Introduction

We colored folk of America have long lived with you yellow, brown and black folk of the world under the intolerable arrogance and assumptions of the white race. We beg you to close ranks against men in America, Britain, France, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands, so long as they fight and scheme for the colonial system, for color, caste and class exploitation.

—W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Bandung Conference"

On the occasion of the 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, W. E. B. Du Bois sent these fiery words to the assembled delegates. Unable to attend because the U.S. State Department had denied passports to him and Paul Robeson, Du Bois was nonetheless enthusiastic about this unprecedented gathering of representatives from twenty-nine developing nations. Writing as formal decolonization accelerated throughout the Third World, he echoed the militant mood of the delegates: "Let the white world keep its missionaries at home to teach the Golden Rule to its corporate thieves. Damn the God of slavery, exploitation, and war."[1] Organized by India, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma (Myanmar), and Indonesia, the Bandung Conference was a meeting of Third World nations dedicated to "the elimination of colonialism and the 'color line.'"[2] Defying the Cold War era's division of the globe into anticommunist and communist spheres, the Bandung Con-

ference sought to craft an independent, nonaligned identity for the Third World by fostering alliances among the decolonizing and newly decolonized nations of Africa and Asia.

If Bandung heralded the entrance of Third World nations onto the world stage, it also spurred the transformation of leftists of color in the United States. Du Bois suggests as much when he links African Americans to colonized peoples, anti-imperialism to antiracism, forcefully arguing that "color, caste and class" are interconnected. In doing so, Du Bois defines "colored" identity as a global identity, one profoundly shaped by racism, colonialism, and imperialism. Bandung served as a symbol of international coalition and anticolonial resistance that challenged the very foundation of Western power. Participating nations sought to wrest the term *Third World* out of the geopolitical context in which it was first coined by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952. Sauvy derived *Third World* from *Third Estate*, the French revolutionary-era term used to describe those at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Reclaiming the term meant inverting that political, economic, and social hierarchy; it meant challenging a global order in which the vast majority of nations pursued the ever-shrinking horizon of First World status.

In its denunciation of Western imperialism, economic exploitation, and the racism on which it thrives, in its urgent appeal to all the "yellow, brown, and black folk of the world," Du Bois's words epitomize the ideals animating a diverse group of U.S.-based intellectuals, artists, and activists mobilizing in the 1960s and 1970s. *Soul Power: Cultural Radicalism and the Formation of a U.S. Third World Left* analyzes the ideas, art forms, and cultural rituals of a group of African Americans, Latino/as, Asian Americans, and Anglos who, inspired by events in the decolonizing world, saw their own plight in global terms. Writers, filmmakers, hospital workers, students, and grassroots activists turned to Third World anticolonial struggles for ideas and strategies that might aid their own struggles against the poverty, discrimination, and brutality facing peoples of color.

There was, of course, significant precedent for their activities. Not only did they follow in the footsteps of the two black Americans absent from Bandung, Robeson and Du Bois, but they were also part of a long and distinguished history of anticolonial, antiracist, and anticapitalist agitation among leftists of color in the United States.[3] In addition to organizations like the African Blood Brotherhood, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, and the International Labor Defense, there were Hubert Henry Harrison, Cyril Briggs, A. Philip Randolph, Hosea Hudson, Grace Campbell, William Patterson, Louise Thompson Patterson, Claudia Jones, Benjamin Davis Jr., and countless

workers, intellectuals, and organizers who worked within Communist Party chapters, New Deal–era unions, civil rights groups, and grassroots organizations. During the McCarthy era, however, the shape of this activism shifted as radicals adapted to the political repression of Cold War (North) America. Penny Von Eschen reads this shift as a turn away from politics toward culture. As evidence, she cites the 1956 Congress of Colored Writers' decision to shy away from "concretely examin[ing] the increasing similarities in the plight of Africans and of black Americans" and focus instead on "the contributions of African culture to American life."[4] Von Eschen's view is one shared by many U.S. historians. Rebeccah Welch breaks with this historiography suggesting that the turn toward culture produced both antiracist critiques and innovative art.[5]

