Blurring the Boundaries of Struggle: The United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) and Relational Resistance in Seattle's Third World Left

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Abstract

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In *Blurring the Boundaries of Struggle: The United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) and Relational Resistance in Seattle's Third World Left*, I challenge social movement historians to question the field's narrow interpretation of 1960s racial politics. While few scholars still entertain the notion that the rise of Black Power resulted in the "declension" of the modern freedom movement, recent studies continue to portray the late 1960s as a time of interracial strife, particularly between communities of color. This obscures a significant historical development. In the backdrop of insurgent struggles for racial justice "at home" and decolonization movements abroad, activists of color in the United States began to refer to themselves as "Third World People." This political identity represented their mutual opposition to white supremacy, capitalism, and colonialism. To capture the new political and social relationships that developed between self-proclaimed "Third World leftists," my dissertation advances the concept of relational resistance: a process by which seemingly distinct racial groups begun to define their liberation in relation to and in solidarity with one another.

To explore this development, I focus on the multiracial transformation of the United Construction Workers Association (UCWA). Between 1970 and 1975, the UCWA quickly transformed from an all-black worker organization to a radical collective of black and Asian American laborers. I make the case that the distinctly multiracial environment of the Pacific Northwest enabled this shift. Through an analysis of archival documents and interviews of over twenty movement participants, I have organized my study into two parts. In the first two chapters, I explore key events and critical moments where the struggles of black workers in the UCWA and other aggrieved racial groups converged in Seattle and the broader region. In particular, I analyze the UCWA's critical role in the development of both a multiracial, worker-governed law office, the Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO), and a Filipino labor organization, the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA). Next, my dissertation shifts to an examination of the UCWA's multiracial, Third World discourse. In this section, I examine "languages of solidarity:" concepts developed by UCWA activists that discursively linked the experiences of aggrieved racial groups and fortified their coalitions. Taken as a whole, my research sheds light on the expansive world of solidarity that blossomed during Seattle's Black Power Movement.

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Abbreviations:

Asian Coalition for Equality (ACE)
Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA)
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Alaska Fishermen's Union (AFU)
Association of General Contractors (AGC)
American Indian Movement (AIM)
Asian Students Coalition (ASC)
Central Contractors Association (CCA)
Committee for Corrective Action in the International District (CCAID)
Court Ordered Advisory Committee (COAC)
Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (EEOC)
Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)
International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU)
International Workers of the World (IWW)
Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipinas [Union of Democratic Filipinos] (KDP)
Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO)
Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (LPDC)
New England Fishing Company (NEFCO)
Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC)
University of Washington Office of Minority Affairs (UW OMA)
Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA)
Southern Christian Leadership Committee (SCLC)
Service, Employment, and Redevelopment (SER)
Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
Seattle Liberation Committee (SLC)
Third World Coalition (TWC)
United Construction Workers Association (UCWA)
United Farm Workers (UFW)
Women in the Trades (WIT)
World Trade Organization (WTO)

Introduction:

The UCWA and Seattle's Third World Left - Centering Solidarity in 1960s Social Movement History and Comparative Ethnic Studies

In just a five-year period, the racial politics of the United Construction Workers Association's (UCWA) grew by leaps and bounds. In July of 1970, only one month after Federal Judge William Lindberg passed down his ruling in *U.S. V. Ironworkers Local 86, et. al.,* which called for the swift desegregation of Seattle's building trades, the UCWA quickly took shape. In turn, the group of black labor organizers at the helm of the UCWA viewed their organization as a social movement vehicle for workers entering the industry through Lindberg's affirmative action mandate. Informed by the Black Power politics of community control and self-determination, they designed the UCWA as a political space that was autonomous from white workers and civil rights liberals. In July of 1970, UCWA activist Tyree Scott made this abundantly clear when he wrote to a potential member,

> We have asked the men who came to the first meeting to bring along other minority construction workers (or men who want to become construction worker), but I should stress that if we want this new organization to really be of and for black workers, these are the *only people we want to come*. *Interested or sympathetic outsiders* really *don't have a place in this*" (own emphasis).[1]

Trevor Griffey has aptly described the UCWA's political culture as distinctly black and working-class. By reading Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as an "organizing tool" for mobilizing black workers around their "right to a job" in the construction trades, what we might now call a "livable wage," they promoted a sense of "black working-class self-activity."[2] That is, they challenged their members to view themselves, not as passive beneficiaries of civil rights

[1] Tyree Scott to Mr. Luckett, July 20, 1970, *The Tyree Scott Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, TSP, SCUW).

[2] For a historical analysis of black working-class self-activity, see Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working-Class* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

law, but its active enforcers. This meant, that workers had to learn equal employment law and become their own advocates within union hiring halls and within hostile work environments. Moreover, UCWA meetings encouraged a sense of collective agency. They shared information about discriminatory industry practices, and when necessary, they strategized how to shutdown worksites that were in non-compliance with affirmative action law.[3] By doing so, UCWA worker-activists boldly fused Equal Employment and Black Power politics.

In less than five years, however, the UCWA delivered a very different message to the broader public. After they observed that the exclusionary policies of the Operating Engineers Local 302 in Seattle were still in place, they launched an impressive campaign of worksite closures that stretched between February to April of 1975. In a notable departure from Scott's previous message that the UCWA was an organization "of and for black workers," their new campaign had an explicit multiracial base and message. On February 12th of that year, seventeen individuals were arrested when the UCWA attempted to shutdown a worksite in South Seattle that employed only two "minority operating engineers" out of a total of twenty "heavy equipment operators." This diverse collection of activists included, Filipino workers (some of whom were then UCWA members), Chicano nationalists, "Third World students" at the University of Washington, and a diverse array of white leftists. The following day, the UCWA released a message to the press and the public.

> Earlier today, a statement from the 17 brothers arrested yesterday morning was read in Municipal Court...These brothers are telling us all that the divisions which in the past resulted in individual groups struggling for their own 'minority rights,' their own piece of

[3] Trevor Griffey describes the UCWA's approach to desegregating the construction trades as a "new labor radicalism that emerged outside and sometimes in opposition to organized labor." Trevor Griffey, "From Jobs to Power: The United Construction Workers Association and Title VII Community Organizing in the 1970s," *Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry* (Ithica: Cornell University, 2010), 178.

> a shrinking pie, are beginning to be overcome...so too are white workers beginning to realize that, as Tyree Scott…has said, "There can be no separate peace!"[4]

Throughout this dissertation, I aim to theorize the political trajectory of the UCWA. The two moments in the organization's history described above (July 1970 and February 1975) book-end this study. At first glance, they appear to be polar opposites. This has much to do with how scholars of the 1960s have demarcated the decade's social movements. Todd Gitlin has famously interpreted the 1960s within a binary of "good" and "bad," where he identified the rise of Black Power as the decade's historical turning point. As the argument goes, the modern freedom movement's "heroic period" of non-violent direct-action protests was the mid 1950s through the early 1960s where black civil rights organizers and white anti-war activists waged parallel and overlapping movements. However, the increasing appeal of nationalism for many black activists, as well as Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans, dismantled a once unified movement. Regression and disarray took the form of identity politics; specifically around race, gender, and sexuality.[5]

Few scholars still employ this "declension thesis." Yet, a comparative turn in civil rights historiography has given way to what I refer to as a "disunity thesis." This is a historical framework that rejects the notion that the late 1960s was a period of declension, but still presents the era as one of interracial strife. Moreover, where the work of Gitlin emphasized black and white disunity, newer studies focuses on the racial discord between communities of color. To the credit of these scholars, they aimed to theorize cross-racial community dynamics and, in particular, to understand why coalitions fail. To do so, they have relied heavily upon Ethnic Studies theories that note the distinct, but relational processes of racialization that have shaped

[4] The United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) to All Media, February 13, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[5] Todd Gitlin, *The 1960s: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987).

the experiences of communities of color.[6] While social movement scholars have applied this framework to a range of cases - comparisons of civil rights reformers, anti-poverty coalitions at the local and national level, and "Third World leftists" - there is a point of agreement across the field: unique racial experiences translated into specific, sometimes conflicting, grievances.[7] The ability of activists to understand these distinction, ultimately shaped the success of coalition building. However, in most cases, scholars note that differences were often too significant to overcome. As a result, once overlapping social movements, to use Brian Behnken's words, were left "fighting their own battles."[8]

The UCWA clearly does not fit into this comparative framework. I maintain a new approach is needed if scholars are to understand how organizations and activists undergo a multiracial transformation in their analyses and political priorities. As Natalia Molina has convincingly argued, instead of a *comparative* approach a *relational* analysis is better suited to expose the inner workings of multiracial movements. In her 2014 text, *How Race is Made: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*, she clearly articulates the difference between the two.

> By relational, I do not mean comparative. A *comparative* treatment of race compares and contrasts groups, treating them as independent of one another; a *relational* treatment recognizes that race is a mutually constitutive process and thus attends to how, when, where, and to what extent groups intersect.

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[6] For a discussion of this theoretical approach see Tomas Almaguer, Racial Fault Lines: The Origins of White Supremacy in California (Berkeley: University of Washington, 1994); Claire-Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," Politics and Society 27.1 (1999); Andrea Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing," *Transformations: Feminist Pathways to Global Change, An Analytical Anthology* (New York: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), 264-271.

[7] Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity has Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2010); Robert Bauman, *Race and the War on Poverty: From Watts to East LA* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2008); Gordon Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013); Brian Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2011); *Laura Pulido, Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California, 2006).

[8] Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles*, 12.

Molina's comments offer valuable insights for understanding the UCWA. No doubt, the grievances of the black workers that formed this "autonomous worker organization" were historically rooted in an emancipation from slavery that never fully materialized. Yet, at the same time, their racial and movement politics were radically transformed by a dynamic world of anti-racist social movements that surrounded them. This included Native American treaty rights activists, Chicano nationalists, and Filipino workers with transpacific connections to radical movements in the Philippines. To develop a framework for understanding the social environment that encouraged the UCWA's evolving racial politics, what others have termed the "U.S. Third World Left," I advance the concept of *relational resistance*.[9] This references a process by which communities with distinct processes of racialization began to define their liberation in relation to, and solidarity with, other aggrieved populations. By no means was relational resistance a forgone conclusion. Rather, it was a political choice and a capacity that certain organizations strove to foster. As such, relational resistance names both the grassroots practices that activists developed to foster multiracial unity, as well as movement participants' evolving political analyses.

To organize my study, I have sought to answer a series of questions that racial disunity scholars leave unanswered. What conditions compel communities with distinct racial experience to embrace multiracial solidarity? How does an awareness of the oppression of other racial groups impact one's own racial consciousness? While racial groups certainly experience distinct processes of racialization, are there not overlapping conditions that warrant coalition-building? In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I map out three fields of study that I engage with to

[9] For a discussion of the U.S. Third World Left, see, Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California, 2006); Cynthia Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of the U.S. Third World Left* (Durham: Duke University, 2006).

answer these questions: "Black Power Studies," studies of the "U.S. Third World Left," and Comparative Ethnic Studies.

Conflict or Crossroads

Rather than organize my study around narratives of conflict, I maintain that the metaphor of a "crossroads" offers a much more constructive approach. As George Lipsitz reminds us, the "ethic of the crossroad" has a significant meaning in Haiti and "throughout the Afro-diasporic world." It "promotes the embrace of contradictions, the recognition of occluded affinities among seemingly dissimilar people and practices, and the insistence on practical work in the world as a means of generating the ideas, imaginaries, and actions needed to improve our conditions." In a similar fashion to social movement historians who emphasize disunity, this concept recognizes that conflict cannot be dismissed, especially by those invested in solidarity. Lipsitz acknowledges as much when he states, "The crossroads is a place where collisions can occur" and people can "lose their way." However, he also notes, "[it is] precisely because choices need to made at the crossroads, [that] it is a site of infinite possibility." As a conceptual framework, the critical intervention of the "crossroads" is that it treats conflict not as a political inevitability, but as "evidence of problems not yet solved."[10] Therefore, it compels scholars to pay close attention to the political choices activists make and the political analyses that inform their decisions.

To take heed of Lipsitz's suggestions, a more nuanced analysis of late 1960s movement politics is needed. Specifically, this dissertation utilizes "Black Power Studies" to intervene in the "racial disunity thesis." As I have described earlier, the Black Power Movement is read as a

[10] George Lipsitz, "Introduction: A New Beginning," Kalfou 1.1 (2014): 8.

significant break in the history of 1960s social movements; demarcating what was "good" and "bad" about the decade's progressive social movements. Committed historians, however, have since shattered the negative interpretations associated with the era's insurgent Black Nationalism. Rather, than view the Black Power Movement as a "wrong turn" in the movement, Peniel Joseph and others, whose research he has identified as "Black Power Studies," have linked this political shift in the modern freedom movement to a broader trajectory of black resistance that go as far back as emancipation, but at the very least, developed in a parallel fashion with the traditional Civil Rights Movement.[11] In this light, it would be fruitful to utilize the insights of "Black Power Studies" to develop a more thorough understanding of how black and other activists of color responded to the political crossroads of the late 1960s.

The studies I have grouped together as "racial disunity thesis" proponents, with certain exceptions, tend to leave ethnic nationalist politics under-theorized or unaddressed.[12] This has much to do with the scholarly debates that inform their research. Take for instance Mark Brilliant's comparison of civil rights reformers in California, *The Color of America Has Changed* and Gordon Mantler's analysis of Black and Chicano intergroup dynamics within the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, *Power to the Poor*. Both share significant links with proponents of the "Long Civil Rights movement" literature in that each study extends the periodization of the modern freedom movement and pay careful attention to the race and class dynamics that informed concern of aggrieved groups. In fact, Brilliant makes this connection explicit when he claims civil rights historiography should not only be "long" in periodization, but "wide" in geographical scale.[13] But, much like "long movement" scholars before them, they obscure the

[11] Peniel Joseph, "Introduction: Toward a Historiography of the Black Power Movement," *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Black Power-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-25.
[12] For a notable exception, see Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*.
[13] *Brilliant, the Color of America Has Changed*, 12

substantive differences between "Civil Rights" and "Black Power." In Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang's essay, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," the two authors offer a searing critique of this tendency to "bleed" different ideological and strategic approaches employed by black freedom seekers. In reference to the work of Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Cha-Jua and Lang contend,

> [T]he decision to use "Civil Rights" as the catch-all phrase [for the field] minimizes "Black Power" to simply a militant moment in the history of the CRM. In this way, Black Power is reduced to a particular set of tactics; or worse, it is altogether suppressed as a specific movement with its own strategic vision, goals and objectives, leaders and followers, practices, symbols and discourses.[14]

Both Brilliant and Mantler, fall victim to this theoretical trap.

In the case of Brilliant, Black Power and other expressions of ethnic nationalism are completely absent from his examination. On one level this makes sense, given his focus on civil rights reformers. But those familiar with social movement history in California should be wary of this erasure of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. As the work of Jason Ferreira, Donna Murch, Laura Pulido, and Lauren Araiza attest, some of the most significant multiracial alliances in California gravitated around activities of the Black Panthers, even significant electoral campaigns.[15] When it comes to Mantler, his examination of Black and Chicanos activists in 1968 Poor People's Campaign is guilt of homogenizing the diverse approaches to liberation displayed by black freedom seekers. His analysis centers the Southern Christian Leadership Committee's (SCLC) Poor People's Campaign and concludes that black and Chicano activists interpret poverty in distinct ways. He maintained that black activists viewed poverty as

[14] Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History* 92.2 (2007): 271.

[15] Jason Ferreira, "With the Soul of a Human Rainbow: Los Siete, Black Panthers, and Third Worldism in San Francisco," *Ten Years that Shook the City: San Francisco 1968-197*8, ed. Chris Carlsson (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011), 30-47; Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2010); Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*; Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others: The Black Freedom Struggle and the United Farm Workers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2014).

an issue of jobs and Chicano see it in the context of land. This makes sense for some of the most prominent figures in the Poor People's Campaign, such as Ralph Abernathy of SCLC and Reises Tijerina of New Mexico's land grant movement. However, Mantler proceeds to use this comparative framework to analyze other multiracial coalitions, such as Chicago's Rainbow Coalition, an alliance whose politics were significantly informed by the city's Black Panther Party. In turn, he dismisses the more nuanced anti-capitalist politics of Black revolutionary nationalists who theorized the importance of land. Furthermore, a more generative analyze may have evolved if he incorporated a discussion of the Republic of New Africa (RNA), a group of revolutionary nationalists who incorporated the demand for an independent black nation within the continental United States into their political platform. Taken together, these examples illustrate the importance of a more thorough examination of Black Power politics and its impact of multiracial coalitions.

Returning to Lipsitz's generative analysis of the crossroads in Afro-diasporic thought, to "embrace contradictions" requires that political activists "fashion innovative improvisation capable of moving the struggle to a higher level." To this point, Lipsitz calls upon social movement scholars and practitioners to "create universalism that is rich with particulars, that entails the dialogue of all, autonomy of each, and the supremacy of none."[16] By doing so, he raises our attention to what Cedric Robinson has described as the "Black Radical Tradition."[17] In stark contrast to the "long movement" approach of Hall, it would be more appropriate to place Black Power within a longer trajectory of black radicalism, which, amongst other political

[16] Lipsitz, "Introduction: A New Beginning."

[17] Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1983).

priorities, sought to strike a balance between racial autonomy and multiracial/international solidarity.[18]

I maintain that the UCWA fits firmly within the Black Radical Tradition, particularly the strands of this political legacy that envisioned freedom in multiracial and transnational terms. The UCWA's multiracial politics evolved in the context of the unfinished project of emancipation that clearly revealed itself in the Black Power era. Even after Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act made equal employment the "law of the land," and, after a Federal Court Judge passed sweeping reforms to fast-track black workers into the building trades in June of 1970, the entrance of black workers into the construction trades remained at bay. In fact, union leadership and the rank-and-file resistance of white workers on the job assured that the old adage "last hired and first fired" continued to apply to black laborers in the industry. In the face of clear practices of institutionalized racism, the UCWA developed innovative approaches to achieving their economic self-determination, which included building a strong multiracial base of support. The result was grassroots practices and political analyses that blended a belief in "self-determination" with a commitment to multiracial solidarity (see chapters 1 and 2). In the mid-1970s, when UCWA activists came to embrace Marxism and anti-colonialism, their multiracial alliances in the Pacific Northwest continued to inform the evolution of their politics (see chapters 3 and 4). The political trajectory of militant black workers in Seattle illustrates does more than trouble a prevalent narrative of racial disunity advanced by Civil Rights historians. It points to the significant of a political formation that Laura Pulido and Cynthia Young have described as the "U.S. Third World Left."

[18] Arguably, no scholar has grappled more with the multiracial and transnational contours of black freedom struggles, or simply black lived experiences, than Gerald Horne. For a summation of his thoughts on this topic, see, Gerald Horne, "Toward a Transnational Research Agenda for African American History in the 21st Century," *The Journal of African American History*, 91.3 (Summer, 2006): 288-303.

The Racial Politics of the U.S. Third World Left

At the periphery of tradition civil rights historiography, another comparative field of social movement history has emerged on the "U.S. Third World Left." In the late 1960s, influenced significantly by an international turn within the black freedom movement, activists of color increasingly embraced an identity as "Third World People." By doing so, they linked anti-racist struggles in the United States to decolonization movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific. While the blurring of national boundaries was evident in their identification with Third World social movements, it also had significant domestic implications for U.S. race relations. Laura Pulido's 2006 study, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*, provides a critical intervention in social movement history that either uses the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense as a "stand-in for the entire Third World Left" or focuses solely on a singular racial/ethnic group. In cities where racial inequality could not be reduced to a white-non-white binary, like Los Angeles, a Third World identity took on a particular meaning. In this context, activists of color stressed that Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans experienced a common, although not identical, oppression rooted in white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy. Collectively, these groups represented the "Third World within."

By examining of the history of the UCWA, we see how the multiracial and transnational dimensions of the U.S. Third World Left were intertwined, at least in the Pacific Northwest. Seattle was not only a multiracial city where activists embraced an anti-imperialist politics, it was also a "global city" where diverse experiences of race, class, and colonialism converged. Building upon the innovative scholarship of Dorothy Fujita-Rony, Moon-Ho Jung, and Kornel Chang, I maintain, that Seattle was a major hub of a larger "Pacific World" of race and

empire.[19] In fact, Alan Gomez offers a generative framework for interpreting Seattle's broader convergence of people and politics during the late 1960s.

> The meeting of the land and the ocean brought many things to the port city of Seattle. Commerce arrived from the East by railroad and from the West by shipping networks. *People, culture and politics* were also part of these transcontinental and transpacific networks. A large Asian population from the Pacific Rim countries reflected these trends. The Yakima Valley also drew migrants from Mexico, California, and Texas…The post WWII migration of African Americans to the west…led to the formation of an urban community that was [a] significant political force in the area…These characteristics made Seattle, and the larger Puget Sound area, a center for Third World multiethnic organizing with international ties to Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean…In other words, Seattle was an important "port" in the international circulation of progressive social movements.[20]

Notably absent from Gomez's analysis is the long history of indigenous resistance. Well before the occupation of Alcatraz (1969), the "Trail of Broken Treaties" (1972) or the American Indian Movement's standoff at Wounded Knee (1973) all made "Red Power" a part of American lexicon, the Pacific Northwest was an epicenter of Native American militancy. In 1964, the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA), a Pan-Indian organization, formed to collectively assert their the treaty rights to fish in their "usual and accustomed places."[21] Regardless, this study places the "international circulation of progressive social movements" described by Gomez, front and center. In turn, I ask, how did this broad "constellation of struggle" produce new ways of thinking about *race*, *freedom*, and in the particular case of the UCWA, *labor*.

This cross-fertilization, I maintain, was a defining feature of the U.S. Third World Left, an argument that easily gets lost, even in Pulido's comparative study. Since she focused on the

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[19] Dorothy Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: University of California, 2003); Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California, 2012), Moon-Ho Jung, "Seditous Subjects…

[20] Alan Gomez, *"From Below and to the Left:" Re-Imagining the Chicano Movement through the Circulation of Third World Struggles, 1970-1979* (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006), 264.

[21] For a discussion of the SAIA see Bradley Shreve, "From Time Immemorial: The Fish-In Movement and the Rise of Intertribal Activism," *Pacific Historical Review* 78.3 (2009), 403-434.

unique experiences of racial groups, and the cumulative effects this had on their radical politics, she paid little attention to theorizing coalitions. For instance, she would reference their existence, but not analyze further their inner-workings or the multiracial politics that flowed from them. This leads to a third intervention of this study. I make the case that "Third World unity," as articulated in the UCWA's movement discourse, represented an early theory of "comparative racialization."

Centering Solidarity in Comparative Studies of Race

Beyond my central interventions within the historiography of 1960s social movements, this study has significant implications for Comparative Ethnic Studies. Namely, a primary concern of my dissertation is centering a discussion of overlapping processes of racialization and the political potential and significance of multiracial solidarity. For a time, the examination of parallel and overlapping experiences of racial groups was a standard practice of the field.[22] As early as 1979, the late Ronald Takaki made this clear in his pioneering comparative history of racism in the United States, *Iron Cages*. In his opening preface, Takaki explained,

> When I began this book many years ago, I became increasingly aware of the fragmentation evident in the scholarship on the history of race…Like many other scholars, I had parceled out white attitudes toward different racial groups almost as if there were no important similarities as well as differences in the ways whites imaged and treated them…Yet I knew that the reality of white America's experience was dynamically multiracial. What whites did to one racial group had direct consequences for others.[23]

However, in recent decades, a range of scholars have turned to theorizing what Tomas Almaguer has referred to as "differential racializaton:" the study of distinct experiences that racial groups

[22] The prolific scholarship of Ronald Takaki is telling of this trend. Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979); Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (New York: Backbay Books, 1993).

[23] Takaki, *Iron Cages*, xiv.

have with white supremacy.[24] The study of Black and Asian racialization is especially revealing regarding this trend.

Within studies of black and Asian American racialization, discussions of "Afro-Asian solidarity," particularly those emphasizing the connection between Black Nationalism, revolutionary movements in Asia, and the radicalization of Asian Americans, have largely given way to what Claire Jean Kim has called "racial triangulation."[25] In her analysis, the "American racial order" is not simply a "vertical hierarchy," but a "field constructed on at least two dimensions or axes, that of superior/inferior [read biological/cultural racism] and that of insider/foreign [read foreigner, alien, and/or enemy racialization].[26] Recently, a range of Asian American Studies scholarship has expanded upon Kim's comparative approach, applying her theorization to struggles for Black and Japanese integration in Los Angeles, Asian American radicalization during the Black Power Movement, Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees experiences, and a broader cultural studies theorization of Black and Asian American citizenship.[27] In this context, the field of "comparative ethnic studies" has clearly moved away from a "teleological investment in multiracial solidarity," which Helen Jun has cautioned

[24] Tomas Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California, 1994).

[25] For studies of "Afro-Asia Solidarity" see Vijay Prashad, *Everybody was Kung-Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon, 2001); *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections Between African Americans and Asian Americans*, eds. Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen (Durham: Duke University, 2008). For an analysis of "Racial Triangulation" see Claire-Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans."

[26] Claire-Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City* (New Haven: Yale University, 2000), 16.

[27] Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2010); Daryl Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009); Eric Tang, *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the New York City Hyperghetto* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2015); Helen Heran Jun, *Race for Citizenship: Black Orientalism and Asian Uplift from Pre-Emancipation to Neoliberal America* (New York: New York University, 2011).

scholars to avoid, and towards a new analytic framework: one defined by "distinct, but relational" processes of racialization.[28]

Even studies that focus on radical social movements have employed a similar approach. As I describe above, Laura Pulido's 2006 study was explicitly comparative in its treatment of anti-racist social movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout her analysis, she compared and contrasted three radical organizations that were rooted in specific racial and ethnic communities – the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (African American), the Center for Autonomous Social Action (Mexican American/Mexican immigrant), and East Wind (Japanese American). Doing so allowed her to draw substantive conclusions about how one's position within a "regional racial hierarchy" impacted their approach to grassroots organizing, their political analysis, and their perspective on multiracial coalition building. Yet similar to proponents of "racial triangulation," Pulido's analysis leaves little room to examine overlapping conditions of racialization, much less the potential solidarity that may result from such objective conditions.

To that note, there is a theoretical, as well as political, question that arises from this turn in the literature: where does multiracial solidarity fit into our analysis? Certainly, scholarship should not assume multiracial coalitions to be a predetermined outcome between racially aggrieved groups. But at the same time, to borrow from Helen Jun's critique of earlier iterations of "comparative ethnic studies," the intellectual challenge is not to "uncover a hidden genealogy of interracial solidarity," but to historicize as well as theorize multiracial solidarity, the conditions which inhibit and contribute to it as well as the potential to cultivate it.[29] Eric Tang's recent work on Black and Vietnamese community relations in "Post-Katrina New Orleans" is a productive turn in this direction. Responding directly to Kim's theory of racial triangulation, he

[28] Jun, *Race for Citizenship*, 4.
[29] Ibid.

notes that the hegemonic power of whiteness, at least in the case of popular narratives of "Black and Asian conflict," relies on Asian Americans embracing the position of "model minorities." Under this rubric, Asian Americans are compelled to respond to racial inequality, not with demands for state resources, but with "hard work" and "[white] middle-class values." This, as Tang shows, was not the case in Post-Katrina New Orleans. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Vietnamese refugees organized political protests that connected their plight to that of local black residents. The refusal of Vietnamese residents to become another model minority "success story," Tang contends, "suggests the implicit possibility of [racial] repositioning." To further elaborate, Tang writes,

> Here, it helps to conceptualize [racial] positions in the Gramscian sense: specific coordinates that uphold a hegemonic form while simultaneously possessing the potential of that form's undoing. With respect to triangulation, the inherent possibility of counter hegemony is evinced when the change in the position of one racial group consequently repositions the other two.[30]

Tang's analysis offers a useful building block for future comparative scholarship to integrate the urgency of solidarity.

Other scholars such as John Marquez and Gaye Theresa Johnson have troubled our understanding of what "relational racialization" means. For instance, Laura Pulido views race as a relational process in that "the status and meanings associated with one group are contingent upon those of another."[31] But, in the case of Marquez and Johnson, they each developed a conceptual framework that examines black and Latino relations through their overlapping experiences of oppression, such as police violence and the "organized abandonment" of their communities.[32] By refusing to see black and Latino experiences as distinct, they unearth new

[30] Eric Tang, "A Gulf Unites Us: The Vietnamese Americans of Black New Orleans East," *American Quarterly* 63.1 (2011): 129.

[31] Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow*, and Left, 4.

[32] John Marquez, *Black-Brown Solidarity: Racial Politics in the New Gulf South* (Austin: University of Texas,

political identities and subjectivities that other scholars have neglected. Furthermore, they point to the potential, as well as the existence, of solidarity. A key point of their their argument has been a shift in focus away from top-down studies of policy makers, or even organizations that are seen as the legitimate voice of aggrieved communities, such as civil rights groups and labor unions. Examining the grassroots practices of youth and community members who live under siege of racism, they also reveal an important methodological approach: the imperative to center the voices of those who have are commonly neglected by mainstream academic inquiry, or excluded from traditional archival collections.

In line with Marquez and Johnson's approach, my dissertation is influenced by the analysis of contemporary social movements. In Deepa Iyer's study of South Asian, Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities in the post-9/11 era, *We Too Sing America*, she references a generative conversation with Dante Berry, the executive director of the Million Hoodies Movement for Justice. Reflecting upon on the potential for coalitions between Black and Muslim American communities, Berry makes clear,

> [T]he growth of the prison industrial complex and the detention facilities, the surveillance of Muslims and the War on Drugs…There are commonalities in how these mechanisms mistreat Black and Brown people. But the challenge before us is this: how do we talk about anti-Black racism and anti-Brown racism *as similar - but different*? How can we leave room for these communities to build *on their own - and together* (own emphasis)?[33]

Berry's comments remind us, academic and social justice activists alike, theorizing solidarity should not be divorced from our discussion of an unequal racial order, and vise versa. As Berry

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2013); *Gaye Theresa Johnson, Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California, 2013).

[33] Deepa Iyer, *We Too Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Sikh Immigrants Shape our Multiracial Future* (New York: The New Press, 2015), 147-148.

maintains, the imperatives of racial justice today necessitates that aggrieved groups work as "co-conspirators" who "scheme together" so we can "all get free."[34]

Berry's analysis is a powerful example of what Robin Kelley has described as "poetic knowledge," or "the many different cognitive maps of the future, of a world not yet born" that are drawn from the "poetics of struggle and lived experience."[35] For activists such as Berry, the converging realities of anti-black violence and Islamophobia that have collided in our current historical moment compels him to demand that those interested in social justice do more than analyze "what's wrong" with our racial order. An equal amount of intellectual energy must be utilized to theorize an anti-racist praxis that will allow us to, in the words of Berry, "all get free." Such emancipatory hopes of a world where all are free of oppressions offer a road map to new research questions for comparative ethnic studies scholars. For one, what does it mean to be in solidarity with communities who experience racism differently from you? In what ways do seemingly distinct processes of racialization overlap?

Lastly, comparative studies of race have done the important work of "decentering whiteness," and thus allowing communities of color to "speak to each other." However, Clare-Jean Kim's important generative critique of "white racial dominance" easily gets lost in our attention to her comparative analysis of Black and Asian American communities. For instance, a fundamental intervention of her study of Black-Korean conflict in New York City, *Bitter Fruit*, was to reframe the "racial scapegoating narrative" that painted Korean grocery store owners as innocent victims of a supposedly violent black underclass. A central problem of this discourse was the ease with which whites could distance themselves from conflict. To which, she writes, "Whites - the unspoken overclass of the underclass and the majority to the model minority - are

[34] Ibid, 151.
[35] Robin Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon, 2002), 9-10.

factored out of the picture as if they were neutral, colorblind, wholly disinterested observers."[36] Thus, a pressing concern for comparative ethnic studies scholars is to also think about the ways in which "white racial dominance" structures conflict between aggrieved racial groups.

Throughout this study, I make the case that at a crucial juncture black workers in the UCWA and other racial groups in the Pacific Northwest balanced addressing their unique experiences of racial oppression with the overlapping conditions of other aggrieved groups. Here, I pay attention to two dynamics. The first is *political openings* for coalition building. Certain features of Seattle and the broader Pacific Northwest's racial landscape proved ideal for coalition building: relatively small communities of color made alliances a strategic necessity; the close proximity of communities of color that did not exist in other cities; and, an international circulation of people that made multiracial and global political connections viable, particularly in a heightened moment of decolonization. At the same time, political openings are nothing more than missed opportunities if individuals and organizations do not seize them. That is why I pay equal attention to a *political openness* to solidarity displayed by movement participants. This openness was demonstrated in a commitment to solidarity that did not let other groups struggle alone. Key examples of this political sensibility included joint protest actions, as well as shared experiences of political repression. It also involved activists fortifying their political connections after demonstrations were over. I discuss this explicitly in chapters 1 and 2, where the UCWA played a pivotal role in the formation of a multiracial, worker-led law office and a predominantly Filipino cannery worker organization modeled after the UCWA. At the same time, I pay attention to the expansive political possibilities of coalitions. The most generative examples, I argue, are ideological cross-fertilization. In chapters 2, 3 and 4, I examine the ways racially

[36] Kim, *Bitter Fruit*, 20.

specific social movements were significantly advanced through drawing upon the ideas of other aggrieved groups.

Chapter Breakdown

Through examining key moments in the UCWA's history between 1970 and 1975, this dissertation aims to examine the concrete acts of solidarity and the ideological cross-fertilization that characterized Seattle's Third World Left. By no means is this a comprehensive history. Rather, each chapter focuses on a historical flashpoint that illuminates a particular stage in the development of the UCWA's multiracial politics. Chapter one, "From Black Labor Radicalism to Multiracial Solidarity," examines how Seattle's multiracial environment shaped the UCWA's racial politics. In it, I demonstrate how the UCWA, an organization that emerged organically out of the racial exclusion of Black workers in the construction trades, quickly embraced a multiracial perspective. First, I illustrate how Seattle's multiracial landscape, particularly the prominent social justice struggles of Chicano and Asian American activists, forced Black workers to think beyond a Black-White binary. I posit that it was this convergence of social movements shaped by racism, capitalism, and colonialism that informed the UCWA's initial multiracial politics.

Chapter Two: "The Ebbs and Flows of Struggle: Manong Knowledge, Blues Epistemology, and the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA), examines the ACWA as an explicit outgrowth of the grassroots multiracial solidarity discussed in the previous chapter. Drawing upon the work of Clyde Wood, I analyze the ACWA's movement politics as a fusion of two distinct organic intellectual traditions.[37] The first is Manong Knowledge, which I define as a

[37] For a discussion of "Blues Epistemology" see Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Race, Power, and the Blues in the Mississippi* (London: Verso, 1998), 25.

"system of explanation" rooted in the lived experiences of Filipino colonial migrants who have toiled decades in the canneries. Manong Knowledge ignited the political consciousness of future ACWA members, but institutionalized racism and conservative union leadership severely hampered their abilities to put it into practice. This is where the UCWA's brand of Black Power becomes central. I argue that it was through the resources and organizing strategies of black workers in the construction trades that Filipino workers were able to rekindle and expand upon labor organizing practices organic to their own community.

Collective struggle did not only result in grassroots expressions of relational resistance. It also produced new ways of thinking about racial justice. In my next two chapters, I illustrate this point through introducing the concept, "languages of solidarity." This refers to the new concepts and political identities that discursively linked diverse histories of oppression and resistance. In chapter Three, "Buffalo Soldiers…It's Time to Refuse to Ride: Race and Empire in the Pacific World and Tyree Scott's Language of Solidarity," I center UCWA leader Tyree Scott's unique historical interpretation of Black infantrymen during the U.S. - Indian Wars, "Buffalo Soldiers." Here, I pay attention to the formation and practice of UCWA activist Tyree Scott's racial politics. I argue that his multiracial sensibilities were shaped by his military service in the Asia-Pacific, as well as the Pacific Northwest's rich history of Indigenous resistance, two sites of a larger "Pacific World" of race and empire. Particularly, Scott's interactions with Native Activists, both experiences of solidarity and conflict, challenged the Black labor leader to research the history of Black and Native interactions. He promptly adapted his research on the "Buffalo Soldiers" into a concept of solidarity that likened activists of color that were hesitant to work in multiracial coalitions to be the "new buffalo soldiers." This chapter examines the experiences that shaped Scott's analysis, and then, turns to an analysis of how he used this

"language of solidarity" to fortify stronger bonds between labor, community, and campus activists in Seattle.

Chapter Four, "There Shall Be No Separate Peace: The UCWA and ACWA's Intertwined Practices of Third World Marxism," further grapples with the balance between historically-rooted activist practices and multiracial solidarity. In this chapter, I trace the UCWA and ACWA's embrace of "Third World Marxism," anti-capitalist politics that were drawn from revolutionary movements in the Non-Western world. While each was rooted in racially-specific trajectories, I make the case that they were put into practice through grassroots multiracial solidarity and the interchange of political analyses and strategies. This was evidence in their overlapping campaigns against construction industry racism in 1975. Even as the UCWA and ACWA appear to go their separate ways in the late 1970s, building movement for rank-and-file democracy in their industry-specific unions, this organizing takes a similar direction. Namely, they incorporate a brand of Third World Feminism they crafted together into their future labor activism.

This study ends with a concluding chapter on the lasting legacy of multiracial and transnational labor activism left by workers of color in Seattle. I specifically focus on the transformation of the Labor Employment Law Office (LELO) in the 1980s and 1990s. Once a legal office that the UCWA, the ACWA, and Mexican farm workers from Eastern Washington shared for much of the 1970s, by the 1980s it transformed into a multiracial organizing space. Here, I highlight a series of initiatives sponsored by LELO to demonstrate the enduring legacies of the Seattle's multiracial movement culture: the sharing of organizational resources and ideological cross-fertilization. While these were momentary occurrence in other places, the

history of the UCWA and LELO demonstrate the importance of fortifying multiracial bonds at an organizational level.

Chapter 1:

From Black Working-Class Radicalism to Multiracial Labor Solidarity: UCWA, LELO, and Relational Resistance in the Pacific Northwest

In 1989, Tyree Scott found himself "framing the work" of the Labor Employment Law Office (LELO), an organization he co-founded fifteen years earlier. His narrative could have easily focused on the group's Black Power roots. As a "worker-governed law office," LELO built upon a unique fusion of community control and equal employment politics that gained traction in Seattle during the early 1970s. Specifically, between 1970 and 1972, organizers within the United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) pioneered a brand of labor activism that mobilized Black workers entering the building trades through affirmative action programs. Illustrative of their radical reading of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the UCWA demanded its members ~~to~~ be agents of industry desegregation, not its passive recipients. This meant that they encouraged Black workers to "learn the law," to pool information amongst one another about navigating openly racist workplace environments, and, when all else failed, collectively shutting down worksites in non-compliance with affirmative action law.[38] Moreover, the failures of the federal government to intervene in the face of union defiance of affirmative action served as a powerful reminder to the UCWA that they needed a formal role in the enforcement of desegregation. By 1972, this was a right that Scott increasingly framed as an issue of "community control."[39] When LELO was formed in 1973, the autonomy it gave labor

[38] Trevor Griffey, "From Jobs to Power: The United Construction Workers Association and Title VII Community Organizing," *Black Power at Work : Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry*, ed. David A. Goldberg and Trevor Griffey (Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press/Cornell University Press, 2010), 174-178.

[39] In Trevor Griffey's 2011 dissertation, *Black Power's Labor Politics: The United Construction Workers Association and Title VII Law in the 1970s*, he quotes a speech made by Scott in June 11, 1972, where he states, "What we [UCWA] want is the right for community control. That's what it means, the right to have minority workers dispatch out minority workers." Trevor Griffey, *Black Power's Labor Politics: The United Construction Workers Association and Title VII Law in the 1970s* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2011), 338.

activists followed the organizational logic that Scott and other UCWA members started three years prior.

Scott, however, decided to highlight a different legacy. "The history of this organization [LELO] and the *relationships it has spun*," the UCWA activist analyzed, "could begin with a ship leaving Manila [Philippines] with a cargo of Filipino immigrants, or…Maputo Province with a cargo of slaves coming to America, or we could begin by re-examining our views of why we 'remember the Alamo,' and how it came to be America."[40] His point was that LELO was created as a multiracial-organization that built unity across distinct histories of race, capitalism, and colonialism. Black workers from the UCWA, Mexican farmworkers in Eastern Washington and Filipino cannery workers in Alaska collectively managed the law office. They believed that the law could be a tool for liberation, if, and only if, workers of color wielded autonomy over it. This ambitious project that translated informal relations of solidarity into an organizational form was not lost on Scott, a community organizer known for his ability to work across racial lines. In fact, he even had to admit, "[T]hese were uncharted waters."[41]

To this day, LELO continues to exist, albeit not as a law office. In the early 1980s, the organization's co-founders shifted away from anti-discrimination lawsuits in favor of worker organizing, political education, and international solidarity. Explaining this transition, Scott described how the roll back in civil rights had moved the "burden of proof…from the employers to us [workers of color]…so now we have to show how racism creates disparities in its application." Under these new conditions, the Black labor activist joked, "[Now] a worker attempting to file a discrimination lawsuit needs to take to a lawyer's office both a bag of money and an uzi." However, in this period, LELO built upon the growing internationalism of its

[40] Tyree Scott, "Framing Our Work," 3 June, 1989, *Cindy Domingo Papers, Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited as CDP, SCUW).
[41] Ibid.

members.[42] In a 2002 interview, Scott explained, "We now look at things in global, international terms because the American influence is global. We have a global economy and LELO is going to work in the context." Some of the organization's twenty-first century projects included, "[A] *Port Profits for Human Needs Campaign* [that] organizes to halt privatization and layoffs at the Port of Seattle and pressures the Port to turn over a portion of its profits to local governments to meet basic human needs caused by unemployment, racism, and poverty"; the "*Every Woman's Movement for Cuba,* [which] leads an annual multi-racial women's delegation to Cuba"; and, an "*International Worker-to-Worker Project* [that] creates opportunities for ordinary workers from different countries to communicate with each other – in their own languages –and share information about the global economy and its effects on workers' lives."[43] Yet, amidst this impressive growth in LELO as an organization, Scott has never waivered in his estimation of LELO's "greatest accomplishment." In a 2002, a year before the Black labor activist passed away due to cancer, he stressed, "[D]espite all the pressure to become…a distinctly black, Latino, or Asian organization - we remained a multi-racial group that transcended racial lines while keeping our class consciousness."[44]

This enduring multiracial unity troubles the dominant comparative framework for 1960s freedom movements. A plethora of studies, whose topics range from civil rights reformers, anti-poverty activists, to even revolutionary internationalists, posit that the concept of "differential racialization" is a key to explaining the interracial conflict and divergent movement trajectories of communities of color during the 1960s.[45] Building upon the insights of comparative ethnic

[42] For a discussion of this international turn in the UCWA and ACWA's activism, see chapter 4.

[43] Doug Chin, "Fighting for Workers' Rights: Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO)," *International Examiner*, Apr 17, 2002, 10.

[44] Ibid.

[45] For studies with this approach see Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America has Changed : How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Neil Foley, *Quest for Equality : The Failed Promise of Black-Brown Solidarity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University

studies scholars, their studies stress that racially aggrieved groups experienced white supremacy in distinct, albeit in relational ways. Translating this line of thought to the study of social movements, scholars conclude that "differential racialization" resulted in divergent movement concerns, which ~~s~~everely impeded the possibility of cross-racial coalitions.[46]

LELO, however, requires that we reexamine late 1960s social movements within ~~from~~ a different light. As the work of Jason Ferreira, Johanna Fernandez, Jakobi Williams, and others show, powerful "rainbow coalitions" grew out of the Black Power era.[47] Despite distinct historical experiences with race, activists formed multiracial alliances through the recognition of their mutual concerns with police violence, urban displacement, and patriarchy. While some scholars have equated the radical politics of the time with divisive "identity politics," in other cases, the broader political culture of "Third World Unity" only deepened the political bonds between racially marginalized communities.[48] Reading LELO's formation alongside a broader literature on the Black Panther Party's "rainbow coalitions" allows us to see Seattle's multiracial class-consciousness as not an anomaly, but part of a broader political phenomena.

To expand our understanding of this development, this chapter examines the forces that drove Black workers in the UCWA to think and act in multiracial terms. Without question, the organization's multiracial solidarity was not a forgone conclusion. Since the UCWA's inception,

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Press, 2010); Mantler, *Power to the Poor : Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974*; Brian D. Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles : Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

[46] Mark Brilliant argues this point the most forcefully in his book *The Color of America Has Changed*. In it he advances a "conceptual framework" for comparative civil rights studies: "different axes of discrimination [require] different avenues of redress." Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed*, 14.

[47] For a discussion of the "Third World" alliances that the Black Panthers fostered see Jason Michael Ferreira, "All Power to the People : A Comparative History of Third World Radicalism in San Francisco, 1968-1974" (Ph D in Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2003); Jakobi Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot : The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Johanna Fernandez, "Denise Oliver and the Young Lords Party: Stretching the Political Boundaries of Struggle," in *Want to Start a Revolution: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*, ed. Dayo; Theoharis Gore, Jeanne; Woodard, Komozi (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

[48] For a discussion of this see Jason Ferriera, *All Power to the People*.

staff organizers were forced to confront the ways white racial dominance maintained its power through creating antagonistic relationships between people of color. In the beginning of the chapter, I demonstrate this by detailing the efforts of Seattle's building trade unions to rupture "minority coalitions." Furthermore, while racial disunity, conflict, and a narrow definition of one's community interests are common responses to such structural antagonisms, I assess why black workers in the UCWA chose a different path. I offer a two-fold response. First, after witnessing the "divide and conquer" tactics of white union leaders, UCWA leaders came to view multiracial alliances to be within their *material interests*. Second, in assessing the political relationships they embraced, Eric Tang's recent work on Black and Vietnamese communities in post-Katrina New Orleans offers a useful framework. Racially aggrieved groups in New Orleans did not have a "shared history," but, as Tang notes, they did possess "respective histories of resilience." In the face of mutual displacement, their resilience "resonated" with one another.[49] Similarly, in the face of conservative union leaders that fanned the flame of disunity, Black workers built multiracial alliances with Chicano and Asian American activists in Seattle based on resonating experiences of race and class subordination. In turn, they embraced what I term *relational resistance*: they defined their liberation in relation to, and solidarity with, other racially aggrieved groups. In what follows, I will track the gradual growth of this racial consciousness and end with the formation of LELO, a concrete effort to transform grassroots expression of solidarity into a durable movement organization. Since this chapter's narrative arc follows the multiracial transformation of the UCWA, some background on the organization is needed.

[49] Eric Tang, "A Gulf Unites Us: the Vietnamese Americans of Black New Orleans East," *American Quarterly* 63.1 (March 2011): 117-149.

