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“TRIBUNE OF THE PEOPLE”: RICHARD B. MOORE, CARIBBEAN ACTIVIST AND  
RADICAL

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## Dedication

Dedicated to my late father, Vladimir M. Ramjit, 1944-2016, another Caribbean academic and intellectual

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## Introduction

Described by Franklin W. Knight as “a typical turn-of-the-century Anglophone Caribbean product,” Barbados-born Richard B. Moore’s activism can be deemed a kind of bureaucratic, grassroots organizing — highly structured, hierarchical, and centralized, using various mediums such as written memorandums, personal correspondence, and articles.<sup>1</sup> Moore often provided the intellectual basis for his activist networks and committees in his work in his usual position as secretary or leader, often writing long opinions or responses on his organizations’ behalf based on his understandings of the principles behind their respective causes. Although the causes Moore supported varied — the Communist Party, the Caribbean federation movement, and immigration reform — his attempts to reinterpret the history of peoples of African descent through his publishing press and written works were the clearest indication of the principles underlying Moore’s activism. In short, his activism was grounded in the belief of the shared histories and oppressions faced by peoples of African descent throughout the world, which transcended the idea of political border. Although the relationship between Caribbean and American racial identities is complex and fraught, and some Caribbean intellectuals may have “emphasized the more ‘acceptable’ aspects of their immigrant identities in contrast with American-born black culture,” Moore did no such thing.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Moore embraced an all-encompassing understanding of African descent as a unifying identity, which acted as a source of strength.

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin W. Knight, “The Caribbean Background of Richard B. Moore,” in *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings, 1920-1972*, ed. W. Burghardt Turner and Joyce Moore Turner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Tammy L. Brown, *City of Islands: Caribbean Intellectuals in New York* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 14.

Using archival materials from the Schomburg Center for Black Studies in Harlem, related to Moore's involvement in the Caribbean federation movement, his campaigns against anti-West Indian immigration bills, as well as Moore's selected writings focusing upon his seminal work, *The Name Negro, Its Origin and Evil Use* (1960), and various articles written later in his life, I explore how Moore conceptualized this Pan-African identity, especially his emphasis upon a feeling of dignity and pride in African descent, and articulated this in his involvement in American politics. Moore's later campaign to replace the use of the word 'Negro' with the word 'Afroamerican,' as well as his historical writings on Marcus Garvey represented the culmination and sincerest expression of his identity as an activist-intellectual.

Richard B. Moore was born on August 9, 1893, in Hastings, Christ Church, Barbados.<sup>3</sup> Moore's father, Richard Henry Moore, was a building contractor, who built different types of buildings around the island. Although Barbados was in the middle of an economic crisis at the turn of the century, Moore's family was able to weather the crisis. In fact, Moore's father was known for his generosity during this time, often selling a loaf of bread for four cents instead of the usual six cents, leading to a popular chant on the island: "R.H. Moore, six for four,/Keep starvation from the door."<sup>4</sup> Moore's father and his wife Elizabeth McLean, whom Richard Henry Moore had married after the death of Moore's mother, were able to buy property and operate a business. Moore's formal education began early, and he participated and won an empire-wide penmanship contest in 1902 and 1903. After the death of his father in 1903, Moore continued his advanced education in a school in Bridgetown, from which he graduated on April

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<sup>3</sup> Knight, "The Caribbean Background of Richard B. Moore," 1; Correspondence and Papers Relating to the International Labor Defense and the Scottsboro Case, Box 6, Richard B. Moore papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

<sup>4</sup> W. Burghardt Turner, Joyce Moore Turner, and Richard B. Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings, 1920-1972*, ed. W. Burghardt Turner and Joyce Moore Turner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1988), 20.

12, 1905. After graduating, he worked in a department store as a junior charge clerk and was eventually promoted to a junior clerk in the office. The death of Moore's father made it increasingly difficult for Moore's stepmother to support the family and so Moore's sisters, Marie and Lucille, left Barbados in 1908, followed by Moore and his stepmother a year later.

Moore arrived with his family in New York on the portentous date of July 4, 1909, not quite sixteen. He had arrived in New York at a time when immigration from the Anglophone Caribbean had coincided with the height of the second industrial revolution and the beginning of the New Negro movement.<sup>5</sup> Moore began to look for a job immediately. He first worked as an office boy in an advertising firm but left after a couple of months due to a hostile work environment. During that short time, he expressed romantic interest in a white stenographer; this was a clear violation of New York's racial etiquette, although unclear to Moore at the time. After working briefly in a men's clothing store, he then worked a series of jobs as an elevator operator. At the same time, he attempted to further his education, applying for classes in typing and shorthand in a local YMCA from which he was rejected. He then took courses at Harlem Evening High School and New York Preparatory School. He attended services at the Christian Missionary Alliance, but he stopped after realizing that the meetings were segregated by race.

From the 1910s onward, a combination of Moore's experiences with Jim Crow in New York, the reminder of constant violence against peoples of African descent in the United States in the form of lynching, and the surging intellectual culture of the Harlem Renaissance, led Moore to try to make sense of the world. He attempted to do so through books, finding particular inspiration in *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, as well as from street

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<sup>5</sup> Brown, *City of Islands: Caribbean Intellectuals in New York*, 11.

philosophers such as Afro-American socialist Hubert H. Harrison.<sup>6</sup> Harrison, as well as other prominent Afro-American socialists such as A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owens, led Moore to support a socialist platform which hoped to change the economic structure and eliminate discrimination against ethnic groups.

Moore became a member of the 21<sup>st</sup> Assembly District Branch of the Socialist Party, which was established in July 1918. Although Moore and many of the other Afro-Caribbean people involved in the party were not American citizens at the time, and thus did not have the rights and privileges of citizenship, they nevertheless felt it important to ally themselves with Afro-American citizens. The 21<sup>st</sup> AD Socialist Club was a unique branch of the party as they had very little connection with the headquarters, but they developed their own study group and educational forum, reading works such as Engels and Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*.

Moore began to be a street philosopher himself and began preaching all over Harlem by 1918. In the age of intense scrutiny of socialist organizing by the government, Moore's fiery oratory also drew attention and the Justice Department put him under lifetime surveillance. Moore and fellow Caribbean activist W.A. Domingo also founded the publication, *The Emancipator* in March 1920 with the help of other socialists, such as A. Philip Randolph, Cyril Briggs, and Chandler Owens.<sup>7</sup> *The Emancipator* adopted a radical stance, but it also attempted to expose Marcus Garvey as the relationship between Marcus Garvey and other socialists had soured. This publication and related propaganda and agitation were the objects of investigation

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<sup>6</sup> Hubert H. Harrison, born in St. Croix, was an activist during the period who was heavily involved in labor organization and the UNIA. Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 25-27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.



launched by the Sixty-sixth Congress, with the assistance of the Department of Justice, and the State of New York Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities.<sup>8</sup>

Moore was also involved in the formation of the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) in 1919, together with Nevis-born Cyril Briggs, another prominent figure in the Harlem Renaissance.<sup>9</sup> This organization advocated for armed self-defense against racial violence. The ABB's mission included a need to work for the "liberation of people of African descent all over the world and certainly in the United States."<sup>10</sup> The ABB was disbanded in 1925, after which many of its members, including Moore, joined the Communist Party. It had become clear for some time that the Socialist Party was ill-equipped to answer the question of Afro-Americans' status to the satisfaction of its members, and many left for that reason. Moore was encouraged to join the Communist Party by his friend Otto Huiswoud. Moore then became a distinguished orator and Communist Party leader.<sup>11</sup>

Moore was heavily involved in a number of other organizations in Harlem. He became a member of the ABB's successor, the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC), which was

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<sup>8</sup> Also known as the Lusk Committee, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> The exact information about the ABB's founding is hard to find, largely because the organization was founded along the same lines as secret fraternal orders of the day. The first advertisements for the ABB appeared in the *Crusader* in October 1919, but when Moore was questioned about the ABB's formation, he was not able to remember an exact date, but "was adamant that it preceded Garvey's UNIA." *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>10</sup> The ABB certainly attempted to influence the UNIA, but it was not organized as a countermovement to it. *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>11</sup> Huiswoud was the first delegate of African descent to attend the National Left Wing Conference in New York City in June 1919, and he was considered therefore to be a founding member of the Communist Party. In the midst of this organizing, Moore married Jamaican immigrant Kathleen James in 1919, and their daughter, Joyce Webster, was born in August 1920. Both Moore and his wife applied for United States citizenship in 1920, and they were naturalized on September 11, 1924. Joyce Moore Turner, Moore's daughter, and her husband, W. Burghardt Turner, provide biographical essays and Moore's selected writings in *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings, 1920-1972*. Moore's relationship with his wife soured as he became involved in radical politics. However, they never divorced and Kathleen James died in 1946 from cancer. Moore married Lodie Biggs in 1950. Lodie Biggs Moore had helped provide the financial backing for Moore's Frederick Douglass Book Center in 1942, and was a fellow Communist Party radical. She was also a scientist who worked as a bacteriologist for the city of New York. *Ibid.*, 46,58, 70.

organized in 1925. Moore served on the ANLC's Resolutions Committee along with Huiswoud, presented at least 4 times, and was elected to the twenty-five-member General Executive Board and the nine-member Council of Directors.<sup>12</sup> He also represented the ANLC in 1927 at the International Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism in Brussels, which attracted 174 delegates from over 21 countries, including Jawaharlal Nehru of India.<sup>13</sup> Moore also attended the Fourth Pan-African Conference in New York in August 1927, where he and other participants pressed radical issues such as labor organizing and allying more broadly with other groups against imperialism. Moore also organized the Harlem Tenants League in January 1928, and he served as president of the organization, where he worked directly in the community to advocate for housing rights.

The highlight of Moore's Communist Party organizing may have been his involvement in the International Labor Defense (ILD). The ILD was designed to respond to legal problems from labor and community organizing, trying cases from 1925-1946. However, the ILD's major case was the Scottsboro Trial, in which nine Afro-American youth from ages thirteen to twenty were arrested in Scottsboro, Alabama, and charged with the rape of two white women. Moore organized mass demonstrations, prepared press releases for conducting campaigns for local ILD groups, spoke at hundreds of protests and demonstrations, and went on four cross-country trips for the ILD.<sup>14</sup> Moore saw his organizing as crucial to gaining support for the campaign and helpful in the outcome of the cases, and the eventual release of all the young men.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Moore became periodically employed by the ANLC after losing his regular job after missing work for the conference. From then on, Moore was not employed in private industry. He remained on the ANLC's payroll until the 1940s. *Ibid.*, 51-52.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>14</sup> For archival materials specifically relating to Moore's involvement in the Scottsboro Trial see "Correspondence and Papers Relating to the International Labor Defense and the Scottsboro Case."

<sup>15</sup> *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 60-61.

As the Communist Party shifted its focus from explicitly advocating against white chauvinism and white supremacy to advocating against nationalist tendencies, it increasingly became the site of tension for Moore and other more radical activists who saw their vision being supplanted. However, Moore still served in the Party until he was ousted, following a disastrous attempt to publish a reprint of Frederick Douglass's *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. This resulted in charges of financial misconduct against fellow Party member Angelo Herndon and a competing publishing press. Moore left the Party in 1942. Reports from the Department of Justice show charges against Moore, such as "extreme nationalist tendencies" and "an independent thinker and difficult for leaders to dictate to," all of which held some truth.<sup>16</sup> Moore's break with the Communist Party, which presented him with "a challenge rather than a crisis," marked a loss of an organizational basis but not his ties to the Harlem activist community, nor his powerful organizational, writing, and speaking skills.<sup>17</sup>

This thesis begins with Moore in the 1940s, already an established and respected veteran organizer and activist, who in some ways had already proved to have a much more radical and expansive vision than his contemporaries. This thesis is particularly grounded in the context of the post-World War II era, where decades of global conflict seemed to herald a new world order. To Moore it also signaled opportunities for peoples of African descent to join forces with other oppressed peoples throughout the world in mass decolonization movements as well as to articulate an identity that was free from pervasive notions of white supremacy grounded in slavery and colonialism. Moore had already been interested in the Pan-Caribbean movement in the 1930s, but this period would provide new potential and avenues for his ideas.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 69.

Chapter 1 situates Moore within diplomatic history through his activism in Caribbean self-determination and independence, especially his role in the 1945 Havana Conference and the United Nations Conference on World Security. In these conferences, Moore pushed for Caribbean self-determination and federalism on behalf of the West Indian National Congress (formerly the WINEC) and the American Committee for West Indian Federation. I analyze “The Declaration of the Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination and Self-Government,” which was mainly the work of Moore and was drafted for presentation of the 1945 Havana Conference. I focus on Moore’s involvement in the United Nation’s Conference on World Security and the United Nations Conference on International Organization, as well as Moore’s correspondence with world leaders such as Alger Hiss and his alliance with the Provisional Council of Dominated Nations formed at the Conference. Chapter 2 examines Moore’s critical work, *The Name "Negro": Its Origin and Evil Use*, published in 1960, in order to understand Moore’s emphasis on language, terminology, and historiography as a medium through which peoples of African descent could use language as a method of liberation, as well as its impact for the postcolonial world.<sup>18</sup> Lastly, Chapter 3 explores Moore’s historical writings of the 1960s and early 1970s, particularly his writings on Marcus Garvey. Moore uses Marcus Garvey as a symbol through which to articulate his visions of Pan-Africanism, and how it fits into his ideas of positive nationalism.

Richard B. Moore provides a case study through which to explore how Caribbean activists were able to navigate a changing world using their transnational and diasporic consciousness brought about by their Caribbean heritage and experiences in what historian Jason Parker defines as the “Harlem-nexis.” In this new context, Moore invoked the principle of the right of self-

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<sup>18</sup> In *The Name "Negro": Its Origin and Evil Use*, Moore advocates for the use of the term “Afro-American” instead of negro. Throughout this thesis, I will use the terms African-American and Afro-American interchangeably.

determination for all oppressed peoples throughout the world through political activism,  
language, and history.

## Chapter 1: Moore as “Unofficial Diplomat”

Richard B. Moore’s activism in the Caribbean self-determination and federation movement in the 1940s and 1950s provides an excellent case study through which to understand how Harlem activists were able to intervene in and navigate larger structures of international politics, through a strong localized organizational framework. This chapter will situate Moore within the context of macro-histories of diplomatic history in his activism in Caribbean self-determination and federalism, which draws from Jason Parker’s scholarship in his article, “‘Capital of the Caribbean’: The African American-West Indian ‘Harlem Nexus’ and the Transnational Drive for Black Freedom, 1940-1948.”

First, this chapter analyzes Moore’s role in the 1945 Havana Conference, using “The Declaration of the Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination and Self-Government,”<sup>19</sup> which was primarily composed by Moore and was drafted for presentation at the 1945 Havana Conference. Second, this chapter examines Moore’s involvement in the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO), where Moore pushed for Caribbean self-determination and independence on behalf of the West Indian National Congress (formerly the WINEC) and the American Committee for West Indian Federation. I examine the ways in which Moore was able to insert himself as an international actor in the proceedings, highlighting correspondence between Moore and world leaders such as Alger Hiss, as well as Moore’s alliance with the Provisional Council of Dominated Nations formed at the Conference. Lastly, I will demonstrate how Moore challenged immigration reform by drawing attention to the importance of Caribbean labor to the World War II effort, using language grounded in his 1947

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<sup>19</sup> For the sake of brevity, “The Declaration of the Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination and Self-Government” will be referred to as the “Declaration.”

Memorandum to the Caribbean Labor Congress.<sup>20</sup> This chapter centers the ways Moore conceptualized history, especially how he used his unique understanding of history to wage an intellectual war against hegemonic colonial and imperial notions of progress, history, and civilization, in his arguments for Caribbean independence.