If the impact of the McCarthy era on leftist activism has been a matter of considerable debate, most critics agree that cultural production and cultural identity assumed a new prominence during the 1950s. Indeed, some leftists used the turn toward culture as a way of combining cultural critiques with antiracist and anticolonial ones. That interstitial approach paved the way for U.S. Third World Leftists in the 1960s who created cultural artifacts that would not only register the Third World's influence, but speak back to it in powerful ways. Inspired by a host of Third World leaders including Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in Cuba, Mao Tse-Tung in the People's Republic of China, and Amílcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau, *Soul Power*'s protagonists—LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka), Harold Cruse, and Angela Y. Davis, as well as filmmakers in Third World Newsreel and at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), unionists in the hospital workers'1199 union, squatters in Operation Move-In, and students in the Young Lords Party crafted what Arjun Appadurai has called "new diasporic public spheres," insisting on the interconnections between U.S. minorities and Third World majorities in a moment of global decolonization.[6]

Forged in the interstices between the New Left and the civil rights movement, between the counterculture and the Black Arts movements, this U.S. Third World Left created cultural, material, and ideological links to the Third World as a mode through which to contest U.S. economic, racial, and cultural arrangements. The appellation *Third World* served as a shorthand for leftists of color in the United States, signifying their opposition to a particular economic and racial world order. This diverse group of organizations and individuals fostered the creation and circulation of a sophisticated cultural lexicon, one characterized by its innovative stylistics, ideological hybridity, and a sense of political urgency. Just as the Port Huron Statement, the Freedom Summer, and the music of Bob Dylan helped craft what Raymond Williams has called a

"structure of feeling" for the New Left, certain events, individuals, and ideologies forged a U.S. Third World Left that was simultaneously committed to transnational political resistance and cultural innovation. Linking the social justice struggles of U.S. peoples of color to liberation struggles in Africa and Asia, U.S. Third World Leftists wrote essays, made films, and engaged in activism that created a distinct cultural and political formation. This formation melded the civil rights movement's focus on racial inequality, the Old Left's focus on class struggle and anticolonialism, and the New Left's focus on grassroots, participatory democracy.

Challenging Western liberalism's tendency to view politically engaged art as simply propaganda, U.S. Third World Leftists developed new aesthetic techniques and vocabularies. Newsreel's groundbreaking films combined the models offered by the Russian documentarian Dziga Vertov and French and American cinema verité to capture the frenzy, confusion, and spontaneous community that characterized the 1967 march on the Pentagon and the 1968 Columbia University student strike. Third World Newsreel was influenced by the documentary films of Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC), Cuba's film institute, mixing cartoon footage, personal interviews, and newsreel footage in *Teach Our Children* (1972), a film about the 1971 Attica prison rebellion. Filmmakers Haile Gerima and Charles Burnett, based at UCLA, turned to the narrative examples offered by Brazilian Cinema Novo, using them to explore the impact of state repression on individual and community identity in Los Angeles. The U.S. Third World Leftists' interest in aesthetic experimentation was always informed by a commitment to a diverse set of political ideals, but such experimentation was never sacrificed to the exigencies of ongoing political struggle. For this group, cultural production and political activism complemented rather than opposed each other.

In addition to its formal innovations, this group also articulated a powerful antiracist and anti-imperialist critique of the United States, developing an analysis of state violence and refining the internal-colony model popularized by the Communist Party International. These twin foci emphasized the parallels between urban communities of color and Third World colonies. The group's ability to imagine and claim common cause with a radical Third World subject involved multiple translations and substitutions; it required the production of an imagined terrain able to close the multiple gaps between First and Third World subjects. The analysis of how U.S. state violence produced internal colonies created a distinct framework with its own set of assumptions and biases. For one, U.S. Third World Leftists privileged urban over rural communities; in the cases considered here, these included New York, Newark,

and Los Angeles. They emphasized solidarity based on material circumstance rather than racial, ethnic, or geographic kinship; they understood internal colonies to be racially and ethnically diverse communities whose members faced certain forms of state violence. The internal colony was no longer solely a description of the Southern Black Belt, as it had been for earlier leftists, but was also a term for black, Asian American, and Latino enclaves. Rather than using race as a means of spurring class identification or using race and class interchangeably, the revision of the internal-colony thesis combined Third World colonial status with both class and race.

