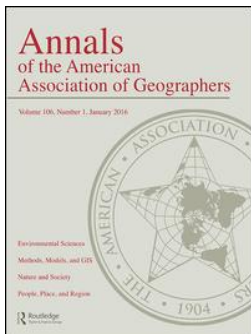
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Toward a Geography of Black Internationalism: Bayard Rustin, Nonviolence, and the Promise of Africa

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This article charts the trip made by civil rights leader Bayard Rustin to West Africa in 1952 and examines the unpublished Africa Program that he subsequently presented to leading U.S. pacifists. I situate Rustin's writings within the burgeoning literature on black internationalism that, despite its clear geographical registers, geographers themselves have as yet made only a modest contribution toward. The article argues that within this literature there remains a tendency to romanticize cross-cultural connections in lieu of critically interrogating their basic, and often competing, claims. I argue that closer attention to the geographies of black internationalism, however, allows us to shape a more diverse and practiced sense of internationalist encounter and exchange. The article reconstructs the multiplicity of Rustin's black internationalist geographies that drew eclectically from a range of pan-African, American, and pacifist traditions. Although each of these was profoundly racialized, each conceptualized race in distinctive ways and thereby had differing understandings of what constituted the international as a geographical arena. By blending these forms of internationalism, Rustin was able to promote a particular model of civil rights that was characteristically internationalist in outlook, nonviolent in principle, and institutional in composition, a model that in selective and uneven ways continues to shape our understanding of the period. *Key Words:* *anticolonialism, Bayard Rustin, black internationalism, civil rights movement, pacifism.*

本文标示出公民权运动领导者贝雅·拉斯丁于1952年到西非的旅程，并检视他随后呈现给美国和平主义领导者的未曾发表的“非洲计画”。我将拉斯丁的写作置放在日益兴盛的黑人国际主义文献之中——尽管其具有明确的地理注记，但地理学者本身却仅对该文献作出微薄的贡献。本文主张，在此类文献中，具有浪漫化跨文化连结以取代批判性地探问其基本且经常相互竞争的宣称之倾向。我却主张，更近身地关注黑人国际主义之地理，让我们能够形塑更为多样且更具务实感的国际主义邂逅与交流。本文重构拉斯丁的黑人国际主义地理中的多重性，该地理折衷地运用泛非洲、美洲以及和平主义的传统。尽管这些传统中的每一项皆深刻地族裔化，但每项皆以特定的方式概念化种族，并因而对于什么构成了作为地理范畴的国际有着不同的理解。拉斯丁透过调和这些国际主义的形式，得以提倡以国际主义为特徵的展望、以非暴力为原则，以及以制度为组成的特定公民权模式，该模式以选择性且不均的方式，持续形塑我们对于彼时的理解。 *关键词:* *反殖民主义, 贝雅·拉斯丁, 黑人国际主义, 公民权运动, 和平主义。*

Este artículo reconstruye el viaje del líder de los derechos civiles Bayard Rustin al África Occidental en 1952 y examina el inédito Programa África, que él presentó inmediatamente después a pacifistas de avanzada de los EE. UU. Yo situó los escritos de Rustin dentro de la floreciente literatura del internacionalismo negro sobre el que, hasta el momento, a pesar de sus claros registros geográficos, los propios geógrafos apenas han hecho modestas contribuciones. En el artículo se argumenta que dentro de esta literatura permanece una tendencia a abocar románticamente las conexiones interculturales en vez de interrogar críticamente sus pretensiones básicas, a menudo competidoras entre sí. Sostengo que una más cercana atención a las geografías del internacionalismo negro nos permitirá, sin embargo, configurar un sentido más diverso y práctico del encuentro e intercambio internacionalistas. El artículo reconstruye la multiplicidad de las geografías internacionalistas negras de Rustin que se apoyaron eclécticamente en una gama de tradiciones panafricanas, americanas y pacifistas. Aunque todas ellas estuvieron profundamente racializadas, cada una conceptualizó la raza de manera diferente y por eso mismo se presentaron diversos entendimientos de lo que constituía a lo internacional como palestra geográfica. Al mezclar estas formas de internacionalismo, Rustin pudo promover un modelo particular de derechos civiles que era característicamente internacionalista en actitud, no violento por principio e institucional en composición, modelo que de manera selectiva y desigual continúa configurando nuestro entendimiento del período. *Palabras clave:* *anticolonialismo, Bayard Rustin, internacionalismo negro, movimiento de los derechos civiles, pacifismo.*

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The geographers have led me to think it a land that was the “white man’s grave” . . . a place of wild animals, disease and superstition—that was it—the “Dark Continent.”

—Bayard Rustin (1952a, 6)

In August 2013, on the fiftieth anniversary of the March on Washington, President Barack Obama announced that Bayard Rustin had been posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the highest civilian award that could be bestowed on a U.S. citizen. The award marked the culmination of a long journey by which Rustin, the quintessential outsider who was once characterized by J. Edgar Hoover as a “suspected communist and known homosexual subversive,” had been fully integrated into mainstream U.S. history.

Rustin’s political career spanned six decades and his close association with figures like A. Philip Randolph, A. J. Muste, and Martin Luther King, Jr. exposed him to the most important strands of U.S. radicalism that bridged the labor, peace, and civil rights movements. Rustin made his name as a pioneer of Gandhian non-violence who worked alongside King and, most famously, organized the 1963 March on Washington (Figure 1). Whereas this wide-ranging contribution might have been partly concealed at the time of his death in 1987, in the past twenty years it has been more widely recognized. This was reflected in the release of an award-winning documentary film in 2002 (Kates and Singer 2002), Rustin’s collected writings in 2003 (Rustin, Carbado, and Weise 2003), personal letters in 2012 (Rustin and Long 2012), and a handful of book-length biographies (J. Anderson 1997; D’Emilio 2003; Podair 2009).

These sources highlight Rustin’s role as a leading U.S. pacifist who, from the early 1940s, directed the peace movement toward the issue of racial justice. Pacifists like Rustin argued that there was an urgent need to develop nonviolent techniques for desegregating the United States and, from the founding of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942 to the first Freedom Ride in 1947, they undertook a range of early experiments in this direction. Promoting the strategic efficacy of nonviolence (civil disobedience, sit-ins, and boycotts), unlike the total moral commitment required for pacifism, allowed peace activists to work alongside civil rights groups in the United States or anticolonial movements overseas that were not principally pacifist in constitution or committed to pacifism as an absolute article of belief.



Figure 1. Bayard Rustin at a news briefing on the Civil Rights March on Washington, 27 August 1963. Source: Library of Congress.

Yet accounts of Rustin’s past have been constrained by the U.S. national borders in a way that his life never was. His entry in the *Biographical Dictionary of the American Left*, for example, makes only passing reference to his “lengthy visit to India” and no mention at all of his work with leaders in Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, or Zambia during the 1950s or 1960s alone, all of which informed his global sense of the race struggle (Garrow 1986). Although the international careers of other, comparable black leaders have been charted extensively in recent years, Rustin has rarely been considered in this way.