Parker points towards an overlooked historical development in the wider historiography surrounding the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s - the extent of transnational black activism in the “diplomacy of Caribbean decolonization,” which was affected by two major waves of immigration to the United States, especially to New York City.<sup>21</sup> Given the effects these parallel waves of migration had on the United States, Parker argues that it is necessary to break down conventional historiographical categories — African American urban history, which tends to be hyper localized, and especially concentrating on the specifics of different locales, cultures, etc, and diplomatic history. Diplomatic history, by contrast, tends to center the macro with the subsequent exclusion of sub global actors. Instead, Parker writes about the avenues, official and unofficial, through which the “Harlem nexus,” as he terms the intervention of Caribbean activists from their Harlem base, worked for Caribbean reform.<sup>22</sup> Richard B. Moore’s specific intervention into the politics of Caribbean federation, independence, and self-determination,

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<sup>20</sup> While the Memorandum was ostensibly written by the American Committee for West Indian Federation, Moore drafted this statement. As Joyce Moore Turner highlights in her biography of Moore, Moore was often one of many in the circle of Caribbean intellectuals who worked together for Caribbean independence. Yet, as Turner writes, Moore’s record is tracible because Moore was often recognized for his talent for writing and speaking and was this often elected to act as spokesman or secretary. Pierrepointe especially noted that when ideas needed to be put into writing, Moore was the one that did it, and brought drafts to the meetings for approval. Turner writes, “Moore’s penchant for wording resolutions and appeals provided the Harlem group with a series of historic documents testifying to thirty years of protest utilizing every possible instrument within their limited command.” Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 87.

<sup>21</sup> These two waves of immigration were the better-known Great Migration from the southern United States and that of West Indians from the Caribbean. Jason Parker, "'Capital of the Caribbean': The African American-West Indian 'Harlem Nexus' and the Transnational Drive for Black Freedom, 1940-1948," *The Journal of African American History* 89, no. 2 (2004): 98.

<sup>22</sup> Jason particularly uses Jamaica as a case study, as he believes it to be the largest and most politically prominent island in the West Indies at that period.

offers scholars an opportunity to challenge those historiographical distinctions further, as Moore was able to leverage his connections to the Harlem community to act as a diplomat to protect Caribbean interests.<sup>23</sup>

## Declaration of the Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination and Self-Government

“The Declaration of the Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination and Self-Government,” largely drafted by Moore on behalf of the West Indies National Emergency Committee or WINEC, later the WINC, was written in anticipation of the Foreign Ministers’ Pan-American Conference on the Defense of the Americas to be held in Havana, Cuba, in July 1940.<sup>24</sup> The formation of the WINC reflected a pre-World War II trend towards a renewed focus on Caribbean self-determination and political organization. It was especially sparked by a series of labor riots across the Caribbean in response to the global economic depression of the 1930s.<sup>25</sup> These riots had resulted in deadly violence and the formation of the West Indies Defense Committee by Reginald Pierreponte in order to solicit aid for victims.<sup>26</sup> Pierreponte also involved Moore and other Caribbean activists in protests to the British government. The riots

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<sup>23</sup> Parker, “Capital of the Caribbean,” 99.

<sup>24</sup> The WINEC was founded with W.A. Domingo of Jamaica as president, Richard B. Moore as vice president, Herman P. Osborne of Trinidad as secretary, and Arthur E. King of British Guiana as treasurer. The name was later changed to the West Indies National Council or WINC and will be referred to throughout this thesis. Later members included Dr. Charles A. Petioni who would later join Moore as a delegate to the United Nations Conference on World Security. Joyce Moore Turner, “Richard B. Moore and the Caribbean ‘Awaymen’ Network,” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 46, no. 1 (2012): 74.

<sup>25</sup> Parker, “Capital of the Caribbean,” 101.; See Cary. Fraser, *Ambivalent Anti-Colonialism: The United States and the Genesis of West Indian Independence, 1940-1964* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> Barbados-born Reginald Pierreponte was a journalist for the *West Indies News Service*. Along with Moore and other Caribbean radicals of the time, he was part of what Joyce Moore Turner terms a Harlem-Caribbean “Awaymen” network, a New York based transnational group that employed various strategies to influence American and British governments to change racist and imperialist policies. Turner, “Richard B. Moore and the Caribbean ‘Awaymen’ Network.”; Brown, *City of Islands: Caribbean Intellectuals in New York*.



and the appeals of organizations such as the Jamaica Progressive League<sup>27</sup> and progressive organizations in Great Britain such as George Padmore's International African Service Bureau to the British government not only resulted in the British government's attempts to nominally address these concerns through the Moyne Commission, but also led to a new political climate in the Caribbean, that challenged the future of imperial rule in the Caribbean.<sup>28</sup>

However, at the same time, the material needs of defense during World War II had placed the Caribbean in a position in which it was in danger of simply being passed into the hands of another imperial power—the United States.<sup>29</sup> The 'Declaration' was written for the 1940s Havana Conference which was convened by United States and Latin American officials to address the fall of France and the Netherlands and the fate of their colonial possessions, as well as to affirm a right to protect these Allied holdings in the Caribbean from Axis invasion. The Caribbean's vulnerable position was made clear by the fact that their leaders were not consulted in the decision. This conference, along with the 1940s Base-For-Destroyers, although representing the threat of incorporation into the American colonial system in the Caribbean also presented the opportunity to "exploit American anticolonial rhetoric to reinforce the emerging challenge to British colonial rule."<sup>30</sup> The Declaration therefore served as a way for Caribbean activists to enter the conversation and participate in the Havana Conference.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Parker identifies the Jamaica Progressive League (JPL) as a crucial actor in the Caribbean federation movement. He claims that JPL was in some ways the 'parent' of the WINC, as Domingo had been a member of the JPL prior to forming the WINC with Moore. Parker, "Capital of the Caribbean," 104.

<sup>28</sup> Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 73-74; Parker, "Capital of the Caribbean," 103.

<sup>29</sup> This can be especially seen in the 1940 Bases for Destroyers deal, which caused a great deal of consternation in the Caribbean.

<sup>30</sup> Fraser, *Ambivalent Anti-Colonialism: The United States and the Genesis of West Indian Independence, 1940-1964*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Parker, "Capital of the Caribbean," 103. The Havana Conference along with the 1940 Bases-for-Destroyers Deal both mark the United States' assertion of the right to intervene in the political evolution of the Caribbean territories to preserve its security. Due to the fear of a German victory in the mid-1940s, this issue of how to deal with colonies in the Western Hemisphere and prevent their transfer to Germany became paramount. Fraser, *Ambivalent Anti-Colonialism: The United States and the Genesis of West Indian Independence, 1940-1964*, 2.

While Parker sees the Declaration to be too conciliatory in its appeal to the United States, Moore's daughter and historian Joyce Moore Turner, presents the Declaration instead as being carefully tailored to Moore's audience.<sup>32</sup> Both are right, but to varying extents. Moore's characteristically careful use of language cannot be read as totally conciliatory but must be contextualized within Moore's activism. Moore and his fellow Caribbean activists worked by way of hyper localized unofficial organizations supported by the Harlem community. As unofficial actors, Moore and his fellow activists needed to strike a delicate balance due to their lack of institutional support, doubly so as the Caribbean was ignored in these negotiations. Moore wrote as an unofficial agent lacking any institutional support for a region that did not have an independent government structure or regional autonomy. Thus, Moore's statement should be understood recognizing the ways Moore links the demand for Caribbean independence to other revolutionary movements in global history, particularly in his use of the American Declaration of Independence to draw upon the idea of a historical progression towards self-determination.

Moore's Declaration begins with a nod to America's Declaration of Independence in the very first paragraph: "There comes a time in the affairs of every people when it becomes imperative for them to examine their conditions of existence and to take such steps as they deem necessary for the protection of their vital interests and for the enjoyment of their inalienable rights to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'" <sup>33</sup> This reference draws upon a shared rhetorical device of invoking the language and ideals of the US Declaration of Independence. This strategy had been used for generations by African American activists to highlight the

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<sup>32</sup> Declaration of Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination and Self-Government Box 1, Folder 12, Richard B. Moore papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

fundamental contradiction between the existence of chattel slavery and the revolutionary ideals of America's founding.<sup>34</sup>

However, Moore not only uses the language of the American Declaration of Independence, but also underscores the related historical context as a comparison to the situation in the Caribbean. He especially refers to the use of resources in the colony to fight an imperialist war without the colonies being given adequate representation or input into the matter. Moore draws explicitly upon the similarities of both situations through the Declaration, writing that the Caribbean had been drawn into a war based solely upon the "rivalries and wars of the Old World" which directly mirrored the historical circumstances of the French and Indian War.<sup>35</sup> However, Moore agrees with the decision to avoid involving the Caribbean region in the war as much as possible, arguing that the best possible way to protect the region from Axis invasion is to incorporate the region into the "Pan-American family of nations strictly on the basis of the right to self-determination."<sup>36</sup> Since most wars have been fought over colonial possessions, Moore posits, the best way to protect the Caribbean is to grant regional autonomy, since the peoples of the Caribbean had already demonstrated their capacity for leadership due to their self-governance with colonial oversight by a few officials. In addition, he highlights that these ideas of self-determination had already been raised by these nations prior to the war, which merely gave a new immediacy to demands for self-determination. Lastly, Moore raises the idea that the

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<sup>34</sup> Invoking the language of the Declaration of Independence against slavery had been used as a rhetorical strategy by enslaved and free people of color as early as the Revolutionary War. For example, see "Petition of a Great Number of Negroes" to the Massachusetts House of Representatives (January 13, 1777). In Aptheker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, vol 1, pp. 9-10. From the Massachusetts Historical Society, 5th series, vol. 3 (Boston, 1877). pp. 432ff.

<sup>35</sup> Council, "Declaration of Rights of the Caribbean Peoples to Self-Determination and Self-Government " 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

historical progression towards independence was a common theme for Pan-American nations and should thus elicit their sympathy and support.

Altogether the Declaration not only integrates a strategy of African American activists who used the American Declaration of Independence to argue for abolition, but also makes a historical argument about the nature of self-determination in the Americas, placing the Caribbean within a larger Pan-American and global trend towards nationhood. This places the Caribbean on the same level as the United States rather than portraying the region as existing below the status of the United States. Moore's understanding of a larger global historical narrative and progression towards self-determination would develop over the years. This will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, especially Moore's focus on revisionist historiography.

### United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO), May-June 1945/" The San Francisco Conference"

Considering the Declaration and the ways Moore invokes the argument of a historical progression towards nationhood, it is important to note how Moore expanded the scope of this idea beyond the immediate concerns of World War II, and indeed, beyond the Pan-American region. Moore's role as a delegate on behalf of Caribbean interests at the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco from May to June 1945 clearly illustrates Moore's expansive and ambitious vision for the future of the Caribbean region.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Despite the rumors of Moore's suspected loyalties to the Communist Party which had dogged his efforts in the West Indian National Council, Moore was nevertheless sent alongside Dr. Charles A. Petioni on behalf of the Paragon Progressive Community Association of New York. Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 78.

Correspondence between Moore and Alger Hiss in May 1945 offers a glimpse into Moore's vision of the aims of the United Nations conference. Moore asked Hiss, along with other official conference attendees, to consider an Appeal for independence made by the colonial dependencies of Britain, France, and the Netherlands in the Caribbean. In the letter Moore claims that the only hope of arriving at global peace is through granting freedom for colonial subjects; he cites the conflicts in Syria and Lebanon as evidence of greater conflicts to come "unless trusteeships, mandates, and all forms of imperialist rule are made way to give peacefully to independence of all subject peoples."<sup>38</sup> Moore urges Hiss to respect both the terms of the Atlantic Charter as well as the affirmed support of the contents of the Charter in the Declaration of the United Nations and at the Yalta Conference. Hiss's response to this plea rejects Moore's understandings of the aims of the Conference, writing that the purpose of the conference is to "formulate the best possible charter for an international organization to maintain peace and security for all people of the world regardless of race, color, religion or sex." Hiss concludes with a terse statement: "it is not intended that the matter you mention will be the subject of action here."<sup>39</sup>

Considering Hiss's rather dismissive response to the issue of granting independence to colonial subjects, it is important to understand that while Moore's idea of a more radical vision of the post-war era was based on an ideal of self-determination, this ideal held a great deal of ambivalence for the United States in thinking of the immediate post-war context. As Brad Simpson discusses, the United States and other world powers feared that expansive claims to self-determination could produce global conflict that could result in unravelling the international

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<sup>38</sup> Letter to Alger Hiss May 25, 1945, Folder 8, Folder 1, Richard B. Moore Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Alger Hiss in Response to Richard B. Moore, June 1, 1945, Box 8, Folder 1, *ibid.*

order. While the United States posited self-determination as a basic organizing principle of the new international order, it simultaneously began a process of tightening its scope and meaning.<sup>40</sup> So, while Moore used self-determination as providing the impetus for Caribbean independence, the United States was engaged in a parallel process of limiting the practical ramifications of this idea, thus holding self-determination as theory rather than practice.<sup>41</sup> It is evident that Moore recognized this ongoing process of limiting self-determination, yet he still leveraged this ideal to make a case for Caribbean independence, engaging directly with “civilizational discourses that stressed the tutelary function of colonial powers toward their backward subjects,” which the United States and Great Britain both employed in their denial of the potential radical understandings of self-determination.<sup>42</sup>

Despite his unofficial status, Moore sought alliances with other anti-imperial movements. He allied himself and the Caribbean with the Provisional Council of Dominated Nations, which included representatives of India, Burma, Indonesia, Africa and the British West Indies.<sup>43</sup> Moore’s willingness to forge connections with global anti-colonial movements highlights his understandings of the newly transnational nature of the anti-colonial movement, and the importance of making international coalitions to bolster his unofficial status, despite acting largely as a diplomat. In an address titled “The Fate and Future of the Colonial Peoples,” Moore addressed the Free India Meeting in Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco, during the United Nations Conference on International Organization. This address again demonstrates Moore’s conception

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<sup>40</sup> Brad Simpson, "The United States and the Curious History of Self-Determination," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (2012): 676.

<sup>41</sup>This process of limiting the practical ramifications of self-determination included the exemption of the British, French, and Dutch from trusteeship arrangements regarding India, Indochina, and Indonesia. *Ibid.*, 679.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Fate and Futures of the Colonial Peoples, Box 8, Folder 1, Richard B. Moore papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

of a historical movement towards self-governance and reflects how Moore thought of World War II as largely an imperialist war, which he then uses as justification to claim self-governance for colonial subjects throughout the world.