Both Angela Y. Davis and Haile Gerima, for instance, analyzed the ways in which state practices of containment—incarceration, housing segregation, welfare bureaucracies—constitute powerful forms of state violence that echo colonial practices and produce forms of individual alienation that can either impede or ignite political resistance. They showed that state violence directed at peoples of color not only defines U.S. democracy but also provides an insidious blueprint for U.S. imperial designs. After their visit to Castro's Cuba, the writers Harold Cruse, LeRoi Jones, and Robert F. Williams debated the suitability of the colonial model for black Americans. Jones and Williams argued that U.S. urban communities were segregated, brutally suppressed, and exploited in ways that mimicked the conditions defining Third World colonies. Consequently, they viewed armed struggle as a primary path to black liberation. Cruse, on the other hand, disagreed, believing that black Americans' First World status meant that armed revolution would never prove viable. For Cruse, this was not simply a question of demographics; it also stemmed from his sense that the complexity of black American struggle required an assault on the cultural and ideological foundations of the United States. This led him to advocate for a "cultural revolution" that would challenge U.S. state practices from within and offer a powerful ideological and cultural alternative.[7] Charles Burnett's brilliant *Killer of Sheep* (1977) depicts the daily life of Stan, a meatfactory worker struggling to find his way out of his dead-end Watts existence. By juxtaposing the helpless sheep being led to slaughter with Stan's children, Burnett suggests that internal colonization results from a set of violent state practices that lead to the death of hope and human connection. Though they did not always articulate their demands in terms of state violence, the 1199ers' fight for better wages and fairer workplaces consistently linked those demands to improvement in the overall living conditions of hospital workers. Their campaigns demonstrated the fact that discrimination and exploitation constitute forms of state violence endemic to working-class black and Puerto Rican life. In doing so, they exposed the gap between the rhetoric of U.S.

democracy and its grim reality. In explicit and implicit ways, U.S. Third World Leftists used a focus on state violence and the internal colony to provide the ideological glue connecting U.S. minorities and Third World majorities.

The example offered by U.S. Third World Leftists challenges extant historiographies of sixties activism, many of which focus on the New Left: the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and other white-dominated groups. Through this lens, middle-class white students and their issues—the draft, student rights—define the decade.[8] Characterized by racial myopia and North American exceptionalism, this New Left–centric historiography has diminished the influence of domestic movements for racial and economic equality and international liberation struggles. Another set of histories focuses on civil rights and Black Power; in those narratives, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), and the Black Panther Party take center stage. Often such histories divide the period's historical actors into integrationists and separatists, Martin Luther King Jr. versus Malcolm X. They overemphasize race as a rallying point, ignoring the fact that assaults against Jim Crow segregation and equality were also assaults on entrenched class and gender exploitation.

Both historiographic tendencies foreground middle-class men and their organizations and underplay struggles to overturn capitalism or imperialism. They overinvest in youth as the catalyst for social change, reinforcing the perception that sixties activism emerged because of a generational conflict between conformist parents and their rebellious kids. Though the Vietnam War certainly made for a primary focus of both the New Left and civil rights, histories of them tend to underestimate the enormous influence of decolonization, thus reducing the international context solely to Vietnam. Finally, these historiographic traditions reify the divide between culture and politics, as if the culture of the period, symbolized by the so-called turn on, tune in, drop out ethos, offered an escape from politics. If we primarily conceive of the period in phallocentric, youth-oriented, and hypersexualized terms—the black jacketed Panther, the male white student—then we continue to mystify a historical moment rather than decode it.

In turning to grassroots organizations, cultural producers, and union members, *Soul Power* defies such easy categorizations, revealing what they obscure: that the boundaries between political philosophies and organizations were often more permeable and fluid than scholars acknowledge, that the working class, women of color, and older people also played an important role in this history. Indeed, the one point is related to the other. If one expands the lens

beyond the New Left and civil rights/Black Power, then one recognizes that this set of marginalized actors created new ideological and political formations to which we need to attend. This expanded focus helps shift our understanding of the sixties and seventies, offering new tools for analyzing and acting in our current historical moment.

This perspective also calls into question the way in which the sixties, themselves, have been periodized.[9] A concentration on the New Left and civil rights has led to a focus on the period between 1960 and 1968. Such an abbreviated timeline supports the familiar truism that 1968 constituted a watershed year after which activism on college campuses and in city streets ground to a halt. However, this periodization obscures the fact that some of the largest U.S. demonstrations of the era occurred after 1968, including the 1970 Mobilization against the War, which drew seven hundred thousand people to a protest in Washington.[10] After 1968, notes historian Terry Anderson, "social activism reached its zenith . . . as millions of baby boomers . . . took to the streets."[11] The Third World strikes in San Francisco, the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam, the so-called blowouts in East Los Angeles all confirm the fact that grassroots protest exceeded the limits placed on it by chronological markers.