This article reexamines Rustin’s role in light of recent scholarship on black internationalism and specifically an African American tradition of internationalism that connected activists in the United States to a global arena of circulating ideas, people, and artefacts in the midtwentieth century. Yet as our understanding of the fuller scope of these international encounters has expanded, so too has the propensity to fetishize them. It is not uncommon to simply trace or describe the existence of cross-border connections in lieu of developing a more critical conceptual apparatus through which to differentiate them or challenge their basic assumptions. Too often black travels abroad are folded together to form a singular, coherent black

internationalist project at the expense of examining how moments of exchange differed, who organized and paid for them, and why.

Addressing this challenge foregrounds the central claim of this article: Closer attention to the geographies of black internationalism allows us to shape a more diverse and practiced sense of the spatial relations forged through black internationalist encounters. Geography offers a multitude of perspectives to critically examine the individuals and institutions that reached out to the international, the alliances they forged to do so, and the power it leveraged them within a contested global arena of competing political ideas and movements. Attending to these specificities unsettles the stability of any singular notion of race or geography from which black internationalist histories are commonly written. Although to date geographers themselves have remained marginal to these discussions, such an approach allows us to take seriously McKittrick's (2011) concerns that contemporary geographical scholarship, although laudable in its aim to honor and critique racial injustice, can work paradoxically to reinforce its dehumanizing tenets. Instead, the field of black geographies must stand against this reality and develop a new system of knowledge, "wherein the brutalities of racial violence are not descriptively rehearsed, but always already demand practical activities of resistance, encounter, and anti-colonial thinking" (McKittrick 2011, 955).

The article draws on the case study of Bayard Rustin's trip to West Africa in 1952. It reconstructs the significance of this visit through a selection of his own published accounts and his unpublished "Africa Program," which he presented to leading U.S. pacifists at the end of that year. In light of the preceding information, the purpose of this analysis is not simply to identify Rustin as a previously overlooked black American commentator on Africa (although this is, of course, important) but rather to show how he, like many other black activists, did not develop a singular political or geographical conception of internationalism but weaved together multiple threads in response to specific challenges and with specific audiences in mind. The article retraces the multiplicity of Rustin's black internationalist trajectories (pan-African, American, Pacifist) that sat at the intersection of various identities (black, gay, socialist, pacifist, American) and shows how this blend of internationalism was intimately connected to how he envisaged the civil rights movement as a political project and his own evolving role within it. Rustin argued that the attainment of black political aspirations within the

United States was both dependent on and a natural extension of the success of nonviolence against racial segregation in Africa. Accordingly, he sought to develop the peace movement into an instrument that could connect emerging civil rights activists and anti-colonial leaders in a way that emphasized a fundamentally shared experience of racial injustice.

The article develops this argument over four parts. The first situates Rustin within the wider literature on African American activists, artists, and intellectuals who visited and wrote of Africa during this period. The second examines the diverse internationalist connections that Rustin promoted through his travel accounts, and the third shows how he sought to institutionally mobilize these through his Africa Program. The final section posits why Rustin's internationalism continues to matter by showing how the Rustinian model of civil rights has shaped our understanding of the period. Yet invariably this process has been selective and uneven—as much as Rustin's internationalism helps explain contemporary accounts, I argue, it also opens up space for conceiving of a different kind of movement, the promise of which remains unfulfilled.

Threads of Black Internationalism

Over the past fifteen years, increasing attention has been paid to placing African American history within an international and transnational framework. These approaches have dislodged narrow, nationalistic accounts of the civil rights movement by demonstrating how domestic claims for black citizenship were often framed in terms explicitly conversant with U.S. foreign policy objectives. This had strength in the context of rising African and Asian nationhood in the 1950s and 1960s when the United States was consolidating its role as a global, moral leader (Plummer 1996, 2003, 2013; Von Eschen 1997; Dudziak 2000; Layton 2000; Borstelmann 2003). From Wilsonian "self-determination" (Rosenberg 2006; Manela 2007) to the newly established United Nations and the language of human rights (C. Anderson 2003), African Americans have long utilized and redefined U.S. internationalist ideals. Similarly, political developments within emerging nations—from the Abyssinian crisis in 1935 to the first large-scale Afro-Asian conference in Bandung in 1955—drew widespread sympathy from black Americans (Meriwether 2002). These developments reflect how race as a category was constructed and challenged globally (Singh 2004; Lake and Reynolds 2008;

Marable and Agard-Jones 2008; M. O. West, Martin, and Wilkins 2009) and how black internationalism operated as a rewriting of the scales of solidarity, resistance, and radicalism (Makalani 2011; Featherstone 2012, 2013, 2015; Slate 2012a).

Although this internationalist seam of African American politics has been valuably excavated, a tendency persists to fetishize international connections themselves, flattening out their diverse trajectories and meanings. Immerwahr (2007) suggested that “although the recognition of internationalism in recent studies has added vital themes and characters to the study of black history, it has yet to draw them fully into focus. There remains a tendency, in discussion of internationalism of any sort, to romanticize the mere presence of transnational connections and to decline to make any more than general comments on their significance” (276). Worse still, perhaps, by marking out every border crossing as exceptional, we risk reinforcing the very boundaries that these approaches purport to overcome (Raza, Roy, and Zachariah 2015).

Black internationalism was a deeply divided project, more so than is commonly acknowledged. This is especially true of its two central components: Black internationalists had very different conceptions of race both within and beyond blackness and, therefore, had a very different sense of what constituted the international as a geographical arena. How do we reconcile Rustin’s visit, for example, alongside his black internationalist contemporaries: the Du Boisian color line (Du Bois 1903) with the Soviet-inspired vision of Paul Robeson (Baldwin 2002), or the Islamic internationalism of Malcolm X (Daulatzai 2012) with Martin Luther King, Jr.’s brave new age of “geographical togetherness” (King 1957, 28)? Each of these conceptualizes race in subtly different ways and thereby maps the international within slightly different parameters. This case is evident in the work of any number of writers who have mapped the geographical contours of black internationalism beyond Africa itself, to include the Caribbean (James 1998; Guridy 2010; Polyné 2010; Putnam 2013), India (Horne 2009; Dixie and Eisenstadt 2011; Slate 2012b), the South Pacific (Shilliam 2015), or Asia more generally (Kelley and Esch 1999; Gallicchio 2000; Prashad 2001; Ho and Mullen 2008; Onishi 2013; Frazier 2014).

Studies like these highlight how racial borders, like national ones, had the ability to be porous in so many ways, and yet remarkably rigid in others. Black internationalism intersected with other movements (communism, feminism, socialism, religion) in ways that are

not easily disentangled. As Makalani (2011) showed, although black radicals plotted their internationalism through the corridors of global Marxism; for example, it “represented less the source and more the moment of their politics” (5). These changing terms underscore the strategic flexibility of activists to often champion global black liberation while resisting any singular political or geographical conception of what black unity entailed. As Raza, Roy, and Zachariah (2015) remarked, “In a world of apparently infinite hopes and possibilities, individuals journeyed across the terrain of internationalist engagements, geographically and intellectually, while promiscuously drawing from all that these labels describe” (xii). Rustin was exemplary in this regard: His internationalism was an amalgamation of diverse political currents and familiar internationalist tropes, with no one assuming primacy. Instead reaching out allowed Rustin, like other internationalists, to promote a particular perspective on the various movements within which he sought to shape a role.