UCWA and the Evolution of Black Construction Worker Radicalism in Seattle

The emergence of the United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) marked the second phase of Black community struggles in Seattle that confronted institutionalized racism in the construction trades. In March of 1969, Seattle's Model Cities Program brought together a group of "minority contractors" to discuss their struggles to attain industry contracts and hire workers of color. In just a couple month time, this informal gathering evolved into the city's latest expression of Black Power, the Central Contractors Association (CCA). Throughout September and October of 1969, the organization "brought every major, federally funded construction site in the city of Seattle to a halt." Inspired by similar direct-action protests that occurred in cities such as Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Chicago, Black activists in Seattle, Trevor Griffey writes, "disabled equipment, blocked workers from their jobs, and demand[ed] that federal civil rights law be used to force unions to hire more Black workers." Their actions, the most dramatic of which included "running a bulldozer into a large open pit at the University of Washington," as well as "marching over a hundred protesters onto the flight apron of Seattle-Tacoma airport to halt air traffic," soon drew national attention and compelled federal intervention.[50]

In late October 1969, the U.S. Department of Justice initiated a lawsuit against Seattle's five major building trade unions – Ironworkers Local 86, Electrical Workers Local 46, Plumbing and Pipefitters Local 32, Operating Engineers Local 302 and Sheet Metal Workers Local 99 - which came to a conclusion that following June.[51] "[A]t the time of its issuance," argued civil rights lawyer William Gould, "*U.S. V. Ironworkers Local 86, et. al*. was the "most comprehensive Title VII decree rendered by any court." Two critical aspects of the decree were noteworthy. First,

[50] Trevor Griffey, "Special Section United Construction Workers Association: History," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, accessed December 4, 2015, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/ucwa_history.htm.

[51] Operating Engineers Local 302 eventually decided to negotiate an alternative "consent decree" opposed to undergoing a federal investigation. For a more detailed discussion of this see chapter four.

federal Judge William Lindberg authorized the development of an independent apprentice program to fast-track black workers into the trades. Secondly, he set strict timetables for industry desegregation, which allowed advocacy groups to clearly monitor non-compliance with the law.[52] Both decisions drew the ire of building trades unions who saw the mandates as an assault on their hard earned autonomy within the industry.[53] Moreover, as the court order placed worksite desegregation center stage, it positioned Black workers as the central protagonists of future struggles against the entrenched racism of Seattle's building trade unions.

Almost as quickly as Lindberg delivered his decision, the UCWA emerged as the central movement organization that mobilized future affirmative action apprentices and journeymen, holding its first meeting when the court order was only a month old. The impetus to bring Black workers together, Griffey notes, "came from an unlikely source;" the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).[54] The Quaker organization had already taken an interest in racism in the construction industry. With their Pacific Northwest Branch located in Seattle, local AFSC officials witnessed firsthand the development of a vibrant Black protest movement that shook the racist foundations of the city's building trades. Amidst the federal investigation, AFSC staffer Alice Paine produced an article "An Idea Whose Time Has Come: Minority Employment in Seattle's Construction Industry." In it, she foresaw only one solution. "Regardless of the tack taken," Paine wrote, "the important thing, we feel, is to facilitate some community organization among the people most affected by discrimination in employment in the construction industry."[55]

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[52] William Gould. "The Seattle Building Trades Order: The First Comprehensive Relief Against Employment Discrimination in the Construction Industry," *Stanford Law Review* (1974): .781.

[53] Trevor Griffey, "From Jobs to Power: The United Construction Workers Association and Title VII Organizing in the 1970s," *Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry*, eds., David Goldberg and Trevor Griffey (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 2010), 170-174.

[54] Ibid, 174.

[55] Alice Paine, "An Idea Whose Time has Come: Minority Employment in Seattle's Construction Trades," *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/ucwa_documents.htm (Hereafter cited, SCRLHP).

The UCWA eventually filled that void after the AFSC hired Tyree Scott, a former leader of the CCA, to be a staff organizer that guided the future worker-centered stage of the movement.

After the UCWA's first meeting, it was clear how Judge Lindberg's ruling shaped the group's labor organizing. At the conclusion of the meeting, according to a report Scott provided the AFSC, the attendees, twenty-five of the forty-one who testified during the Lindberg trial, "determined that they would work together to fight this discrimination [that they faced on the job], beginning by going over the new court order to inform themselves of the new rights under it."[56] Trevor Griffey's research on the UCWA demonstrates that by interpreting "Title VII" of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as an "organizing tool," the "autonomous worker organization" promoted a distinctly "Black working-class movement culture." In sharp contrast to affirmative action initiatives for Black construction workers managed by unions and the Urban League, which "usually trained new workers to develop certain [conciliatory] work habits," the UCWA "enlist[ed] black workers to study the law, determine their rights, and decide for themselves how and in what ways to assert them."[57] This brand of "participatory democracy" even molded the group's organizational structure. There was no question that Tyree Scott was the group's "undisputed leader and strategic mastermind." But, Griffey writes, "[H]e did not serve as its President in its first few years, if he ever did." Rather, at all levels, the UCWA was administered by the very Black construction worker that sought to enter an industry hell-bent on their exclusion. While the group's board of directors "change over time," it consistently was composed of Black construction workers and in the beginning, they were "mainly individuals named in the Title VII lawsuit [U.S. V. Ironworkers Local 86]." At this time, Scott served as a

[56] Griffey, "From Jobs to Power," 175.
[57] Griffey, *Black Power's Labor Politics*, 226-227.

staff organizer and "described himself to the public as working for the UCWA."[58] As result, this organizational structure fostered, Griffey writes, "a particular kind of working class and racial pride: a self-conscious awareness that the search for survival made one an expert in one's own life, and that such personal expertise was essentially non-transferable and should not be ceded to others to interpret."[59]

U.S v. Ironworkers Local 86 as "Race Management"

Even as Lindberg's court order, unintentionally, unleashed a brand of working-class Black militancy, it also had a deeper multiracial significance. For the duration of the affirmative action mandate (1970-1978), it only provided a means for Black workers to enter the industry. Thus, despite the equally low numbers of Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans in the four trades targeted for court ordered desegregation, non-Black workers of color had to seek employment through the traditional route; union hiring halls with a well-documented track record of racial exclusion. This would not have been the case without the last-minute political maneuvering of Seattle's building trade unions. Over the course of the hearing, union lawyers observed that it was only Black workers that testified to their first-hand experiences with discrimination. Therefore, they made the case that only Black workers should receive redress. It is unclear why the unions employed this strategy. Potentially, it served two purposes. One, it erected roadblocks for the further inclusion of other aggrieved racial groups. Two, the uneven application of affirmative action provided the perfect setting for these unions' manipulation of antagonistic relationships between communities of color. Regardless, the unions' legal

[58] Ibid, 273.
[59] Ibid, 271-272.

arguments convinced the Judge, and in the final court order, "Minority worker" was stricken from the ruling and replaced with "Black worker."[60]

The union's actions fit within a longer history of race and labor that David Roediger and Elizabeth Esch described as "race management." In their 2012 text, *The Production of Difference*, they document the ways that labor management often hinged upon claims of an expert racial knowledge of their workforce. In their study of the management practices of slave owners, industrial capitalists in the U.S. West and America's overseas empires, and innovators of "scientific management" in the 1920s, they found that white management's claim's to a "special capacity to manage other races" took many forms, from creating "ratios of productivity" to assertions that their tutelage was linked to the "race development" of "allegedly inferior people." But most pertinent to Seattle's construction industry was the way race was used to "play groups of workers against each other."[61] Writing in the context of "sophisticated strategies for managing race-against-race" in Western mining in the late 1800s, Roediger and Esch argued, "the separation enforced by management…left almost everyone involved with something to lose, something to defend, and much to fear."[62]

During the 1970s, Seattle's building trade unions wielded a "near total control over the labor market," which was evident in the ways court-ordered redress still provided organized labor significant power, despite being found guilty of racial discrimination.[63] "Affirmative Action Apprentices" would still have to be dispatched by union halls and receive on-the-job training from white workers who viewed their presence as a threat to their employment. Under these

[60] Todd Hawkins, Interviewed by William Little, *the William Little Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, WLP, SCUW).
[61] David Roediger and Elizabeth Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2012), 9-12.
[62] Ibid, 107.
[63] Griffey, "Special Section United Construction Workers Association: History."

conditions, Seattle's building trade unions could be read as labor managers of a certain sort. In a slight alteration to the tactics employed by industrial western miners, Seattle building trade unions pitted workers of color seeking to enter the trades against each other to ensure that employment in the construction trades remained what W.E.B. Du Bois and scholars after him have termed a "wage of whiteness."[64]

The UCWA had a clear analysis of racial discrimination in the construction trades. Michael Woo, a former UCWA member and later staff organizer recalled, "the unions tried to outwit the movement" by dividing its "unifying forces:" by undermining grassroots multiracial solidarity. While the CCA demonstrations were largely composed of Black activists and community members, they also served as a site where a small group of Asian American activists experimented with direct action protests and multiracial solidarity. The Asian Coalition for Equality (ACE) emerged out of a series of informal meetings of roughly a "dozen concerned Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese" interested in discussing how their respective ethnic groups "were denied equal opportunity and justice in America?" This group of educators, city officials, religious leaders sought to mobilize the Asian community in the greater Seattle area to participate in popular anti-racist struggles in the city. As an organization, they were committed to "gaining full equality and justice for all people, be they Blacks, Indians, Mexican Americans, Asians, or other minority groups."[65] While ACE lacked the Third World, anti-imperialist orientation of Asian American Movement groups that emerged in other U.S. cities, their expressed commitment to multiracial solidarity resonated with this broad shift in pan-ethnic

[64] For Du Bois's analysis of the "Wages of Whiteness," see W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folks Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880, 2nd Edition* (New York: Atheneum, 1962). Additionally, for an example of how other scholars have applied this generative analysis to the study of "White working-class racism," see David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working-Class*, (London: Verso, 1999).

[65] "ACE and WHY?," Asians for Action: The Voice of Asian Coalition for Equality, October 1969, 1.

Asian American activism.[66] This political orientation was powerfully conveyed in their June 1969 press conference that ended with a call to action.

> Too long have we [Asian Americans] permitted the American Indian to be exploited, the Mexican migrant to wander the face of this land for minimal returns, and the Black man to carry the struggle for human rights and decency on his back. To this we acknowledge their suffering and struggle and affirm our empathy with them. But we want to do more. We want to coalesce with them on specific issues and projects. We want to join in the struggle for justice and equality along side them.[67]

On September 23, 1969, ACE members translated words into action. That day, the CCA turned their attention to the University of Washington, at the time, the home to "20 different federally funded construction projects on the Seattle campus." A quick survey of the racial make-up of the university's construction workforce revealed that it was only "7 percent black, 60 percent of whom had jobs with the low-skill laborers union." After contractors refused Scott's demand that they hire Black workers, the CCA leader declared to the university that their construction projects were the "CCA's next target."[68] Fully aware of the potential for a violent confrontation, Asian American activists had a "two-fold" purpose for attending the demonstration: 1) "To march in support of the CCA"; and, 2) "to observe in a non-violent manner."[69] In the coming month, ACE activists were arguably the CCA's most vocal allies, as they denounced the blatant police violence they witnessed at the University of Washington. In their newsletter, *Asians for Action*, they attested to the "excessive force" police used against the CCA activists and reaffirmed their "complete and continued support of the Central Contractors Association in their stand for equal employment opportunities in the building trades." Moreover, they took a critical stance of local news coverage's portrayal of the days protest actions, accusing

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[66] For a discussion of the Third World, anti-imperialist, and multiracial orientation of Asian American Movement activists see Daryl Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009).

[67] "ACE and Why."

[68] Griffey, *Black Power's Labor Politics*, 94-96.

[69] "ACE Supports CCA," Asians for Action: The Voice of Asian Coalition for Equality, October 1969, 1.

the media with "bias[ed] and distorted coverage" that showed "only the establishment's point of view."[70]

ACE's solidarity with the CCA continued well after the September demonstration. The following week, a group of thirteen ACE members and one representative of the CCA, James Takisaka, the group's lone Asian American member, confronted Seattle's Mayor, Floyd Miller, about the actions of the city's police department. During the meeting, ACE members reiterated their eye-witness accounts of excessive police force and demanded the Mayor to take action. Allen Nakano of ACE recalled, "he saw a Negro man beaten by two officers after the man and his wife had turned and walked away from the officer." Another ACE activist, Rosalie del Fierro, recounted a Black demonstrator, who after being struck by an officer, crawled under a dump truck. Upon which, she explained, the officer "then ordered the truck driver to dump the load of dirt on the man." After this testimony, James Takisaki told the mayor that he had witnessed the same incident, and the officer also "struck [Takisaki] about the head when he tried to protest police conduct."[71] The following month, Philip Hayasaka, an ACE member and then director of Seattle's Human Rights Commission, continued to express his solidarity with the CCA, as he took his organization's critique of the mainstream media to Seattle's city council chambers. There, he explained, "news reports gave too much emphasis to property destruction and not enough to injuries to demonstrators inflicted by police."[72]

The solidarity action of ACE did not go unnoticed by Black activists. According to Michael Ross, a former CORE volunteer in Mississippi, who by the late 1960s relocated to Seattle and

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Michael Parks, "Tempers Flare at City Hall Meeting Over Police Conduct," *The Seattle Times*, September 30 1969, G2.

[72] "Quiet Americans' Confront 'the Man," *Asians for Action: The Voice of Asian Coalition for Equality*, October 1969, 2.

became a close ally to the UCWA, the support the CCA received from the Asian community was one of historic importance. During a 1975 interview, he noted,

> One…thing occurred that was unique in that struggle[CCA demonstrations], was that it was the first time that the Asian community had joined with the Black community in dealing with an issue of discrimination and entering in with the Black community on a direct action basis, shutting down construction projects…They [ACE] support[ed] our efforts of Central Contractors, they were part of the demonstrations, they went to jail like everyone else did, and that was a significant thing that occurred in terms of the minority community.[73]

Actually, ACE's support for the CCA, fit a much longer historical trend of cross-racial civil rights actions that stretched back to the 1930s.[74] But Ross's comments are suggestive how those involved in the struggle interpreted their alliance. Given the efforts of union leaders to alter Judge Lindberg's court order, one could speculate they too found this coalition to be equally important.

An Enduring Practice of "Divide and Manage"

A distinct form of race management developed as the UCWA struggled to attain a formal role in the implementation of affirmative action in the construction trades. By promoting racial discord amongst Seattle's communities of color, union leadership labored to block the UCWA from having any formal role in the enforcement of affirmative action. This was evident in the UCWA's failed attempt in 1971 to negotiate the "Seattle Plan," a desegregation order for industry unions not covered in Judge Lindberg's court order.

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[73] Michael Ross, interviewed by William Little, Oct 28, 1975, *the William Little Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, WLP, SCUW).

[74] As early as 1935, Quintard Taylor notes, Filipinos and African Americans worked alongside a coalition of civil rights and labor organizations in Seattle to "successfully block [an] interracial marriage ban introduced in the state legislature." Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 Through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1994), 130.

In the wake of the CCA's 1969 demonstrations, a plan developed, originally titled, the Affirmative Minority Construction Opportunities (AMCO). The fact that this desegregation order applied to all minority workers made it unique from the Lindberg court order. However, when it came to the implementation of affirmative action, it was similarly ineffective. This agreement had "no enforcement provision" and "the Department of Labor withheld funding for recruitment because unions refused to participate." However, "AMCO still provided a useful fiction." According to Griffey, "Construction companies citied AMCO in their bids for government contractors in order to claim that they were in compliance with non-discrimination law."[75] By December of 1970, the UCWA, in only its fifth month of existence, turned their attention to the AMCO's failure to bring about meaningful desegregation in 13 trades.

In similar fashion CCA demonstrations and work site closures resulted in renewed government intervention. On December 17, 1970, nearly fifty UCWA members occupied a 17.6-million-dollar construction project at the University of Washington run by a contractor that utilized the AMCO agreement. In a clear showing of the Black worker organization's clout as a "watchdog organization" for industry desegregation, it took less than 24 hours for the black worker group to force the Association of General Contractors (AGC) to verbally commit to the implementation of the AMCO plan. This was an impressive agreement that mandated the hiring of "285 black workers in a total of 13 trades over the course of the next three years."[76] However, once again, unions labored to block the UCWA from having any formal role in the enforcement of affirmative action.

At first, labor leaders' refusal to participate in the new plan stalled the allocation of the Department of Labor resources for recruitment. Yet, government officials feared that another

[75] Griffey, *Black Power's Labor Politics*, 257.
[76] Ibid, 259-261.

lawsuit would be "too time consuming" and an additional "special apprentice program" would divide workers. Thus, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC) gave interested parties in Seattle an ultimatum; Seattle area unions, contractors and minority representatives were compelled to reach an agreement on their own by February 15, 1971, or "a plan [would be] imposed on them." According to Griffey, "On February 11, a multiracial coalition led by the UCWA presented its suggested plan to the union, who flatly opposed it, and the contractors, who demanded revisions." The following day the UCWA sent a telegram to the Department of Labor (DOL) "claiming that it should impose a plan." But, in a strange turn of events, "the UCWA reached an unexpected compromise."[77]

The new deal only called for 110 minority workers to be brought into building trade crafts annually for three years. While an admittedly weaker plan, UCWA activist Tyree Scott explained, his organization was assured that they would have a role in its implementation. Moreover, his confidence in the plan was based on its governing structure. The group in charge of administering the "Seattle Plan" included "two union representatives, two contractors, and four minority community representatives." Thus, a unified "minority coalition," at least in theory, had the ability to check union resistance. Scott even asserted, "The [minority] coalitions agreement was that if labor and management refused to go along with the Coalition's choices [for staff], the[y]…would withdraw from the plan."[78]

In a twist of fate, Austin St. Laurent, the chair of Seattle's Building Trade Council, an umbrella organization of nineteen industry unions, manipulated the multiracial solidarity that Scott assumed to be a given. At the Seattle Plan's March 18 Board meeting, St. Laurent "nominated Alberto del Valle, a Chicano member of the Coalition from Active Mexicanos, to be

[77] Ibid, 263-264.
[78] Ibid, 264.

the Plan's interim Director, and Bob Black, a Native American member of the Coalition from Kinatechitapi Council, to be its recruiter." To add further fuel to the fire, he declared "labor would never agree to any candidate for a staff position who had associated with the United Construction Workers Association." St. Laurent's actions effectively "split the minority coalition" by convincing both Valle and Black to "vote for each other's paid staff position."[79] If the Judge Lindberg's 1970 court order served to "divide the [UCWA and] other third world communities," as UCWA activist Todd Hawkins later argued, St. Laurent, had effectively done so once again, this time by buying off the UCWA's supposed "minority allies."[80]

A Shift in the UCWA's Approach to Coalition Politics

The failures of the UCWA to mobilize multiracial support stands in stark contrast to what they would later be known for in Seattle. In the summer of 1972, they effectively organized a multiracial critical mass to shut down the city's construction industry, a political trend that would continue throughout the decade. Thus, this begs the question: what accounts for this sudden success in mobilizing solidarity? Tyree Scott's own reflection upon the failure of the "Seattle Plan" offers a hint at the UCWA's evolving approach to multiracial alliances. During a 1975 interview, he asserted it was the UCWA's full intention for all workers of color to gain entry into the construction trades. However, as the UCWA formalized a "minority coalition," Scott regretfully remembered, "we didn't go to their workers…We went to community organizations." In part, this was due to there being no equivalent to the UCWA in Seattle's other communities of color. As result, the Black labor activist lamented, "[W]e ended up [with] petty bourgeois

[79] Ibid, 265.
[80] Todd Hawkins, interviewed by William Little, November 7, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.

Chicanos, [Native Americans], and Asians."[81] Scott's reflections exhibited an understanding that if the UCWA was to form meaningful alliances, they needed to identify allies that shared both their material conditions and their politics.

Not long after the Seattle Plan negotiations fell apart, the UCWA demonstrated their willingness to think about institutionalized racism in the construction trades fully in multiracial terms. In the Fall of 1971, this was evident when they began to support Michael Woo, a young, unemployed Chinese American. Woo, a former cannery worker and college dropout, worked at Boeing when, in his words, "the bottom fell out of the economy [in Seattle]." Here, Woo aptly described conditions in Seattle after the infamous "Boeing bust." During the postwar era, much of the economic prosperity in Seattle was tied to the financial success of Boeing. According to Trevor Griffey, the company "provided one out of every four jobs in the greater Seattle area during the 1960s." However, its "simultaneous decline in commercial and military airplane contracts during the late 1960s and early 1970" forced Boeing to rapidly diminish its workforce, which had ripple effects across Seattle's economy. In striking fashion, the city went from near full-employment in 1968 to 11% unemployment in 1971, which was double the national average.[82] Woo was one of the many Seattle residents who fell victim to the city's economic crisis.

Soon after being laid off, Woo found himself on public assistance. With a wife, a young child, and yet another baby on the way, Woo was desperately seeking work. Oddly enough, it was a state agency that put him in contact with a group of militant black workers who radically altered his life course. During a visit to "Unemployment Security," a social worker

[81] Tyree Scott, Interviewed by William Little, November 4, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.
[82] Trevor, *Black Power's Labor Politics*, 251.

recommended he look to the UCWA for assistance.[83] Remembering his introduction to the group, he explained, "When I got there I found out these were organizers." As "grassroots workers themselves," he analyzed, UCWA staff "understood the problems workers of color faced." Woo remembered, "What they were talking about was…good paying jobs in the construction industry that were being denied particular to people of color." In reference to their particular reading of "community control," he summarized, "their argument was public dollars in our neighborhood should generate some neighborhood jobs."[84]

During the UCWA's first two years, Woo was their only non-Black member. Therefore, it is important not to overstate his significance. However, the the UCWA's advocacy for him challenged the racially divisive logic that undergirded Judge Lindberg court order. Despite this obstacle, Woo remembered, "the UCWA recognized I had needs."[85] Through the Black worker organization, he learned a trade as a wireman, he acquired employment, albeit not in a trade under the jurisdiction of the U.S. V. Ironworkers court order. To Woo's amazement, UCWA staff even investigated what happened at his old Boeing job to ascertain if there was negligence or discrimination involved in his dismissal. He remembered, "That [comprehensive advocacy] was what attracted me."[86]

The UCWA not only provided the young man with economic stability, they offered him a political education. Woo recalled, "[They] taught me my economic situation was tied to what was going on in the country. What the Civil Rights Movement was doing…[where] militant black workers called for some equity."[87] Moreover, Tyree Scott challenged him to think about his unique relationship to the court order. "Tyree took some time to explain to me," Woo noted,

[83] Michael Woo, Interviewed by Author, August 8, 2014.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Michael Woo, Interviewed by William Little, November 3, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.
[87] Michael Woo, Interviewed by Trevor Scott and Nicole Grant, SCRLHP

"about the court order [that] dealt with blacks going into the trades. What effect that had on Chinese and other ethnic groups…It made sense to me that labor will try to divide us for some reason."[88] This combination of concrete aid and political education spoke volumes of the UCWA's political commitment to extend their organizational reach beyond Seattle's black community. In the coming months, UCWA activists would be exposed to a broader world of race and class oppression in Seattle. Much like Woo, their future Chicano and Asian American allies experienced Seattle economic crisis in ways heightened by their unique histories of racialization and colonialism.

St. Peter Claver: "The Heartbeat of the Struggle"

If Seattle's economic conditions pushed Woo into the UCWA's political orbit, the Black worker organization's own growth facilitated the development of new multiracial alliances. Shortly after the Seattle Plan negotiations failed in 1971, the UCWA started to hold meeting at St. Peter Claver, a Catholic church in Seattle's Central District. By this point, their membership meetings included over a hundred of attendees, and the church site's large auditorium and close proximity to their office made it ideal. But this new meeting space held another important purpose. There, UCWA activists were introduced to a wider world of race, class, and resistance that departed significantly from the "petty bourgeois" character of previous allies. Since the late 1960s, Bob Santos, a Filipino community activist who ran a tutoring program for youth out of the Catholic church, was asked to manage the church's auditorium and rent it out to community groups. For those who could not afford to pay, Santos allowed them to use the space for free. In turn, the church site became a "hub of activity" for nearly every progressive organization in the city. During the early 1970s, the church served as a location for one of the Black Panther Party's

[88] Michael Woo, Interviewed by William Little, November 3, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.

"free breakfast programs." Radical student groups, such as the University of Washington's Black Student Union and the Asian Student Coalition, regularly held meetings at the auditorium. Moreover, significant demonstrations in the city were devised and organized from the church site, such as the Native American occupation of Fort Lawton and local UFW boycotts. With such a diverse array of activists utilizing the St. Peter Claver's auditorium, the Seattle archbishop's office began to receive complaints that "the *left wing* had taken over church property."[89]

With this unique convergence of anti-racist organizing, this church site produced the "time-space compression" that Cynthia Young describes as foundational to the formation of the U.S. Third World Left. In her 2006 study *Soul Power*, Young argues that the international circulation of radical ideas and people between the 1950s and 1970s challenged activists of color to drastically "rethink their local context and their position within the U.S. nation-state." The result was a "powerful anti-racist and anti-imperialist critique" that read black, Latino, [Native American], and Asian American enclaves" as "internal colonies" of the U.S. Empire.[90] In this period, the embrace of a "Third World" identity denoted an international consciousness. But, in cities that were as racially diverse as Seattle, it also referred to a multiracial sensibility. Seattle's communities of colors were not separated by oceans or continents, and there certainly was much more overlap between groups than in other U.S. metropolitan cities. However, the UCWA's failure to mobilize a "minority coalition" to administer the "Seattle Plan" demonstrated that real racial boundaries in Seattle did exist and lines of communication between communities were needed.

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[89] Bob Santos and Gary Iwamoto, *Humbows Not Hotdogs: Memoirs of a Savvy Asian American Activists* (Seattle: International Examiner, 2002), 48-50.

[90] Cythnia Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham: Duke University, 2006), 12.

St. Peter Claver was the physical space that brought diverse populations together for a common cause. According to Santos, the center's "most important contribution to the fight for equality and justice" in Seattle was the "network established among the multi-ethnic groups and the leaders who met there." In a 2004 interview, Santos remembered,

> This was a very interesting period of time because a lot of the meetings would be held at St. Peter Claver Center…Individual ethnic groups…their numbers were pretty limited, but together, collectively… you had numbers of people…200 or 300 hundred people at demonstrations that really got the attention of local media and local government, and things started to happen.[91]

The Filipino activist's comments referred to a string protests that occurred in 1972, which started with a month of construction site closures organized by UCWA that June, but included a Chicano-led takeover of an abandoned school building, a local demonstration in solidarity with the American Indian Movement's "trail of broken treaties" campaign, and an organized disruption of a groundbreaking ceremony for the "Kingdome" — a stadium in Seattle's international district, which Asian community activists feared would result in the displacement of hundreds of poor, elderly Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese residents. For the UCWA, the most immediate alliances they developed at the Catholic church were between Chicano and Asian American activists whose organizing did not take place at worksites, but were firmly rooted in racially-specific, working-class grievances.

The Chicano activists that developed close relationships with UCWA members were primarily staff organizers of a new anti-poverty program that addressed the concerns of Chicano migrants in Seattle. According to the 1970 U.S Census, Seattle's Latino population had risen to 22,258, eight percent of whom were Mexican. Moreover, this migrant population was solidly working-class. Their average family income was estimated at $2,300, well below the federal

[91] Bob Santos, Interviewed by Trevor Griffey and Michelle Goshorn, November 12, 2004, *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/santos.htm (Hereafter cited, SCRLHP).

poverty level of $3,000.[92] A majority of the population had recently been uprooted from employment in agribusiness in the Yakima Valley. In the face of "new health and safety codes for labor camps," which included the development of "concrete floors, showers, cooking facilitates, garbage cans…flushing toilets, as well as running water," growers responded by closing camps and investing their "surplus capital into new machinery that increased the pace of mechanization."[93] With meager wages and the number of jobs in the fields on the decline, many workers turned to larger cities for economic stability. Seattle was a logical destination.

One Chicano activist remembered, the conditions for Chicanos in Seattle at the time was dire. "After years in the fields, excluded from education and job training, living day-to-day on the ragged edge of starvation, many out-of-work migrants arrived in the cities in need of health and medical aid, as well as financial assistance." This migration occurred so rapidly, he noted, "[that] the state and federal governments were caught flat-footed."[94] But by the early 1970s, a series of state responses emerged, such as the Washington State Commission on Mexican American Affairs; Active Mexicanos, "a community organization that acted primarily as a referral agency for jobs, housing, and health care"; and, a Department of Labor funded organization, Service, Employment, and Redevelopment (SER) that opened in June of 1971 and operated a total of five programs, ranging from a GED program to employment training.[95]

However, the Chicano English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Education Program, funded through the South Seattle Community College, represented a distinct response to the

[92] Alan Gomez, *"From Below and to the Left:" Re-Imagining the Chicano Movement through the Circulation of Third World Struggles, 1970-1979* (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006), 272-273.
[93] Bruce Johansen and Roberto Maestas, *El Pueblo: The Gallegos Family's American Journey, 1503-1980* (New York: Monthly Review, 1983), 124-126.
[94] Bruce Johansen and Roberto Maestas, "A Community Seeking a Home," *Martin Luther King's Living Laboratory: Seattle's El Centro de la Raza* (unpublished manuscript March 13, 2014), Microsoft Word file.
[95] Gomez, 273.

concerns of Seattle's growing Chicano population.[96] In the main, its staff had cut their teeth politically in Chicano movement organizations on college campuses, in the community, and in solidarity with farm worker organizing. As result, their curriculum reflected this political orientation. In fact, many facets of the program could easily be read in the context of the broader cultural nationalism of the Chicano movement.[97] For one, a staff member recalled, "[they] aimed to teach English without obliterating knowledge of Spanish or respect for Chicano culture and history." This was clearly seen in the weekly movies that staff showed students. To promote conversational English, students came together once a week to watch films that primarily dealt with the concerns of farm workers, such as, "Huelga," "Decision at Delano," "Salt of the Earth," and "Matter of Consciousness."[98] But a broader examination of their ESL curriculum reveals an effort to promote a multiracial consciousness that was keenly aware of the diversity of social justice struggles that surrounded them.

To expose students to the "real living language" of English, Chicano activists brought in local activists as guest speakers, and when demonstrations occurred, staff members filled their vans with students to attend planned actions. When Roberto Maestas, the program's director, reflected on this mixture of language learning and political education, his comments were instructive of the close relationship that developed between the Chicano activists and the UCWA. The struggles of Black workers were by no means the only local social movement that Chicano ESL students were exposed to, but it did serve an important political function; they demonstrated the realities of employment discrimination in Seattle. The idea, Maestas explained, was to "use racism against Blacks as curriculum." That is, "Black [people] speak

[96] Hereafter, this program will be cited Chicano ESL Program.
[97] For a detailed discussion of the Chicano Movement's "cultural nationalism," see Carlos Munoz Jr., *Youth, Identity, and Power: The Chicano Movement* (London: Verso, 2007).
[98] Gomez, 275.

English, but can't get [a] job." Thus, he stressed to his students, in order to find employment "you have to deal with discrimination."[99] Thus, guest speakers, such as UCWA's Tyree Scott and Milton Jefferson, were central to the movement culture that blossomed from the Chicano ESL classrooms.

In addition, to Black workers, Chicano activists also invited Asian American community organizers fighting the impacts of gentrification in Seattle's International District. Additionally, Al Bridges from the Nisqually Indian nation, who were in the midst of a protracted struggle over their treaty rights to fish and anti-war activists at the University of Washington were included in this multiracial circle. As a whole, Maestas remembered that this multiracial curriculum was significant for a growing, but still relatively small, Chicano population in Seattle. Through listening to guest speakers and attending demonstrations, the Chicano ESL director claimed, "these poor farm workers or Chicano homeless, or jobless…single women [gained] a sense [that]…'We Latinos are not alone."[100] This broader sense of community would be critical, as we shall see later, when South Seattle Community College decided to shut down the ESL program.

Similarly, members of the University of Washington's Asian Student Coalition (ASC), through their shared use of St. Peter Claver, became central features of the UCWA's network of multiracial supporters. Founded in the Spring of 1970, the ASC was born out of the overlapping protests at the University of Washington against the Vietnam War and for Asian American Studies.[101] Within the following two years, the group's growing membership illustrated the array of political currents that informed Asian American campus radicalism. For Nemesio and Silme Domingo, their political consciousness was molded by an industry with a long history of

[99] Ibid, 275-276.
[100] Trevor Griffey, "Soldier On: Roberto Maestas, Larry Gossett, and Bob Santos on a Democratic Future," *Real Change*, August 7-20, 2003, 8.
[101] Diane Wong, "Asian American What?," *Asian Family Affair*, May 1972, 11.

exploiting Asian migrant labor in the Pacific Northwest, Alaska's salmon canning industry. The Domingo brothers were representative of an entire generation of young Filipino men during the 1960s and 1970s who followed their fathers and uncles into seasonal employment in the Alaskan canneries. In Alaska, they developed a political consciousness through witnessing first-hand an entire industry shaped by racial segregation.[102] Other ASC members would follow a political trajectory akin to Yuri Kochiyama and Richard Aoki; their radicalism matured through an involvement in Black freedom struggles.[103] For instance, when Guy Kurose entered the University of Washington at eighteen years of age, he already had three years of organizing experience with the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.[104] Yet another significant political current in the organization were various strands of anti-imperialism in Seattle. Many members brought political experiences gained from their involvement in Anti-War protests, an emerging solidarity movement against the martial law regime in the Philippines, and participation in Third World feminist group's such as Seattle Third World Women. However, by 1972, the organization discovered a community struggle that galvanized this broad constituency: the preservation of the International District.

In February 13, 1968, King County approved the development of a $40 million multi-purpose stadium. Originally, local officials envisioned the project's location in downtown Seattle. However, when voters rejected this proposal four years later, county decision makers

[102] See chapter two.

[103] For a discussion of the significance that Black Power struggles had the radicalization of Yuri Kochiyama and Richard Aoki see Diane Fujino, "Race, Place, Space, and Political Development: Japanese-American Radicalism in the "Pre-Movement" 1960s," *Social Justice* (2008): 57-79.

[104] Guy Kurose was one the the three Asian American Black Panthers in Seattle discussed in Aaron Dixon's memoir, *My People Are Rising: Memoir of a Black Panther Captain*. Here, he writes, "This being Seattle, it was not unusual that a handful of the new recruits were Asian – like fifteen-year-old Guy Kurose, who was Japanese; seventeen-year old Mike Gillespie, a Filipino trumpet player; and Mike Tagawa, a Japanese Vietnam vet. These guys had all grown up in our neighborhood and identified with young Blacks in many ways." Aaron Dixon, *My People Are Rising: Memoirs of a Black Panther Captain* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 104.

settled on a new site, the International District.[105] The area's relative close proximity to downtown made it an ideal location, but it would not take long for community activists to recognize the impact of such a massive development project on a district that had long been mired in urban decay. Doug Chin, a community organizer in area, remembered, "At that time, Chinatown International District was a stagnant place, they were closing down hotels, businesses were stagnant, the only people that were there were basically old people that were poor."[106] The building of a new stadium that was designed to attract a professional football team likely meant an influx of "respectable" businesses in the district and the removal of working-class residents. As one student activist later wrote, "Can one seriously doubt the economic value caused by the absence of gap-toothed, unshaven, unkempt old men?"[107] Moreover, it would not take long for the neighborhood to show signs that residents' fears regarding stadium construction were warranted. While district hotels had long been in code violation for fire safety hazards, stadium construction sped the pace of the city's response. By April 1972, "Ten hotels [received warning], in order to conform to code…[they] must renovate by May 20 and 28" or face closure. If this was to happen, one writer estimated "734 people" would be displaced.[108] More alarming for ASC members, of this number 485 residents were retired Asian cannery workers, "332 of whom were old single Filipinos."[109]

In this context, the International District Drop-In Center quickly transformed from a social service program into a social movement space that radicalized Asian American student activists, particularly Filipinos. Operating on a shoe string budget, and heavily reliant on student volunteers, the organization formed with the intent to "monitor the progress of the stadium

[105] "A Parking Lot is Not a Home," *Asian Family Affair*, December 1972, 5.
[106] Doug Chin, interviewed by Trevor Griffey and Brook Clark, March 1, 2005, *SCRLHP*.
[107] "The Struggle is On," *Kaibigan*, April 9, 1972, 4.
[108] "Chinatown Proposal Submitted to HUD," *Kaibigan*, April 9, 1972, 3.
[109] "Seattle," *Kalayaan International*, November – December 1972, 15.

project, provide information to Chinatown residents, and organize meetings."[110] However, for younger Filipinos in search of "their roots," they found community elders who were in dire need of assistance. In the process, the student volunteers drew inspiration from their stories of survival and resistance.

Maino Rudio was a testament to the intergenerational learning that occurred at the Drop-In Center. When the decision to build a multi-purpose stadium in the International District was announced, Rudio was sixty-four years old and a long time resident in the area. However, as student volunteers would soon find out, he came to the U.S. in 1929, at the very beginnings of the Great Depression. Like many Filipinos in his position, he labored in the Alaskan canneries and the agricultural fields up and down the West Coast. In fact, he maintained he was involved in the union organizing drive that saw Filipino cannery workers wages rise from "$1 to $2 a day" to "$65 a month." This story came, as one *Seattle Post Intelligencer* reporter noted, "while relaxing on a couch at the Drop-In Center."[111]

From their elders, Filipino student activists developed pointed critiques of the crude economic calculus that legitimized displacement. From Ted Tomol, a sixty-year old International district resident, Filipino youth volunteers learned that for county officials and private developers profits were more important than people. Or in his own words, "They [county officials] [a]re gonna build that stadium no matter what. If you got money, you can do anything. To hell with the little people!"[112] Rudio's comment, on the other hand, offers a critique of displacement that extended beyond economics. Rather, what concerned the elderly Filipino was a meaningful sense of community. "They move you away," Rudio warned, "You become like a prisoner. You don't know anybody. You got nobody to talk to. You just stay in your room and

[110] Dick Clever, "Chinatown Ponders Domed Stadium," Seattle Post-Intelligencer, June 11, 1972, F4.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

do nothing."[113] The socio-economic background of volunteers varied. However, all those that frequented the International District Drop-In Center were exposed to a rich repository of working-class knowledge shaped by experiences of U.S colonialism, militant labor struggles, and a belief that they had a right to housing and sense of community in their declining years.

Thus, St. Peter Claver provided a social space for the unique convergence of race and class struggle in Seattle. From the UCWA's efforts to find Black workers meaningful employment in the construction trades, to the Chicano ESL program's advocacy for Seattle's growing Latino poor, to Asian American student activists and their efforts to preserve a community that their elders called home, each of their distinct community campaigns soon found a broad base of multiracial support. In the case of the UCWA, these cross-racial bonds coincided with the deepening of their Black Power politics. By June of 1972, the Black worker organization's unique set of racial politics would be on display as they launched their "June First Movement," the group's 1972 campaign for "control and self-determination" over affirmative action in the construction trades. Their decision to turn to direct-action protests, however, was born out of two years of frustration by working "within the system" of court-ordered desegregation.

Toward Community Control of Affirmative Action

By the later months of 1971, it became increasingly clear that Judge Lindberg's court order was failing. With "high attrition rates, the poor progress of special apprentices in their accelerated two-year programs, and contractors and unions' open opposition," the only hope to salvage what once seemed to be a promising mandate for desegregation was, the UCWA

[113] Ibid.

reasoned, to "give some control over the program…to a responsible body made up of the people affected by [racial exclusion]…the minority construction workers themselves."[114]

A UCWA proposal submitted to the Department of Labor in January 1972, entitled, "Proposal to Establish a Minority Community Advocacy Component to [the] Implementation of Construction Industry Affirmative Action Plans," is illustrative of the organization's perspective on industry desegregation orders. Its writers maintained,

> There can be no question that a plan to resolve a problem without involving the affected party can have no legitimacy. As it is now, only two parties in the situation, labor and management, [the] two responsible for discrimination, have any power in implementing the very plans designed to change the situation. We believe that only by building into these plans real minority community participation, not through administrative committees which are controlled by labor and management, will there be a change for success. This minority community participation must be through an entirely independent agency, one in which they themselves control.[115]

Despite the Department of Labor's very solicitation of proposals to increase "minority community" participation, they flatly rejected the UCWA's bid. This was "another depressing sign" in the mind of Scott "that the government would provide no support to independent worker organizations."[116] It did, however, shape things to come in Seattle. By the summer of 1972, it was painfully clear affirmative action requirements were not being met. The UCWA concluded that union racism was the main culprit.

With white union workers in charge of training affirmative action apprentices, on the job resistance to desegregation proved pivotal. Under these conditions, a series of tactics were employed to enforce clear workplace racial hierarchies. White trainers either provided little explanation of tasks Black apprentices were expected to do, required them to conduct demeaning tasks, such as sweeping the work area, or put them into situations where they would likely be

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[114] United Construction Workers Association, "Statement for Press and Public…," June 21, 1972, *The Tyree Scott Papers, Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, TSP, SCUW).

[115] Griffey, *Black Power's Labor Politics*, 332.

[116] Griffey, "From Jobs to Power," 172-173.

injured.[117] Furthermore, according to Trevor Griffey, a "subversion of the dispatch system" resulted in a constant state of unemployment for Black workers. He cites the AFSC Northwest director Arthur Dye at length, describing Black workers waiting in union hiring halls "day after day for several months" who were never dispatched. Moreover, those who raised the question of why they remained out of work, Dye reported, "[were] sent out…a hundred miles or so away [from Seattle]…only to find out that when they arrived at their destination there wasn't a job."[118] In other cases, Seattle's economic crisis offered a useful excuse for segregated worksites. However, Scott aptly understood the explicit racial logic in such economic calculations. "We are dealing with racism," he explained in a 1975 interview. "[T]here wasn't any work because there was unemployment amongst white workers, as long as there was unemployment among the white workers, the black workers had to wait, to get the jobs."[119]

An evident practice of non-compliance to the court order by unions, alongside the increasingly hostile worksites that Black apprentices entered, set the stage for a return to the type of grassroots protests that initially pushed the Department of Justice to intervene in 1969. Sick of the power that industries and unions used to avoid their legal obligations to desegregate, Scott explained, "In '72, we [UCWA] sat down and we planned it from day one that we were going to either win or lose, we would take them on one more time in the streets. And just show them that they are violating the court's order."[120]

June First Movement

The UCWA wasted little time disrupting an industry that offered no viable entry point for Black workers. On June 1, UCWA leaders struck the first blow in the month-long campaign of

[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Tyree Scott, Interview by William Little, December 5, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.
[120] Ibid.

worksite closures they later termed the "June First Movement." That day, they broke into the control room of the Interstate-90 floating bridge and jammed its opening; blocking the Seattle Police Department's tactical squad from crossing Lake Washington. Using this window of opportunity, 40 UCWA activists "shut down all I-90 projects [on a 5-mile stretch] between Bellevue and Issaquah." In the follow days, the UCWA led demonstrations that shut down the construction projects of "two privately funded [downtown] skyscrapers" and "seven different University of Washington Job sites." According to Griffey, "By June 5,…the UCWA had disrupted more than $50 million in construction projects in less than a week."[121]

At the end of the first week of demonstrations, the Court Ordered Advisory Committee (COAC), an ad-hoc committee of "interested parties" that Judge Lindberg created to oversee the process of his court order and report directly to him, held an emergence meeting, and the UCWA used the space to issue a set of clear demands: "full and immediate implementation of the court order to meet its goals; 'Complete control over all minority dispatches to construction work in Seattle;' and a [call for] contractor[s] to shut down…all area construction projects until the court order was implemented" (335).[122] In the weeks that followed, the UCWA's campaign only intensified. After AGC acquired a restraining order against further UCWA job closures, Tyree Scott publicly burned it, and made the claim that it "should not be followed, 'just as the court order is not not being followed."[123] Throughout the month, in the face of police repression, union leadership's accusations that the UCWA was attempting to create "a new, separate all-black union," and increasingly violent confrontations between rank-and-file members and protesters, worksite closures continued to apply pressure on unions and contractors to abide by

[121] Griffey, Black Power's Labor Politics, 334.
[122] Ibid, 335.
[123] Ibid.

the court order, and challenged Judge Lindberg to make the UCWA a party to the lawsuit.[124] When the federal judge stalled, particularly on the question of the dispatching power for UCWA, the Black worker group organized "a 50-hour vigil outside the federal court house."[125] Yet, the UCWA's June First Movement did more than unleash the militancy of black worker. It provided a political arena for activists of color to display publicly the multiracial unity generated at St. Peter Claver.

When Larry Gossett, a former leader of the Black Student Union at the University of Washington recalled the UCWA's 1972 demonstration, he noted a significant demographic change from the CCA's protests. "In 1969," he remembered, "sometimes we'd have 50…100, sometimes 250 people, but 90% of them would be Black." However, in 1972, "a new element joined in…Other Third World people and progressive whites." The "composition changed," Gossett explained, "[be]cause the movement base changed." This time around, "There was an effort made to get other people, especially Third World people [involved]." While it was unclear to Gossett if "Chicanos and Asians offered it, or Tyree [Scott] sought it out," he identified two leaders in particular who mobilized their respective communities: Roberto Maestas of the Chicano ESL Program and Silme Domingo of the Asian Student Coalition.[126]

Regardless of the location of demonstrations, they began and ended at St. Peter Claver. Michael Woo remembered that the church site was at the heart of the struggle. "Uncle Bob [Santos]…made that space available" during the June First Movement and the UCWA met there "almost nightly." Woo explained, "[W]e had the meetings at night to talk about what happened during the day, we set out a covert strategy for the following day…we would meet the following

[124] Ibid, 338.
[125] Ibid, 339.
[126] Larry Gossett, Interviewed by William Little, November 6, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.

morning…come back that night [to] talk about who got arrested who didn't…what worked what didn't…[and] planned for the next days actions."[127]

For those in the Chicano ESL program, the demonstrations were a continuation of the lessons about racism and discrimination that staff organizers knew were critical to the lives of their students. From the very beginning of the UCWA's actions, ESL instructors such as Samuel Cardenas and Lupe Martinez were some of the first demonstrators arrested, to which Maestas started to receive notices from college administrators to "rein his people in." Of course, "He did not comply."[128] Rather, Maestas and other used UCWA actions to drive home to their students the importance of confronting oppression and building solidarity. Recalling his message to students, the director of the Chicano ESL program stressed,

> "We invited these humble people with little or no connection with Black people and said, the Black community, they got carpenters, they got machine operators, they got plumbers, they got construction workers and they can't get a job. So what does that mean to us…We got to be alongside side them. Who ever wants to come. You might go to jail, but that is the nature of the beast."[129]

News coverage revealed that Chicano solidarity continued throughout the month of June. On June 20th, two days prior to a demonstration at Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) that saw fifty-one people arrested, Gordon Hill, a special collections librarian doing public relations work for the UCWA at the time, captured footage of a UCWA meeting chaired by Tyree Scott where Roberto Maestas served as a Spanish translator for his students.[130]

In the case of Asian American supporters, one UCWA member recalled, "the Asian student unions…always were around our demonstrations."[131] Even afterwards, ASC used their

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[127] Michael Woo, Interviewed by author, August 8, 2014.
[128] Gomez, 277.
[129] Roberto Maestas, Interviewed by Trevor Griffey, February 22, 2005, *SCRLHP*.
[130] Gordon Hills to United Construction Workers Association, August 22, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.
[131] Michael Woo, Interviewed by Ron Chew, September 2, 2011, *The Ron Chew Oral Histories at the Wing Luke Museum* (Hereafter cited, RCOH, WLM).

newspaper to keep racism in the construction trades a prominent community issue. In the August edition of the *Asian Family Affair*, Quintard Woo took the "white owned and controlled media" to task for their "irresponsible reporting" of the UCWA's demonstrations. In his article, "Confrontation: Asian on the March Too," he not only offered a history of the UCWA's demands, he took issue with local reporters who referred to Tyree Scott's public statements as "claims." In doing so, the Asian student radical argued, they suggested that the UCWA leader was "stating his opinion," as opposed to expressing a "reality…that the unions have failed to comply with the federal court order."[132] As Woo closed his article, in a similar fashion to Maestas, he revealed the ways activists of color in the city were thinking about racial justice in relation to, and solidarity with, one another.