In considering the sixties' importance as a historical period in the United States, I find it useful to defy decade and national markers. I take my cue from Fredric Jameson's contention in "Periodizing the Sixties" that the sixties began in 1957 with the independence of Ghana and concluded somewhere between 1972 and 1974.[12] I would amend his periodization slightly, pushing the decade's beginning back to 1955 and the Montgomery Bus Boycotts and extending its end to 1973, with the completion of the U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam, the CIA-sponsored coup in Chile, and the beginning of the five-month OPEC oil embargo. My amendments, however, illustrate Jameson's larger point: namely, that one's historical interpretation of an era determines one's periodization, rather than the other way around. I have extended my discussion into the late 1970s to discuss the UCLA filmmakers because I see the Watts films as a eulogy for the era.

If the formation, consolidation, and decline of the U.S. Third World Left stretched across two decades, two significant factors sparked its emergence. The first factor was decolonization. During the 1960s alone, almost thirty countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America declared formal independence after long, sometimes bloody struggles. In a relatively short period of time, the political and economic contours of Africa and much of the Caribbean transformed, as did those of their former colonizers, none more dramatically than those of France and Britain. For U.S. Third World Leftists, events in Ghana,

Cuba, China, Algeria, Kenya, and Vietnam appeared particularly resonant. As the first independent black African nation, Ghana became a beacon for many black Americans including Nina Simone, Stokely Carmichael, and W. E. B. Du Bois, who died there at the age of ninety-five. In the cases of Kenya, Algeria, and Vietnam, armed struggle proved central to their national independence movements, making the Mau Mau in Kenya, the Vietcong in Vietnam, and the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in Algeria mythic heroes to U.S. Third World and other leftists. Though it occurred in the 1940s, Mao Tse-tung's revolution in China also wielded considerable influence in U.S. Third World Left circles. Maoism, Chairman Mao's unique interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, held particular sway among leftists of color, as did the ideas of Vladimir Lenin and Ernesto "Che" Guevara.[13]

Of seminal importance to U.S. Third World Leftists, however, was the 1959 Cuban Revolution. "The Cuban Revolution," Paul Lyons asserts, "provided young American dissidents with revolutionary inspiration, while the response of the United States imperialism to that revolution played a significant role in breaking down Cold War mythologies."[14] For a brief period before United States–Cuba relations soured, a generation of young men identified with the romantic figure cut by revolutionaries Fidel Castro and Che Guevara and dreamed of taking up arms in Cuba's name. North Americans as disparate as the theorists C. Wright Mills and Paul Sweezy, the Beats Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and the mainstream journalist Herbert Matthews were united in their support for Castro, whom they saw as a "rebel with a cause."[15] If young men gravitated toward Castro as the embodiment of the triumphant nonconformist, they also envied his ability to craft his own history and that of a nation. "Young, bearded, defiant," John Diggins argues, "Castro became the symbol of rebellious young Americans in search of a John Wayne of the Left, a guerrilla who could shoot his way to power and at the same time remain virtually uncorrupted by the temptations of power."[16] If that image (even more than its reality) proved compelling for a generation of white leftists "bred in at least modest comfort . . . looking uncomfortably into the world [they] inherit[ed]," it proved equally so for many of the critics, activists, and artists who were part of the U.S. Third World Left.[17]

In Cuba, many of these leftists found a way to connect domestic struggles for racial equality to Third World liberation movements. The Cuban Revolution served as a powerful emblem for writers and activists, as well as the masses of black and Latino/a peoples. When Castro appeared in New York City's Central Park in 1959, several thousand Latinos came to see him receive keys to the city. The following year, a triumphant Castro returned to the United States

and stayed at Harlem's Theresa Hotel, causing a throng of African Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and other Spanish-speaking Caribbean peoples to surround the hotel.[18] For writers and intellectuals, Castro's Cuba held a special appeal because it offered a model for integrating cultural production and radical politics. Cuba's investment in film, literature, and art demonstrated the centrality of cultural production and its creators to the attainment of national autonomy.

The second primary factor in the U.S. Third World Left's formation was a time-space compression that helped bridge geographic, ideological, and experiential gaps between U.S. minorities and Third World majorities.[19] Print culture proved an absolutely essential technology of time-space compression by helping to disseminate Third World ideas across the globe. Max Elbaum notes that by the mid 1960s, inexpensive copies of Mao's *Little Red Book*, as well as the writings of Guevara, Castro, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin were "available in every large city and college town." Vigorous publishing and distribution industries in both Cuba and China assisted this circulation, primarily targeting the United States.[20] Mao's *Little Red Book* vied for shelf space with Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Amílcar Cabral's *Return to the Source*, Robert F. Williams's *Negros with Guns*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Homecoming*, Georg Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*, and Herbert Marcuse's *An Essay on Liberation*, to name only a select few. The worldwide convulsions caused by the decolonization movement not only transformed the geopolitics of the era but changed the ways in which people understood global arrangements of power and dominance. The greater circulation of radical literature from around the globe depended on print and media technologies, national infrastructures, and transnational networks that, in a very real sense, shrank the distance between national contexts and the people in them. Conversely, the circulation of this print media also accomplished time-space compression as people in Los Angeles, Oakland, and New York could read Fanon's account of the FLN or learn Mao's aphorisms.