A number of recent studies have further problematized transnational accounts by exploring the politics of gender and sexuality in shaping black internationalist movements. This work has foregrounded the voices of black women activists and intellectuals (Andrews 2011; Blain 2015), including the likes of Shirley Graham Du Bois (Horne 2000; Horne and Stevens 2009; Gao 2013), Amy Jacques Garvey (Taylor 2002), and Eslanda Robeson (Mahon 2006; Ransby 2013). These restlessly determined race women, although commonly overshadowed by their more prominent husbands (W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Paul Robeson, respectively), fused together feminist agency with a deep commitment to racial uplift. They navigated the masculine terrain of black political activism in ways that both meaningfully contributed to the movements they served and challenged the private and domesticated role of women within them. Throughout the twentieth century, generations of African American women built politically dynamic forms of black, feminist internationalism, anchoring “their sense of themselves as women within a common racial identity that was grounded in shared experiences of oppression and resistance” (Materson 2009, 35).

Similarly, recent scholarship has examined the complex interplay among race, sexuality, and mobility, emphasizing the ways by which “queerness challenges not just the nation’s familial metaphor of belonging, but disrupts national coherence itself”; that is, queer subjectivity is “always already extra-national” (Wesling 2008, 31). Rustin’s homosexuality is

important to understanding his intellectual and practical engagement with internationalism and, as we see later, disrupting his efforts to institutionalize it. In this sense, Rustin's internationalism can be read alongside other black, queer contemporaries (e.g., Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin) who conceptualized their experiences of U.S. race relations through an exilic lens. As Holcomb (2007) showed in the case of McKay, the mobility offered by international travel was as much political as it was geographical, navigating among the borders of black, queer, and Marxist as he moved between Harlem, London, Moscow, and Marseille. Likewise, Baldwin (2002) showed how Langston Hughes's travel writings from Tashkent to Tokyo (vividly recounted in his autobiography *I Wonder as I Wander* [Hughes 1956]) were constructed in a way "so as to gesture toward the collaboration of racial, sexual and national boundaries in the American imagination" (Baldwin 2002, 91).

Far from holding a common outlook (politically, racially, geographically), black internationalists therefore encompassed a diverse range of overlapping identities, ideologies, and trajectories, each with a distinct history and geography. There is a need to more closely attend to these geographical dimensions of black internationalism and to problematize current scholarship, which rarely has an explicit engagement with the political construction of scale and the international itself. As Featherstone (2012) suggested, "Rather than there being ahistorical forms of identification, ways of articulating solidarity are always partial, limited and situated" (8). Closer attention to the localities and spatialities of internationalism can help destabilize its varied assumptions while retaining sensitivity to the overall ambition and generative possibilities of internationalist connections (Featherstone 2012, 2013, 2015; Hodder, Legg, and Heffernan 2015).

Geographers, however, have remained marginal to these debates, despite their obvious geographical registers. As Waligora-Davis (2006) argued, the "contours of African American utopian discourses are marked by [the] imperative to rearticulate space, to reimagine black futures which are otherwise denied by racisms" (82). This imperative has been skilfully considered in the otherwise burgeoning field of black geographies (e.g., McKittrick and Woods 2007). There has been a sustained effort to rethink the civil rights movement; for example, by examining how racial injustice was coupled to wider structural transformations of the U.S. economy (Wilson 2000a, 2000b; Inwood 2013). Moreover, the ways in which African American political

consciousness connected to anticolonial struggles abroad reflects a wide range of geographical imaginations, as much as historical ones. This case has been astutely made in relation to the geographical thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Inwood 2009), Malcolm X (Tyner 2006b), the Black Panther Party (Tyner 2006a), or the multiracial left in Los Angeles (Pulido 2006), each of which provides important intellectual insights for my own analysis that follows. As Heynen (2009) documented of the Black Panther's Breakfast for Children scheme, for example, Rustin's Africa Program similarly reveals how black activism was adept at constructing local, national, and international scales of political engagement in ways that destabilize the binary spatial axes of nationalism and internationalism; integration and separatism.

Elsewhere, the work of historical geographers on the cultures and networks of empire provide obvious theoretical and methodological direction on how to map cross-cultural exchanges in ways attentive to wider structures of racial and colonial power (Lambert and Lester 2006; Ogborn 2008). In the twentieth century, however, black activists negotiated these exchanges against a backdrop of globally expanding U.S. power, the economic, political, and cultural foundations of which geographers have been particularly instructive at tracing and critiquing (e.g., Smith 2003, 2005; Farish 2010; Domosh 2013; Nally and Taylor 2015). Drawing on their insights, this article shows the complex and contradictory role that black activists played in this story—operating in ways that neither blindly reproduced "American values" nor were wholly subversive of them. Through work in all of these areas (black geographies, imperial networks, twentieth-century U.S. internationalism) geographers provide clear insights for remapping black internationalism in more diverse and practiced terms. In light of this, I now turn to examining the role that Bayard Rustin could play in this story by showing how his internationalism was rooted in competing conceptions of race, nationalism, and pacifism from which he drew eclectically and strategically.

Visions of Africa

In the early 1950s, Rustin was the race relations co-secretary of the American Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). Outside of the historic peace churches the FOR, founded in 1915, and the War Resisters' League (WRL), formed in 1923, were the twin pillars of U.S. pacifism; the former was based in Nyack, New York, with a nationwide

coverage of religious ministers and intellectuals, and the latter was based primarily in New York City, staffed by radicals and socialists. As broad-front peace groups collapsed during World War II, membership of these smaller organizations swelled. Between 1941 and 1945 the FOR's income almost doubled to \$100,000 (\$1.3 million in 2016), with its dues-paying membership reaching a new high just short of 15,000 (Wittner 1969). In 1940 the FOR appointed A. J. Muste as its Executive Secretary, a figure who had made his name throughout the 1930s as a union organizer. Under Muste's leadership, the FOR aggregated a more radical national staff (including Rustin and George Houser as race relations co-secretaries) that sought to popularize nonviolent methods for use in a range of social justice arenas in the United States, including most notably against racial segregation.

In the early 1950s, similar nonviolent campaigns against apartheid in South Africa attracted widespread attention from pacifists and civil rights groups alike. Rustin and Houser helped found Americans for South African Resistance in 1952, one of the first organizations in the United States to directly support an African freedom movement. They argued that apartheid had clear parallels with segregation in the United States and that not only were movements elsewhere on the continent amenable to the influence of pacifists but that there was a natural convergence between their race work at home and abroad. As Houser (2003) told an audience at the fiftieth anniversary of the American Committee on Africa in 2003, "This work was always conceived as part and parcel of the civil rights struggle . . . the struggle in Africa was to us, as Americans, an extension of the battle on the home front."

In light of this, Rustin was sent to West Africa in 1952 (organized and sponsored by FOR and the American Friends Service Committee) ostensibly to build contacts between U.S. pacifists and African independence leaders, as well as to gather resources to interpret the so-called African revolution to U.S. audiences on a four-month speaking tour when he returned. In actuality, having met the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru several years earlier, work with emerging African leaders would further cement Rustin's growing credibility as one of the most promising black figures in the United States and as a leading exponent of nonviolence in issues of racial justice. This held the longer term potential of fulfilling U.S. pacifists' elusive search for what they termed their "Negro Gandhi" (Nonviolence in the South 1956).