In the address, Moore affirms his and the Caribbean's support of the Free India movement on the basis that "good nationalism must be founded on good internationalism," stating that the interests of a nation can only be served if it is in the interests of all mankind.<sup>44</sup> From there, Moore situates the Caribbean's anti-colonial movement within a larger global context, and he applies an anti-colonial lens to create a revisionist counter narrative of World War II. For example, Moore states that while an American might identify Pearl Harbor as the beginning of World War II, the war started with the invasion of Manchuria, or when fascist Spain invaded Ethiopia. Like the Declaration, Moore expands his view of World War II as a war waged largely to protect colonial holdings and identifies imperialist conquest as the cause of the war. Moore argues that the invasion of Manchuria and the invasion of Ethiopia both reflected the expansion of imperialist conquest, and so the way to gain victory is to break with imperialism by granting freedom to countries under imperial control.<sup>45</sup>

For the remainder of the address, Moore cites the promises made by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in the 1941 Atlantic Charter, particularly promises made by Britain and the United States to dismantle their colonial empires by the end of World War II, drawing special attention to Article III of the Charter which states their intentions to respect the rights of self-government and sovereign rights for all nations, and to respect the forms of

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> In reading this statement, it is interesting to keep in mind that Moore, as well as activist W.A. Domingo had successfully kept British and American attention on Caribbean federation during World War II by hosting debates on the question: "Should British Colonial Negroes Support the British Empire in the present War?" Moore had argued against. Turner, "Richard B. Moore and the Caribbean 'Awaymen' Network," 73.

government which these nations would choose.<sup>46</sup> Moore urges the participants involved in creating a new world order to follow the “truth” of the Atlantic Charter, despite Churchill later renouncing some of the terms as they applied to India, and acknowledges how the United States and other colonial powers attempted to constrict self-determination. However, he cites the efforts of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to widen the applicability of the Atlantic Charter as embodying the correct interpretation of the Charter. He sets a challenge to the leaders of the World Security Conference, stating that if it is to have any prestige, or to carry out its function, “It should reaffirm the principles of the Atlantic Charter, declare specifically that these principles apply to the colonial peoples and set up an International Commission to work out with these colonial peoples the means of changing peaceably from imperialist oppression and dominance to independence and cooperation.”<sup>47</sup> This again shows that Moore did not see self-determination as an abstract concept, but an achievable goal that required concrete steps to make possible. The Conference made this possible, not only by bringing together the various colonial peoples with which Moore identified with and made alliances with, but also by allowing Moore to address the world leaders who could lead the project of decolonization.

Before closing with quotations from two American statesmen, Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, whose writings had made a lasting impact of Moore from an early age,<sup>48</sup> Moore stated that the “logic of history demands that imperialist domination and colonial subjugation must cease that men may live and attain security and peace.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, Moore claims that without this freedom there can be no hope of global peace, as the existence of colonial

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<sup>46</sup> Moore, "Fate and Futures of the Colonial Peoples."

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> For more on Moore's respect for the writings of Lincoln and Douglass see Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*.

<sup>49</sup> Moore, "Fate and Futures of the Colonial Peoples," 2.



holdings will lead to war again and again. His use of quotations from major leaders in the American Civil War whose involvement had led to emancipation, although in very different ways, and very different intentions, make another historical reference. By invoking these historical figures, Moore makes a parallel between slavery and colonialism: just as ignoring the issue of slavery had led to the American Civil War, the continued existence of colonial holdings throughout the world would likely lead to more world conflict.

It is clear from this address and the WINC's Declaration that Moore envisioned a new world order predicated upon anti-colonialism and the dismantling of imperial empires. The seemingly boundless optimism and hope for this radical future suffused Moore's various addresses at the conference, as well as the ways Moore worked within the proceedings, contrasting with other similar anti-colonial movements of the 1920s to the 1940s, (e.g. Du Bois's progressively radical and less conciliatory Pan-African Congresses.) While Du Bois's Pan-African Congresses had become more radical in their expressions of anti-imperialism since the First Pan-African Congress in 1919, these Congresses had not intervened specifically in the decision-making bodies that tried to determine this new world order.<sup>50</sup> Moore and his colleagues' emphasis on inserting themselves into the proceedings, perhaps by virtue of their status as colonial subjects of Great Britain, raises questions of how they were able to leverage their specific positionality as Caribbean-born activists working within tightly knit Harlem-based community organizations to their own benefit. What were the specific advantages of working as Caribbean activists that did not exist for African American activists such as Du Bois? Did the fact that people in the Caribbean had largely done the work of self-governance with colonial

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<sup>50</sup> Walter Rucker, "'A Negro Nation within the Nation': W. E. B. Du Bois and the Creation of a Revolutionary Pan-Africanist Tradition, 1903-1947," *Black Scholar* 32, no. 3/4 (2002).

oversight, while African Americans in the United States were largely shut out from formally participating in post-Reconstruction government, account for Moore's optimistic vision, as well as Du Bois's resort to increasingly separatist politics based on a Pan-African vision? How did Moore's emphasis on revisionist and anti-colonial history allow for his more capacious vision of a new global order predicated on the dismantling of imperialism and colonialism?

## Caribbean Independence

Answers to these questions emerge in how Moore and his contemporaries not only recognized the value of seeking support from global anticolonial movements, but also frequently appealed to British officials in the United States to make their case for Caribbean independence, signaling a practical understanding of how to leverage their positions as colonial subjects. Richard B. Moore's speech on Caribbean federation at the Luncheon Meeting for Lord Listowel in 1953 presents one example of this type of appeal.<sup>51</sup> This meeting, set up by fellow activist A. M. Wendell Malliet was one of many meetings in which Moore was called upon to make a presentation to British officials about Caribbean federation.<sup>52</sup> The majority of Moore's address to Lord Listowel deals with defining Caribbean federation previously addressed in the 1947 Memorandum to the Caribbean Labor Congress. Moore stresses the need for clear definitions of federation stating that federation as it stands must be defined in its "proper, precise, political significance as the union of sovereign independent states," and not as bringing together colonies

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<sup>51</sup> William Francis Hare, 5th Earl of Listowel, was a Labour politician serving on the House of Lords. He was the last Secretary of State for India as well as the last Governor-General of Ghana before both offices were abolished.

<sup>52</sup> Another instance of such a meeting, occurred in 1947, where Moore was called upon to clarify the type of proposed federation, ahead of the Montego Bay Conference in 1947. The contents of this meeting between Moore and Mr. Ernest Saben-Claire, colonial attaché of the British Embassy were later added as an addendum to the Memorandum to the Caribbean Labor Congress. Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 84.

for the purposes of administering them as a single political unit. Moore then posits that Caribbean federation would be a way to combat problems of poverty, and economic and social depression in the region.

While Moore presents reasons to support Caribbean federation and self-rule in the colonies, he also further refines the idea of Caribbean capacity for self-rule that he had previously raised in the Declaration. Significantly, Moore mentions the historical inheritances shared by people of African descent in the Caribbean. Moore argues that the majority of people in the Caribbean “are the descendants of people brought from Africa,” and that it is “an established fact of history” that the African peoples had successfully governed themselves for centuries before the European invasion of Africa. Therefore, he states the importance of acknowledging “the facts of the historical situation...that over vast areas and from remote times the Africans did quite well at the task of governing themselves.”<sup>53</sup> Moore presented this point earlier in his “Memorandum to the Caribbean Labor Congress.” In this memo, he argued that Africans had a “native genius for self-government and development of civilization of a high order,” and this had been “conveniently forgotten and all but expunged from the modern European record.”<sup>54</sup>

In his address to Lord Listowel, Moore cites anthropologists to support his claim of great African cultures in the past. However, he does so not only to support the claims to successful self-governance, but also to make a larger historical claim that governments imposed on any

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<sup>53</sup> Speech of Richard B. Moore on Caribbean Federation at the Luncheon Meeting for Lord Listowel, February 3, 1953, Box 1, Folder 12, Richard B. Moore papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

<sup>54</sup> Memorandum to the Caribbean Labor Congress, Box 1, Folder 12, Richard B. Moore Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library. This memo is in in Appendix 3 of the Document entitled, “Historical Summary and Political Analysis of Federation.”

nation by another people have never been just, beneficial, or “conducive to the peace and progress of mankind.” Moore then poses a question in response to claims for the necessity of the British acting as guardians over the Caribbean region, asking, “Who will guard the guardians; who will civilize the civilizers?” This provocative question signals back to Moore’s omission of the word (and fact!) of slavery in his use of the phrase “people brought from Africa,” and it points to the violence that was inextricable to the colonial system and manifested in plantation slavery and later forms of economic, political, and social subjugation.<sup>55</sup> In addition, Moore interrogates the very notion of a civilizing process and European civility given colonization practiced by the British.

Moore not only calls towards a shared heritage of peoples of African descent, and a connection to a history which peoples of African descent in the Caribbean can use to strengthen their claim for independence, but he also questions the narrative of British “civilization” and superiority, which the British colonial regime has used to support their position on maintaining guardianship of the supposedly backwards Caribbean. Lastly, Moore again incorporates a historical progression towards the fulfillment of democratic rights, with an implicit threat, stating:

It is evident, however, that we have now reached a state in human affairs when the denial of these democratic rights can no longer be maintained with any prospect of peace, security, or well-being for any of the peoples of the earth. Any attempt forcibly to retain the Caribbean people, or *any other peoples*, in the status of colonial subjection, can only engender hostility in the minds of these peoples against those who impose such imperial rule.<sup>56</sup>

Moore reverses the assumption held by British and American statesmen that granting self-determination its full credence had the potential to lead to anarchy and the disruption of the

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> "Speech on Caribbean Federation for Lord Listowel," 3-4., My emphasis added

global world order; instead, he argues that the *failure* to do so would lead to violence. This is explicitly connected to how Moore had blamed the outbreak of World War II, which he termed as an imperialist war, on the continued existence of colonial holdings, and used as justification for his claims to end imperialism in the UNCIO. In addition, this statement also implicitly referenced the labor uprisings of the 1930s that had sparked British recognition of Caribbean calls for independence, invoking a history of resistance of laborers for their rights. Moore also advances a prior claim made in the 1947 “Memorandum to the Caribbean Labor Congress” in which he highlighted the growing political ties between organized labor movements in America and the Caribbean, stating that the Address was meant to also highlight “the developing sense of solidarity of the organized labor movement in this country with their brother toilers in the West Indies.”<sup>57</sup>

Moore’s address to Lord Listowel is indicative of the ways in which Moore thought about self-determination as a specific actionable political right and foreshadows his later emphasis on African descent as both a legitimizing identity and proof of capacity to self-rule. In this address, Moore also continued his critique of Euro-centric ideals of civilization, implicitly pointing out the violence in colonial rule, demonstrating his ability to conduct research and synthesize academic texts to create a political and historical argument against imperialism.

## Immigration Reform: Legacy of Caribbean Labor in World War II

Moore also focused his attention towards restrictive proposed legislation that especially targeted Caribbean immigration to the United States. Whether Moore realized it or not, global

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<sup>57</sup> Federation, “Memorandum to the Caribbean Labor Congress,” 1.

ideas of self-determination that circulated after World War II also carried within them a double-edged sword. Defining the boundaries of certain countries as territorially determined nation states also included the articulation of who belonged inside these borders and who did not, a process that had been put into place during World War I and was solidified in the 1920s with new legislation around immigration restriction and deportation. Thus, immigration reform was also key to understanding the new global age that followed both world wars. As Mae Ngai argues: “World War I marked the consolidation of the international nation-state system, based on Westphalian sovereignty, hardened borders, state citizenship, and passport controls.”<sup>58</sup> Immigration reform became an arena through which American politicians could exercise control over the United States’ role in this new global order, which, began as early as the 1920s, and reached a new level after World War II.

One downside then to the Caribbean movements for independence in the general context of these political developments was that the days of relatively fluid and open borders that had characterized West Indian immigration to the United States, including Moore and his family’s immigration to the United States, were over. Moore chose strategic channels through which to pursue action on this front, especially his reliance on local organizations and committees concurrent with appeals to high level administrative offices and officials, including senators and the British government itself.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Mae M. Ngai, "The Strange Career of the Illegal Alien: Immigration Restriction and Deportation Policy in the United States, 1921-1965," *Law and History Review* 21, no. 1 (2003): 75.

<sup>59</sup> The campaign against the Judd Bill also involved a statement made against the Judd Bill at a public hearing held by the Sub-committee of the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary on July 20, 1949. Moore also campaigned against the 1952 McCarran-Walter Bill, a similarly restrictive immigration reform bill, as secretary of the Committee to Act Against the McCarran and Walter Bills of 1952. The McCarran-Walter bill was passed. Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 87.

One such instance of Moore's activism in immigration reform was in his address in front of the British Embassy on March 24, 1949, on behalf of the United Caribbean African Council on Delegation, in which he spoke out against the 1949 Judd Bill.<sup>60</sup> This address highlights issues in immigration reform such as the uneasy relationship between the Caribbean's continued colonial status and geographic location in Pan-America, and the racist overtones of the proposed legislations. In particular, Moore focuses upon an amendment in the Judd Bill which provided "that no more than one hundred persons born in any one colony or other dependent area shall be chargeable to the quota of its governing country in any one year," in essence limiting immigration from the British West Indies to one hundred persons per year.<sup>61</sup>

In the statement before the British embassy, Moore frames the restriction of West Indian immigration to the United States as literally a matter of life and death, citing evidence of the extreme poverty and destitution in the Caribbean. He noted the hypocrisy of the forced return of Caribbean migrants to the West Indies despite having been indispensable to the war effort of both the United States and Great Britain. Interestingly enough, Moore refers to immigration barriers as "an 'iron curtain'" that has "almost completely descended upon the Caribbean peoples to keep them penned up in these areas to starve and to die." In this statement, Moore summons the fearful rhetoric that surrounded Communism at the beginning of the Cold War, and instead redirects it towards the attempts to limit Caribbean immigration. It is possible to read Moore's

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<sup>60</sup> The proposed 1949 Judd Bill lifted the ban placed upon people coming from "Asiatic countries" but attempted to restrict immigration from the Caribbean to 100 per year. Previously, people from the Caribbean had emigrated to the United States under the British quota of 65,721 which was never completely filled. Ellis A. Williams, "Political Rumpus Gears High in West Indies over Judd Bill," *Atlanta Daily World* May 10 1949. The United Caribbean African Council on Delegation was organized in 1949, with Moore acting as secretary, to counteract passage of legislation in the U.S. Congress that would restrict immigration. Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 87.

<sup>61</sup> Statement of Richard B. Moore, Secretary, United Caribbean African Council on Delegation to the British Embassy, March 24, 1949, Box 1, Folder 12, Richard B. Moore papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

use of the phrase ‘iron curtain’ as countering the assertion that Communism posed an existential threat to the defeat of tyranny in Europe as Churchill so claimed in his 1946 “Iron Curtain” speech. Instead, Moore asserts that it is the hardening of borders, establishment of quotas, and, in fact, the continued existence of colonial domination that are the true barriers to global peace. Moore also seemingly acknowledges the charges of Communist allegiance that followed his activism in the use of the phrase iron curtain, but he places his allegiance firmly with Caribbean peoples. Continuing to draw attention to the exploitation of Caribbean labor in World War II and the benefits that the British Empire had derived from their Caribbean holdings, he cites Winston Churchill himself to justify his assertion, citing a statement made by Churchill in which Churchill acknowledged that Great Britain’s colonial holdings in the West Indies as well as in India gave Great Britain the position of strength through which it was able fight the Napoleonic wars, but also to attain its foremost commercial and financial position in the world. Moore also labels the proposed legislation as racist, noting that the restrictive provision applies to almost all of the African peoples, except Ethiopia and Liberia, as well as those of Asian origin.<sup>62</sup>

Moore blames immigration restrictions placed on the West Indies in the Judd Bill on the Caribbean’s colonial status under the British Empire while, at the same time, calling on the British government to act for the protection of the Caribbean peoples. Even though he initially appeals to the British government to lobby against the Judd Bill to United States government, Moore argues that greatest protection can be given if the British government grants the West Indies the status of self-governing dominion under the Statute of Westminster. Moore thus fights a war on two fronts. He appeals to the British government to intercede on the region’s behalf in

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<sup>62</sup> Moore often cited iconic figures in American and British history in his critique of colonial hegemonic narratives of history in relation to colonial subjects. This can also be seen in Moore’s address to the Free India coalition during the United Nations conference in 1945.



terms of immigration policy, but also implores the British Empire to take steps towards fulfilling the region's democratic ambitions. While it may seem as though asking Britain to grant the Caribbean the status of self-governing dominion is capitulating to pressure against full freedom, Moore, in fact, shows his customary ability to appeal to his audience while still fighting back against colonial narratives that would ignore Caribbean service to the strength and continued survival of the British Empire vis-a-vis their war service.