Travel constituted another central technology of time-space compression. In the twentieth century generally, and particularly after World War II, people of color had greater opportunity and means to voluntarily travel. Migration from the South to the North, immigration from colonies to metropoles, and circulation to international conferences transformed local and global landscapes, simultaneously shortening and stretching ideological and demographic boundaries. These various modes of and reasons for movement and boundary crossing exposed individuals and groups to a wider array of experiences and influences than ever before as the greater circulation of bodies and texts

from the Third World to the First World made its indelible mark on local political cultures.

Another technology of time-space compression was the use of image-making media and the wider circulation of images. The civil rights movement, for example, was profoundly impacted by television images of white brutality: watching dogs biting black flesh from the coziness of one's living room made an impression no verbal description ever could.[21] The development of smaller, lighter cameras enabled Cuban filmmakers to shoot and exhibit their films in rural areas, just as it allowed U.S. independent filmmakers to exercise great control over the visual representations of themselves and their communities. Not only did this technological shift mean greater autonomy but it also meant independent distribution and a larger circulation of alternative images.

If, as Michael Denning has argued, the very concept of culture shifted midcentury because of "the uneven development of a global culture out of the cultural and ideological struggles between the three worlds," then this project explores the meaning of those shifts within a twenty-year period.[22] Like Warren Susman in his essays on cultural history, I am interested in the "forms, patterns and symbols" that resulted from certain historical events, rather than the events themselves.[23] Taking its cue from Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front*, in which the author attends to both "the politics of allegiances and affiliations" and the "politics of form," *Soul Power* establishes personal links, party memberships, and political affiliations, as well as attending to the ways in which people, styles, themes, and particular forms unexpectedly converge. As Raymond Williams notes, "cultural formations" are always both "artistic forms and social locations."[24] Forms, in other words, are always social in the richest sense of the term, full of meanings that cannot be known in advance.

The fragmentary, partial, and provisional nature of the U.S. Third World Left as a cultural formation requires me to define a few terms. The emerging body of diaspora theory has profoundly influenced this project.[25] For one, I have found the well-established paradigm of "roots and routes" a necessary but not sufficient analytic frame for this project. All diasporas are characterized by the oscillation between movement and stasis, retention and innovation. Brent Edwards describes the culture of the African diaspora as one characterized by a series of *décalages*—a term he translates from the French as both spatial "gaps" and time "intervals."[26] Following this notion of disjunctures and conjunctures defining transnational identities, we might conceptualize the U.S. Third World Left as a cultural and political formation characterized by the simultaneous uncovering and suturing of multiple aporias that define the experience of

diaspora. In diaspora, roots and routes are expanded and contracted, ruptured and rebuilt.

Attending to the ways in which local specificities are shaped by and shape global economic, political, and intellectual forces, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan emphasize the necessity of foregrounding gender analysis in transnational studies, though they also insist on the need to "compare multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppressions rather than to construct a theory of hegemonic oppression under a unified category of gender."[27] This holds no less true for transnational race and class analysis. The call for Third World solidarity appears on its face to depend on a unitary theory of hegemonic oppression, but analysis of its impacts and uses in individual contexts undercuts this impression. Nonetheless, I am interested in the ways in which a global analysis of race, class, gender, and national oppression, with all of its hegemonizing tendencies, helped U.S. Third World Leftists describe local concerns in more urgent, compelling, and specific terms. A complex analysis of their usage demands scholarship that is flexible, nonsectarian, and non-ideologically bound in any narrow sense.