> The UCWA, a minority organization is the first hold that minority people have in the construction industry…Asian people, as well as all minority people, should and must have the freedom to choose their own professions, no matter what they may be. Self-determination is the right to solve our problems our way, for if the Man giveth, the Man can just as easily taketh away.[133]

In terms of the UCWA, this broader multiracial support strengthened their resolve. Particularly in their large scale demonstrations, such as the closure of construction sites at SCCC, Michael Woo emphasized the significance of cross-racial solidarity. "When we shutdown… [SCCC] there were easily 100 to 150 people…we were running through the construction site with 2x4s chasing workers off the job with riot squads sitting outside." In fact, the UCWA returned to the community college worksite three days in a row and the size of demonstrations expanded each time. Woo maintained, "[I]f it weren't for the critical mass of folks that gathered,

[132] Quintard Woo, "Confrontation: Asian on the March Too," *Asian Family Affair*, August 1972, 3.
[133] Ibid, 4.

not just from the African American community, but from all the communities [that assembled] we would not have had the confidence to do the type of actions we did."[134]

The outcome of the movement did not garner all the goals the UCWA desired, but it significantly altered the political landscape of Seattle's construction industry. They failed to attain the power to dispatch Black workers, but Judge Lindberg made the UCWA "a party to the lawsuit [U.S. v. Ironworkers Local 86] for the purposes of implementation and enforcement." This entailed, "a more direct role in both screening and referring" workers of color entering the trade. Another significant gain was the UCWA's newfound representation on apprentice sub-committees. For each union involved in the lawsuit, a sub-committee was designed to approve workers of color for "admittance, advancement, discipline, or promotion." By being "in the room," Michael Woo argues, "we played an important role in making sure people were being treated fairly, and as a result we gained a lot of respect from the workers."[135]

This newfound power within the construction industry quickly paid dividends for Black workers. Within two years of the June First Movement, the number of African Americans in the trades expanded to nearly five hundred. These gains far surpassed the numbers of other U.S. cities with much larger African American populations.[136] The fact that UCWA achieved a semblance of Black Power in the construction trade through mobilizing multiracial solidarity was not lost on Scott and others leaders in the group. The coming months offered ample opportunities to return the favor of solidarity.

[134] Michael Woo, Interviewed by Author.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Griffey, "From Jobs to Power," 183.

"Revolutionary Time" and the June First Movement

Michael Simmons's first impressions of Seattle are telling of the dynamic, multiracial environment that followed the June First Movement. In the fall of 1972, Simmons was the newest Black radical on the staff of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) when he visited Seattle. By this time, he had nearly a decade of activist experience. In his late teens, he immersed himself in civil rights struggles in his hometown of Philadelphia. There, he protested local issues, such as, the racial exclusion of Black workers in the city's construction trades, as well as organized demonstrations in solidarity with the Southern freedom movement. Soon after the 1965 "March on Selma," he moved to the South and became a field secretary for the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Active in the group through its "Black Power Phase," he took part in drafting the organization's "Black Consciousness Paper" and its position on the Vietnam War. Additionally, in the late 1960s, his refusal to serve in the army during Vietnam War resulted in a two-and-a-half-year jail stint. There he was introduced to Quakers, and upon his release, he became a staff member of the AFSC in 1972. His new position as the national representative for housing and employment programs placed him in the political orbit of Black worker struggles in Seattle, given, as Simmons recalled, "[The AFSC's] Employment programs at that point were exclusively…the work of Tyree [Scott], Todd [Hawkins] and those at the UCWA."[137]

Simmons arrival in Seattle, coincidentally, occurred in the midst of another critical anti-racist struggle in the city. Just as the AFSC staff member landed in the Pacific Northwest, a multiracial, Chicano-led group occupied an abandoned school building in South Seattle. They demanded that the property be transferred into the hands of the city's Chicano community. A precursor to the occupation was the defunding of the Chicano ESL Program. Local activists saw

[137] Michael Simmons, Telephone Interview with Author, January 13, 2015.

the South Seattle school building as a potential site to not only reestablish their program, but also centralize other Chicano services dispersed across the city. This was the start of a yearlong battle for the building that Chicano activists would ultimately name "El Centro de la Raza."[138]

On his second day in Seattle, Scott took Simmons to the occupation. Not only did Simmons see Black and Chicano occupiers, but he noticed that "the Asian community [also] support[ed] it." Simmons recalled being "taken aback" by the diversity and solidarity he witnessed in Seattle. "Coming out of the Black Power Movement…[and] the East Coast," he explained, he had a "general solidarity with people of color," but his experiences in that part of the country suggested that Asians and Latinos were also "racist toward Black People." Juxtaposing Seattle to his hometown, Simmons stated, "A comparable situation in 1972 would have never happened in Philadelphia…Lets say, if you substitute Puerto Rican with Chicano…that level of solidarity was not going on." Jokingly, Simmons would often refer to Seattle as a "never-never land" and a "liberated territory" in conversations with Scott. These terms, however, were more admiration than critiques. Given the diverse world of solidarity that was unimaginable in his previous experiences as an activist, Simmons acknowledged, "I started to really have an affinity for the politics of Seattle." He continued,

> "The beauty of Seattle for me…coming out of the East Coast…there was a submersion of ethnic lines…it wasn't viewed as solidarity, it was just the struggle of oppressed people…some people were Black, some people were Chicano…so that, it went beyond a sense of solidarity…it was just a slight to one is a slight to all. I didn't see it as me supporting Chicanos or supporting Filipinos, but I just saw it as oppressed people…That was the political culture…In terms of the core struggles in Seattle, it was as fluid as it could possibly be…There was no designation of ethnicity, as far as I could see.[139]

[138] Alan Gomez, "Third World Pacific Northwest: El Centro de la Raza," *From Below and to the Left: Re-Imagining The Chicano Movement Through the Circulation of Third World Struggles, 1970-1979* (Phd Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006).

[139] Michael Simmons, Telephone Interview with Author, January 13, 2015.

Simmons's observations were those of an outsider, and he arguably dismissed tensions that did exist in the city. What his comments do provide, however, are an eye-witness account of the political culture that informed the June First Movement. In the months that followed UCWA's 1972 demonstrations, it was easy to witness the multiracial solidarity that Black workers unleashed.

The Chicano and Asian American protests in Seattle that followed the UCWA's June First Movement give credence to David Roediger's recent contention that Black Freedom struggles literally produced a revolutionary sense of time. In *Seizing Freedom*, Roediger maintains that the labor and feminist movements of the late 1800s found inspiration from what W.E.B. Du Bois called "the general strike of slaves:" the massive defection of enslaved people from the Confederate states to the Union lines during the Civil War. Borrowing from historians of the French Revolutionary, Roediger convincingly argues that the "self-emancipation" of slaves resulted in the development of "revolutionary time:" "a period in which the pace of change and the possibility of freedom accelerated the very experience of time." In this era, the freedom dreams of formerly enslaved people not only inspired feminists and labor activists, it also resulted in "the formation of a pro-Union mobilizations of Indians…[who] united across tribal and racial lines into a fighting force" and "the stirring eight-hour strike of Chinese workers on the Transcontinental Railroad." Rodegier likened these disparate movements that drew upon a common inspiration, and at times, expressed solidarity with one another, to a "nineteenth-century Rainbow Coalition."[140] A close look at anti-racist struggles in Seattle during the Fall months of 1972 point to a similar sense of "revolutionary time," where the grassroots demonstrations and the multiracial sensibilities of movement participants bore a striking similarity to the UCWA's June First Movement.

[140] David Roediger, *Seizing Freedom: Slave Emancipation and Liberty for All* (London: Verso, 2014), 9-19.

In the case of El Centro de la Raza, Theresa Aragon, a Chicana administrator at the University of Washington who served as a key negotiator with city officials during the building's takeover, praised the example the UCWA set several months earlier. When commenting on the efforts of city officials to divide the occupation's multiracial base, Aragon noted,

> I am really thrilled about this [occupation] because… the example of the United Construction Workers is showing that minorities are not going to fight over a…single allocation but that we will fight together to [see] that…allocation[s] are increased, and it is a beautiful thing that is happening.[141]

In the coming years, "El Centro" continued to be a home to multiracial unity in Seattle. While many programs served Chicanos, the community center never exclusively served this population. In particular El Centro opened its doors to a Samoan social service program, the "American Samoan Community Center" and housed the Seattle office of the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA), a militant Native American group struggling to preserve their treaty rights to fish in Washington State.[142] This openness to multiracial alliances even inspired Raul Salinas, the former prison radical who called El Centro home for much of the 1970s, to document El Centro's movement culture in his poem, "Crash Landing."

Centro where tri-ethnic vibes
Permeate/ create
Class-consciousness
Among the poor.
Where lesson in Life
Are taught daily
(by Revolutionary Sisters
and dedicated Daughters)
on lawns untended
due to energies spent
en el rescate
& self-determination
of the oppressed.
Where 3rd World fuerzas…

[141] Theresa Aragon, Interview with Unidentified Interviewer, 27 October, 1972, Theresa Aragon de Shepro Papers, Special Collections University of Washington (hereafter cited as TASP, SCUW).
[142] "El Centro De La Raza" Brochure, n.d., TASP, SCUW.

Deal with:
Nicaraguan disasters
Indian genocide (of modern-day massacre)
Plantation life of Campesinos
Movimiento Estudiantil
Black construction slaves [a direct reference to the UCWA, own emphasis]
Presos Politicos (y sociales)
…and raza…!Raza!...Raza!!!
in unyielding solidarity.[143]

Just a month after Chicanos began their occupation of El Centro, Asian community activists seized their opportunity to escalate the struggle to preserve the International District. Some in the community put their faith in a lawsuit that would force King County to build the Kingdome stadium elsewhere. But after this legal challenge failed, Asian American student activists took the lead of UCWA and El Centro demonstrators before them. As Mike Castellano, an Asian American Studies supervisor at the University of Washington, noted, "We've lost the legal issue. Now we have to battle on political and moral grounds."[144]

On March 2nd, Asian American students led a march that started from the International District Drop-In Center and culminated in a disruption of the stadium's ground breaking ceremony. Just as the event's "dignitaries" began to take stage, "Activists shouted down speakers, threw mud balls at the stage, got in a heated exchange with City Council President Liem Tuai [who the ASC viewed as a sell out]…and were eventually chased off by angry Seattle police."[145] That evening, concerned community members held an impromptu meeting at St. Peter Claver and "unanimously decide[d] to turn all efforts and resources directed at the stadium toward low-income housing for the Asian elderly."[146]

[143] Quoted from El Centro's 1978 publication *Recobrando.*
[144] "Seattle," *Kalayaan International*.
[145] "Kingdome Protest and HUD March, Nov., 1972," *SCRLHP*.
[146] "A Parking Lot is Not a Home," *Asian Family Affair*.

Ten days later, a broad coalition of Asian community organizers, students and elderly residents of the International District led "150 to 200" people on a march to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office in Seattle, where they picketed and "demand[ed] federal funds for low-cost housing for the elderly." The demonstration's speakers were telling of the protest's multiracial character. In addition to Frank Irigon, an Asian Student Coalition member, other activists that voiced their solidarity with the elderly of the International District were Roberto Maestas and Larry Gossett. Gossett's comments stressed the importance of maintaining solidarity. He stated, "We're going to have to forge a Third World alliance to maximize our impact." But as he continued, he showed how activists of color in Seattle were not only thinking about their current struggles in relational terms, they were also identifying historical links. "What's happening [in the International District]," the former Black Student Union leader emphasized, "is like what happened after the Reconstruction period in the South: A period of benign neglect!" While this action failed to get "even token promises of assistance," the multiracial unity of the HUD demonstration captured the attention of a writer of the *Kalayaan International*, a radical Filipino publication based in the San Francisco Bay Area. While unimpressed with the actions of city officials, the unnamed author acknowledged the demonstration "did succeed in forging closer ties among the different Third World communities who began to realize that their struggle was one and that unity was the key."[147]

The comments and poetry of El Centro activists, as well as the actions in the International District give credence to the political culture Simmons described. Although Simmons's contention that there was "no designation of ethnicity" overstated the point, what he rightly captured was a set of new social relations developed in the midst of collective struggle. At their core was a refusal to be "divided and conquered." But by continuing to meet, collectively study

[147] "Seattle," *Kalayaan International*.

political theory, and learn about each other's histories and contemporary struggles, the city's political culture encouraged a radical questioning of racial boundaries. Seattle's political environment even prompted the UCWA to rethink the racial dimensions of their own labor organizing. This required them to build movement organizations to sustain the June First Movement's sense of "revolutionary time" and "relational resistance."

From Third World Unity to Multiracial Worker Solidarity

Even UCWA organizing that occurred outside of Seattle, which was not overtly multiracial, still found ways to strengthen the UCWA's local expression of Third World unity. A clear example of this is the Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO). The idea for the law office grew out of challenges that UCWA organizers Tyree Scott and Todd Hawkins faced when they expanded their organizing model to Black workers in the U.S. South and Southwest. While Black workers were eager to utilize civil rights law in their favor, the real obstacle the UCWA faced was from so called "movement lawyers" regardless of race. Due to the relative "newness" of Title VII law, UCWA organizers, in many cases, knew the law better than the lawyers they hired.[148] But, in a letter written to their comrades in the South a year after their initial organizing trips, Scott and Hawkins lamented,

> Lawyers unfortunately, black and white, too often go to law school to make money and…they think they are the leaders. So you end up with a whole group of people who want to make decisions and their main motivation is making money. They are not concerned with the impact that an end to job discrimination might have on a total community.[149]

A dynamic that occurred throughout their time in the South, Simmons remembered, was "All these movement lawyers always tr[ied] to tell the poor folks what to do." UCWA

[148] Michael Simmons, Telephone Interview with Author, January 13, 2015.

[149] Tyree Scott and Todd Hawkins to All Members and Staff of the Southwest Workers Federation, 29 July, 1974, TSP, SCUW.

organizers sought to subvert this relationship by establishing the Labor Employment Law Office (LELO), a "worker-led" law office. The office was premised on what, according to Simmons, Tyree Scott firmly believed, "[P]oor people should be able to treat their lawyers like rich people treat their lawyers: they tell them what to do."[150] Before the year ran out, LELO's formation was underway. It was a concept that Tyree Scott, Michael Simmons, and a lawyer that played a crucial role in the success of the UCWA in Seattle, Michael Fox, discussed throughout the fall of 1973. According to Trevor Griffey, the three drew up the original proposal and by August of 1973, Fox composed the law firm's articles of confederation and another draft of the office's proposal for funding. To this note, Trevor Griffey argues, the formation of LELO translated the "near-spontaneous" Black Power protests that occurred in Seattle, which catalyzed the development of the UCWA, "into an organization for sustaining an ongoing social revolution."[151]

This social revolution, however, was explicitly multiracial. The very workers that led the law office were drawn from three different labor struggles in the Pacific Northwest. The office was certainly built upon the UCWA's particular fusion of equal employment and Black Power politics, but they ran the organization alongside Asian cannery workers that Michael Woo started organizing in the summer of 1973, and a group of Mexican farm workers from Eastern Washington that Michael Fox had represented since their formation in 1970, the United Farm Workers Association (UFWA). While political obstacles in the South highlighted the need for the law office, Seattle's multiracial movement culture ultimately shaped its organizational structure and legal agenda.

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[150] Trevor Griffey, *Black Power's Labor Politics: The United Construction Workers Association and Title VII Law in the 1970s* (Phd Diss., University of Washington, 2011), 400.

[151] Ibid, 402.

Without notes from the initial meeting for LELO, it is impossible to ascertain the gathering's details, as well as the potential debates that occurred between the organization's three different laboring populations. However, LELO's proposal offers a useful political text to identify how the organization's founding members identified their commonalities. The proposal's introduction explained the "private law office" was concerned with the "particular problems facing low-income and minority people in gaining employment and improving their employment situation." In a section titled, "The Problem Area," authors specified a series of problems that shaped the "powerlessness" of a working population they termed the "low-income worker." At the heart of the economic subjugation of this broad working population, the proposal highlighted,

> "[Was] a lack of readily marketable skills… the absence of any adequate means to collectively bargain or discuss grievances with management…and their consequent inability to secure steady, decently paid employment which realistically has some avenue for the acquisition of skills and advancement possibilities.[152]

As the proposal further explained ~~of~~ the plight of low-income workers, writers drew upon the organizing experiences of each group represented in LELO. To explain the obstacles preventing workers from exercising the right to collectively bargain, the proposal detailed the efforts of the United Farm Workers' Union (UFWU). In the previous two years the UFWU litigated and won "three highly significant cases," which "won the right for union organizers to come into migrant labor camps" in Washington.[153] As the proposal turned to the way racist practices of industries "continue to deny employment to racial minorities," they emphasized the successful efforts of the UCWA, particularly in the construction trades. Lastly, to demonstrate the obstacles low-income workers faced, even when integrated into the ranks and leadership of unions, the proposal highlighted the pressing problems of Asian cannery workers in Alaska. In reference to the ILWU Local 37, a Filipino-led cannery worker union, LELO's proposal documented,

[152] *Law Employment Law Office, "Proposal for Funding," undisclosed date, TSP, SCUW.*
[153] *Ibid.*

"Although Asians have lived in segregated, woefully inferior, and often unsafe housing while working in Alaska…, their union has done virtually nothing to improve conditions and has done a disappointing job in securing long-term improvements."[154] Thus, LELO's 1974 proposal was more than an effort to secure funds for the fledgling law office. It represented a political text in which member organizations articulated a common language of class that united their struggles as workers of color. Akin to Moon-Kie Jung's discussion of "interracialism" in Hawaii's labor movement, LELO members did not just "disarticulate race" in favor of a broader class consciousness. Rather, they rearticulated their histories with racism, the labor market, and unions as interconnected. In fact, by re-narrating their past experiences with race and labor exploitation as interlocking, the proposal's authors made their respective labor struggles "meaningful to all [LELO members."][155]

Conclusion

In three short years, the UCWA transitioned from an organization whose sole concern was the economic plight of black workers into a catalysts of multiracial solidarity in Seattle. In doing so, they typified an important political legacy of the 1960s and 1970s anti-racist movements: the centrality of cross-racial organizing. This does not mean that political alliances between racially aggrieved groups is a given. The UCWA's early efforts to development "minority coalitions" demonstrates this quite clearly. Rather, activists in Seattle made building cross-racial political relationship a primary terrain of struggle, arguably on par with their community-based grievances. In the process they developed nuanced racial analyses and grassroots practices that identified commonalities across groups and fortified these relationships at an organizational

[154] *Ibid.*

[155] Moon-Kie Jung, *Reworking Race : The Making of Hawaii's Interracial Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 163.

level. If anything, this history demonstrates that movement scholars need to develop a careful and critical analysis of cross-racial alliances. Unquestionably, studies need to attend to the structural conditions and personal biases that impede solidarity. But we cannot foreclose the historical reality of such alliances and the ongoing potential for political growth. As Natalia Molina has recently showed, those in power use "racial scripts" to both marginalize and divide communities of color. But, she also brings to light how racially aggrieved groups have offered dynamic counter-scripts that "enabled unlikely antiracist alliances to form based on similar, but not identical experiences of racialization."[156] In the chapters that follow, I analyze the evolving counter-scripts developed by workers of color in the Pacific Northwest that blurred seemingly fixed racial boundaries. To start, the next chapter turns to labor organizers who blended "organic intellectual" traditions of Black and Filipino workers as they mobilized cannery workers in Alaska during the early to mid 1970s.

[156] Molina, *How Race is Made in America, 10*.

Chapter 2:

Building Power for Others: Manong Knowledge, Black Power and the Resurgence of Filipino Labor Organizing in Alaska's Salmon Industry in the 1970s

In the May 1973 edition of the *Asian Family Affair*, a newspaper run by Asian American student activists at the University of Washington, Silme Domingo penned a damning article of labor exploitation in Alaska's salmon canning industry. It was published only weeks before hundreds of predominantly Filipino cannery workers gathered at the intersection of King and Maynard Street in Seattle. From there they traveled to the Alaskan canneries for summer employment. Whether they were young Asian-American students who sought to "defray educational expenses," or elderly Filipino farm workers who gladly left the "hot lettuce fields of the Salinas Valley," Domingo maintained, Alaska was no "winter land of the north."

Despite "segregation and discrimination" being commonly understood as a "Deep-South problem," Domingo's article stressed that it "directly related to Asians in Alaska." To make this point clearly, he highlighted the ways Asian workers were subjected to inferior housing, as well as a "stratified labor structure" that segmented "Asians at the bottom jobs…[with] the actual tedious task of handling the fish." To add insult to injury, segregation was reinforced by a pervasive system of worker control. Cannery management used a loosely defined termination policy to fire workers they deemed expendable. "In one case," Domingo wrote, "[T]wo brothers were selectively chosen from a disenchanted crew and were blacklisted as an example of company power." Yet another example of this objectionable policy involved "a 60-year old Filipino" who was fired after "he developed a skin irritation while working in damp conditions." In each case, "[T]he employing company justified themselves by claiming the employees' work was unsatisfactory." To make matters worse, the Filipino-led cannery worker union, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousmen's Union (ILWU) Local 37 was "once thought

to be a possible weapon to fight the industry."[157] However, Domingo lamented, "[T]he power of big business and McCarthyism destroyed [the] union's potential." Identifying little "hope for change," the articled closed with the powerful reminder: "There will never be an Asian that will leave Alaska without tasting the racism and oppression that has been prevalent since the first 'Chink' scaled a fish."[158]

The conditions described by Domingo soon birthed a movement organization that radically transformed Asian American activism in Seattle.[159] Formed just three months after Domingo's article was published, the Alaska Cannery Worker Association (ACWA) launched a full-on legal assault against industry racism in the canneries. By November of 1973, the worker organization filed their first lawsuit against one of Alaska's major canning companies, the New England Fishing Company (NEFCO). In the coming year, two others legal cases followed that targeted the Wards Cove and the Whitney-Hidalgo Packing Companies. But more important than their legal advocacy, the ACWA provided a movement base for worker unrest in Alaska that was increasingly bubbling to the surface in the early 1970s. To ensure that the "affected workers" of cannery lawsuits had autonomy over their legal cases, the ACWA's staff organizers and board members were drawn directly from "cannery workers who have been to Alaska and seen how Filipinos and non-white workers live[d]."[160] Moreover, since their union, the ILWU Local 37, was seen as "undemocratic" and "unaggressive" by many of its members, the new

[157] Between the decades of the 1930s and the 1950s, the ILWU Local 37 militantly advocated for increased wages and better working conditions for its members. Cold War immigration policies that targeted "alien subversives," however, had a tragic effect on the union, pushing many of its radical union officers out of leadership positions.

[158] Silme Domingo, "The Alaska Canning Industry," *Asian Family Affair*, May 1973, 4.

[159] The group of cannery workers who met to discuss forming a worker organization that would initiate lawsuits against the salmon industry in Alaska soon played a leading role in Seattle's other Asian communities' struggles, such as preserving the International District from urban renewal, opposing the martial law government of the Philippines, and demanding Asian American Studies on university and community college campuses in the city.

[160] "More On The ACWA," *New Tide*, July 1974, 1.

cannery worker organization nurtured a brand of rank-and-file militancy in the Alaskan canneries not seen since the early years of the Cold War.[161]

In Domingo's polemic on cannery labor practices, he clearly understood that any political action on the part of aggrieved cannery workers would be part of a larger history of Filipino labor organizing that stretched back to the 1930s.[162] In fact, this chapter makes the case that Domingo and others drew upon the "organic intellectual" tradition of their community elders, what I term "Manong Knowledge." But this working-class wisdom alone could not bring an end to the generations of institutionalized segregation that locked Filipinos and other non-white workers in the industry into low-wage labor, hazardous working conditions, and substandard living facilities. Rather, cannery workers put Manong Knowledge into action through drawing upon the resources and organizing strategies of the United Construction Workers Association (UCWA). As shown in the first chapter, the UCWA was a group of militant black workers who pioneered a radical approach to industry desegregation and who Domingo himself supported during their dramatic worksite closures in June of 1972.[163]

The formation of the ACWA, thus, sat at the intersection of two histories of race and labor that were brought into alignment by the emergence of multiracial grassroots alliances in Seattle. In turn, the history of the ACWA offers a generative site to further trouble narratives of interracial strife in the 1960s and narrow readings of the Black Power Movement. Most comparative treatments of 1960s social movements emphasize momentary multiracial coalitions that quickly fractured due to disputes over resources, the racial biases of activists themselves,

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[161] Arleen De Vera, "Without Parallel: The Local 7 Deportation Cases, 1949-1955," *Amerasia Journal* 20, no. 2 (1994).

[162] For a discussion of Filipino cannery worker organizing in the 1930s see Chris Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor : The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon industry, 1870-1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). For an account that frames this labor organizing in the context of colonial relationships to the United States see Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power : Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[163] See chapter 1.

and divergent political interests.[164] While these studies have provided insights into the difficulty of coalition building, they leave a central question unanswered: what does multiracial solidarity mean for communities that have distinct histories of racial oppression? Furthermore, studies tend to view the era's increasing appeal of ethnic nationalism as a racially divisive force, one that deepened interracial strife between communities of color. On both accounts, the relationship between the ACWA and the UCWA reveals the limits of prior analysis. For one, a close examination of their alliance illustrates how activists translated their multiracial politics into concrete expressions of solidarity. Two, Black Power politics, rather than being a hindrance to this coalition, actually strengthened it.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into three parts. First, I highlight the politicization of Filipino workers in the cannery. The work of Diane Fujino and Daryl Maeda has convincingly argued that the Black Power Movement was a central radicalizing force for Asian American activists of the 1960s and 1970s; in turn, their work shows that the ACWA offers a unique vantage point to reassess the emergence of Asian American Movement politics.[165] I uniquely emphasize, however, that prior to their relationship with Black militant workers, the ACWA's founding members were exposed to an organic tradition of resistance in the Filipino community, what I term "Manong Knowledge." I then move into a discussion of the UCWA's evolving racial and movement politics. As the black worker organization expanded their movement to "new regions and industry," they blended their Black Power and multiracial

[164] Brian Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2011); Robert Bauman, *Race and the War on Poverty: From Watts to East L.A.* (Norman: University Oklahoma, 2008); Gordon Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013).

[165] Diane Fujino, "The Black Liberation Movement and Japanese American Activism: The Radical Activism of Richard Aoki and Yuri Kochiyama," *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections Between African Americans and Asian Americans* (Durham: Duke University, 2008), 165-197; Daryl Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009).

politics. In fact, the resources that both groups shared, I argued, was framed in the context of "self-determination." That is, the UCWA placed financial, legal, and staff resources in the hands of their Filipino allies in order to ensure that they had the ability to practice self-determination. Lastly, I turn to the formation and early organizing of the ACWA. Here, I pay close attention to an underestimated dynamic of 1960 social movements, ideological cross-fertilization. By analyzing the ACWA's organizing activities, I make the case that Manong Knowledge and the UCWA Black Power politics came to inform one another.

Manong Knowledge in Alaska's Salmon Canneries

In the summer of 1971, a group of Filipino cannery workers reached their breaking point. By the season's end, the constant racial indignities in Alaska's salmon industry had boiled to the surface. In a meeting called by the cannery foreman to "congratulate the workers on a good season," the proceedings soon erupted into an open display of workplace frustrations. "[O]ne of the young Filipinos…started saying something about the food," and soon "everybody was saying something about…what they felt was not fair." In the days that followed, industry officials revealed the lengths they went to suppress workplace resistance. Nemesio and Silme Domingo were far from ringleaders of the end of the year outburst. But, upon returning to Seattle, they received termination letters from their employer, the New England Fishing Company (NEFCO), which, in unequivocal terms, stated, they "would not be employed…in any further seasons."[166]

Events such as these emboldened a new generation of cannery workers to challenge the structural racism they experienced. In explicit and implicit ways, those workers harnessed what I term, "Manong Knowledge." Building upon Clyde Woods's analysis of "Blues Epistemology," I argue, "Manong Knowledge" is a "system of explanation," which first and foremost, was a

[166] Nemesio Domingo Jr., Interview by Cindy Domingo, Tape Recording, Seattle, WA, February 28, 2003.

"critique of [cannery] social relations."[167] Their political analysis grew not only from discussions with their Manongs (a term of respect Filipinos use for elderly males), but also from their own first-hand experiences with the collective degradation of laboring in Alaska. The result was a "collective memory" of their Manongs' subversive history.[168]

When Filipino youth toiled side-by-side with their elders, they came face-to-face with a long, uninterrupted history of colonized labor. After the Spanish American War, Filipinos were enveloped into an expanding U.S. Empire that included Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guam, and American Samoa. This colonial history was also a labor history. As Rick Baldoz aptly observes, after the United States formalized colonial relations in the Philippines, Filipino workers were integrated into a "transpacific imperial zone…of [commercial] agribusiness, mining and oil production," in which, Alaska's canned salmon industry was central.[169] The experiences of the Domingo brothers reveal that these colonial labor relations clearly did not end with "Philippine Independence" in 1946.

Filipinos remained an exploitable workforce through the postwar years via durable practices of institutionalized racism in Alaska. For one, a dual union system ensured that White workers were disproportionately employed in the industry's highest-paid positions. Workers responsible for the catching and transporting of salmon were historically represented by the Alaska Fishermen's Union (AFU), an almost exclusively white organization.[170] Other skilled positions,

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[167] Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Race, Power, and the Blues in the Mississippi* (London: Verso, 1998), 25.

[168] My interpretation of "collective memory" draws upon study of the Black Freedom Movement, particularly the works of George Lipsitz and Robin Kelley. For a further discussion of collective memory see George Lipsitz, *A Life in the Struggle: Ivory Perry and the Culture of Opposition* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1988); Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1990).

[169] Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: New York University, 2011), 48-63

[170] Alaska Cannery Worker Association, "Report on Cannery Conditions," 10 September, 1973, *The Tyree Scott Papers, Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited TSP, SCUW).

like machinists and cannery supervisors, remained the sole possessions of White workers due to a process that Federal Judge Gus Solomon described as "company nepotism." In court proceedings, NEFCO explained that positions were often advertised through "word of mouth," but evidence showed that "friends and relatives of employees…receive[d] first word about job openings." This process, the judge concluded, "tends to isolate non-whites from the *web of information*."[171] Evidence on this point presented by plaintiffs was particularly damning. In a January 8, 1970 memorandum sent by NEFCO's vice president, he instructed all cannery superintendents that

> In keeping with our previous policy, we are generally obligated to hire a number of college students that are either employee's sons or some close business associates. Please let me know how many openings can be filled with this class of people.[172]

This combination of industry and union practices locked Filipinos into the low-paid and hazardous cannery employment.

Remembering these conditions, David Della, a cannery worker and future ACWA member, explained the appeal of seeking alternatives to cannery labor. In reference to machinists, "These were people that made sure [that]...the machines [that cooked the Salmon] operated well [and]...they would fix the machines if they broke down." Della irately recalled, "they [White machinists] didn't have to stand in the cold like *we* [Filipinos] did...If the machines didn't break down, [which Della contends they never did], all *they* had to do was stand and watch."[173]

But for future ACWA members, the "fish house" also was a site where, to borrow from George Lipsitz, cannery workers "turned segregation to congregation."[174] That is, through their common conditions of labor exploitation, they crafted a collective sense of solidarity that proved

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[171] Domino v. New England Fishing Company (NEFCO), 727 F.2d 1429 (9th Cir. 1984).
[172] Ibid.
[173] David Della, Interviewed by Cindy Domingo. Tape Recording. Seattle, WA, March 18, 2003.
[174] For a further discussion of what Lipsitz calls "the Black Spatial Imaginary," see George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2011).

pivotal to their future legal campaigns. Arguably, some of the most significant bonds that developed were intergenerational. For one, young workers devised methods to protect their elders from the dangers of long hours on the job. According to Andy Pascua, butchers were responsible for pushing fish into the machine, whose blades came down "70 times every minute" and "half an inch from your hand." The problem, he explained, "after 30, 40 hours straight [of] work it's hard to keep a rhythm…you start getting sloppy…tired and mistakes start to happen." But to protect elderly workers from this hazard, Pascua remembered hiding them under piles of rags as they slept. In the meantime, Pascua and his friends ran the machines short-handed.[175]

Stan Viernes offered a different vantage point to assess intergenerational connections. In his first year as a "slimer," the workers tasked with cleaning any "unwanted" parts of the fish that the butcher machine left behind, he woke up one morning screaming in pain. Due to long hours on the job, he developed a muscle-lock in his hand. As one friend recalled, his fingers were positioned as if he was still holding a knife. Eventually, his "dad...c[a]me and grab[ed] [his] fingers and...rub[bed] them to get the stiffness out." Generations of exploitation had normalized this occurrence, and once his hand was loose enough, his dad simply placed a knife back in it and said, "Let's get back to work."[176] While Pascua and Viernes's recollections point to distinct intergenerational relations, they both illustrate how cannery labor offered Filipino youth a window into their community's long history of workplace exploitation. This collective memory, or Manong Knowledge, represented more than a reminder of oppression. It generated a collective consciousness that emboldened worker resistance.

The insurgent practices of cannery workers were not only found at the worksite. They also revealed themselves in spaces of leisure. During the canning season that the Domingo brothers

[175] Andy Pascua, Interviewed by Cindy Domingo. Tape Recording. Seattle, WA, April 21, 2003.
[176] Stan Viernes, Interviewed by Ron Chew, July 1, 2011, *ACWA/Local 37 interviews, Wing Luke Musuem Library* (Here after cited as ACWA/Local 37, WLML).

were terminated, Nemesio recalled that his co-workers' initial struggles for dignity began in their dormitories. The "Filipino bunkhouses" had seen little to no improvement for over two decades. This fact became particularly clear for the Domingo brothers when they discovered their father's name carved into the wall above Silme's bunk. This was an especially powerful reminder since the date was also engraved, "Nemesio Domingo, 1927."[177] By the middle of the summer season in Uganik Bay, Filipino workers took small steps to improve their living conditions. In an attempt to "make [themselves] more comfortable," Nemesio recalled, the men constructed "cardboard walls to partition the barracks." This attempt to provide a semblance of privacy, however, would not last long. Once a cannery foreman heard about this, he immediately instructed them to take down the cardboard walls because they were a "fire hazard."[178] This response was a powerful reminder that even minor attempts to improve their conditions were often impeded by management.

Another industry practice that harkened back to earlier decades of anti-Filipino racism was the policing of interracial intimacies. Scholars have shown that a central feature of white society's scorn for Filipinos during the 1920s and 1930s was the specter of interracial mixing with white women. This anxiety was at the root of anti-miscegenation laws, mob violence, and the fierce policing of interracial social spaces, such as taxi-dance halls.[179] Even in the 1970s, this rigid demarcation of racial and gender boundaries still held true in Alaska's salmon industry. "[A] lot of…hassle," Andy Pascua explained, came from pronouncements that Filipinos were "not allowed to interact at all" with White women. In his experience, cannery foremen imposed a curfew, and stated, after 6PM, "You Filipinos can't cross…onto this [White] section of the

[177] Nemesio Domingo Jr., Interview by Cindy Domingo. Tape Recording. Seattle, WA, February 28, 2003.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*; Linda Espana Maram, *Creating Masculinities in Los Angeles's Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920-1950* (New York: Columbia University, 2006).

cannery." Pascua and others were livid. "Well hell, its 6," he remembered, and "we'd cross[ed] the line."[180] Without going into too much detail, he remembered that many fights between Filipino and white males occurred because of the former's refusal to acquiesce to company policies of segregation.

Where Pascua was brief in his discussion of altercations, the events that led to Nicolas Facelo's termination shed light on what those fights may have looked like. According to Facelo's 1973 termination report, he was fired for fighting a waiter at a cannery cafeteria. But a closer look reveals that the altercation began because he broke an unwritten company policy: dining with a white woman. When the waiter instructed him to return to the table for "oriental cannery workers," Facelo's casual interactions turned into an act of resistance. Instead of going back to his segregated table, Facelo, according to a union report, "[S]tood up and fought [the waiter]." Afterwards, the then president and business agent of Facelo's own union, Gene Navarro, explained to Facelo the policy of separate eating facilities was a "previous practice for almost forty years" and urged the disgruntled worker to apologize to the waiter. According to Facelo's union termination report, "he would rather go home" before he apologized. Facelo very well may not have been the ideal worker. His cannery foreman described him as someone who "[didn't] want to get up in the morning and [was] always late for work."[181] Yet, Facelo's defiance, even his questionable work habits, should be read within the context of a generation of younger cannery worker who increasingly found conditions in Alaska, especially its racial etiquette, intolerable.

Potentially more alarming was the union's complicity in the case against Facelo. This

[180] Andy Pascua, Interviewed by Cindy Domingo. Tape Recording. Seattle, WA, April 21, 2003.

[181] Gene Navarro, "Reports and Information About Nicolas Facelo's Case of Termination," September 17, 1973, *Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union Local 7, Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited CWFLU Local 7, SCUW).

demonstrated a conservative turn the organization had taken over the decades. This political shift became abundantly clear for younger workers when their political activism transitioned to Seattle's International District. During the offseason, the area was home to hundreds of elderly cannery workers who were seasoned labor activists in their own right.

Manong Knowledge at the International District Drop-In Center

In February 13 1972, King County officials approved the construction of a $40 million domed stadium only blocks away from the International District, a neighborhood whose residents were predominantly Asian, elderly, and poor.[182] It would not take a vivid imagination to foresee that this massive development had the potential to displace local residents. In a matter of months, the fear of community activists came to fruition. By April 1972, "Ten hotels [received warning], in order to conform to [fire safety] code…[they] must renovate by May 20 and 28" or face closure. If this was to happen, one writer estimated, "734 people" would be displaced. Of this number, 485 residents were retired Asian cannery workers, "332 of whom were old single Filipinos."[183]

As the previous chapter has shown, the International District Drop-In Center quickly transformed into a social movement space that emboldened the political consciousness of Asian American student activists in Seattle. But for those who already labored in Alaska, volunteering at the Drop-In Center provided them with a history lesson about their own union, the ILWU Local 37. Labor organizing in the canneries began in earnest in the 1930s. However, during World War II, union activity stalled. Much like the rest of the labor movement, the Local 37 took a "no strike pledge" in solidarity with the war effort. As result, former union activist

[182] "A Parking Lot is Not a Home," *Asian Family Affair*, December 1972, 5.
[183] "Seattle," *Kalayaan International*, November – December 1972, 15.

Ernesto Magaoang explained, "No struggle of any kind took place. It was unpatriotic to do so." But when wartime defense industries closed and the veterans of prior organizing campaigns returned to Alaska for employment, "old timers" reclaimed their union. In this period, Filipino activists transferred their union affiliation to the left- leaning ILWU and placed "rank-and-file" democracy and higher wages at the forefront of their politics.[184]

For future ACWA members, Chris Mensalvas became a history teacher of sorts. In addition to being a mainstay at the Drop-In Center, he was an iconic figure in Filipino labor history and driving force in the Local 37's "reform movement" of the 1940s. Just as the labor militants began to make inroads into the union's leadership, he organized one the largest strikes that California agribusiness had seen. In 1948, he and Ernesto Mangaoang coordinated a 4,000 person walkout in Stockton's asparagus fields.[185] Not surprisingly, at the height of the Cold War, when immigration officials turned their attention to "labor subversives," Mensalvas was a central target. In 1949, he was arrested on charges of Communist Party membership, and three years later he found himself in the political crosshairs of immigration officials as his status as an "alien subversive" made him eligible for deportation.[186]

David Della's memories of visiting Mensalvas are telling of the intergenerational learning that occurred. When Della stepped into the Manong's apartment in the International District, he noticed, "stacks and stacks of books and papers." In total, he spent four hours talking to Mensalvas. The elderly Filipino pulled out "papers and books about…his experiences…in the canneries," and encouraged Della to "keep reading and get active [in the union]."[187] While

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[184] Ernesto Magaoang, "Report of the Business Agent," *1952 Yearbook, ILWU Local 37* (Seattle: ILWU Local 37, 1952), 7.

[185] For more on the 1948 asparagus strike see Dawn Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipina/o American Community in Stockton, California* (Durham: Duke University, 2013), 254-258.

[186] Arleen De Vera, "Without Parallel: The Local 7 Deportation Cases: 1949-1955," *Amerasia* Vol. 20, No. 2 (1994):12.

[187] David Della, Interviewed by Cindy Domingo. Tape Recording. Seattle, WA, March 18, 2003.

Della's experiences were certainly transformative, arguably no Drop-In Center volunteer harnessed Manong Knowledge more than Silme Domingo. As his wife Terri Mast remembered, "Silme loved to talks to old-timers…hear their stories, and bounce ideas off of them."[188] Through those conversations, he crafted a theory of social movement building that likened the "ebbs and flows" of activism to a river. As UCWA leader Tyree Scott remembered, "Silme likened our struggle to the flow of a river." Even as conditions changed, "the ebbing river would flow…[in] the same path as it had during the last flow." The challenge, Scott explained, "[For] those of us who want the river to flow in a different path [we] must work hardest during the ebb to change the river's bed, [thus] creating a new path." Domingo adamantly believed, Scott stressed, "we could change things but that we had to work [the] hardest when things were bleakest."[189] Via the labor history that Domingo pieced together from his Manongs, he came to grips with the significance of his own historical moment. The rising political consciousness of cannery workers in the 1970s suggested it was an ideal time to "change the river bed" and usher in a new "rank-and-file" movement.

The larger question, however, was how to build such a movement. For many, workplace organizing was foreclosed by company policies that easily terminated subversives. When it came to elected leaders of the Local 37, they were often silent, and even complicit, in practices of racial discrimination. Thus, the democratic visions imparted by elderly Filipino laborers could not be the sole building blocks for the movement Domingo and his peers envisioned. This search for alternatives pushed Filipino cannery workers into the political orbit of militant Black workers in Seattle's construction trades.

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[188] Terri Mast, Interview by Ron Chew, December 12, 2010, *ACWA/Local 37, WLML*.

[189] Tyree Scott, "Framing Our Work," June 3, 1989, *Cindy Domingo Papers, Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited as CDP, SCUW).

"Empowering Them With the Resources Necessary to…Struggle"

The previous chapter already demonstrated that Domingo and other Asian American student activists in Seattle were a vital base of support for the UCWA during their 1972 worksite closures. Immediately following the success of their protest actions, UCWA member Michael Woo remembered, "dollars came in[to]" the organization because "it had led a recognizable movement." Compared to similar campaigns in cities with much larger Black populations, none had quite the success of the UCWA. Not only did the UCWA open the door for black workers to enter Seattle's building trade union, they also had a formal role in overseeing the success of the industry's affirmative action programs. As result, the UCWA "had enough money" to expand, but Woo recalled, the organization's leadership grappled with the question, "[H]ow do you build a movement?" Their experiences showed, "[I]t wasn't just Black workers that were working to turn back racism in the [construction] industry."[190] With an understanding that the UCWA's grassroots strength was in their multiracial base of support, "building a movement" required that they think about their labor struggle in multiracial terms.

It was in this context that Michael Woo, the organizations only non-Black member at the time was hired as a staff organizer. When worksite closures proceeded in 1972, Woo, in his own words, "put [his] principles ahead of [his] pocketbook," and actively participated in all of the UCWA's demonstrations. While this political act ultimately cost him his job, it did not go unnoticed.[191] He was brought on as staff that summer to work alongside the UCWA's key organizers: Tyree Scott and Todd Hawkins. The following year, when the group expanded their

[190] Michael Woo, Interview with Author,
191 Ibid.

organizing to "new regions and industries," Woo pushed the organization to investigate blatant practices of segregation in the Alaskan canneries.

Like many working-class Asian Americans of his generation in the Pacific Northwest, Woo spent a portion of his teenage years laboring in Alaska. When describing his experiences to UCWA staff, Woo detailed an intense system of racial segregation that structured every aspect of life for cannery workers. During this conversation, UCWA leader Tyree Scott "just reinforced" Woo's descriptions. Woo recalled, Scott recently "developed relationships with…leaders in the Asian community." In conversations with Scott, they consistently told the UCWA leader, "There [was] huge discrimination in the canneries."[192] Moreover, Woo made the case that the canneries were ripe for worker organizing. "I used to work in the cannery," he maintained, and "these guys who worked with me…[are] pissed off and they would do something because they were part of the ASU [Asian Student Union]." Here, Woo specifically referenced Silme Domingo and his older brother Nemesio. The summer season of 1967, the Domingo brothers had labored in the very same cannery as Woo. As result, the UCWA's board of directors, a group entirely composed of Black construction workers, unanimously voted to "invest in this" to the tune of $3,000.[193]

Bob Santos, a community leader in Seattle's historically Asian neighborhood, the International District, remembered the preliminary discussions about taking the UCWA strategy into the Alaska canneries occurred at the UCWA office. There, Silme and Nemesio Domingo, Michael Woo, a future LELO lawyer Abraham "Rami" Arditi, Scott and Santos met regularly to strategize how to confront "the decades of segregation and discrimination…against Filipino

192 Michael Woo, interviewed by Nicole Grant Trevor Griffey, December 30, 2005, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, Special Collections, University of Washington (Here after cited as SCRLHP, SCUW).

193 Ibid.

cannery workers."[194] The conclusion drawn from the meeting was that the UCWA's "two-pronged" strategy of "grassroots worker organizing" with the threat of "industry wide lawsuits" could break the back of generations of segregation that segmented Asian migrant workers into the lowest paid and most hazardous employment in Alaska's salmon industry. It was believed that the results of successful Title VII lawsuits against the largest cannery companies would ultimately ripple throughout the entire industry.[195]

Once the ACWA took form, however, its members struggled to replicate the legal success of their allies in the construction trades. As Nemesio Domingo explained, a crucial part of the UCWA's achievements was due to its ability "to entice the government to intervene." By contrast, the lawsuits filed by the ACWA would take several years to reach the courts, with the first not being settled until 1977 and the last being drawn out as late as 1992. For a group of workers, who, Nemesio acknowledged, "[D]idn't have any money," and relied upon migratory labor for survival, such extended legal battles presented serious challenges.[196]

But the law, while key to the UCWA and their sister organizations' strategies, was not considered an end in itself. Writing to a colleague in 1974, Scott argued, "We [the UCWA] really don't see our salvation in courts, only short term goals and gains." Rather, the UCWA leader contended, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act served as an "organizing tool" to mobilize workers historically segregated into unskilled labor around their right to meaningful forms of employment.[197] Beyond legal redress, autonomous "minority worker organizations" were envisioned as incubators of working-class militancy for those whose economic

[194] Bob Santos, *Humbows, Not Hotdogs! Memoirs of a Savvy Asian American Activist* (Seattle, Washington: International Examiner Press, 2002), 141.
[195] Michael Woo, Interview By Cindy Domingo, In Authors Possession.
[196] *Domingo Jr., Nemesio. Interview by Cindy Domingo. Tape Recording. Seattle, WA, 28, Feb., 2003.*
[197] Tyree Scott to Stanley Wise, 4 April, 1974, TSP, SCUW.

marginalization was tied to the industry and union racism, and quite frankly, as one supporter contended, "no one was organizing."[198]

In fact, in the context of expanding their organizing model beyond Seattle, the UCWA's vision of an alternative labor movement gained clarity within the minds of the organization's leadership. In Trevor Griffey's account of UCWA organizing in the U.S. South, he cited Tyree Scott, who described Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as a "natural tool for those groups who were already trying to solve the problems their white counterparts look to unions to solve." The UCWA was only a "catalyst agent," he added, "to demystify the law."[199] More importantly, once they did so, UCWA organizers quickly labored to foster local autonomy. The lawsuits they put in motion were managed by "autonomous workers' organizations" whose rank-and-file were drawn from the legal cases' "affected workers."