## Conclusion

Perhaps the clearest articulation of Moore's full attitudes regarding colonialism and the historical momentum towards decolonization can be found in an article entitled "Churchill and Death of Empire," written after Churchill's death in 1965. In this article, Moore uses Winston Churchill as a symbol and embodiment of colonialist empire. Therefore, to Moore, Churchill's death also stands for the end of empire as the world knows it. Although written by Moore, he chooses to refer to himself as "this writer," perhaps as a nod to the ubiquity of the colonial experience. He begins the article with a reflection on Churchill's infamous use of the phrase, "The sun never sets on the British Empire."<sup>63</sup> He recalls that while growing up in Barbados in the early twentieth century he thought that these words were solely about the "great and unique British empire," due in part to how history has been "narrowly constricted and tendentiously taught by imperialists."<sup>64</sup> However, he writes, through personal research he soon discovered that this had also been said about the Spanish Empire. Moore claims that Winston Churchill himself was a prisoner of the imperial mode of thought, a mode of thought that prevented him from

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<sup>63</sup> Moore refers to a phrase, "the empire on which the sun never sets." This phrase has been attributed to many expansive world empires and dates from antiquity. C. J. Fordyce, "The Empire on Which the Sun Never Sets," *The Classical Weekly* 25 (1931).

<sup>64</sup> Churchill and Death of Empire, Box 11, Folder 29, Richard B. Moore papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

understanding the claims of millions of peoples in the colony to the same rights he claimed and led him and other imperialists to view the people they colonized as lesser beings. Quoting Churchill's support of Rudyard Kipling's iconic poem, Moore writes, "Thus the chief bearer of 'The White Man's Burden' could not appreciate or properly feel the evil effects of empire upon its numerous and necessary victims."<sup>65</sup> Nor could Winston Churchill understand the inevitability of empire's end.

While acknowledging the instrumental role which Churchill played in his leadership of the war effort and his strident calls against the onslaught and danger of fascism, Moore argues that the war came at a time when the best interests of the British Empire were aligned with the best interests of the majority of mankind. Churchill's main priority was the survival of the British Empire, and only after this did Churchill bother with notions of progress for mankind. Moore cites especially Churchill's reluctance to acknowledge the full ramifications of the Atlantic Charter as supporting his claim, as well as the fact that even India's independence did not come until after Churchill's party had been defeated. Thus, Moore writes, "Not while Winston Churchill held office as Prime Minister did the liberation of Britain's colonial peoples begin."<sup>66</sup>

Lastly, Moore refers to an incident in which Churchill used the poem "If We Must Die," by Jamaican immigrant and famed poet Claude McKay, during a speech at the House of Commons to rally Britain during World War II. Moore contrasts the circumstances under which the poem was written, as a protest against the lynching of African American people, and the ways in which Churchill used the poem, without accreditation, without reference, and with no

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 4.

thought of mentioning its author as keeping with the “mores of the imperial acquisitive society.” Moore declares that this “imperial code of conduct sanctioned far greater expropriation of lands, natural and mineral resources, and even the being, personality, and life of millions of forcibly subjugated colonial people.”<sup>67</sup>

Moore concludes the article by quoting Rudyard Kipling’s *Recessional*, a poem that echoes the line, “Lest we forget – lest we forget.”<sup>68</sup> Moore often wrote about how African history had been deliberately obscured, and how this was directly linked to the violence of imperialism. All of Moore’s rhetoric for Caribbean independence carried within it a counter narrative of historical progression to self-determination, which he used as evidence of the inevitability of empire’s end and for the full exercise of freedom. For Moore, then, history and the construction of historical narrative were not only methods of control, but also functioned as methods of potential liberation, a personal but ultimately radical and political process.

While Jason Parker and other historians conclude that there was a drift away from depth of cooperation between U.S. African Americans and West Indian activists during the post-war period, as African Americans largely focused on the threat from Jim Crow while Caribbean activists continued to work towards Caribbean independence in the 1950s and 1960s. However, Richard B. Moore’s later emphasis on the revision of African historiography, particularly his emphasis on language, suggests a larger concern with the shared heritages of peoples of African descent. His framework transcended country as an affective bond, most clearly demonstrating how Moore was able to trouble distinctions made between American and more global politics. Thus, it is possible to see Moore’s intervention into Caribbean independence and freedom in the

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>68</sup> Rudyard Kipling, “*Recessional*,” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46780/recessional>.

1940s and 1950s as a first step in understanding and countering ideas of civilization and progress that had been used to support the continuance of colonialism. Moore would further refine his approach to understanding African descent in his 1960 work *The Name "Negro": Its Origin and Evil Use*. This book and Moore's other writings, which sought to recontextualize the understanding of African history and the commonality of people of African descent living in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas were additional ways that Moore asserted his transnational and diasporic understanding of freedom.

## Chapter 2: Free men name themselves: The Campaign Against the Word ‘Negro’

While Moore’s activism in the Caribbean self-determination and federation movement in the 1940s and 1950s shows the ways in which Harlem activists were able to intervene in and navigate larger structures of international politics through acting as “unofficial diplomats,” Moore’s activism extended also to the problem of language, especially in his work as the Chairman of the Committee to Present the Truth About the Name 'Negro'. The goal of the Committee was to eventually replace the use of the word ‘negro’ by the one hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1963, instead using the term Afroamerican to highlight a connection to African descent.<sup>69</sup>

This chapter analyzes the materials produced and written by Moore on behalf of the Committee, including Moore’s 1960 treatise, *The Name Negro: Its Origins and Evil Use*, as well as the “Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status” to show how replacing the use of the term ‘negro’ can be understood to be a project of dismantling the language and rhetoric of oppression for liberation both from a personal and political standpoint. This chapter demonstrates how Moore identifies the name ‘negro’ with the subjugation of racialized subjects, presents an etymology of the word ‘negro’ in order to distinguish history from ideology, and, lastly, how Moore links self-definition or naming to a moral and historical progression towards decolonization and freedom in his integration of diasporic and transnational politics.

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<sup>69</sup> Richard B. Moore, *The Name "Negro": Its Origin and Evil Use* (New York: Afroamerican Publishers, Inc., 1960), 77; Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status, Box 4, Folder 2, Richard B. Moore Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

It is first instructive to locate the essential questions and issues that arise from the efforts of black diasporic peoples to refer to a shared African descent in the project of emancipation. Historian Sidney Lemelle identifies four major questions that continually arose in these twentieth century attempts to find “new avenues of counter-hegemonic discourse” through new or resurrected cultural representations and icons focusing upon African descent.<sup>70</sup> However, the last question that Lemelle identifies is the most salient to understand the role which *The Name Negro* played in connecting the invocation of African descent to a form of emancipation. The last question is: “To what extent do the affects of Eurocentrism (white chauvinism/racism) keep Africans and Blacks from ‘knowing themselves’ and resisting that which oppresses them?”<sup>71</sup> To Moore, the answer to this question is bound in the Eurocentric racist logic which created the term ‘negro,’ and kept those of African descent from knowing themselves. Moore’s solution, thus, was for peoples of African descent to rename themselves, and, by doing so, start to resist oppression.

### The Name Negro: Its Origin and Evil Use

In *The Name Negro: Its Origin and Evil Use*, Moore systematically lays out the origins of the word “negro,” stemming from the transatlantic slave trade, and presents an argument for replacing it with the term Afroamerican. In this work, Moore shows himself to be a capable academic and voracious reader, drawing from Latin American academics such as Fernando Ortiz and Jose Antonio Saco, multiple French, English, and Spanish dictionaries, as well as notable

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<sup>70</sup> The first three points of contention revolve around the applicability of the African experience as a method of countering oppression by diaspora blacks, the relationship between African and black Atlantic cultures, as well as the extent to which Eurocentric conceptualisations have “distorted African and Black Atlantic cultures, cultural productions and image representations” which will be addressed later in my discussion of Moore’s historical writings. Sidney J. Lemelle, “The Politics of Cultural Existence: Pan-Africanism, Historical Materialism and Afrocentricity,” *Race & Class* 35, no. 1 (1993): 93.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

African-American and Caribbean public intellectuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglass, and Edward Wilmot Blyden.<sup>72</sup> The integration of multiple language dictionaries as well as these Latin American intellectuals shows that Moore is able to engage from a transnational perspective and critique, adding a significant dimension of analysis from which Moore makes his argument. The book itself is composed of a series of addresses Moore gave on behalf of the campaign with two main lecture-discussions both delivered in 1960. The first lecture is entitled “The Social Origin of the Name ‘Negro,’” and focuses upon the reasoning behind the campaign against the name ‘negro’ as well as Moore’s explanation of the historical roots of the term and its explicit connection to transatlantic slavery. The second, entitled “The Developing Usages and Rejections of ‘Negro,’” offers an account of the etymological roots of the term ‘negro’ and its inclusion and definitions in dictionaries of multiple languages.<sup>73</sup>

### “The Social Origin of the Name ‘Negro’”

In the first section of the book, Moore first addresses his decision to concentrate upon changing the use of the term ‘negro’ rather than trying to directly address the conditions of systemic racism in the United States. Moore attributes his interest in changing from the usage of the word ‘negro’ to a lecture delivered in the 1920s by Dr. J. Edmeston Barnes, who Moore

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<sup>72</sup> Edward Wilmot Blyden (August 3, 1832–February 7, 1912) was a West-Indian educator and writer who migrated to Liberia along with other free black immigrants from the United States. His writings on Pan-Africanism were extremely influential at the time. For more on Blyden see: Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Selected Letters of Edward Wilmot Blyden*, ed. Hollis Ralph Lynch (Millwood: KTO Press, 1978); Hollis Ralph Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden : Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); Teshale Tibebu., *Edward Wilmot Blyden and the Racial Nationalist Imagination* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

<sup>73</sup> Due to the length and complexity of *The Name Negro*, this chapter’s discussion of the book will focus on the first half of the book rather than the second half, which largely discusses different usages of the word ‘negro,’ and lists African intellectuals’ reactions to the word ‘negro.’ This regrettably leaves out Moore’s discussion and analysis of his correspondence with American newspaper editors regarding changing the use of the term ‘negro,’ as well as his more detailed analysis of African history and influence, which will be discussed in the last chapter.

records as stating that “The name ‘Negro’ is a bastard political colloquialism which ought to be rejected.”<sup>74</sup> Moore acknowledges his surprise at hearing this statement at the time, as he had once felt that it would be best to focus his energies towards “improving the condition” and trust that the name would eventually take care of himself. However, he soon understood this view to be limited as it left out “the working of the human mind” and the “law of the association of ideas.” As Moore explains, the psychological effect of using the name ‘negro’ is to call forth all the reactions or racist associations with which the name is associated, making it imperative to change the name. Moore writes that this law of the association of ideas “has been used by cunning oppressors for evil and murderous ends.”<sup>75</sup>

From there, Moore explains the trajectory of his activism, from working in the Scottsboro Trial defense, to his current work of spreading the history of peoples of African descent. Moore uses an anecdote of attending a lecture given during “Negro History Week,” (which he would characterize as being rather dubiously named) on the subject of ‘the Negro Woman.’ Upon hearing that this lecture began with the story of a slave ship, Moore recounts how he was inspired to change the subject of his lecture immediately after hearing this, exclaiming that “History does not begin with a slave ship but goes back into antiquity.” Rather than the slave ship, Moore traces history back to the earliest development of cultures in Egypt and Ethiopia.<sup>76</sup> However, he links the use of the word ‘negro’ to the dawn of the transatlantic slavery tracing the etymology of the word from Portuguese to Spanish to English. Moore thus separates the word ‘negro,’ which emerged from a specific historical context and served a certain purpose for

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<sup>74</sup> Dr. J Edmeston Barnes of Barbados was deeply involved in the Pan-African movement of the 1920s, and he was one of many visitors from the Caribbean who travelled to Harlem for consultations. Cary D. Wintz and Paul Finkelman, *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* (London, United States: Routledge, 2004), 980-81.

<sup>75</sup> Moore, *The Name Negro*, 13.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*



representing and justifying the enslavement and oppression of people of African descent in the formation of a racial ideology, from the actual history of peoples of African descent which, he argues, has been deliberately ignored.

Moore claims that the word ‘negro’ was first coined by the Spanish or Portuguese as simply an adjective meaning “black,” but that after 1441, as the slave trade developed, the term became used as a noun. Moore writes that the name was meant to designate a specific identity “upon those who were unfortunate enough to be caught in the clutches of the slave traders,” and he states that its origin is “vile and infamous,” beginning in “indignity,” and “immorality.”<sup>77</sup> He then claims that the name ‘negro’ soon became associated with slavery and was “connected to and loaded with vicious and degrading notions of class, ‘race,’ and color prejudice,” which led to the “black color and other physical features of African slaves” becoming identified with “ugliness, repression, and baseness.” This, he posits, branded African slaves as “bestial and savage, innately inferior, fit by nature only for slavery, and indeed ordained by God himself for perpetual slavery.”<sup>78</sup> These associations, he writes, led to theories that were used to justify slavery such as Noah’s curse.<sup>79</sup> Moore is thus able to show how the name ‘negro’ became an identity thrust upon enslaved people of African descent that at once justified their enslavement, as well as associated their physical features with a race that was fit to be exploited.

Moore traces the changes in meaning attached to the use of the word ‘negro,’ citing scholars Fernando Ortiz of the University of Havana, to explain how the term ‘negro’ developed as was required by the slave system.<sup>80</sup> He also cites Cuban essayist Jose Antonio Saco, in

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Fernando Ortiz (July 16, 1881–April 10, 1969) was an influential Afro-Cuban essayist and anthropologist. Moore cites a book by Ortiz called *The Illusion of Races*, which was not translated into English at the time of publication.

addition to Ortiz, to argue that slavery had not been totally abolished during the Middle Ages to miraculously resurface in Europe.<sup>81</sup> However, Moore argues that when slavery reached a world scale, it took on a new character of white supremacy, as well as ideas about the “natural superiority” of the European people, leading the word ‘negro’ to be even more closely synonymous with slavery.<sup>82</sup> He then continues to track the uses of the name ‘negro’ from the development of chattel slavery, to massacres and lynching during Reconstruction, to the continuing project to keep freedmen at the bottom of society. Thus, he writes, emancipated people were identified by their color and then branded by the name ‘negro.’<sup>83</sup>

Moore expounds on his understanding of the name ‘negro’ and the “law of the associations of ideas” arguing that the important thing about a name is the “impression which it makes in the minds of others and the reactions which it invokes.”<sup>84</sup> Moore connects the name ‘negro’ to contemporary racial subjugation in the United States, and he suggests that Afroamericans have become so used to the name as to be dangerously unaware of it, unlike those who enforce racism. He states:

It begins to be clear to me that what is wrong with some Afroamericans at the present time on this question is that they have become so conditioned to the smell of this name “Negro” that they don’t

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Whether Moore translated this book himself or had friends and colleagues translate it for him is unknown. For more on the theoretical importance of *The Illusion of Races* in the field of anthropology please see: Stephan Palmié, “The Cuban Factors of Humanity: Reproductive Biology, Historical Ontology and the Metapragmatics of Race,” *Anthropological Theory* 16, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>81</sup> Jose Antonio Saco (May 7, 1797 – September 26, 1879) was a Cuban essayist and writer. Moore cites Saco’s book *History of Slavery from the Most Remote Times to Our Day*, a work that also was not translated into English. It is possible that Moore might have come across Saco from a 1938 edition of the book, with a preface written by Fernando Ortiz. See: José Antonio Saco, *Historia De La Esclavitud De La Raza Africana En El Nuevo Mundo Y En Especial En Los Países Americo-Hispanos*, ed. Fernando Ortiz (Habana: Cultural,, 1938). For a review of this edition of the book published in *The Journal of Negro History* in 1938 please see: Richard Pattee, review of *Historia de la Esclavitud de la Raza Africana en el Nuevo Mundo y en Especial en los Países Americo-Hispanos*, Jose Antonio Saco, Fernando Ortiz, *The Journal of Negro History* 23, no. 3 (1938).