That scholarly imperative extends to my conception of the term *radicalism*. If, as Edwards argues, "black internationalism" is a form of radicalism, then its counterhegemonic value must also be critically weighed.[28] Eager to avoid many of the sectarian debates that fractured the era and have hampered its subsequent analysis, my use of the term *radical* reflects a belief that the cultural and political forms under consideration had profound counterhegemonic effects in the social world. For one, they imagined a social world in which forms of Third World internationalism created new power blocs and dismantled imperial claims to domination. They addressed systemic inequities, entrenched forms of discrimination, and challenged the representational forms that undergirded them. One's understanding of radicalism cannot be frozen in time or space, but rather must reflect a keen assessment of how representational acts and political strategies signify in and impact specific material and ideological contexts. In other words, my project is not interested in outlining any narrow criteria for radicalism. Exercises in describing a group or person as "radical" or "reactionary" may satisfy a need to impose order on messy realities, but ultimately they run the risk of obscuring the larger historical significance of individuals and organizations.

This brings me to the most difficult and vexing problem posed by this project—the political and intellectual difficulties inherent in deploying the term *Third World* in a First World context. Strictly speaking, this book is not

about the Third World. It is not an exploration of how literature, filmmaking, political movements, ideologies, agendas, and wars understood to "originate" in the Third World impacted people living there.[29] It is, however, about how the literature, films, political movements, ideologies, agendas, and wars understood to originate in the Third World impacted people of color living in the United States. Consequently, it both is and is not about the Third World. It is about how the Third World profoundly impacted the way activists, writers, thinkers, filmmakers, organizations, and individuals understood themselves, their identities, and their political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. This book considers how the discourses, ideologies, and aesthetic practices adapted from Third World anticolonialism helped leftists of color reconsider and rethink their own local context and their position within the U.S. nation-state. Simply put, it is about how the relationship between the global and local came to be understood and made new cultural and political possibilities available to a group I call U.S. Third World Leftists. That rethinking proved productive and enabling, but it also had its price, reducing the Third World in some instances to a set of icons, a set of projections and imaginaries.

Given this, *Soul Power* necessarily has its gaps and blind spots. This book does not address how people living in the Third World understood themselves in relation to people of color in the United States, though I hope it will spark such studies; it does not survey the diverse histories and outcomes of countries and communities in the Third World, though they inform them. As a result, I and U.S. Third World Leftists run the very real risk of replicating the homogenizing tendency of Western imperialism and colonialism. That tendency sees developing countries as a backward unity, bereft of regional, national, religious, ethnic, racial, and political differences, rather than entitites shaped by histories that share but cannot be collapsed into their common aspects. Indeed, the very use of the term *Third World* brings with it (among other things) a history shaped by racism, imperialism, colonialism, and a ruthless capital-accumulation drive that depends on a self/other logic ultimately about the self rather than the other. From that perspective, Third World knowledges, histories, logics—in short, Third World specificities—need not be incorporated into what "we" in the West already know about "them," no matter that the historical record tells us that the Third, Second, and First worlds are mutually constitutive. This book tries to avoid such a homogenizing tendency by focusing on how specific struggles, practices, and ideas were translated and put to ideological and political work in U.S. localities. Mindful of colonialism's heterogeneity, I take seriously Lawrence Grossberg's assessment that cultural studies often ends up "reducing it to discourses of representation and ignoring its material realities."[30]

Nonetheless, people, ideas, artifacts, and cultural practices travel, that is to say they are taken out of their context and put in others; they mutate, transform, and take on new meanings that cannot fully dislodge but do resituate earlier meanings and contexts. It is that process of mutation on which I focus because those meanings and contexts also form a part of colonialism's material reality.

I am interested in how Third World discourse and strategy was deployed by U.S. Third World Leftists and at what cost. For one, it was used to describe racially, ethnically, and nationally diverse organizations and coalitions. In some instances, it became a banner under which people of color—African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino/as—and whites worked together and formed coalitions. In other instances, it suggested parallels between U.S. citizens and Third World immigrants. The term was often used in imprecise and contradictory ways. For example, *Third World* was often conflated with *working class*, a conflation that cannot account for the existence of a relatively large Third World middle class and a powerful, if tiny, elite whose interests clash with those of the working class. It cannot account for the historical moment at which Antonio Gramsci's "class fractions" become part of the "historical bloc," helping to maintain the hegemony that dominates the working class, as well as members of more elite classes.[31] Put differently, it confuses nationalism with Marxism, a nation with a class. Yet as Fanon reminds us in "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," the "national bourgeoisie" sees itself as the "transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism."[32] A less troubling reading of this conflation might be that those using the term deployed it in the name of a Fanonian "national consciousness," one that fuses with a "political and social consciousness." Certainly this reading is consistent with the Black Panther Party's denunciation of "pork chop nationalists" who fetishized and reified the rituals and artifacts of a particular (national) culture for their own conservative interests. Still another and perhaps more persuasive reading might understand the use of the term to denote an international consciousness and mode of solidarity—certainly this was also true of the Panthers who used it to claim common cause with Mao and Nkrumah, for instance. Rather than speaking and working in the name of a narrow nationalism, U.S. Third World Leftists claimed affiliation with an international anticolonial community, one in which the use of the term *Third World* offered a way of interpellating and signaling a community with certain shared interests: the commitment to eradicating colonialism, imperialism, racism, class exploitation, and, in some admittedly rare instances, homophobia and misogyny.

