The Black Left’s War on Marcus Garvey and Garveyism

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Introduction

Harlem in the years following World War I was a hub of black activism. Individuals and groups based in Harlem came to the fore to challenge the traditional dominant black leadership in America. The two most powerful wings of black civil rights activism that had developed were the Bookerite wing of the movement, which followed the lead of Booker T. Washington in favor of a more accommodationist approach, as well as the opposing NAACP wing led by W.E.B. Du Bois. These new more hardline and radical tendencies were embodied by individuals such as Marcus Garvey, Cyril Briggs, and A. Philip Randolph. Garvey led the Universal Negro Improvement Association and served as the face of black nationalist activism in America. Cyril Briggs led the African Blood Brotherhood and edited The Crusader magazine. Briggs was initially rooted in black nationalism but quickly became one of the earliest and most fervent black supporters of Communism in America. Randolph was a member of the Socialist Party of America and edited The Messenger magazine alongside Chandler Owen. All three individuals, and their associated movements, argued for a break from traditional black leadership. These three organizations were identified by New York investigative agents as being the only “ultra-radical” groups in the city.¹ However, this shared disdain for moderate black leadership did not prevent intense division between Garvey and the two black publications of the radical left.

Marcus Garvey’s organization the Universal Negro Improvement Association had developed a mass following within America and in many other countries throughout globe by 1920. Garvey initially founded the U.N.I.A. in his home country of Jamaica in 1914 under the

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auspices of uniting all of those of “African parentage” to work for the interests of the race.\textsuperscript{2} Initially the U.N.I.A.’s program contained clear influences from Booker T. Washington with an expressed aim of setting up industrial colleges for black Jamaicans.\textsuperscript{3} After moving to America in 1916 Garvey moved the headquarters of the association to Harlem. David Levering Lewis encapsulated what Garvey offered via the U.N.I.A. as a “vision of a renascent Mother Africa, united and mightier than in the days of the great pharaohs, her ancient arts and sciences the envy of the planet.”\textsuperscript{4} By the early 1920’s Garvey and the U.N.I.A. had formed a litany of black owned businesses, had formed an African Orthodox Church, and had begun to call for the creation of a Pan-African black nation.\textsuperscript{5}

Over this period black activists, journalists, and organizations from across the political spectrum staked out positions in firm opposition to Garvey. The two most significant radical leftist black publications, the socialist \textit{Messenger} magazine and the Communist associated \textit{Crusader}, led the most sustained and vociferous campaigns against Garvey. Although ostensibly both opposing Garvey from the left, the development and substance of the two anti-Garvey campaigns diverged. \textit{The Messenger}’s critiques of Garvey were, for the most part, distinctly rooted in socialism while \textit{The Crusader}’s Communist line was largely absent from the publication’s anti-Garvey pieces.

This thesis will explore the development of both \textit{The Crusader} and \textit{The Messenger}’s anti-Garveyism. I will discuss the drastically differing approaches taken by each publication in regards to how each publication chose to oppose the Garvey movement. \textit{The Crusader}, initially

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Edmund David Cronon, \textit{Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association} (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 16-17.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Cronon, \textit{Black Moses}, 18.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Lewis, \textit{When Harlem Was in Vogue}, 40.
\end{itemize}
defenders of Garvey, showed a willingness to employ a broad swath of arguments against him. These critiques included personal attacks on Garvey, criticisms of his plans for Africa, questioning of the truthfulness of his membership and financial claims, as well as accusations that he had sold out those he claimed to protect. These arguments, however, rarely proved deeply ideologically Communist in nature. The Messenger in contrast produced anti-Garvey arguments which were in large part distinctly rooted in the magazine’s socialist ideology. These differing approaches were the result of the publications’ divergent rationales for embracing socialism as well as the national background of each magazine’s editors.

The Messenger and The Crusader were connected to differing but related strands of the American radical left during the period. The Messenger positioned itself directly in line with the Socialist Party of America, or SPA. The SPA was formed in 1901 as a joining together of smaller socialist groups including dissidents from the Socialist Labor Party who desired a vision of socialism which was rooted in labor unions. The SPA membership and electoral support quickly exploded. Eugene Debs, a union leader, served as the parties repeated nominee for President and achieved a peak performance of 6 percent of the popular vote in 1912, which amounted to over 900,000 votes. The party also achieved success in having Socialists elected to the House of Representatives as well as in harnessing control over numerous large labor unions. While the party never rivalled the Republican Party or the Democratic Party in terms of national success, it was distinctly not a fringe party relegated only to a small cadre of supporters. New York City served as a stronghold for the Party, particularly in 1917 when the Party’s nominee for

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Mayor, Morris Hillquit, drew over 140,000 votes and outpolled the Republican nominee.\textsuperscript{9} Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph joined the Party the same year and coordinated the SPA’s campaign efforts in Harlem.\textsuperscript{10}

Despite its popularity at the ballot box, the Party had been rife with internal divisions from the outset. The SPA was divided between a more moderate wing which did not believe violent revolution was necessary to achieve socialism and a more radical wing who believed more extreme actions were necessary.\textsuperscript{11} This division widened in the wake of the Russian Revolution of 1917. The more radical wing of the Party fervently supported the new Communist Russian government.\textsuperscript{12} They urged the SPA to embrace a revolutionary program for America and for the Party to join the Communist International “as a part of the world revolutionary Socialist program.”\textsuperscript{13} The moderate wing still retained control of the Party apparatus however, and as such these programmatic changes were resisted and supporters of the revolutionary aims were expelled.\textsuperscript{14} These dissidents initially formed two competing parties, the Communist Labor Party and the Communist Party.\textsuperscript{15} In 1920 these two parties were, under the orders of the Communist International, merged together to found the Unified Communist Party which, by 1921, would be rebranded the Workers Party.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{9} Jack Ross, \textit{The Socialist Party of America: a Complete History} (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 198.
\textsuperscript{12} Record, \textit{The Negro and the Communist Party}, 20.
\textsuperscript{13} Record, \textit{The Negro and the Communist Party}, 21.
\textsuperscript{14} Record, \textit{The Negro and the Communist Party}, 21.
\textsuperscript{15} Record, \textit{The Negro and the Communist Party}, 21.
\textsuperscript{16} Record, \textit{The Negro and the Communist Party}, 21.
Although neither the Socialist Party of America nor the Communist parties which split from it ever achieved mass support within black America, numerous black intellectuals were associated with each movement. In large part, much like the Communist movement in America at large, most of the early black Communists had previously been members of the SPA before splitting off to join the nascent Communist movement. Cyril Briggs however represented a unique case in that he had never been a member of the Socialist Party prior to joining the Communist movement. A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen meanwhile were two of the few black socialist intellectuals who remained in the SPA in the wake of the fissures brought about by the Russian Revolution.

Garvey’s relationship with the socialist and communist movements is a far more complex story than one would expect from the man who eventually labelled opponents of capitalism as “enemies to human advancement.” One of Garvey’s earliest allies was a black socialist named W.A. Domingo, who later wrote for both The Messenger as well as The Crusader. Domingo and Garvey had been friends and collaborators in Jamaica prior to both men’s immigration to New York City. This relationship continued after both arrived in America. By the time Garvey began publishing the Negro World in 1918 his long-time collaborator, Domingo, had befriended Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph and committed himself to the socialist cause.

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17 Record, The Negro and the Communist Party, 44.
Domingo’s socialist activism apparently did not concern Garvey as he chose Domingo to edit the *Negro World*, as well as asking him to contribute two editorials per issue in the publication.\(^{22}\)

Garvey himself however never showed any fondness for socialism. During the late 1910s there was no hint of derision for the ideology. In fact in an address given in February 1919 Garvey spoke positively of the labor movement, arguing that it stood as a “fair example to us as Negroes, that if we are to impose our wills on the powers that be, we must be as solidly organized as labor today.”\(^{23}\) This was not an endorsement of labor unions, but simply a strong endorsement of the power and influence they had been able to wield through organization. However, it is significant in that there was no hint of the vitriol directed at organized labor that would populate his later writings and speeches. Although not a socialist himself, during his early years in America Garvey showed an openness to working with black socialists, to the point that he allowed a socialist to write for and edit his publication, and a fondness for the organizational methods of the socialist and labor left.

In June 1919 this welcoming approach to working with socialists collapsed. A socialist pamphlet written by Domingo was seized by the Lusk Committee, a New York State body investigating radical activity. As an immigrant Garvey feared that association with Domingo in an increasingly anti-socialist national climate could lead to his expulsion from the country.\(^{24}\) In the aftermath Garvey assembled a U.N.I.A. committee which expelled Domingo for “writing and


publishing editorials that were not in keeping with the UNIA program.” Garvey later described Domingo as a “Socialist who has a desperate grudge against work and who has the dreamers vision that all the rich people of the world will divide up their wealth with the loafer.” This dismissal of Briggs due to his ideology served as Garvey’s declaration that socialists no longer had a place in his movement. This anti-socialist position strengthened subsequently as Garvey began to decry socialism and socialist activists in the *Negro World* and in public addresses.

Garvey made clear that his vision of the ideal world now had no place for the anti-capitalist vision espoused by socialists like Cyril Briggs, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen. He went on the attack, repeatedly denouncing socialist and labor union policies espoused by the editors of *The Messenger* and *The Crusader*. In his essay “The Negro, Communism, Trade Unionism and His Friend: Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts” Garvey warned blacks to “be careful of the traps and pitfalls of white trade unionism, in affiliation with the American Federation of white workers and laborers.” This denouncement of unions on its face would not have shocked Randolph and Owen; as black socialist labor advocates they repeatedly critiqued the racist aspects of major white unions such as the American Federation of Labor. Garvey followed his attack on “white trade unionism”, however, by stating “It seems strange and a paradox, but the only convenient friend the Negro worker or laborer has, in America, at the present time, is the white capitalist.” Garvey’s rationale was that white capitalists were happy to employ African Americans as long as they were willing to take “a lower standard of wage than the white union

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25 “W.A. Domingo,” 529.
man.” If blacks were to unionize for higher wages they would simply be passed over in favor of unionized white laborers. 

Garvey’s solution was for black laborers to accept lower wages from white capitalists until they could save up to “become their own employers.” Garvey went further than simply decrying the effectiveness of class politics, stating that he was “of the opinion that the group of whites from whom Communists are made, in America, as well as trade unionists and members of the Worker’s party, is more dangerous to the Negro’s welfare than any other group.” He not only rejected the prospect of unionization as ineffective but actively disparaged it, along with other radical leftist movements, as the largest threat to blacks in America.

Garvey stated his opinions on economics and more radical left-wing politics succinctly in his essay “Capitalism and the State” in which he wrote that “Capitalism is necessary to the progress of the world, and those who unreasonably and wantonly oppose or fight against it are enemies to human advancement.” To Garvey those who opposed capitalism were both “enemies to human advancement” and “more dangerous to the Negro’s welfare than any other group.”

Garvey’s expressed anti-socialism was likely a hybrid of political expediency as well as genuine programmatic belief. He had shown an initial tolerance for socialists within his movement, largely out of a feeling of friendship with his old ally Domingo. With the changing political climate in the wake of the Russian Revolution and fear of socialist and anarchist radicalism, the continued association with a known socialist proved too much for Garvey.

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30 Garvey, “The Negro, Communism, Trade Unionism and His Friend,” 70.
31 Garvey, “The Negro, Communism, Trade Unionism and His Friend,” 70.
Garvey’s anti-socialism can thus in part be read as rooted in a desire to protect himself and his movement from federal scrutiny. However, Garvey also promulgated an ideological opposition to the goals of the socialists and communists and expressed a genuine attachment to capitalism as necessary for the progress of the race.

In addition to Garvey’s increasingly anti-socialist positions, Garvey took specific actions which spurred both The Crusader and The Messenger magazines into fervent opposition. Cyril Briggs and The Crusader positioned themselves in steadfast opposition to Garvey in the wake of his decision to publicly expel and insult Briggs and the African Blood Brotherhood at a U.N.I.A. convention in 1921. Randolph and Owen on the other hand moved from ideological critiques of Garvey into a vociferous anti-Garvey campaign as a result of Garvey’s decision to meet with the Ku Klux Klan in 1922.

Marcus Garvey had long emphasized the importance of racial purity to his ideology. Garvey wrote, “I believe in a pure black race just as how all self-respecting whites believe in a pure white race.” He clearly drew a connection his own belief in the need to preserve the purity of races and the same belief among whites. Garvey took this shared support for “racial purity” a step too far for many, such as Randolph and Owen, with his decision to meet with the Ku Klux Klan. In June of 1922 Garvey traveled to Georgia and met with Edward Young Clarke, the Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Looking back on the meeting Garvey argued that the meeting was necessary to “authoritatively and correctly find out the corporate and objective attitude of the newly organized Klan toward the members of my race.”

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34 Grant, *Negro With a Hat*, 333.
asserted that others in the black press had vilified the Klan and that his visit was an opportunity to see for himself the veracity of anti-Klan claims.\textsuperscript{36} Garvey additionally emphasized the convergences he saw between his own program and that of the Klan’s, praising the Klan’s desire “to preserve their race from suicide through miscegenation and to keep it pure” which he referred to as a “commendable desire.”\textsuperscript{37} Garvey imagined that his decision to travel and meet with the Klan would be perceived as a feat of personal bravery.\textsuperscript{38} For \textit{The Messenger}, however, Garvey’s decision to meet the Klan, an organization which brutalized blacks, crossed a new line that necessitated a much harsher form of critique than the magazine had utilized previously.

\textbf{Historiography}

Despite the wealth of primary source literature available relating to Marcus Garvey’s tortured relationships with the black radical leftist magazines \textit{The Messenger} and \textit{The Crusader}, this aspect of Garvey’s life has largely not proven to be a point of extensive study. The majority of historians who have touched on the topic have done so primarily through the individual perspective of Marcus Garvey, A. Philip Randolph, or Cyril Briggs. These more narrow focuses have left several holes in the historiography surrounding the leftist anti-Garvey movement which this thesis will fill.