Figure 2. Bayard Rustin (right) with Kwame Nkrumah (left) in 1952. *Source:* Walter Naegle, Executor of the Bayard Rustin Estate.

After long delays in London, Rustin was eventually only able to obtain visas for the Gold Coast (today Ghana) and Nigeria. At the end of August 1952 he flew to Accra, where he spoke at length with Kwame Nkrumah, the prime minister of the Gold Coast who would become the first president and prime minister of Ghana after independence in 1957 (Figure 2). In mid-September, Rustin left for Nigeria to meet Nnamdi Azikiwe, the country's leading nationalist, who would also become Nigeria's first president following independence in 1963 (Figure 3). Rustin's six weeks on the continent stirred passions both personal and political. He admired Nkrumah and Azikiwe immensely and struck up enduring friendships with both. In meetings with Nkrumah at the Convention People's Party headquarters in Accra, he praised the Ghanaian leader's "sound, down-to-earth political realism" and "burning



Figure 3. Bayard Rustin (left) with Nnamdi Azikiwe (right) in 1952. *Source:* Walter Naegle, Executor of the Bayard Rustin Estate.

revolutionary spirit,” which, according to Rustin, understood the shared pursuit of racial equality in the United States and Ghana (Rustin n.d.-b). In Nigeria, he spent much of his time at Azikiwe’s home in Lagos. In Azikiwe, he found a natural political ally and was encouraged to return permanently to train and direct young freedom fighters in nonviolent resistance (see Executive committee minutes 1952).

When Rustin returned to the United States he embarked on a four-month speaking tour recounting his recent travels. He also penned five articles that, alongside some twenty photographs, were posted to the publisher of *Afro-American* newspapers in Baltimore (see Rustin 1952c). The *Afro-American* was a leading black internationalist voice in the mid-twentieth century—exemplified by the overlapping image of Africa and America that appeared on its masthead (Muhammad 2011). Accordingly, the *Afro-American* was a natural outlet for Rustin’s reports on how “Africa looks [towards] colored America” (Rustin 1952a). Yet the reports point to the selective way that Rustin traversed the ideological terrain of internationalism, drawing eclectically from a range of competing perspectives that fused together pan-African, (African) American, and Pacifist traditions.

Pan-Africanism

Rustin argued that Nkrumah and Azikiwe’s skill was found in their pursuit of a supposedly innate African social and political model of democracy, centered on pristine African village culture (e.g., Rustin n.d.-b). His reports positioned contemporary independence claims in terms that emphasized an illustrious, black, civilizational past in Africa that predated European conquest. Like many African Americans abroad, his travels helped to dispel what Marable (2005) termed the “historical logic of whiteness,” a belief that if “‘race’ itself is a fraudulent concept, devoid of scientific reality, ‘racism’ can only be rationalized and justified through the suppression of black counter-narratives” (20). Rustin’s accounts sit within this politicized form of pan-African history, what Moses (1998) referred to as a historiography of progress and decline—a perspective that highlights the eclipse of an ancient past and celebrates the progression toward a shared future. This tradition was common in African American newspapers and periodicals, including the *Afro-American* in which Rustin was writing, and fused together history, politics, and mythology to counter the point, as one article put it, that many “Negroes today are

not even aware that their race has a history” (“Ancient civilization of the Negro” 1925).

It was important for Rustin, therefore, as Tyner (2006b) observed of Malcolm X, to articulate a “Pan-Africanist-centered vision of Africa, one that countered the geographical knowledges produced in the media, educational systems, and elsewhere” (118). Rustin’s reports and talks posed counterhistorical evidence to dispel the falsehood that black people were somehow incapable of civilization. Touring the bush regions of Nigeria, he admired the indigenous art and tribal governance. He wrote, “I have visited a black king whose forefathers were using iron . . . when the British were in the stone age. . . . I have seen a system of decentralized democracy unto nothing the west has yet devised. . . . I have seen sculpture in wood and stone . . . that makes the classical works of Greece and Rome seem cold and photographic” (Rustin 1952d, 6). Rustin was an avid art collector throughout his life, including hundreds of African artefacts acquired in the 1950s. Rustin’s biographer, Jervis Anderson, told the *New York Times* that “of all the civil rights figures, Bayard Rustin’s range of political and esthetic interests was the broadest, absolutely,” and George Houser reflected that “although he was never a black nationalist, these objects helped to identify his roots, his past, and they had deep meaning for him” (Rozhon 1998). Some items of his West African collection went back more than 3,000 years and underscored the kind of vibrant civilizational past that Rustin excavated in his reports and talks.

Rustin used African history to cultivate a black, international political space that pulled together the fortunes of black Africans and Americans. He wrote back from Accra that “in this dirty, poor, ambitious city, I find much that I find in Harlem. We left here in 1619, yet the people sing, walk, laugh, cry, dance, and strive in a way that is like 125th Street and Lenox Avenue. I seem to know and to understand them as I do nowhere else but in Harlem” (cited in J. Anderson 1997, 146). These cultural and historical ties were carefully calibrated to maximize their political affect. This was framed in an unambiguous call to action: “Colored Americans have a great duty before them. . . . There can be no rest until Africa, that ancient land afire with the love of liberty, is free” (Rustin 1952a, 6). In positioning African Americans alongside their African brothers culturally and historically, this call seemed clear and reasonable. He wrote that “Africans not only welcome us, they urge us to come and join them in their struggle” and that “raising our horizons to include interest in, and service to, Africa . . . we shall gain that perspective and spiritual power which will give us new

insight, and energy for the battle of Jim Crow at home” (Rustin 1952a, 6).

Rustin argued that West Africans used racial progress in the United States as a common benchmark. Azikiwe and Nkrumah had both studied at the African American Lincoln University, where they had come face-to-face with stalwarts of the U.S. racial scene, men like A. Philip Randolph, Walter White, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Whether referring to Azikiwe’s defeat of “Jim Crow” in the European section of Lagos or his trade school policies as the “Tuskegee of Nigeria” (Rustin 1952d), Rustin translated West African political developments in terms explicitly suggestive of U.S. racial politics. In doing so he naturalized international black solidarity. This was crucial, he believed, in countering the introversion of the emerging civil rights movement, which presented a profound “spiritual danger” (Rustin 1952a).

(African) American Internationalism

For all that Rustin presented of a pan-African ancestral and civilizational past in Africa, however, he also understood the African Revolution as something that needed to be both internal and external, ruthlessly modernizing and committed to social liberalization. The contribution of African Americans that Rustin was seeking to galvanize could be most effective in sympathetically directing the struggle against those injustices that Africans themselves practiced. In one article, he wrote that “revolution must be directed not only against colonialism, but also the ignorant and disruptive elements and customs within the African community . . . against superstition, ignorance, disease and tribalism” (Rustin n.d.-b). Failing this, Africa might “reach independence but miss freedom” (Rustin n.d.-c). The admiration he held for Azikiwe reflected his staunchly liberal position on social issues, including rights and jobs for women, and his opposition to “privilege in any form,” which struck a chord with Rustin whose first, short-lived foray into politics was with the American Communist party, before rejecting communism to become a lifelong socialist (Rustin 1952d). He believed that African Americans were uniquely positioned to provide a perspective that was at once inside and outside African politics; his reports therefore promoted difference as much as commonality.