In doing so, the UCWA's actions mirrored the organizing of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) a decade earlier. As Barbara Ransby has noted, under Ella Baker's guidance, the "shock troops" of the southern Black freedom movement took their lead from "local organizing traditions" in rural areas of the South and tirelessly sought to cultivate local leadership.[200] Similarly, by placing grassroots workers in control of their own struggles, the UCWA's sister organizations, which totaled twelve by the end of 1973, had an importance that extended beyond overseeing industry desegregation. "Minority worker organizations," as the UCWA described them at the time, became spaces of self-determination for workers that often had little power at their worksites as well as in their community.

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[198] Michael Simmons, Phone Interview With Author, 13 January, 2015.

[199] Griffey, *Black Power's Labor Politics: The United Construction Workers Association and Title VII Law in the 1970s*: 385.

[200] Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement : A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

This emphasis on local autonomy was crucial for adapting the UCWA's approach to conditions in the canneries. Both in Seattle and in the South, UCWA organizers faced similar dynamics of workplace segregation: Black workers were either excluded from employment, or locked into unskilled labor. If this occurred in industries that had an active trade union, "organized labor" was almost exclusively white and typically played a pivotal role in workplace segregation. Racial hierarchies in the Alaska salmon canning industry, however, operated under slightly different means. As discussed earlier, industry segregation in Alaska relied on a dual union system. The predominantly white Alaska Fisherman Union (AFU) represented the highest paid positions in the industry, which ranged from the "beach gang workers" who unloaded boats full of fish once they arrived at the processing plants to be canned. Moreover, the highest paid positions in the canneries, those of machinists and supervisors, were typically reserved for whites who had some familial connection to company managers. In contrast, the arduous labor of sorting, processing, and cleaning fish was reserved for the predominantly Filipino union, the ILWU Local 37, as well as the local Alaska Native workforce.

While this segregated union structure mirrored the experiences of the Black workers the UCWA had previously organized, the predominantly Filipino leadership of the ILWU Local 37 presented a significant twist in the construction worker group's strategies. In the case of the 1970 Department of Justice lawsuit that propelled the formation of the UCWA, it targeted the racism of Seattle's building trade unions. Given the corrupt practices of the ILWU Local 37, ACWA's leadership initially debated whether to include the cannery union in their lawsuits.[201] The pervading opinion of the group, however, shied away from this since the union still had a great deal of support within the Filipino community, especially amongst elderly workers. A bulk

[201] See previous chapter for discussion of union corruption and the political development of Silme and Nemesio Domingo.

of the older Filipino workers had vivid memories of the early "militant" years of the ILWU Local 37. Some even recalled the exploitative "contractor labor system" that preceded the union's formation in the 1930s.[202] In addition, organizing a group of migrant workers poses challenges that the UCWA never faced. Much of the success they found in organizing black workers relied on building broad-based community support, and turning their Seattle office, located in the heart of the city's historically black community, the Central District, into an organizing space. Applying those same strategies to a work force that stretched from the Pacific Northwest to Southern California, and in some cases across the Pacific, was a challenge. Thus, from the very beginning, it was clear the UCWA's foray into organizing workers in Alaska required a unique application of their organizing strategy.

For scholars who emphasize racial disunity during the civil rights era, the distinct methods of segregation faced by Black construction and Filipino cannery workers could be viewed as a divisive force that was too great an obstacle for multiracial coalitions of the period to overcome. For instance, in Gordon Mantler's recent study on Black-Chicano relations during the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) Poor People's Campaign, he argued that both groups' racially distinct readings of poverty, as well as the "racial paternalism" of SCLC toward non-black communities of color, resulted in the campaign's ultimate failure to build a multiracial movement of the poor.[203] However, in sharp contrast to the racial divisive politics of SCLC, UCWA's reading of self-determination mirrored that of Ella Baker and SNCC's interpretation of the term, which ultimately was more conducive to cross-racial alliances. According to Ransby, "One of the crucial organizing principles that Ella Baker taught, and SNCC absorbed, was the meaning of self-determination." Instead of being a call for racial separatism, Ransby notes, "For

[202] For a discussion of the contractor system and the Filipino-led union struggles to abolish this system, see Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor : The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon industry, 1870-1942*.

[203] Mantler, *Power to the Poor : Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974*.

Baker…[it was a] democratic idea that an oppressed group, class, or community, had the right to determine the nature of the fight to end its oppression."[204] In the case of the UCWA, when they applied this "democratic idea" to support other workers of color, it fostered a non-hierarchical relationship of solidarity.

The UCWA's correspondence with potential funders of the ACWA, as well as the initial plaintiffs in the cannery lawsuits, illustrate the ways the UCWA's politics of self-determination shaped the relationship between these two worker organizations. In a letter to the Campaign for Human Development, an organization that previously supported the UCWA, Tyree Scott described the UCWA as a "sister organization," and himself as a "fund raiser…working under the auspices of the board of the Cannery Workers Association." On top of noting the ACWA's board was "all Asian," Scott explained it was Asian cannery workers themselves not "some government agency" carrying out the lawsuits against the Alaska salmon canning industry. The significance of this to Scott was that Asian workers, the ones that seasonally toiled in the industry's worst conditions, would have "the control over the project and the direction it would take."[205]

Michael Woo echoed Scott's sentiments in a 1973 letter he wrote to potential cannery worker plaintiffs and future ACWA members. In a meeting notice that brought together approximately fifty cannery workers in October of 1973, Woo implored cannery workers to take a leadership role in the effort the UCWA started. He wrote, "[W]e [UCWA] have reached a point where our actions should center around directives from a group of individuals working together to combat these problems; individuals like yourselves." In reference to how the UCWA envisioned their relationship to the pending lawsuits, Woo emphasized, "[O]ur role is to provide

[204] Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement : A Radical Democratic Vision*: p. 300.
[205] *Tyree Scott to Robert Carvaljal, 15 February, 1974, TSP, SCUW.*

resources such as legal assistance, community organizing, and possibly financial aid *without attempting to dominate."* The letter called for a meeting to form an "autonomous workers' organization" of "minority cannery workers." Because the black worker group viewed themselves as a "sister organization" that provided support and solidarity "when needed," Woo told cannery workers "it is vital that you attend [the meeting]."[206] Both Scott and Woo's statement reveal the UCWA never intended to control the direction of the ACWA. Rather, by providing Asian cannery workers with the resources they lacked, the UCWA helped build the capacity of Asian cannery workers to practice self-determination. Or, as Michael Woo explained to a funder of the ACWA, the UCWA simply "empower[ed] them [the ACWA] with the necessary resources to continue their struggle."[207]

"Many Asian Brothers…Willing to Commit Themselves to Change"

Woo played a central role in promoting the self-determination of cannery workers. While a UCWA funding report suggested his hiring, at least in part, was an effort to "relate better to Asian community employment concerns," his connections to the canneries, as well as the Domingo brothers, had a much longer history. In 1967, then in his late teens, Woo choose to follow the summer employment pattern of his Filipino friends who spent that summers in the canneries. In a twist of fate, the ILWU Local 37 dispatched him to a cannery in Uganik Bay, the very same site that employed the Domingo Brothers. Nemesio, Woo remembered, worked solely in the kitchen, but Silme split his time between the kitchen and the cannery floor. When Silme worked as a "slimer," a cannery position tasked with cleaning any remaining unwanted parts of the salmon once it passed through the butcher machine, he and Woo toiled on the "same wet

[206] Michael Woo, "Notice," undisclosed date, Tyree Scott Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington (hereafter cited as TSP, SCUW).
[207] Michael Woo to Phil Park, 3 January 1974, TSP, SCUW.

[cannery] floor." Reminiscing about their time together in Alaska, Woo remembered, "[A] lot of camaraderie [was built]…we worked long hours [and] between work or sleep, were doing laundry, playing cards or music, or just hanging out."[208]

This friendship cultivated in wet, hazardous conditions and segregated barracks was rekindled when Michael Woo and Silme Domingo returned to Alaska as organizers. While Woo had been several years removed from laboring in the canneries, Domingo had more recent and bitter experiences in the industry. Laboring in the canneries every summer season between 1967 and 1971, his final term of employment in the industry demonstrated the degree to which cannery officials labored to preserve a docile work force. Now equipped with the resources and the organizing strategies of the UCWA, Domingo and Woo returned to Alaska to mobilize rank-and-file workers similarly incensed with industry racism.

Still an undergraduate student at the University of Washington, Domingo stole a letterhead from the department of fisheries, which he used to produce a memo that identified Woo and himself as "business administrative students from the University of Washington." They departed Seattle in late July of 1973 with their forged letter, which afforded them a two-week window before cannery superintendents caught them. During this period, they introduced themselves to different cannery superintendents, but according to Woo, "[T]hey'd never see us again." Instead, he explained, "We were in the bunkhouses, talking and organizing, getting stories and firing people up."[209] Yet, the workers they encountered needed little encouragement to be riled up. Over the course of their investigation, Domingo and Woo found a number of laborers already engaged in altering their conditions in Alaska. In the few years preceding their trip, cannery workers stopped production with strikes unauthorized by union leaders, protested the

[208] Michael Woo, Phone Interview with Author, 8 August, 2014.

[209] Ligaya Domingo, Building a Movement: Filipino American Union and Community Activism in the 1970s (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2010), 55.

discrepancy in food provided to white and non-white workers, and in one case had already organized themselves into a grievance committee.[210] Taken together, these isolated acts of resistance illustrated the wide potential for a unified worker movement.

Upon returning to Seattle, Domingo and Woo produced a thirty-six-page document that depicted the deplorable working and living conditions cannery workers faced in Alaska. In it, the two former cannery workers turned labor organizers offered a vivid depiction of industry-wide segregation. One of the most alarming were the housing conditions. When it came to housing, there was nothing "de facto" about segregation. The houses provided to Asian cannery workers, as companies documents revealed, were called "Filipino houses." Across the industry, Domingo and Woo witnessed Asian cannery workers who resided in "condemned buildings" that shared the "similar characteristics of oldness, decadency, unsanitar[iness], and inadequa[cy]." In some cases, those buildings also housed the "kitchens and dining facilities" for the Asian work force. The report documented several cases of rooms that had "no adequate beds." Instead, "workers utilize[d] mattresses thrown on the floor because of the scarce and yet poor quality of…beds available." In terms of the "washing facilities," workers complained that they were "inadequate and unsanitary." After their shift, many found they regularly did not have enough hot water for "more than five showers." For instance, in a cannery in Ketchikan, "[T]here was only one washer to handle the…needs of 50 workers." Because of this, Domingo and Woo found, "Many of the workers chose to take their wash [of clothes] to town."[211] This lack of basic housing needs was further exacerbated by the average cannery worker's condition of labor, which was wet, arduous, and dangerous.

[210] *Alaska Cannery Worker Association, "Report on Cannery Conditions," 10 September, 1973, TSP, SCUW.*
[211] Silme Domingo and Michael Woo, "Report on 1973 Observatory Trip to Alaska," TSP, SCUW.

To no one's surprise, Domingo and Woo's travels proved that industry living conditions were separate and woefully unequal. But they also revealed an important gender dynamic of life and labor in the industry: female cannery workers exclusively meant white women. At a cannery run by the Excursion Inlet Packing Company, Domingo and Woo's observations of a "white girls dormitory" attested to this. Named "Tongass Lodge," the bunkhouse was located approximately a quarter to half a mile from the companies various "Filipino bunkhouses and "Alaska Native village." The two organizers describe Tongass Lodge as "the most impressive living facility" they observed during their trip. "Upon entering," they wrote, "we were immediately met by a lady who acted as a "house mother," who "allowed us to enter." Both Domingo and Woo were "astonished to see the most modern living facility…in an Alaska cannery." They noted, "There were found beds in each room…curtains on the windows," linoleum floors, and "individual lights by each bed." In regard to the bathroom facilities, they found that the appliances were "new and completely automatic." Soon afterwards, they were taken to a bunkhouse strictly for "guests, white fishermen and white employees," which Domingo and Woo attested, "[W]as very similar in every respect to Tongass Lodge."[212] The objective conditions of labor in the canneries alone did not allow for cannery workers to imagine race and gender alliances within the industry.

The material benefits of whiteness were not limited to the luxuries of a "modern living facility," they also extended to the cannery floor. Numerous Filipino workers raised the concern that "a large number of [White] women [were employed]…in [ILWU] Local 37 jurisdiction."[213] This was a clear violation of Local 37's union contract that reserved employment in the "fish houses" for its rank-and-file. Many of the white women employed by the industry were "either

[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.

friends or relatives of white employees," typically the cannery superintendent.[214] A "new operation" in the canneries that heavily employed women was the "Cold Storage" freezer. There, they cleaned the fresh salmon, which was "quickly frozen."[215] This labor was far less time consuming and hazardous than traditional cannery labor. Yet, even when whites worked alongside non-white workers, Domingo and Woo noted, they earned "a higher rate because they belong[ed] to the Alaska Fishermen's Union." Over the previous two decades, the number of jobs in the cannery reserved for Local 37 members drastically declined. In fact, the union only sent four hundred workers a season to Alaska in the early 1970s. This was a stark decline from the forties and fifties, when they dispatched six thousand workers.[216] The White women who entered the canneries during this period were viewed by many in the ACWA as another encroachment on the limited autonomy and resources the industry afforded Asian migrant laborers.

By far, the most alarming section of Domingo and Woo's report was the countless descriptions of workplace induced injuries. "In one such case," Domingo and Woo stated, "[A] worker had slipped on wet concrete and grabbed for one of the uncovered vertical fish ladders." This incident resulted in "three of his fingers…[being] crushed and later amputated." Another case involved a "can catching apparatus" that broke twice in one day and injured the feet of two workers. When the workers requested "proper foot wear," their cannery superintendent responded, "[F]or the last 50 years no one ever wore special foot wear and that it wasn't

[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] "Cannery Closures," New Tide, July 1974, 4, Cannery Workers and Farm Laborer Union, Local 7 Records, Special Collections, University of Washington (Hereafter cited CWFLU, SCUW).

necessary."[217] Collectively, these outrageous conditions compelled workers to talk to Domingo and Woo, and later they joined the ACWA.

By the first week of August, the two organizers from Seattle had worn out their welcome. Cannery superintendents, upon calling university officials, discovered they had no connections to the University of Washington department mentioned in their letter. Kicked out of the canneries, the two organizers, Woo remembered, "slept on the dock that night waiting for the float plane to come in the morning." The UCWA staff member added, "[W]e were just happy to get out of there alive."[218] But the two weeks of organizing already set the stage for the autonomous worker organization the UCWA envisioned. When workers flew back to Seattle at the end of the canning season, both Domingo and Woo greeted them at the airport and "did further organizing." In the following year, Woo, alongside Sam Cabansag, the ACWA's first director, whose salary was paid by the UCWA, traveled throughout California, where they discussed "organizing for the year, as well as identifying a "contact person for each region."[219]

"Title VII Organizing" and the Broadening a Tradition of Manong Knowledge

Upon Domingo and Woo's return to Seattle, the ACWA rapidly took form. In early October, a group of approximately fifty former cannery workers met at the UCWA office. In the coming weeks, the collective mobilized their righteous anger into a movement organization. By October 12, 1973, the newly formed group drafted a constitution, adopted the name the "Alaska Cannery Workers Association," and elected officers. It was not solely in name that the ACWA mirrored their comrades in the construction trades. They imbued their fellow cannery workers with the

[217] Silme Domingo and Michael Woo, "Report on 1973 Observatory Trip to Alaska," TSP, SCUW.
[218] Michael Woo, Interview by Ron Chew, 2 September 2011, ACWA/Local 37 interviews, Wing Luke Musuem Library (Here after cited as ACWA/Local 37, WLML).
[219] Michael Woo, Phone Interview with Author, 8 August, 2014.

same self-determination that the UCWA afforded their rank-and-file. Namely, the ACWA assured that cannery workers themselves had control over their elected leaders and in organizational decisions. This sentiment was evident in a letter penned by Nemesio Domingo where he encouraged the ACWA's membership to vote in their coming November 1974 election. The ACWA organizer wrote, "ACWA is <u>your</u> organization. You have the power to determine the direction of ACWA by voting. Officers and Executive Board make priorities; hires and fires the staff; and makes all policy decisions." He ended his correspondence by imploring the membership to "*militantly* exercise you[r] right to *self-determination* and *self-development* of ACWA — Vote!" (own emphasis).[220]

The ACWA's legal battle with Alaska's salmon industry developed rather quickly, largely due to the support of the UCWA. Even prior to the ACWA formation, the UCWA filed the first lawsuit against a major cannery company, the New England Fishing Company (NEFCO). Typically, filing employment discrimination lawsuits was a slow process. During this period, first, a worker was required to file a formal complaint with a regional EEOC officer, and then wait to receive a "right to sue" letter. However, this was expedited because Nemesio filed such a complaint after his 1971 termination, using Nemesio's complaint as the groundwork for a case that later included several other ACWA members. Michael Fox, in one of his first activities as lawyer for the UCWA, initiated the lawsuit against NEFCO.

When it came to the outreach of potential plaintiffs, Michael Woo and Silme Domingo continued to build lines of communication with industry workers. In doing so, they traveled along a migratory labor cycle that Filipinos on the West Coast had known quite well. Since the 1920s, Filipino colonial migrants moved between seasonal work in West Coast agricultural fields and Alaska's salmon canneries. Organizing this dispersed migrant workforce was once a priority

[220] Nemesio Domingo to All ACWA Members, 5 November 1974.

of the ILWU Local 37. Yet, by the end of the 1950s, Cold War repression pushed many of the activists committed to this approach out of the union's leadership, if not out of the organization entirely.[221] The ACWA's efforts to build wider rank-and-file support for their pending lawsuits, however, reignited the Manongs' tradition of labor organizing.

Correspondence between Woo and a group of laborers from California revealed that the UCWA's Black Power politics anchored the political message that the ACWA delivered to aggrieved workers. In 1974, when the initial lawsuit against NEFCO was in its early stages, a group Local 37 members in California expressed trepidation about their case, fearing the loss of jobs. In turn, Michael Woo countered with an expansive reading of "job loss."

> [H]ave you ever thought about how many jobs were lost over the past eight years to…friends or relatives of…white employees? Or about the number of brothers who were injured because of unsafe or inadequate equipment? Or how about the Egg Department, [which] has completely disappeared in this year's contract…Not even to mention those who chose to speak up for what they believe is <u>right</u>, and end up with a termination letter…We are the 'nigger' in Alaska and need to start deciding our own destiny.[222]

Here, Woo aimed to spark an anti-racist, class-consciousness that drew upon the many workplace grievances he had encountered in his past year of organizing cannery workers. In doing so, he strove to link cannery closures and decreased employment opportunities to institutionalized racism in the industry. As Woo ended his letter, he emphasized that the lawsuit's potential victory should not solely be measured in immediate material gains. By challenging historical industry practices of discrimination, Woo exclaimed,

> "The workers will have shown not only themselves but all other workers who are being oppressed, that "the man" isn't all that tough. And they were able to do this without the help of anyone else but through the sacrifice and perseverance of themselves and their brothers. PLEASE DON'T LOOK AWAY FROM YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES!!"[223]

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[221] De Vera, "Without Parallel: The Local 7 Deportation Cases, 1949-1955."
[222] Michael Woo to Unknown, n.d., TSP, SCUW.
[223] Ibid.

In addition to utilizing the UCWA's organizing strategies, the black worker group's political networks also proved critical. Through the black worker group's connections to the American Friends Service Committee's "Community Relations Division" and the Third World Coalition, they had open lines of communication with anti-racist activists across the country. Given that half of the workers that Alaska's salmon canning industry employed lived in California during the off-season, the UCWA's affiliations paid dividends for the newly-formed cannery worker group. It is unclear her connections to the AFSC, but Anna Chan, an Ethnic Studies student at the University of California Berkeley, was paid five hundred dollars in the summer of 1974 to work on the ACWA's lawsuit. During this brief period, Chan connected ACWA organizers in Seattle to a law firm based in Oakland's Chinatown, the Asian Law Caucus, and personally "took statements from plaintiffs and contacted new ones." Furthermore, she strengthened the group's connections to Filipino organizations in the Bay Area, such as the Katipunan Ng Mga Demokratikong (a national Anti-Martial Law whose headquarters were in Oakland), Filipinos for Affirmative Action, and Pilipino Organizing Committee (a progressive Filipino organization in San Francisco's Mission District). In spite of being a small organization based in Seattle, the UCWA's connections to activists outside of the Pacific Northwest played an important role as the ACWA's newly filed lawsuits required that staff organizers build relationships with workers spread across a wide geographic space.

Even conversations with Filipino workers in California brought into focus the value of the UCWA's approach to movement building. During an October 1975 ACWA board meeting, activists recalled an illuminating conversation with workers in California. The meeting notes explained, "The Filipinos in the area [Stockton] generally do not support the United Farm Workers." This had much to do with the ways "the UFW emphasized too much the Chicano

aspect [of their organization] to the point of excluding other peoples (i.e. Posters are all in [S]panish or [E]nglish)." Similarly, other workers in the San Joaquin Valley noted, "[T]here are more Filipino agricultural workers than Chicanos in that area, but through their own [the UFW's] narrow outlook and planning, they lost support of the Filipinos."[224] These conversations were four years removed from Larry Itlong's resignation from the union, an event that made public racial tensions within the organization. The result was a large defection of Filipino workers to a rival Teamsters Union.[225] Analyzing this as an organizing mistake, ACWA board members agreed, "The lesson to be learned is that ACWA must be very careful in its organizing not to be labeled as a Filipino only group. We must emphasize our "Asian" focus and in a broader sense our support of all Third World people."[226]

Matt Garcia's work on the tense relations between Filipinos and Mexicans in the UFW demonstrated that the cause of interracial strife within the union was tied to a range of issues, some of which were well highlighted in the board meeting notes discussed above.[227] What was more significant about the ACWA's analysis of the relationship between the UFW and Filipino farm workers was what it said about the cannery worker group's own multiracial leanings. The very same meeting notes discussed California activists who were impressed with the powerful alliances the two-year old organization cultivated in Seattle. Records showed, "People in California were impressed with the ACWA policy of working with other Third World groups and women. The concept of "no separate peace."[228] Our progress will be observed by folks." While "people in California" may have referred to San Joaquin farm workers who still had the

[224] "ACWA Board Meeting Notes," 21 October, 1975, *CWFLU, SCUW*.
[225] Matt Garcia, "Labor, Migration, and Social Justice in the Age of the Grape Boycott," *Gastronomics: The Journal of Food and Culture* 7.3 (2007), 71.
[226] "ACWA Board Meeting Notes," October 21, 1975, *CWFLU, SCUW*.
[227] Matt Garcia, "Labor, Migration, and Social Justice in the Age of the Grape Boycott," *Gastronomics: The Journal of Food and Culture* 7.3 (2007), 71.
[228] "ACWA Board Meeting Notes," 21 October, 1975, CWFLU, SCUW.

sour taste of a failed labor coalition in their mouth, the extensive organizing that the ACWA conducted in the San Francisco Bay Area implied groups there were also impressed. Considering that scholars have frequently pointed to the San Francisco Bay Area's as an exceptional case of multiracial, third world left coalitions, the awe that certain Bay Area activists expressed toward the ACWA is telling.[229]

The concept referenced in meeting notes, "no separate peace," was a slogan developed by the UCWA that emphasized, "no single struggle or issue [of oppression was] separate or isolated from one another." It was a philosophy that emphasized building unity, whether it was within trade unions with white workers, amongst communities of color, and even across borders. The slogan appeared consistently in organizational documents in 1974. The group even used the term for the name of their newspaper that ran from 1975 to 1978.[230] It is unclear whether the concept was in the UCWA's active vocabulary by 1973, but the term's politics certainly animated the UCWA's ~~its~~ relationship with the ACWA. As a result, no separate peace also bled into struggles for worker unity on the cannery floor.

In 1974, Sammy Daclan, a Filipino cannery worker in Chatham, wrote to ACWA organizer Sam Cabansag and explained that Filipino workers experienced improved conditions after the NEFCO lawsuit was filed, but this did not extend to minority workers writ large. Namely, Daclan wrote, "Native Alaskans were still subject to horrible work conditions…poor housing facilities, [and] a seasonal guarantee of [only] $600." Daclan was unequivocal in this contention, "Out of the total company's workers the [I]ndians are worst off." The letter went on to note that

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[229] In Laura Pulido's study of the U.S. Third World Left in Los Angeles, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*, she makes the point that San Francisco had a more open embrace of inter-ethnic cooperation than Los Angeles.
Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left : Radical Activism in Los Angeles*: 179.

[230] For brief explanation of *No Separate Peace*, see the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project. The multi-media project has uploaded several issues of the newspaper online.
"No Separate Peace," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington, accessed 16 January 2015, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/NSP.htm.

several indigenous workers were interested in filing complaints against NEFCO and becoming plaintiffs on the pending lawsuit. Daclan also proudly boasted that he had "made waves…for trying to help the native Indians' situation." In particular, he documented a confrontation with a cannery superintendent, where he was scolded and reminded that his responsibilities were as a "delegate for Local 37, not for the native Indians." In response, Daclan retorted, "I was a member of the ACWA so making me the representative of all cannery workers." The confrontation ended with the superintendent walking away, but not before Daclan "gave him both issues of the ACWA's publication, *The New Tide*," which detailed their organization's use of worker organizing and industry lawsuits to destroy the system of cannery segregation once and for all.[231]

After hearing about the developments taking place in Chatham, Cabansag wrote to Michael Woo, "Those organizing efforts are going to have to be [a] chief priority."[232] By September of that year, the ACWA's board of directors already met with indigenous cannery workers and unanimously passed a resolution that resolved, the ACWA, "[A]cknowledges the rights and necessity for self-determination…of Native Alaskans to intervene into ACWA's litigations in their own behalf."[233] Within the next year, Alaskan Legal Services, a law office that provided free legal support to the state's indigenous communities, joined the ACWA lawsuit as the representative for Native Alaskan plaintiffs.[234]

This solidarity also extended to Black workers in the canneries. In 1974, Clovis Campbell approached the ACWA and shared his experiences of employment discrimination working for NEFCO. In June 8, 1974, he was demoted from "Assistant Engineer to Process Worker," but, as

[231] Sammy Daclan to Sam Cabansag Jr., July 6, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.
[232] Sam Cabansag Jr. to Michael Woo, July 12, 1974, *CWFLU Local 7, SCUW*.
[233] Alaska Cannery Worker Association, Board of Director Meeting Minutes, September 28, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.
[234] Steven Lock to Alaskan Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, June 11, 1975, *CWFLU Local 7, SCUW*.

his EEOC complaint letter stated, he was still required to fulfill his previous employment duties.[235] Given the distinct nature of his case, the ACWA's lawyers agreed to represent Campbell in a separate lawsuit. But the very fact that Campbell approached the ACWA illustrates the reputation they developed within the industry. Furthermore, the fact that ACWA members provided him with proper representation revealed, just as the UCWA before them, the Asian cannery worker organization "walked their talk" of Third World unity.

Community-Based Activism and Gender Politics

The example that the UCWA set as a "community-based labor organization" influenced the ACWA well beyond the canneries. From early on, the ACWA understood the importance of immersing themselves in Seattle's Asian American community. A year prior to their formation as a workers group, many ACWA members were active in a broad multiracial coalition of activists that protested the adverse affects pending stadium construction would have on residents of Seattle's historically Asian neighborhood, the International District (ID). Supporting a grassroots struggle to maintain the district was especially significant to ACWA, since "485 cannery workers" called that section of Seattle home during the off-season.[236] With this in mind, the cannery worker group utilized Michael Woo's family connection in the ID to find cheap office space in the neighborhood.[237] With many ACWA members terminated from future work in the canneries, organizing in the ID became a central part of their activism.

Between 1973 and 1976, the ACWA developed a series of programs aimed at building relationships with rank-and-file cannery workers in the area. For example, in this three-year

[235] Nemesio Domingo to Alaska Cannery Workers Association Board Members, 11 October, 1974, CWFLU, SCUW.
[236] "Social Preservation and Improvement: Community Action Plan for the International District," May 1975, TSP, SCUW.
[237] Michael Woo, Phone Interview By Author, 8 August, 2014.

period the ACWA took over the International District newspaper, the *International Examiner*, and implemented a district food program, held an annual International District May Day rally, and led a campaign that demanded "revenue generated by stadium construction…address the adverse effects" the construction project had on "the International District and the greater Asian American community." Building upon the UCWA's existing campaign for construction jobs, the ACWA incorporated into their demands that "80 Asian American must be guaranteed apprenticeship and journeyman jobs on the Domed Stadium site."[238]

During this period, ACWA records reveal that the organization struggled to stay afloat financially, often paying staff workers late. But by having an office space, equipment, and resources, Terri Mast recalled, "that office became the place where a number of organizations [within the Asian community] came together…[and] used that as their H[ead] Q[uarters] as well."[239] With the UCWA being a central link to many of these resources, they indirectly shaped the development of Seattle's Asian American Movement. For instance, outside of student activists who were able to redirect campus resources into the community, few community-based organizations in the ID had access to a meeting space (outside of free rooms provided by local churches) and office supplies. The UCWA's initial funds, at the very least, covered these minor, but important, expenses. By "empowering [the ACWA] with the resources to continue their struggle," they facilitated the process of the ACWA becoming the working-class anchor of Seattle's Asian American Movement that increasingly was moving its political energy away from campuses and into the community.

As the group built its base, as well as it home, in the ID, their grassroots community organizing, as well as the behind the scenes work that went into getting their cannery company

[238] Alaska Cannery Workers' Association, "ACWA Community Meeting – Wing Luke Musuem," 28, December 1974.

[239] Terri Mast, Interview by Ron Chew, 12 December 2010, ACWA/Local 37, WLML.

lawsuits off the ground, provide avenues to interrogate further the group's gender politics. As previously mentioned, female laborers in the canneries were typically white women, and thus linked to a larger problem of workplace segregation. By centering the activism that took place in both the ACWA and LELO's offices, however, we find that a number of women were drawn from student, anti-war, and community activist circles and conducted some of the central organizational labor that allowed for cannery lawsuits to occur.

The ACWA's first administrative assistant, Julia Laranang, at the time a student parent, was pulled into the organization's connections to campus activism. Laranang met Silme Domingo at the University of Washington during a campus event that encouraged students to "get…involved in fighting…martial law in the Philippines." After the event, Silme described the legal cases the ACWA filed, the grassroots activist members were conducting with cannery workers, and asked her to be an "office person" for the ACWA. In reflecting upon why she joined the organization, Laranang described how she "literally grew up in the Chinatown/International District," the area where many elderly cannery workers lived during the off seasons. Additionally, both her father and brother were cannery workers. During this period, Laranang played a central role in the day-to-day functions of the organization, where she "answered phones, typed up letters [to plaintiffs]…[and] helped with the discovery work [for the lawsuit]."[240]

The nature of her labor reflected the gender dynamics that characterized the UCWA and the ACWA. With both construction and cannery labor forces being male dominated, female involvement was segmented within office work. Laranang's position in the ACWA mirrored that of two other LELO secretaries. Terri Mast had a connection to cannery labor and the Filipino community that extended beyond her involvement in LELO and the ACWA. In the early 1970s, Mast alongside her Filipino boyfriend, worked together in a non-union cannery.

[240] Julia Laranang, interviewed by Ron Chew, 14 January 2011, ACWA/Local 37, WLML.

Additionally, in 1972, she accompanied her boyfriend's family to the Philippines for three months, just as then President Marcos declared Martial Law. Upon her return to Seattle, her interest in anti-martial law activism saw her political world overlap with that of the ACWA. Subsequently, Mast began volunteering for the cannery worker organization, which eventually evolved into a secretary position.[241] As a white woman it would have been easy for the group to associate her with the other workers in the canneries that were hired ahead of ILWU Local 37 members. However, the fact that she worked in a small cannery, involved in anti-martial law activists, and even volunteered for the ACWA, endeared her to the group.

Beverly Sims, another LELO secretary, traveled a similar path in her eventual involvement in the UCWA. A student at the University of Washington during the late 1960s and early 1970s, as well as girlfriend to a Black Panther at the time, she had prior experience in activism. But upon graduation her search for employment eventually led her to become an office secretary for LELO. By the mid-1970s, she would become an active member of the construction worker group. Through the UCWA she became the second Black woman to enter the "minority apprentice program" for the building trades, and the first one to become a journeyman.[242] She and Mast would also play critical roles in the UCWA and ACWA's respective struggles to build alliances between workers of color and women in their respective industries during the latter part of the 1970s.[243] However, their place within each organization, just as Laranang's, was limited to making a meaningful contribution by doing the every-day work of the organization. However, as the following chapters will show, the very women segmented into "women's work" within both organizations would not only conduct the everyday labor of keeping their respective legal

[241] Terri Mast, Interview by Ron Chew, 12 December 2010, ACWA/Local 37, WLML.
[242] Beverly Sims, Phone Interview with Author, 8 November, 2014.
[243] See chapter 4.

struggles moving forward, they also provided the important intellectual labor that advanced their organizations' intersectional analysis of race, gender, and class oppression.

Conclusion – Solidarity as Capacity Building

At first glance the relationship between the UCWA and ACWA may seem momentary. By the mid-1970s, both organizations decided to prioritize working within unions in their own industries, which ultimately led them in similar, but separate paths. Outside of coming together for matters related to LELO, there were few instances of both groups working on collective projects in the later half of the decade. The larger point that this chapter makes, however, is the ACWA's independence, or better yet self-determination, was the ultimate goal of the UCWA. Michael Woo's initial organizing with cannery workers was never imagined as a long-term scenario. It was hoped that the race and class-consciousness that Title VII organizing sparked would motivate cannery workers to identify new directions for rank-and-file action in the industry and their community. By the late 1970s, this consciousness evolved into a full-fledged movement by cannery workers to take over the leadership of their union, the ILWU Local 37. In doing so, ACWA activists built more explicitly upon what I have described as Manong Knowledge. In this period, their activism was less influenced by the Black Power politics of their comrades in the construction trades, and more by the radical politics of Filipino labor militants who were victims of the Cold War's unrelenting assault on subversives in the labor movement. Building upon an early period of their union's international solidarity with the Philippine left, ACWA members built bridges between the ILWU Local 37 and Anti-Martial Law labor activists across the Pacific in the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU). This transpacific worker solidarity even resulted in the passage of an ILWU resolution to investigate labor

conditions in the Philippines. This resurgent internationalism, however, had tragic results, culminating in the deaths of two of the ACWA's founding organizers, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes.[244]

Understanding that this longer history of Filipino labor organizing in the canneries was reignited, to a significant degree, via the resources of the UCWA offers an important lesson about multiracial solidarity during the Black Power era. Quite often scholars are drawn to events such as the June First Movement: dramatic multiracial demonstrations that offer concrete evidence of solidarity. By contrast, this chapter examines how activists solidified their multiracial bonds after large-scale political actions come to an end, and coalition members are forced to address their pressing community-based concerns.

Ultimately, the UCWA strove to build the ACWA's capacity to wage an independent struggle against industry racism in the canneries. This history portrays a narrative of Black Power rarely discussed: one where self-determination drives, as opposed to divides, multiracial coalitions. To borrow from Johanna Fernandez – who has examined the activism of Denise Oliver, a Black female leader of the predominantly Puerto Rican group, the Young Lord Party – when we examine the history of Black Power in "unlikely places," we find that self-determination was not isolated to intra-racial pride and independent political organizing.[245] Rather we find that the same political impulse to be politically independent from white dominated institutions also motivated new forms of multiracial solidarity. The relationships between communities of color at any moment in U.S. history are varied and complex. Yet, the Black Power era opened the door to new possibilities. Just as the era's radicalism inspired all communities of color to challenge white supremacy in all its forms, it also created opportunities

[244] Ligaya Domingo, *Building a Movement: Filipino American Union and Community Organizing in the 1970s* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2006), 100.

[245] Fernandez, "Denise Oliver and the Young Lords Party: Stretching the Political Boundaries of Struggle," 272.

to re-imagine new relationships between racial aggrieved groups. This chapter illustrated how Filipino workers relied heavily on the strategies, resources, and organizing experiences of black workers in the UCWA. The following chapters will consider how the UCWA's radical politics were shaped, in no short measure, by the multiracial environment of Seattle's Third World Left.

Chapter 3:

"Buffalo Soldiers…It's Time to Refuse to Ride:" A Pacific World of Race and Empire and Tyree Scott's Vision of Third World Solidarity

"I bet your mama never told you about the Buffalo Soldier. Dignified, Sanctified, Super Sold Trooper." While Quincy Jones was more popularly known as a writer and producer, this line from his 1974 song "Soul Saga" served an important political purpose for Tyree Scott. The United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) leader used those lyric as a springboard to critique activists who romanticized Black culture and history, but neglected the plight of other racial groups. "We Black people" he wrote,

> [H]ave treated the buffalo soldier quite the way the history of imperialism has been treated - either incomplete or with sheer lies…[T]here can be no doubt that the buffalo soldiers killed Indian men, women and children with the same vigor as Col. Custer! This sad history takes on even more significance when we realize that the buffalo soldier himself was fresh from the chains of slavery.[246]

Without question, there is room to challenge the historical accuracy of his account of Black servicemen during the "U.S.-Indian Wars," both their actions and their intentions. Yet, Scott's analysis in his March 1975 essay, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers," provides a glimpse at the nuanced reading of racism, capitalism, and imperialism that Seattle's Third World Left nurtured. Similar to many Black radicals who likened working-class, communities of color to "internal colonies" of the U.S. Empire, Scott developed a unique "colonial analogue." The new political vocabulary that Scott developed in this period, however, was not solely concerned with framing institutionalized racism in global terms. Rather, he sought to articulate a discourse that strengthen solidarity between communities of color, even as conditions appeared ripe for interracial strife. This in itself is not a significant departure from the "Third World unity" that unified the grassroots coalitions of the Black Panther Party, students of color who demanded

[246] Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers," March 1975, *Tyree Scott Paper, Special Collection at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, TSP, SCUW).

"educational self-determination" in the form of community-controlled Ethnic Studies programs, or prompted multiracial delegations of U.S. leftists to travel throughout Revolutionary Asia. What is significant about Scott's Third World perspective is that, instead of emphasizing the similarities of colonial relations "at home" and "abroad," Scott turned to a history of settler colonialism within the United States. By doing so, he found a historical precedent of interracial strife that contemporary activists could learn from. Namely, he referred to Black leaders that squabbled with other aggrieve racial groups as the "New Buffalo Soldiers."[247]

Movement activists of Scott's time had a range of names for those he likened to the black servicemen of the "U.S.-Indian Wars," such as "Uncle Toms" or "Poverty Pimps." On one level, Scott's analysis fit firmly within this line of critique. As he described in his essay,

> The buffalo soldiers I speak of here are now serving in Gerald Ford's cabinet. In the United States Senate…[and] Congress, state assembles and city councils…They are mayors of major cities throughout the county. They run poverty programs that do a lot for them and little for others…They preach the religion that imperialism used to enslave their ancestors every Sunday morning. They are the students that are going to the university to become professionals and make money. They are the black employed workers who use their income to purchase gadgets for his or her false security. They all talk Black, even if only at dinner parties.[248]

The sophistication of Scott's analysis only seemed to grow with time. Two months after he wrote his essay, conflict between Blacks and Chicanos at the University of Washington offered an ideal political space to broaden his analysis. Black and Chicano tensions were high after the director of the Chicano division of the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) was fired by his black supervisor. Scott modeled his speech to accommodate the multiracial campus setting and stated, "Buffalo Soldiers were not confined to the Black community." They included, "Dick Wilson, at Wounded Knee." He even claimed, "Chicanos got a Buffalo Soldier serving as governor of New

[247]Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers," *TSP, SCUW*.
[248] Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers."

Mexico."[249] To illustrate his argument that every community of color had a figure akin to the "Buffalo Soldier, a buffer class that mediated between the white power structure and the Third World masses, he offered the crowd a history lesson.

> [I]f you watched the Vietnam War on TV, you'd see some fighter pilots getting out of their jets…You'd see a whole bunch of Asians getting out of them jets…And if you go to San Antonio, Texas and go across the street from the Alamo and look at the statue…[and] some of the names listed on it, when they get through with Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett, there's some Spanish names on there too. Those are Buffalo Soldiers…and if you read some history, you'll find there were some Indians riding alongside of the cavalry — they called them "Indian scouts." They're Buffalo Soldiers too you know.[250]

Here, what Scott theorized was a condition that Robert Allen described as "internal neocolonialism." In the context of rising black militancy and urban rebellions, Allen argued in his foundational 1969 study, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, "the white power structure, locally and nationally, was presented with a crisis of control" that saw "itself increasingly challenged and discredited in black communities." To "maintain hegemony," Allen explained, the mode of domination shifted. "[D]irect white control of the internal black colony [was replaced] with indirect neo-colonial control through black intermediary groups."[251] In a similar vein to Allen, Scott understood that this buffer class may have had their own personal ambitious that drove their decision making, but they were still pivotal for maintaining "colonial relationships."

In this chapter, I maintain that Scott's "colonial analogue" offers a significant window into the evolution of the UCWA's multiracial politics. For one, it demonstrates how relations between communities of color became their own *terrain of struggle*; one significant enough to prompt Scott to create his own political terminology that challenged the limits of singular racial categories. On another level, Scott's interesting take of black servicemen allow us to theorize

[249] Tyree Scott, "The Album is Body Heat," *No Separate Peace*, Seattle, WA, May 15, 1975, 4.
[250] Tyree Scott, "The Album is Body Heat."
[251] Robert Allen, "Reassessing Internal (Neo)Colonialism Theory," *The Black Scholar* 35.1 (2005): 4.

the unique racial environment that cultivated his critique. In the remainder of this chapter, I seek to "piece together" the various parts of Scott's politicization that compelled him to reimagine how we remember the Buffalo Soldiers. By doing so, my analysis moves between various sites: Okinawa and Vietnam in the mid-1960s, where Scott served as a Marine; Seattle's Third World Left, where he was exposed to Indigenous struggles to preserve treaty rights to fish in Washington State; meetings of the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) Third World Coalition (TWC), where black and Native American activists had disputes over antagonistic histories and financial resources; and back to Seattle where Scott sought to cultivate a movement that linked institutionalized racism in the construction trades to a critique of monopoly capitalism and U.S. imperialism. This genealogy of Scott's analysis allows us to connect his "black radical imagination" to the "Pacific World" of race, war, and settler colonialism that molded it. In doing so, I draw upon the insights of social movement historians and scholars of Asian American studies.

Peniel Joseph's pioneering scholarship in what he has self-described as "Black Power Studies" has deepened our understanding of the modern freedom movement's turn to Black Power. Rather than read the increasing popularity of black nationalism as a "wrong turn" for 1960s activists, Joseph and others have sought to position the era's militants within a larger trajectory of Black radicalism.[252] Central to this scholarly intervention is framing domestic struggles for Black Power within a global context of anti-colonial movements abroad. In this period, black militants did not only draw inspiration from liberation struggles in Africa, their politics were also produced in relation to revolutionary movements in Cuba, China, and

[252] Peniel Joseph, "Introduction: Toward a Historiography of the Black Power Movement," *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*, ed. Peniel Joseph (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.

Vietnam.[253] Scott's analysis of Buffalo Soldiers suggests yet another significant influence on the era's Black Internationalism: Indigenous resistance in the United States.

To illustrate this point, I draw upon the work of Asian American Studies scholars who have theorized the U.S. West as part of a larger world of race and empire shaped by the international flows of capital and people. Recently, Moon-Ho Jung has attempted to theorize what the region's dynamic social environment has meant for the history of radical social movements. In his 2014 edited volume, *The Rising Tide of Color: Race, State Violence, and Radical Social Movements Across the Pacific*, Jung asks the question, "What would it mean to study race, resistance, and the US state…from a decidedly *Pacific framework*?" That is, a perspective that takes into account the variety of "disparate political, social, and cultural movements [that] spann[ed] the North American continent and…the Pacific Ocean."[254] In this context, we can read Scott's analysis of Buffalo Soldier's as an attempt to theorize Third World unity from such a framework.

I argue that Scott drew upon his various experiences within a larger Pacific World of race and empire, specifically the violence of U.S. imperial warfare in the Asia-Pacific and vibrant resistance struggles of indigenous people and other "Third World" leftists in the Pacific Northwest. As a result, Scott developed what I term a "language of solidarity:" a political vocabulary that allowed differentially racialized communities to speak across their differences and identify common interests. These efforts were imperfect attempts at intercultural dialogue, fraught with inaccurate historical accounts and political biases. But they also serve as a

[253] Cythnia Young, "Havana Up in Harlem and Down in Monroe," *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham: Duke University, 2006); Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Durham: Duke University, 2014); Judy Tzu-Chen Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism During the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2013).

[254] Moon Ho-Jung, "Introduction: Opening Salvo," *The Rising Tide of Color: Race, State Violence and Radical Movements Across the Pacific, ed. Moon-Ho Jung* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2014), 8.

reminder. In the face of uneven racial hierarchies, activists still crossed, questioned, and attempted to define for themselves what solidarity meant and how it should be practiced.

Tyree Scott's Critical Consciousness and the "Battlefields of Vietnam"

The last line of Scott's essay, "My Brothers and I, Buffalo Soldiers," acknowledged that he once, "acted as [a] Buffalo Soldier in the past out of ignorance." His last year of service in the Marine Corps, 1965, was ten years removed from the writing of his essay. But his time in the military, especially the last two years where he was stationed in the Asia-Pacific, had a significant impact on him. In fact, his service abroad would spark his social consciousness. In doing so, Scott's political awakening was part of a broader shift in Black consciousness and activism that Kim Philips captured in her book *War!: What is it Good For?* In reference to the Black enlistees that served during the Vietnam War, Philips observed that a "critical consciousness" was "crafted on the battlefields of Vietnam."[255] The records left by Scott before he passed away in 2003 offer limited accounts of his time in Asia. But the few that do exist reveal the war's significant impact on him.