David Levering Lewis’ book \textit{When Harlem Was in Vogue} provides an excellent broader view of black life in Harlem in post-World War I era. Garvey, Randolph, Owen, and Briggs all appear in the work, but they feature as smaller figures in a much larger story. This thesis focuses more narrowly on more radical portions of black political thought during this period. Lewis’ work places these radical activists in conjunction with their more moderate, and perhaps more

\textsuperscript{36} Garvey, “Application For Pardon,” 260
\textsuperscript{37} Garvey, “Appeal For Pardon,” 261.
\textsuperscript{38} Grant, \textit{Negro With a Hat}, 333.
politically successful, contemporaries. Lewis’ work is crucial to understanding physical and cultural life within Harlem; factors which undoubtedly influenced these figures political understandings.

More narrowly, most Garvey historians who have covered the black left campaign against Garvey in *The Messenger* and *The Crusader* magazines have failed to take a holistic view of each publication and their shifting opinions on Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association. Edmund David Cronon and Colin Grant both offer detailed analyses of Garvey’s life which are crucial in helping to frame what was occurring to him throughout the period of the two publication’s wars against him. Additionally both historians discuss Garvey’s black leftist critics to varying degrees. However, with Garvey as their central focus, their view of the anti-Garvey press campaign is restricted only to its most vitriolic period. This can be seen through the fact that both excerpt at length the most extremely personal anti-Garvey piece ever published in *The Messenger*, “The Madness of Marcus Garvey” by Robert W. Bagnall.39 While this piece is undoubtedly crucial to understanding the vitriolic levels which the anti-Garvey movement would reach, the weakness is in the failure to place the article in the larger context of *The Messenger*’s longstanding opposition to Garvey. Additionally, both authors correctly identify Garvey’s meeting with the Ku Klux Klan as the point which marked the beginning of *The Messenger*’s vicious assault on Garvey. However, by only noting the articles published in the magazine in the aftermath of Garvey’s Klan meeting, two years of shifting opinion on Garvey and numerous substantive anti-Garvey articles published prior to his meeting with the Klan are ignored. This representation results in a view of *The Messenger*’s anti-Garvey campaign as devoid of ideology, as the publication is only seen as an angry reaction to a Garvey misstep. A

longer view of the history of *The Messenger* is necessary to understand their anti-Garvey campaign as something which developed over time and, for much of the magazine's history, was deeply rooted in considered socialist critique.

Representations of Cyril Briggs and his *Crusader* magazine’s anti-Garvey campaign in Garvey biographies have been broadly more positive. Colin Grant correctly notes that Briggs was a longtime admirer of the success of Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association and was, for a period, sympathetic to its black nationalist goals. Grant also briefly notes early trepidations expressed in *The Crusader* over creeping authoritarianism on Garvey’s part in the affairs of the UNIA. This soft early critique is key to understanding *The Crusader*’s later vociferous criticism of Garvey as not simply a sudden switch from unquestioning Garvey supporter to rigid opponent in the wake of Briggs and the African Blood Brotherhood’s expulsion by Garvey from a UNIA conference. While Grant offers this more holistic view of the *Crusader*’s articles on Garvey, he does not attempt to utilize these early soft critiques to understand the later more rigid attacks as a validation of Briggs’ fears regarding Garvey’s flaws.

Although Cyril Briggs and the African Blood Brotherhood have never been the subject of a book length study like A. Philip Randolph and Marcus Garvey, numerous historians have offered substantive analyses of Briggs’ activism which have touched on his opposition to Garvey. The most prominent of these historians are Mark Solomon and Winston James. Winston James details the development of Briggs’ ideology over time from a more pure black nationalist to a more committed Communist. In relation to the Briggs-Garvey dynamic, James argues that this ideological turn did not significantly affect Briggs’ feelings toward the Garvey movement. He notes that, “Briggs did not so much abandon his black nationalism as graft onto it

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40 Grant, *Negro With a Hat*, 251.
41 Grant, *Negro With a Hat*, 252.
revolutionsary socialism.” To James, the rancorous split between Garvey and the African Blood Brotherhood was the result of personal animosities mixed with Garvey’s authoritarianism and financial issues. Mark Solomon, while acknowledging the importance of Garvey’s personal failings to the falling out, challenges this unideological explanation for the Garvey/UNIA-Briggs/Crusader feud. Solomon points to Garvey’s attack on blacks who allied with the “Bolsheviki” as the point which “capped the growing alienation between Garvey and Briggs.”

The weakness of both authors’ arguments however, is that they don’t utilize the abundance of articles present in The Crusader which clearly trace the development of Briggs’ position on Garvey and the UNIA and are crucial to understanding the relative presence of Communist ideology in Briggs’ assault on Garvey.

Biographers of Randolph have in large part chosen not to focus in great detail on Randolph’s early life and thus, as with historians of Garvey, understandings of the content of The Messenger’s anti-Garvey campaign have been underdeveloped. Due to the longevity of Randolph’s life as an activist and his later, and more well known, involvement in organizing the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the March on Washington Movement, it seems that this early contentious feud with Garvey has been deemed less worthy of significant study. One key argument that some Randolph biographers have made in their short discussions of his relations with Garvey however, is that Randolph and The Messenger were motivated to oppose Garvey out of jealousy at Garvey’s success. The assertion is that the socialist editors of The Messenger, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, turned so fervently against Garvey out of an intense

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43 James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 160.
feeling of personal jealousy over Garvey’s success in appealing to working class blacks, a group that both Randolph and Owen hoped to bring into the socialist movement. This argument is put forth by both Jervis Anderson and Andrew Edmund Kersten in their biographies of Randolph. Kersten writes that Randolph “had been working hard to gather the vanguard of the socialist revolution with only meager results. Garvey had popped up, given speeches, held rallies and parades replete with pomp and circumstance, promising a pie-in-the-sky dream about “Negro Zionism” and hundred of thousands of blacks bought it.”\footnote{Andrew Edmund Kersten, \textit{A. Philip Randolph: a Life in the Vanguard} (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 22.} Anderson seconds this point, writing that “it would have been surprising if Randolph and Owen, struggling at least since 1917 to build a Socialist mass movement in Harlem, did not feel a certain jealousy though neither of them confessed to such a feeling - over the mass movement Garvey had organized.”\footnote{Jervis Anderson, \textit{A. Philip Randolph; a Biographical Portrait} (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 26.} For both Anderson and Kersten, personal jealousy at Garvey’s success is crucial to understanding the break between Garvey and the socialist editors of \textit{The Messenger}. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., who has focused most narrowly on studying the history of \textit{The Messenger}, also points to jealousy as a partial rationale for this animosity. While I believe jealousy is indeed crucial to understanding the rift between \textit{The Messenger} and Garvey, I will challenge in this paper the level of emphasis placed on jealousy by these authors in favor of emphasizing the role of ideological differences in the split between Garvey and \textit{The Messenger}.

Theodore Kornweibel’s book \textit{No Crystal Star: Black Life and the Messenger, 1917-1928} is undoubtedly the strongest of any of the works which discuss the black left’s anti-Garvey campaign. While others have treated these campaigns as simply short points to mention to color the overall story of Garvey and Randolph’s lives, Kornweibel offers the only detailed analysis of
the entirety of the anti-Garvey campaign in either publication. Kornweibel’s overarching argument is that over time the content of the anti-Garvey articles published in the magazine devolved from more principled ideological stands to cruder attacks arguing in favor of deportation and accusations that Garvey’s followers were simply ignorant.\(^{47}\) He writes, “whatever purely working class character remained in the magazine after 1920 was lost in the effort to ‘get Garvey’.”\(^{48}\) In this reading, the anti-Garvey effort became so crucial to the very fabric of The Messenger that the publication was willing to sacrifice its radical ideological position if it furthered the cause of tearing him down. Kornweibel’s analysis of the ways in which The Messenger’s push against Garvey shifted over time is highly detailed and helps frame my thesis. However, I also challenge his assertion that by the end of the anti-Garvey campaign all vestiges of the magazine’s socialist ideology, particularly within the anti-Garvey pieces, had ceased to exist.

To fully understand the anti-Garvey movement in the black left press it is also crucial to explain the reasons why the movements associated with The Messenger and The Crusader, the Socialist Party of America and the Communist African Blood Brotherhood, failed to appeal to working class blacks in anywhere near the numbers to which Garvey was able to. Explanations for these failures have focused on the ideological positions embraced by the Socialist Party and the Communist movement compared to the Garvey movement as well as the organizational and personal hurdles of Cyril Briggs and the African Blood Brotherhood.

Much has been written to explain the failures of the early 20th century Socialist Party of America to appeal to a larger swath of the black populace in America. In his book The Negro


\(^{48}\) Kornweibel, Jr., No Crystal Stair, 169.
and the Communist Party, Wilson Record argues that the Socialist Party, with which *The Messenger* explicitly aligned itself, failed due to its unrelenting focus on connecting all oppression to class. Record asserts that “most Socialist Party members were agreed that the exploitation of Negroes was only an extreme form of the exploitation of all workers under capitalism. It was not basically a problem of racial antipathy or social caste.”49 He notes that this purely class-based approach made it difficult for the Socialist Party to expand their appeal to a larger swath of the black population beyond the cadre associated with *The Messenger*.50 This explanation is seconded by Sally M. Miller in her essay “The Socialist Party and the Negro, 1901-1920.” Miller emphasizes however that Randolph and Owen took pains to make their socialist appeal in explicitly racial terms. She points to the example of Randolph making the “analogy of chattel-slavery and so-called wage-slavery with great pointedness.”51 She also notes the efforts of Randolph and Owen to more directly speak to blacks in America, Miller argues that the Party was nevertheless unwilling to break from purely class based prescriptions for black suffering in America and that this stunted any hope for widespread appeal to American blacks.52 Understanding the Socialist Party’s approach to race is critical as this question of class vs. race based action was the ideological basis for much of the animosity between *The Messenger* and Garvey. Joyce Moore Turner, in her book *Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance*, also zeroes in on the Socialist Party’s failure to develop a specific appeal to blacks as well as their failure to challenge the racism in terms of membership of many unions as reasons for their failure to appeal to masses in the same way as Garvey.53 Turner expands this discussion further.

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than other scholars have. She argues that the Party’s inability to come to a consensus on questions of immigration stunted any hopes for the party to appeal to Afro-Caribbean immigrants. These immigrants had joined the Garvey movement, which offered a universalist appeal to blacks worldwide, in large numbers.\textsuperscript{54} Turner’s focus on this point is key, specifically in light of the fact that the issue of xenophobia in the campaign against Garvey led to internecine within The Messenger.

Explanations for the failures of Cyril Briggs to attract masses to his African Blood Brotherhood have been less focused on the organization’s Communist beliefs and more to organizational structure and a practical handicap of Briggs, namely his inabilities as a public orator due to an extreme problem with stuttering. In Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance Turner refers to Briggs speaking difficulties as a “cruel hoax” played by nature which had “bade him speak yet tied his tongue.”\textsuperscript{55} Winston James, in his work Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America, also points to Briggs’ intense stammering issues as a handicap to any hopes of being a rousing leader of a mass movement, as Garvey was able to be.\textsuperscript{56} While Briggs’ oratorical failings help to explain his inability to bring in mass membership to his African Blood Brotherhood, it also places a higher level of importance on analyzing the content of the Crusader magazine. The written word was the only means through which Briggs was able to promulgate his message and thus the most effective means through which he could wage his assault on Garvey.

In works dealing with Briggs the question as to when exactly he joined the Communist party has proved to be a consistent debate. While this is an interesting argument, for the purposes

\textsuperscript{54} Turner, Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance, 46.
\textsuperscript{55} Turner, Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance, 35.
\textsuperscript{56} James, Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia, 157-158.
of this paper the more important question, given the fact that his Communism was largely absent from his attacks on Garvey, is why Briggs joined the Communist movement and what exactly Communism meant to him. Winston James argues that Briggs’ attraction to Communism was not rooted in Marxist theory but instead in a belief in the promise of the newly formed Soviet state as an anti-colonial and anti-imperial power.\textsuperscript{57} Turner writes, “The Bolsheviks, as far as Briggs and the others were concerned, were the deadly enemies of black people’s enemies, which meant that Lenin and Trotsky were their friends.”\textsuperscript{58} J.A. Zumoff argues that “Briggs’ position as both a colonial subject from the Caribbean and a Black person in the United States informed his radical politics, compelling him to mix a hatred of British colonialism with a desire to end racial oppression in the United States.”\textsuperscript{59} Briggs’ intense disdain for colonialism was central to his politics. This explains his ability to easily substitute his early attraction to the Irish revolutionary struggle with a commitment to the Russian revolutionary struggle, as both represented challenges to the colonial powers Briggs so despised. Zumoff argues that Briggs’, and other A.B.B. members, status as immigrants from Caribbean colonies explains why they were the first blacks to join the Communist Party.\textsuperscript{60} The internationalist anti-colonial nature of Communism was the basis for Briggs’ commitment, not its class based appeal. This analysis of Briggs’ approach to Communism will be key in understanding the paucity of Communist argument in Briggs’s critiques of Garvey.