But this is where the metaphorical use of the term bumps up against its ma-

terial limits. The specific forms of oppression faced by national minorities who are legal citizens differ considerably from that of colonized national subjects, though both were denied full citizenship rights. This raises the question, then, of what kinds of transpositions are needed in order to build a representational vocabulary that bridges—if only in the realm of the symbolic—the geographic and experiential gaps between Watts and Nairobi. The elision of specific historical conditions and their attendant consequences makes certain political and cultural possibilities available, but it also closes down others. It cannot fully address the situational privilege First World national minorities have vis-à-vis Third World national majorities; it cannot account in any real specificity for the difference that colonialism combined with enslavement makes; and it cannot account for the different forms of colonialism or the differences between colonialism and imperialism. In short, the collapsing of disparities implied in the use of the term fails to acknowledge variation, hierarchies, and gradations within the Third World itself, or between it and the First World. That is to say, the metaphor potentially works in favor of helping First World minorities demand greater rights and privileges, but the political danger exists that it might perform significant work on, rather than for, Third World majorities. It might be the case that conflating people in the First World with those in the Third World borrows the latter's legitimacy while maintaining the spotlight firmly on the First World. Clearly, there is no one simple way out of this dilemma, but there are perhaps cases where U.S. peoples of color borrow legitimacy without taking any away from Third World majorities, or where First World minorities fight to wrest concessions from the state on their own behalf and that of Third World majorities. It is these politically and culturally significant cases to which we must critically attend.

I am interested in scrutinizing the claiming of a Third World identity by First World minorities for the very forms of exchange that make what might be taken as a collapsing of differences possible. In other words, how do ideas, political strategies, styles, cultural practices, and rhetoric mutate and adapt across multiple diasporas? At the very center of this project lies the question of how the borrowing of a terminology, the claiming of a political lineage or a cultural community, has historically impacted U.S. struggles for social justice and radical transformation. Those who used the term *Third World* saw in it a way of signaling an intersectional focus on empire, race, class, and often gender that did not reduce their political struggle to any single issue. Nonetheless, its use marks a conceptual lacuna, one that reveals the inadequacy of the language readily available to U.S. Third World Leftists. It suggests a working through of intersectional approaches, a grappling with various categories of oppression

that do not lend themselves to elegant rhetorical (or political) solutions. At the same time, U.S. Third World Leftists did not use the term solely in metaphoric terms, merely as a colorful backdrop against which to define themselves and their priorities. Instead, this group labored to fill in the aesthetic, cultural, and intellectual ground so that the term *Third World* captured their understanding of the global and local dynamics behind race, class, colonial, and imperial domination. In their writing, film, and activism, I decode this perspective, while acknowledging that it is one that walks the tightrope between analysis and idealization, between sophisticated differentiation and crude reduction, by conceding that it often gets the balance horribly wrong. Nonetheless, I am intrigued by the ways in which we might understand the term *Third World* as a placeholder, a contradictory edifice of ideas and concepts that expresses, as Louis Althusser wrote when defining ideology, an "imagined relation" to the material world as much as it expresses a "scientifically verifiable" reality.[33]

Over the course of this project I consider a range of figures and formations including LeRoi Jones, Angela Y. Davis, Robert F. Williams, Harold Cruse, Susan Robeson, Christine Choy, Charles Burnett, the L.A. Rebellion, Third World Newsreel, and the Young Lords Party. In doing so, I attend to the specific and unique ways each used Third World discourse and to what political and cultural ends. I have elected to incorporate specific theorists, texts, and ideas that emerged in the Third World as they arise narratively in the book, rather than separating them into a separate framing chapter. I discuss them in the context of how they were used and mobilized by groups of people or individuals for specific purposes, which is to say often in fragmentary and strategic ways. Constructing a totalizing discourse into which I fit each thinker would seem to me to violate the hybrid, provisional, and partial manner in which U.S. Third World Leftists adopted and adapted ideas and forms. To do so would rub against the grain of the project itself—though I hope that the reader will attain a concrete sense of common themes or preoccupations despite the fact that they are not reducible to a common or singular reading of any particular text or thinker.