Although one thread of Rustin’s internationalism excavated pan-African roots shared by black Americans and Africans, his internationalist vision was also

decidedly American, framed by the possibilities and limitations of the Cold War viewed from Washington. Calls for liberalization mirrored a developmental discourse toward Africa that, as geographers have recently identified, by the early 1950s increasingly shaped many Americans’ sense of their international duty (Domosh 2015; Nally and Taylor 2015). Rustin’s visit closely followed President Truman’s 1949 inaugural address, the so-called Four Point Speech, which mapped out what Mazower (2012) called a “breathtaking redefinition of the U.S. national interest” (275). In it, Truman outlined a dramatic new global role for the United States that would internationalize the social and economic achievements of the New Deal by exporting technical and scientific expertise. For many, this was a bright, forward vision of U.S. internationalism—one focused not on Europe but the “third world”; not on strategic military calculations but on social progress and development. Recasting internationalism in these terms opened up the promise of America’s global influence to groups who had previously been largely critical of the country’s overseas ventures. Black activists like Rustin, therefore, no less helped craft this particular U.S. relationship with the postwar world, and emerging African states specifically. This was done in ways that at once challenged, redirected, and reinforced the rise of the “American Century” and charted a distinct role that African Americans might play within it. During his time in Africa, Rustin did not embrace an alternative sense of racial identity (pan-African or otherwise), even if he might have been encouraged to think more widely about the one he already held.

Pacifist Internationalism

In some senses, then, Rustin was a fairly conventional (if often overlooked) black internationalist. Yet it is perhaps too convenient to position him in this way—an account that although mostly correct is also largely incomplete. Rustin’s motivations to travel to Africa bore the distinct mark of his pacifism and the pacifist movement that had organized and funded the trip. In this account, Rustin is one of a range of leading pacifists who sought to build international connections during the 1950s and 1960s between the U.S. peace movement and emerging leaders in the decolonizing world. A considerable part of Rustin’s admiration for Nkrumah, for example, was as an advocate of peace, enshrined in the Ghanaian leader’s twin preoccupations of nonalignment and nonviolence.

Nkrumah's promotion of African neutrality and nonalignment (a refusal to side with either Cold War antagonist) had a tremendous moral and strategic appeal for peace activists operating in the constrained political climate of the 1950s United States—a period in which dissent itself had become a fundamental threat to the “American way.” Overtly pro-Soviet or communist-led peace initiatives, like the 1951 American Peace Crusade, were flagged by the Subversive Activities Control Board and found their freedom to organize prohibitively curtailed (Wittner 1969). Pacifists could not escape this new public mood or the state-sponsored anticommunist purges that accompanied it (Mollin 2006). Nkrumah's vocal championing of nonalignment offered activists (of all kinds) a means of negotiating this political climate. Through this so-called third way, pacifists were able to use anti-colonialism to position themselves squarely as both liberators and anticommunists, offering real practical possibilities to construct international solidarities within an atmosphere of powerful government hostility (Danielson 2014).

Second, what Rustin witnessed in West Africa, and his travels in India previously, confirmed for him that Gandhian nonviolence could be the defining feature of racial emancipation across three continents. This was Rustin's distinctly internationalized conception of what civil rights leader James Farmer (1942) termed “the race logic of pacifism.” Rustin saw this promise in Nkrumah's vocal support of nonviolence, exemplified in his pamphlet *What I Mean by Positive Action* (Nkrumah and Convention People's Party 1949) and in the Ghanaian struggle for independence more broadly, which openly identified the Gandhian movement as their model (see Sutherland and Meyer 2000).

Despite championing “blackness,” Rustin mapped a slightly different political constellation: a line of descent that did not stretch from the great African civilizations of the past (although he recognized their importance) but from the nonviolent anticolonialism of Gandhi, Nehru, Nkrumah, and Mandela. Although still profoundly racialized, it was a different conception of racial solidarity that drew on the shared experience of colonialism and nonviolence among the wider Afro-Asiatic world. This reflected less a conventional pan-Africanism than what Slate (2012b) termed a “colored cosmopolitanism,” a form of internationalism couched between “an inclusive humanism that defied narrow, chauvinist definitions of race, religion, or nation whilst simultaneously defending the unity of ‘colored’ peoples” (66), more broadly defined. Rustin

wrote, “We Negro Americans must take note, Nkrumah, Gbedemah and a handful of black men, like Gandhi and Nehru before them, have demonstrated once again that nonviolence is the true bearer of racial justice” (Rustin n.d.-b). By recounting a dynamic, anticolonial tradition of nonviolence, Rustin was able to bring a particular version of black internationalism into being, reconfiguring its racial and geographical contours along the way. For Rustin, nonviolence was more than simply a tactical repertoire of resistance techniques (strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience) but a spatial mechanism that could build lines of commonality across distance and difference and, thereby, embed and (re)shape racial solidarity itself.

The Africa Program

Rustin sought to institutionalize this blend of internationalism through his innovative Africa Program, which he proposed to the FOR council at the end of 1952 (Rustin n.d.-a). In it, Rustin argued that by using anticolonialism to crystallize popular support, African liberation struggles presented a way for the peace movement to build a cross-body of popular support in the United States. In this, Rustin's argument was strategically simple: Racism has a universal pattern, and whether it occurred in Ghana or Mississippi, it needed to be confronted collectively. Jim Crow and colonialism were not separate structures but a single system with different faces and forms. If the white supremacist ideologies that underpinned them were essentially the same, Rustin argued, then the techniques that pacifists had been developing against segregation in North Carolina could be seamlessly exported to tackle colonialism in Lagos (Rustin 1952b).

In the United States, Rustin envisaged that the program would bring together academics, newspaper editors, black leaders, peace groups, women's and labor groups, as well as financially supporting African leaders to tour the United States. In ways that clearly bear the marks of Rustin's American internationalism, pacifists would act as a pipeline for delivering technical and material support to independence leaders on the continent. The sending of clothing, books, scientific material, teachers, and agricultural experts would all be supplemented with a limited but lively program of campaigning at the United Nations—giving the FOR a more “legitimate legislative function” (“Africans may appeal to UN” 1950). This would be augmented with a Servants of Africa movement to address

internal issues of tribalism, treatment of women, and social and economic inequality.