Numerous historians have touched on the campaign against Garvey in \textit{The Crusader} and \textit{The Messenger} magazines. However, where the historiography is lacking is in considering the

\textsuperscript{57} James, \textit{Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia}, 165.
\textsuperscript{58} James, \textit{Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia}, 167.
\textsuperscript{60} Zumoff, “The African Blood Brotherhood, From Caribbean Nationalism to Communism,” 212.
concurrent anti-Garvey campaigns of these radical leftist publications in conjunction with each other. This gap is in large part the result of the fact that most historians who have written on the anti-Garvey movement have done so with an explicit focus on only one of the individuals involved, Marcus Garvey, A. Philip Randolph or Cyril Briggs. This has resulted in more narrow perspectives through which historians have chosen to analyze both magazine’s campaigns. Most historians have chosen simply to note that both publications opposed Garvey. What is missing, and what my paper will add to the historiography, is a lengthier view of the anti-Garvey campaigns of both *The Messenger* and *The Crusader* which elucidates the developments of both magazines from positions of sympathy towards Garvey to fervent opposition. In analyzing these publications on the overarching level I also hope to consider the question as to whether the leftist ideologies of these two publications can be found in their respective anti-Garvey campaigns, a point not greatly considered by historians aside from Theodore Kornweibel, Jr.

The two primary sources that form the basis for this thesis are *The Crusader* and *The Messenger* magazines. *The Crusader* ran from September 1918 through February 1922 while *The Messenger* ran from November 1917 through June 1928. *The Messenger* was the shared product of socialist activists A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, although Owen left the publication in 1923 and moved away from socialist politics.  

*The Crusader* was the brainchild of Cyril Briggs, an immigrant from Nevis who joined the communist movement. While offering a broad understanding of each magazine’s ideological positioning, the focus here will be specifically on the periods of each magazine’s publishing runs in which the questions of Garvey and Garveyism were dealt with. In particular, it will be structured more narrowly as a textual analysis of the development and content of the pieces in both magazines which specifically

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61 Kornweibel, Jr., *No Crystal Stair*, 34.
wrestled with Garvey and his movement. A specific focus will be placed on identifying the presence, or lack thereof, of each magazine’s expressed radical leftist ideological beliefs within the articles each published on Garvey. The Garvey coverage of each publication will then be placed in comparison with each other to analyze and understand the differing approaches towards Garvey adopted by his two most prominent journalistic critics of the political left.

The first chapter in this thesis is focused more narrowly on understanding the approach to Garvey in *The Crusader* magazine. The chapter will begin with an overview of the magazine’s ideological underpinnings and the understanding of communism that it embraced. This approach to Communism, which did not place primacy on the class conflict, will be utilized to explain why *The Crusader* did not find it contradictory to initially support Garvey in spite of his expressed opposition to Communism. The chapter will then offer a detailed analysis of the arch of development in *The Crusader*’s approach to Garvey. This will offer an understanding of how the publication came from expressing a desire to ally with the Garvey movement to a position of fervent opposition. The second chapter will offer a similar analysis but with a focus on *The Messenger* magazine. This chapter will begin with an analysis of the inherent conflicts between the class-based vision of socialist activism of A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen and the race based vision of activism which eschewed both socialism as well as interracial alliances which was espoused by Garvey. This will be followed by a detailed discussion of *The Messenger*’s shift from early methodical critiques of Garveyism to a hybrid of continued ideological critique and vicious personal, at times xenophobic, attacks on Garvey. The final chapter will tie the two publications together by exploring how and why two publications who both expressed support for radical left politics dealt with Garvey and his movement in such variant ways. This chapter will argue that the differing approaches to radical left politics, one
class-based and one focused on anti-colonialism, explain the crucial differences between each magazine’s dealings with the Garvey movement.
Chapter One - The Crusader and Garvey

Marcus Garvey and Cyril Briggs both immigrated to the United States from the Caribbean. Garvey immigrated to the United States from Jamaica in 1916. Briggs was born to a white father and black mother on the island of Nevis, a British colonial territory. Briggs immigrated to New York City from Nevis in 1905 and worked as a journalist at the New York Amsterdam News in the years prior to his founding of The Crusader magazine. Throughout these early years and into the beginning of The Crusader, Briggs developed an ideology that continued to shift but remained rooted in anticolonialism.

Ideology

By the time of his formal rejection of Garvey in 1921, Briggs had declared himself a Communist. His vision of Communism and his rationale for embracing the ideology however were not rooted in any deeply studied attachment to Marxism. Briggs’ Communism did not in fact mark a great departure from his more longstanding anti-colonial beliefs. J.A. Zumoff argues that Briggs’ ideology always retained at its core a hatred for colonialism which was informed by his experiences growing up in a British colony. Briggs and the African Blood Brotherhood, largely made up of Caribbean immigrants, were attracted to Communism precisely because of their experiences as immigrants from colonies. The Socialist Party of America, of which A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen were members, possessed no agreed upon policy on immigration and was wracked with internal division over whether to welcome immigrants as fellow struggling laborers or to reject them on the grounds of protecting jobs in America from cheap foreign labor. Thus, the Socialist Party, with its narrow view at all times on class

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64 Turner, Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance, 46-47.
oppression, would not have held interest for the anti-colonial black immigrant Briggs.\(^{65}\) According to Zumoff, the Communists in America had, much like the Socialists, utterly failed to offer an appeal specifically designed to blacks in America. It was not class based arguments that convinced Briggs to turn to Communism, it was the international anti-colonial positioning of the Soviet Union.\(^{66}\) In a letter to Theodore Draper from 1958, Briggs spelled out his rationale for embracing Communism. Briggs writes, “My interest in Communism was inspired by the national policy of the Russian Bolsheviks and the anti-imperialist orientation of the Soviet state birthed by the October Revolution. I was at the time more interested, as you will gather, in the national liberation revolution than in the social revolution.”\(^{67}\) The adoption of Communism came from Briggs’ belief that allying with the Soviets offered the most effective path forward to throwing off the yoke of colonial powers.

The centrality of anti-colonialism to Briggs’ ideology also informed his approach to setting up the African Blood Brotherhood in 1919. Briggs had long admired the Irish nationalist movement, even before he became interested in the Russian Revolution. Robert A. Hill argues that Briggs modeled the A.B.B. on the secretive Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) which orchestrated the Easter Rising in 1916.\(^{68}\) The A.B.B., like the IRB, was intended to be a secret organization with posts across the world which possessed the power to strike back against oppressive colonial governments as well as black mistreatment within America. Briggs was

willing to take inspiration from movements internationally, both ideologically communist and not, which offered promise to the anticolonial struggle.

Briggs’ actions and ideological positioning were at all times rooted in his disdain for colonialism, a disdain he shared with fellow immigrant Marcus Garvey. Briggs from 1919 to 1922 was not a doctrinaire Marxist. His vision of Communism did not inherently conflict with Garveyism. Briggs and the A.B.B. at times expressed support for the economic aims of Communism in their program but, as Briggs noted, it was the anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism of the Soviets which formed the basis for his activism.

**Garvey and The Crusader**

The final published issue of *The Crusader* magazine included ten articles specifically attacking Marcus Garvey and carried the headline on its cover, “Marcus Garvey’s Arrest.”69 This issue served as the triumphant cap on a lengthy campaign waged against the U.N.I.A. leader in the pages of *The Crusader*. In reading this final issue of the publication it’s difficult to conceive that only three years prior the magazine and its founder and editor Cyril Briggs had proudly extolled the virtues of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Although *The Crusader* began publishing in 1918, Marcus Garvey did not appear as a subject of discussion until an article in the December, 1919 issue which spelled out *The Crusader*’s position on the possibilities of Garvey’s Black Star Line shipping venture. Garvey founded the Black Star Line with the intention of creating an entirely black owned and operated transatlantic shipping line for black passengers which offered the high class treatment that was traditionally reserved for white passengers on transatlantic ships.70 Garvey viewed the Line as an opportunity to connect blacks across the globe as well as a means of racial financial

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70 Grant, *Negro With a Hat*, 187.
improvement.\textsuperscript{71} \textit{The Crusader} dismissed skeptics of Garvey’s shipping plans by arguing that the mere raising of possible negative effects of the Black Star Line amounted to “racial pessimism.”\textsuperscript{72} This same piece spoke glowingly of Garvey, arguing that “When men are willing to die for a cause they are not likely to be dishonest to that cause. Mr. Garvey has suffered enough persecution in his fight for the race to earn himself the status of a martyr and a full-grown niche in Ethiopia’s hall of fame.”\textsuperscript{73} The first mention of Garvey in the magazine was adoring as he was fiercely shielded from questions regarding his honesty. Although this article appeared directly next to a piece glorifying race relations in “Bolshevist” Russia, \textit{The Crusader} appears to have found no contradictions between their attachment to “bolshevism” while also offering hope and support for a black capitalist enterprise.\textsuperscript{74}

This defense of Garvey fit into Briggs’ aim of presenting his and Garvey’s movements not as competitors, but as allies. A letter to the editor from a \textit{Crusader} subscriber highlights that in late 1919 readers of the magazine viewed Garvey and Briggs in this manner. The author of the letter declares that he is for Garvey “beyond the limit” but also writes to Briggs that he desires to offer him any service he requires.\textsuperscript{75} The reader felt comfortable in pledging his support to Garvey while also subscribing to \textit{The Crusader} and offering personal support to Briggs.

Not until the April 1920 issue of the magazine did cracks begin to appear in Briggs’ fervent and unquestioning support for Marcus Garvey. \textit{The Crusader} reproduced a letter from Garvey which praised the publication for their coverage of an upcoming U.N.I.A. convention.\textsuperscript{76} The convention in question was intended to serve to elect “His Supreme Highness, the Potentate,

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{71}{Grant, \textit{Negro With a Hat}, 187.}
\footnotetext{72}{“The Black Star Line,” \textit{The Crusader}, December, 1919, 9.}
\footnotetext{73}{“The Black Star Line,” 9.}
\footnotetext{74}{“Bolshevism and Race Prejudice,” \textit{The Crusader}, December, 1919, 9.}
\footnotetext{75}{S.C. Jordan, “Letter to the Editor,” \textit{The Crusader}, December 1919, 28.}
\footnotetext{76}{“A Letter from Marcus Garvey,” \textit{The Crusader}, April, 1920, 5.}
\end{footnotes}
His Highness, the Supreme Deputy, and other high officials, who will preside over the destiny of the Negro peoples of the world until an African Empires is founded.”77 The author of the piece, almost certainly Cyril Briggs given his status as the sole editor of the publication, does not dismiss the notion of such an election as undesirable on principle, instead asserting that the need to elect a leader for the black race across the globe was “supreme.”78 Briggs argued that the level of importance of such an election necessitated that it occurred correctly. He asserted that New York City would not be an appropriate site for the global black population to meet, that not enough time and effort had gone into publicizing the election to ensure the “support and cooperation of the majority of Negro communities in Africa and the New World,” and given these flaws the election was doomed to be a “farce.”79 The piece closes with a plea for Garvey to open up his invitation to the convention to “ALL Negro bodies and communities throughout the world.”80 The objections to Garvey’s plans to elect a leadership for the global black populace are not rooted in Marxist opposition to a top down leadership structure; Briggs did not criticize titles such as “His Supreme Highness,” Briggs had more practical concerns instead, relating to the inclusiveness of the electorate. This practical critique predominated in articles relating to Garvey in The Crusader prior to its more extreme break with Garvey.

A May 1920 article on the Universal Negro Improvement Association spelled out a new Crusader approach to critiquing Garvey by separating the man from his organization. In this piece the author praised the possibilities of the U.N.I.A. for the race and argued that the “collapse of the movement or failure of any of its important enterprises would be nothing less than a racial...
calamity.” Out of concern for the health of Garvey’s organization the author pled with Garvey to be more transparent in regards to the finances of the Black Star Line. This casting of doubt on Garvey’s honesty in regards to the Black Star Line marked a shift for *The Crusader* which only six months prior had excoriated those who questioned Garvey.

The following month Briggs returned to the question of the upcoming U.N.I.A. convention and election. Briggs’ opposition to the conduct of the election was becoming increasingly vociferous. Briggs argued that although Garvey had invited a broader swath of organizations to participate in the convention, as *The Crusader* had previously requested, the actual election for global “Potentate” would still be fundamentally flawed. Garvey would allow for non-U.N.I.A. members to partake in the election of the leader for American blacks but the voting body for the election of global race leader would be limited to U.N.I.A. members. Thus, argued Briggs, what “should be the greatest event in modern Negro history is made to approach the proportions of a gigantic farce.” Briggs became increasingly exasperated by Garvey’s growing authoritarianism and obsession with the U.N.I.A. as the sole premiere racial organization.

It would be a mistake to read these critiques of Garvey’s actions as the head of the U.N.I.A. as a complete disavowal of Garvey by Briggs and *The Crusader*. Numerous pieces continued to appear in the magazine which praised Garvey and his movement. A letter published in the July 1920 issue of the publication for example reads that “the aim of the new Negro- whether led by a Hercules or a Garvey or a Messenger or a Crusader, etc. has the definite

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82 “The Universal Negro Improvement Association,” 6.
84 “Garvey’s Joker,” 9.
purpose of freedom.” Despite some criticism of Garvey’s actions, Briggs clearly still retained a desire to ally with the Garvey movement. Articles critiquing Garvey published in The Crusader until October 1921 hedged any criticism of Garvey with praise. Briggs did not yet view Garvey as an implacable enemy but as an ally in need of course correction.

This hybrid critique and praise for Garvey that predominated in The Crusader is exemplified by the article “The Provisional President.” This article covered the much discussed U.N.I.A. convention tasked to elect a global racial leader, an election which resulted in Garvey being elected the “Provisional President of Africa.” The piece highlights the point, previously raised by Briggs and The Crusader, that the election was not carried out in a manner that was fairly representative of the global black population. In particular, the author argues, “the African peoples had no adequate representation and no part in the U.N.I.A. Convention proportionate to their numbers and importance, and might well resent this almost autocratic election of a New World leader for them.” The piece also notes, in Garvey’s favor, that Garvey would have still won the election had it been carried out in a more representative fashion. Furthermore, the election of Garvey is considered crucial in that he was a “Negro elected by Negroes” which is preferable to “Negroes following Moton and the other white-appointed leaders.” Robert Moton was the Bookerite head of the Tuskegee Institute and popular enemy of more radical black activists for his moderate accommodationist beliefs. To Briggs and The Crusader the election of Garvey as Provisional President of Africa represented an important step forward as it broke from what they perceived as the over-reliance among traditional black leadership, such as Booker T.