In the face of "few economic and social opportunities," Philips notes, "The military appeared to provide one of the few and consistent responses to the economic plight of black men."[256] Despite Scott attesting to serving out of "ignorance," a 1975 interview suggested he turned to the military out of a similar economic calculation. At age seventeen, Scott dropped out of high school when he learned that his girlfriend at the time was pregnant. Recalling this, Scott explained, "We had no income, no way of living…I never had a job in my life, so…I decide[d] to join…the Marine Corps." After three year of service, Scott re-enlisted. On top of having an

[255] Kim Phillips, *War! What is it Good For?: Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military From World War II to the Iraq War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2014).
[256] Ibid,

additional child to take care of, his motivation hinged upon having the exact "same job prospects and no real-life skills" as when he entered.[257]

But three years into his second term, his travels abroad deepened his analysis of U.S. militarism and the racial implications of his own involvement. As Scott noted, "I developed a political consciousness in 1963…the year that I went to Okinawa." He did not detail what exactly was so enlightening about his first tour in the Asia-Pacific. Rather, he saved his comments for his experience in Vietnam. During a 1975 interview, he recounted an alarming incident where a white military officer harassed not only a local child in Vietnam, but also a fellow Black enlistee. While sitting under a tree with another Black serviceman, Scott explained, "A Vietnamese kid was standing about five feet away." Just as Scott's friend reached out to offer the kid a piece of candy, a higher-ranking officer, who Scott referred to as a "Southern-redneck sergeant", hit his friend in the arm. Their White superior proceeded to scold the two Black servicemen. In Scott's retelling of this event, he noted,

> I can still see the guy's face and all the hate…I had been reading some stuff that made it clear to me that what he [their White sergeant] was doing there was the same as what he would do in the States for a Black and Chicano kid…I just knew that it was bullshit…this guy didn't like black folks, nor did he like Vietnamese folks, but he was there supposedly to fight for democracy.[258]

Events such as these continued throughout the year; one in particularly prompted Scott to vocally express his new views on the war. Just as Scott was about to be dispatched back the United States, a Chicano soldier in a unit right next to his was killed in a sweep. The following day, as Scott recalled, "[A] bunch of his [the deceased soldier's] buddies…were talking about how…they were going to kill some Vietnamese." After hearing this, Scott told the group "they [U.S. Military] were out there killing people and it was their [the Vietnamese's] country." He

[257] Tyree Scott, Interview with William Little, December 9, 1975, *William Little Papers, Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, WLP, SCUW).
[258] Ibid.

modestly explained, "Of course that didn't sit too well." Potentially, he voiced his opinion because he knew he was "heading home." While a clear choice in Scott's mind, his superiors were surprised. His first sergeant even appealed to him, telling Scott that he was a "credit to [his] race." Comments such as these, especially at this point in his political development, only further solidified that leaving the military was the right political decision. At twenty-six years of age, after nine years of service, Scott returned to United States and settled in Seattle, Washington in 1966, where his father had a small electrician business.[259]

While Scott's recollections of his final year of military service were brief, his critiques fostered by the environment of war demonstrated an early glimpse of what he later meant when he called upon Buffalo Soldier to "refuse to ride." Despite the significant economic security that military service provided, he made a political choice to not reenlist. It would be some time before Scott developed into an activist, but the "battlefield of Vietnam" revealed an central aspect of his racial sensibilities that would carry over to his community organizing: his ability to make connections across what Andrea Smith has termed "distinct…but still interrelated" logics of White Supremacy. Serving in Vietnam provided Scott a political education in the connections between two "pillars of White Supremacy" detailed by Smith: his own experiences of "anti-Black racism" and "Orientalism/War" that drove the U.S.'s involvement in the Asia-Pacific. His critique of Buffalo Soldiers, however, would be significantly shaped by his connections with Indigenous activists struggling against another racist history and logic: genocide.

The Roots of the Pacific Northwest's "Fishing Wars"

It was no coincidence that Scott's political analysis involved a critique of settler colonialism. In 1964, five years prior to Tyree Scott establishing himself as a grassroots

[259] Ibid.

organizer in the Pacific Northwest, the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA) made the region an epicenter of indigenous resistance. Namely, the "fishing wars," the organization's violent confrontations with state game wardens and vigilante sports fishermen, as one scholar has argued, paved the way for the Red Power Movement.[260] At the crux of the harassment, arrests, destruction of property, and indiscriminant violence that local Native activists endured were treaty rights established in the 1850s between United States Officials and Tribal Governments.

After the U.S. Congress passed the 1850 Oregon Donation Land Act that "authorized land grants up to 320 acres" to U.S. Citizens, the Territory's governor, Issac Stevens, labored to rapidly "extinguish Native land claims." Between 1853 and 1854, he did just that. According to a 1970 AFSC report, "Governor Steven had made treaties…[that] extinguished the Indian title to more than one hundred thousand square miles [64 million acres] of land now making up much of the territory of Washington, Idaho, and Montana."[261] What these agreements held intact was indigenous people's right to fish in their "accustomed grounds and stations." This was a right that the region's various treaties acknowledged were "in common with all citizens of the Territory."[262] To be clear, this was no act of colonial benevolence. As Bradley Shreve has argued, "More than anything, the governor wanted the land, not the fish." If Stevens prohibited indigenous people from fishing, Shreve rightly noted, his government "would be required to provide some sort of alternative to sustenance."[263] The eventual erosion of fishing rights, much like their land claims, followed a "logic of genocide" that Andrea Smith argues, "holds that indigenous people…must always be disappearing." That way, "non-Indigenous people [could]

[260] Bradley Shreve, "From Time Immemorial: The Fish-In Movement and the Rise of Intertribal Activism," *Pacific Historical Review* 78.3 (2009), 406.
[261] American Friends Service Committee, *Uncommon Controversy: Fishing Rights of the Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Nisqually Indians* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1970), 19.
[262] Shreve, 407-408.
[263] Ibid.

rightfully claim this land," as well as other resources traditionally held by First Nation people.[264]

The infringement upon Native fishing rights was spurred by the territorial displacement that followed the passage of the 1887 Dawes Act, which divided tribal lands into individual allotments. As a result, Nisqually land claims dropped from the 4,700 acres agreed upon in the Treaty of Medicine Creek to only 835. Similarly, Puyallups lost 17,463 of their 18,000 acres. Under this excessive loss of land, Shreve notes, "many of the 'usual and accustomed places' [for fishing] were no longer located within the newer tribal boundaries." Furthermore, the growth of regional economies, particularly logging and sports fishing, led to a decline in salmon runs and prompted state authorities to enforce conservation. In a sign of things to come, as early as 1890 the state established "new restrictions…[that] prohibited out-of-season fishing at stations that Native people traditionally frequented."[265]

When the economic interests of the Pacific Northwest settlers conflicted with indigenous fishing rights, long standing treaties were quickly disregarded, giving way to legal and state-sanctioned violence against indigenous people. Throughout the early 1900s, the Washington State legislatures crafted a series of laws that restricted the rights of Native fishermen. In 1925, the state reserved the fishing of steelheads to "sports fishermen." Moreover, nine years later, a law "forbade setting fixed gear, including nets [the traditional methods used by Native fishermen], in the river for salmon."[266] Those who continued to exert their treaty rights to fish in their "usual and accustomed places" faced arrests, as well as the confiscation, and potentially destruction of fishing nets and boats. Courts also denigrated Native sovereignty. Future legal battles conservatively interpreted treaty language; specifically, when it came to the phrase "in

[264] Andrea Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy," *Incite* (2006), 68.
[265] Shreve, 408.
[266] Fay Cohen, *Treaties on Trial: The Continuing Controversy Over Northwest Indian Fishing Rights* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1986), 67.

common with all citizens of the Territory." Early court rulings often read "in common" as a green light for state officials to enforce conservation and regulate Indian fishermen.[267]

What this political drama obscured was the role commercial fishermen had in the declining population of fish. Two Seattle writers observed in the late 1970s, it was "the encroachment of civilization" that "decimat[ed] the rivers" and the corresponding salmon runs.[268] Roberto Maestas and Bruce Johansen convincingly argued that the construction of several large hydroelectric dams along the Columbia River, combined with a thriving logging industry and urban sprawl in the region, had a disastrous effect on the river's fish. In their 1979 text, *Wasi'chu: The Continuing Indian Wars*, they explained,

> Salmon are migratory fish; they spawn at the headwaters of rivers and streams, travel downstream as smolts or fry to the open ocean, and then - three, four, or five years after they have hatched - return to their birth places to spawn again. Dams severely cut into this migratory cycle…Salmon are also extremely sensitive to changes in water temperature, oxygen content, and turbidity, so sensitive that logging and industrial development have destroyed their breeding grounds.[269]

A closer look at the numbers reveal that outside of the environmental impact affecting salmon spawn, it was "overfishing" by the sportsmen that depleted the fish runs. Those who paid for commercial licensees had no regulation on the number of fish they caught. Under such conditions, University of Washington professor Russel Barsh found, in the late 1950s, Indian fishermen "took less than 1 percent of the total state harvest." Despite this clear gap in fishing output, the Washington State Sportsmen's Council, a lobby for recreational fishers, "took the lead in opposing Indian fishing." They aggressively lobbied state official and courts to secure

[267] Shreve, 414.

[268] Bruce Johansen and Roberto Maestas, *Wasi'chu: The Continuing Indian Wars* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 185.

[269] Ibid.

their interests, and popularized the notion that it was Indian fishermen that were "overfishing."[270]

This context produced a local movement to support fishing rights popularly known as the "fishing wars." In 1954, s Puyallup and Yakima Indian, Robert Satiacum, "challenged state game laws by intentionally gill-netting out of season and without a license."[271] This started a series of direct action protests against the state, where determined Native fishermen risked arrests, their own equipment, and even their lives in the name of asserting their treaty rights. Within ten years, the epicenter of those struggles would take root in a tract of land along the Nisqually River known as "Franks Landing."[272]

Following the Dawes Act, Billy Frank acquired Franks Landing as an allotment. In the early 1960s, it would be the site of intense repression by game wardens. In January 1962, "three-dozen wardens…descended on six Nisquallies, seizing their tackle, gear, and their boats." Within two years, local Natives developed a movement organization that militantly asserted their treaty rights and self-determination well into the 1970s. The Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA), borrowing tactics from civil rights activists, began a series of "fish-ins," which much like the Southern "sit-in" movement, and forced the hand of the government to protect treaty rights.[273] Robert Maestas, a Chicano activist from Seattle, vividly remembered these protest actions. "Non-Indians…lined the shore as Native people took to their boats with nets," he recalled, "forming a human chain between those who were fishing and the state game and fishing agents" intent on arresting "Indian fishermen."[274] State violence only intensified in the years to come. In Vine Deloria Jr.'s 1973 study, *God is Red*, he details a particularly

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[270] Shreve, 409.
[271] Ibid, 411.
[272] Ibid, 414.
[273] Shreve, 420.
[274] Roberto Maestas and Bruce Johansen, "Fishing Wars," *Martin Luther King's Living Laboratory: Seattle's El Centro de la Raza*, unpublished manuscript.

disturbing display of police power. On Labor Day weekend of 1970, "Almost three hundred police silently surrounded" Frank's Landing." The motivation of police that day had little to do with "law and order." Rather, they had all the signs of producing a climate of terror and intimidation. Deloria states,

> Tear gas was thrown into the camp. The better-known Indian fishermen and women were rushed and brutally beaten. As many as six burly policemen grabbed little Allison Bridges, a slip of a girl weighing some one hundred pounds and standing just a whisper above five feet. Indian teenagers with long hair, worn in traditional Indian fashion, were beaten with long clubs and flashlights. The people in the camp were arrested for disorderly conduct…The camp was leveled; the Indians' cars were impounded and taken to Tacoma, where they were virtually destroyed while in police custody…Even though the police knew that the raid had been illegally undertaken, they sent a bulldozer into the camp and completely destroyed the remnants of the Indian tents and nets that had survived the initial raid.[275]

Events such as these may have been physically removed from Seattle, but by the early 1970s, they became a central feature of the city's "Third World" political culture.

"Fishing Wars" and Third World Seattle

Sixty miles of the Interstate - Five Freeway separate Franks Landing and Seattle. But, Seattle served as a "port city" that connected a diverse set of people and politics. Akin to the Black construction workers protests from the East Coast, Chicano Nationalism from the Southwest, and Philippine Anti-Martial Law mobilizations along the West Coast that flowed into Seattle, so did the "Fishing Wars" along the Nisqually River.[276] This migration of people and ideas made the movement for Native fishing rights an integral part of Seattle's Third World movement culture, and as a result, Tyree Scott's multiracial consciousness.

During the late 1960s, there were multiple political links between Seattle and Franks Landing. As Sherry Smith's account of the "Fishing Wars" attests, SAIA activists encouraged

[275] Vine Deloria, *God is Red* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1973), 26.
[276] For a more detailed analysis of Seattle as a "port city" see chapter 1.

supporters from "whoever they…could." As result, Franks Landing saw a diverse congregation of activists that included "non-Indian communists, Black Panthers, Students for a Democratic Society and Peace and Freedom Party members, unaffiliated [university] radicals…, alienated Indian and non-Indians Vietnam veterans, Quakers from Seattle, [and] countercultural types."[277] But characteristic of the cross-fertilization of Seattle's various anti-racist movements during the 1970s, it was a Chicano community center that played a central role in cultivating and sustaining political links between Seattle and Franks Landing. El Centro de la Raza was formed in 1972 after a Chicano-led, multiracial occupation of an abandoned elementary school in South Seattle. Many of El Centro's initial occupiers had roots in the fishing rights struggle. In fact, the center's "Indian-Chicano solidarity" was cultivated in a high school classroom. In 1968, when future El Centro leader Roberto Maestas taught for the Western Washington University's Upward Bound program, two of his fifty students were Nisqually women and seasoned fishing rights activists: Alison Bridges and a woman he only remembered as "Laura." Through them, Maestas learned about the "fishing wars" and traveled to Franks Landing. The particularly close relationship that developed between Alison's father, Al Bridges, a SAIA leader, and Maestas reveals that ideas of masculine resistance informed the alliances that developed in the following years. In reference the Al Bridges, Maestas fondly remembered,

> We were brothers; he was an amazing person…one of the most courageous, gutsy human beings I ever met. He had no qualms duking it out with a ten, fifteen, twenty-member staff squad from the game department or the sheriff's office…And I saw this with my own eyes and it really had a deep impression on me.[278]

Maestas's political connections with indigenous struggles at Franks Landing had an immediate imprint on Seattle's Chicano Movement. Since the first day of the El Centro

[277] Sherry Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2012), 25-26.
[278] Bruce Johansen and Roberto Maestas, "Fishing Wars," *Seattle's El Centro de la Raza: Dr. King's Living Laboratory* (Unpublished, in possession of author).

occupation, October 12, 1972, the community center was a political home to Native organizations. El Centro housed SAIA's Seattle office, produced key movement publications for the fishing rights organizations, and after Leonard Peltier was arrested in 1975, the Seattle community center served as the initial location for the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (LPDC).[279] Activists at El Centro further revealed their solidarity politics as they produced new multiracial organizations. The Indian Chicano Educational Project was founded upon two goals: (1) "To inform and educate the broader community as to what effect government polices and conventional education have had on the two territorial minorities; and (2) To mobilize support for Indian-Chicano issues at local, state, and national levels."[280]

Arguably, one of the most important tasks El Centro had in advancing the fishing rights struggle was encouraging other Seattle activists, such as Tyree Scott, to travel to Franks Landing. In the period between 1972 and 1974, SAIA activists needed supporters to observe the violence of the Game Wardens and renegade fishermen. Yet, volunteers were also "put to work," as Indigenous communities labored to preserve their land from environmental destruction. Chicano activist Juan Bocanegra explained, "What happened was the department of engineering had diverted the [Nisqually] [R]iver…right into the Indian land. The Native community was losing its land quick and started asking for volunteers."[281] In a 1972 report, Hank Adams detailed the impact of the state's program of "rip-rapping the…bank of the Nisqually River [opposite to Franks Landing]." The River, by Fall of 1968, he explained, had moved "almost 300 feet inland, eating into the upriver half of Franks Landing." He feared that much of the land could be lost by

[279] For more on Peltier's arrest, imprisonment, and that social movements that demanded his freedom, see Leonard Peltier, *My Life is a Sundance* (New York: Macmillan, 2000).

[280] "El Centro de la Raza (Pamphlet)," n.d., The *Teresa de Shepro Aragon Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, TSAP, SCUW).

[281] Juan Bocanegra, Interview by Chris Parades, Cristal Barragan, and Trevor Griffey, February 2, 2006, Seattle, WA, *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*
< http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/bocanegra.htm>.

the "high waters." Adams continued to note, "[A]ll the remaining trees 20 to 60 years of age on the upper property were taken out by the river, together with other vegetation and housing facilities." While the Bureau of Indian Affairs lagged in their support, Adams wrote, "[H]undreds of non-Indian students and members of Chicano organizations worked to sandbag the area to prevent further washout."[282] Outside of activists from El Centro, Bocanegra and Maestas also recruited fellow Third World radicals in Seattle, such as former Black Student Union leader Larry Gossett, Filipino student and labor activist member Silme Domingo, and Tyree Scott to sandbag the riverbed.

University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division

(Tyree Scott at Franks Landing)

[282] Hank Adams, "Fishing Rights" Hank Adams Reader, ed. David Wilkins (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2011), 63-64.

University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division

(A group of activists from Seattle standing along the banks of the Nisqually River)

For those of the UCWA, these were far from momentary travels of solidarity. Rather, they built upon a practice of "concrete solidarity" that saw the black worker organization use their access to resources to support the struggles of other aggrieved racial groups. This approach to coalition building was central to the formation of the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA), an organization of Filipino laborers who seasonally toiled in Alaska's salmon industry and modeled themselves after the UCWA.[283] A letter that Steve Robideau sent Scott on January 13, 1975 demonstrates that UCWA's approach to building grassroots solidarity in the Pacific Northwest also extended to the region's indigenous people. In the letter, Robideau, the director of El Centro's Indian-Chicano Educational Project, who only several months later would become well-known for his role as a coordinator of the Lenoard Peltier Defense Committee, attested to Scott's support as he expressed his "deepest gratitude" to the UCWA activist. According to the

[283] See chapter 2.

letter, Scott, and potentially other construction workers, had provided assistance in "light and oil utilities," as well as shared the UCWA tax-ID number. Explaining how these services were "invaluable," Robideau stressed,

> You undoubtedly realize that many of us work full-time to serve the Indian community…without any form of financial compensation. In many ways our survival and the continuation of the services which we provide for the Indian people are dependent on assistance and donation such as those that come from you.[284]

He concluded by reminding Scott, "If there is any way in which we could be of service to you in our capacity as a community service organization don't hesitate to call on us."[285]

While Scott's relationship to Indigenous activists in the Pacific Northwest are not mentioned in his essay on the Buffalo Soldiers, they certainly inform his analysis. Scholars who have emphasized conflict between communities of color in the 1960s, often make note of a "hierarchy of oppression" that has proven to be a significant factor in the splintering of multiracial coalitions. Scott's travels to Franks Landing, and his relationship with Native activists, such as Steve Robideau, offered a first-hand lesson on the lived realities of settler colonialism. It is unclear if Scott himself witnessed the state repression that Native fishing rights activists endured, but he no doubt heard stories from "fellow travelers." Those narratives surely painted a vivid picture of the brutality of commercial fishermen, police forces, and armed vigilantes. While many scholars and movement activists have noted the significant differences between "civil rights" and "treaty rights," Scott likely observed the similar ways both were disregarded when they conflicted with the economic and political interests of whites in the region.[286] Over the course of the "fishing wars," indigenous treaty rights were consistently

[284] Steve Robideau to Tyree Scott, January 13, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[285] Ibid.
[286] For a discussion of the importation distinctions between civil rights and treaty rights, see Vine Deloria Jr., "The Red and the Black," *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1969), 168-196.

dismissed, and even denigrated, by the courts. This mirrored the UCWA's efforts to enforce affirmative action law in the construction trades. Since the black worker organization's inception in 1970, they sought to dramatize a central legal contradiction; construction industry contractors and unions violated affirmative action law, but black workers who protested racist industry policies were arrested and charged as "criminals." On September 4, 1970, shortly after a group of UCWA activists were arrested for shutting down a construction site at the University of Washington, Lionel Hampton, the UCWA chairman at the time, offered this observation.

> It is funny that the people who yell loudest for law and order in fact do not believe in the law at all. We are asking that the law be enforced. The contractors were violating the law a year ago, when Tyree was arrested for his protest and they are still doing it…Almost three months have passed since the court order, and the contractors have still not hired…[black] workers. It is time that the law be carried out, not just when it concerns blacks and the poor, but the rich too.[287]

While the struggles of the SAIA and the UCWA were products of distinct historical experiences of race, capitalism, and colonialism, the similar ways that those in positions of power disregarded their grievances was surely not lost on Scott. As he later reflected on the complicated legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers and the role they played in the displacement of indigenous people, his experiences at Franks Landing surely offered food for thought.

Interracial Struggles Within the AFSC

However, a completely different set of interactions with Native American activists compelled Scott to analyze the history of the Buffalo Soldiers. Within the AFSC's Third World Coalition, a national network of anti-racist activists affiliated with the Quaker organization, Scott experienced firsthand how competition over limited financial resources produced tense relationships between aggrieved populations. It was this experience that compelled him to

[287] Lionel Hampton, "United Construction Workers Association: Statement for Release to the Press and Public," September 4, 1970, *TSP, SCUW*.

reexamine histories of conflict and to theorize how to put solidarity into practice.

As an AFSC employee during the early 1970s, Scott played a pivotal role in a multiracial staff revolt within the Quaker organization. According to Michael Simmons, the Third World Coalition (TWC) grew out of an unstated, but in his estimation, a "clearly racist hiring policy" on the part of the AFSC. Veteran activists from the various social movements of the 1960s were hired by the Quaker organization. Despite the group's extensive international work, people of color would only be hired to work in their own communities. This racially segregated employment structure was particularly alarming given the internationalist politics of many activists of color then employed by the AFSC. For instance, Simmons himself helped to publish SNCC's statement on the Vietnam War and even served jail time for challenging his draft status. The already present tensions over the AFSC's "racist hiring policy" only intensified during a 1971 staff meeting in Colorado. Symbolic of the Quaker organization's disconnect from staff of color, at the meeting, lettuce that was then being boycotted by the United Farm Workers was served as part of their dinner. Chicano staff promptly walked out of the event and their Black co-workers followed in solidarity, leading to an "organizational crisis." As result, an internal staff of color caucus emerged from this meeting. "[F]rom that embryonic start," Simmons explained, "the [Third World] Coalition began to grow."[288]

Over the coalition's first three years, its political purview rapidly expanded beyond the interests of the AFSC. What started as an internal caucus of staff members, soon prioritized using the Quaker organization as a "resource mechanism" to support the political struggles of "third world groups and organizations, domestically and internationally."[289] By October of 1974, the organization adopted a new statement of purpose, which refocused the group's political

[288] Michael Simmons, Phone Interview With Author, 13 January, 2015.

[289] Alan Gomez, *From Below and to the Left: Re-Imagining The Chicano Movement Through the Circulation of Third World Struggles, 1970-1979* (Phd Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006), 335.

commitment around the "liberation of T[hird] W[orld] communities within and beyond the U.S., to the advancement of poor and working class people within those communities…[and to] actively oppose… exploitation and oppression on the basis of class, race, and sex." In the process, the coalition opened up its membership to "people beyond AFSC." This was coordinated through the development of separate task forces based upon a new set of priorities agreed upon by the coalition's membership: "1) Criminal Justice; 2) Community Organizing; 3) Political Education; 4) International - Chile, Cuba, Immigration, Native Americans; and 5) Sexism." Moreover, in terms of their relationship to the AFSC, it was agreed that the TWC would "continue to try to influence the organization's policies and concerns that affect Third World Peoples." To this point, there was a consensus that the support they received for their community work "ha[d] only begun to be exploited, and should continue."[290]

However, this radical shift in the organization was not without its own set of racial tensions. Particularly, there was a growing sentiment amongst Native American members that they were not receiving a fair share of the coalitions resources. From Simmons's vantage point, this impression was part and parcel of a broader feeling within movement circles that African Americans "had gotten too much of the [financial] crumbs." Feeling alienated from the Quaker organization's resources, many of the Native Americans within the organization, Simmons maintained, advanced the position that they in fact were the "most oppressed" and that "everything should be geared toward them."[291]

More alarming for Simmons was the argument that "African Americans were implicated in their [Native people's] historical oppression." In his estimation, "one could identify as many examples of solidarity as there were conflicts." Moreover, he felt that the debate could easily be

[290] Ibid, 355-362.
[291] Michael Simmons, Phone Interview with Author, July 13, 2015.

flipped in the opposing direction, given the history of slavery within native communities. More insidious, however, was that Simmons viewed much of these critiques to be rooted in "opportunism." During this period, he claimed "a lot of people started coming out of the wood works and claimed they were Native American," including individuals he described as "in some cases racist Whites." As debates portrayed "Black people [as] overseers" of Native genocide, Simmons viewed those conclusions as an effort at fundamentally "undermining [the] solidarity" that undergirded the TWC.[292]

An examination of the historical context in which Native activists made claims to prioritize their struggle offers a more nuanced understanding of their demands. For Indigenous activists, a particularly important concern in 1974 was exploiting the AFSC's international connections. Just a year earlier the American Indian Movement engaged in a deadly standoff with government officials at Wounded Knee.[293] As the movement for Native American self-determination regrouped, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz argued, "[it] was saved largely by its decision to embrace, insist on, and apply international human rights law." Specifically, in July of 1974, Dunbar-Ortiz stated, "AIM called a weeklong intertribal meeting with other Native organizations and communities from North and Latin America to hammer out a common strategy." One outcome of the gathering's deliberations was "a mandate to establish an office at the United Nations (UN)," and use that elevated position to internationalize their domestic struggles. To the TWC's credit, Simmons's recalled, "Because the AFSC was an NGO at the UN…we were able to facilitate a lot of that work."[294]

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[292] Ibid.

[293] For a detailed narrative of the American Indian Movement and their battle at Wounded Knee see Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996).

[294] Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "How Indigenous People Wound Up at the United Nations," *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 2010), 118-119.

But as Federal Government repression continued, and Native activists sought to coordinate national and international campaigns for their survival, it is likely that the coalition's financial allocations proved insufficient. In a document prepared for the SAIA's 1975 Columbus Day Protest in Seattle, the fishing rights organization highlighted two years of U.S. "sanctioned terrorism" in response to "intensified Indian resistance." Particular alarming were the "over 170 Native Americans that had been killed on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservation alone" since February 1973. For the SAIA, however, murders alone did not capture the horrible conditions they faced. Namely, they connected the recent actions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to "relocate the Navajo, Hopi, and Northern Cheyenne Treaty Peoples off their…reservations" that were rich with natural resources, as well as the continued efforts to "regulate" indigenous fishermen in the Pacific Northwest, as interconnected processes of genocide. Collectively, these conditions pushed First Nation people across the U.S. to call for their own "anti-war campaign" to "organize support for Indian Resistance."[295]

A November 1975 letter written by SAIA director Sid Mills provides a window into the frustration that Native activists had with the TWC bureaucracy. In it, he noted that his organization had already made two formal requests for financial assistance to the TWC, one at a general coalition meeting in Mexico City and another "specific presentation at the [TWC] Steering Committee in Chicago." Mills reiterated, "at the request of A.I.M. leadership the SAIA was tasked with launching a National campaign" that brought attention to the state repression described above. The Native organization maintained that their "meager resources" were insufficient for such an undertaking. Beyond asking for more monetary support, the letter included a call for further Native autonomy within the coalition. To this end, Mills reminded TWC staff, "We don't believe that anyone in the 3rd World Coalition can design a program for

[295] Survival of American Indians Association, "Stop The War…Support Indian Resistance," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

Indian people except Indian people themselves."[296] Thus, Native critiques were more complex than "opportunism."

Despite the tensions described above, Simmons stressed that they did not debilitate the TWC. Still, they were significant enough to challenge both Scott and himself to explore the "interconnected histories of Black and Native American," in the hopes of building stronger bonds of unity. "[W]hat began…as looking at the history of [interactions between] Native Americans and African Americans," Simmons explained, transitioned into Scott researching "the role of U.S. Black troops and the subjugation of Native American people."[297] His conclusions, Simmons honestly admitted,

> [Were] a source of tension between Tyree [Scott] and I…during the period…I felt in his quest…for support and solidarity in the movement, he did not have any empathy for Blacks who were in that role…It was my contention that a lot of these Black soldiers had no choice. I am not suggesting that Black soldiers should not be criticized, but on the other hand, I did not think they should have been seen as an extension of General Custard.[298]

Yet, Simmons acknowledged that Scott "had made a concerted effort to challenge cultural nationalism in the Black community," and his analysis was more concerned with praxis than the nuances of history. What resulted was a "language of solidarity" that was more than political rhetoric. It constituted an attempt to think through a complicated history of interracial conflict in order to develop a "usable past." For Scott, the "historical function" of Buffalo Soldiers as non-white intermediaries of U.S. Imperial Wars was strikingly similar to contemporary community leaders who fanned the flames of disunity between aggrieved racial populations. "Buffalo Soldiers," he maintained, served to "distort, confuse, and suppress" the interests of communities of color. By directing community frustration toward one another, the "New Buffalo Soldiers,"

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[296] Sid Mills to Third World Coalition: State Committee, Staff, and Chairpersons, November 21, 1975, *The Raul Salinas Papers, Special Collections at Stanford University* (Hereafter cited, RSP, SCSU).
[297] Michael Simmons, Phone Interview with Author, January 13, 2015.
[298] Ibid.

Scott explained, wasted valuable political energy that could be better used to target those in positions of power. In this sense, his usage of the term Buffalo Soldier served as a "critical vocabulary" that revealed commonalities between communities of color and demonstrated the possibilities of multiracial solidarity.

Buffalo Soldiers as a Third World "Language of Solidarity"

Scott's historical analysis of the "Buffalo Soldiers" was not without its shortcomings. In a speech to university students, he made the claim, "No Indian had no slave, no Indian never had to go to West Africa to bring back Black folks and make them slaves in this country."[299] While indigenous people certainly did not participate in the Slave Trade, a number of tribes did hold slaves, and even after emancipation, denied them tribal citizenship. It is worth noting, as Donald Grinde Jr. and Quintard Taylor states, Black-Indian relations differed significantly from tribe to tribe.[300] Another criticism that could be levied against Scott was his unexamined "economic reductionism." Characteristic of orthodox Marxist thought, his essay continually made the case that the problem of cultural nationalists and racist White workers alike was an "absence of a class analysis."[301] These inaccuracies and biases should by no means be dismissed. But the contributions of his unique historical analysis may best be framed by the comments of his close friend and comrade, Michael Simmons.

Simmons was consistently highly critical of Scott's interpretations. He claimed, "Tyree [Scott]..went overboard" when he concluded, "African American were as [just as] guilty…[of Native genocide] as white people," a sentiment that showed the Black labor activist took the

[299] Tyree Scott, "The Album is Body Heat."
[300] Donald Grinde Jr. and Quintard Taylor, "Red vs. Black: Conflict and Accomdation in The Post Civil War Indian Territory, 1865-1907," *American Indian Quarterly* 8.3 (Summer, 1984), 211-229.
[301] Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers," *TSP, SCUW*.

critiques of Native American activists in the TWC to heart.[302] Moreover, Scott's perspective was documented in the first page of Scott's essay, where he accused "buffalo soldiers [of] kill[ing] Indian men, women, and children with the same vigor as Col. Custer!"[303] But despite Simmons' objections, he recalled, Scott's analogy did have an "important contribution." Specifically, "As a metaphor that transcended its origins," Simmons saw a great deal of value in what Scott attempted to theorize.[304]

Scott's political critique was not only directed at middle-class community leaders who occupied an intermediary position of power, but also political activists who were commonly referred to as "cultural nationalists." Similar to the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Scott viewed the emphasis that cultural nationalists placed on racial pride and black unity to be both politically and ideologically flawed, particularly in Seattle. For one, while Scott acknowledged, "Black Power and Black Pride…developed as a positive force" that "strengthen[ed] and unif[ied] the resistance of Black communities," he also observed that such instances of "race pride" could be "used as an excuse to ignore the struggles of [other Third World people]."[305] This, he lamented, "[was] an excuse for weakness, or an opportunity for racism." Furthermore, Seattle's racial demographics posed another problem altogether. Scott acknowledge that "groups that were advocating Black Nationalism were very vocal," but in Seattle, where the percentage of white residents in the city approached nearly eighty percent, he feared that they would "be isolated."[306] Thus, as a political analogue, the term Buffalo Soldier was a means to challenge cultural nationalism in a city that, arguably, had no room for it.

At the same time, his framework offers an opportunity to examine what "Third Word

[302] Michael Simmons, Phone Interview with Author, July 13, 2015.
[303] Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers."
[304] Ibid.
[305] "Editorial: "Who We Are,"
[306] Michael Woo, Phone Interview with Author, 8 August, 2014.

unity" was meant to convey. In the very first sentence that Scott uttered to students at the University of Washington during a May 1975 rally - before delving into his historical analysis Buffalo Soldiers, or even the racial tensions on campus between Black and Chicano students - the UCWA activist stressed,

> Let me talk to you brothers and sisters today about something that's real important, and that is…to know who your enemy is, [be]cause in the absence of knowing…your enemy…you fuck around and kill your friends.[307]

Arguably, utilizing "Third World people" as a comprehensive term for all communities of color obscures important differences between groups. However, the idea that Third World people had a "common enemy" not necessarily a common oppression is a subtle but important difference. Malcolm X understood that identifying a "common enemy" had been a basis for fostering Afro-Asian solidarity since the 1950s and could greatly inform Black freedom struggles in the United States. As he exclaimed in his 1963 speech, "Message to the Grassroots,"

> Bandung…was the first unity meeting in centuries of black people. And once you study what happened at the Bandung conference, and the results of the Bandung Conference, it actually serves as a model for the same procedure you and I can use to get our problems solved. At Bandung all the nations came together, the dark nations from Africa and Asia…They began to recognize who their enemy was [a system of western colonialism]. The same man that was colonizing our people in Kenya was colonizing our people in the Congo…and in Burma, and in India, and in Afghanistan, and in Pakistan…So they got together on this basis – that they had a common enemy.[308]

When examining the various essays, letters, and speeches that disseminated Scott's analysis, it becomes apparent that the black labor activist's intended audience was UCWA members and supporters, Black minsters, and Third World student activists. These all point to an effort to foster discussions amongst Third World people about the importance of unity. Thus, even with its analytical shortcomings, and its mixed political result, Scott's intervention should be read as

[307] Tyree Scott, "The Album is Body Heat."

[308] Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots," *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements* (New York: Grove, 1990), 5.

an effort to create a "language of solidarity" that allowed Third World communities, in Seattle and beyond, to genuinely speak to each other.

Third World Unity and UCWA's Jobs for All Campaign

A key concern for Scott was, "At what point does the Buffalo Soldiers *refuse to ride*" [own emphasis]? On February 26th, 1975, his organization and their supporters had to confront this question directly. That day, a UCWA demonstration at a historically Black church in Seattle set the stage for Scott to pen his essay, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers." The renovations at Mt. Zion Church appeared relatively insignificant within the larger landscape of Seattle's construction industry. Its operation costs, estimated at $650,000, were miniscule when compared to larger projects the UCWA shutdown that same day. For instance, worksite closures at Seattle Central Community College and Group Health Hospital in Seattle's Central District both had budgets that exceeded $5,000,000.[309] This point, however, begs the question, of what was at stake for the UCWA as they marched on the church. To fully answer this question, an understanding of two weeks of protests that preceded the confrontation is needed.

For the past two months, the UCWA engaged in "good faith" negotiations with the Operating Engineers Local 302 in order to revise their largely ineffective affirmative action "consent decree." Promising deliberations, however, quickly turned sour as union officials unilaterally hired a white rank-and-file worker to serve as a "minority oiler coordinator." This position was tasked with ensuring workers of color were dispatched to construction sites and retained on the job. In the time in between the UCWA's first worksite closure on February 12, 1975 and the Mt. Zion protest two weeks later, the nature of the UCWA's demands grew

[309] Reverend Sam McKinney, Dr. Roy Phillips, and Art Siegal, "Joint Release," February 26th, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

exponentially. At first, they appeared ready to settle for the desegregation of one South Seattle construction site: a $1.5 million-dollar sewage project. The worksite had a crew of twenty "heavy equipment operators," but not one was a worker of color. Their initial demand was for the contractor and the union to live up to the original consent decree, which called for worksites to employ "minority workers" at an equivalent rate to their portion of the city demographics, 25%. As the basic demands of protesters were rejected, and the City of Seattle, instead of providing the financial resources to hire more workers, sent its tactical squads to arrest demonstrators, the UCWA's campaign embraced a more militant posture.

For one, the activists who converged at worksites, within jail cells, and municipal courtrooms demonstrated the UCWA's ability to harness Third World unity. Arrest records alone reveal the diverse outpouring of support the UCWA received in Seattle. Within two days of protest alone, seven-nine activists were brought up on charges of a "failure to disperse." Several of them were long-held allies, such as ACWA members, Chicano activists from El Centro de la Raza, and members of the Seattle chapter of the AFSC Third World Coalition. Additionally, a strong contingent of supporters came from campus struggles at the University of Washington. Solidarity was not isolated to student radicals either. Campus employees, such as, Juan Sanchez, the director of the Chicano Equal Opportunity Program (EOP), and Philip Meranto, a radical Political Science Professor, were both arrested on the second day of protests. The concerns of the UCWA also resonated with international students such as Pilar Bueno, a twenty-year old exchange student at the university from Bolivia. After being sentenced to 30-days in jail, she boldly expressed to the press, "The judge's sentence is my education; I am with my people here…They will try to divide us, but we know that only united we shall win."[310]

After UCWA activists and supporters were arrested, they decided to "take the offensive" in

[310] Ibid.

the courtroom. Based upon the logic that the charges against them were politically motivated, they reasoned that defending themselves in court would only legitimate a legal system that was morally bankrupt. In fact, they asserted that the courts were "an instrument of the rich and powerful against the poor and oppressed seeking justice."[311] Word of their defiant stance reached members of the Northwest Chapter of the American Indian Movement (AIM). In a letter co-signed by six AIM members in the Pacific Northwest, the group declared,

> [We] recognize, respect, understand, and support your vision with respect toward (maximum) non-recognition of the foreign U.S. Gov[ernment] and its murderous tool of repression: the courts, the legal, and the justice system, the latter which we defeat across the Western Hemisphere everyday, and through actions such as yours…Again, Tyree, we are at one with you.[312]

The UCWA also showed that they could balance Third World unity with principled working-class unity. In an effort to appeal to the material interests of white workers, the UCWA called upon rank-and-file members to endorse their demand for "jobs for all." After reflecting upon the economic landscape of the construction industry in the mid-1970s, the UCWA found that although unemployment disproportionately impacted Black and other Third World workers, it had cut across racial lines. In 1975, all construction workers were unemployed at a 20% rate, with Operating Engineers experiencing the worst of it at 40%. By the second week of protests, the UCWA unveiled a new plan that offered a solution to the industry's economic crunch. They estimated that a "graduated corporate profit tax" that targeted the largest businesses in Washington state could garner "annual profits of $1.5 billion."[313] The UCWA's plan was to put the burden of unemployment squarely on the shoulders of the state's billion dollar corporations. This approach, they maintained, had the potential to create jobs for all Washington residents. First, they suggested a shorter, thirty-two-hour work week, where laborers would still earn their

[311] The "UCWA 23" to the Municipal Court System, City of Seattle, Jan. 29th, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[312] The Northwest Chapter of the American Indian Movement to Tyree Scott, n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.
[313] UCWA, "Paper For Discussion," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

normal 40-hour salary, thus making room to hire more workers. Secondly, to ease the burden of those presently out of work, unemployment compensation would be raised to $150 per week and extended to six months. Lastly, people would be hired to do "public service jobs in the community" that were "controlled by the workers."[314]

After two promising meetings with white workers, negotiations ended when Local 302 members failed to show up for a third day of deliberations. Feasibility was the largest roadblock preventing rank-and-file construction workers from ~~to~~ embracing the UCWA plan. One Local 302 member was quoted in the local news expressing his cynicism, as he reminded reporters, "[the] federal government has all the construction job money frozen solid."[315] Tyree Scott, however, had another conclusion. "[T]he white worker…already had a job," and thus, "was not interested [in jobs for all]."[316] He issued even harsher criticisms of White workers a couple of weeks later. "[W]e cannot blame those ignorant white workers," Scott wrote to another activist. Reflective of his reading of race, class and imperialism, the UCWA activist maintained,

> They [White workers] make the fatal mistake necessary for Imperialism to continue to oppress the people of the world by assuming that because their skin is white they are part of the power structure or Rockefeller's equal…These workers fail to understand class analysis. Their only concern is losing their jobs and their gadgets.[317]

After this failed attempted at working-class unity, the UCWA appeared only more determined to intensify their struggle. In a flyer distributed after their failed negotiations, the group of Third World workers reminded union members, "Affirmative action is the <u>law</u> of the state" and they were determined to uphold it. "As long as white workers force us to struggle alone," the UCWA maintained, "we will enforce these laws by shutting down construction sites

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[314] Ibid.
[315] Paul Boyd, "Minority Protest Leads to Rainier Sewer-Job Stoppage," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, February 18, 1975, A3.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Tyree Scott to Rev. Samuel McKinney, March 6, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

and tak[ing] away white workers' jobs." Not only did their resolve grow, but their demands also expanded. Their flyer detailed a two-part ultimatum:

> Either Local 302 …fire the present Minority Oilers Coordinator and give the UCWA veto power in the hiring of his replacement; — OR, all contractors working in our community (Spokane Street to the Ship Canal and Broadway to Lake Washington) close down their jobs until such time as a majority of their workforce is Third World.[318]

This decision to extend the scope of their future worksite closure put the UCWA's evolving movement in a collision course with Mt. Zion Church and the cultural nationalist politics of its reverend.

Third World (Dis)Unity at Mt. Zion Church

When UCWA protesters approached Mt. Zion, Rev. Sam McKinney responded to the multiracial crowd with confusion and disdain. McKinney, a leader in Seattle's civil rights movement since the late 1950s, viewed the renovations to his church as critical to the revitalization of Seattle's historically Black neighborhood, the Central District. In reference to the project at Mt. Zion, the Reverend noted, "If you look around…you can see how the Central Area has been decimated." For him, the newly designed church would provide "a political base, an opening to better jobs and a pleasant family neighborhood."[319] In addition, it also had an explicit cultural dynamic. The "African-inspired" building in construction was dubbed, "The Church and the World," and boosted stained-glass windows with images of various African-American political and religious leaders that ranged from freedom fighters during the era of slavery, such as Nat Turner and Harriet Tubman, to "modern-day" activists such as Martin Luther King Jr.[320]

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[318] UCWA, "A Slice of the Pie…Or Jobs For All."
[319] Ray Ruppert, "Work Halt Miffs Church," *Seattle Times*, March 2, 1975, A15.
[320] Mary Henry, "Mt. Zion Baptist Church (Seattle)," *HistoryLink: Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington*

With the project's sincere interests to serve the needs of Seattle's Black community, McKinney understandably offered a harsh criticism of the demonstration, which he alleged, had few Black activists among them. One reporter quoted him as he poked fun at the significant number of White activists at the church demonstration, when he claimed, "There's a Caucasian in the coal pile."[321] In the days that followed, his critiques extended to the UCWA's "Third World" focus. The minister claimed the construction worker organization had been "infiltrated" by non-Black activists. This perspective was exemplified by McKinney's subtle comments directed at Michael Woo. In reference to the Chinese American activist, he publicly stated, "Where was he in '69?"[322] This was a direct reference to the political mobilizations in Seattle Black community against racism in the construction trades that served as the precursor to the UCWA.[323] But given his concerns about the UCWA's demographics, it is likely Woo's race, not his longevity as an activist, was of greater concern. In many respects, Woo represented the beginning of what McKinney found so alarming: the first instance of the UCWA opening its ranks, resources, and leadership to non-Black workers.

An interview conducted several months after the demonstrations details the Reverend's more severe critique of the UCWA's racial politics, a critique that even questioned Tyree Scott's genuine connections to the city's black community. In reference to Black youth, McKinney claimed, "I don't think they are interested" in the UCWA's "Third World" politics. Moreover, he used the UCWA's office as a further sign of the group's distance from Seattle's black community. As he looked around, McKinney recalled, "[T]he only black person on the wall [w]as Malcolm X," and he personally questioned the relevance that "images such as [Fidel]

State History, accessed May 12, 2015, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=2048.

[321] Ray Ruppert, "Work Halts Miffs Church."

[322] "Editorial: "Who We Are," *No Separate Peace*, May 15, 1975, 2.

[323] For a discussion of the 1969 demonstrations, see chapter 1.

Castro and Mao Tse-Tung" had to Black workers. Additionally, the Reverend even took a shot at the "white folks" that funded the UCWA. Due to their use of AFSC funding, McKinney gestured that the group was politically compromised. "You know white folks," he explained, "whenever they put money [behind us], they want us to reflect…[what] they have." By contrast, he claimed, "I support the cause of black folks…All the money that I get goes to…black folks."[324]

In the days that followed, mainstream media quickly seized the opportunity to transform the UCWA demonstration at Mt. Zion church into a "Black v. Black" issue. Scott maintained that this was a deliberate attempt to depict the UCWA as a "fringe radical" group that was isolated from Seattle's Black community. In the process, two crucial concerns of the UCWA were obscured: their broader call for "full employment" and the fact that building trade unions continued to send White workers, as Scott put it, "into our neighborhoods and take the few jobs that do exist, rather than taking the problem to the source, the corporations." A close reading of local coverage following the demonstration affirmed his critique. Beyond illustrating McKinney's commitment to the Black community, a *Seattle Times* reporter depicted him as far more interested in sparking a dialogue with UCWA protesters than they were with him. For instance, the article described how McKinney "pleaded for a chance to talk with [Tyree] Scott," but the activist insisted he had to get to another construction site. To make matters worse, at the time the article was published, a week after the demonstration, McKinney still claimed that he had not received the "face to face meeting with Scott" he desired. The author even presented McKinney as bitter for being placed in a position "where he seemed opposed to and confronting another black man." Fearing that the issue was being presented as "black folks…fighting black

[324] Samuel McKinney, Interview by William Little, Transcript, n.d., *WLP, SCUW*.

folks," the Reverend stressed, "I don't want any black confrontation. I know white people just sit back and laugh." The article concluded with McKinney's call for dialogue opposed to demonstrations. "We're open to conversations[and]…We'd like to be supportive," McKinney explained, "but we can't be if we can't communicate."[325]

To Scott, even though the Reverend's concerns were genuine, the manner in which he articulated his grievances affirmed Scott's critique of black nationalists. If the historical function of the "New Buffalo Soldier," as Scott maintained, was to "distort, confuse, and suppress," McKinney's response was firmly within this practice. The minster consistently stated, "poor black people's money [wa]s building…[Mt. Zion] church." For Scott and the UCWA, the challenge then was how they could convince the Reverend that "poor black people's money was…pay[ing] a white contractor and his white workforce." Even more concerning, "poor black people's money" supported workers who, Scott later explained to the religious leader, "refuse[d] to use the power of their unions to bring about some meaningful change [via not supporting the UCWA's "jobs for all" proposal] and who come into our neighborhoods and take the few existing jobs."[326] Scott concluded, nevertheless, to challenge the Reverend in public risked alienating church supporters. Instead, the UCWA activist penned a nine-page letter to the reverend that sought to "clear up issues surrounding the UCWA and the construction industry." This was a novel though failed attempt at encouraging McKinney to "refuse to ride."