<sup>82</sup> Moore, *The Name Negro*, 21-23.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

recognize the stench anymore. But I assure you that the ignominy, the indignity, and the stench of the name is well recognized by those who insist on forcing it upon us.<sup>85</sup>

In addition, by invoking the word ‘stench’ and transferring it to the name ‘negro’ itself, Moore is able to counter bodily stereotypes used to dehumanize peoples of African descent in order to exploit them, as well as to present the ways in which language is used to reinforce these associations.<sup>86</sup> Similar to chattel, the name ‘negro’ reflects a stigmatization of blackness related to slavery, and, as Moore argues, this stigmatization continued into the time period in which his book was published.

Moore also links the use of the word ‘negro’ and other degrading language such as labels of ‘native’ or ‘kaffir’ to colonial oppression in Africa.<sup>87</sup> Stating that oppression in the United States and the Caribbean differs from that in Africa, he also links the use of the word ‘negro’ in the Caribbean to a result of trying to deny “unalienable rights of self-determination and self-government” to the peoples in the Caribbean, the overwhelming majority of which Moore labels as being of African descent. He writes, “the name ‘Negro’ is being foisted upon them too, and some who have come from there, and who have been infected with the disease *americanensis* [sic], are taking this disease back there.”<sup>88</sup> Just like the name ‘negro’ has adapted to from the end of chattel slavery through Reconstruction and beyond, Moore makes a connection between the new imperial

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>86</sup> Moore continues to expound on this point in the second half of his treatise. For example, he shows how the word ‘negro’ is found in dictionaries such as the Oxford dictionary, with phrases such as “negro lethargy,” which reflected the idea that enslaved people were not able to work hard enough for their master and actually hid the fact this was actually a form of resistance. *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>87</sup> The word ‘Kaffir,’ originating from an Arabic term meaning ‘non-believer,’ was the standard name used by the British in the Eastern Cape of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It later extended to include Africans in South Africa as a term of derogation. Similar debates transpired in the 1950s over the proper terminology for South Africans during the 1950s. Terms such as ‘Bantu’ meaning ‘the people,’ or African were suggested as being more fitting. See M. A. Jaspán and B. Nomvete, "On the Use of the Terms 'Kaffir,' 'Native,' and 'Bantu,'" *Science & Society* 19, no. 4 (1955). Moore links the use of the terms ‘kaffir,’ ‘native’ and ‘negro’ in South Africa to the violence of events such as the 1960 Sharpeville massacre writing, “It should then be clear to every thinking person how these loaded names ‘native,’ ‘kaffir,’ ‘negro,’ are used to excite and to store up hate and hostility in prejudiced minds, which are then easily incited to perpetrate such inhuman, bloodcurdling, and murderous deeds.” Moore, *The Name Negro*, 31.

<sup>88</sup> *The Name Negro*, 28.

power of the United States and how the use of ‘negro,’ as it has been used in a particularly American context, justifies the continuation of colonialism in the Caribbean. Moore illustrates how the word ‘negro’ is transnational in its usage and orientation and delineates the geographical span of its denigrating aspects.

Moore argues that those of African descent can only improve their economic condition by casting off the name ‘negro,’ as he believes that it is impossible to improve the economic condition without having the “driving force of human self-respect.” Moore states, “If you are willing to accept the slave master’s vile appellation ‘negro,’ you are also willing to accept segregated slums at double rentals and all the disabilities that go with tenth-class citizenship.”<sup>89</sup> Moore shows how the continued usage of the name ‘negro’ has evolved from simply justifying and reflecting enslavement to repeating the same processes of economic and political exploitation in the twentieth century.

Moore lays out his reasons for adopting *Afroamerican* as the accepted term rather than Ethiopian, colored, African-American, “Black Man,” or “Black Race.” Moore dismisses Ethiopian as it is the name of an already existing country, and African-American for being too cumbersome. Moore classifies the terms ‘colored’ and ‘black’ as fitting into the same racist logic as ‘negro.’ Moore writes that colored is “vague, associated with false notions of “race,” adding that it lacks “any definite connection with the good earth, or with an extensive historical record, or with a significant group culture”<sup>90</sup> Moore suggests that “Black Man” or “Black Race” are also “loose, racist, color designations which have no basic, obvious, or unmistakable linkage with land, history, or culture.” Thus, he argues that ‘Afroamerican’ best expresses both African

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

heritage and current citizenship; he states “The name Afroamerican properly recognizes and expresses our origin and connection with land, history, and culture.”<sup>91</sup> Moore also points to other international changes in terminology, noting that Latin Americans had replaced the word ‘negro’ with the names similarly compounded such as Afrocubano and Afrobrasileiro. Although Moore’s argument is centered in the United States context, he purposefully engages with the usages (and rejections!) of ‘negro’ in other parts of the Americas.

Moore argues that names can be changed, citing Ghana, Ethiopia, Iran, and Indonesia, as examples of former colonial possessions that were able to rename themselves after they had gained independence. Interestingly, Moore even mentions the Haitian Revolution as an example of how former French colony of Saint Domingue changed its name to Haiti after garnering its independence.<sup>92</sup> This connection to Haiti illustrates how Moore was able to present the history of racial domination and slavery and the ways it ran parallel to his notion of a moral and historical progression towards freedom, which changing the use of the term ‘negro’ would support. He acknowledges the objection that these examples of name changes do not really apply to the United States, as peoples of African origin in the United States cannot become a nation, but counters that “the basic principle involved is actually the determination of any group of people to rid themselves of the stigma which a bad name carries and the recognition of their right to do so by other people.”<sup>93</sup>

Moore is thus able to invoke the principle of self-determination as he did in his addresses in support of Caribbean independence decades earlier, but he reinterprets it as a personal kind of self-determination that would allow people of African descent in the United States to claim that

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

same right. Because Moore argues that this goal can only be reached through united action, he is also able to call upon the same kind of self-declaration and unity that is crucial to self-determination. Earlier in the work, Moore examines how the name 'negro' is linked to continuing oppression under the existing colonial system. As a result, he is also able to claim a transcendent moral and historical progression towards freedom which he connects to processes of decolonization throughout the world.

Moore presents the term Afroamerican as being specifically grounded in the Pan-American context, arguing that the term emphasizes citizenship and asking what the Americas would have been without the "enslaved sons of Africa." Moore states "it should be made clear at all times that we are Americans," and he continues to emphasize the work and labor of enslaved Africans stating "if any group of people have a claim to full citizenship and proper status in these United States of America, it is the Afroamericans" because "we have been compelled to make a contribution of 250 years of unrequited toil, and we have also voluntarily made a great contribution to the upbuilding of this nation."<sup>94</sup> In the same way that Moore invoked Caribbean labor for the war effort in his argument against restrictive immigration policies in the 1950s, Moore uses the labor of peoples of African descent to argue for their full rights of citizenship and a name that reflects that citizenship. Thus, this project of renaming and citizenship are linked in a direct and specific way.

Moore then concludes his first lecture with the rousing statement: "Dogs and slaves are named by their masters; freemen name themselves!"<sup>95</sup> By naming themselves, peoples of African descent can free themselves from slavery and the associations with it. In addition, he also references the ways in which emancipated men and women in the United States often renamed

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 49.

themselves after slavery's abolition, throwing off a name given in slavery and choosing one that reflected their freedom.<sup>96</sup>

## Language, History, and Ideology

In Moore's focus on language and how the word 'negro' changed over time to represent the subjugation of peoples of African descent, he makes a distinction between ideology and history and identifies the name 'negro' with the subjugation of racialized subjects. In doing so, he separates the actions of racism, enslavement and subjugation, and how these processes became transformed into a designation upon a group of people. He demonstrates how language was used to justify the circular logic of racism in which acts against a specifically defined group of people changed from "racism, something an aggressor *does*, into *race*, something the target *is*," as Fields writes in her book, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, Moore might argue that the name 'negro' hides the process of enslavement and attaches it to the person itself in a racial identity. Racecraft, as Fields terms the process of fitting people into races, which was employed to justify slavery and racial oppression, uses language in order to obscure the action of the enslaver. As a result, as Fields writes, "enslavers disappear only to reappear, disguised in stories that append physical traits defined as slave-like to those enslaved."<sup>98</sup> Thus, as Moore argues, the name 'negro'

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<sup>96</sup> For example see: Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (South Bend, United States: Infomotions, Inc., 2000), 9.

<sup>97</sup> Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*, ed. Barbara J. Fields (London: Verso, 2012).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

developed with the practice of enslaving peoples of African descent, so that the name negro carried certain racialized characteristics with it, which he identifies in the second half of his book.<sup>99</sup>

Moore links self-definition or naming to the process of decolonization in his integration of diasporic and transnational politics, as well as in his invocation of a moral progression towards eventual freedom. He highlights this in his bold historical claims for the importance of replacing the use of the term ‘negro,’ which he employs throughout the treatise as well as in his earlier addresses on behalf of Caribbean independence. For example, Moore writes that it is time to replace the word negro, as “the consciousness and the dignity of man must now rise and dispense with it forever.”<sup>100</sup> In the same way that he argued for the inevitability of dismantling colonialism in his arguments for Caribbean independence, Moore also links the discontinuation of the use of the word ‘negro’ as part of this historical progression towards freedom. This sense of a sweeping goal and a profound optimism can be seen in the fact that the Committee chose the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1963 as the chosen date for the term’s eventual replacement. This also served to ground Moore’s campaign in American history, and to identify it with legal emancipation, giving his campaign a greater gravity.

### Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status

Moore’s and the Committee’s hopes that the term ‘negro’ would be phased out by 1961 were unrealized. In a document entitled “Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status,” circa 1968, issued on behalf of the Afroamerican Institute, but ostensibly written by

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<sup>99</sup> For example, Moore uses a definition from the 1933 Oxford English Dictionary, which had defined ‘negro’ as “an individual (especially male) belonging to the African race of mankind, which is distinguished by a black skin, black woolly hair, flat nose and thick protruding lips.” As quoted in Moore, *The Name Negro*, 50.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.



Moore,<sup>101</sup> he details a response to a 1968 *Wall Street Journal* article that was meant to address the use of the term ‘negro.’<sup>102</sup> Moore stresses the continued importance of this debate as the “use of an offensive term cannot but heighten the tension and aggravate the hostility between American citizens of African origin and those of European provenience,” indicating that Moore felt that the ‘condition’ had escalated.<sup>103</sup> Throughout the statement, Moore is careful not to use terms such as white or black. This is different from *The Name Negro*, in which Moore used ‘Negro’ and ‘White’ “for lack of other words.”<sup>104</sup> Instead, Moore emphasizes the American citizenship of African Americans, while using the anthropological term “provenience” to refer to people who might normally be defined as white. Using a term such as provenience emphasizes a point of origin, rather than a concrete racialized identity, much like he intended the term ‘Afroamerican’ to convey.

In addition, Moore references the use of the term ‘Black’ by “certain militants,” who while not mentioned by name can be taken to be a reference to the rallying cry “Black Power” used by activists such as Stokely Carmichael/Kwame Ture in the late 1960s. Moore addresses the concerns raised by the assistant executive director of the NAACP, John A. Morsell, who Moore reports to have decried the use of the term ‘black’ on the basis that it would lead to ‘reverse racism’ and the “ironic outcome” of “Negroes themselves split into rival camps on the basis of skin colors.”<sup>105</sup> Moore responds that Morsell must have been “apparently unconscious

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<sup>101</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, Moore usually wrote the materials for the organizations of which he was a member of, which is why a lot of the documentation from these organizations survive to the present day in his archive. Moore in fact founded the Afro-American Institute in 1969 and served as the president until his death. While Moore was the key lecturer of the group, he acted at times as chairperson or commentator, while also presenting notable scholars such as John Henrik Clarke. Turner terms this organization as “the literary equivalent” of the People’s Educational Forum. Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 72.

<sup>102</sup> See Kenneth C. Field, "Are Negroes 'Black'? Racial Identification Stirs Semantic Strife," *Wall Street Journal*, December 12 1968.

<sup>103</sup> Institute, "Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status," 1.

<sup>104</sup> *The Name Negro*, 46.

<sup>105</sup> "Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status," 2.

of the direct racism which issues from the name ‘Negro,’ and of the fact that harmful prejudice in proportion to dark skin colors comes in the first place from the ‘white’ slave master at the top of the status pyramid.”<sup>106</sup> Moore further criticizes the NAACP’s use of early letters of W.E.B. Du Bois to argue that the change from the name ‘negro’ is unwarranted, arguing that Du Bois’s later writings, such as his article “The World and Africa,” reflect that Du Bois had been slowly changing his mind about the origins of the word ‘negro.’<sup>107</sup>

This document, as well as *The Name Negro*, reflect intercommunity tensions over the problem of renaming. This is evidenced by Moore’s criticisms of the language employed by the Negritude movement of the 1930s and 1940s in *The Name Negro*, and his rejection of the term “black,” which became more strident from *The Name Negro* to the later “Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status.” In a section of *The Name Negro* entitled “Evil usages of ‘Negre’: French trained elite and ‘Negritude’” Moore uses the etymology of the French word ‘negre’ in order to show its connections to slavery, presenting for example how the word ‘negrier’ meant things like ‘slave-trader,’ ‘slave-ship,’ ‘slave-master,’ and ‘slave driver.’ Moore then asks a question of the Negritude movement, about whether this has all been “adequately considered by the African French-trained elite who have latterly begun to speak of ‘negritude’ and the like? Is it not more fitting to speak of ‘African culture’ and of ‘the African personality?’”<sup>108</sup> While Aime’ Cesaire’s invocation of Negre in the movement may have been an attempt to create a corollary for Alain Locke’s New Negro for colonized blacks in the French empire, to Moore this might have

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>108</sup> Moore, *The Name Negro*, 54.

been dangerously too close to accepting the colonized identity linked with the term negro, which was again, defined in opposition to whiteness and a state of subjugation.<sup>109</sup>

It is also interesting to recall Moore's commentary with his use of 'Negro' and 'White' in *The Name Negro*, in which Moore stated that "Inexact descriptions of color-as-color, they represent color-as-a-race-symbol, a thing full of mischief not only in America but internationally."<sup>110</sup> Moore goes further into his criticism of the term black in the later Statement, claiming that the term 'black' "has significance only in opposition to 'white.'" He continues to posit that the use of the term 'black' reinforces a false ideology of racial difference, stating "When used as a name for a minority group in this society, which is dominated by notions of 'white supremacy,' the word 'black' carries along with it and connotes generally, *regardless of minority usage or individual disadvantageous intent*, racial differentiation and harmful racist discrimination."<sup>111</sup> In addition, Moore rejects black, saying that it does not relate properly to land or country of origin. Afroamerican serves Moore's purpose in two ways: it conveys that connection to a shared history, land, and culture, and it cannot be considered to exist in opposition to whiteness.

## Moore, Language, and the Politics of Renaming

Moore's transition from engagement in global politics as an unofficial diplomat to working around the issue of language can be understood as also playing a vital a role in the process of decolonization as securing Caribbean independence, a theme that is explored in postcolonial theory. If language has been used to label peoples of African descent and mark them for servitude

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<sup>109</sup> Aimé Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land : Bilingual Edition* [Cahier d'un retour au pays natal], trans. A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 15.