86 “The Provisional President,” The Crusader, September, 1920, 10.
87 “The Provisional President,” 10.
88 “The Provisional President,” 10.
Washington and Moton, on white support. Garvey, despite his personal failings, could not be accused of reliance on whites. The piece ends by noting that Garvey’s relationships with black leaders outside of the U.N.I.A. had been lacking and that if he desired to truly fulfill the aims of his new office effectively he needed to show himself more willing to reach out and share the “burdens and responsibilities of his task” with others.89 The Crusader argued for the potential benefits of Garvey as the preeminent race leader, but continued to express reservations regarding his leadership style and his monomaniacal obsession on the supremacy of his organization over all others.

Throughout the rest of 1921 leading up to October, Garvey and the U.N.I.A. appeared little in The Crusader. The few times Garvey is mentioned are almost all to defend him from what Briggs believed to baseless lines of attack. For example, a piece in the February, 1921 issue of the magazine titled “Blaming it on Garvey” takes issue with the accusation made by a Mr. Hubert of the Urban League that blamed Garvey for black unemployment. Hubert asserted that black workers attempting to find work from white employers were being turned away and told to appeal to Garvey for employment.90 The Crusader found this holding of Garvey responsible for black unemployment to be baseless, arguing that if whites indeed told black workers to turn to Garvey than it was only being done to “create a schism among the race by leading one group to hold another group responsible for ills that are general throughout the country and were certain to be inflicted even had Negroes remained 100 percent servile.”91 This defense of Garvey highlights that at this point Briggs still did not present himself as a Garvey opponent. The critiques of Garvey were intended to improve his leadership, in contrast with

89 “The Provisional President,” 11.
90 “Blaming it on Garvey,” The Crusader, February, 1921, 9.
91 “Blaming it on Garvey,” 9.
those of Hubert who attempted to tear down Garvey and was willing to use lines of argument to achieve this goal that Briggs deemed unfair. Garvey’s faults were not yet seen to outweigh his more beneficial qualities. As an August 1921 article noted, “Garvey may be crude, and he may muss up the Present at times, but there’s more future looking statesmanship in his little finger than there is in the entire clay-heaps of dutiful Dr. DuBois and squirming servile Moton.” As it turned out, this was the last positive assessment of Garvey to appear in the pages of *The Crusader*.

**Fundamental Break**

During August and September of 1921, Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association held an enormous organizational convention. Briggs and others in the African Blood Brotherhood attended. Garvey attempted to show a level of openness to Briggs and the A.B.B.’s participation by allowing Rose Pastor Stokes, a white Communist and Briggs ally, to address the convention. In her speech Stokes pleaded with Garvey and the U.N.I.A. to ally with the Soviets as a means to free Africa from enslavement. Garvey downplayed the significance of Stokes’ speech by reminding the audience that the mere presence of Stokes as a speaker did not indicate that the U.N.I.A. had embraced Bolshevism, asserting instead that she was only one of many invited speakers presenting a wide array of views. As the convention wore on into September, Briggs and the Brotherhood handed out pamphlets criticizing the direction the convention was taking. After they distributed the third such pamphlet to attendees, Garvey took the stage and expelled Briggs and the A.B.B., publicly savaging Briggs and his organization. Among Garvey’s accusations were that Briggs was a white man posing as a black man, that the A.B.B.

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93 Solomon, *The Cry was Unity*, 24.
94 Solomon, *The Cry was Unity*, 24.
was financed and run by white Communists, and that their aims were contrary to the capitalism of the Black Star Line. Briggs was tarred as a “socialist idiot” attempting to infiltrate and lead the U.N.I.A. in a dangerous direction. This spectacular public attack on Briggs and the aims of the A.B.B. served as the key breaking point for The Crusader and the Garvey movement. Garvey validated every fear expressed previously in the pages of The Crusader regarding Garvey’s personal authoritarian tendencies.

The first issue of The Crusader published in the wake of the U.N.I.A. conference marked the magazine’s new approach to Garvey. The October 1921 issue of The Crusader contained eleven articles attacking Garvey in a tone never broached in the magazine’s previous critiques. Additionally, the use of praise of Garvey to soften critiques was completely abandoned. Whereas previous criticisms were constrained to his actions as leader of the U.N.I.A., a much wider swath of critiques were now utilized. No longer was Garvey viewed as a flawed but promising figure; he was now, in the eyes of Briggs and The Crusader, an outright enemy to the cause of black freedom. From October 1921 through the final issue of The Crusader published in January-February 1922, taking down Garvey became nearly the sole focus of the publication. Many of the anti-Garvey critiques published in The Crusader make clear the degree to which Briggs was motivated in large part by a growing intense personal disdain for Garvey, rather than a strong ideological opposition to the aims of the U.N.I.A. itself. The manifold lines of attack published against Garvey can be categorized in five ways as relating to Garvey’s attacks on Briggs for his racial background, the personal feud between Briggs and Garvey, accusations that Garvey was a traitor to the race and his followers, critiques of the finances and membership claims of the

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95 Solomon, *The Cry was Unity*, 24.
U.N.I.A. and the Black Star Line, as well as criticisms centered on the failures of Garvey in relation to Africa.

**Libel Case/Briggs’ Race**

Shortly after publicly doubting Briggs’ race at the U.N.I.A. convention Garvey chose to repeat the accusation in his *Negro World* newspaper, writing that “a white man in New York by the name of Cyril Briggs has started the African Blood Brotherhood to catch Negroes, no doubt.”96 Briggs initially responded to these aspersions by gleefully mocking Garvey. He argued that Garvey was playing to type by reverting to personal insults when faced with legitimate criticism.97 To Briggs, the ludicrousness of Garvey’s accusation was a sign that he had no real counter to *The Crusader*’s criticisms.

Garvey’s accusations regarding Briggs’ race were intended to sting Briggs, whose mixed race lineage had given him a light skin complexion. To Garvey, skin complexion and racial lineage were not outside of the bounds of discourse. On the contrary, racial makeup was crucial to the racial ideology he espoused. Garvey asserted that it was his opponents who were obsessed with color and that in contrast he preached “the unity of the race, without color superiority or prejudice.”98 He contended that his opponents, namely in the NAACP, explicitly favored those of the lightest complexion.99 Within his racial ideology and in his responses to critics however, Garvey displayed a willingness to utilize what amounted to color prejudice. Garvey was a fervent proponent of preserving “race purity”, which meant a strong opposition to

Garvey referred to miscegenation as “race suicide” and accused those who took part in it of “abhor(ing) their race for the companionship of another.”\textsuperscript{101} He framed his opposition to miscegenation in the terms of slavery, arguing that in large part the “hybrid” race had been created by the abuses of enslaved black women by white slave masters and that free blacks should not “perpetuate” the same crime.\textsuperscript{102} Garvey also contended that “miscegenation will lead to the moral destruction of both races, and the promotion of a hybrid caste that will have no social standing or moral background in a critical moral judgment of the life and affairs of the human race.”\textsuperscript{103} Briggs’ racial background and status as a member of this “hybrid caste” thus marked him in Garvey’s eyes as inherently morally suspect. It was distinctly Briggs’ complexion that was deemed at fault by Garvey, as Briggs had never taken a position on issues relating to intermarriage or “miscegenation” in the pages of \textit{The Crusader} prior to Garvey’s accusations.

While Briggs initially claimed to have responded with laughter, thanking Garvey for the “half-hour’s hearty amusement” which these accusations afforded him, his actions seem to reveal that he found the charge deeply irritating.\textsuperscript{104} Briggs, instead of laughing off the assertions as he claimed, chose to pursue charges against Garvey for libel.\textsuperscript{105} Numerous accounts of the subsequent trial and Garvey’s various retractions were published in \textit{The Crusader}. The case ended with \textit{The Crusader} triumphantly reporting that Briggs had “magnanimously allowed”

\textsuperscript{103} Garvey, “Miscegenation,” 62.
\textsuperscript{104} Briggs, “Briggs Pokes Fun at Garvey,” 16.
\textsuperscript{105} “Negro Editor Called White Brings Criminal Action,” \textit{The Crusader}, November, 1921, 17.
Garvey to retract the accusations to spare Garvey a prison sentence.\textsuperscript{106} Despite Briggs’ best attempts at frame the situation as ludicrous and a source of “amusement,” the numerous reports on the trial and the fact that Briggs went so far as to bring his mother to court to prove his racial origins indicate that Garvey’s accusation stung Briggs.\textsuperscript{107}

Although \textit{The Crusader} would later accuse Garvey of playing on “Negrophobist” fears of “intermarriage, miscegenation, etc.” in his attacks on the concept of social equality, Briggs made no such arguments in response to Garvey’s attacks on Briggs’ own racial background.\textsuperscript{108} Briggs instead focused his public line of attack more narrowly on simply reporting what he perceived to be Garvey’s humiliations in the courtroom. This choice to focus on a legal rather than philosophical line of defense could have came out of a sense that a strong racial ideological defense of intermarriage likely would only have exacerbated Garvey’s wrath, given his fervent obsession with racial “purity.” However, this tactical choice also could have came from the fact that Briggs’ parents had not been married and he had had little relationship with his white father.\textsuperscript{109} Joyce Moore Turner has argued that Briggs viewed the light complexion given to him by his father as something he needed to compensate for, describing him as having a “white countenance with a black consciousness.”\textsuperscript{110} This self-consciousness in regards to his skin tone helps to explain why when faced with personal attacks on his background Briggs responded with a libel suit rather than a defense of his parents relationship.

\textbf{Personal Feud}


\textsuperscript{108} “Garvey Upholds Ku Kluxism!,” \textit{The Crusader}, October, 1921, 10.

\textsuperscript{109} Turner, \textit{Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance}, 35.

\textsuperscript{110} Turner, \textit{Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance}, 35.
The growing personal rivalry between Garvey and Cyril Briggs played a role in the level of animus reached in the criticism leveled at Garvey in the pages of The Crusader. Their battle over Garvey’s libel regarding Briggs’ race was only one avenue through which the rivalry between Briggs and Garvey became intensely personal. In the midst of their court case, Garvey approached the judge and attempted to inform on Briggs for supposedly plotting secretive seditious acts against the government. Garvey handed the judge a letter from Briggs, stating that “Briggs sent me this letter asking me to cooperate with him in the overthrow of the white governments.” The letter in question was from August, months before Garvey’s actions at the U.N.I.A. convention solidified the division between the two race leaders. In the letter Briggs spelled out his desire for an alliance between the U.N.I.A. and the A.B.B. on a jointly representative program, acknowledging that some ideological differences did exist. The section of the letter which most closely resembles a call for the “overthrow of the white governments” appeared near the end when Briggs wrote that the A.B.B. is “organized for immediate protection purposes and eventual revolutionary liberation in Africa and other countries where Negroes constitute a majority of the population.”

To Briggs, Garvey’s decision to hand this private correspondence over to a government official meant that Garvey was now essentially acting as an informer for the government against a fellow black activist. Briggs presented this act as the ultimate evidence of betrayal. The Crusader argued that this treason should be the final straw for those who remained loyal to Garvey, stating that “it is high time for every follower of his to take mental stock of himself and try to honestly answer the question if he is not too pro-Garvey to be really pro-Negro.”

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111 “Garvey Turns Informer,” The Crusader, November, 1921, 5.
112 “Garvey Turns Informer,” 5.
113 “Garvey Turns Informer,” 5.
114 “Garvey’s Turn Informer,” The Crusader, November, 1921, 8.
Garvey’s decision to inform on a rival black activist to the government meant that the question was no longer Garvey or Briggs, but Garvey or the race itself.

Despite Cyril Briggs’ protestations that he and the A.B.B. were entirely above “mud-slinging, false allegations and abuse” that typified Garvey’s rhetoric, *The Crusader* did occasionally dip into “mud-slinging” to discredit Garvey. 115 The piece “As to Morality” stands as the most viciously personal attack published in *The Crusader* against Garvey. The article contrasted Briggs’ supposedly superior morality with the numerous moral failings of Garvey. The accusations specifically related to Garvey’s relationships with women, stating that “The editor of *The Crusader* has never left his wife, nor turned his wife out. The editor of *The Crusader* is not now living with a woman not his wife and never has so lived.” 116 The piece went so far as to accuse Garvey of raping a “little white girl” in London. 117 Leveling this accusation of rape against Garvey would have been particularly inflammatory given the predominance during the period of lynching of black men by white mobs under the guise of protecting white women. The tone and content of this piece is certainly out of the ordinary when considering the broader swath of the publication’s anti-Garvey articles. *The Crusader* never previously or subsequently utilized attacks based on Garvey’s personal relations with women. The fact that this piece was published directly in the wake of Garvey’s accusations regarding Briggs’ race could explain Briggs’ willingness to resort to the “mud-slinging” he proudly claimed to avoid. Garvey’s accusation that Briggs was a white man, his decision to turn over private correspondence from Briggs to the authorities, and Briggs’ decision to hurl personal invective regarding Garvey’s private life elucidate the degree to which the divide between *The Crusader* and Garvey was

exacerbated by a growing personal rift between Briggs and Garvey which played out in large part in the pages of the magazine.