In his correspondence, Scott carefully made the case, without compromising the UCWA's broader anti-colonial and Marxist politics, that their "goals and…enemy [wa]s the same." In reference to a recent news article "The Conquest of Mt. Zion," Scott stressed, "I think it is very important for both you and I to understand he is our enemy and we should make no mistake

[325] Ray Ruppert, "Work Halt Miffs Church."
[326] Tyree Scott to Reverend Sam McKinney, March 6, 1975.

about it." Placing the article within the broader context of UCWA's movement against construction industry racism, Scott found the writer's sudden attempt to "discredit the UCWA" to be suspect. Scott questioned, why were his critiques leveled in 1975, and not in 1969 "when…[a] bulldozer was driven over…[a] cliff at the University of Washington," or in 1972 "when the Seattle Community College was heavily damaged." For Scott, the answer lay in the fact that previous protest actions "had not raised the basic question of who was at fault and who should pay." The UCWA activist explained that a fundamental contradiction within the construction industry lay in who could build what, and what purpose did it serve. As he noted, corporations "could build skyscrapers while we could not build houses." The UCWA's plan for full employment, he explained, challenged this logic, as it proposed, "because corporations and banks are the ones who are making large and quite often excessive profits in the time of depression…they should pay for the unemployment problem."[327] After stating his case, he ended with a call for solidarity from the religious community,

> "We need and want the support of Mt. Zion and every church in this community. Our goals are the same and our enemy is the same. We must never forget that we must not allow our enemies to confuse the issue and have us fighting ourselves. This has happened too long."[328]

"Sam Kelly is a Buffalo Soldier…But He is Not the Problem"

Scott's message to McKinney, however, largely fell on deaf ears. The minister stopped his public accusations of the UCWA, but showed no signs of supporting their protests either. But Scott continued to find useful avenues for his political analogue. In May of 1975, just as UCWA-led demonstrations against the Operating Engineers Local 302 died down, Chicano faculty, staff, and students at the University of Washington started a nearly month-long walk-out in protest of

[327] Tyree Scott to Reverend Sam McKinney, March 6, 1975.
[328] Ibid.

the campus's lack of commitment to Chicano programming. The lack of support for Chicano Studies, where predominantly White departments refused to hire Chicano faculty, was easily interpreted as a problem of the "White university power structure." But the concerns of Chicano staff in the university's Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) were more complex. Namely, after the head of the EOP's Chicano Division was fired by his Black supervisor, the issue was increasingly framed as one of "Black and Brown disunity."[329]

Accordingly, battle lines on campus were quickly drawn along racial lines. Under these conditions, Black students and faculty came to the defense of the Black supervisor Kelly.[330] Scott, however, had the foresight to see the problem with this nationalist approach. For one, Sanchez, along with countless Chicano student activists on campus, were part of the many UCWA supporters arrested in the beginning of their February 1975 demonstration. Moreover, Scott had already openly critiqued Kelly's position to fine Sanchez a day's pay while he was in jail for supporting the UCWA.[331] A closer look at the tensions between Kelly and Sanchez, which had been evolving for the better part of a year prior to the Chicano staffer's dismissal, revealed a battle over the political direction of EOP programming, and Third World programming on campus more generally.

One important context of these debates were the "violent protests" on campus. After a series of failed attempts to increase the number of Chicano faculty, demonstrators turned toward property damage. Students frustrations came to a head when the political science department rescinded their appointment offer to Carlos Munoz Jr., then a young Chicano scholar whose research analyzed Chicano urban communities as "internal colonies."[332] In May 1974, a heated

[329] Julie Emery, "Chicano Contraversy on U.W. Campus Boils," *Seattle Times*, May 22, 1975, A6.
[330] Bob Shallit, "An Interview With Juan Sanchez," *The Daily*, May 13, 1975, 3.
[331] Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers," March 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[332] Ernie Englander, "Is Munoz Qualified? Dolbeare, Yes; Flathman, No," *The Daily*, May 14, 1974.

confrontation over the Political Science department's decision between George Beckmann, the then dean of Arts and Sciences at the University, and Chicano students soon escalated into what the campus newspaper termed, "a destructive rampage producing damages as high as $3,000." When the Dean left to meet with other administrators, the students who occupied his office, according to the *UW Daily*, "[O]verturned desks, filing cabinets, typewriters, chairs, plants and more."[333] Prior to these events, Kelly professed that Chicano students had been "extremely patient."[334] But in the wake of student actions, he whole-heartedly supported the university's new policy against "violent protests." He even drafted his own version of the policy for his staff in the Office of Minority Affairs.

Nearly a year removed from the May 1974 incident, university administrators, once again, failed to hire another qualified Chicano candidate, this time for an Associate Dean position. This prompted another confrontation with Dean Beckmann, which, this time, included Juan Sanchez, the director of Chicano Studies, Gary Padilla, the Chicano student secretary, Rosa Morales, and eight other students.[335] No signs of property damage were apparent, but the accusations that the Dean's life was threatened placed all Chicano attendees in violation of the university's policy on violent protests.[336] Due to this, Kelly promptly fired Sanchez. In his dismissal letter, Kelly insisted, that while Sanchez's involvement in, and professed objection to, the campus's policy on violent protests, played a role in his dismissal, Kelly identified "numerous events" that warranted his firing. More precisely, Kelly argued, Sanchez "*displayed insubordination*, an *intention* to *defy my instructions* whenever you considered it suited your purposes, and a *disregard* for the welfare of the Educational Opportunity Program." Here, he highlighted Sanchez's

[333] Brian Haughton, "Dean Beckmann's Office Trashed During Sit-In," *The Daily*, May 14, 1974.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Steve Miletich and Karen Long, "Following Protests Against Hiring Practices, University Fires Two Chicano Adminstrators," *The Daily,* May 7, 1975.
[336] Ibid.

"persist[ant]…hectoring [of] a [university official]" he invited to a staff meeting, as well as the Chicano's "refusal to counsel student about even the possibilities of opportunities in military science." Kelly even maintained, Sanchez's actions were "destructive [to]…the long-range aims and day-to-day functioning of the Education Opportunity Program."[337]

Sanchez's responses to those accusations, however, revealed a deeper political divide between him and his supervisor. The "guest" that Kelly charged Sanchez with "hectoring" was the Executive Vice President of the University Phillip Cartwright. In response to Cartwright's role in managing the campus's affirmative action policies for faculty and staff, Sanchez asked him, "[H]ow it felt to be a white male heading an affirmative action program which has to do with minorities and women." Moreover, in terms of his "refusal to counsel" students about "opportunities in military sciences," Sanchez recalled a campus ROTC colonel attending an EOP staff meeting. Sanchez maintained, "[The colonel] gave a 10 or 15-minute lecture on the golden opportunities for our students in the ROTC and about the need to defend our country." Sanchez insisted that he only asked the colonel a simple question, "[W]hy it was that 20 per cent of all the soldiers who died in Vietnam were Chicano when we make up barely 5 per cent of the population." To which, Kelly cut off Sanchez's questioning, and Sanchez subsequently walked out. The last concern was Sanchez's actions as staff that Kelly found to be "destructive" to the EOP's long-tern goals. A closer look shows this boiled down to Sanchez's insistence on autonomy and self-determination for the Chicano Division of the EOP. In a post-termination interview, Sanchez stressed,

> We want to be able to hire and fire our own people…to develop our own programs, set our own priorities and be able to fund those programs we feel are pertinent and responsible to the needs of our community.

Taken together, movement politics, not necessarily racial politics, divided Kelly and Sanchez.

[337] "Sam Kelly's Letter Dismissing Juan Sanchez," *The Daily*, May 13, 1975, 3.

That is, tensions between the two was not solely about interracial antagonism. Rather it reflected competing political approaches within the Office of Minority Affairs: gradual reform v. autonomy. Sanchez identified this contradiction in his firing,

> The same kind of protest activities that led to the creation of his [Kelly's]…position, that created the Office of Minority Affairs, and that has created Ethnic Studies and other programs are now being negated by Sam [Kelly].[338]

It was in the wake of these divisions that Chicano activists on campus invited Tyree Scott to speak. Aware that the student movement began to fracture along racial lines, Scott deployed his analogy of Buffalo Soldier as a full-on critique of racial nationalism on campus. Cognizant of the cultural nationalism that permeated the campus student movement, he spoke directly to the ways both Black and Chicano activists connected to their "historical roots" and inserted a Marxist critique of US imperialism that unified the two. To Black students, Scott asked, "If you say you love Africa, how can you walk around with a diamond ring on your finger that came out of the mines in South Africa?" Quickly turning to Chicano students, he continued his line of questioning, "And if you love Latin America, how can you continue to buy a bunch of cars up when the gas is coming from Venezuela at the exploitation of Venezuelan people."[339] Bringing his discussion to the need for unity, he exclaimed,

> "But if we can't love each other in this country…I'm talking about students and folks in this room here, if we can't transcend the fact that we're Black and Brown or Red or Yellow, and start looking at who our common enemy is, we'll be just like the folks who got on them sampans [small wooden boats traditionally used for fishing], and who climbed across the walls at the US embassy to get on one of them helicopters when the shit came down [speaking about the Vietnam War].[340]

This all set the context for framing the firing of Juan Sanchez. Scott explained to students, the University officials were "testing" them. "The administration," he maintained, "understands

[338] Bob Shallit, "An Interview With Juan Sanchez," *The Daily*, May 13, 1975, 3.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid.

the role that Third World students are playing at this campus…If y'all raise hell the White students [are] going to start raising hell." Creating division amongst Third World students, the UCWA activist analyzed, was a way of "[P]utting out the spark before it becomes a fire."[341]

In reference to Kelly, Scott told students, "Sam Kelly might be a Buffalo Soldier, and I say he is…but [he] ain't the enemy." Instead, Scott explained, "The problem is [President] Hogness over there…Your enemy ain't some Black Sam Kelly over there, cause if he goes, they're going to replace him." Aware that Chicano Students, understandably, were upset at Kelly, Scott warned, "if you want to fight with Black folks over the question of Juan Sanchez's job, go do that. The Man['s] plannin[g] on that."[342] What Scott proposed for future action echoed Sanchez's critiques of Kelly. The UCWA activist told students to "reclaim something that's rightfully yours, and that's the Office of Minority Affairs." Just as Sanchez maintained, Scott's speech noted that the programs managed by Kelly were a product of "student unrest," where "students with enough sophistication raise[d] enough hell." His final message was Sanchez's dismissal could be the fate of any Third World student, or White student for that matter, who was willing to challenge university policies. For that reason, Scott closed with the argument that

> It ain't no race issue, so it ought not to be Chicano students marching up there to Hogness' office…It ought to be Black students, Indian students…Asian students…[and] White students. That's what they're trying to keep quiet, and that's what's at issue today.[343]

Scott's campus speech was reflective of the Black radical's efforts to develop a "critical vocabulary" that transcended limits of organizing along singular racial categories. He reframed issues of interracial conflict on campus to reveal the ways Black and Brown tensions obscured deeper power relations at the university and beyond. While much of the campus organizing

[341] Ibid.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.

continued to operate along racial lines, a united front of Third World students, who called themselves People in Struggle Since the Early Days (PISSED), formed by the following June and developed a five-part proposal for "self-determination" of Third World programming. This included the reinstatement of not only Sanchez, but two Black professors who were denied tenure. In addition, they took to heart Sanchez's call for autonomy and called for the "restructur[ing] of the Office [of Minority Affairs] to give self-determination to each Division."[344] This expansive proposal failed to materialize, but it likely found inspiration from Scott's May speech. The fact that an analysis of the proposal was later published in the UCWA's newspaper, *No Separate Peace*, attests to Scott's influence and connection to student radicals at the University of Washington.

Conclusion

Scott's political *rearticulation* of the Buffalo Soldiers points to an important aspect of the U.S. Third World Left's racial politics. While the unique historical experiences of aggrieved racial groups framed their political outlook, a central aspect of their activism was the development of practices and analyses that transcended seemingly rigid racial lines. Scott's formulation of what he termed the "New Buffalo Soldier" and his fervent belief that they "need to refuse to ride" was but one example of this broader political trend. In fact, Scott's pathway to his analysis, as well as his practice of it, illustrates a rather fluid world of racism and anti-racism, at least in the Pacific Northwest. His interactions with differentially racialized communities produced a multiracial sensibility that made single racial categories insufficient. If we are to reframe the history of interracial strife that saturates the historical literature on the 1960s and 1970s social movements, uncovering the type of multiracial politics represented in Scott's

[344] "UW Post-Mortem," *No Separate Peace*, June 20, 1975, 8.

Buffalo Soldier analogue is a good place to start. It is suggestive of the discursive and actual solidarity strategies that existed in the past, and serve as an example of a new "language of solidarity" we can employ in the present.

Chapter 4:

"There Shall Be No Separate Peace:" The Intertwined Practices of "Third World Marxism" Amongst Black and Filipino Labor Activists in Seattle

In the Winter and Spring months of 1975, the United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) proved to be Seattle's leading advocates of Third World Unity. Since February of that year, the group of "Third World construction workers" waged a movement that, at least temporarily, brought Seattle's construction industry to a grinding halt. This campaign began when they discovered that a construction site in the Rainier Valley, a predominately Black and Asian American community in the city, was not operating in compliance with affirmative action law. The project's crew of fifteen operating engineers did not include one laborer of color. The UCWA's efforts to shutdown this project soon ballooned into a city-wide campaign with both short-term and long-term goals. First, they insisted on control over the Operating Engineer Local 302's affirmative action program. Until this demand was met, activists vowed to "close down" the jobs of "all contractors working in *our community*…until such time as a majority of their workforce is Third World."[345] This immediate concern was also accompanied by a long-term solution to address the chronic unemployment of not only workers of color, but white workers as well. They demanded a "progressive tax" that targeted the surplus wealth of corporations in Washington State to create "meaning jobs for all" residents.[346] Unfortunately, the mass arrests of UCWA activists and supporters squashed their demands. By the following April, courtroom trials took the steam out of their demonstrations. Even more concerning, the Local 302 had already negotiated a revised affirmative action "consent decree" with representatives from the

[345] UCWA, "A Slice of the Pie, or Jobs for All," n.d., *The Tyree Scott Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited TSP, SCUW).
[346] UCWA, "A Paper for Discussion," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).[347] Once again, backroom deals between industry and government officials left the UCWA out of the picture.

Determined to build upon the grassroots solidarity that had converged on construction sites and courtrooms, the UCWA initiated a publication to fortify Third World unity in Seattle. In May of 1975, they started their own newspaper, *No Separate Peace.* The paper's self-described focus was "the struggles of Third World, poor, and working women and men to obtain [their] human rights." According to the paper's editors, "The purpose of [*No Separate Peace*]…is to take the natural interest and sympathy that already exist[s] [in Seattle] around many struggles, and to build increased commitment through a clearer understanding of the issues involved."[348] True to form, the first three editions of the paper included articles documenting Seattle's 1975 "May Day Celebration," testimony from Seattle's Venceremos Brigade Delegation in Cuba, and an article written by an American Indian Movement (AIM) activist that maintained, "If you can understand Vietnam, you can understand Pine Ridge." With substantive coverage of the period's most prominent political organizations, the initial editorial of *No Separate Peace*, "Who We Are," revealed something unique about Seattle's social movement culture.

The late 1960s and 1970s was marked by an "invisibility" of Asian American activists in radical political circles. This was shaped by the popular notion that Asian ethnic groups were "model minorities;" individuals with histories of racial marginalization in the United States, but, supposedly, through their "hard work" and "cultural values," have achieved significant social and economic success.[349] In a significant departure from this trend, the editors of *No Separate*

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[347] "New Minority Trainee Plan Omits U.C.W.A.," *Seattle Times*, March 8, 1975, A5.

[348] "Editorial: Who We Are," *No Separate Peace*, May 15, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

[349] For a discussion of Asian American invisibility in the U.S. Left, see Judy Wu, "Hypervisibility and Invisibility: Asian/American Women, Radical Orientalism, and the Revisioning of Global Feminism," *The Rising Tide of Color: Race, State Violence, and Radical Social Movements Across the Pacific*, ed. Moon-Ho Jung (Seattle: University of Washington, 2014), 238-265.

Peace made clear, "[I]f someone wants to know about the struggles in the Asian communities these days," editors explained, "they will find our paper a good source for this information."[350] To this note, future editions of *No Separate Peace* would not disappoint. For one, they included an article that linked the gentrification in Seattle's predominately Asian neighborhood, the International District, to a process of "International Neocolonialism."[351] Moreover, readers were informed of a June 12, 1975 protest at the Philippine Consulate of Seattle, which saw local activists demand the following: "(1) Free 20,000 political prisoners [of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship]; (2) Stop U.S. military aid to the Marcos dictatorship; (3) Self-Determination for Filipino people; (4) Marcos – Stop taxing overseas Filipinos."[352]

The coverage of "struggles in [Seattle's] Asian communities" described above offers a generative entry point to further examine the political ties between black workers in the UCWA and their "sister organization" of Filipino workers in Alaska's salmon industry; the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA). In this chapter, I examine the UCWA and ACWA's parallel and overlapping pathways to "Third World Marxism." As Max Elbaum reminds us, the expressions of Marxism that had the greatest appeal amongst 1960s radicals were those "identified with Third World movements - especially the Chinese, Cuban, and Vietnamese Communities Parties." Many on Left were in search of "a framework for social revolution that put the anti-imperialist and anti-racist upsurges of that era at its very center."[353] Both the UCWA and ACWA were influenced by two distinct, but parallel streams of anti-racist thought: the Black Radical Tradition and an upsurge of nationalist consciousness from the Philippine. Despite the unique origins of their radical politics, both organizations utilized the strategy of grassroots

[350] Ibid.
[351] Doug Chin, "The International District Condition," *No Separate Peace*, 8-10.
[352] Doug Chin, "Anti-Martial Law Protest," *No Separate Peace*, 3.
[353] Max Elbaum, *Revolution is in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che* (London: Verso, 2002), 41.

multiracial solidarity and ideological cross-fertilization to advance their goals. In doing so, they reveal what Jason Ferreira has termed, "[T]he profound cross-fertilization of ideas and people" between the era's activists of color;[354] a development that troubles certain scholarly accounts of 1960s radicalism.

Laura Pulido's *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*, is arguably the most prominent study of the "U.S. Third World Left" and most noted for its efforts to theorize the political formation's multiracial character. Even though Third World leftists drew upon a common set of anti-racist and anti-capitalist ideologies, it is Pulido's contention, at least in the case of Los Angeles activists, that one's position within the "regional racial hierarchy" determined everything from their grassroots activism, political analyses, approaches to inter-ethnic solidarity, and gender politics.[355] Pulido's emphasis of "differential racialization" is useful for identifying distinctions, but offers little room to assess the intercultural exchanges that occurred between groups. To broaden our understanding of this political cross-fertilization, I examine the ways the UCWA and ACWA crafted a diverse set of radical ideas - Third World unity, community survival, working-class solidarity, and Third World Feminism - collectively, as opposed to in isolation. But, before I analyze this exchange of ideas and support, I will distinguish the respective political traditions that inspired the UCWA and ACWA's radical turns.

Title VII Law to Third World Marxism

In a rather quick fashion, the UCWA's critiques of institutionalized racism soon gave way to condemnations of what Cedric Robinson terms "racial capitalism." In his generative study of

[354] Jason Ferreira, "All Power to the People : A Comparative History of Third World Radicalism in San Francisco, 1968-1974" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 1.

[355] Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California, 2006).

the Black Radical Tradition, Robinson argues, "The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions."[356] Black worker-activists in the UCWA began to reckon with this reality, largely due to the success of their legal advocacy. In a 1975 interview, when asked why the UCWA grew critical of the limits of civil rights law, Tyree Scott frankly responded, "[B]ecause we effectively used it," and thus had to directly confront its political shortcomings.[357] Between 1970 and 1974, the number of Black workers in Seattle's construction trades leaped exponentially from ten to nearly five hundred. This had much to do with their 1972 June First Movement. During the summer of 1972, after becoming a "party to the [1970 department of justice] lawsuit," which mandated strict timetables for desegregation in Seattle's building trade unions, the UCWA played a pivotal role in assuring that Black workers both entered and stayed in the industry.[358] But, as Scott explained, "the law…only addressed itself to the problems of [the] white worker[s']" racism."[359] Unemployment was a completely different matter. In 1975, the union that had drew the UCWA ire, the Operating Engineer's Local 302, had a "40 percent unemployment rate" amongst its membership. Moreover, Seattle's construction industry overall unemployment rate was 20 percent.[360] This economic imbalance forced the UCWA to think critically about their previous tactics and demands. Diane Dickerson, a University of Washington Law student who had volunteered for the UCWA summarized as much in her 1975 article published in the newsletter for the Seattle Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, *Contempt: Justice Belongs to All the People*. In her appropriately titled piece, "Struggle Continues: Historical Lessons of the UCWA," Dickerson analyzed, "Under capitalism

[356] Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1983), 2.

[357] Tyree Scott, Interviewed by William Little, Transcript, December 16, 1975, *William Little Papers, Special Collections, University of Washington* (hereafter cited as WLP, SCUW).

[358] For a more detailed discussion of the UCWA's role in *U.S. v. Ironworkers Local 86 et. al.*, see chapter one of the dissertation.

[359] Tyree Scott, Interviewed by William Little, *WLP, SCUW*.

[360] "A Slice of the Pie, or Jobs for All," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

there can never be jobs for all. A reserve army of ready workers is essential to maintain a constant supply of replacement." She explained, this not only "maintains low wage levels," but it also "serves to divide workers by forcing them to compete for existing jobs."[361] Under these conditions, it was apparent that dividing the remaining construction jobs between white and workers of color was far from a long-term solution.

Furthermore, unemployment was not the sole concern of the UCWA. Staff organizers also worried about the broader social consciousness of their membership. While the primary goal of the UCWA during its early years centered upon finding employment for their membership, they also hoped their organization would be a spring board to other forms of social protest. Analyzing the group's synthesis between social services and political education, UCWA activist Harley Bird commented,

> [Y]ou [can] talk about the philosophy of the system of capitalism, the whys and wherefores…but if a guy is hungry, doesn't have a job, has a family to feed and a light bill to pay and shoes to buy for his kids, it falls on deaf ears. So it was necessary to provide jobs and employment opportunities to continue to keep those people working.[362]

By 1974, with employment becoming a reality for a significant portion of its membership, the need for a more explicit political education program became apparent to UCWA staff. In a letter to a colleague within the AFSC's Third World Coalition, Scott described how, in the UCWA's excitement to spread their successful organizing model to new regions and industry, they failed to "bring the workers along" in the group's various organizing projects between 1972 and 1974. Over this period, the UCWA cultivated a broad network of "sister organizations" across the country.[363] While the end goal was local autonomy for each constituency, the driving force

[361] Diane Dickerson, "Struggle Continues: Historical Lessons of the UCWA," *Contempt: Justice Belongs to All the People,* March 1975, 20.
[362] Harley Bird, Interviewed by William Little, Transcript, October 29, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.
[363] For a more detailed discussion of this expansion effort, see chapter 2.

behind these initiatives were the ambitious desires of UCWA staff organizers, namely Tyree Scott, Todd Hawkins, and Michael Woo. There is no evidence that the UCWA's rank-and-file members in Seattle protested this use of organizational resources, but Scott's comments suggest they also had little involvement and input.

Scott also feared, the UCWA's failure to "bring workers along" had resulted in "a bunch of workers who are well paid and who react to the problems they once had in the same way as their white counterparts (they become part of the problem)."[364] While he did not explicitly spell out what this meant, it is likely members approached the work of the UCWA with indifference. A useful measure of this was the precipitous drop in the organization's active membership. At the UCWA's early 1970s height, the group boosted a membership roll of a nearly five hundred, and the meetings were generally attended by hundreds of workers. Four years later, by UCWA activists' own estimates, the organization's ranks dropped closer to 50.[365] Thus, the UCWA confronted a dual problem: an increase, but arguably "depoliticized" Black workforce in the construction trades and a much smaller rank-and-file. This dilemma forced UCWA activists to re-access the work of their organization. For Scott, this challenge pushed him to study the history of the labor movement in China, Russia, Europe, and the United States. In turn, he and others in the UCWA gradually moved toward Marxism.

Just two years prior, it was hard to imagine this shift occurring. The Black worker group had a tenuous relationship with Seattle's "White Left" during the June First Movement; one that severely tainted their views of Marxism. During the 1972 campaigns, Scott recalled the "chauvinistic" attitude of white activists from the Revolutionary Union (RU). For instance, they were very critical of the UCWA's demand for the "right to dispatch…[Black] apprentices." As

[364] Tyree Scott to Stanley Wise, 4 April, 1974, TSP, SCUW.
[365] UCWA, "Notes from Weekend Retreat," June 14-15, *TSP, SCUW*.

advocates of outright class struggle, white leftists found problems with what they described UCWA's "race first" approach.[366] To the RU's credit, they supported and participated in the UCWA's June First Movement. Scott remembered, "they…faithfully show[ed] up…[with] 10 or 12 people" for each demonstration. Even afterwards, they attended meetings, put forward positions, and tried to develop "democratic centralism" within the organization. This alone set them worlds apart from other leftist groups. In the case of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), they originally assumed that the UCWA "made a class analysis." Once they found this not to be the case, the PLP proceeded to publish ample propaganda calling the UCWA "opportunists" and claiming they "had agents in the CIA and FBI." To make matters worse, they even "came to [UCWA] meetings and pass[ed] the leaflets out." Reflecting on these experiences, Scott acknowledged, "It caused me to be really suspicious of Marxism." He continued, "I was judging Marxism by those people, rather than the other way around."[367]

For the UCWA's central staff organizers, it was conversations and collective struggles with an entirely different set of leftists, namely, activist of color employed by the AFSC, which significantly shaped the group's analysis of racism, capitalism, and imperialism. As discussed in the previous chapter, the AFSC's Third World Coalition (TWC) was a diverse meeting ground for anti-racist activists across the nation. While the group originally formed as a caucus within the Quaker organization, it quickly developed its own set of prerogatives. By October of 1974, in sharp contrast to the AFSC's liberal orientation that emphasized a politics of "peaceful negotiation" and the ethics of "non-violence," the TWC adopted a "statement of purpose" that declared their commit to the "liberation of T[hird] W[orld] communities within and beyond the

[366] Michael Ross, Interviewed by William Little, Transcript, October 28, 1975, *The William Little Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited WLP, SCUW); Larry Gossett, Interviewed by William Little, Transcript, November 6, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.

[367] Tyree Scott, Interviewed by William Little, Transcript, October 29, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.

U.S., to the advancement of poor and working class people within those communities…[and to] actively oppose…exploitation and oppression on the basis of class, race, and sex."[368]

Alan Gomez's research reveals that Scott and other Seattle activists significantly informed this radical shift. Two months before the TWC publicly disseminated a revised "statement of purpose," Scott sent a memo to coalition members to address their concerns not within the "context of the A.F.S.C.," but in the "context of the world." For him, focusing on the former took critical energy away from "mov[ing] on the oppressive forces external to Service Committee that affect our lives."[369] Namely, he reminded TWC members, "Most of us would be hard pressed to find a 3rd World community in this country where…[integrating the AFSC] take[s] precedence over the lack of employment, the lack of adequate housing, the lack of adequate educational systems, [and] the absence of and high cost of justice."[370] In Scott's estimation, it was through resources, such as "access to technology…[and] communication systems," as well as raising the people's consciousness of "the political process and…this country's economic policy," where an institution like the AFSC could be useful to grassroots social movements. In addition to reorienting the TWC's goals around a set of Third World revolutionary principles, the coalition also opened up its membership to "people beyond AFSC." Clearly, Scott's suggestion to prioritize the group's political energies around "mov[ing] on the oppressive forces external to [American Friends] Service Committee" were taken to heart.

The fact that the UCWA's Marxist turn ran parallel to the restructuring of the TWC was not a coincidence. According to Michael Simmons, the AFSC may have made distinctions between the TWC and other AFSC organizing projects, but many of its members did not. For one,

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[368] Alan Gomez, *From Below and to the Left: Re-Imagining the Chicano Movement Through the Circulation of Third World Struggles, 1970-1979* (PhD Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006), 362.

[369] Ibid, 352.

[370] Gomez, *From Below and to the Left: Re-Imagining the Chicano Movement Through the Circulation of Third World Struggles*, 353.

Simmons maintained, the TWC gave AFSC employed staff members, "[A] vehicle to look at politics beyond what we were hired to do." Thus, UCWA activists, funded solely to address employment discrimination, were given an outlet to link their grassroots organizing to the AFSC's extensive international networks. To this note, Simmons remembered, "[W]e were working with the Puerto Rican socialist parties…on [the] liberation [and Independence] movement." In terms of African Liberation, he recalled, "[W]e had developed connections with Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe." These international linkages, Simmons continued, "allowed us [TWC members] to develop…more political sophistication." Namely, international solidarity was "no longer rhetoric," because activists, "were actually meeting people that were part of these movements."[371] As Simmons remembered, what started first as extensive discussions about the merits of Third World Marxism between Scott and himself, soon "became more of a collective conversation" with UCWA staffers Todd Hawkins, and Michael Woo. In reference to the four of them, Simmons noted, "[B]etween 1974 and 1976 one or more of us went to Cuba, China, [and] India." In Woo's case, he also traveled to Canada to attend a meeting celebrating the victory of North Vietnamese in 1975. These travels, Simmons maintained, "[B]egan to shape our world view, [through] our encounters with Third World Marxists, slash revolutionary intellectuals."[372]

The UCWA's new political orientation most clearly expressed itself in a new, long-term goal: "meaningful jobs for all." As we shall see later, the construction worker group no longer believed dividing the remaining jobs within the construction trades was a viable solution to unemployment and underemployment in communities of color. Instead, they implored all those concerned with their economic vulnerability, including rank-and-file white workers in the

[371] Michael Simmons, Phone Interview with Author, 13 January, 2015.
[372] Ibid.

construction trades, to confront the root of the problem; capitalism itself. To do so, they proposed a progressive tax on corporations in Washington, which would ideally result in "full employment" for the state's residents. As a result, UCWA activists followed the trajectory of W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, and countless others who crafted a "proletarian politics from the vantage point of the Black Radical Tradition."[373] The UCWA's were not alone either in their critiques of racial capitalism. A close look at the political transformation of their "sister organization," the ACWA, demonstrates a similar turn toward Third World radicalism.

ACWA: The Labor Arm of Seattle's Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)

In the summer of 1973, "a group of about eighty young activists met at a retreat in the Santa Cruz Mountains" and "founded the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino."[374] Translated into English as the Union of Democratic Filipinos, or KDP for short, the organization linked two distinct, but interrelated sources of oppositional consciousness that animated Filipino activism in the United States at the time: The Asian American "Identity Movement" and a "nationalist revolutionary awakening" in the Philippines during the 1960s and 1970s. This fusion was several years in the making. For Filipino American youth of the early 1970s, their politics were molded in the backdrop of the black freedom struggles and anti-war protests across the country. As seen in chapter two, many drew political inspiration from community elders who migrated to the United States at the height of the Great Depression. These pioneers left an indelible mark on the U.S. Labor Movement, but during the early 1950s they feel victim to the era's vicious anti-communist hysteria. This history of Cold War repression left many destitute, subject to

[373] Robinson, *Black Marxism*, xxxii.
[374] Helen Toribio, "We are Revolution: A Reflective History of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)," *Amerasia Journal* 24.2 (1998): 155.

deportations, and in severe states of depression.[375] By the late 1960s, Filipino American militants were exposed to another source of inspiration. Transpacific routes of migration brought them in contact with students, intellectuals and political exiles who either had first-hand experience with Martial Law in the Philippines, or were actively involved in the movement against then Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. In reference to the unique political environment this created for Filipino American youth, Rene Cruz, a former KDP member explained, "[Y]ou have to look at the dynamics of…a group of [Filipino] Americans who had been…radicalized by the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam movement, finally finding a struggle of their own…the Philippines." In this context, supporting the Philippine Communist Party's movement to oust Ferdinand Marcos, Cruz explained, represented, "our roots," "our Vietnam."[376]

Within the KDP's first year, the national chapter in the San Francisco-Bay Area extended its operation into the Pacific Northwest. In turn, many of those involved in the ACWA became prime recruits. In particular, Silme Domingo was highly sought after. Actively involved in campus, community, and labor issues relevant to Seattle's Filipino community, it was believed that if he joined the organization, the broader network of activists he was connected to would follow suit. In fact, the pan-ethnic and multiracial character of Domingo's political affiliations made the Seattle chapter of the KDP rather unique. Instead of making the organization an explicitly Filipino group, activists such as Domingo recruited Chinese, Japanese, and even some White activists, all of whom were part of campus struggles for Asian American Studies,

[375] Arleen De Vera, "Without Parallel: The Local 7 Deportation Cases, 1949-1955," *Amerasia Journal* 20.2 (1994): 1-25; Rick Baldoz, "'Comrade Carlos Bulosan:' State Surveillance and the Cold War Suppression of Filipino Radicals," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 11.33 (2014).

[376] Augusto Espiritu, "Journeys of Discovery and Difference: Transnational Politics and the Union of Democratic Filipinos," *The Transnational Politics of Asian Americans*, eds. Christian Collet and Pei-Te Lien (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2009), 41.

community initiatives to preserve low-income housing and social services in the International District, and the movement to bring an end to generations of racial discrimination in Alaska's salmon canneries. The KDP hoped to fill a political void in Seattle's Asian American activist scene. When it came to Asian American radicalism, Cindy Domingo, Silme's younger sister and future KDP recruit noted, "[W]e were the only show in town."[377] This made Seattle starkly different from other cities, such as Los Angeles and the San Francisco-Bay Area. In these places, a variety of radical, ethnic-specific, organizations existed. As a result, Pan-Asian student movements soon splintered along ethnic lines once they immersed themselves community' struggles. By contrast, Seattle's KDP chapter served to fortify bonds between Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese American activists that were cultivated in campus insurgencies.

The fact that the Seattle chapter of the KDP emerged when Asian American activism had already formalized concrete programs to address educational, housing, and employment issues in the city's Filipino community made the Pacific Northwest an ideal environment to put into practice what the KDP referred to as their "dual line." A reflection of diverse constituencies that made up the organization - Filipino American youth and Philippine national - the KDP developed a two-pronged political program: supporting "national democracy" in the Philippines, and socialism in the United States. The latter platform happened to be a site of tension for members of the Communist Party of the Philippines, who viewed Filipinos in the United States, both American born and immigrant, as "an overseas exile group waiting to return to a national democratic Philippines." A significant portion of the KDP argued the contrary. Many KDP members viewed Philippine communities in the United States as an "integral part of the US. working-class," and more specifically, "an ethnic community whose democratic [anti-racist]

[377] Cindy Domingo, Interview by author and James Gregory, Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project (Hereafter cited, SCRLHP), http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/cindy_domingo.htm.

struggles" should be linked a movement for socialism in the U.S.[378] In fact, the KDP's founding documents made note,

> In their day to day lives they [Filipinos] share the same experiences and aspirations and face identical problems along with the rest of the American [working-class]…As such, progressive Pilipinos are an inseparable part of the whole American people's struggle to take political power out of the hands of the big capitalists and into the hands of the working people, who make up the vast majority of the population .[379]

The ACWA, which had already begun to raise the political consciousness of Filipino and other non-White cannery workers, served as an ideal "front organization" to put into practice the KDP's socialist politics. With three lawsuits already in motion against major cannery companies in Alaska, the struggle to "Preserve the International District" became their primary concern for ACWA members. While their organizing was devoid of the explicit language of class struggle found in the KDP statement above, members of Seattle's KDP chapter immersed themselves at the center of a broad coalition that aimed to intensify the struggle of International District residents. With the construction of the Domed Stadium already underway, organizing in the International District transitioned from protesting the stadium's location, to redirecting the economic resources toward the community. In this period, ACWA members demanded that a percentage of the remaining construction jobs be allocated for Asian American residents of the International District. This campaign once again provided a venue for the UCWA and ACWA's movement politics to be mutually reinforcing.

The UCWA's Growing Asian American Membership

[378] Espiritu, "Journeys of Discovery and Difference," 47.
[379] Toribio, "We are Revolution," 164-165.

The UCWA's embrace of "Third World Marxism" was accompanied by a significant shift in the organization's racial composition. By 1976, those changes were so profound that staff organizers published an editorial entitled "Who Are We?," where they declared,

> We first started to look at ourselves as an organization. We were no long[er] a black workers group, but a multi-national group with Chinese, Filipino and black workers in our ranks and leadership. We had come to realize that the same problems that affect the black community also affect other Third World communities.[380]

This statement could be read as political rhetoric; one that arguably obscured important differences between racial groups. However, this transformation within the UCWA was a product of both of construction industry practices and the multiracial sensibilities of activists involved. Mainly, as Asian American workers attempted to enter the construction trades in significant number, UCWA activists quickly observed, they faced challenges that resonated greatly with their Black counterparts. A clear example of this was the obstacles that Lester Kuramato faced as he sought to enter the industry. The young Japanese American was one of the ACWA's founding members. Much like his peers, he was incensed by the constant racial indignities that non-white workers faced in Alaska's salmon industry. While he was committed to the ACWA's use of anti-discrimination lawsuits to "destroy" industry practices of segregation, he was less inclined to continue his employment in Alaska. When, Kuramato returned to Seattle after the 1973 summer canning season, he was in desperate need of a job. It is unclear if the UCWA had any influence on his decision making, but he immediately began to explore his options in the construction trades.

Kuramato visited the "Seattle-King County Plan" office, an affirmative action program for trades not included in the 1970 Lindberg Court Order. The response he received underscored the obstacles that non-Black workers of color faced getting into the trades. He was told, "[I]t would

[380] "Who We Are?" *No Separate Peace*, May 1976, 4, TSP, SCUW.

be almost impossible…to get in because of the court decree allowing only 10.6% minorities… [applied to] blacks only." Apparently, the only work he could find through the office was "carpet laying," a low paid position that Kuramato described as a "dead end." His saving grace, however, was his subsequent visit to Seattle's Employment Opportunities Center, a civil rights organization that dealt explicitly with job training in Seattle's Central District. There, Kuramato learned about a machinist training program and subsequently went to the Washington State Employment Security office to sign-up. Remembering this experience, he maintained, "If I hadn't been there [the Employment Opportunities Center] that day I would probably [be] working at a hamburger joint or someplace learning nothing."[381] Within a year's time, Kuramato was not only a member of the UCWA, he was elected by the organization's rank-and-file to be on their board of directors.[382]

Kuramoto was not alone. Without access to the organization's membership rosters, it is impossible to ascertain how many Asian American workers joined the UCWA. But two prominent Filipino worker turned activists illustrate this trend beyond Kuramato. At the center of an emerging battle between the UCWA and Seattle's Operating Engineer Local 302 union were Michael and John Jimenez; two laborers who, at first, simply sought an opportunity to work as "heavy equipment operators." The two Filipino laborers had a similar educational and economic profile as the UCWA's broader black membership. Neither of them had finished high school. In the case of Michael Jimenez, prior to signing up for the Local 302's "minority oiler program," he had a series of odd jobs, including a stint in Alaska's salmon canneries, working for a time as a trucker driver, and even laboring as a landscaper, "cutting lawns and pruning

[381] "Excerpts from Testimony on the Exclusion of Asian American from the Construction Industry and the King County Domed Stadium Construction Project," December 19, 1974, *The Silme Domingo Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington* (Hereafter cited, SDP, SCUW).

[382] UCWA, "Board of Directors Meeting," December 15, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.

trees." John Jimenez regularly worked in Alaska as a cannery workers during the 1970s. But during his tenure in the U.S. Military, he learned a trade as an Operating Engineer, and hope to gain a foothold in the Local 302.[383] Yet, the two Filipino workers quickly understood that the affirmative action structure of the Local 302 showed no signs of desegregating their trades in any meaningful way.

Michael Jimenez's described his experiences in the union's Minority Oiler Program as one where "they just…phase you out." In 1970, when the Local 302 negotiated an affirmative action "consent decree" with the Department of Justice, it was agreed that once a "minority worker" reached "500 man-hours" at a worksite, they were counted toward the industry's desegregated workforce. However, Michael Jimenez noticed that the union employed a clever method that allowed them to follow affirmative action law on paper, but evade it in practice. The Filipino oiler trainee explained, "After I got 500 hours, I was never called again." When he followed up with his union officials about potential job prospects, Jimenez was often told "work was slow." Yet, Jimenez grew skeptical of this reply because he saw a constant stream of white laborers, who, according to him, "[were] always out, and always working."[384]

Beyond the racial discrepancies in dispatching workers, Michael Jimenez observed that part of the problem was as an absence of on-the-job training. In his experiences, he maintained "You might get on the job with a person who isn't going to teach you anything." To this point, he spent several hours on the streets "flagging traffic," as opposed to learning a trade. In the process, workers of color received an inferior training that put them at a disadvantage for future

[383] Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO), "UCWA, et. al. v. Operating Engineers Local 302," May 3, 1977, *TSP, SCUW*.

[384] "Excerpts from Testimony on the Exclusion of Asian American from the Construction Industry and the King County Domed Stadium Construction Project."

job prospects. As a result, Michael Jimenez summarized, "That's one of the reasons…[why] I got laid off…It's just one big circle. You work 500 hours, after that - no job."[385]

By contrast, John Jimenez's tenure in the Local 302 demonstrated that experience and qualifications provided little protection from racial exclusion. In the Fall of 1972, he walked into the Local 302's office with "two years [of experience] in the military as an operating engineer." Despite this, the union enrolled him into the "Oiler Training Program."[386] As a result, he was required to "grease cranes" that he had operated two years prior. While frustrated with the prospect of starting "all over again," he remained confident that he would soon find steady employment. By December of 1974, however, his optimism had been dashed by the reality of institutionalized racism. Despite being a member of the union for seventeen months, he recalled, "I've [only] worked about five weeks…a week here, a week there, [and sometimes only] half a day."[387]

Much like Michael, John Jimenez saw a consist stream of white workers, often less qualified than himself, dispatched to job sites while he laid idle. In fact, he remembers one instance where a white worker had been employed by a contractor for seven years through a "laborers union." The contractor apparently liked him, sent him down to the Local 302 office, and soon he was back on the job as a heavy equipment operator. As someone who spent many hours waiting to hear his name at the Local 302 hiring hall, John Jimenez maintained, "All the oilers that I know are steadily working. The only people that I see out of work are minorities."[388] This was powerful example of how unions were not the only culpable party in the industry's

[385] Ibid.
[386] LELO, "UCWA v. Operating Engineers Local 302."
[387] "Excerpts from Testimony on the Exclusion of Asian American from the Construction Industry and the King County Domed Stadium Construction Project."
[388] Ibid.

practices of racial exclusion. Clearly, industry networks between unions and contractors worked in a similar fashion to exclude Black and Asian American workers.

The experiences of Lester Kuramato, Michael Jimenez, and John Jimenez illustrate that it was not only radical politics that linked black and Asian American laborers in Seattle, but also overlapping processes of racialization. This phenomenon challenges the dominant analysis structuring Black and Asian American comparative studies. Scholars such as Claire Jean Kim, Scott Kurashige, and Eric Tang have argued that both groups experience "distinct, but relational" processes of racialization.[389] That is, even though dominant society views each group differently, as either biologically/culturally inferior or "forever foreign," they are also undergo a process that Kim describes as "relative valorization." This means, "whites valorize Asian Americans relative to blacks on cultural and/or racial grounds in a way that reinforces white dominance over both groups."[390] However, the striking similarities of racial exclusion that both black and Asian American construction workers experienced suggests that another development was afoot. In the case of Seattle's building trade unions, they viewed all workers of color as potential threats to the economic livelihood of rank-and-file white workers. In this case, Asian American construction workers did not occupy a middle ground between blackness and whiteness. Rather, their experiences in the construction trades attest to what John Marquez has described elsewhere as "foundational blackness."[391] Since the industry's exclusionary practices were crafted largely to ostracize black workers and curtail the influence of the UCWA, anti-blackness provided an organizing logic for prohibiting the entry of all other racial groups.

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[389] Claire Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," *Politics and Society* 27.1 (1999): 105-138; Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans and the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2008); Eric Tang, *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the NYC Hyperghetto* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2015).

[390] Claire-Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City* (New Haven: Yale University, 2000), 16.

[391] John Marquez, *Black-Brown Solidarity: Racial Politics in the New Gulf South* (Austin: University of Texas, 2013).

But common conditions of exploitation alone do not automatically translate into collective action. A sense of mutual struggle had to be nurtured at the grassroots level. By December of 1974, two distinct, but interconnected campaigns developed in Seattle: the UCWA's efforts to desegregate the Operating Engineers Local 302 and the ACWA push to open the construction trades to Asian American workers. Each struggle became political space where respective expressions of "Third World Marxism" were put into practice in a relational way. In both cases, they relied upon grassroots multiracial solidarity and the cross-fertilization of political strategies.

Trade Union Racism and Local 302's "Minority Oilier Program"

In what came to be known as the "Jobs for All" campaign, UCWA activists were initially concerned with the actions of the Operating Engineer's Local 302. Originally part of the 1970 department of Justice investigation, the union ultimately decided to settle outside of court. In contrast to other major building trade unions under investigation, Local 302 had the political foresight to recognize that they were doomed to lose the case given their racist membership and dispatching practices. Instead, they created a "consent decree" with the EEOC, just months before the UCWA came into existence in June of 1970. Negotiated outside of Judge Lindberg's court order, a larger ramification of this arrangement was that the plan was beyond the reach of the UCWA, who after the 1972 "June First Movement," had special screening and supervising privileges within the industry's other building trade unions.[392]

In the latter months of 1974, it was painfully clear to the UCWA that the Local 302's "consent decree," according to Michael Woo, "had little to no effect."[393] Evident in the experiences of Michael and John Jimenez, the operating engineers union found ways to meet the

[392] See chapter 1.
[393] Michael, Interviewed by William Little, Transcript, November 3, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.

stated requirements of affirmative action guidelines, without having lasting affects on workplace demographics. Reflecting upon his observations of the union's requirement for minority workers to have at least "500 man-hours," Woo explained, "One guy would go into the trade…for only 500…hours and that would be the end of it. They would be counted as a statistic." But to make matters worse, he remembered, "even at that, most folks didn't get their 500 [hours]."[394]

In the latter months of 1974, the UCWA's Operating Engineers sub-committee grappled with the blatant exclusionary practices of their union. At a time when the four trades covered in *U.S. V. Ironworkers Local 86*, were complying with the court order, those in the UCWA's Operating Engineer sub-committee were flustered, and as Woo commented, "ready to do something."[395] At this time, the UCWA staff discovered a worksite in South Seattle that was "out of compliance" with Local 302's affirmative action plan. The site employed twenty operating engineers, none of which were workers of color. To make matters worse, Woo pointed out, "[I]t was right in our community."[396] Between the months of October and December of 1974, the UCWA applied ample pressure on the site's contractor, National Contractors. Woo explained, "We…tried to talk with him, meet in his office, [make] phone calls, [write] letters."[397] Shutting down the site appeared to be the only solution.