Soul Power is organized into six chapters. "Havana Up in Harlem and Down in Monroe: Armed Revolt and the Making of a Cultural Revolution" uses a historic trip that LeRoi Jones, Harold Cruse, and Robert F. Williams made to Cuba in 1960 to investigate the impact of the Cuban Revolution on the U.S. Third World Left. Juxtaposing these three men's writings and activism, I trace the debates about culture, identity, and revolution that lie at the core of U.S. Third World Left discourse.

"Union Power, Soul Power: Class Struggle by Cultural Means" looks at the

early history of 1199, the health care workers union. Examining the role that cultural production played in consolidating a racially and ethnically diverse workforce, I argue that the union's history offers us a new way of conceptualizing U.S. Third World radicalism and identity politics.

Chapter 3, "Newsreel: Rethinking the Filmmaking Arm of the New Left," considers Newsreel, an activist documentary film movement born out of the 1967 march on the Pentagon. Conventionally seen as a New Left organization, I show how Newsreel's exhibition and distribution practices, as well as two of their later films on the Young Lords Party and the squatters' rights organization Operation Move-In, preview many of the themes and concerns that found fuller articulation in its successor Third World Newsreel. Discussion of the two activist groups depicted affords me the opportunity to consider their representation in the films, as well as their forms of organization and activism.

Chapter 4, "Third World Newsreel Visualizes the Internal Colony," traces the influence of Third Cinema, particularly of Cuban film, on the collective's work. Led by women of color during this period, I analyze Third World Newsreel's 1972 film on the Attica prison rebellion, exploring the film's representation of the internal-colony thesis, which compares communities of color with Third World countries. I conclude this chapter by assessing the group's efforts to solidify national and transnational cultural networks and help construct a U.S. Third World Left imaginary.

Chapter 5, "Angela Y. Davis and U.S. Third World Left Theory and Praxis," considers the seminal figure of Angela Y. Davis. By looking at her autobiographical and theoretical work, I explore the impact of anticolonialism and Western Marxism on the production of Davis's intersectional approach to political analysis and activism. Finally, in "Shot in Watts: Film and State Violence in the 1970s," I conclude with the L.A. Rebellion, a group of African American and African filmmakers that produced narrative films on the community of Watts. In two of their films, Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep* and Haile Gerima's *Bush Mama* (1979), one can see the disintegration of U.S. Third World Left discourse under the pressure of an increasingly conservative political atmosphere.

This book offers by no means a definitive account of U.S. Third World Leftists. If it were definitive, it would have to include some of the following: Audre Lorde, the Black Panther Party, I Wor Kuen, the Brown Berets, Shirley Graham Du Bois, the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization, the Third World Student Strikers, Toni Cade Bambara, the Revolutionary Action Movement, the Third World Women's Alliance, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the Communist Labor Party, and many others. Because this is a

cultural history, I have included figures and organizations that produced literary texts, cultural works, forms of analysis, and activism that raised important issues for U.S. Third World Leftists more generally. Though many of the people I consider are African American, the reader should not take this as a sign that they dominated this cultural and political formation: Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and Native Americans were also central to this group. As I show in what follows, these leftists worked in multiracial, multiethnic, and even multinational groups. It is also true that womanism emerged as a central legacy of U.S. Third World Leftists. Analysis of the specific forms of discrimination facing women of color and a rigorous antihomophobic stance remain hallmarks of this rich feminist tradition. Though much of the activism undertaken by women of color in *Soul Power* articulates this point of view, none of the chapters explicitly theorize the specific forms of oppression facing women of color. This is due in part to the fact that numerous scholars have analyzed the textual contributions of Third World feminism, and also to the fact that archival sources on the organizations at the center of this movement were largely unavailable.

Consideration of U.S. Third World Leftists must be central to any analysis of postwar U.S. activism and theory. For just at the moment when the U.S. nation-state sought to assert its global hegemony, U.S. Third World Leftists challenged that hegemony by appealing to transnational modes of solidarity that resituated First World peoples and their struggles. What this body of counterhegemonic ideas and practices—with all of its contradictions—meant has long been overlooked. Mapping the roots and routes of ideas, cultural practices, and political strategies from Havana to Harlem, Vietnam to New York, London to Los Angeles, *Third World Power* offers important insights into how ideas and cultural products travel, mutate, and leave profound and often troubling historical traces.