Garvey as a Sellout

_The Crusader_ had previously defended Garvey by arguing that regardless of his many faults he at least refused to bow down to the pressures of the white race in the way more moderate black leaders were perceived to do. After Garvey’s public repudiation of Briggs and the A.B.B. this line of argument was entirely reversed as _The Crusader_ now presented Garvey as an overly moderate figure who refused to sufficiently challenge powerful white interests, and at times was presented as an ally to Ku Kluxism. In an article aptly titled “Is Not This Treason?”, Garvey was accused of rejecting social equality, of supporting white imperialist governments across the globe, and of stoking the divisions of colorism within the race itself.\(^{118}\) The greatest emphasis was placed on Garvey’s supposed endorsement of white imperialist governments. This accusation stemmed from Garvey’s recommendation that blacks stay loyal to the governments under which they live, presumably with the end goal of leaving those states to move to Africa. To _The Crusader_ this call for loyalty to oppressive imperialist states amounted to treason to the race as well as to the U.N.I.A.’s anti-imperialist program that had originally appealed to Briggs. The article argued that “it is manifestly impossible for Negroes to be loyal to Great Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and Spain, and still free Africa from the oppressive exploitation of those capitalist-imperialist plunderers.”\(^{119}\) Garvey’s call for blacks to avoid resisting the governments of Western states in which they resided, while they resided there, was thus presented by Briggs as an argument in favor of imperialism in Africa. As an accusation against

\(^{118}\) “Is Not This Treason?,” _The Crusader_, October, 1921, 8.

\(^{119}\) “Is Not This Treason?,” 8.
Garvey, whose central focus was squarely on Africa rather than on domestic affairs, the label of pro-imperialist was highly pointed.

Briggs used this discussion of loyalty to racist governments to stake out a position for himself as a truly brave race leader in contrast with Garvey who was now just another of the “pussyfoot leaders” who were “not prepared to suffer imprisonment, deportation or exclusion for their opinions.” The refusal to disavow loyalty to oppressive governments was, according to Briggs, “a radical departure indeed, from the revolutionary preachments and forcible liberation doctrines by which the fearless and earnest membership of the U.N.I.A. was attracted to the leadership of Garvey!” Briggs and the ABB thus did not regard the rank and file membership of the U.N.I.A. as the enemy, the enemy was Garvey alone. Just as Garvey had committed treason against the race, he had betrayed the interests of the masses of U.N.I.A. members who had placed so much faith in him. This choice of framing was clearly intended to bring disenchanted U.N.I.A. members into Briggs’ African Blood Brotherhood, a goal which Briggs achieved minor success at by drawing in ex-Garvey allies W.A. Domingo, Cyril Crichlow, and Bishop McGuire to write for *The Crusader*.

According to *The Crusader* Garvey’s treason to the race extended beyond his call for loyalty to white imperialist governments; the magazine argued that he had embraced an alliance with Ku Kluxism. This accusation first appeared in the October 1921 edition of the publication, prior to Garvey’s formal meeting with the Klan. In a public rejection of W.E.B. Du Bois in 1921, Garvey alleged that Du Bois advocated the “destruction of the black and white races by the goal of social amalgamation of both.” Early on in the magazine’s publishing run Briggs had spoken

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of Du Bois in much the same way as they spoke of Robert Moton. Du Bois, in a piece on his actions at the Paris Peace Conference, had been labeled by Briggs a “compromiser and a traitor to the Negro’s legitimate aspirations.” The Crusader now felt comfortable ignoring these previous aspersions and defended Du Bois as an ally in the anti-Garvey fight. The publication argued that Garvey had twisted Du Bois’ argument for social equality in the same way as “Negrophobists of the worst type,” by playing on popular fears of intermarriage and miscegenation. Briggs and The Crusader utilized Garvey’s rejection of social equality to essentially argue that he had become in many ways indistinguishable from the most implacable enemies of the black race. The Crusader wrote, “In repudiating social equality for the Negro, Mr. Garvey has done no more and no less than the Emperor Simmons, Hoke Smith, Ben Tillman, Vardaman and other Negro haters. Hadn’t his friends better appoint a guardian for Marcus Garvey - a guardian that will exercise an intelligent censorship over his unintelligent and maniacal ravings and servile surrender of Negro rights?”

The Crusader asserted that Garvey had now positioned himself in alliance with Klan leaders and the most notorious of white supremacist politicians.

It was the goal of Cyril Briggs and The Crusader to discredit Garvey on all possible fronts. This meant discrediting him both internationally as well as domestically. To achieve this aim Briggs utilized Garvey’s words to tie him directly to the worst enemies of the black race both in America and across the globe. Domestically, The Crusader argued that Garvey’s rejection of social equality placed him directly in agreement with the Klan and Jim Crow politicians responsible for the most extreme consequences of white supremacy. Internationally,

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124 “Garvey Upholds Ku Kluxism!,” 9.
125 “Garvey Upholds Ku Kluxism!,” 10.
Garvey’s argument for temporary loyalty to the governments under which blacks lived was utilized to imply that Garvey essentially supported imperialist governments which brutalized blacks worldwide. Garvey, according to Briggs, had sold out those he was tasked to forcefully represent.

**The Africa Question**

Africa served as the focal point for Garvey’s ideology. He famously had his organization elect him as the “Provisional President of Africa.” Briggs and *The Crusader* were keenly aware of the centrality of Africa to Garvey and his followers. Undermining the legitimacy of Garvey in Africa took a position of primary importance in *The Crusader* after their break.

Within the context of the Africa question *The Crusader*’s Communist ideology first came to the fore as a means of attacking Garvey. Briggs wrote of his vision of a free Africa for the Africans that he desires “not an Africa whose white capitalist imperialist bonds have been exchanged for the capitalist or feudalist bonds of a Negro Potentate, with a piratical court and an antiquated system of knights, lords and other potential parasites upon the Negro workers.”

Briggs implied that Garvey’s vision of a free Africa was in reality just as oppressive as the imperialist system already in place. Garvey’s goals, even if accomplished, were dismissed as entirely undesirable. White capitalist authoritarianism would simply be replaced by an oppressive pseudo-monarchical system with Garvey at the head. Garvey’s words in favor of a free Africa, according to Briggs, were completely undercut by his desire to claim positions of power.

*The Crusader* argued that the fact that the vast majority who voted on the position of “Provisional President of Africa” were not from Africa contradicted the legitimacy of Garvey’s

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claim to the position. The Crusader further worked to delegitimize Garvey’s claim to be an African leader by publishing articles from actual Africans who laughed at Garvey’s title of “Provisional President.” One African journalist, L.M. Bennett Newana, simply pointed to the existence of numerous Kings, Princes, and Chiefs already in place in Africa who had no intention of resigning their roles in favor of Garvey. For many Garvey had become synonymous with the quest to free Africa from Western imperialism. Briggs attacked the legitimacy of Garvey’s claim to be a spokesman for the oppressed in Africa by arguing that Garvey was motivated by self interest and his claim to leadership was unsupported by the African populace.

Financial/Membership Irregularity

While The Crusader first centered on defending Garvey from criticism relating to the finances of the Black Star Line, by late-1921 the magazine had entirely abandoned that approach. The Crusader now offered highly pointed critiques of perceived massive financial mismanagement within the Black Star Line as well as within the U.N.I.A. as a whole, laying the blame directly at Garvey’s feet. The most significant of these pieces was written by Garvey’s disenchanted former ally, W.A. Domingo. This piece, “Figures Never Lie, But Liars Do Figure,” combed in depth the financial and membership numbers of the U.N.I.A. According to Domingo, large sums of money were being raised by the U.N.I.A. to aid the government of Liberia. However, Domingo asserted, the finances revealed that less than three percent of the funds raised for Liberia actually reached Africa. Meanwhile, officers and employees of the U.N.I.A. were receiving salaries approaching seven times the amount of the money which had reached

129 W.A. Domingo, “Figures Never Lie, But Liars Do Figure,” The Crusader, October, 1921, 14.
Liberia. Domingo also alleged that U.N.I.A. finances, even taken as accurate, showed a membership of less than 90,000, a number far less than the 4.5 million members Garvey claimed. This piece, and others like it, were a clear attempt by The Crusader to create discontent within the Garveyite ranks. The numbers in question were not small errors. These were accusations of massive financial mismanagement as well as flat out lies in regards to the size of U.N.I.A. membership. The Crusader also gleefully reported the charge that Garvey had advertised a Black Star Line ship, the “S.S. Phyllis Wheatley,” for which there was no evidence of existence.

The Crusader claimed thus that it was no surprise to see Garvey eventually arrested for financial fraud crimes relating to the Black Star Line. They wrote, “We affirmed, and still affirm, that no commercial enterprise is good enough to base the sacred Liberation movement upon its chances of success or failure - and least of all, any of Garvey’s schemes, conceived as they were in total ignorance and managed by methods that have made the race a laughing stock and challenged the attention of the Federal Government of the United States.” This piece undoubtedly overstated the degree to which The Crusader had warned the black public regarding the undesirability of placing so much hope for the race in the Black Star Line, However, for The Crusader, Garvey’s arrest on financial charges represented a fulfillment of the numerous charges they had made centered on his lack of transparency with the public when it came to financial affairs.

Cyril Briggs and his Crusader magazine expressed a vision of communism which diverged from traditional class-based analysis. Instead, his embrace of the ideology was rooted in

130 Domingo, “Figures Never Lie, But Liars Do Figure,” 14.
what he viewed as the potential for the nascent Soviet state as an anti-colonial power. The centrality of anti-colonialism to Briggs’ activism explains his early desire to ally with Garvey and the U.N.I.A. To Briggs, Garvey’s support for black capitalist enterprises such as the Black Star Line as well as his attacks on white American leftists did not inherently contradict with the anti-colonial efforts Briggs held dear. It was not until Garvey’s formal ejection of Briggs from a U.N.I.A. conference and his accusation that Briggs was actually white that *The Crusader* would formally turn on the Garvey movement. In the wake of these events the publication would excoriate Garvey as a traitor to the race, a fraud, a negative influence on Africa, as well as hurling personal invective against Garvey. However, these lines of assault, aside from the Africa question, remained largely free of communistic class-based lines of argument. This less purely ideologically socialist rejection of Garvey would be distinct from the approach embraced by the other most significant black leftist publication of the period, *The Messenger*. 
Chapter Two - *The Messenger* and Garvey

Upon arriving in New York City as an immigrant from Jamaica, Marcus Garvey “sought out the company and the platforms of men he probably considered genuine race radicals.”\(^{134}\) This desire to find the radicals of Harlem led Garvey to black socialist activist A. Philip Randolph in 1916. This meeting proved fortuitous for Garvey as Randolph gave Garvey his “soapbox so that a street crowd that assembled to listen to Randolph could hear the thoughts of this Harlem newcomer.”\(^{135}\) Randolph served as the facilitator, essentially giving Garvey his first public audience in Harlem. The following year Garvey gave a speech that was presided over by Chandler Owen.\(^{136}\) Randolph and Owen’s support for Garvey was not limited to simply giving him places to speak. Randolph biographer Jervis Anderson writes that Randolph and Garvey, “despite basic differences in political philosophy – worked closely together. Toward the end of the war, they collaborated in a group called the International League of Darker Peoples, and drew up a list of demands in behalf of colonized peoples to be presented to the colonial powers at the peace conference in Versailles. Randolph was even selected by the UNIA to go to France.”\(^{137}\) This working relationship was apparently of enough importance for the Bureau of Investigation, the precursor of the FBI, to list Randolph and Owen as two of Garvey’s main associates in a report on radicalism in New York City.\(^{138}\) Although there were already ideological differences between Randolph/Owen and Garvey, they chose to work together in a larger capacity than


simply appearing on the same platform. The level of collaboration was great enough for Randolph to be viewed as an acceptable spokesperson for the aims of the U.N.I.A. in Paris.

The Relationship Breaks Down

From Garvey’s arrival in New York City in 1916 through to the Versailles Conference there existed a comfortable working relationship between Marcus Garvey and A. Philip Randolph. The question is what led to the spectacular collapse in their relationship. In 1916 Randolph gave Garvey a place on his soapbox but by 1923 The Messenger decried Garvey as the “Supreme Negro Jamaican Jackass,” among a long list of other similarly colorful insults. It would be a mistake to attempt to pinpoint one specific cause for the swift decay in the working relationship. Little detailed analysis from historians of Randolph and Garvey seems to have been dedicated to what caused their break however. The two most prominent interpretations that have been put forth by biographers of Randolph have been that Randolph and Owen had become jealous of Garvey’s success or that the ideological differences between the two sides was simply too vast. Randolph also published his own account of his early relationship with Garvey in The Messenger in which he explained his view of the break between the two sides.

Jealousy

Both Jervis Anderson and Andrew Edmund Kersten have argued in their biographies of Randolph that jealousy was a crucial cause for the break between Garvey and Randolph. It seems a fool’s errand to try to read Randolph’s emotions, especially in light of the fact that, according to Anderson, neither Randolph nor Owen ever admitted any feelings of jealousy. However, after delving into the critiques of Garvey published in The Messenger there is evidence to substantiate

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this claim and to suggest that Anderson was mistaken that the editors of The Messenger never admitted to having these feelings. In a lengthy critique of Garvey published in the August, 1922 issue of The Messenger Randolph wrote that “the Garvey Movement could only have begun in New York City where the field had been prepared by Owen and Randolph for the reception of new ideas, presented through the vehicle of radicalism. It is well known that Garvey began his propaganda in harmony with the Messenger’s principles in order to get a hearing. He shifted his propaganda after he got a foothold.” Although the word jealousy is not used here it appears to be essentially what Randolph is admitting to. He argues that he and Owen laid the groundwork for political radicalism in New York City only to have Garvey come in and exploit this fertile ground all the while subverting black radicalism away from socialism. Randolph’s article admits to a greater level of jealousy and anger than either Kersten or Anderson acknowledged. Both historians emphasize the jealousy Randolph must have felt at watching Garvey’s movement grow while his struggled. Randolph’s writing indicates instead that his frustration was rooted in the fact that he felt Garvey had built his movement on the backs of the hard work of himself and Owen.

**Ideology**

While jealousy as an explanation for the break between Randolph and Garvey can in part be validated it was not the definitive reason. Instead, Randolph and Garvey’s working relationship was in large part broken down by a shift made by Garvey, largely in response to federal crackdowns on socialist radicalism, to position his movement more firmly in opposition to socialism.