Once the worksite stoppages commenced, the UCWA's Third World Unity was on full display. On December 9th, twenty-three activists gathered in front of the South Seattle job site. At this point, they only demanded an additional five jobs for Third World workers. Responses by contractors and police, however, were typically. National Contractor claimed they lacked the money for additional jobs and appealed to the city of Seattle for funding. Instead of funding the

[394] Ibid.
[395] Ibid.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ibid.

creation of new jobs, the city provided financial resources in the form of "police protection."[398] In typical fashion, Seattle's tactical squads arrested the twenty-three protesters on charges of "disorderly conduct and obstructing traffic."[399] A collective statement delivered by demonstrators in municipal court the following month, however, presented a different account of events. In response to their alleged unlawful behavior, the group maintained, "We at no time blocked traffic, acted in any disorderly manner or trespassed on the property; yet were unlawfully arrested, hit with clubs…and carried off to jail." Moreover, given their short period of detainment, only an hour and half, the role that police played was clear to the protestors. Characteristic of the department's privileging of "order" over "law," arrests were not intended to hold them, but remove them from the construction site. That way, UCWA activists concluded, "the job could continue although it was operating *without* fulfilling the legal requirement to hire Third World workers in all job classifications" (own emphasis).[400]

This became a critical part of their strategy moving forward. As one of the UCWA supporters, Larry Gossett, analyzed, "power com[es] from the people who went back out to the job sites…not from Tyree [Scott and others] staying in jail." Understanding that "the police could not afford to cover the job site every day," the UCWA returned the following morning to shut the site down.[401] In the *Seattle Times* coverage of the event, the UCWA's multiracial support was evident. The December 10th article noted, the estimated fifteen to twenty demonstrators were all "apparently of Asian background." To this, they continued, "The U.C.W.A., once regarded as a predominately black organization, has expanded to cover other minorities, mainly Chicanos and Asian-Americans." Unlike the day before, the actions ended

[398] UCWA, "For Immediate Release," December 11, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.
[399] Ibid.
[400] UCWA 23 to The Municipal Court System, The City of Seattle, January 29, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[401] UCWA, "General Membership Meeting Notes," December 15, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

"peacefully" with no arrests. As tactical squads assembled and announced to the crowd that they had "five minutes to disperse," protestors simply responded, "See you tomorrow."[402]

Just as in previous years, the UCWA's direct-action protests moved affirmative action forward. The fear of future work stoppages prompted the Association of General Contractors (AGC), a national organization that represented site's contractor, to look to the federal court to have the UCWA "enjoined from further job closures." Instead, Federal Judge William Lindberg denied their request and ordered "the UCWA, AGC, Local 302, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enter into good faith negotiations."[403] By December 15th, according to notes from a UCWA general membership meeting, the negotiations had already made significant headway in eliminating the "requirements that result in discrimination against minorities." For instance, the unions agreed to eliminate the prerequisites for "a high school diploma," which, as a result of racial disparities in graduation rates, the UCWA argued, undermined the employment opportunities of workers of color. Negotiations even established a degree of oversight for the UCWA. They, alongside the Association of General Contractors (AGC) had the authority to monitor the agreement. The UCWA's lawyer in charge of negotiations, Michael Fox, was so impressed with the progress of discussions that he confidently affirmed a new "consent decree" would be signed "within three weeks." The progress made in negotiations, Fox reminded the UCWA's membership, "could not have been accomplished without the demonstration[s]."[404]

But just as deliberations moved in promising direction, Local 302 showed little signs of "good faith." By early February, the union broke a critical aspect of the agreement. According to the past months' deliberations, the person employed as the "minority oilier officer" was tasked

[402] Byron Johnsrud, "Demonstration at Job Site Ends Peacefully," *Seattle Times*, December 10, 1974, A20.
[403] Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, The Buffalo Soldiers," March 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[404] UCWA, "General Membership Meeting Notes," December 15, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

with the important responsibilities of dispatching future minority workers and overseeing the affirmative action plan. Under the terms of the negotiation, that position was reserved for a "minority worker," and all parties - the UCWA, AGC, Local 302 and the EEOC – had a say in the hiring. On both points, the Operating Engineers union violated the consent decree. They unilaterally hired Lynn Krause, a member of the Local 302 and a graduate of the union's minority oilier program, which incensed the UCWA. Court hearing three years later revealed that the union's arguments for employment of Lynn Krause were based on questionable grounds. Local 302 official made the case the Krause was a "minority worker" because his great-grand parents were Spanish, and thus a "Spanish-American." Despite this flawed racial logic, court proceedings showed a degree of nepotism was also involved. In the 1977 case, *UCWA v. Operating Engineers Local 302*, the proceedings discovered that Lynn Krause was "a first cousin to Ronald W. Knight," the union's former "minority oiler program" coordinator. Base upon the UCWA's research, they discovered that Mr. Krause met with Mr. Knight, as early as October 15, 1974 and informed him that he was "dissatisfied with his present job with Safeco Insurance." To which, the union official told his cousin, "hang in there…there is a possibility I might be able to help you."[405] It appeared that the union had a clear candidate in mind, even before they entered negotiations with the UCWA.

In response to the Local 302's action, those in the UCWA were forced to openly question, "How many other non-minorities have been allowed entry into the program over the past five years?"[406] To make matters worse, Local 302's lawyer claimed that he had "no knowledge" that "UCWA approval" was part of the revised affirmative action plan. On top of claiming innocence, the lawyer adopted a confrontational stance to any UCWA authority in the matter.

[405] LELO, "UCWA v. Operating Engineers Local 302."
[406] UCWA, "A Slice of the Pie, Or Jobs for All," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

When explaining the union's decision to a reporter, one representative asserted, "[T]his is a job in the union…We'll be the ones to choose the person. The U.C.W.A. wants the right to a veto. No way will we put someone in the union office *we don't know and trust*"[407] (own emphasis).

Such a response by "organized labor" was not only a sore reminder of the entrenched institutionalized racism of building trades unions, but it also made plain a tension that UCWA activists had grappled with for the better part of a year: the limits of civil rights law. In a flyer distributed in the latter part of February 1975, amidst a series of construction sites closures, activists not only blamed racist union officials, but they also openly critiqued the negligence of the EEOC. Despite its role "to oversee the implementation the union's consent decree, the governmental agency," UCWA activists asserted, "[they] did…not challenge the validity of Local 302's authority in the hiring of Krause,…check to see how Krause was admitted or [inquired] how many other…non-minorities…have been in the minority oilier program."[408] With union racism, once again, continuing without federal repercussions, the UCWA were forced to employ militant tactics in the name of enforcing the law. However, this time around they would also question the use of the law as a viable movement strategy. As Diane Dickerson, a UCWA volunteer and University of Washington Law Student, raised in her article on the ensuing protests, "At what point has the law outlived its usefulness as a tool for radical change?"[409] This line of critique would mobilize a broad cross-section of activists in Seattle to take part in the UCWA's demonstrations between February and April of 1975. However, a central precursor to those actions would take place in the International District.

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[407] Ko, "They Closed Down a Construction Site: A UW Professor, Administrator, and Fifteen Others Arrested," *The UW Daily, February 13, 1975*.

[408] UCWA, "A Slice of the Pie, Or Jobs for All," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

[409] Dickerson, "Struggle Continues: Historical Lessons from the UCWA."

Community Control and the Struggle to Preserve the International District

The International District (ID) was only six miles away from the South Seattle construction site that drew the attention of the UCWA. Grassroots struggles to preserve the working-class, Asian character of the ID, began in earnest in 1972. That year, King County Official indicated their commitment to build a multi-purpose domed-stadium, despite the opposition of longtime residents and community activists. To challenge this effort, a group of concerned Asian American activists formed the Committee for Corrective Action in the International District (CCAID). To ensure the future profits generated by the stadium were redirected back into the community, CCAID members devised an eight-point proposal that called for a range of social services, such as a health clinic and multi-serve center for senior citizens, as well as significant community oversight in the operation the stadium. But a clear indicator of the influence that the UCWA had on Asian American activism in Seattle was point two of their proposal which built upon the construction worker group's unique "community control" politics. In it, CCAID activists called upon County Executive John Spellman to "rewrite stadium bid specifications requiring 40 apprenticeship and 40 journeyman positions for Asian Americans."[410]

For the ACWA, their members search for viable employment opportunities in the construction trades soon evolved into a productive movement strategy. At first, ACWA activists believed that learning skilled construction trades would be beneficial to their pending lawsuits against the cannery companies. For instance, not only could they use statistical employment data to prove discrimination, but if plaintiffs had either training or employment experience in a particular construction trade, they could make a stronger case as "qualified applicants" for well-

[410] Nemesio Domingo to John Spellman, January 15, 1975, *The Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union (CWFLU) Local 7 Records*, Special Collections at the University of Washington (Hereafter cited, CWFLU Local 7, SCUW).

paid and less labor-intensive positions in Alaska's salmon industry. However, mobilization to preserve the International District brought new meaning to the ACWA's efforts to open the construction trades to Asian American workers. It now became a strategic battleground to save a community under siege.

On December 15, 1974, acting director of the ACWA, Nemesio Domingo, took the concerns of International District activists directly to the UCWA's Board of Directors meeting.[411] While notes from the meeting were brief, Domingo typically delivered a common message when describing the plight of International District residents. He often likened the Domed Stadium to a "white elephant" in the Asian American community. Writing to King County Executive John Spellman one month later, Domingo noted, "[An] [a]dverse impact has already been felt in the International District in terms of higher rent and speculation buying." Community activists feared this was only the beginning. In fact, they foresaw this economic trend extending to surrounding neighborhoods, such as, "Beacon Hill, the southern part of the Central District, Rainier Valley," all places, Domingo reminded the county executive, "where Asian Americans live." Putting this in a national context, the ACWA activist understood full well what could become of working-class, Asian American communities, "The Domed Stadium exhibits all the falsities of urban renewal…a minority group…[being] asked to accommodate a white project in this community — only to be pushed out later."[412]

Not surprisingly, UCWA organizers responded with affirmations of solidarity. Even though they were amidst their own struggle to open up the operating engineer trades to "third world workers," UCWA board members resolved to "back [the] A.C.W.A. should they need our help." In doing so, they asked Michael Woo, once again, to split his responsibilities between the two

[411] UCWA, "Board of Directors Meeting," December 15, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.
[412] Nemesio Domingo to John Spellman, CWFLU Local 7, SCUW.

worker organizations, where he, alongside other UCWA members, would "get together with the Asian staff [of the ACWA] to discuss the methods to best serve in helping them get organized."[413] Only four days later, the UCWA put their support of their "sister organization" on display. On December 19, a special meeting of the Washington State Commission of Asian American Affairs was held at Wing Luke Museum in the International District to discuss the "exclusion of Asian American in the construction industry and the King County Domed Stadium Project." There were countless numbers of Asian American workers and contractors who discussed the struggles of community members to "break into" the construction industry. Much of the discussion hinged upon the roadblocks set up by organized labor. When Michael Woo was given the floor, he made clear, "I have always wanted to work in the construction industry…[but] …never successful." He reminded the commission that the major avenue for legal redress against racial exclusion, Federal Judge William Lindberg's decision in *U.S. V. Ironworkers Local 86*, was "limited to black [workers]," even though "statistics didn't bare out that Asians, Hispanics, American Indians, and other minorities weren't discriminated against."[414] Nemesio Domingo added, the ramification of this racial policy were most pronounced in the Domed Stadium project. According the ACWA activist, "There have been nearly 200,000 man hours put into the construction of the Domed Stadium. [However,] Asian Americans, which represent nearly 5% of the population in King County, got less than *half of one percent* of those man hours" (own emphasis).[415]

Tyree Scott's testimony offers a window into the discursive links that UCWA and ACWA organizers made between their respective community-based labor struggles. In reference to a

[413] UCWA, "Board of Directors Meeting," December 15, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.
[414] "Excerpts from Testimony on the Exclusion of Asian American from the Construction Industry and the King County Domed Stadium Construction Project."
[415] Ibid.

recent construction project on the I-90 freeway, Scott argued, it had been "sold to the black community" as a "job creating mechanism." Thus far, the Black labor activist indicated, this had not been the case. With this precedent already set, Scott quickly turn to the situation in the International District. A similar rhetoric surrounded the construction of the Domed Stadium, but he reminded commission members to "look at the statistics" described by Domingo. In Scott's opinion, they easily demonstrated that job creation was a falsehood.[416] As both the UCWA and the ACWA intensified their struggles against the construction industry, grassroots multiracial solidarity proved to be key.

A close look at these Asian American-led protests in the International District reveals they harnessed the power of a grassroots critical mass much like the UCWA. As early as January 16, 1975, thirty young International District activists attempted to meet with King County Executive John Spellman to express their concern about the "deterioration that is occurring" in their community. Spellman canceled the meeting due to a "strike of county employees," forcing the Asian American activists to table their grievances to a future date.[417] Two weeks later, a much large crowd of activists assembled and had no intentions of waiting idly by as government officials took their time to respond.

On February 3rd, Elaine Ko noted, "Nearly 200 Asians and supporters occupied King County Executive John Spellman's office…in protest of his unresponsiveness to the needs of the International District." The group assembled in Hing Hay Park in the International District and marched to the county courthouse as they chanted - "we demand action" and "save our community." Once they arrived to their destination and the county executive was no where to be seen, the multiracial crowd overflowed into his fifth floor office while they boisterously

[416] Ibid.

[417] Elaine Ko, "Asians Occupy Spellman's Office in Protest of Stadium Construction," *UW Daily*, February 4, 1975, *CWFLU Local 7, SCUW*.

declared, "housing, not the domed stadium!" Spellman's absence had much to do with his desire to only meet "three or four Asian leaders in his office." In response, the spokesman of the sprawling group of activists, ACWA leader Silme Domingo, made clear, "We all have the right to hear the county's response." He added, "Spellman has continued to refuse to negotiate with the community on our terms…[T]hus, this is our response."

As one International District activist attests, the demonstration at Spellman's office proved to be a meeting ground for activists across the city, and even the region. Julia Laranang, an ACWA secretary at the time, remembered, "a lot of people came to help." Most notable was the presence of Native American organizers. Laranang, even admitted this was the first time she met Native American treaty rights activists, such as Sue Morales and Ramona Bennett.[418] In a testament to the political conviction of non-Asian American supporters, they embraced the frustration of International District activists as their own. This indignation boiled to the surface as protesters witnessed a map that depicted a dire future for the International District. Laranang recalled,

> [T]here was a drawing on the wall that had the Kingdome. And you know for a long time, those freeway ramps…were incomplete. Well, [this] freeway ramp was complete and it went right over the International District. And all that was in the drawing was a couple of hotels and restaurants and there was no International District. It was just this freeway ramp going to the Kingdome.[419]

For many, according to Laranang, this image symbolized that the displacement of Asian elderly resident from the International District was not "just imagined," but a "very real threat."[420] Frustrations were even further heightened when Larry Gossett, a Black community activist, noticed "a gold spike dug into an inscribed wooden plate" on top of Spellman's table.

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[418] Julia Laranang, Interviewed by Ron Chew, Transcript, January 14, 2011, *The Ron Chew Papers at the Wing Luke Museum* (Hereafter cited, RCP, WLM).
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid.

To the alarm of protesters, the inscription read, "The spike that broke the back of anti-stadium opposition." As the large crowd began to disperse, Silme Domingo reminded officials this was only the beginning. Drawing a page from the UCWA's play-book, he declared the group's commitment to intensify "anti-stadium opposition," even if this meant "clos[ing] down…stadium construction."[421] In less than two weeks time, the political energy the took over County Executive Spellman's office transferred back to the South Seattle construction site. This time, activists fulfilled their promises of bringing construction sites to a standstill.

UCWA Demonstrations and Spaces of Third World Unity

February 12th, 1975, marked the beginning of a new wave of UCWA-led worksite stoppages. That day, a group of approximately 20 "Third World construction workers" and their allies assembled at a South Seattle construction site. Arriving at 6:30 in the morning, protesters padlocked the entry gates closed and successfully shutdown the $1.5 million project for an hour and a half until police arrived at the scene. A testament to the city of Seattle's promise to provide the site's contractor with "police protection," seventeen activists were arrested for a "failure to disperse;" a number that ballooned to nearly eighty the following day. At this point, the demonstrators appeared willing to settle for minimal gains. Initially, they demanded the "immediate hiring" of "Five Third World heavy equipment operators."[422] But the nature of their concerns escalated rather quickly. In public statements and courtroom testimony, activists articulated a powerful condemnation of corporations, labor unions, and the courts and police who protected them. In doing so, UCWA demonstrations once again became a multiracial movement space; a site where a diverse set of radical social movements converged and cross-fertilized.

[421] Ko, "Asians Occupy Spellman's Office in Protest of Stadium Construction."

[422] Elaine Ko, "They Closed Down a Construction Site: A UW Professor, Administrator, and Fifteen Others Arrested," *The UW Daily, February 13, 1975*.

Tyree Scott's 1975 Poem, "Signs of the Revolucion," provides a rich cultural text in which to read the political analyses that informed the ensuing demonstrations. In fact, it was dedicated to the 23 activists arrested at the UCWA's December 9, 1974 worksite closure, a precursor to the action described above. In it, Scott's juggled a complex set of issues. The poem began by reflecting on conditions in Black working-class communities.

> Pill popping freaks,
> Flashing out on their own
> Do-ragged bloods,
> Heads honked to the bone
> A whole period of confusion…"[423]

Next, he delivered searing critiques of "monopoly capitalism" and U.S.-sponsored dictatorships abroad. Included were bold lines that jokingly warned U.S. Officials that Salvador Allende, the democratically-elected socialist president of Chile, was not dead. He also linked the repressive regime of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines to earlier forms of U.S colonialism in the archipelago, and alluded to the fire bombing of a national bank in New York City conducted by Puerto Rican Independistas. But arguably, the last three stanzas offered the clearest window into Scott's overall argument for multiracial, working-class unity.

> Expert freaks
> Trying to figure out the struggle
> Debating which issue
> Is *more relevant than the other*.
>
> Color-Coded Negroes
> Getting mad on their own
> Jump up at dinner parties
> To challenge Mr. Jones
> That ain't no sign of no Revolcion!
>
> Was that you I heard, [Amari] Baraka?
>
> Thomas Bradley, Kenneth Gibson

[423] Tyree Scott, "Signs of the Revolucion: For the 23 (Winter of '75)," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

Maynard Jackson, Gerald Hatcher
There is a rumor going around
About a new Buffalo Soldier
And Dennis Banks
Started it.

Signs, signs, signs of the Revolucion.[424]

In many respects, the three stanzas above captured the politics of UCWA activists and their supporters, which were displayed in the following months. Many participants hoped to put an end to "cultural nationalist" tendencies that often regressed into unproductive arguments between activists of color regarding whose community-based concerns were "more relevant than the other[s]." Moreover, Scott's last two stanza offered harsh assessments of the black middle-class and the black political elite. In line the perspective of UCWA activists and their supporters, they showed little sympathy for middle-class community leaders or politicians of any race that upheld the interests of white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy. Activists of color who did so were increasingly referred to by Scott as the "New Buffalo Soldiers."[425] This blend of Marxism and multiracial solidarity were artfully captured in a single slogan: "No Separate Peace."

No Separate Peace became the mantra of the UCWA's demonstrations and its activists wasted no time articulating it. In fact, the mass arrests of protesters provided an ideal opportunity to boldly express multiracial unity. On February 13, the day after 17 UCWA members and supporters were arrested after for their actions at a South Seattle construction site, a UCWA public statement drew attention to the "Five…brothers, leaders in their respective Black, Chicano, Asian and White communities [who] [we]re still in City Jail." They were a strategic collection of activists: UCWA members Tyree Scott and John Jimenez, Nemesio Domingo of the ACWA, Roberto Maestas of El Centro de la Raza, and White political science

[424] Ibid.
[425] See chapter 3.

professor at the University of Washington, Philip Meranto. Their shared imprisonment, according to the UCWA, signified, "the division which in the past resulted in individual groups struggling for their own 'minority rights,' their own piece of a shrinking pie, are beginning to be overcome." The statement closed with the declaration, "There can be no separate peace!"[426]

Those around Scott identified him as the "visionary" of "No Separate Peace." However, this concept simple gave voice to what he had seen taking shape around him. To borrow from Gaye Theresa Johnson, he provided a language that named, and in no short measure nurtured, Seattle's broader "constellation of struggle." For Johnson, the metaphor of a "constellation" offers a useful framework for thinking about multiracial coalitions. Specifically, it is attentive to the "array of activities, histories, and identities" that activists bring to collective campaigns. While each "star" has a life of its own, when viewed together, they reveal a larger pattern.[427] A brief overview of some of the organizations that supported the UCWA in this period illuminates a diversity of political actors and social movements for whom No Separate Peace resonated.

Many of the demonstrators arrested alongside the UCWA were longtime, "fellow travelers." For instance, it was no surprise that the directors of the ACWA and El Centro, Nemesio Domingo and Roberto Maestas, were two of the "five brothers" who were jailed alongside Tyree Scott. Given that less than 3 years prior, their organizations and the respective communities collectively shutdown Seattle's construction industry, each of their constituencies were a key base of support.[428] In both cases, the UCWA's longtime supporters mobilized their respective communities to support the UCWA's new set of demands. Asian American activist Elaine Ko's illustrates this quite well. Where UCWA statements foregrounded a masculine public narrative

[426] UCWA, "Press Release to *All Media,*" February 13, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

[427] Johnson, Gaye Theresa, "Constellations of Struggle: Luisa Moreno, Charlotta Bass, and the Legacy for Ethnic Studies," *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 33.1 (2008): 155-172.

[428] For a discussion of their 1972 protest actions, see chapter 1.

of the "five brothers" who were incarcerated together, women such as Ko did the crucial labor of coalition building. Still an undergraduate student at the University of Washington, she wrote countless articles on the UCWA's demonstrations, both in the university's main publication, the *UW Daily*, and Asian American movement publications such as *Asian Family Affair* and the *International Examiner*. By doing so, she disseminated information and analysis to constituencies that made the UCWA's protests possible.

In terms of El Centro's staff, they had a long record of collaborating with the UCWA, both locally in Seattle and within the AFSC's Third World Coalition (TWC). Through the TWC, El Centro was connected to a diverse network of Latino radicals across the country, and Latin American revolutionaries abroad. Even prior to the 1975 worksite stoppages, this activist network served to reinforce the politics of No Separate Peace. According to notes from a UCWA membership meeting on December 15, 1974, in a gathering that updated UCWA members on the progress of legal negotiations with the operating engineer union, three Chicano activists were in attendance. Two were staff members from El Centro de la Raza, Roberto Maestas and poet-activist Raul Salinas. But they were also joined by Denver-based organizer Ernesto Vigil. Once Vigil was given the floor, he explained the political work of one of the Chicano Movement's most prominent organizations, the "Crusade for Justice.[429]" Afterwards, he proceeded to stress the importance of Third World Unity. "We Third World People - Chicanos, Blacks, Asians, and Native Americans," Vigil insisted, "must unite against a common enemy instead of fighting against oppression in separate corners."[430] The Denver-based activist's message offered a generative precursor to the grassroots solidarity that shaped the following months.

[429] For a more detailed discussion of the Crusade for Justice see Ernesto Vigil, *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and The Government's War on Dissent* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1999).
[430] UCWA, "General Membership Meeting Notes," December 15, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

With strong links between "El Centro" and the University of Washington's Chicano Student movement, it is not a stretch to assume El Centro activists mobilized those on campus to participate in worksite closures. If this was the case, they made a tremendous contribution to the UCWA's campaign, as student radicals participated in impressive numbers. The second day of protests at the South Seattle construction site saw 63 arrested, and by one account over twenty were University of Washington students.[431] Further research into police archives would be required to assess the how many Chicano students participated, but local news papers, such as the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, quoted them in droves. Upon arriving at the second day of protests, one reporter documented a comical interchange between a police officer and a young Chicano student. When Moises Garcia was asked by an officer, "What's going on?," he simply responded, "Nothing but the struggle."[432] Another Chicano demonstrator voiced a harsh critique of law enforcement and their abuse of power. In reference to the arrests of his peers, he maintained, ""They've got the law…and they can interpret them how ever they want to. If they want to fuck with us, they're going to fuck with us."[433] Even the leading Chicano administrator within the University's Equal Opportunity Program (EOP), Juan Sanchez, was present on the second day of actions. His participation, however, was not received well by Dr. Sam Kelly, a Black administrator in charge of the university's Office of Minority Affairs (OMA). As a result, Sanchez was fined a day's pay for his act of solidarity. Tyree Scott later analyzed this decision as "the obvious role and response of a Buffalo Soldier."[434]

While Third World unity permeated throughout the demonstrations, White radicals still had a strong presence. Outside of the ones that were student activities, many were drawn from the

[431] Jack Pfeifer, "Police (Who Don't Take This Lying Down) Arrest 62 More," The Daily, February 14, 1975, 1.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Tyree Scott, "My Brothers and I, the Buffalo Soldiers," March 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

recently formed Seattle Liberation Coalition (SLC). SLC was a short-lived multiracial alliance composed of a "workers, students, Third World people, and community groups" who were drawn together by a common set of anti-imperialist politics. The group organically grew out of a 1974 demonstration in Seattle against the International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) corporation. A particular concern of activists was the company's "exploitation of, and control over…the lives of people around the world," especially, its connection to repressive regimes in Chile and South Africa.[435] Through the UCWA's involvement in the group, they developed a close relationships with two white radical who were a constant presence at worksite closures, Michael Steinlauf and Paul Zilsel.

Steinlauf was one of the first to be arrested. He used his own leftist connections to promote the UCWA's campaign. Amidst dozen of UCWA supporters facing court hearing in March 1975, Steinlauf published an article in a local progressive paper, *The People's Health,* where he provided a detailed overview of the UCWA's demands. In a slight twist to the UCWA's message of "No Separate Peace," he ended his article with the message, "Alone we can only win a slice of the pie; together we can run the bakery."[436] In the case of Zilsel, his experiences as a member of the International Workers of the World (IWW) informed how he framed his solidarity. When he was tasked with defending his support of the UCWA in front of a municipal judge, he connected the police repression of "Third World workers" to Washington state's "long and bitter" history that saw the "state's armed thugs and…[its] judicial system…repress the just struggles of oppressed and working people." Namely, he reminded the court of the experiences of "Wobblies," where in 1916, "11…were massacred at the dockside in Everett by the Snohomish County sheriff" and another "74 wobbly survivors were tried for murder right here in

[435] Seattle Liberation Coalition, "Statement of Unity," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.
[436] Michael Steinlauf, "Article for *The People's Health*," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

Seattle." Drawing inspiration from the I.W.W. motto, "An injury to one is an injury to all," Zilsel exclaimed, "We stand in solidarity with the United Construction Workers Association in their just struggle."[437] Without question, the worksite closures that continued into the next month were led by Third World activists. However, this did not come at the cost of strategic and politically principled alliances with white leftists like Steinlauf and Zilsel. In both cases, white supporters understood that solidarity required that they follow the political lead of workers of color.

Through the unity that UCWA activists and supporters expressed during construction site closures, they transformed a simple demand for desegregating a construction site into an opportunity to unveil a more radical set of politics. Namely, they linked a diverse set of progressive movements under the banner "No Separate Peace." However, this slogan was not singularly a declaration of Third World Unity, it also was a commitment to principled class struggle. After a week of intense police repression, UCWA activists and supports directed their attention away from "racist union leaders," and toward the predominately white rank-and-file of the Local 302.

"Times Have Changed…And So Have We:" Appealing to the White Working-Class

The second week of UCWA protests saw activists shift their focus from union officials to white rank-and-file workers. As Tyree Scott explained to reporters, "[T]wo and a half months of talks with union leaders had gotten nowhere." Now, the UCWA was determined to take their case "directly to the union members on the job."[438] In a flyer that was disseminated widely at Seattle construction sites, the group explained their position. "UCWA began as an organization

[437] Paul Zilsel, "Statement to the Court," April 14, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[438] Don Hannula, "Work Resumes After Demonstration," *Seattle Times*, February 18, 1975, A8.

fighting for 'minority rights.' But…[t]imes have changed, the economy has changed, and so have we." Fighting for the remaining jobs within the construction industry, the UCWA analyzed, only played into an "age-old game of divide and conquer [that] can no longer be a solution to anyone's problems."[439] Instead, the group of Third World construction workers offered a concrete plan to tackle unemployment, not just in the city's construction industry, but also across Washington State. The UCWA maintained, a progressive tax plan on the state's major corporations, which even at a low estimate had "annual profits of $1.5 billion," offered the only route toward full employment in the state.[440] Earlier that month, the UCWA published a nine-page paper that documented their plan for a "graduated corporate profit tax" that put the burden of addressing unemployment squarely on the shoulders of Washington's billion dollar companies.[441] While UCWA activists viewed union leaders to be politically compromised, it was hoped that white construction workers, who themselves faced near twenty percent unemployment, would see that the UCWA's plan addressed their own class interests.

By appealing to the class-consciousness of the Local 302's rank-and-file, the UCWA built upon a longer history of Black radicalism that critiqued and confronted what W.E.B. Du Bois famously termed the "wages of whiteness." In his groundbreaking 1935 text, *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois analyzed, "[T]he consequences of [racist] thought were bad enough for colored people the world over," but in his estimation, they were, "even worse when one considers what this attitude did to the [white] worker." Du Bois continued, "He [the white worker] began to want, not comfort for all men, but power over men…He did not love humanity

[439] UCWA, "A Slice of the Pie, Or Jobs For All," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.
[440] UCWA, "Paper For Discussion," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.
[441] Ibid.

and he hated niggers."[442] Even in cases where white workers received lowly wages, they were compensated, Du Bois argued, with a "public and psychological wage," which above anything else, afforded them the comfort that they were not Black, and thus not relegated to the bottom of the Southern social hierarchy.[443] In the context of Seattle's construction industry in the mid-1970s, the wages of whiteness that Du Bois described forty years earlier were largely material. Being white, and thus not subject to the historical forms of exclusion that the UCWA had fought since 1970, provided workers with preference in employment, a monumental privilege in a period of sizable unemployment. But just as the white workers analyzed by Du Bois, the privileged position of Local 302 members within the political economy deformed their class consciousness. As we shall see, by interpreting Third World protesters as a threat to their employment, as opposed to a threat to their systemic unemployment, they confirmed Du Bois's contention that the failure of reconstruction had disastrous affects for the American working-class; one that ultimately led many white workers to adopt a labor politics that "approved of capitalism" and "ruined democracy."[444]

The UCWA had no illusions that union workers would welcome dialogue with open arms. Instead, they turned to the only tool available to them, direct-action protests that would force the hand of their white brothers. On February 17th, 1975, about 150 demonstrators first gathered at a Central District park and proceeded to march down to the South Seattle construction site. "Once on Rainer Ave," the street where the construction site was located, according to the accounts of local reporters, "the marchers knocked down street barricades and attempted to shut off motors on heavy equipment standing idle during the workers' lunch period." In what amounted to an

[442] Quoted from Kathleen Cleaver, "The Antidemocratic Power of Whiteness," *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, Vol. 70 (1995), 1376.

[443] For a more detailed discussion of Du Bois's account of the Reconstruction see W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880* (New York: Free Press, 1935).

[444] Cleaver, "The Antidemocratic Power of Whiteness," *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, 1376.

hour-long confrontation between protesters and "more than 50 riot-equipped Seattle policemen," demonstrators successfully, "tied up traffic, delayed buses, and…closed down the project for the afternoon." As UCWA leaders made clear that they were fed up with empty negotiations with union officials and that they "only want to speak with the workers," by the early afternoon they had achieved their goals. Workers agreed to "knock off work and talk with the demonstrators."[445]

Comments from workers showed little solidarity with the UCWA and a great deal of skepticism for their "jobs for all" campaign. One claimed that it was not the intention of him and his co-workers to shutdown the site for the day. Rather, they were "advised to go home for [their] own safety." Another worker openly criticized the protesters tactics of equipment damage, which he noted, "doesn't solve anything" and instead "makes us madder." A third worker offered a more explicit blend of racism, masculinity, and homophobia. He referred to the multiracial crowd as a group of "fruitcake demonstrators." In fact, he added, "I wish I had my ____ shotgun." Regardless, UCWA activists remained hopeful about the potential dialogue and assured them, "…As long as …rank and file workers were willing to meet and talk with us, we would not shut down their jobs."[446]

The UCWA's optimism, however, was soon tempered by the worker reactions. After two days of seemingly productive dialogue, the negotiations were cut short when "white workers did not show up for the third meeting."[447] In the end, UCWA activists and white construction workers remained worlds apart when it came to the issue of "full employment." During the process, White workers viewed jobs for all to be a highly unlikely scenario given that the

[445] Paul Boyd, "Minority Protest Leads to Rainier Sewer-Job Stoppage," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, February 18, 1975, A3.
[446] Ibid.
[447] UCWA, "A Slice of the Pie, Or Jobs for All," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.

"federal government has all the construction job money frozen solid." In response to the pragmatism of White workers, Scott appealed to the power of organized protest and worker unity. "[I]f all the construction workers in the city went on strike together," he countered, "Senator Henry Jackson would take notice and make sure the jobs were found."[448]

A likely source of hope for the UCWA was the fact that their proposal was empirically driven. Addressing itself to the concern of "full, guaranteed employment," the document asserted, "Since the corporations' presidents, the politicians, and the union leaders can't come up with effective alternatives, then we must."[449] Their idea for a progressive corporate tax was inspired, not only by the disproportionate level of profits made by the state's corporate giants - such as Weyerhaeuser, Boeing, and Seafirst - but also political developments that were already set in motion by state politicians. At the time of their proposal, up to forty-four state representatives sponsored a house bill that would place a "flat 12% tax on profits of corporations doing business in Washington State," of which the revenue was aimed to provide relief on special school levies. "A problem with this tax proposal," the report claimed, was "that it was a flat tax — [thus] every corporation is taxed at the same rate." This meant the tax "fell most heavily on smaller corporations" while wealthier ones bore "relatively less of the burden."[450] Unsurprisingly, the UCWA's plan offered substantive changes to the state representatives' proposal. The "graduated corporate profits" tax was proposed to start at "10%" for smaller corporations, a scale that would elevate for those with larger profits. Moreover, they proposed

[448] Paul Boyd, "Minority Protest Leads to Rainier Sewer-Job Stoppage," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, February 18, 1975, A3.
[449] UCWA, "Paper for Discussion," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.
[450] Ibid.

an even higher tax rate for corporations making "excess profits," which they defined as "profits above 8% of capital stock."[451]

To make their case further, the proposal included a detailed discussion of the federal tax loopholes available to giant corporations. In describing what the paper termed, "THE OTHER WELFARE SYSTEM," writers detailed countless examples of companies that make nearly half a billion dollars in profit, but paid no federal taxes. By contrast, the UCWA's proposal aimed to "create jobs by taking and controlling the billions of dollars corporations have manipulated and gouged from our work."[452] Specifically, they proposed three ways that corporate profits could be utilized in the interest of working people. First, they advocated for a shorter, 32-hour work week, where laborers would still earn 40-hours worth of pay, and thus, making room to hire more workers. Secondly, to ease the burden of those presently out of work, unemployment compensation would be raised to $150 per week and extended to six months. Lastly, people would be hired to do "public service jobs in the community" that were "controlled by the workers."[453]

It is unclear why White workers failed to show up to the third day of dialogue. But their consistent message regarding the UCWA's "jobs for all" proposal was feasibility. Tyree Scott, however, had another conclusion. "[T]he white worker…already had a job," and thus, "was not interested [in jobs for all]."[454] In line with Du Bois's analysis of the white worker during the era of Reconstruction, Scott issued even harsher criticism of White workers a couple weeks later. "[W]e cannot blame those ignorant white workers," Scott wrote to another activist.

> They [White workers] make the fatal mistake necessary for Imperialism to continue to oppress the people of the world by assuming that because their skin is white they are part

[451] Ibid.
[452] Ibid.
[453] Ibid.
[454] Jerry Bergsman, "Minority Workers Seek Halt to Building," *Seattle Times*, February 24, 1975, A5.

> of the power structure or Rockefeller's equal…These workers *fail to understand class analysis*. Their only concern is losing their jobs and their gadgets (own emphasis).[455]

As Local 302's rank-and-file's responses mirrored that of their union leadership, the UCWA appeared only more determined to intensify their struggle. In a flyer distributed after their failed negotiations, the group of Third World workers reminded union members, "Affirmative action is the law of the state" and they were determined to uphold it. "As long as white workers force us to struggle alone," the UCWA maintained, "we will enforce these laws by shutting down construction sites and tak[ing] away white workers' jobs."[456] Not only did their resolve grow, but their demands also expanded. Vowing to return to the streets in significant numbers, as well as the politics of grassroots Third World unity, their flyer detailed a two-part ultimatum:

> Either Local 302 …fire the present Minority Oilers Coordinator and give the UCWA veto power in the hiring of his replacement; — OR, all contractors working in our community (Spokane Street to the Ship Canal and Broadway to Lake Washington) close down their jobs until such time as a majority of their workforce is Third World.[457]

Continued protest, however, opened a new challenge for UCWA activists and supporters: police repression.

"Taking the Offensive:" Challenging the Legitimacy of the Courts

In March of 1975, the Third World unity that converged in both the UCWA's worksite closures and International District demonstrations were forced to reinvent themselves under the weight of mass arrests. In the process, Seattle's municipal courthouse provided a political arena to display a new set of movement ideas. In the month prior, Seattle's tactical squad rounded up a dizzying array of UCWA members and supporters, 79 in the first two days alone. Courtroom testimony revealed that this group was united by a common political critique. It was their

[455] Tyree Scott to Rev. Samuel McKinney, March 6, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[456] UCWA, "A Slice of the Pie, Or Jobs for All," n.d., *TSP, SCUW*.
[457] Ibid.

contention that the courts only worked for "a tiny privileged ruling class." Defending their position, activists turned to both national and local examples. Whether it was the freeing of William Calley, the U.S. Army Lieutenant tied to the 1968 My Lai Massacre who received a presidential pardon from President Nixon, or the more recent murders of unarmed Black men in Seattle's Central District, as far as the demonstrators were concerned, both cases showed that the U.S. legal system was morally bankrupt. In turn, the arrests of UCWA activists and allies was simply the latest incarnation of this systemic problem. Because of this, on February 13th, the first round of incarcerated demonstrators declared, "Until such a time as the courts begin to represent all the people, we the UCWA brothers and sisters currently both inside and outside prison walls refuse to participate in this judicial system in any way."[458]

This approach was not simply a political statement, on one level, it was also grounded in strategy. In fact, Michael Woo described it as a means of "tak[ing] the offensive." In reference to the UCWA's 1972 demonstrations, the "June First Movement," he explained, "[M]ass arrests took all the steam out of the work." This led to a situation where "people were more concerned with how they were going to confront their own individual trails." This time, "instead of figuring out a good defense," Woo recalled, demonstrators came to the conclusion, "we shouldn't have been on trail" in the first place. From this perspective, it made no sense constructing a legal defense when the police and the courts were "working as vestiges of the employer rather than us." Thus, after what Woo described as a "big discussion," "Everybody decided to not recognize the courts, showing them we had some strength in ourselves."[459]

Their courtroom critiques, if for only brief moments, succeeded in transforming municipal courtrooms into extensions of their worksite demonstrations. In particular, the sentencing of

[458] UCWA to the Municipal Court of Seattle, February 13, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[459] Michael Woo, Interviewed by William Little, November 3, 1975, *WLP, SCUW*.

three UCWA supporters illustrated a range of discursive strategies that were used to articulate their manifest unity and expansive interpretations of justice. The first person to appear in court was Pilar Bueno, a 20-year old Bolivian exchange student at the University of Washington. She appealed her case on the basis that she was a victim of a "political" arrest. "It's not that I recognize the legitimacy of the court," Bueno explained to the press, "[But] we have to fight for our democratic rights." In a note written in jail, Bueno expressed her continued solidarity with the UCWA, "The judge's sentence is my education; I am with my people here…They will try to divide us, but we know that only united we shall win."[460] Michael Steinlauf, who faced the same judge the following day, took the stance, any assertions of his rights within the U.S. Legal system were futile." To this, he argued, the "facts" of his case are "irrelevant" because they were "based in law…not…in justice." Just as the UCWA supporter began to detail his critique that the "Law…[was] an instrument created by…rulers to enforce their interests," the judge cut him off, and even retorted, "This is not the format nor the place to talk of justice." The irony of the judge's comment prompted a courtroom packed with UCWA supporters to erupt in laughter; a collective joy that relished in the judge revealing the contradictions of the legal system he represented.[461] Yet another more comical approach was made by ACWA director, Nemesio Domingo Jr. During his sentencing, he drew a contempt of court warning as he questioned a uniformed police lieutenant's "condescending attitude" toward himself and other UCWA supporters. "Do you know why I'm dressed in a suit?," Domingo asked the lieutenant." It was, he continued, "to show you I have more class than you." News coverage of the ACWA activist's actions noted that Domingo aimed to "make the point that the police were coming into court

[460] Lee Moriwaki, "Another Job-Site Protester Given Jail Sentence," *Seattle Times*, March 14, 1975, A8.
[461] Michael Steinlauf, "Statement to Judge Barbara Yanick," March 13, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

lying and depriving him of his legal rights."[462] The respective courtroom strategies of Bueno, Steinlauf, and Domingo varied. But, collectively, they revealed the myriad of ways the UCWA's movement, indeed, "took the offensive."

When municipal judge T. Patrick Corbett was unable to control the actions of protesters in his courtroom, he turned his attention to their attorney, Michael Withey. On March 24th, 1975, Judge Corbett, concluded, "The intimidation of this court has gone to its limit." The Municipal Judge reached his breaking point when a group of approximately thirty-five people marched into his courtroom as the case of Doug Chin, an Asian American activist arrested during the UCWA's February demonstrations, was heard. After the judge ordered the crowd to "come forward and be committed to jail," they instead, chanted, "Fascism in Action" and "The people, united, will never be defeated." After they dispersed, the judge maintained that Withey "appeared to have a leading role" in the actions of courtroom protesters. He even seemed to take pity on Chin and directed all his ire the activist attorney. "I'm honestly reluctant to punish your client," Corbett told Withey, warning, "Sometimes a client has to suffer because of the errors of his attorney." His attempts to regain control of his courtroom saw Corbett go so far as to appeal the Washington State Bar Association to investigate the attorney on charges of "obstruction-of-justice."[463]

Outside of the courtroom, activists continued their critiques of police. Their analysis seemed even more pronounced with the March 28 arrest of Tyree Scott. That day, Scott was charged with "interfering with an arrest;" that of his fellow UCWA activist Michael Woo who was being served with a "$1,000 bench warrant." While in jail, Scott wrote a statement that the UCWA reproduced for mass distribution. In it, he both summarized nearly a month of

[462] Lee Moriwaki, "Two U.C.W.A. Supporters Convicted for Part in Protests," *Seattle Times*, March 27, 1975, A4.

[463] Eric Lacitis, "Angry Judge Challenges Protesters," *Seattle Times*, March 24, 1975, A1.

courtroom hearings and connected them to the violent actions of police in Third World communities. "I think it's about time that people…start to look at what is happening in the courts and with the police," explained the UCWA activist. In reference to the sentencing of those who took part in UCWA demonstrations, Scott noted, despite a common charge of "blocking traffic" or a "failure to disperse," the courts issued an array of decisions. For those given jail time, the length of their sentences ranged from ten days to ninety. Others were charged with "$100 fines" or "300 hours of community service." To Scott, these all represented the actions of an incoherent legal system.[464]

His statement then moved from the legal violence of the courts, to the physical violence enacted by "officers of the law." First, he referenced an altercation he witnessed inside his holding cell, where "two jailers were holding a young Black man…choking him…[and] punching [him]…in the stomach." As Scott and Woo "ran over and attempted to break [it]…up," he explained, "We were subsequently choked and beaten." Scott linked this physical abuse to a broader trend of policing that the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense had combated for years. In reference to the recent officer related murder of Joe Hebert, a local Black resident of the Central District, Scott explained that the Panthers attempted to "work within the system," by filing a "coroner's inquest" that eventually found officer Al Earlywine, "guilty of unjustifiable homicide." Despite this, the prosecuting attorney "still decided he would not prosecute." To this, Scott noted, "people have been critical of the Panthers in the past for their militancy." Now was the time for those interested in justice, Scott explained, to "drop those excuses." "It is time now," the UCWA leader stressed, "for all those who have any sense of justice to speak out against this insane system and don't let the voices of conciliation quiet you

[464] UCWA, "For Immediate Release! Statement by Tyree Scott from City Jail," March 29, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

down." Well into April, grassroots demonstrations in Seattle reflected the linkages between the UCWA and the Black Panthers. For instance, on April 17, nearly 150 protesters converged to call for "Justice for Joe [Hebert]" and the immediate prosecution of officer Earlywine. According to an issue of the Black Panther newspaper, the multiracial list of attendees at the rally included Chicanos from El Centro de la Raza and "Third World construction workers" from the UCWA.[465] Moreover, as the crowd passed city hall, some of the chants outside the municipal courthouse included "Free Tyree Scott," where he still faced sentencing for his charge of "interfering with [the] arrest" of Michael Woo.[466] While in jail, the UCWA distributed a statement from their incarcerated staff organizer, where he continued his critique of the legal system and demand for "meaningful jobs for all."

> Many of us have been sentenced to jail time and fined because we demanded meaningful work for all. I am guilty as any of them because we all did the same thing…I refuse to recognize this court in this illegal act. The history of the judicial system has been to protect the rich and you [the judge] are acting part as usual. People are unemployed and will demand that these corporations and banks be taxed…I will not defend my self nor will I pay a fine, and I shall continue to demand that corporations and banks be taxed.[467]

The emphasis placed on challenging the legitimacy of the court, however, directed much needed attention away from the very issue that began the UCWA's series of protests in the first place, racial exclusion in the Operating Engineers Local 302. While UCWA activists defended themselves in court, labor management, both the union in question and local contractors, made their own agreement with the federal government. The new affirmative action plan with the EEOC retained the union's old "oilier-trainee program," only with "improved administration." Additionally, the "consent decree" maintained that the "percentages of minorities in the trades

[465] "Autopsy Revealed Seattle Police Shot Joe Hebert in the Back of the Head," *The Black Panther*, accessed May 12, 2015, http://www.negroartist.com/writings/BLACK%20PANTHER%20NEWSPAPERS/13%20no%205.htm.

[466] Mike Wyne, "Crowd Marches On Courthouse," *Seattle Times*, April 17, 1975, C1.

[467] Tyree Scott, "Statement to the Court," April 15, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

had to mirror the ethnic makeup of Western Washington," which equated to at least "7 to 8 percent minority."[468] Recalling this period, Woo lamented, "[T]he new consent decree…wasn't new at all." But even more troubling, Woo explained, "[T]he UCWA was still left out."[469] As result, the group of Third World construction workers found themselves right where they started. If they were to wage a campaign for "No Separate Peace," it would have to be by other means than worksite closures and drawn-out courtroom battles.