<sup>110</sup> Moore, *The Name Negro*, 46.

<sup>111</sup> Institute, "Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status," 4., my emphasis

and subjugation as Moore claims in *The Name Negro*, then his conclusion is that redefinition and renaming by those marginalized peoples of African descent will be the first step to reverse that effect of colonization, and the associated idea of race.

As Bill Ashcroft writes,

One of the most subtle demonstrations of the power of language is the means by which it provides, through the function of naming, a technique for knowing a colonized place or people. To name the world is to 'understand' it, to know it and to have control over it... To name reality is therefore to exert power over it, simply because the dominant language becomes the way in which it is known. In colonial experience this power is by no means vague or abstract.<sup>112</sup>

Moore explicitly connects the word 'negro' as part of that process of control since the dawn of transatlantic slavery and colonialism. Thus, in this seemingly postcolonial age that Moore had entered, his attempt to replace the word 'negro' with the phrase 'Afroamerican' was an attempt to reclaim power over a word that became associated with and fed into the material reality of chattel slavery, colonialism, institutional racism, and general subjugation. As Zeigler and Osinubi write, each designation with which African Americans chose to name themselves is "appropriate within the African American history of post-colonial struggle, for as a social and linguistic act, naming gives the namer a certain amount of power and control."<sup>113</sup> As Zeigler and Osinubi note, as the material conditions of African Americans changed, "so did their self-defined ethnic nomenclature." Although Moore tries to argue that taking away the name 'negro,' and the associations of subjugation which it carries, are part of addressing the "condition," he rejects the idea that other means of identification such as ideas of 'blackness' or 'Negritude' can accomplish the same goal, emphasizing African descent as a unifying identity.

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<sup>112</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 1994), 283.

<sup>113</sup> Mary B. Zeigler and Viktor Osinubi, "Theorizing the Postcoloniality of African American English," *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 5 (2002): 597.

However, Zeigler and Osinubi emphasize also the profound uncertainty that comes along with the process of naming as an attempt to dismantle oppressive forms of power, citing R. Radhakrishnan, a leading postcolonial literary theorist. Radhakrishnan writes that when “ethnic reality” realizes itself to be the “victim of representation” it then attempts to unname “through a process of inverse displacement” to achieve a revolution against both the discourse of the oppressor and the oppressor itself. He argues, “it gives itself a name, that is, represents itself from within its own point of view; and it ponders how best to legitimate and empower this new name.”<sup>114</sup> However, Radhakrishnan locates a problem within this issue of naming: “In whose name is this new name being authorized, authenticated, empowered?” Taking a postmodern perspective, Radhakrishnan points out that renaming carries an assumption that “there exists an essence (African, Indian, feminine, nature, etc.)” which “ironically perpetrates the same ahistoricism that was identified as the enemy during the negative/critical or "deconstructive" phase of the ethnic revolution.” From this, certain questions naturally follow: What does it mean for diaspora blacks in the Americas to claim this unifying sense of African descent? What did it mean for Moore to claim it as a former British colonial subject?

Although Moore was probably not unconscious of these questions, it is important to retain sight of Moore’s goals in invoking a shared identity of African descent. When he engaged in international politics as an unofficial diplomat, Moore used the idea of the history of complex and sophisticated African cultures and self-governance in support of his argument for Caribbean independence. In focusing upon language later in the 1960s, he made an appeal to a certain power structure and sense of identity even within the ongoing project of trying to overturn the legacy of colonialism. For example, in Moore’s term *Afroamerican*, he stated that he wished to emphasize

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<sup>114</sup> R. Radhakrishnan, "Ethnic Identity and Post-Structuralist Difference," *Cultural Critique*, no. 6 (1987): 208.

American citizenship first, and African descent after. This does not indicate that he saw reclaiming or referencing African identity to be part of a separatist movement, like earlier versions of Pan-Africanism. At the same time, he refutes historical accounts of Africa as a “Negroland” affirming Africa as a place that is geographically defined and specific.<sup>115</sup> The main question that emerges then is whether Moore’s emphasis on “African descent” might still be trapped within the same logic employed in the creation and usage of the word ‘negro’ itself – that is, reifying African identity rather than acknowledging the fluidity and changing nature of identity and invocations of descent, as well as how these could be used to perpetuate the same violence imposed by the project of labeling, naming, and “knowing.”

However, it is also possible that Moore uses the idea of African descent to solve the historical problem of displacement, or “dysplacement,” as historian Barbara Fields terms it.<sup>116</sup> In other words, his invocation of African descent attempts to reinstate a relationship between a people and place that was torn away through the institution of slavery, a sense of place that migrant, or diaspora blacks were “simultaneously alienated from and connected to.”<sup>117</sup> Indeed, Moore writes,

The name *Afroamerican* expresses unmistakably and at once our previous origin in a vast, rich, and goodly land Africa, a worthy record thus of really ancient history; and a significant development of uplifting cultural patterns and culture forces. These culture forces, which aided us to withstand the harsh transition period of alien domination, now fortunately passed or passing, still provide us with these vital qualities which enable us to face the present in the land where now we are with awareness, courage, and dignity, and so to project ourselves into the future with assurance, and hope, and the will to perform an honorable role in the pageant of mankind.<sup>118</sup>

Throughout the treatise, Moore argues that the term *Afroamerican* properly expresses a connection with land, history, and culture, as well as “national identity.” He also uses the idea of African descent as a source of strength that allowed peoples of African descent to withstand slavery. His

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<sup>115</sup> Moore, *The Name Negro*, 25.

<sup>116</sup> Barbara J. Fields, "Dysplacement and Southern History," *The Journal of Southern History* 82, no. 1: 7-26.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>118</sup> *The Name Negro*, 67.

emphasis on citizenship is a rhetorical choice that could empower peoples of African descent to claim the fullness of their rights as citizens and to improve “the condition” from within. Moreover, this does not indicate that Moore was looking to the change from the word ‘negro’ to be a matter of fixing a sense of national identity, but a way to create an empowering identity *within* a nation, reclaiming a heritage that had been denied, a heritage which he saw as the essence of claiming freedom. However, it is important to consider that Moore’s invocation of citizenship was a rhetorical choice that had tangible ramifications, especially if we consider that one of the rights of citizenship is the right to name oneself. Thus, Ashcroft’s statement that this power of renaming oneself is “by no means vague or abstract” must be emphasized.<sup>119</sup> For example, in revisiting Moore’s example of how former colonial possessions such as Ghana, Ethiopia, and Haiti renamed themselves, he shows the power of collective naming as an act of independence, but also as an act of sovereignty embedded in real material rights and privileges of citizenship.

It is important to consider the reasons for Moore’s insistence on prioritizing descent rather than a sense of blackness. His insistence on centering the appropriate use of the word ‘negro’ is dependent upon the historical circumstances of the time. He frequently references violent outbreaks or disturbances, such as the violent regime of apartheid,<sup>120</sup> or racial riots in the United States, in his argument for the abolishment of the use of ‘negro.’<sup>121</sup> He uses events that occupied a large part of the public’s imagination to show that as long as the associations of the word ‘negro’ remained then these kinds of violence and denials of civil rights would only persist.

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<sup>119</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 283.

<sup>120</sup> Moore, *The Name Negro*.

<sup>121</sup> Institute, "Afroamerican Institute Statement and Call on Name and Status."

## Conclusion

If we consider Moore's work in the Caribbean federation movement as Moore working as a "diplomat without government," then his work *The Name Negro* can be seen to be part of the intellectual tradition of "historian without portfolio," a term coined by historian Earl Thorpe<sup>122</sup> and especially attributed to Moore by historian John McClendon.<sup>123</sup> While Moore's diplomatic work can be seen as an attempt to gain concrete political freedoms, his activism work against using the word 'negro' can be seen as seeking freedom in the abstract sense, by working against the epistemological violence which presented people of African descent as existing without history or culture, a violence that Moore argues culminated in the pervasive use of the term 'negro.' This theme is continued from his earlier activism work and can be especially seen in his addresses on behalf of the Caribbean independence movement. Moore and the other members of the Committee to Present the Truth of the Name 'Negro' explicitly link the end of the use of the term 'negro,' and its replacement with the proper terms *African* and *Afroamerican*, to a sense of emancipation and freedom itself.

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<sup>122</sup> Earl E. Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique* (New York: Morrow, 1971).

<sup>123</sup> John M. McClendon, "Richard B. Moore, Radical Politics, and the Afro-American History Movement: The Formation of a Revolutionary Tradition in African American Intellectual Culture," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 30, no. 2 (2006): 7.



## Chapter 3: Pan-Africanism, Moore, and Marcus Garvey

In reading Moore's writings on history, it is instructive to return to Sidney Lemelle's analysis of blacks' use of the diasporic identification with African cultures and history in the project of emancipation, and the questions that process engenders. The previous chapter focused on the ways Moore's *The Name 'Negro'* addressed the connection between white supremacy and language and how its usage kept people of African descent from knowing themselves and advocating for their rights. Moore's historical writings, which primarily focus on Pan-Africanism and radical movements in Harlem, seek to answer some of the other questions raised by Lemelle, especially the relationships between African and Black Atlantic cultures and the ways this connection were used in activism of the era.

This chapter focuses on Moore's analysis of the legacy of Marcus Garvey, a controversial figure in American history, whose UNIA movement typified some of the strains and tensions within the Afroamerican and Afro-Caribbean community in Harlem, and how this movement reflected some of the contradictions and difficulties in fully achieving a Pan-African vision. This chapter analyzes how Moore approached this subject in his articles "Africa Conscious Harlem," published in *Freedomways* in 1963, a 1970 lecture delivered by Moore on the subject of opposition to Marcus Garvey, and lastly, a chapter in John Henrik Clarke's book *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa* entitled, "Marcus Garvey and His Critics." In these writings, he criticizes Garvey's relationships with Afro-American leadership, counters Garvey's understanding of race and how Garvey transplanted Caribbean racial politics to the American setting, and, lastly, argues that Garvey's visions of settlement in Africa corroded from

“progressive and healthy nationalism toward self-centered and reactionary nationalism.”<sup>124</sup>

Moore’s historical writings on Garvey in relation to Pan-Africanism indicate that Moore saw history as praxis. Moore’s engagement with Garvey and what Garvey represents was not simply Moore’s account of the movement. Rather, Moore’s analysis, which he often prefaces with a statement accounting for the need to take a steady assessment of leaders in the movement in order to learn from their mistakes, prove that Moore saw history as another practical tool for freedom much like he saw the role of language in *The Name “Negro.”* Therefore, Moore’s writings on African consciousness and Pan-Africanism in the context of Garvey allows us to gain a deeper insight to Moore’s understandings of his broad and transnational philosophy. Moore’s understandings of Pan-Africanism, and the ways he entered into that historical discourse, demonstrate how Moore understood his work of dismantling structures of oppression bolstered by white supremacy and the legacy of colonialism.

Moore’s sense of pride in African history and ancestry served as a source of strength. This is evident in earlier writings, including his speeches in defense of the Caribbean independence movement, which drew upon a sense of African culture and history to justify the Caribbean’s claims to self-governance. Later in his work *The Name ‘Negro,’* Moore would use his understanding of African history to address the power of language in reinforcing racism and the oppression of people of African descent. Moore’s historical writings of the 1960s and 1970s reflect and continue these themes.

Moore was just one of many public intellectuals of African descent who took an active interest in history, the diasporic connections with African history, and, so, it is important to

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<sup>124</sup> Richard B. Moore, "The Critics and Opponents of Marcus Garvey," in *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, ed. John Henrik Clarke (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 234.

briefly provide some historical context on the role of Afroamerican and Afro-Caribbean public intellectuals and the revival of critical engagement with African history that took place during the twentieth century. Historian John McClendon argued that Moore had engaged in the intellectual tradition of “historian without portfolio.”<sup>125</sup> Throughout his activism, Moore built a historical case in which to combat hegemonic colonial and imperial notions of progress, history, and civilization, in his arguments for Caribbean independence, West Indian nationalism, and against the continued use of the word ‘negro.’

Moore engaged in an ongoing movement and legacy of African American historiography that sought to rewrite and expand racist historical narratives that denigrated peoples of African descent, often defined as beginning in the 1800s. As historian Earl Thorpe writes, much of black history has been concerned with the quest of Afro-Americans for freedom, equality, and manhood. Thorpe further identifies three main motivations driving this “Negro History movement,” as he terms it, as follows: to address previous elitist historical writings that omitted the history of black peoples; to combat racial prejudice and stereotypes which have been bolstered by pseudoscience; and, lastly, to serve as a source of inspiration to inspire blacks to high achievement.<sup>126</sup> In addition, Thorpe identifies a connection between black historical writings and the “New Colonialism” of the late nineteenth century, which led many racial and cultural groups to become interested in their pasts with many seeking a “folk genius of some kind which would explain their achievements and serve as a stimulus to group pride.”<sup>127</sup>

Historian John McClendon identifies Moore to be part of “The Modern Layman” group, a group which Thorpe describes as a “group of non-professional persons, in all periods, who have a

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<sup>125</sup> McClendon, “Richard B. Moore,” 7.

<sup>126</sup> Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique*, 4, 9-12.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

fondness for the discipline of history, feeling that their life experiences peculiarly fit them for chronicling some historical events.”<sup>128</sup>

Moore’s career as an activist spanned many decades and several different causes from advocating for the defense of the Scottsboro Boys for the International Labor Defense, his involvement in the Socialist Party and Communist Party, to his later activism which has been discussed in the previous chapters. Due to this span of political groups and interests, Moore often applied his life experiences to historical writings. Despite the sheer variety of these causes, Moore’s priority was first and foremost for oppressed peoples throughout the world, which Moore articulated strongly as early as 1939 in a letter to Mr. Robert S. Vann, the editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*. In this letter, he addresses an editorial attacking himself and other members of the Communist Party using accusations made by a former member.<sup>129</sup> In the course of addressing the points in the editorial, Moore states that, despite being a member of the Communist Party at that time, his true adherence to any political party has “been based only upon principle and one principle alone - to support that party and that program which best represents the specific interests of my class and my oppressed people and the general interests of mankind as a whole.”<sup>130</sup> In some ways, Moore’s writing typifies a more abstract and humanistic Pan-Africanism, defining itself “as a part of a universal movement towards human freedom.”<sup>131</sup> This ethos echoes throughout Moore’s activism and especially in his historical writings, as he is

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>129</sup> For more details, see George S. Schuyler, "Ex-Communist Says 'Red' Bad as G.O.P. On Negro: Williams Says Party Shelves Black Pioneers," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 18 1939.

<sup>130</sup> Letter from Richard B. Moore to Robert S. Vann of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Box 6, Richard B. Moore Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

<sup>131</sup> This is attributed to Maulana Karenga as quoted in James L. Conyers, "Pan Africanism, African American Historiography, and Afrocentricity: A Critical Review of Ideology and Historical Thought," in *Reevaluating the Pan-Africanism of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey: Escapist Fantasy or Relevant Reality*, ed. James L. Conyers (Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 215.

unhesitant to criticize the ways that leaders in early Harlem radical movements may have acted against the best interests of oppressed people of African descent and other victims of colonial oppression. Thus, Moore uses history to engage with Garvey as a learning opportunity or a teachable process, while also demonstrating that Garvey was one actor in a larger movement towards freedom for oppressed peoples throughout the world.