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A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen embraced an ideology that opposed Garvey’s in almost every facet. To Garvey race was everything. Race was the basis of the oppression faced by blacks worldwide and thus race needed to be the basis for any proposal to improve the wellbeing of blacks. Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph took the diametrically opposite position. To Owen and Randolph the struggles faced by blacks were rooted in class oppression and necessitated class solutions. According to the black socialists of *The Messenger*, racial oppression itself was rooted in the faults of capitalism. An essay published in *The Messenger* in September 1920, before the magazine had explicitly denounced Garvey and the U.N.I.A. affirmed “oppression is not racial; and that no particular race has absolutely clean hands. There may be degrees in suffering and oppression but none is absolutely “without sin.” Why do nations, races, classes and individuals oppress other human beings? Because they hate? No; but because they profit from such oppression.” Randolph and Owen viewed racism as a natural byproduct of capitalism itself, and to defeat racism required the overcoming of capitalism and the destruction of its thirst for profit. This belief that racism was actively created and stoked by capitalists and that interracial working-class solidarity provided the necessary path forward was stated succinctly in a cartoon from the August 1919 issue of the magazine. The cartoon showed a black and white worker attempting to reach out to each other but burdened by chains and capitalists on their backs. The capitalists are utilizing racist arguments to stoke divisions and prevent interracial cooperation between the two workers. Another capitalist is seen in the background making off with bags of money, representing the profits of the workers’ labor. This was the lens through which Randolph and Owen viewed racism. Racism was directly fostered by capitalists as a means of preventing worker’s unity across racial lines. Randolph and Owen

believed that racism was utilized as a distraction by capitalists to ensure that their hold on profits from workers labor was not threatened. Racism was, according to the Socialist editors, a means of maintaining the capitalist economic system which they so despised.

As a result of this fundamental disagreement regarding the role of race and class in the black political struggle, Garvey and the black socialists approaches to allying with white activists varied drastically. Both sides rejected the mainstream white political establishment that more moderate black political groups such as the NAACP at times endorsed. But, Owen and Randolph enthusiastically supported the Socialist Party, a party with largely white membership and leadership. As active members of the party Owen and Randolph repeatedly supported white candidates on the Socialist Party ticket and actually ran as Socialist candidates numerous times themselves. They often published pieces lavishing praise upon white socialist leaders. They wrote of socialist and labor leader Eugene V. Debs, “Great ‘Gene, we salute thee! We hallow thy name, thy works and days, we, the most crushed of peoples, loved thee since first thy struggles

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for economic justice began. Yes, our ‘Gene, harbinger and prophet of the noblest philosophy ever conceived in the mind of man.’\textsuperscript{143} Garvey harshly rejected white radicals who attempted to ally the class struggle with blacks, while Randolph and Owen wholeheartedly embraced working with white socialists. To the two socialists, working class solidarity across racial lines was the crux of their ideology. They argued that the problems faced by working-class whites were in large part similar to those faced by the majority of blacks, and that these problems were firmly rooted in economics.

Garvey and the U.N.I.A. viewed the global oppression of blacks as being rooted purely in race. Garvey’s worldview had no place for radical whites who claimed to work in the interests of blacks and he soundly rejected socialist class rhetoric in favor of a vision of a black capitalist empire in Africa. Randolph and Owen to the contrary believed racial prejudice to be a natural byproduct of the larger enemy, capitalism. Their solutions, support for the Socialist Party in its mission to overcome capitalism and organizing blacks into labor unions with working class whites, clearly indicated the primacy of class to their ideology.

After \textit{The Messenger} broke with Garvey and the U.N.I.A. Randolph and Owen explained the earlier relationship between the two groups. The piece, “The Garvey Movement: A Promise or a Menace,” assessed the relationship along three main lines. First, the author argues that the Garvey with whom they had worked drastically differed from the Garvey of December 1920. The author states that “Then, the Black Star Line idea was no part of its effects. Nor were the slogans ‘Negro First,’ an ‘African Empire,’ ‘Back to Africa’ and extreme race baiting prominent in its program.” The ideological shifts made by Garvey are blamed for the break between the two sides. Continuing an explanation based on ideology, the author writes of the U.N.I.A. “In

\textsuperscript{143}“The Great ‘Gene,’” \textit{The Messenger}, August, 1919.
speaking from the same platform with the founder of the movement, we were chiefly interested in educating its membership in the class-struggle nature of the Negro problem, and retaining the sympathetic attitude of the Movement toward Socialism.”\textsuperscript{144} The rationale for the early collaboration, according to the author of the piece, was an ill-fated attempt to instill socialism in the Garveyist movement. \textit{The Messenger}’s explanation for the break between the two sides thus came down to the failure of class ideology to take root in the U.N.I.A. as Garvey took his movement further down a path that embraced capitalism and emphasized racial politics above all else.

Additionally, the article argues that the relationship between the two groups was never particularly meaningful or important. The point is made that “the editors of \textit{The Messenger} have never been members of or affiliated with, in any way, the Universal Negro Improvement Association”\textsuperscript{145} This statement is disingenuous however. While neither Chandler Owen nor A. Philip Randolph had ever been members of the U.N.I.A. One of the men listed as a Contributing Editor of the September 1920 issue of \textit{The Messenger} was W.A. Domingo.\textsuperscript{146} Domingo had been an editor of the U.N.I.A.’s publication \textit{Negro World} as well as a contributor to Cyril Briggs’ \textit{Crusader} magazine.\textsuperscript{147} Even if the author of the piece, who is unnamed, only intended the statement to apply to Randolph and Owen it still distorted the facts. It contradicts an earlier point in the article which mentioned that the U.N.I.A. “selected as one of its representatives to the Peace Conference, one of the editors of \textit{The Messenger.”}\textsuperscript{148} While his selection as a representative of the U.N.I.A. at the Peace Conference does not mean Randolph was a member

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\textsuperscript{144} “The Garvey Movement: A Promise or a Menace,” \textit{The Messenger}, December, 1920.
\textsuperscript{145} “The Garvey Movement: A Promise or a Menace.”
\textsuperscript{146} \textit{The Messenger}, September, 1920.
\textsuperscript{147} Martin, \textit{Race First}, 316.
\textsuperscript{148} “The Garvey Movement: A Promise or a Menace.”
of the group, it certainly contradicts the argument that Randolph and Owen had never been affiliated with the group “in any way.” This line of argument appears to rewrite history in order to downplay the relationship between the socialists behind *The Messenger* and the U.N.I.A.

The relationship between Garvey and the black socialists behind *The Messenger* was short, roughly lasting from Garvey’s arrival in New York City until *The Messenger*’s opening salvo against Garveyism in November of 1920. While jealousy likely played a role in the growing tensions between the two sides, the decision by Garvey to denounce socialists specifically combined with the fundamental ideological differences between the two groups doomed their working relationship. Garvey’s embrace of more explicitly racially nationalistic goals, support for capitalism, and eschewal of any alliances with white activists stood in diametric opposition to the working-class unity across racial lines and strong support for white socialists like Debs that Owen and Randolph espoused. As these ideological lines became more firmly entrenched the relationship collapsed.

**The Development of *The Messenger*’s Critiques of Garveyism**

After ceasing all work with Garvey and the U.N.I.A., Randolph and Owen began a prolonged attack on Garveyism in *The Messenger* that lasted until Garvey’s conviction for fraud in 1923. During this period *The Messenger*’s critiques partially shifted in terms of both content and style. The initial attacks that appeared in the magazine focused more narrowly on critiquing various aspects of Garvey’s ideology rather than attacking Garvey as a person. It is slightly misleading to only speak of one break in terms of the relationship between the editors of *The Messenger* and Garvey. There was an initial break in which Owen and Randolph ceased working with Garvey in any capacity. This break resulted in critiques of the Garveyist program on practical grounds that included counterarguments in favor of socialism.
The first substantive attack on the Garveyist program was directed at Garvey’s support for blacks to organize politically purely along racial lines. In keeping with *The Messenger*’s long history of support for interracial working-class alliances they argued that purely racial politics offered no solution to the problems faced by blacks worldwide. The piece reads, “Granted that it were possible for the Negroes to capture the governments of America, the West Indies and Africa, it does not follow that the conditions of Negroes would be better…Would a Negro King, Emperor or Czar give liberty, justice and democracy to black subjects more readily than a white King, Emperor or Czar would give liberty to white subjects?”  

This article was in keeping with the general tenor of the critiques of Garveyism that dominated the pages of *The Messenger* from 1921 through the first half of 1922. Most of these began with attacks on the impracticality of various aspects of Garvey’s ideology and finished with arguments in favor of socialism as the solution. An essay by A. Philip Randolph simply titled “Garveyism” perfectly represents this formula. Randolph asserts that the notion of Garveyites creating a black empire encompassing all of Africa is absurd on the grounds that the creation of such an entity would require Garveyites to defeat all seven European colonial powers with footholds on the continent. Randolph concludes by arguing that Garveyism simply serves the interests of capitalism. He states that Garvey is supported by white capitalists who understand that Garvey’s goals stood no chance of being achieved and that as a result Garveyism simply helps to keep blacks “away from any truly radical economic program.”

During this early period of anti-Garveyism *The Messenger* also at times defended Garvey against lines of attack that it deemed unfair. An article appeared in the April 1922 issue of the

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149 “The Garvey Movement: A Promise or a Menace.”
151 Randolph, “Garveyism.”
magazine which criticized other black opponents of Garvey for attacking him on the basis of his status as an immigrant from the West Indies. *The Messenger* defended the record of West Indian immigrants as passionate fighters in the black political struggle and stated that attacks on Garvey should have more depth than offensive appeals to nationality.\(^{152}\) This more high minded means of critiquing Garvey and his political movement did not last however.

A second break between *The Messenger* and the Garvey movement occurred in the middle of 1922 in the wake of Garvey’s decision to meet with the Ku Klux Klan. An editorial appeared in the July 1922 issue of *The Messenger* which represented the beginning of a more virulent style of attack on Garveyism. The piece, which is titled “Marcus Garvey! The Black Imperial Wizard Becomes Messenger Boy of the White Ku Klux Kleagle,” refers to Garvey as a “blustering West Indian demagogue” and concludes by stating “Here’s notice that the *Messenger* is firing the opening gun in a campaign to drive Garvey and Garveyism in all its sinister viciousness from the American soil.”\(^{153}\) This newfound anger and embrace of personal attacks on Garvey continued unabated, the subsequent issue of the *Messenger* referred to Garvey as “the worst type of me-too-boss and hat-in-hand good “nigger” the race has ever been bedeviled by. A menace to sound, democratic racial relations, a race baiter and a race traitor, Garvey must go.”\(^{154}\) This virulent tone was clearly a marked departure from the more thoughtful lengthy criticisms of Garveyism from before.

Additionally, the previous *Messenger* policy of refusing to use Garvey’s status as an immigrant against him was largely abandoned. The initial critique referred to Garvey as a

\(^{152}\) “Garvey Unfairly Attacked,” *The Messenger*, April 1922.


“blustering West Indian demagogue” while later attacks referred to him as a “Supreme Negro Jamaican Jackass.” The newfound embrace of xenophobic attacks on Garvey proved so significant that it actually led to W.A. Domingo’s resignation from the Messenger in an editorial in which he attacked the editors of the Messenger for lowering themselves to the level of Garvey. Domingo wrote, “I certainly maintain that to oppose Garvey on the score of his birthplace is to confess inability to oppose him formidably upon any other ground…Certainly there is enough error and weakness in Garveyism for you to find a more intellectually dignified method of assault; and certainly the people you hope to rouse against this monstrous thing are sufficiently intelligent as to be entitled to a higher form of propaganda!” Domingo recognized the stark shift away from substantive ideological critiques of Garvey to the newfound embrace of xenophobic personal attacks.

Another theme running through many of the anti-Garvey pieces post-July 1922, related to the newfound xenophobia, was the need not only to oppose Garveyism but actually to have Garvey himself deported from the United States. This focus on the need to expel Garvey from the country was especially strong in the editorials of Chandler Owen. Owen penned the piece “Should Marcus Garvey Be Deported?” in the September 1922 issue of The Messenger. In this article he exhibits great concern that others might view arguments in favor of deportation as inherently anti-socialist. Instead, he asserts that only “deportation for the expression of political and class war opinions” would contradict socialist ideology. Owen argues that his support for the deportation of Garvey is rooted in opposition to what he views as the Garvey movement’s

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violent threats. He quotes an article which appeared in the *Negro World* which read, “whether it be Pickens or whether it be Chandler Owen, the Universal Negro Improvement Association has no fears of anybody and when you interfere with the Universal Negro Improvement Association you will take the consequences.” Owen interpreted this as a threat of physical violence and that this threat was in line with Garvey and the U.N.I.A.’s practice of breaking up the meetings of rival black groups. Although Owen emphasizes violent Garveyite rhetoric, clearly Garvey’s meeting with the Klan pushed Owen to the point of recommending Garvey’s deportation. This support for Garvey’s deportation became Owen’s sole focus in terms of attacking Garvey. This need to expel Garvey was so great that it provoked Owen to attempt to unite anti-Garvey factions across the political spectrum, many of whom the publication had previously ridiculed, as opposed to working only with socialists. The December 1922 issue of *The Messenger* surveyed prominent black academics, activists, and publishers about their opinions on the Garvey movement and whether they supported his deportation. Owen certainly would have been disappointed to find that only two of the fourteen individuals he contacted were willing to go on record as supporting Garvey’s deportation. These pieces in *The Messenger* focus more narrowly on personal attacks and contain little to no remnants of the serious ideological critiques of Garveyism that marked the earlier anti-Garvey pieces in *The Messenger*.