The Africa Program reflected Rustin's practical concerns as a strategist. Although he recognized the vastness of what he was proposing, he believed that in the first instance pacifists could act effectively and cheaply as a logistical node, connecting concerned groups in the United States with African contacts, including those that he had already made. In the long term, however, he saw that an African turn for U.S. pacifists could attract considerable African American attention. It would be a central pillar to mobilizing black nonviolence in the United States and recruiting large numbers of new black members to peace organizations, along with the financial dues this would entail. This optimism reflected Rustin's belief that, despite pacifism's languid reputation, one could resourcefully take advantage of more prevalent racial and international anxieties to secure support. He noted that the issue of African liberation was

a hot one consciously and subconsciously; the fact is that subconsciously white people have a deep guilt feeling about the injustice to Africa coupled with a great fear of black men using violence. Efforts to get them to back non-violence is creative when we give them an active moral and financial role to play . . . many Negroes in America can be more readily brought to an interest in pacifism through an interest in Africa than could be done in any other way. (Rustin n.d.-a)

Above all, the proposal was a deeply personal one. Rustin's program was not simply any other appeal for the organization's tight resources but reflected, in his words, the "deep sense of calling I have to the issue of African freedom . . . a calling that I cannot ignore" (Rustin 1952b). He was entirely committed and, should the committee decide not to approve it, he would take a leave of absence irrespective to pursue the project independently. He planned to take a year's leave to return to Nigeria to trial the program that he had already been discussing with Azikiwe and Nkrumah. Once back in Nigeria he would set up a training center that would connect anticolonial groups from across the continent, train activists in nonviolent resistance, and act as an organizational base from which to lead further campaigns. It would also host promising African American activists to train them in nonviolence and encourage them to see their activism in a wider international context.

The FOR's National Council prevaricated. They recognized that there was a "real tie-in" between their race

work in the United States and the "African situation" and that "special attention to Africa" was warranted as part of this responsibility (Executive committee minutes 1953). At the meeting, Rustin was passionate that the severity of the struggle required pacifists to develop a nonviolent strategy to undermine imperialism and that a black American with a reputation in using nonviolence against racial segregation was essential to the task. Indeed, the committee had no difficulty in accepting that Rustin "had a unique entre for selling non-violence to African leaders and that his experiences in racial conflict in the U.S., besides being a Negro, enabled him to win the confidence of indigenous African groups as no white man could" (Sayre 1953). Yet the project was enormously expensive, was politically divisive, and risked siphoning off valuable staff time from the U.S. racial scene that, in 1953, was at an increasingly critical juncture.

At close, the committee voted to back Rustin's program, setting in motion a series of financial and logistical cogs. Pacifists organized for him to leave for England in May 1953, confer with African contacts, and then depart for Nigeria in mid-June for at least two years. Once there, he would be tasked with tailoring nonviolence of the kind he had been developing in the United States for use in African liberation struggles. It was agreed that Rustin would lead the African end of the project and his race relations co-secretary, George Houser, would organize black students in the United States and prepare for prominent African leaders to visit. In so doing, the FOR's race program was now seen through an explicitly internationalist framework, one that intellectually and tactically tied together the fortunes of black Americans and Africans. Rustin's work in Nigeria would be the first step of a permanent pacifist presence on the continent that would link the civil rights movement and its leaders directly with emerging African anticolonists, under the financial support of the U.S. peace movement.

Two weeks later Rustin arrived in California for another speaking tour to fundraise for his upcoming trip. He spoke at an event sponsored by the Association of University Women at the Pasadena Athletic Club. While he was walking back to his hotel at 2:00 a.m., two white men in a car pulled up slowly beside him. Rustin, according to the men, asked "us if we wanted a good time . . . [he said] that he couldn't offer us much, but he could blow us" (cited in D'Emilio 2003, 191). Rustin was in the back seat of the car giving oral sex to one of the men when two police officers approached and arrested them. That afternoon the

PASADENA POLICE DEPARTMENT Pasadena 12, Calif.		FELONY REPORT (CR 14)	
PC 288-A (Sex Perversion) REPORT Classification of Crime		Case No. 66360	
Victim (Firm)..... If Business Firm Last Firm Name	Where Committed: Public Street, 2, Pasadena, Cal.	Date Committed: Wed. 1-21-53	Time: 2:30 AM
Victim (Person).....	Date Reported: 1-21-53	Time: 2:20 AM	
Main Address.....	Reported To: Pasadena, PD	Reported By: On View (Heath & Stornie)	
Bus. Address.....	Address: 4422, PD	Phone:	
Bus. Phone..... Res. Phone.....	Investigating Officer: Heath & Stornie	Suspect: Bayard Rustin	
Person Attacked: Two male white-Adults	Property Attached: Sex-organs (Penis)	Hair Color: Black	Eye Color: Brown
How Attached: Hand & Mouth	How Attached: Hand & Mouth	Height: 6-1	Weight: 177
Means of Attack: Mouth	Means of Attack: Mouth	Nationality: Negro	Build: Med
Object of Attack: Sexual gratification	Object of Attack: Sexual gratification	Occupation: Lecturer	Marks: None
Trade or Business: Waved at subjects and asked same if they were looking for a good time. Climbed into vehicle.	Vehicle Used: 1940 Olds, 4 Dr. Cal. 4N 3381	Suspect: Marvin Wayne Long	
Person Arrested: Louis Banno, M-4-23, 5-11, 170, Slend, Brn Hair & eyes (Carp.)	Date: 1-21-53	Department Number:	
This subject and the above named suspect arrested this date on the aforementioned charge.			
Give details of crime, additional victims, and description and value of property:			
While on routine patrol Officer's Heath and Stornie observed the above mentioned vehicle parked just south of Green st. on the the south west corner of So. Raye mond. Upon closer inspection by Officer Heath the above #2 subject and #1 were sitting in the back seat of this car and #1 subject was bent down over #2. #3 suspect at this time was sitting in the front seat of this car.			
Both Officer's observed suspects #2 attempting to zip up his pants which were open at this time, and his penis out. Subjects at this time stated that they were merely sitting there. All subjects were taken out of the vehicle and separated and subject #2 stated that they had just met #1 and that he had propositioned them, in regards to copulating their private parts, which in fact was carried out by the three above suspects #2 & 3 taking the passive parts. (See statements and Recordings)			
All subjects at this time admitted their parts in this case.			
Subjects were transported to this station where statements and recordings were made of their action in regards to this matter, they were at that time booked on the above charge. Suspects #2 & 3 transported by Sgt. Olsen.			
The aforementioned vehicle was completely searched at this time, during the course of the search a blood stained mattress cover was found in the trunk of this vehicle (those Officer's unable to determine type of blood, Animal or Human except test) Vehicle does not belong to any of these parties, Reg. to Ford W. Jamison, 5237 N. Reno St. Temple City. This party contacted by Officer Heath and same stated that he had loaned this vehicle to subject #2. Officer W. Stornie PC84 E/W Depts to; 3 Det., 1 Ctl. 1 Vice. (Cont.) Officer R. Heath P371 1-21-53			

Figure 4. Arrest record for Bayard Rustin, 21 January 1953. Source: Bayard Rustin Papers, Library of Congress, Box 23, Folder 1.

judge sentenced him to sixty days imprisonment for sex perversion (Figure 4). Rustin's arrest, although a relatively minor infraction, was one of the defining points of his political career. Under the circumstances, he resigned from the FOR, for whom he had worked for twelve years, almost immediately, and the Africa Program, which was so personally tied to him, never came to fruition.

Rustin wrote from prison that "in most of the dramatic ways, the so-called big ways, I was prepared to give it all" (Rustin 1953, 155). Yet pacifists and civil rights groups relied on the performance of mainstream

standards of postwar manhood that allowed activists to cast themselves in familiar and respectable roles (Mollin 2006). This was one reason that Rustin's homosexuality, well known but largely unspoken, was so difficult to reconcile. Rustin's "problem" had been brought to the FOR's attention a number of times and was "seriously aggravated" by wartime imprisonment (Executive committee statement 1953). As such, his arrest was significant, not because it marked the revelation of his sexuality but the slippery divide between his private and public lives, a divide that Rustin refers to as his willingness to give it all in the so-called big

ways, “but in the small and really primary ways I was as selfish as a child” (Rustin 1953).