Moore's collaboration with scholars such as John Henrik Clarke, and writings in publications such as *Freedomways*, demonstrate that Moore did not do this work in isolation but was part of a larger movement towards reconciling principles of solidarity based on African descent with practical political work.<sup>132</sup> As the proprietor of the Frederick Douglass Book Center, which grew out of Moore's massive collection of African, Asian, and Afroamerican art, Moore was constantly exposed to, and actively searched for, books related to African, Afroamerican, and Caribbean literature and history. Moore's massive library, which included quite a few rare and out-of-print books, attracted many African students to his store, leading to his involvement in causes that supported African independence. Moore was a voracious reader of the books he collected, which accounts for the sheer variety of books and authors that Moore

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<sup>132</sup> *Freedomways* came out of an earlier journal called *Freedom* founded by activists Esther Cooper Jackson, her husband James Jackson, Edward Strong, and Louis Burnham, as well as Paul Robeson. After *Freedom* folded in 1955 under the political repression and intense scrutiny of the McCarthy era, Burnham, the former managing editor of *Freedom*, teamed up with Strong to create and replace it with an African-American progressive civil rights journal, envisioning it as a link between an older generation of activists such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and Du Bois's wife Shirley Graham Du Bois, and a younger generation of activists such as those in SNYC (Southern Negro Youth Congress) of which the founders of *Freedom* were members. Despite facing considerable odds against the founding of this journal, *Freedomways* was first published in April 1961 with the support of a wider group of activists such as historian John Henrik Clarke, Louis's wife and fellow activist Dorothy Burnham, and pan-Africanist writer W. Alphaeus Hunton, Jr. *Freedomways* was first edited by Shirley Graham Du Bois who then resigned in 1961 after she and W.E.B. Du Bois moved to Ghana. After the Du Bois's departure, *Freedomways* was edited by Esther Cooper Jackson with the help of associate editors such as John Henrik Clarke. See: "Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Negro Freedom Movement 1961-1986," in *Encyclopedia of African-American writing: five centuries of contribution: trials & triumphs of writers, poets, publications and organizations*, ed. Shari Dorantes Hatch (Amenia, N.Y: Grey House Publishing, 2018); Johnetta Richards, "Fundamentally Determined: James E. Jackson and Esther Cooper Jackson and the Southern Negro Youth Congress-1937-1946," *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008).

references in his historical writings. By the 1960s, many community groups requested lectures on Afroamerican and Caribbean history, leading Moore to be seen as an authority in the field, lecturing at colleges and universities including Columbia University.<sup>133</sup> Moore's historical writings of the late 1950s onwards were in fact encouraged and developed by requests from editors like Clarke. These requests helped Moore to transfer his oratorical skills, that had been especially developed for the use of the Communist Party, into a more appropriate style for prose, as he began to record his experiences in organizing and activism.<sup>134</sup> Thus, by the late 1950s, Moore had pivoted from advocating for causes to tracking his own experiences within them and locating them in the larger trajectory of the fight for liberation for all peoples of African descent.

### Africa Conscious Harlem

In the article "Africa Conscious Harlem," published in the Summer 1963 issue of *Freedomways*, Moore writes about the Harlem community's awareness of, and identification with, Africa, both politically and culturally.<sup>135</sup> Moore traces this consciousness of "ancestral homeland" to the beginning of transatlantic slavery, especially when Africans were brought as slaves into the Americas. He does so not only in order to identify a consciousness of Africa as a method of personal liberation in reaction to the evils of slavery, but also to show the longevity and the transnational nature of identification with Africa. However, while Moore divides his article into quite broad categories such as "early ties to Africa," "Role of speakers and press," and "Harlem literary renaissance," he devotes two entire sections to Garvey alone, entitled

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<sup>133</sup> Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 71.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>135</sup> This article as well as others from the Summer 1963 issue of *Freedomways* was published in a volume edited John Henrik Clarke. See: John Henrik Clarke, *Harlem, a Community in Transition*, 2nd ed. (New York: Citadel Press, 1969).

“Arrival of Marcus Garvey,” and “Estimate of Garvey” showing how vital Moore felt Garvey to be to this discussion.

Moore claims that Garvey had arrived at the moment when Harlem’s African consciousness had reached its height and was then “carried to great heights of mass emotion, widespread projection, and stupendous endeavor by the skillful propagandist and promoter, Marcus Garvey.” Moore argues that Garvey was able to seize upon the general anger and unrest following events such as the massacre in East St. Louis in July 1917.<sup>136</sup> Thus, Moore writes, “Marcus Garvey saw the opportunity to harness this upsurge against oppression and to direct the existing consciousness of Africa into a specific organized movement under his leadership,” as he realized the “deep-seated if unconscious desire of the disinherited people of African origin for equal or similar status to that of others in every phase of human thought and endeavor.”<sup>137</sup> Moore traces the basic trajectory of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, (UNIA) before beginning his estimation of the Garvey movement.

Moore argues that Garvey demonstrated a dichotomy between the “progressive tendency which projected ‘the redemption of Africa’ and the ‘Declaration of Rights of the Negro People of the World,’” and a reactionary tendency which had a “Napoleonic urge for personal power and empire, with the inevitable accompaniment of racial exclusiveness and hostility.”<sup>138</sup> This second reactionary tendency eventually overshadowed “the constructive pristine ideas of African

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<sup>136</sup> The 1917 East St. Louis Massacre, from July 1 through July 3, 1917, was a deadly race-riot that transpired as a result of labor disputes related to many African Americans who had migrated to the city from the South to work in factories for the war effort. This deadly violence had a galvanizing effect on many African Americans at the time, leading especially to the NAACP organized event, the Silent Parade on July 28 when ten thousand black people marched down Fifth Avenue in protest. Moore references this Silent Parade in his later chapter on Garvey. See Charles L. Lumpkins, *American Pogrom: The East St. Louis Race Riot and Black Politics* (Athens, Ohio Ohio University Press, 2008).

<sup>137</sup> Richard B. Moore, "Africa Conscious Harlem," *Freedomways* (1963): 321.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

nationalism, liberation, and independence,” leading Garvey to agree with white supremacist leaders and even the Ku Klux Klan. Moore also highlights the other ways Garvey weakened this African consciousness, arguing that aspects of the movement, such as Garvey’s disagreements with former close associates and the failures of his business practices, left the movement open to attacks from its opponents, and led it to splinter.

Before concluding the article, Moore predicts that consciousness of Africa will continue to grow in Harlem and among Afro-Americans. Eluding to his earlier criticisms of Garvey, Moore argues that this consciousness of Africa can only develop fully once there is no distinction drawn between “vital interest in our African heritage and the liberation of the African peoples and deep and active devotion to the cause of human rights and equal citizenship status here in the U.S.A.”<sup>139</sup> To Moore, these two issues are inextricably tied, especially as the common barrier to both goals being realized is the continuation of racism and colonial oppression. While Moore does credit Garvey for being able to exploit and direct this consciousness of Africa to his own advantage, he conceptualizes African nationalism and independence as pristine and pure in contrast with the petty concerns of Garvey’s personality and ego, which he argues grew to overshadow real goals of African independence. Moore presents a real need to keep adherence to a liberatory process and the unselfish principles behind it. To him, because Garvey was not able to see a common enemy behind colonial oppression in Africa and the fight for civil rights in the United States, it weakened the positive bonds created by this African consciousness and led him away from the positive aspects of his movement.

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 333.



## Moore's Writing on the Legacy of Garvey

In his later writings on Garvey, Moore not only expands upon his critiques of Garvey, but also focuses on the intracommunity tensions that surrounded Garvey's interpretation of this consciousness of Africa. Previously, Moore had only written about Garvey in relation to his general consciousness of Africa in Harlem, and in his analysis of the career of W.E.B. Du Bois in relation to Pan-Africanism. However, in his collaboration with historian John Henrik Clarke, on Clarke's edited book of essays on the impact of Marcus Garvey, which resulted in both a chapter in the book as well as a 1970 lecture as part of a symposium on Garvey's impact, Moore focused exclusively on Garvey. This lecture and Moore's chapter on Garvey provide the clearest articulation of Moore's own philosophy of building transnational collaborative independence movements in contrast to how he saw Garvey. In these writings, Moore continues his claim that it is larger oppressive structures such as colonialism and imperialism, which perpetuate race and racism, which are the true barriers to achieving freedom for oppressed peoples.

In the 1970 lecture, Moore had been given the task of speaking on the opposition to Garvey, on the basis of being a contemporary activist of the Garvey period, while others spoke of Garvey's achievements. Moore's assignment is consistent with much of Moore's career, where he was often charged with speaking on the opposing side of popular opinion in order to keep a topic in the public's attention.<sup>140</sup> Moore begins his 1970 lecture rather defensively and states that, although it might be intuitive to immediately think of W.E.B. Du Bois as the leader of opposition to Garvey, there was in fact a varied opposition. He also claims that his earlier writings on

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<sup>140</sup> For example, Moore and fellow activist W.A. Domingo kept the question of Caribbean self-determination active during World War II, by staging a popular series of debates with questions such as "Should British Colonial Negroes Support the British Empire in the Present War?" with Domingo arguing the affirmative and Moore the negative. Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 76.

Garvey in “Africa Conscious Harlem” and “Du Bois and Pan-Africa” had led to serious criticism and threats. Despite this antagonism towards his writing on Garvey, Moore still claims that the time has come to look at historical figures and heroes as “dispassionately as possible” in order to learn from their mistakes, and to develop a better path forward. Moore’s lecture on Garvey was not intended as an attack on Garvey, but as a means to do better for the future.

Moore gives an account of Garvey’s career in the United States, terming him as an “oppositionist in the opposition,” especially in opposition to African American leadership of the period. Moore’s history of the movement is extremely detailed due to the fact that Moore was a contemporary of Garvey and the people surrounding him, especially Hubert H. Harrison, who gave Garvey an audience in front of a mass meeting in Bethel Church. Although Garvey began with the opposition, as Moore continues, “then he himself became a power, and he himself had to deal with opposition.” For the rest of the lecture Moore accounts the reasons for the opposition towards Garvey especially in regard to Garvey’s racial views, and Moore expresses his position on the avenues through which Garvey’s critics voiced their opposition.

Moore begins by countering Garvey’s understandings of American racial politics and claims that Garvey was dominated by the concept of race. Moore especially expands upon his previous writings about Garvey’s attacks against mulattoes. Moore characterizes the term ‘mulatto’ as “a derogatory term which was devised by the Euro-American oppressor to stigmatize his own offspring by African women, or people of mixed African and European descent.”<sup>141</sup> Moore attributes Garvey’s resentment of mulattoes to his Jamaican upbringing, claiming that the small minority of Euro-Jamaicans found it necessary to develop a buffer class between them and the “exploited black toilers of the plantation” in order to maintain their power.

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<sup>141</sup>Marcus Garvey Lecture, Box 11, Folder 13, Richard B. Moore Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

Moore claims that this “brown man, middle class syndrome” developed in Jamaica more highly than other areas, so that this “mixed middle class” imposed “a regime of prejudice and persecution on this shade basis” and those who had “the least visible admixture of European ancestry” suffered and were denied the means of developing. Moore states that Garvey’s resentment of this was natural but argues that Garvey let this generalization about people of mixed ancestry develop into an animus against them as oppressors. It is important to note that Moore once again does not use terms like ‘white’ or ‘black,’ but rather refers to origin or ancestry when referring to racial conflict in Jamaica.

Moore posits that Garvey then carried this animus into the United States where “such shade prejudice had not developed to that degree of prevalence as it had in the Caribbean.”<sup>142</sup> Moore does not argue that this type of colorism did not exist in the United States, but instead claims that there was less of a need of this since there were enough Europeans in the United States that they did not need to establish a buffer class. Even though Garvey at first emphasized bringing together Americans and people who had migrated from the Caribbean to the United States, he spread a doctrine against people of mixed ancestry, which Moore attributes to Garvey’s domination by the concept of race. Moore states “To Garvey, race was the primary thing, social force, in life.”<sup>143</sup> Moore criticizes Garvey’s statement in support of President Harding’s 1921 address on race, in which Garvey had claimed there to be differences between the races that would make it impossible for them to draw together on the basis of equality.<sup>144</sup> He

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>144</sup> An article written in *The New York Times* reported that Harding’s speech was expressing support for a program to reorganize the Republican Party to make it clear that the party would “not countenance any tolerance of claim on the part of the negro to social equality with the whites.” Garvey’s telegram, as reported by the *Times*, expressed support for the policy stating that “All true negroes are against social equality, believing that all races should develop on their own social lines...The new negro will join hands with those who are desirous of keeping the two opposite races

argues that Garvey's statement was the essence of white supremacy, especially in the idea of fundamental differences between "so-called" races which made conflict absolutely necessary. In these criticisms, Moore expands upon his understanding of race and the idea of racialized difference itself as an obstacle to achieving freedom. Moore makes a historical argument to show the factors, especially the attitudes of the ruling class, that led to Jamaica's particular brand of racial stratification and oppression. He highlights how Garvey's dependence on external definitions of race, based on those colonial interests, led Garvey to attack people of mixed ancestry in the United States to his detriment. In addition, Moore argues that Garvey had made a mistake in thinking of race as a monolithic truth, rather than recognizing how it was weaponized in order to divide and disempower oppressed peoples from uniting against their colonial oppressors.

However, Moore also criticizes what he calls unprincipled opposition to Garvey. He especially criticizes those who called for Garvey's deportation because this action sided with the colonial state against peoples of African descent, which was not in the best interests of their people.<sup>145</sup> Moore expands on this point in reference to a document signed by an organization called the Friends of Negro Freedom, who organized themselves in opposition to Garvey. To Moore, this document, which urged the attorney general to take action against Garvey's organization and called for his deportation, constituted joining with the oppressors against their own people, and was "vicious and unprincipalled [sic] opposition."<sup>146</sup> Moore challenged major figures in these movements especially in critiquing their participation and collusion with

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socially pure and work together for the industrial, educational and political liberation of all peoples. "Special to *The New York Times*, "Harding Supports New Policy in South," *New York Times (1857-1922)*, October 27 1921.

<sup>145</sup> Here the transcription of the address is slightly confused, but Moore returns to this idea later in the address as well.

<sup>146</sup> Moore, "Marcus Garvey Lecture," 10.

oppressive systems in their opposition to Garvey, thus showing how Moore used Garvey as an example, rather than just attacking his legacy.

In his account of Garvey's opposition, Moore continues to claim that the greatest conflict between Garvey and other Afro-American leaders was the fact that Garvey had so focused on the idea that the only solution was an independent nation in Africa that he had continually downplayed the struggles for civil rights in the United States. Moore does credit Garvey for "the psychological stirring of vast numbers of people of African descent throughout the world" and for the fact that Garvey made them conscious of their historical past; as a result he enabled them to take "pride in themselves, counteracting the results of the white chauvinist propaganda, to which they were subjected." This, Moore claims, was Garvey's greatest achievement."<sup>147</sup> However, Moore points out that the reactionary aspects of Garvey's teaching eventually led Garvey to declare himself as a fascist.<sup>148</sup> Thus, Moore argues that there is a need to distinguish between the "progressive stages of Garvey's work and the reactionary fascist attitude which developed from racist notions." Moore then ends his lecture with a prohibition against getting caught up in the notion of race:

Let us not be caught in that trap so that we are in a position to carry forward a progressive struggle to enable our people to move forward and take their place along with other human beings in every field of human endeavor and add independent nations in their own continent, Africa.<sup>149</sup>

This statement reflects Moore's continual understanding of race as a dehumanizing concept that keeps peoples of African descent from moving forward. However, it is interesting that here Moore identifies the ultimate goal as adding independent nations in Africa rather than a sense of

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>148</sup> Moore quotes from J.A. Rogers to support this statement. He also references statements written by Garvey in his publication, *The Black Man*. See: J. A. Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color* (New York: Macmillan, 1972). For additional reading on Garvey's controversial statements in support of fascism see Paul Gilroy, "Black Fascism," *Transition*, no. 81/82 (2000).