No Separate Peace as Intersectionality

Community-based struggles for "No Separate Peace" did indeed continue in the months that followed. One campaign in particular revealed that "No Separate Peace" increasingly became associated with an intersectional analysis of race, class, and gender. When it came to heightening the struggle in the International District, Asian American activists did not limit their demands to Asian American workers on the Domed Stadium Project. By May 1975, the UCWA, ACWA, and a group of largely white women, Women in the Trades (WIT), began a legal battle determined to change the racial language of *U.S. V. Ironworkers Local 86*, so that legal redress applied to "minorities and women," opposed to solely "black workers." In a joint August 1975 press release, later republished in the UCWA's newspaper *No Separate Peace* under the subtitle, "John Spellman, You Discriminating Dog," the coalition of aggrieved workers explained, "in the construction of the [domed stadium] project, no females have been hired…non-Black Third World workers [were relegated] into the lower-paying mechanical jobs; and…Blacks mostly [restricted] to certain court-ordered trades and apprentice positions." As a result, they called for the "immediate correction of the discrimination practices of labor and management." This

[468] "New Minority Trainee Plan Omits U.C.W.A.," *Seattle Times*, March 8, 1975, A5.
[469] Michael Woo, Interviewed by William Little.

collective effort to rectify racist and sexist industry practices reflected an important dimension of the conceptual argument of "no separate peace:" the linking of seemingly distinct political struggles.

Furthermore, this coalition showed all the signs that solidarity was far from momentary. Much like the UCWA and ACWA's other white allies, WIT members framed their politics in relation to, and in solidarity with, Third World activism. In a joint meeting, WIT activists clarified, even though their primary goals involved getting women "into the trades" and "assist[ing] those already [there]," they were "conscious that they do not want to be used as a divisive force" within the industry. By November of 1975, in addition to pushing forward the lawsuit described above, the UCWA and ACWA took progressive steps toward sustaining their relationships with WIT activists. In the case of the UCWA, they discussed the "possibil[ity] [of] contribut[ing] money to WIT." As for the ACWA, they viewed their alliance with WIT in the context of the "growing presence of women in the canneries." As such, the ACWA's board of directors agreed to "allow Women in Trades to use [their] office space…on a month by month basis."[470]

While this coalition never achieved the legal changes they desired, it demonstrated that the UCWA and ACWA had taken a concrete step toward addressing a glaring shortcoming in their movement politics: their gender analysis. When it came to the predominately male memberships of both groups, sexism certainly had a role. Case and point, women were involved in these organizations from their beginnings, but they were relegated to "women's work," most notably as secretaries. But the organization of race and gender in their respective industries also played an important role. In terms of the construction trades, women did not enter the industry until the UCWA began to open the door for desegregation. The experiences of Megan Cornish, a former

[470] ACWA, "Board of Directors Meeting," November 29, 1975.

member of Radical Women attests to this. At the time of the UCWA's 1972 demonstrations, she had "cut her teeth" politically in Anti-war and Feminist protests in Seattle. Still, she recalled, "I would have never dreamed that I would have ended up in trade work." "At the time," Cornish noted, "I was fighting for the right of Black men to enter the trades. Even then, it would have never dawned on me I would enter the trades." But over time, this experience opened Cornish up to the possibilities of being a construction worker. When Clara Frazier of Radical Women organized an Electrical Trades Trainee (ETT) program for Seattle City Lights, Cornish was one of nine women to be hired.[471] In the case of the ACWA, the women employed in Alaska's salmon industry, at least when their group formed in the early 1970s, were white, and therefore benefitted from superior living and dining facilities.[472] As a result, many in the ACWA viewed the industry's female workforce as part of the problem of industry segregation. By the mid-1970s, however, significant changes occurred in their political analyses that translated into a more expansive, intersectional reading of class struggle.

For the UCWA, as they began to embrace the politics of "Third World Marxism," they also incorporated an analysis of patriarchy. A key example is the "cadre meetings" the UCWA initiated for its members. In 1974, staff organizers led small membership gatherings of no more then ten workers. The goal was to use political education, as one staff member explained, "to develop a 'social consciousness' of what's happening around us, whether it be at an international, national, local, or even personal level." Topics of discussion included "the history of the black worker," "a history of the UCWA," as well as broader discussions of "problems that effect the community," such as, "criminal justice…[and] education," and "national policies toward Africa." Yet, even more noteworthy, according to Tyree Scott, the facilitator of the first

[471] Megan Cornish, Interviewed by Nicole Grant and Alex Marrow, October 20 2005, SCRLHP, <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/cornish.htm>.

[472] See chapter 2.

cadre meeting, the gathering also resulted in a "very good discussion" about "women's role in the 3rd world struggle."[473]

It may be more appropriate to say the meeting revealed an evolving analysis of gender in the organization. In Scott's report, he explained that the discussion centered "*our* women's role, and how it relates to us oppressing and viewing them quite the same way the white society has viewed and oppressed the 3rd world people." This line itself is full of its fair share of complexities and contradictions. The language of "our women" suggests a paternalistic mindset. But their later emphasis on the role that UCWA members played in the oppression of "third world women," one that was akin to "white society," reflected an attempt to struggle with the meaning of patriarchy in their organization and their daily lives. Scott's UCWA report modestly noted, "I don't think that anyone was converted during these discussions" and that it was "probably the first time that most of us had discussed it." But his personal notes on the meeting showed that at least one attendee had sensitivity to the unique experiences of black women. The worker explained, "[black] women experience the same discrimination as us." He continued to describe a significant difference between the political struggles of white and black women. "White women are struggling against the white man" he remarked, but "black women are struggling against the system."[474] A larger point to take from this discussion is UCWA activists began to stretch the traditional boundaries of their organizational work and the political analysis of their membership. At the very least, a critique of patriarchy was part of this process.

In the case of the ACWA, even though their membership was composed of Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, and Samoan men, many of their key activists were immersed in political networks that were heavily influenced by Third World feminism. For instance, quite a few women in the

[473] Tyree Scott to Al James, "Report on Saturday Mornings Cadre Meeting," April 16, 1974, *TSP, SCUW*.
[474] Ibid.

Asian Student Coalition at the University of Washington were also members of the Seattle's Third World Women; a political space for women of color in the city that discussed revolutionary theories and developed the leadership skills of its members autonomously from the "male chauvinism" that pervaded other movement groups.[475] Furthermore, once many in the ACWA joined the KDP, they entered an organization nationally known for its feminism and gay liberation politics. Within the KDP, they drew upon a critique of patriarchy developed in the revolutionary movement in the Philippines. In addition, the fact that key members of the KDP's executive committee were openly homosexual, it made the group, according to Trinity Ordona, "A haven for Filipino gays in the Asian American Movement."[476]

Thus, both the UCWA and ACWA's support of women workers in the construction trades reflected ongoing changes in their organizations. These transition, however, did not solely reflect male constituencies coming to consciousness. Rather, they were the products of the intellectual labor of female activists who operated on the edges of these organizations and seized their moment to transform them. It is not surprising that this occurred in a period of heightened police repression and internal crisis. Robyn Spencer's research on the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense suggests a similar trend. Under the full weight of the U.S. federal government's war on the Panthers, "Cointelpro," and "internecine battles amongst party leadership," she found that female members began to shape the organization like never before. In turn, they made issues pertinent to female members, such as "reproduction, parenting, and sexuality crucial parts of the organizational dialogue."[477] A close look at the UCWA's demonstrations points to a

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[475] Sharon Maeda, Interviewed by Trevor Griffey, December 30, 2005, *SCRLHP*, <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/maeda.htm>.

[476] Trinity Ordona, *Coming Out Together: An Ethnohistory of the Asian and Pacific Islander's Queer Women's and Transgendered People's Movement in San Francisco* (PhD. Diss, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2000), 93.

[477] Robyn Spencer, "Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle: Revolutionary Black Womanhood and the Black Panther Party in the Bay Area, California," The Journal of Women's History 20.1 (2008): 104.

similar process. Even as the group's press releases and public statements centered masculine political actors, female activists were arrested alongside their male counterparts, despite the fact that they were rarely quoted in print media. After the demonstrations came to an end, the UCWA started a new publication, *No Separate Peace*, which offered a discursive space to escalate their solidarity politics. In doing so, they provided a new terrain for Third World Feminists to shape the future trajectory of the organization.

With the publishing of their first edition in May 1975, the publication's initial editorial, "Who We Are," made a strong case for "principled unity" amongst oppressed people. In reference to both local and national, the article explained, "Over the past ten years we have witnessed the flowering of many communities, cultures, and movement," which were a "source of strength and pride" for participants. "The primary contradiction that emerge[d]," they claimed, "[was] between those who will not move beyond their own community and culture, and those who see the need for unity among all oppressed people." With this in mind, "The task of the paper," editors wrote, "[was] to point out that, ultimately, there is one struggle and one enemy." Utilizing the "art…poetry and culture of the various communities of our area [Seattle and the Pacific Northwest]," the paper sought to "educat[e] people to struggle against the divisiveness of racism, sexism, and imperialism."[478]

The initial staff of the paper alone was telling of the UCWA's labors to produce a collective, multiracial project. Writers, editors, and board members for the paper included, representatives from El Centro de la Raza, the ACWA, the Union of Democratic Filipino (KDP), the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA), and the Seattle chapter of the AFSC's Third World Coalition. Many of these organizations soon absolved themselves from having a formal role in the paper due their obligations to their own community-based struggles, but *No Separate Peace*

[478] "Editorial: Who We Are," *No Separate Peace*, May 15, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.

continued to feature articles about, and even written by, a broad cross-section of local Third World activists until the paper went out of publication in 1978.[479] Moreover, the national reach of the paper spoke to the ways local supporters used their own networks to "spread the word." For instance, some of paper's subscribers included, Bay Area based activist Bill Sorro, a Filipino organizer involved in the struggle to save the San Francisco's International Hotel, and Ana Coelho, the field director for the Portland chapter of SAIA.[480]

From its inception, Third World Feminism made a significant mark on the UCWA's publication. Arguably, its clearest expression came in the second edition of the paper that featured an article by the UCWA's Beverly Sims and the KDP's Elaine Ko's entitled "Women in the Struggle." In it, they offered an anti-racist and anti-sexist analysis of women's liberation. "Sexism, like racism," they maintained, "[wa]s an evil tool of capitalism which has been used to suppress the American people." As they elaborated, the two activists made note of a "triple-pronged oppression" that "Third World women suffer:" the interlocking oppression of race, sexism, and capitalism.[481] By doing so, they drew upon a longstanding intersectional critique, which Erik McDuffie recent research shows, has been a defining feature of "Black left feminism" since the 1930s.[482] But for the political work of the UCWA and ACWA, this article offers a useful lens to assess how an insurgent feminist politics began to shape the common masculine interpretation of "No Separate Peace." As Sims and Ko wrote, "No one can be given emancipation — so we as women and members of the oppressed working class here in America must struggle for our liberation…Female resistance must emerge as part of the greater struggle

[479] "No Separate Peace Reorganization Meeting," September 12, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[480] Julia Julian to Bill Sooro, March 3, 1978, *TSP, SCUW*; Ana Coelho to "Editors of No Separate Peace," December 1, 1975, *TSP, SCUW*.
[481] Beverly Sims and Elaine Ko, "Women in the Struggle," *No Separate Peace*, 4.
[482] Erik McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University, 2011).

against capitalism, for we have suffered greatly under the yoke of this oppressive society." To which, they closed with the assertion, "[T]he liberation of women necessitates the liberation of all human beings for their truly can be No Separate Peace."[483] This intersectional analysis found concrete expression in the UCWA and ACWA as they both decided to prioritize labor organizing in their respective industries.

Parallel Struggles for No Separate Peace

By June of 1975, the UCWA began to grapple with how their own members viewed the radical turn in their politics. A common feeling amongst the group's staff and membership was that the UCWA had "taken on too much."[484] Their emphasis on large protest actions and broad "left" coalitions resulted in core organizers neglecting, and even at times, alienating their base: Black and other Third World workers in the construction trades. That month, the UCWA held a membership retreat to critically analyze how they could "build a mass base." A central point of debate had been the group's refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the court. Namely, retreat participants highlighted the "paradox or contradiction" of the UCWA's previous actions to "condemn the courts as worthless," but also "use them as a means to organize."[485] Characteristic of the way Third World Marxism still framed their analysis, meeting attendees turned to a Mao Tse Tung's essay, "On Being Concerned With the Well Being of the Masses," to guide their discussion. Recalling Mao's analysis, activists noted,

> In that [essay] there were two towns. Both were trying to recruit people for the Red Army. One was successful and one was not. This was because in Tingchow the municipal government did not concern itself with the practical problems of the people. In

[483] Sims and Ko, "Women in the Struggle."
[484] "Notes from Weekend Retreat," June 14-15, *TSP, SCUW*.
[485] Ibid.

> the town where the government worked with the people to meet their immediate needs, people joined the Red Army in great numbers.[486]

The UCWA concluded, the "courts can serve that function for us." In the past, organizing Black workers around their "rights to a job" not only served a way to meet people basic need of employment, it also "show people what kinds of power they had." At the retreat, participants agreed to "Use the courts until they break down."[487]

But even if the courts were not yet broken, they moved at far too slow a pace to serve as a primary solution. Immediately following this period, not only did the UCWA make a commitment to have greater communication with their membership, all staff members joined a trade.[488] Over this period, they aimed to bring their message of "No Separate Peace" into the building trade unions. The UCWA's coalition with the ACWA and WIT became central to this new political direction. UCWA activists led the development of caucuses within the building trade unions composed of "Third World" and women members who actively attended union meetings, ran for leadership positions, and collectively advanced anti-racist and feminist positions within locals. By the summer of 1976, the UCWA had translated their efforts within unions into a three-part program to "build strong trade unions that f[ou]ght for the interests of all workers." First, they stressed the need for "Economic Militancy." Concretely, this meant "1) more employment, 2) high wages to meet the cost of living, and 3) better and more comprehensive fringe benefit programs controlled by workers rather than by management."[489] Their second points was "Trade Union Democracy." In an August, 1976 edition of *No Separate Peace*, UCWA members recalled their experiences within unions, where they "watched the most militant workers threatened and laid off without any backing from the fellow workers, shop

[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Ibid.
[489] "U.C.W.A.'s Program," *No Separate Peace*, August 1976, 2.

stewards, or union officials." As active rank-and-file members, the UCWA planned to promote fair and democratic practices throughout their unions.[490] Lastly, they analyzed, racism and sexism "destroys…principled unity" amongst workers and had no place within the labor movement. Beyond calling for abstract forms of working-class unity, this final point understood how racism and sexism created unique forms of class oppression that unions must challenge. For example, in reference to women workers, the UCWA noted, "women not only have the right to work, but more and more, [they] often are the sole supporters of households."[491] For the UCWA, these three positions represented the "necessary steps to…transform…unions into…[institutions] that [would]…fight for …the interest of all workers."[492]

During the late 1970s, the ACWA underwent a similar transformation. While they viewed the efforts to attain construction jobs for Seattle's Asian American community as a progressive endeavor, quite a few members felt that it detracted from their original goal: building a social movement base for cannery workers in Alaska's salmon industry. In a August 1975 Board of Directors Meetings, ACWA activists unanimously agreed, "[Our] priority must be union reform of [the ILWU] Local 37."[493] For those interested in continuing their activism within the construction industry, they simple shifted their membership from the ACWA to the UCWA. But most other organizers committed themselves to building a rank-and-file caucus within the Local 37 designed to "takeover" the reigns of the union and revitalize its tradition of economic militancy, rank-and-file democracy, and international solidarity. Conversations with community elders in the International District revealed that the precedent for such a campaign had already been set thirty years prior. In the face of horrendous conditions of employment and housing, not

[490] Ibid.
[491] Ibid.
[492] Ibid.
[493] ACWA, "Board of Directors Meeting," August 29, 1975, *CWFLU Local 7, SCUW*.

unlike those that prompted the formation of the ACWA, a "rank-and-file committee" formed in the mid-1940s that demanded and won: "A guaranteed seasonal wage of not less than $600;" "A 40-hour work week with overtime for all time" exceeding that amount; and "One day of rest per week."[494]

While clear historical links existed between past and present examples of union reform within the Local 37, there also was a significant ideological connection to the UCWA's philosophy of "No Separate Peace." To this note, how the second iteration of the Local 37's rank and file committee described themselves is telling. In a newsletter produced for the union's rank-and-file, *The Alaskero News*, reform movement activists explained,

> Since 1977, the growing reform movement has been a threat to the narrow interest of these few individuals - corrupt officials and foremen. The reform movement calls for *the unity of workers* of *different nationalities and colors* to strengthen [the] Local 37 and end the bribery and corruption, so we can better fight the industry for decent living and working conditions (own emphasis).[495]

It would be hard to imagine that this call for working-class unity was not influenced by the UCWA's message of "No Separate Peace." In line with the multiracial politics that the UCWA advanced, the Local 37's rank-and-file movement built inroads with Native Alaskan workers and integrated working-class whites in organizing and leadership.[496] But in a clear continuation of the intersectional analysis outlined in Sims and Ko's article, Local 37 activists built a movement that elevated female leadership and concretely addressed the concerns of women workers in the industry.

Emma Catigue's foray in cannery worker organizing is telling of this trend. In 1974, she immigrated to Seattle from the Philippines. Upon her arrival, she quickly found herself immersed in anti-martial law organizing and from the onset of the rank-and-file committee, she

[494] FTA-CIO Local 7, "Rank and File Committee Newsletter," May 1, 1947, *CWFLU Local 7, SCUW*.
[495] "Local 37 – Union or Social Club?," Alaskero News, n.d., *CWFLU Local 7, SCUW*.
[496] Bruce Occena, Interview by Ron Chew, Transcript, July 2, 2011, *RCP, WLM*.

was quickly propelled into its leadership. She reasoned that her appeal was largely tied to her status as a recent immigrant and her fluency in Tagalog. These two features gave her the ability to reach a group of workers that other American-born organizers could not. However, in a significant departure from the predominately male character of the ACWA's organizing in the early 1970s, she fondly remembered Silme Domingo's encouragement and belief in her leadership skills. Catigue explained, "Silme [Domingo], he empowered me…maybe if I don't meet Silme and [he does not] push me to [do] this [become a labor organizer], I probably wouldn't be…where I am [today]…an advocate…an activist because he is the one that said, 'Hey, Emma, you can do that." This departed significantly from how she was received by more established Filipino activists in Seattle. Once when she was passing out anti-Marcos propaganda in the community, Trinidad Rojo, a prominent community leader and former Local 37 president scolded her, "You know what? As a woman, you're not supposed to be on the street. You're supposed to be home, cooking food, taking care of your family. This is not your job!"[497] The KDP, and by extension the reform movement in the Local 37, provide a political space that nurtured Catigue's radical politics and her leadership abilities.

The new gendered composition of cannery worker activism was also a response to the changing organization of work in the canneries. Terri Mast, the "first white woman" in the ILWU Local 37's then 40-year history was chosen to be a union delegate. Women, by the late 1970s, were no longer protected by "sex-segregated job classifications." While Filipina workers had maintained they were never subject to such protections, in the past, white women had been hired to do "less physical jobs," such as working as "egg pullers." In a change of events, Mast maintained, "[T]he frequent shortage of workers" resulted in women being "transferred to all sections of the canneries where workers were needed." This often resulted in them being sent to

[497] Emma Catigue, Interview by Ron Chew, Transcript, January 20, 2011, *RCP, WLM*.

"once all male jobs."[498] These shifting workplace dynamics made the reform movement's appeal for rank-and-file unity across boundaries of race and gender a strong selling point.

Furthermore, the experience of one Filipina organizer revealed that femininity offered no protections against the industry's efforts to intimidate labor activists. In the August 1979 edition of the KDP's national newspaper, *Ang Katipunan*, Lynn Domingo was interviewed after the reform movement activists was terminated earlier that year. Recalling the circumstances of her termination, Lynn Domingo remembered she took an early break because the machines that processed salmon had broken down and she was informed her that they would not be fixed until after lunch time. To pass the time, she returned to her bunkhouse to "pass the time" with "two other [non-white] women" coworkers, Aida Brown and Lorna Martin. It was there that a supervisor barged into the door without knocking, demanding to know why they were not at their worktable. Even after explaining that the machines were down, Lynn Domingo recalled the supervisor continued to "curse at us." He even blatantly lied, as he alleged, "the machines had been going for half an hour." As the three women began to put their aprons on to return to work, the supervisor screamed, "As far as I am concerned all three of you had walked out of the job and you are all fired." Lynn Domingo firmly believed that her supervisor was "waiting for the chance to fire me."[499] Her closing statement in the interview revealed how reform movement activists attempted to elevate discriminatory instances to display the shortcomings of the union leadership. She bluntly declared,

> I think that there should be serious reform within the union. I feel that the officers have not really effectively taken care of the needs of the workers. The union should make sure that the workers know their rights and that these are not being violated by management. Because when you are out there in Alaska it is like being in prison. If you do not know your rights, the management will take advantage of you.[500]

[498] "Local 37 Woman Delegate Shares Alaska Experience," *Ang Katipunan*, August 15-31, 1979.
[499] "Interview: Cannery Worker Terminated," *Ang Katipunan*, August 1-15, 1979.
[500] Ibid.

The cases of Catigue, Mast, and Domingo, demonstrate very different expressions of the progressive gender politics that Local 37 union reforms aimed to cultivate. Whether it was the development of female leadership, the integration of working-class white women into the movement, or the repressive industry practices that women of color faced, each example demonstrated how former ACWA members, much like their comrades in the construction trades, began to incorporate an analysis of gender in their labor organizing.

Conclusion: Enduring Histories of Cross-fertilization

By the Summer of 1975, the UCWA and ACWA clearly embarked on separate paths for "No Separate Peace." However, their relationship continued to be mutually beneficial well into the 1980s. An easy way to track this is to follow a central dynamic that shaped their relationship from the beginning: resource sharing and ideological cross-fertilization. Part of the money that came from the ACWA's first legal victory against the New England Fishing Company (NEFCO) in 1977 went back to the UCWA. As a result, Black workers used these financial resources to send its members to work on redevelopment projects in Mozambique.[501] Tyree Scott notes, this transnational partnership was, in part, influenced by the tragic deaths of two of the ACWA's most prominent organizers. In June 1981, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were murdered in their own union hall. Less than a month prior to their deaths, the two labor organizers, alongside other members of the rank-and-file committee within the Local 37, convinced their international, the ILWU, to send union delegations to investigate labor conditions in the Philippines. It took eight years of legal advocacy to reveal that the architect of their assassinations was ex-Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. In fact, the ILWU Local 37's

[501] Labor Employment Law Office (LELO), "LELO's Annual Domingo, Viernes, Jefferson Awards Dinner," June 1, 2002, *CDP, SCUW*.

president Tony Baruso was paid $15,000 to orchestrate the deaths of the two Anti-Martial Law activists.[502] Remembering this period, Scott claimed, "The murders were a wake up call for us all about how important international solidarity really was and the threat it represented for workers to have this kind of relationship across borders." Scott recalled the murders in 2003 and maintained, "[T]he problems we face as workers transcend frontiers."[503]

The UCWA's multiracial solidarity with Filipino workers did not only translate into concrete expressions of internationalism. The group's ideological embrace of "Third World Marxism" intersected a great deal with a theory of social movements developed by ACWA activist Silme Domingo. It was Domingo's adamant belief that organized protests "ebbed and flowed" much like a river. What this meant for activists was that they had to tireless organize when demonstrations ebbed; arguably, when conditions appeared their bleakest. These efforts would result in a politically conscious mass of people that would be ready to push forward progressive change once protests began to flow. Speaking to a crowd of activists in 1989 about his own shift away from "Title VII" organizing and toward political education and international solidarity, Scott drew upon Domingo's analogue as he stated, "We are now back working on the river's bed."[504]

> The strength of our ideas moved us forward and…we found companion ideas in this broader world. We learned from Amilcar Cabral, the African revolutionary that we must scrap the racist culture and all negative aspects of our own culture; that we must create a new one respecting everything that world has created for the betterment of humankind. We came to understand that he and Silme were both talking about changing the flow of the riverbed.[505]

[502] Santos and Iwamoto, *Humbow Not Hotdogs*, 148.
[503] LELO, "LELO's Annual Domingo, Viernes, Jefferson Awards Dinner."
[504] Tyree Scott, "Framing Our Work."
[505] Ibid.

The fact that Scott compared Domingo to arguable one of the most influential African Revolutionaries since the 1970s is noteworthy.[506] It showed, at least for Scott, that the struggles of Black and Filipino workers continued to shape one another.

[506] For a discussion of Cabral broad significance on Pan-Africanism, Socialism, and Black Freedom Movements in the United States see Firoze Manji and Bill Fletcher Jr., eds., *Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral* (Dakar: Codesria and Daraja, 2013).

Conclusion:

Another Battle in Seattle: The Labor and Employment Law Office's (LELO) Enduring Legacy of Multiracial Labor Solidarity

In 1999, Seattle was the epicenter of a grassroots movement to confront neoliberal globalization. Activists around the country converged in the Pacific Northwest to "greet" that year's meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) with a series of protests; demonstrations that became more widely known as the "Battle in Seattle." Unlike the multiracial labor activism that I analyzed in this dissertation, this moment has been characterized by movement participants and scholars alike as a predominately white political gathering.[507] This is not to say that activists of color were not present, but, quite often, the political actors most associated with the WTO demonstrations were white leftists. This public perception even led longtime Chicana activist Elizabeth "Betita" Martinez to question, "Where is the color in Seattle?"[508] The anti-racist critiques of recent anti-globalization demonstrations were far from demands for inclusion. For, as Amory Starr has summarized in 2009, "[White] Activists should be equally or more committed to working on local struggles waged by people of color as they are to international actions. People of color have been fighting globalization for 510 years and therefore are experts who should be looked to for leadership in fighting the current phase of globalization."[509] The history of the UCWA certainly does not delve into the long history of anti-globalization raised by Starr. However, it offers a glimpse at Seattle's history anti-racist, feminist, and international labor mobilizations that predated the "Battle in Seattle."

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[507] Amory Starr, even though she is critical of this assertion, her article, "Is the North American Anti-Globalization Movement Racist?: Critical Reflections," surveys a series of critique made by activists of color that the "Battle in Seattle," as well as other anti-globalization gatherings afterwards, had reinforced white supremacist organizing methods. See Amory Starr, "Is the North American Anti-Globalization Movement Racist?: Critical Reflections," *Socialist Register* 39.39 (2009): 265-280.

[508] Elizabeth "Betita" Martinez, "Where was the Color in Seattle?: Looking for Reasons Why the Great Battle was so White," *Colorlines*, March 10, 2000, accessed April 13, 2016, http://www.colorlines.com/articles/where-was-color-seattlelooking-reasons-why-great-battle-was-so-white.

[509] Starr, 266.

During the 1980s, the largely African American United Construction Workers Association (UCWA) and their allies' approach to labor organizing underwent significant changes. They viewed the law, particularly Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as an "organizing tool" to embolden the race and class consciousness of workers of color. This political strategy was exemplified when the UCWA, alongside Filipino cannery workers and Mexican farm workers, formed a multiracial, worker-governed law office, the Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO). According to Cindy Domingo, an activist who was closely tied to LELO's work from the 1980s and 1990s, "the changing political times brought on by the Ronald Reagan era, changes in the balance of forces in the courts, especially the Supreme Court, and the receding of social movements in this country made it difficult to use class action suits to accomplish LELO's mission."[510] Due to this, LELO activists shifted their labor organizing away from Title VII lawsuits and towards grassroots worker organizing, political education, and international solidarity.

The history of LELO in the 1970s - one that saw Black, Filipino, and Mexican workers share resources and win significant legal victories, despite the increasing rollback in civil rights - powerfully showed, Domingo maintains, "unity could be built amongst workers of color across national and racial lines." In this new phase of LELO's organizing, its members continued to build upon their legacy of multiracial solidarity, in addition to expanding into an international arena. By doing so, they revealed, once again, the narrow dimension of white labor activists. Domingo recently explained, "While many [U.S. Labor leaders] viewed workers from abroad as taking jobs from U.S. Workers," LELO activists analyzed, "the global economy was forcing us to find common interest with workers abroad" and "to see that there was no separate peace"

[510] Cindy Domingo, "LELO: Legacy of Equality, Leadership, and Organizing; Four Decades of Organizing Across Divides in Seattle," *Amerasia Journal* 41:3 (2015): 33.

between the labor struggles of aggrieved workers scattered across the globe. During the 1980s and 1990s, they put their politics into practices through the "support [of] movements fighting dictatorships in the Philippines, El Salvador [and] Chile," as well as being "at the forefront of the [South African] anti-apartheid movement in Seattle."[511] However, their international vision of a global labor movement came most clearly into fruition in 1999.

That year, LELO organized the first meeting of the "International Worker to Worker Project." This 1999 meeting was held in Seabeck, Washington, only an hour ferry-ride away from Seattle, and "hosted 35 ordinary workers from 11 different countries." Each participant shared their own experiences of "living and working in the global economy." The result was a set of principles, which underscored how approached their international work."[512] Four of which were particularly noteworthy.

> (1) The environment is a working class issue and its protection is not incompatible with jobs and development; (2) All workers should have the right to organize and have that organization recognized by their employer; (3) All workers should have the right of freedom of movement across borders to work in the country of their choice - free from discrimination and exploitation; (4) In the transformation of the global economy and privatization, it is women and children who suffer the most from the loss of the public sector and government protection for the least advantaged. We also agree the that the home is a workplace and that domestic violence should be considered a workers' issue.[513]

LELO's evolution in the 1980s and 1990s resonates with the central arguments of this study, as well as reveals its limits. In this dissertation, I have conducted a close examination of the UCWA's racial and movement politics. To do so, I focused on a rather short period of time. I start in 1970, the year that the UCWA formed to mobilize black workers in Seattle's construction trades. I end in 1975, when the worker organization, once again, brought Seattle's construction industry to a grinding halt. This time, however, instead of demanding "community control" of

[511] Ibid, 34.
[512] Ibid, 37.
[513] Ibid.

Seattle's affirmative action programs, they unveiled an explicitly Marxist and multiracial platform that would ideally led to "full employment" in Washington State. Throughout their actions, they struggled for principled working class unity across different scales – through declarations of solidarity with national liberation movements in the Third World; by fostering multiracial unity across Seattle's communities of color; and by sparking dialogue, even if it was momentary, between "Third World" construction workers and their white counterparts. In each case, their commitment to solidarity was captured by the slogan "There shall be *no separate peace*."

The goal of this study was to show how, in a period of heightened ethnic nationalism, the UCWA quickly morphed from an explicitly black worker group into an organization that embraced a multiracial membership, as well as the freedom struggles of other aggrieved groups. This study's five-year period was essential for examining this transformation because the UCWA's staff organizers encountered an explicitly multiracial world of race and resistance in Seattle. In turn, the city's racial demographics forced the UCWA to expand their own understanding of race and labor. The fact that the UCWA's imprint is still evident in Seattle's political culture illustrates that an extension on the organization's timeframe is certainly needed! Moreover, an interview with Beverly Sims, a LELO secretary that later became a key organizer for both the UCWA and LELO in later years, demonstrates that my focus on the UCWA alone was far to narrow. As she maintained, "What made the idea of No Separate Peace work" was the fact it was not just the UCWA that "believed in it." She explicitly references Asian American, Chicano, and Native American activists that developed similar movement politics and practices.[514] Lastly, her own prominent role in the UCWA, as well as Cindy Domingo's declaration that LELO came to view the "home as a workplace" and "domestic violence as a

[514] Beverly Sims, Phone Interview with Author, September 8, 2014.

workers' issue," makes evident a blatant absence in the study: the role of gender and feminism in the UCWA's transformation. In each instance, these limitations highlighted above, point to important concerns and questions that must be expanded upon in future research. But for the remainder of this conclusion, I will reiterate key interventions that this dissertation endeavored to make, starting with the idea of "relational resistance."

As explicitly detailed in my introduction, and revisited throughout my dissertation, the concept of relational resistance offers a critical intervention for both the study of 1960s social movements and Ethnic Studies. I view this concept as an interpretive framework that allows scholars to better understand and theorize the ways anti-racist social movements overlap, as well as influence one another. Below, using the history of LELO, I have outlined three ways in which relational resistance can serve as a guide for the study of multiracial solidarity: concrete solidarity, ideological cross-fertilization, and critical practices of recovering, or "retrofitting" subversive activist histories.

Concrete Solidarity in a Multiracial World

What first compelled me to write a history of the UCWA was the organization's commitment to multiracial solidarity. The multiple ways that the UCWA embodied this political principle in their grassroots actions, organizational structure, and evolving political analysis offers a significant challenge to prevailing scholarship on anti-racist social movements in the late 1960s. Namely, for civil rights historians who I have classified as proponents of a "racial disunity thesis," their comparative studies of 1960s social movements typically followed a neat teleology: brief moments of cooperation between communities of color, which quickly regress into conflict or independent political trajectories. Without question, this comparative framework reveals the

significant obstacles to multiracial coalition building: distinct racial experiences that resulted in unique group-specific grievances, a fare share of racial biases between groups, and a tendency to prioritize the needs of one's own community above others.[515] By contrast, the UCWA compels us to rethink such over-determined narratives of conflict and ask the question: what solidarity "looks like" as a praxis?

In Cindy Domingo's 2015 speech on LELO, "Four Decades of Organizing Across Divides in Seattle," she points to a practice of "resource sharing" that bound the struggles of Black, Filipino, and Mexican workers in the Pacific Northwest.

> Over the two decades of filing and winning Title VII lawsuits, Black workers had shared their resources so that API [Asian and Pacific Islanders] and Native workers could fight discrimination in the canneries, and the API/Native workers shared their resources with Latino [predominately Mexican] workers so that farmworkers could be organized. This type of solidarity…showed that there would be no separate peace among workers.[516]

This statement reveals that solidarity, at least for the workers who formed LELO, was not an abstract declaration, or even a momentary occurrence. Rather, it was built into their organizational structure. The legal victories of one group, and the financial resources that it generated, would quickly funnel into the political struggles of another. Thus, the slogan of "no separate peace" did not only name what activists believed, it also named the literal links between them; ones fortified by an organizational commitment to grassroots support and sharing financial resources.

Throughout this study, I challenged the notion that such acts of solidarity were aberrations. Particularly, in a time of heightened ethnic nationalism, it is tempting to believe that LELO

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[515] Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity has Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2010); Robert Bauman, *Race and the War on Poverty: From Watts to East LA* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2008); Gordon Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013); Brian Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2011); *Laura Pulido, Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California, 2006).

[516] Domingo, 34.

activists departed significantly from the politics of the time. However, in line with those who Peniel Joseph has termed "Black Power Studies" scholars, I aimed to read the politics of Black Power, namely "self-determination," in more nuanced, and I would argue, more accurate, ways.[517] Specifically, in my discussion of the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA), I make the case that the UCWA framed their solidarity with Filipino workers explicitly in the context of "self-determination." That is, the UCWA, through sharing resources, endeavored to build the capacity of cannery workers to practice self-determination. In this sense, Black Power politics was not a hindrance, but rather a glue to fortifying multiracial coalitions. Moreover, in subsequent chapters, in line with the work of Daryl Maeda, Jason Ferreira, and Johanna Fernandez, I paid careful attention to how the UCWA's turn towards a Marxist, anti-colonial critique of the U.S. social order, was made in relation to, and in dialogue with, other racial groups in the Pacific Northwest.[518] As a whole, this dissertation reminds readers that the overlapping anti-racist social movements of the 1960s and 1970s were not only spaces where "differentially racialized" groups collided in conflict, but also testing grounds for imagining new social relationships.

A Legacy of Ideological Cross-Fertilization

Another concern of my dissertation are the rigid racial boundaries that scholars have placed upon activists of color. Departing from the notion of "differential racialization," historians and ethnic studies scholars alike have maintained that the central grievances and actions of activists

[517] Peniel Joseph, "Introduction: Toward a Historiography of the Black Power Movement," *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Black Power-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-25.

[518] Daryl Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2009); Jason Ferreira, "With the Soul of a Human Rainbow: Los Siete, Black Panthers, and Third Worldism in San Francisco," *Ten Years that Shook the City: San Francisco 1968-197*8, ed. Chris Carlsson (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011), 30-47; Johanna Fernandez, "Denise Oliver and the Young Lords Party: Stretching the Political Boundaries of Struggle," *Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*, eds. Dayo Gore, Komazi Woodard, and Jeanie Theoharis (New York: New York University, 2009), 272.

were linked to their distinct histories of racial and economic subjugation.[519] This dissertation counters by providing an analysis of the ideological cross-fertilization that occurred between the UCWA's black labor activists and their Asian American, Chicano, and Native American allies. To reiterate a point made throughout this study, even though the varied political practices and ideas of activists were rooted in unique historical experiences with racialization, collective struggle made them mutually reinforcing. The evolution of cannery workers organizing in the 1990s is a testament to this point.

Atonio v. Wards Cove was one of the three lawsuits filed by the Alaska Cannery Workers Association. Building upon the UCWA's organizing model, Filipino and other non-white workers hoped that "grassroots worker organizing" paired with the threat of "industry-wide lawsuits" would signal the end of racial segregation in Alaska's salmon canneries. While the first two cases would be litigated well into the 1980s, they both showed signs of making the ACWA's hopes a reality. The initial case, *Domingo v. New England Fishing Company*, was the first Title VII lawsuit argued on behalf of migrant, seasonal workers. This case resulted in an impressive settlement, "$4.65 million in damages and $1 million in attorney fees." The second, *Carpenter v. Whitney-Fadalgo*, ended in a significantly smaller financial reward, "$850,000 in damages for the workers and $255,000 in attorneys' fees and costs," but it called for the immediate desegregation of the company's cannery operations. Specifically, it required, "the employer…to achieve 50 percent non-white participation in its upper-level jobs for three consecutive years."[520] Despite using the same factual evidence and charges, the third case ended

[519] For a discussion of this theoretical approach see Tomas Almaguer, Racial Fault Lines: The Origins of White Supremacy in California (Berkeley: University of Washington, 1994); Claire-Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," Politics and Society 27.1 (1999); Andrea Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing," *Transformations: Feminist Pathways to Global Change, An Analytical Anthology* (New York: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), 264-271.

[520] Domingo, 32.

in a tragic loss, not only for the plaintiffs involved, but all of those broadly conceived as "minority workers" under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Owners of the Wards Cove Packing Company were determined to prolong the ACWA's third legal case as long as possible. The logic was, poor, migrant workers could not sustain their legal challenge as long as a multi-million-dollar company. This strategy of "throwing money into the case" and forcing ACWA members to do the same, saw the lawsuit extend itself into 1989, when it went all the way to the Supreme Court. As a result, *Atonio v. Wards Cove* became one of a series of legal cases decided by the conservative Rehnquist Supreme Court which set new standards for proving "disparate impact." As a result of shifting the "burden of proof" from employers to employees, former UCWA leader Tyree Scott interpreted the decision in *Atonio v. Wards Cove* as a "death throe" to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; a verdict that eliminated the ability of working-class people of color to use the law in any meaningful way.[521]

However, the organizing that followed this case, speaks volumes to significant cross-fertilization between the various activist traditions that informed LELO's members. In general, the court's failure to provide justice, or at the very least economic compensation for aggrieved workers, revealed the necessity to embrace an international framework; one that shifted their struggle from civil rights to human rights. In this light, the case was a key moment that compelled LELO activists to initiate programs such as the "International Worker to Worker Project." But, in terms of the initiative to pursue retribution for cannery workers, the organizers for the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Project" viewed this case as a wake-up call and a rallying cry. The project's coordinator, former ACWA cofounder Nemesio Domingo Jr., in various rallies and speaking engagements across the country, used the case to make an argument

[521] George Lovell, Michael McCann, and Kristine Taylor, "Covering Legal Mobilization: A Bottom-Up Analysis of Wards Cove v. Antonio," *Law and Social Inquiry* 41:3 (2016): 61.

for a "third civil rights reconstruction" that would read civil rights in the "broadest possible manner." Namely, "civil rights" for Domingo, included the concerns of not only workers of color and women, but also elderly, disabled, undocumented, and queer workers. As he declared in his article, "Wards Cove and the Reconstruction of Civil Rights," this new movement would settle for nothing less than, "Justice for all, no separate peace…[and a scenario where] no one gets left behind."[522] Furthermore, to extend this struggle to the international arena, Domingo, alongside Gary Owens, a former Seattle Black Panther who joined LELO in the 1980s, traveled to the 2001 United Nations Convention on Racism in Durban, South Africa.[523]

The theme of Civil Rights reconstructions and elevating domestic anti-racism to the level of Human Rights are longstanding themes of the Black Freedom Struggle.[524] However, LELO's turn in this direction hinged upon the failures of the U.S. legal system to provide justice for *Filipino workers.* This fact is telling of a history of ideological cross-fertilization that I aimed to capture throughout this study. Similar examples can be found in the formation of the ACWA and the overlapping Black and Filipino "organic intellectual" traditions that informed the group's activism, as well as Tyree Scott's unique historical reading of those he termed the "New Buffalo Soldiers." As the example of the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Project" suggests, it clearly continued in the subsequent decades.

[522] Nemesio Domingo, "Wards Cove and the Reconstruction of Civil Rights," *The Wards Cove Project for Civil Rights and Worker Justice, Update* 1:1, 2000, 3-4, The Cindy Domingo Papers at the Special Collections at the University of Washington (Hereafter cited, CDP, SCUW).

[523] Lovell, et. al., 92.

[524] For a discussion of one of the earliest appeals for the United Nations to investigate U.S. racism see Gerald Horne, *Black Revolutionary: William Patterson and the Globalization of the African American Freedom Struggle* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 2013).

A Long, but Interrupted, Movement History

Given the ongoing commitment that UCWA and LELO members had to multiracial solidarity, it is tempting to read this study within the paradigm that Civil Rights historians have termed the "Long Civil Rights Movement." In this dissertation's introduction, I have already detailed a central shortcoming of this framework: the collapsing of significant ideological differences between "Civil Rights" and "Black Power." Yet another concern voiced by scholars is the literature's tendency to portray this long trajectory of freedom struggles as a continuous movement, as if there were not ruptures between the political activity of the Great Depression, the modern Civil Rights Movement, and post-Civil Rights era. Recently, during an interview about his seminal text on Black communists in Alabama, *Hammer and Hoe*, Robin Kelley aptly critiques this contradiction in the literature. After noting the positives of the "Long Civil Rights Movement" framework, namely its approach to recovering a "history of the black Left in the South," he goes on to explain,

> I do have problems with the notion of an *unbroken* long civil rights movement. The Communist Party did not begat CORE, SNCC, SCLC, et cetera, but marked a particular moment in history. You said it right when you used the word remember or memory, because the actors themselves did not experience a long civil rights movement. They experienced breaks followed by the suppression of information that sometimes erased earlier struggles from memory…It is a memory that has to be reconstructed constantly and is not easily accessible for an obvious reason: it is dangerous.[525]

The history of the UCWA and LELO, particularly the enduring legacy of their slogan, "No Separate Peace," offers a generative way to think about what Kelley, I believe, is gesturing toward: memory as a site of struggle.

Filipino labor activist and founding LELO member, Silme Domingo, developed a theory of social movements that understood full-well that political struggles occur in "ebbs and flows." As

[525] Jordan T. Camp, "Black Radicalism, Marxism, and Collective Memory: An Interview with Robin D. G. Kelley," *American Quarterly* 65:1 (March 2013): 227.

this dissertation's second chapter on the Alaska Cannery Workers Association (ACWA) argues, remembering a radical past of Filipino labor activism was central to reinvigorating organizing in Alaska's salmon industry during the 1970s. In a similar fashion to Chicano Studies scholar Maylei Blackwell, Domingo understood that, in the context of social movements, memory is often reimagined, or "retrofitted" by activists, to fashion new political subjectivities. In Blackwell's 2011 study, *Chicana Power*, a study that "evacuates new [Chicana] feminist genealogies of resistance," she describes "retrofitted memory" as a form of "counter-memory that uses fragments of older histories that have been disjunctured by colonial practices of organizing historical knowledge or by masculinist renderings of history that disappear women's political involvement." This process of retrofitting memory, Blackwell maintains, "[C]reate[s] space for women in historical traditions that erase them."[526] Her feminist intervention into Chicano history offers generative lessons for scholars who compare anti-racist social movements. The political struggles I analyze in this study is filled with key moments where activists use historical narratives to advance popular struggle. In some cases, it involved linking histories that were commonly read as separate. This was seen in the formation of LELO, where activists fashioned a narrative history that tied together the race and class struggles of black, Filipino, and Mexican workers in the Pacific Northwest. Similarly, when UCWA activist Tyree Scott's revisited the history of settler colonialism in the U.S. West, and particularly the role of black servicemen in it, he questioned, and in some cases condemned, "community leaders" who serve the interests of those in power: the "New Buffalo Soldiers."

The UCWA and LELO demonstrate that re-narrating history has an important political function in moments of potential crisis, or movement ruptures. It is worth remembering that

[526] Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana Power: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas, 2011), 2-3.

LELO was formed a year after Black, Asian American, and Chicano communities in Seattle came together in solidarity in 1972. The worker-governed law office was conceived as an organizational tool to sustain the solidarity that made the UCWA so successful in Seattle. Or, in the case of Scott's "New Buffalo Soldier" analogue, it was crafted at a moment when "Third World" unity in Seattle was tested, both within Seattle's black community and at the University of Washington. Thus, in both cases, activists made pivotal interventions in times when solidarity could have easily regressed into separate struggles or outright racial conflict.

By extending this study into subsequent decades, analysis should pay careful attention to how this tradition of crafting multiracial, activist histories provided those committed to coalition-building with a method of promoting solidarity. Clearly, prior freedom seekers have left a critical vocabulary that contemporary activists can draw upon. This is evident in an article written by Fredrick Simmons in LELO's June 2006 edition of their newsletter *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other*. Simmons was a black electrician mentored by Tyree Scott in the 1990s. His essay, "Immigrant Rights Movement Benefits All Workers," had all the imprints of his mentor. He first reframed contemporary debates about immigration in the context of global capitalism and empire. He reminds readers, "Let us not confuse immigration with colonialism. Immigration is an outgrowth of colonization. When the colonized can no longer survive because their land and resources have been plundered, when workers can no longer provide for their families, they are forced to leave behind their countries, cultures and traditions to survive." He uses this broader frame to challenge the notion that "immigrants are taking [U.S.] jobs." An argument he found particularly alarming coming out of the mouths of black workers, which he read as, "tantamount to saying that your skin color relegates you to certain job choices and pay

scales."[527] He ends his piece with an explanation of LELO's mantra, crafted in 1975 by the UCWA, "No Separate Peace." Simmons explains,

> This means that all workers' struggles worldwide are interconnected and if a group of [workers'] struggles anywhere in the world is disenfranchised then our work must continue. It also means that whenever a group of workers wins changes in their conditions, we all benefit. If the current immigrant rights movement is successful, all workers should thank them.[528]

LELO is an optimal example of what Kelley's earlier quote implores. As an organization, LELO does not have the same mass following that the UCWA once did at its apex in the early 1970s: nearly four hundred members. However, its political visions and relationships with other aggrieved groups endured through series of "ebbs and flows," such as, economic downturns and a conservative rollback in civil rights law and judicial interpretation. What LELO has provided is an organization that maintains the historical memory of prior political struggles. As Simmons's article suggests, this political act of remembering continues to enrich the work of contemporary social movements in Seattle.

[527] Fredrick Simmons, "Immigrant Rights Movement Benefits All Workers," *Speaking for Ourselves, to Each Other: A Newsletter of LELO – A Legacy of Equality, Leadership, and Organizing*, Spring 2006, 3, http://www.lelo.org/lelonews.pdf.

[528] Ibid.

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