Yet the dichotomous relationship between Rustin’s public and private lives belied their mutual entanglement. Work in the FOR required long hours, considerable traveling, and low, subsistence pay. It demanded a level of personal sacrifice and commitment that was not easy for those with families to support and bills to pay. Rustin’s sexuality was tied into his broader cosmopolitan disposition; a connoisseur of wine, food, whisky, art, antiques, fashion, and culture, he had a playful sense of performance, thrived in the multicultural vibrancy of the big city, performed Negro spirituals that moved audiences to tears, and cultivated an impeccable British accent. Reflecting on his national identity in an interview in 1964, Rustin said, “I fought against it for years, against being American—in my speech, my manner, my everything” (Mayer 1964, 78). Rustin’s cosmopolitan character is what enabled him to work so effectively on the FOR’s staff, taking long national and international tours, and his sexuality, although of course not predetermining it, was a key part of this identity. Like the exilic life of McKay and Hughes mentioned previously, Rustin enjoyed the anonymity offered by travel, which played favorably to his theatrical sense of reinvention and surprise. Yet the early 1950s were a period of intense, state-sanctioned homophobia, fueled by the publication of official documents like the 1950 Senate report, “Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government.” Although international travel offered some escape and maneuverability within these constraints, it also placed queer black activists more directly under state scrutiny.

Before the year was out, Rustin had been appointed to head the more secular and radical WRL. This move was not entirely one of necessity but also reflected how he had for some time been moving toward a more radical pacifist approach, convinced of the need to reach those who were not orientated within a traditional religious framework (Memorandum to the executive committee 1953). It was the WRL that would grant Rustin leave to work with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Montgomery in 1956 and to continue to work with African leaders overseas. Moreover, as I turn to next, many aspects of his Africa Program did come to execution, albeit led by different activists and taking different forms.

A Rustinian Model of Civil Rights

In the final section of this article I want to show why Rustin’s internationalism matters and the ways it can

shape and challenge our understanding of the civil rights movement and its place in the wider world. I argue that through Rustin’s distinctive blend of internationalisms—exemplified in his West African accounts and mobilized through the Africa Program—he was able to promote a particular Rustinian model of civil rights, a version of the African American struggle that forms a considerable basis for the now “official” record of the movement. Geographers have recently sought to destabilize this record and move beyond what Alderman, Kingsbury, and Dwyer (2013) called the “loose collection of names and dates, bland verities and mythic endeavours” (172) commonly associated with the period. Rustin allows us to critically interrogate the genealogy of this story and the uneven and selective ways by which his ideas have acquired currency.

Through his West African travels Rustin articulated a perspective on the emerging civil rights movement that was defined by three chief characteristics. First, he believed the African American struggle to be one component of a global, racial movement, defined above all else by the concerted efforts to challenge colonial rule. Rustin himself made this point explicitly when speaking before crowds at the Montgomery Bus Boycott, declaring that “what really is happening in race relations in the United States today is the same thing which is happening all over the world, it’s a struggle for freedom which is essentially anti-colonial . . . [and] a part of a worldwide movement” (Rustin 1956). Second, Rustin gave primacy to Gandhian non-violence as the driving energy behind this movement. Like many contemporary black observers, he believed that Gandhi provided the best example of building a mass movement around anticolonial politics and, like many pacifists, he was keen to emphasize how nonviolence was the innovative instrument that distinguished it. Third, as evidenced in his Africa Program, Rustin believed that the cause was most ably served by a formal institutional apparatus, headed by elected officials who held representational legitimacy. In 1952 he was still some way from completing his journey from radical, pacifist outsider toward a state-centered vision of racial justice rooted in “coalition” politics, yet his Africa Program nevertheless shared the same underlying assumption of political life: Black interests could best be served by organized political groups that, even if not state accredited, held a clear mandate.

Rustin was able to lobby internationalism, therefore, to articulate a strategy for the civil rights movement that was distinctly favorable to his own experiences and background. More than most, he was

well versed and well connected with anticolonial movements abroad—something he was able to publicly promote through his articles and talks. As a committed pacifist who had spent over a decade as a field organizer for the FOR, Rustin had a virtually unequalled claim to nonviolent, tactical expertise in U.S. race relations. Likewise, he was a talented strategist who was well acquainted with the practice of organizing (drafting a manifesto, identifying funding streams, lobbying supporters). Perhaps more than any other African American leader, he had an astute understanding of the back-office, day-to-day mechanics required for campaigning. Beyond the many committees, boards, and panels on which he sat throughout his career, this is especially evident in his leading role in establishing King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), his bringing together of various civil rights groups in the March on Washington (in both 1941 and 1963), and his founding of the A. Philip Randolph Institute in 1965.

Importantly, by promoting this perspective on the movement, Rustin necessarily downplayed other forms of political organizing and resistance. As a globe-trekking activist hard-wired into international affairs, his strategy was invariably an elite one. It ignored oft-overlooked forms of everyday resistance to which geographers have recently drawn attention, such as *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (Alderman and Inwood 2014). Likewise, the focus on Gandhian nonviolence fails to represent any number of activists who viewed it with suspicion, hostility, or indifference. Most obviously, this included those who believed in racial justice “by any means,” but it also included those who preferred legislative challenges through the courts—a strategy most associated with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Even among those who did participate in boycotts, freedom rides, and sit-ins, many did not subscribe to Rustin's grander racial and anticolonial conception of nonviolence. For some it was part of a distinctly African American tradition of struggle, whereas for others it just felt right. Finally, Rustin's institutional approach sits in contrast to black internationalist contemporaries (including “artist-activists” like Robeson) who, Iton (2008) showed, used their status and travels abroad to personally critique U.S. domestic and foreign policy without affiliation to black political groups.

Given this range of perspectives in the movement, what is perhaps most striking about the Rustinian model of civil rights is the extent to which it mirrors

what is now widely considered the dominant strategy of the movement. As that movement has become codified within the U.S. national story (and Rustin's own internationalist ventures largely overlooked), however, we are left with an uneven and selective appropriation of these characteristics. The task of preserving the more radical legacies of mythic figures like King, which has been taken up by geographers and historians alike (Inwood 2009; C. West 2014), is therefore a difficult undertaking. As Singh (2004) argued, “There is no more powerful way to represent the political universality of the U.S. nation-state than to have black people stand in for the nation at large” (17). This sterilizes the powerful black critique of the socioeconomic and national system that has historically formed internationalist racial affiliations, “a contentious, unfinished history of collective struggles against white supremacist monopolies on nationalist ideals and practices” (17).