While Chandler Owen eschewed the earlier lengthy ideological attacks on Garveyism, it would be a mistake to suggest the magazine as a whole followed suit. It appears that only Owen chose to follow this path; Randolph continued with more considered and less emotional critiques of Garvey. Randolph responded to Garvey’s meeting with the Klan and *The Messenger*’s

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158 Owen, “Should Marcus Garvey Be Deported?”
159 Owen, “Should Marcus Garvey Be Deported?,”
declaration of war on Garvey by writing a lengthy four part analysis of Garveyist ideology titled “The Only Way to Redeem Africa.” Whereas Owen clearly took it as a given that Garvey would be opposed by African-Americans in his editorials, Randolph still felt that Garveyism needed to be considered and refuted on ideological grounds. Randolph’s critique followed similar lines to the early *Messenger* pieces on Garvey. In the first installment of “The Only Way to Redeem Africa” he returned to the impracticality of Garveyists being able to expel all of the colonial powers from Africa as well as on the naiveté of the Garveyist belief that all of Africa shares a “racial and national homogeneity” that unites them.\(^\text{161}\) In the second part of his running critique of Garvey, Randolph focused on the Garveyist “anti-white man’s doctrine” which “is based upon the assumption that all white men are the enemies of all Negroes.”\(^\text{162}\) Randolph refuted this notion by praising Eugene V. Debs, Randolph’s consistent example for the possibilities of interracial alliances, as well as highlighting the sacrifices made by white abolitionists such as John Brown and Elijah P. Lovejoy who “suffered, but fought unselfishly for the cause of Negro liberty.”\(^\text{163}\) In the third installment of his anti-Garveyist critique, Randolph focused once more on the idea of a black African empire. While in his first installment he discusses the impracticality of a pan-African empire united by race, in this piece he approaches the issue from a more clearly socialistic anti-imperial rejection of the idea itself. Randolph asserts that “Black despotism is as objectionable as white despotism” and that “no people love empires save the ruling class who live by the exploitation of the subject or working class. Such was the reason for the revolt of the Russian people against the Russian empire. The ruling and subject classes were both white, but that fact did not keep back the revolution.”\(^\text{164}\) In the final part of “The Only Way to Redeem

Africa” Randolph concludes with his solution for how to save Africa. His explanation rejects Garvey’s focus on race as the root of Africa’s domination, arguing instead that Africa “will never be free so long as financial imperialism holds sway in Society, and financial imperialism will hold dominion just so long as the resources and means of wealth, production and exchange are privately owned.”\textsuperscript{165} To Randolph, the solution to global black, and working-class white, suffering remained rooted in socialist economics.

Garvey’s decision to meet with the Ku Klux Klan seems to have divided the two editors of \textit{The Messenger} magazine. Chandler Owen viewed this meeting as the natural final refutation of Garveyism for every right-minded individual. Owen’s subsequent attacks on Garvey focused almost entirely on the need to deport Garvey from America. Owen treated the rejection of Garveyism as an ideology as a given. But, Randolph still clearly thought there was a need to counter Garveyist proposals on an ideological level. He continued his pre-July 1922 policy of analyzing and refuting aspects of Garveyist ideology, specifically in relation to Africa. Many of the most harshly anti-Garvey editorials in \textit{The Messenger} during this time that use Garvey’s immigrant status against him do not list Randolph as an author. Because of that it is impossible to state for certain who is responsible for the abandonment of the anti-xenophobic policy of \textit{The Messenger}. However, the combination of the fact that Chandler Owen is the one who felt the need to respond to W.A. Domingo’s accusations of xenophobia with the fact that A. Philip Randolph defended West Indian immigrants, in his “The Only Way to Redeem Africa” series of essays, leads me to believe that it is likely that the more xenophobic anti-Garvey pieces were penned by Owen. This is not to entirely exonerate Randolph from culpability for this use of

xenophobia. Randolph was co-editor of the publication and thus likely would have at least had to have given tacit approval to Owen’s repeated use of xenophobia.

Initially upon Garvey’s immigration to the United States, the socialist editors of *The Messenger* showed a willingness to work with Garvey. However, as Garvey more explicitly turned against socialism, with his expulsion of W.A. Domingo and his denunciation of white radicals, the relationship between the two sides swiftly collapsed. *The Messenger*’s early coverage of Garvey focused moreso on the ideology of Garveyism, methodically analyzing in socialist terms the flaws they found in his race first ideology. In the wake of his decision to meet with the Klan however, the tone of the magazine shifted and split. Chandler Owen embraced an obsession with having garvey deported from the country and engaged in xenophobic personal invective. Randolph in contrast continued to focus on combatting the appeal of Garvey’s ideology with arguments rooted in favor of socialism as the true solution to the problems faced by the black race.
Chapter 3 - The Crusader and The Messenger vs. Marcus Garvey

By the late 1910s federal investigators on radical activities identified *The Crusader* and *The Messenger* magazines as the only two “ultra-radical” black publications in the country.\(^{166}\) Both magazines staked out positions on the radical left of the political spectrum. By the end of its publication run in 1922 *The Crusader* had embraced Communism and allied with the Workers Party of America. *The Messenger* had from the outset espoused the vision of socialism embodied by the Socialist Party of America. The two publications shared subscribers and, for a time, contributors such as W.A. Domingo. Both magazines also waged extended vehement campaigns against Marcus Garvey. This joint target and ideological lineage did not lead to the same means of attacking Garvey however. *The Messenger*’s campaign against Garvey lasted several years, was largely overtly socialist in nature, and also was deeply tainted at times with anti-Caribbean xenophobic sentiment. *The Crusader*’s excoriating campaign was largely constrained to the last few months of the magazine’s publishing run, was less reliant on class based argument, and never utilized xenophobic argument. These differing approaches toward Garvey can largely be explained by the differing backgrounds of the publications’ editors as well as the variant visions of radical leftism that each espoused.

Randolph and Owen’s socialism, embodied by the Socialist Party of America, was deeply rooted in class based action. *The Messenger* editors contended that racial oppression was a direct byproduct of capitalism and that any movement to combat racism must thus have anti-capitalism at their core. To Randolph and Owen the question of cross-racial activism was treated as non-negotiable. According to the black socialists at *The Messenger*, oppressed blacks and working-class whites shared a common capitalist enemy and working in alliance was the only path

\(^{166}\) Kornweibel, Jr., *Seeing Red*, 144.
forward. Garvey rejected both inter-racial solidarity and proudly embraced the capitalist system that Randolph and Owen believed directly created the racism faced by blacks.

Although it seems to be a contradiction in terms, Briggs’ vision of Communism was not deeply rooted in class based analysis or action. Briggs’, and thus *The Crusader*’s, Communism was based in the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist program of the Soviet Union. He believed that allying with the Soviets provided the most effective means to free Africa, as well as other colonies such as Nevis, from European colonialism. Briggs denounced capitalism often throughout *The Crusader* and argued in favor of inter-racial alliances where possible. The program of the African Blood Brotherhood for example stated that “class-conscious white workers who have spoken out in favor of African liberation and have shown a willingness to back with action their expressed sentiments must also be considered as actual allies and their friendship further cultivated.”167 The piece called for interracial action with “class-conscious white workers,” however the aim is explicitly the liberation of Africa rather than interracial activism for the primary purposes of overthrowing class oppression. While *The Messenger* and *The Crusader* both expressed support for the liberation of Africa and for the overthrow of capitalism, the way they viewed the purpose of interracial alliances displays their differing approaches to socialism. *The Crusader* viewed class-conscious whites as, predominantly, allies in the anti-colonial struggle while *The Messenger* viewed them as integral allies in the class struggle against capitalism.

These differing approaches toward socialism are crucial to understanding the variances in the approaches of *The Crusader* and *The Messenger* toward the Garvey movement. By rejecting socialism as well as interracial activism in favor of purely race based action, Garvey struck at the

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heart of *The Messenger*’s vision for the future. While contrasting with many of the goals of *The Crusader*, Garvey’s program did not attack the roots of Briggs’ attachment to Communism, its anti-colonial nature. Briggs and Garvey were essentially in agreement that the liberation of Africa from colonialism was the central aim of both movements. Where Briggs and Garvey disagreed was more rooted in the best way to achieve the overthrow of colonialism. Garvey represented an inherent threat to the core aims of *The Messenger* in a way that he did not to *The Crusader*, a crucial difference that helps to explain why each publication dealt with Garvey differently.

For the majority of its publishing run, from 1918 to 1922, *The Crusader* positioned itself as an ally of the Garvey movement. The period of intense opposition only occurred in the last four months of the magazine’s existence. *The Messenger*, despite early collaboration between Garvey and Randolph, never viewed itself as an ally of the Garvey movement. The magazine praised Garvey for illustrating the importance of mass organizations as well as for his critiques of black leadership but these moments of praise were always restrained and only appeared as small pieces within much larger explicit critiques.\(^{168}\) *The Messenger* stated from the outset in its coverage of Garvey that class questions were non-negotiable, writing “If we find, upon examination, that the Garvey Movement is opposed to the interests, or that it does not advance the interests of working people, and that 98 percent of Negroes are working people, it is certainly beyond the realm of debate that the said movement is not a promise but a definite menace to Negroes.”\(^{169}\) The magazine concluded that, yes, the Garvey movement possessed no plan to


improve the position of the working class and instead favoring purely racial based activism and on this basis required rejection.

*The Crusader* by contrast was less willing to dismiss other groups and individuals for their failure to repudiate capitalism. An editorial in the April 1921 issue of the publication laid out the publication’s position in this regard. The piece argued that the creation of a Socialist state was the most effective means of achieving racial salvation, but that history had shown that other avenues which did not challenge capitalism could also be effective.170 *The Crusader* asserted that “it would be much more preferable to gain our rights through the Socialist Co-Operative Commonwealth. But the Negro has been treated so brutally in the past by the rest of humanity that he may be pardoned for now looking at the matter from the viewpoint of the Negro than from that of a humanity that is not human. And again, he may prefer that his rights and immunity from oppression be based upon his own power rather than upon the problematical continued existence of the Socialist Co-Operative Commonwealth.”171 Briggs recognized the potential weaknesses of the socialist argument for the common bonds of humanity given the unique forms of oppression faced by blacks. In essence, Briggs was acknowledging the legitimacy of the appeal of Garvey’s argument for race based rather than class based action, even if Garvey was not explicitly named in the piece. This openness to recognizing the appeal and potential success of movements, such as Garvey’s, which did not oppose capitalism would have been anathema to Randolph and Owen for whom the centrality of class based action was non-negotiable.

**Federation and Disenchantment**

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The Crusader’s openness to allying with groups who were not anti-capitalist was solidified in the program of the African Blood Brotherhood which called for the creation of a Federation of “all Negro organizations.”¹⁷² This proposed federation of “negro organizations” was not predicated upon those organizations agreeing upon a class analysis, but was to be open to all black organizations as a means of pursuing more unified action. A federation between the U.N.I.A. and the A.B.B. is what Briggs desired and repeatedly petitioned Garvey for. Garvey’s rejection of this proposal, embodied by his public denouncement of Briggs and the A.B.B., and not his support for capitalism was his fault. Garvey, rather than ally the U.N.I.A. with the A.B.B. in a federation had, according to Briggs, attempted to set up the U.N.I.A. as the “organization par excellence” and demanded “all other organizations destroy themselves” and be subsumed into the U.N.I.A.¹⁷³ Briggs acknowledged the programmatic differences between black organizations, such as the U.N.I.A. and the A.B.B., but argued that the federation proposal would best allow these differences to remain while also working together in a more unified manner on issues where there was agreement. This desire to work with the Garvey movement in a federation highlights the overarching point that Briggs did not view his core goals as competing with those of the Garvey movement.

Briggs’ longstanding desire to ally his African Blood Brotherhood with Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association explains why The Crusader focused so intensely on critiquing Garvey’s leadership style while The Messenger largely ignored such questions. Garvey rejected Briggs’ repeated overtures for an allied federation between black organizations across the ideological spectrum. His refusal, according to Briggs, was rooted in Garvey’s personal

authoritarianism and need to control the movement. This personal critique of Garvey’s leadership style also appeared significantly in pieces written by disenchanted ex-Garveyites who had moved from the U.N.I.A. to the A.B.B. Bishop McGuire, the ex-Chaplain-General of the U.N.I.A., wrote in *The Crusader* that he left the U.N.I.A. “because I rebel against the arrogant domineering and dictatorial leadership in the organization” and “not because I repudiate any of its claims and objects.” This strong critique of Garvey’s choices as a leader was rooted in Briggs’ prior belief that the Garvey movement, and Garvey himself, had promise. Randolph and Owen never invested any significant level of hope in the U.N.I.A. and certainly never called for anything amounting to a federation between the U.N.I.A. and the Socialist Party. Thus, the vitriol directed towards Garvey that appeared throughout the last few issues of *The Crusader* remained absent from the anti-Garvey pieces found in *The Messenger*.

The centrality of class analysis to *The Messenger* rendered any alliance between Garvey and Randolph and Owen impossible. The fact that Briggs’ Communism was rooted in the “national revolution” rather than the “social revolution” explains his desire to ally his movement with the Garvey movement despite their varying economic visions. To Briggs, the agreement on the anti-colonial argument superseded the importance of their economic differences. These differing approaches to socialism also explain why, even after *The Crusader*’s formal disavowal of Garvey in October, 1921, their anti-Garvey arguments were far less ideologically socialist in nature than were those published in *The Messenger* magazine.