<sup>149</sup> Moore, "Marcus Garvey Lecture," 15.

racial equality throughout the world. To Moore, adding independent nations in Africa is the strongest way to combat racial oppression. This allows for national determination and self-definition to emerge from African consciousness as a practical reality.

Moore expands his earlier critiques of the Garvey movement in his chapter “The Critics and Opponents of Marcus Garvey.” However, Moore presents a stronger argument that the failures of the Garvey movement were in part due to the fact that Garvey and other African American leaders had failed to see that their primary opposition was “colonialist oppressors and all upholders of racist white supremacy,” and instead they turned against each other. Moore arrives at this conclusion by analyzing the events and feuds that had characterized Garvey’s career, and gives an account of the organizations and leaders that Garvey interacted with and disagreed with. Lastly, Moore argues that Garvey’s visions for settlement in Africa had been corrupted.

Moore strongly counters the statement made by Garvey in a 1923 article entitled “The Negro’s Greatest Enemy.” In his statement Garvey noted that he had visited some of the ‘so-called Negro leaders’ shortly upon his arrival in New York from Jamaica “only to discover, after a close study of them, that they had no program, but were mere opportunists.”<sup>150</sup> Moore lays out the various Afro-American organizations and leaders to prove that Garvey could not have been justified in his claim that there was no program developed by Afro-American leaders of the time. Moreover, he also critically analyzes Garvey’s UNIA Manifesto of 1917 and the 1920 Declaration of the Rights of the Negro People to claim that this program was not too dissimilar from the existing programs of the time such as those developed by the NAACP. Even Garvey’s

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<sup>150</sup> “The Critics and Opponents of Marcus Garvey,” 210; Marcus Garvey, “The Negro’s Greatest Enemy,” *Current History (New York)* 18, no. 6 (1923): 254.

plans of settlement in Africa were not new, Moore claims, and he again links Garveyism to the long legacy of Pan-African thought dating from the 1800s.

While Moore had previously written about the intracommunity disputes between Garvey and other activists, he also acknowledges that Garvey's proposed reconquest of Africa was considered dangerous to the colonial system of European empire builders, and a "whole vicious system of thought, feeling, and action known generally as 'white supremacy.'"<sup>151</sup> He arrives at this idea from a series of questions that arose during a shooting of Garvey by disgruntled ex-employee George Tyler.<sup>152</sup> This episode raised smaller questions of who might have encouraged Tyler in this attempt and what forces "sought to dispose of Garvey and stop the campaign to achieve the projected goal of free nationhood and the building of a powerful empire in Africa." From there, Moore arrives at the larger question which structures the rest of the chapter, "Who and what forces were 'The Negro's Greatest Enemy? Was the chief hostile and dangerous enemy the leaders of African descent, or the still higher and more dangerous forces which controlled Western societies and upheld 'white supremacy'"<sup>153</sup> This incident, for Moore, reflected the realization that Garvey's program presented a real threat to the colonial system. Rather than simply looking at the ways in which Afroamerican leaders had expressed what Moore had seen to be unprincipled opposition to Garvey as a matter of disagreement with Garvey's personal failings, Moore seems to now have evolved his thinking to see the mechanisms and larger structures of oppression that may have guided their actions.

Moore argues that the counterpart to colonialist domination in Africa manifested itself somewhat differently in America, where the majority of the population was Euro-American.

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<sup>151</sup> Moore, "The Critics and Opponents of Marcus Garvey," 221.

<sup>152</sup> See: "Marcus Garvey, the Adventurer, Shot in New York," *Philadelphia Tribune (1912-2001)*, Oct 19 1919.

<sup>153</sup> "The Critics and Opponents of Marcus Garvey," 220. Moore again references Garvey's 1923 essay, "The Negro's Greatest Enemy."

After the abolishment of chattel slavery, this same system of colonial domination continued after Reconstruction by an era of the same denial of human rights in the form of peonage, lynching, murder, segregation, and disenfranchisement. Unfortunately, Moore writes,

[T]he basic connection and similar results of colonialism in Africa and of its counterpart were too often ignored by Marcus Garvey, as well as by several leaders of the Afro-American people in the United States. Thus the primary and most dangerous opposition of the ‘white supremacist’ forces in Africa, and the European centers of control, as well as in America, was tragically glossed over, underestimated, and sometimes even wholly forgotten.<sup>154</sup>

Despite recognizing the effects of this racist repression, Garvey deemed Afro-American leaders as not only his rivals, but his opposition, and then as “The Negro’s Greatest Enemy.” These ‘white supremacist’ forces thus succeeded in limiting the true revolutionary potential of Garvey’s movement by putting him in opposition with other Afro-American leaders.

Moore covers the same ground that he did in his 1970 essay relating to Garvey’s critics, but adds a new dimension in his assessment of the ways that Garvey’s nationalism changed over time. As Garvey progressed, his platform changed from, what Moore characterized as, progressive and positive nationalism to unrestrained and reactionary nationalism. Moore defines positive nationalism as “expressing the right of the African, as of all other peoples, to self-determination,” and reiterates that this positive nationalism is “marked by due regard for the rights and liberties of other nations and peoples.”<sup>155</sup> By contrast, reactionary nationalism was “evident in the selfish and ruthless disdain for the freedom and welfare of other nations and their people.”

Moore continues to define positive nationalism in a statement that can be seen to define Moore’s entire political philosophy: “The essence of progressive nationalism is, therefore, *love for one’s nation within the framework of regard for and observance of the liberties and well-*

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 231.



*being of all others.*"<sup>156</sup> This statement encompasses the avenues through which Moore directed his own activism, especially in the ways he linked the struggle for Caribbean independence to the project of decolonization throughout the world in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>157</sup> For example, this statement mirrors an earlier statement Moore made in front of the Provisional Council of Dominated Nations, which included representatives of India, Burma, Indonesia, as well as countries in Africa and the British West Indies, during the United Nations Conference on International Organization.<sup>158</sup> In that address, Moore presented the importance of making transnational alliances and supporting decolonization movements throughout the world, positing that "good nationalism must be founded on good internationalism," and he had argued for nations to serve the good of all mankind. Moore's own activist philosophy and work in independence movements had been based upon building bridges between oppressed people, and Moore had been open to transnational collaborative projects. In keeping with this emphasis of principled self-determination as the only legitimate mechanism for freedom, Moore argues that Garvey's "Napoleonic tendencies" and acceptance of racial differences had led Garvey to abandon the general struggle for human rights, and then to dangerously accommodate white supremacy. To Moore, Garvey did not recognize that larger oppressive structures, white supremacy and colonialism, had perpetuated race and racism. This led Garvey to fall into the trap of utilizing oppressive constructions of outsiders and others. Thus, Garvey's true potential as an actor who was so able to draw upon a sense of pride in African heritage and descent was

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 232. Moore's emphasis

<sup>157</sup> It should also be noted that Moore's emphasis on the language of self-determination as the primary basis of decolonization bears a remarkable resemblance to Resolution 1514, "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1960. See United Nations, "General Assembly Resolution 1514 (Xv) Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>.

<sup>158</sup> Moore, "Fate and Futures of the Colonial Peoples," 1.

limited by this oversight, and it corrupted what may have been a real threat to forces of white supremacy.

## Conclusion

Moore counters Garvey and the ways that Garvey wrote about his own movement, not only as an amateur historian, but as someone who was there at the time and engaged in similar politics as Garvey. Garvey functions as a symbol and foil for Moore, much like Winston Churchill did, in Moore's article, "Churchill and the Death of Empire," and allows Moore to expound upon his own activist philosophy. Moore's disagreement with Garvey's approach and understanding of race is a continuation of how Moore wrote about race in *The Name 'Negro,'* especially in his characterizations of Garvey's insistence upon racial separatism and the idea of differences between the races as dangerous and untrue. Moore's criticisms of opposition to Garvey, which demanded his deportation, demonstrates that he understood colonial oppression to be the true enemy, which Moore used as the basis of his activism. Therefore, Moore's writings on Garvey operate as a way for Moore to write about his own Pan-African vision and sensibility and highlight his openness to operating on a transnational activist level against larger oppressive structures and the legacy of colonialism. As the African decolonization movement came to fruition in the 1950s and 1960s, the future must have seemed to rest within African liberation and an international Pan-African vision. Moore's writings on Garvey are not reflecting back to a more radical past in which the history of Pan-Africanism was a static concept for study but should be understood as an expression of hope for a radical future.

## Conclusion

By the late 1960s, Moore had begun to look outside of the United States in his political beliefs and writings, especially after he was invited to return to Barbados on November 23, 1966, to celebrate its independence. This visit led Moore to donate his extensive collection of books and pamphlets to the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados.<sup>159</sup> At the same time that notable activists began heading to Africa as the site of true revolution, Moore organized trips to Africa in the late 1970s. These never came to fruition due to his failing health. Instead, Moore spent his last days in Barbados and died on August 18, 1978. As Joyce Moore Turner writes, the Caribbean “Awayman” had returned home.<sup>160</sup>

In a 1979 memorial, J. Cameron Tudor writes that “Richard B. Moore loved Africa and her peoples with a passion hardly surpassed among his contemporaries and the succeeding generations. He had a reverence for her triumph and glories, joined to an intellect which was uniquely free of dishonest scholarship.”<sup>161</sup> Yet, Tudor continues, Moore was not a racist, but rather wished to show people of African heritage how they had contributed to world civilization and “to show white people how much poorer they made themselves when they splashed the pages of their own history with the spoliation of Africa.”<sup>162</sup> Tudor’s reflections are correct. Richard B. Moore, a fiery orator and writer, lent compassion to his historical writings, both compassion for the pain undergone by all oppressed peoples around the world, especially those of African descent, but also the degrading effects of white supremacy and false notions of race.

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<sup>159</sup> Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 92-96. See also W. Burghardt Turner, “The Richard B. Moore Collection and Its Collector,” *Caribbean Studies* 15, no. 1 (1975).

<sup>160</sup> Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*.

<sup>161</sup> J. Cameron Tudor, “Richard Benjamin Moore: An Appreciation,” *Caribbean Studies* 19, no. 1/2 (1979): 173.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

In all of his writings, he strove for dignity, for peoples of African descent to know and love themselves, and he continuously preached a message of radical progress towards equality.

This thesis has demonstrated the breadth and depth of Moore's activism and his impact on twentieth-century history. Yet the fact that Moore is relatively unknown raises broader questions about the importance of documentation and historical writings by and about Caribbean radicals and peoples of African descent. Moore saw the value of these writings, evidenced by his library of several thousand volumes of books, pamphlets, and documents on African, Caribbean, and Afro-American culture, collected over more than a forty-year period, all of which Moore accomplished without outside financial support or great personal wealth or income. He did so in order to refute notions of white supremacy and race; this collection served as proof to counter these false claims and to bring books and other writings together about the accomplishments and culture of Africans at home and in the diaspora.<sup>163</sup>

One of Moore's proudest accomplishments in pursuit of that goal was the reprinting of *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* in 1941. Moore was deeply influenced by Frederick Douglass and felt that it was one of the most significant books written by an Afro-American. At the time, it had been out of print for forty years.<sup>164</sup> As W. Burghardt Turner writes, Moore was "a bibliophile with a definite interest but one would be hard pressed to see in him the systematic librarian."<sup>165</sup> His expansive view of African achievements made it so Moore collected books on seemingly unrelated topics, reasoning that topics like mathematics, science, and medicine were developed in Africa and thus needed to be documented. Moore knew his library by heart and his mind operated as a virtual card catalogue; his same prodigious memory which made him such a

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<sup>163</sup> W. Burghardt Turner, "The Richard B. Moore Collection and Its Collector," *ibid.* 15, no. 1 (1975).

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

compelling orator and brilliant writer allowed him to remember details of any books that he read for instant recall.<sup>166</sup> Thus, his library was more than a museum collection of rare and out-of-print books. Rather, it represented “the tools of the collector’s life and development,” and Moore saw them as weapons with which “to strike at the ills of society.”<sup>167</sup>

Moore’s library and activism is a living testament to his belief in documenting the histories of peoples of African descent, yet Moore himself remains to be a niche figure in histories of the Harlem Renaissance. As mentioned previously, the biography and selected works in the volume, Richard B. Moore, *Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings, 1920-1972*, edited by Moore’s daughter Joyce Moore Turner and her husband W. Burghardt Turner, provide the major bulk of the writings on Moore. The other major writer on Moore is Marxist historian John McClendon who has devoted an article to Moore’s historical writings and included him in another about African American studies and Marxist historiography.<sup>168</sup> Historian and biographer Tammy L. Brown also devotes a chapter to Moore in her book *City of Islands: Caribbean Intellectuals in New York*.<sup>169</sup> Other than that, Moore often appears as a briefly mentioned name in a laundry list of other prominent Caribbean activists of the 1920s and 1930s.

This reflects a larger problem not only with Moore’s legacy, but also with the erasure of many Caribbean radicals and Marxists and the ways they played a crucial role in the struggle for civil rights in the United States and in decolonization movements throughout the world. One part of the problem might be the idea of the Caribbean as nebulous. Sociologist Antonio

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 142-43.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>168</sup> See McClendon, "Richard B. Moore."; John H. McClendon, "Materialist Philosophical Inquiry and African American Studies," *Socialism and Democracy* 25, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>169</sup> Brown, *City of Islands: Caribbean Intellectuals in New York*.

Gaztambide-Géigel has argued that the term "Caribbean" itself was not used consistently to name a geographic region until the twentieth century and was hardly used in the region before World War II, making it a construction of the twentieth century itself.<sup>170</sup> This thesis examines the ways that Moore might have leveraged his Caribbean identities in different ways through American racial politics and international decolonization. Although Moore used the term Caribbean and embraced it in the Caribbean independence movement of the 1940s and 1950s, he was more likely to embrace an identity as a former colonial subject, who had emancipated himself through various means of history and language, and to claim an all-encompassing identity of African descent or ancestry. However, Moore expressed pride in his Barbados heritage through the donation of his library and other historical writings on the region. However, the relative newness of the term makes it imperative to question and explore the meaning of the Caribbean, including how this term is charged with different histories, discourses, and imaginaries.<sup>171</sup> This might account for Moore's complete emphasis on different aspects of Caribbean identity, such as the legacy of plantation slavery and British imperialism, as he moved through the twentieth century.

Though beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to consider what could be gained from looking at the similarities and differences between Moore's understanding of race as a harmful construction designed for the interests of white supremacy and later Caribbean activists, such as Stokely Carmichael/Kwame Ture, who also moved from the American civil rights context to then transcend political borders with an encompassing black identity. A common thread must be explored in the radicalism and activism of earlier generations of Afro-American and Caribbean activists and subsequent generations, especially as both seemed to find Marxist

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<sup>170</sup> Antonio Gaztambide-Géigel, "The Invention of the Caribbean in the 20th Century (the Definitions of the Caribbean as a Historical and Methodological Problem)," *Social and Economic Studies* 53, no. 3 (2004).

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

philosophy and ideology compelling as a potential solution to the end of western imperialism. It is also crucial to question whether the western domination of historiography has resulted in the relative elision of Caribbean radicals who consistently interpreted western narratives of progress for their own counter-hegemonic ends. Richard B. Moore's legacy teaches us the importance of history as a tool for liberation. We honor his memory by embracing the searching quality of his mind, by reading and writing about peoples of African descent whose cultures and histories have been erased, and by striving for the dignity of all the oppressed peoples of mankind. Or, more crucially, we must heed the words that Moore wrote in a letter to his granddaughter, Sylvia Joyce Turner, in 1960, "What one does surely makes one what one comes to be; therefore, strive to do that which is helpful, good, and kind, and you will come to be a fine person."<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Turner, Turner, and Moore, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem*, 311.

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