Accordingly, as much as Rustin's internationalism has shaped our understanding of the period, it also continues to challenge it. Although the global shape of the civil rights movement is now widely recognized, for example, this is from a narrowly U.S. perspective. To the contrary, Rustin's Africa Program demonstrates how the movement in the United States was, in a real and tangible way, woven into concomitant independence struggles abroad. This was not support flowing from one site to another (from the United States to Africa, North to South) but a mutual negotiation through the complex political challenges of the early Cold War years. Pacifists, like Rustin, believed that the support of African Americans could meaningfully advance African independence, not only to politically galvanize black Americans to the cause of civil rights but because dismantling colonialism in Africa was an important step in its own right. This is a deeper sense of black internationalist solidarity in which race struggles were tactically and morally entwined.

Similarly, although nonviolence is now commonly seen as a guiding principle of the movement, it has also been curiously detached from its wider racialized and internationalized histories. This latter conception of nonviolence is increasingly problematic as the civil rights story has become one of U.S. moral redemption. Moreover, as the fortunes of nonviolence shifted in Africa, Asia, and the United States during the 1960s, so too has our ability to reconstruct anticolonial, nonviolent internationalism. As civil rights groups moved more centrally into U.S. foreign policy and anticolonial leaders became new heads of state, the nonviolent

solidarities forged between black activists in the global arena have become more difficult to resurrect. In short, although we might recognize Rustin's role in embedding nonviolence at the heart of the civil rights movement, equally important (but less understood) are the ways in which pacifists embedded the civil rights movement into a globalized and racialized history of nonviolence.

Finally, modern textbook histories of the movement are typically institutional—charted acronymically in the changing priorities of the SCLC, NAACP, CORE and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Yet many organizations that contributed to the movement (tactically, financially, morally), including the peace movement that organized and funded many of Rustin's overseas trips, remain underexplored. These groups are archetypical of what Morris (1984) termed *movement halfway houses*, organizations that connected emerging black activists with older protest traditions. Although well stocked with skilled activists and tactical experience, they commonly lacked a broad body of mass support and thus sought to influence emergent movements in indirect and informal ways. Still, too little has been said of the important role that the peace movement played in supporting the circulation of black intellectuals and activists, including organizing King's own trip to India in 1959.

Although Rustin's Africa Program never came to fruition, it did have a direct and tangible legacy. Several months after his arrest, Rustin organized for his friend and fellow African American pacifist and civil rights activist Bill Sutherland to travel to West Africa in his place. Sutherland worked with Azikiwe and the Nigerian delegation while in London on writing an interim constitution, before traveling to Ghana. In 1956 he became the private secretary to the finance minister in Nkrumah's new cabinet and continued to provide a vital link among pacifists, African Americans, and new African heads of state, working for both the Ghanaian and, later, Tanzanian governments (Sutherland and Meyer 2000). Rustin's race relations co-secretary, George Houser, also traveled extensively through Africa. In May 1954, he embarked on an FOR-sponsored trip through eight countries on the continent, having one year earlier restructured Americans for South African Resistance, which he and Rustin had established, into the American Committee on Africa (ACOA). Founded by pacifists and committed to nonviolence, ACOA was to become one of the largest and most successful organizations in the United

States dedicated to supporting anticolonial movements in Africa, financially supporting them through its influential Africa Fund (see Houser 1989). Bayard Rustin, A. Philip Randolph, and Martin Luther King, Jr. would all serve on its national committee.

Conclusion

Brock (2007) argued that by the 1950s the Cold War was shaping, and being shaped by, the rising demands of both black Americans and Africans. Accordingly, tremendous, almost impossible, aspirations were placed on African leaders by those in the United States who were anxious to show that white supremacy was both finite and vulnerable. In the heat of McCarthyism, civil rights activists and pacifists alike developed a vision of Africa as idealistic and pure. Sutherland and Meyer (2000) reflected that in the United States, "the possibilities of progressive social change looked rarer and more remote, but in Africa it seemed that there was a real possibility to put the values we were talking about into practice" (5).

For Rustin the promise of Africa was multiple and diverse. Although he excavated an illustrious black civilizational past in places like Ghana and Nigeria, he also saw the continent as an increasingly important sphere of U.S. political, social, and cultural influence. This internationalism was inflected not only toward anticolonialism and civil rights but the important role that the peace movement had to play in both. As such, West Africa was an ideal laboratory for experimentation with Gandhian-inspired nonviolent techniques. Here pacifism could be transformed into a political theory of action, charged with racial emancipation. The success of nonviolence in the civil rights movement in the United States would in no small part, it was believed, be determined by its ability to provide an effective answer to the colonial question in Africa. Rustin would remain attached to this perspective when he returned to work with Nkrumah in the late 1950s and East African anticolonial leaders Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere in the early 1960s.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, and even unhelpful, to disentangle Rustin's racial perspective from his American or pacifist one. Places like Ghana operated across a range of black internationalist registers. As one of the first sub-Saharan nations to gain independence, it became a beacon for anticolonial and postcolonial optimism. Rustin, like any number of African Americans who visited or settled in the country (e.g.,

Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Maya Angelou, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Mohammad Ali) saw a unique significance in Nkrumah's pan-African vision (Gaines 2006). Likewise, for pacifists Ghana was the exemplar of decolonization. Unlike Kenya, which had emerged as the other African anticolonial model in the 1950s and was heavily associated with the armed struggle of the Mau Mau, Nkrumah had passionately self-identified as a Gandhian disciple, underpinning his own strategy of positive action with Gandhi's nonviolent philosophy of *satyagraha* (soul force).

Accordingly, although Rustin's motivations to visit West Africa were no doubt shaped by other African Americans writers and intellectuals who made similar trips to the continent during this period, his experiences should not be easily collapsed into them. More important, we need to critically examine the role that internationalist encounters (of all kinds) played in allowing activists to promote their own interpretations of racial justice as a global political project within a fiercely contested arena of competing movements and perspectives. Invariably this internationalist politics was multiple, uncertain, and fragmented—simultaneously crossing, dismantling, and reinscribing borders. As we have seen, black internationalism was strategically deployed and operated within varied political parameters: at times a leverage against domestic politics; a space for a geographically expanded U.S. nationalism; or a separate scale for the pursuit of global forms of citizenship and identity. Like other black activists before and since, Rustin eclectically drew from these diverse ideological traditions, moving between them both predictably and capriciously in response to specific challenges and with specific audiences in mind.

The article has argued therefore that what is required is closer attention to the geographies of black internationalist encounters themselves—their specificities and particularities—to fashion a fuller understanding of the spatial practices and solidarities forged through them (whether racial, political, or pacifist). Geographers have an important contribution to make in this project, and the article has suggested several areas of contemporary geographical work that might provide theoretical and methodological insights to do so.

In 2007, Nelson Mandela wrote that the Americans he trusted most were those who understood the mutual constitution of the civil rights movement, African liberation, and the radical peace movement. “We were all working to free ourselves from the bondage of race-based oppression,” he said, “whether in the form of apartheid in South Africa or the legacy of slavery and

racism in the United States. We were part of a worldwide movement that continues today to redress the economic and social injustices that kill body, mind, and spirit” (cited in Minter, Hovey, and Cobb 2008, viii). Rustin's story allows us to unearth the fuller and more radical scope of these connections—connections that are not simply an addendum to U.S. history but a reassessment of the collective struggle fought for civil rights, self-government, and peace around the world. The rapidly changing fortunes of these movements have left an enduring obstacle to telling their shared stories, stories that remain partial and incomplete, both politically and intellectually.

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