**Socialism/Communism in the Critiques**

In critiquing Garvey, *The Messenger*, and A. Philip Randolph in particular, rooted their opposition in socialist argument. They opposed Garvey precisely because he opposed class based action. Randolph countered that, “Garveyism will not only not liberate Africa, but it will set back the clock of Negro progress by cutting the Negro workers away from the proletarian liberation movement expressed in the workers’ efforts, political and economic to effect solidarity, class-consciousness, by setting them against instead of joining them with the white workers struggle for freedom. Herein lies the chief menace of Garveyism.”\(^{176}\) The principle reason to oppose Garvey in Randolph’s estimation was the threat he posed to the promise of workers’ solidarity. After Garvey’s meeting with the Klan, a meeting which caused *The Messenger* to declare a “campaign to drive Garvey and Garveyism in all its sinister viciousness from the American soil,” the magazine, despite their newfound embrace of personal attacks on Garvey, continued to explicitly utilize socialism in a way that Briggs and *The Crusader* did not in their campaign.

To Briggs and *The Crusader*, the rationale for opposing Garvey was not motivated by Garvey’s denunciation of class struggle. Instead, Briggs attacked Garvey in large part for the failed promises of Garvey as a leader. Briggs placed the lens of criticism primarily on Garvey himself rather than on the program which he espoused. When the Garveyite ideology was broached in *Crusader* critiques, the objections were not rooted in any significant way in socialist analysis. Briggs attacked Garvey as a traitor to the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial cause for his decision to advise “Negroes to be loyal to all flags under which they live.”\(^{177}\) The core attachment between Briggs and the Communist movement was his belief in its promise as an anti-imperialist force. However, even when attacking Garvey as insufficiently anti-imperialist,

\(^{177}\) “Is Not This Treason,” *The Crusader*, October, 1921, 8.
Briggs largely chose not to inject his anti-Garvey critique with arguments in favor of Communism. The failure of Garvey to be sufficiently anti-imperial is treated as personal “treachery” on his part rather than as a fundamental failing inherent in the pro-capitalist nature of Garveyite ideology.

The closest Briggs came to explicitly connecting his anti-Garvey stance to Communism came in a piece in the final issue of The Crusader. In the piece Briggs argued that Garvey sought alliances with the “traditional enemies and enslavers of the Negro race” by appealing to European leaders for recognition of his racial leadership. Briggs asserted that the Workers Party with its international network of newspapers and magazines and support for the “Negro Liberation Struggle in its program” would be a far more beneficial ally for the race. The tone with which Briggs discusses the Workers Party still varies significantly from the approach of Randolph and Owen to the Socialist Party. Randolph and Owen argued for black support and full membership in the Socialist Party alongside the party’s white members. Briggs, while by this time a member of the Worker’s Party, spoke of the Party as a reliable ally in the struggle for black liberation and notes that the A.B.B. sent delegates to the Party convention. At no point in the piece, however, did Briggs call for blacks en masse to join the Workers Party as full members. There is a tone of defensiveness rather than open pride in the piece.

**Personal Disdain**

Despite the significant differences between the two publications approaches stemming from their variant ideological approaches, there were additionally areas of convergence in both

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anti-Garvey campaigns. Perhaps the most significant area of overlap between the two publications is their embrace of vicious personal attacks on Garvey. While both publications at times affirmed their desire to keep their disagreements with Garvey professional and outside of the realm of mudslinging, both proved incapable of keeping this promise. For both magazines the decision to stoop to personal attacks was spurred by Garvey’s own actions. For Cyril Briggs, it was Garvey’s decision to accuse Briggs of lying about his racial background during his public expulsion of Briggs at the U.N.I.A. convention as well as in print in the *Negro World*. Briggs responded to these attacks with a lawsuit as well as a stark shift in tone which included leveling accusations of rape against Garvey.\textsuperscript{180}

*The Messenger* dropped its more measured tone in response to Garvey’s decision to meet with the Ku Klux Klan as well as a thinly veiled threat published in the *Negro World* directed at Chandler Owen. The September 1922 issue of *The Messenger* carried the text of a speech, which was also printed in the *Negro World*, in which Garvey promised a “Waterloo” moment for those that opposed him, specifically naming Chandler Owen.\textsuperscript{181} The combined effect of Garvey’s threats and his meeting with the Klan unleashed in Owen’s writings a torrent of personal attacks against Garvey. Garvey was then regularly derided with a litany of extremely personal insults as exemplified perhaps most extremely by the editorial, “A Supreme Negro Jamaican Jackass.” In addition to the title of the piece, Garvey was also labeled a “monumental monkey, Southern white man’s “good nigger,” clown and imperial buffoon”, an “unquestioned fool and ignoramus” and a man with a “diseased brain.”\textsuperscript{182} Both publications, despite their protestations, were clearly not above the mudslinging that they accused Garvey of utilizing.

\textsuperscript{180} “As to Morality,” *The Crusader*, November, 1921, 13.
The viciousness of Chandler Owen’s attacks on Garvey in *The Messenger* however, went beyond simple name calling as Owen also began an extensive xenophobic campaign against Garvey with the expressed intention of having Garvey deported from the United States. The appearance of xenophobia and arguments in favor of deportation were, unsurprisingly, entirely absent from the critiques of Garvey which appeared in *The Crusader*. Cyril Briggs was himself a Caribbean immigrant and as such the use of xenophobic rhetoric to tear down Garvey would have appeared inherently contradictory. Much of the core of the African Blood Brotherhood, which *The Crusader* existed to support, were also immigrants from the Caribbean. W.A. Domingo, Otto Huiswoud, and Richard B. Moore were all Caribbean immigrants and members of the A.B.B. In addition to avoiding the use of explicitly xenophobic language in their campaigns against Garvey, the heavy immigrant membership in the A.B.B. also meant that *The Crusader* never broached the topic of deporting Garvey. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., in his history of *The Messenger*, argues that Caribbean Garvey opponents, such as the A.B.B., at most only desired Garvey’s imprisonment. Immigrant opponents of Garvey would have realized that if deportation could be used to target Garvey, it could be used as a threat against them in the future. ¹⁸³ This crucial difference in regards to the use of xenophobia and arguments in favor of xenophobia were, rather than being rooted in the variant ideological approaches of the two publications, based in the national backgrounds of the editors of each magazine.

**Garvey and Africa**

Another point of overlap between both publications anti-Garvey efforts was in their denunciations of Garvey’s specific plans for Africa. Both *The Messenger* and *The Crusader’s* critiques specifically argued that the native populace would not possibly coalesce around Garvey

¹⁸³ Kornweibel, Jr. *No Crystal Stair*, 149.
as a leader. The two publications disagreed significantly over the desirability of a pan-African leader. In this respect, Briggs and *The Crusader* began as sympathetic to Garvey’s ideals but slowly shifted and came more in line with *The Messenger’s* socialist anti-imperial critique.

Both *The Crusader* and *The Messenger* explicitly asserted that Garvey’s plans for a pan-African empire with himself at the head did not consider the interests of the native African populace. Briggs, even when he still saw potential in Garvey as a leader, expressed concern for the lack of outreach to the populace actually in Africa in the process of electing the position of Provisional President.\(^{184}\) Briggs argued that, “We do not know that the African peoples will relish the idea of a New World leader in preference to the very many able native leaders.”\(^{185}\) *The Crusader* later went on to publish a piece from an African which noted that Africa had a great many Kings and Chiefs already who would have had no intention to relinquish their positions in favor of Garvey.\(^{186}\) *The Crusader* accused Garvey of wilful ignorance of the existence of indigenous African leadership. *The Messenger* attacked Garvey in a similar vein, questioning his knowledge of Africa. A. Philip Randolph focused particularly on this point in his “The Only Way to Redeem Africa” series of essays. In these essays Randolph contended that Garvey had a drastically over-simplistic view of Africa which ignored the enormous differences in “customs, traditions, manners, culture, language, race and religion” within the continent.\(^{187}\) Randolph wrote of Garvey that “To him there is a racial and nationality homogeneity in Africa; all tribes possessing one mind.”\(^{188}\) Both publications shared the critique, with differing focal points, that Garvey’s plans inherently contradicted the actual situation on the ground in Africa. According to

\(^{184}\) “The Provisional President,” *The Crusader*, September, 1920, 10.
\(^{185}\) “The Provisional President,” *The Crusader*, 10.
The Crusader, Garvey’s claims for leadership ignored the existence of indigenous African leaders. Meanwhile The Messenger pointed to the impossibility of unifying an internally varied continent like Africa under one man’s leadership. Despite Garvey’s professed central focus on Africa, according to The Crusader and The Messenger, he proved remarkably ill-informed regarding the continent.

Despite their similarities, significant difference did exist between the two publications in regards to their opinions of Garvey’s plans in Africa at the outset. While Briggs and The Crusader offered early critiques regarding the level of openness and proper inclusion of the indigenous African populace in the voting for Provisional President of Africa, the publication crucially did not object on principle to the office itself. The Crusader emphasized that with their criticisms they “did not mean to pretend that no necessity exists for the election of such an official. The need is supreme.”189 Prior to Garvey’s expulsion of Briggs from the U.N.I.A. convention, The Crusader retained this measured position of critiquing the flaws in the election of Garvey while still supporting the concept of electing a race leader for Africa. As The Crusader opened up its concentrated assault on Garvey, the publication reversed course to oppose not only the position of “Provisional President” but the entire basis for Garvey’s vision for an African empire. This argument against Garvey’s plans for Africa was one of the few moments in which The Crusader presented an anti-Garvey argument in explicitly socialistic terms. The publication stated that Garvey’s vision would produce “an Africa whose white capitalist imperialist bonds have been exchanged for the capitalist or feudalist bonds of a Negro

Potentate, with a piratical court and an antiquated system of knights, lords, and other potential parasites upon the Negro workers.\textsuperscript{190}

This socialist opposition to Garvey’s plan to “liberate” Africa was virtually indistinguishable from those published in \textit{The Messenger} from the outset of their coverage of Garvey. A piece published in the October 1920 issue of \textit{The Messenger} derided the creation of a black African empire that failed to challenge the capitalist system arguing that this would only benefit “those wealthy Negroes who migrated to Africa and found a free field for investment and exploitation of the workers of their own race.”\textsuperscript{191} The first lengthy analysis of Garvey in \textit{The Messenger} also attacked the core of Garvey’s plans in Africa by arguing that simply replacing a white Emperor with a black Emperor, i.e. Garvey, without challenging the capitalist system would do nothing tangible to improve the conditions of the African populace. Both magazines eventually shared a socialist opposition to Garvey’s African imperial plans on the grounds that Garvey would only be changing the race of the face of the oppressive ruling system and that the true liberation of Africa from bondage necessitated a revolution against capitalism.

Despite the shared embrace of left wing radical political ideologies as well as intense disdain for Marcus Garvey, \textit{The Messenger} and \textit{The Crusader}’s coverage varied significantly in numerous areas. Both shifted from positions of offering fairly high minded critiques to lobbing intensely personal attacks against Garvey in response to actions by Garvey that each perceived to have crossed a line. Furthermore, both eventually came to express largely similar positions regarding the impracticality and undesirability of Garvey’s plans for an African empire.

\textsuperscript{190} “A Free Africa,” \textit{The Crusader}, October, 1921, 8.
\textsuperscript{191} “Colonizing Africa,” \textit{The Messenger}, October, 1920, 113.
However, considered in their entirety, the two publications anti-Garvey campaigns diverged rather significantly. These variant approaches to dealing with Garvey and his movement were in large part the result of the national and specific ideological visions of socialism embraced by each magazine. For *The Messenger* the question of interracial working class struggle against capitalism was non-negotiable and served as the magazine’s defining approach to conquering the oppression faced by the black race. *The Crusader*’s Communism was in contrast rooted in the simple belief that the Communist movement, as embodied by the Soviet Union, represented the most effective path to fighting imperialism in Africa. This embrace of socialism which was not rooted in class helps to explain the crucial differences in the two magazines approaches to Garvey. Despite the early working relationship between A. Philip Randolph and Marcus Garvey, the relationship quickly decayed as the ideological chasm between the two sides became clear. Garvey’s rejection of unions, class-based action, and interracial alliances contradicted the core tenets of *The Messenger*’s ideology. For Cyril Briggs and *The Crusader*, the Garvey movement held promise in their shared central focus on an opposition to imperialism in black nations. Garvey’s opposition to socialism did not contradict the crux of Briggs’ ideology in the way it did Randolph and Owen’s. These differing rationales for embracing socialism explain why the pieces in *The Crusader* moved from hope to disenchantment and specifically covered the organizational, financial and leadership failings of Garvey. This initial optimism explains the degree of focus lent to the affairs of the Black Star Line as well as the argument that Garvey had betrayed those who had placed faith in him. As *The Messenger* never expressed any degree of hope for Garvey as a leader, these arguments rooted in disenchantment and betrayal never appeared in the publication. Furthermore, the fact that Garveyism and *The Messenger*’s socialism were fundamentally incompatible accounts for the
consistent use of socialist arguments in the anti-Garvey pieces in *The Messenger, The Crusader* by contrast put forth far less socialist centered critique of Garvey.

This is of course not an exhaustive discussion of the entirety of interrelations between Garveyism and the Black Left. There are numerous areas surrounding this topic which hold great potential for further research in the future. This idea of class and race being competing lenses of understanding oppression continued on long after the end of this battle between Garvey and his leftist opponents. Research could be done which places the debates of this period in comparison with similar debates later on in the civil rights movement. I would be intrigued to analyze the black nationalist rhetoric of later organizations and individuals such as Malcolm X or the Republic of New Afrika in comparison with that of Garvey, specifically as it related to issues regarding interracial activism, socialism, trade unionism, and racial separatism. The Black Panther Party for Self Defense, for example, embraced a hybrid vision of black nationalism and socialism. Research could be done which analyzes the degree to which these later radical black groups and individuals wrestled with the same debates engaged in by Garvey, Randolph, Owen, and Briggs. Furthermore, many black activists and intellectuals of the left that came to prominence after this period, such as Kwame Nkrumah and CLR James, have spoken positively of the legacy of Garvey. Along these lines, research could be done on how later black leftists who have praised Garvey have wrestled with his expressed opposition to socialist and communist politics.
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