

Etherington-Wright's extensive critical repertoire. Yet the book sets itself an inherently historical task: to use autobiography as a means of gaining access 'to the mentality of the writer and by extension to the intimate life of the period under scrutiny' (p. 4). There is certainly a gap for a study of women's autobiography within the rich historical literature on gender and professional identity, but whilst Etherington-Wright's book offers some useful conceptual tools and discrete insights, unfortunately it cannot fill it.

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Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones. By Carole Boyce Davies. Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2007. vii + 311 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-4096-6, \$22.95.

Carole Boyce Davies offers a critical intervention for understanding how the life and work of black communist, activist and intellectual, Claudia Jones illuminates the interlocking trans-Atlantic histories of leftist politics, feminism, anti-colonialism and black internationalism in the twentieth century. Born in Trinidad in 1915, Claudia Jones spent the majority of her life in the USA. There, she joined the Communist Party in the 1930s and developed a political orientation grounded in the philosophies of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, yet anchored by her formative experiences as a working-class black woman of non-citizen status navigating life in Jim Crow America. Persecuted, incarcerated and ultimately deported from the USA in 1955 during the height of a post-war wave of anti-communist hysteria for her unapologetically radical political ideas, Davies notes that Jones is most remembered for her political organizing among Britain's Caribbean community during the late 1950s until her untimely death in 1964.

For Davies, writing about Claudia Jones is an act rooted in 'recovering' a historical figure that has been noticeably absent in histories of the African diaspora, feminism and working-class radicalism. Jones's writings serve as the focal point of Davies's study, which is organized thematically around an introduction and six chapters which explore the dimensions of Jones's life as a radical thinker, international journalist, community organizer and as a subject of state repression. She begins by situating Jones's ideas and activism within a range of scholarly agendas. For Davies, Jones's intellectual production and political praxis foregrounds and necessarily complicates dominant paradigms characterizing scholarship on black feminism, communism and British Caribbean intellectual history—a domain which Davies notes has largely been identified with men including C.L.R. James, Eric Williams and George Padmore. In the first chapter, Davies establishes a critical framework for examining the broad corpus of Jones's intellectual work as a theoretician of

political economy, anti-colonialism, anti-racism and feminism. Examining many of Jones's writings during the early years of her involvement with the Communist Party USA, including her 'Half the World' column which ran in the *Daily Worker*, Davies illuminates how the physicality of Jones's burial site to the 'left of Karl Marx' in London's Highgate Cemetery provides an apt metaphor for understanding her ideological positions. Because Jones placed what she referred to as the 'superexploitation of the black woman' at the centre of her analysis of economic relations, social conditions and political possibilities, Davies demonstrates the extent to which Jones critiqued the limitations of Marx and Lenin by considering the gendered black subject as an agent of history (p. 2–3).

In the second and third chapters, Davies focuses on two different media that Jones employed to articulate her political ideas and agendas—journalism and poetry. Established in 1958, Davies contends that the *West Indian Gazette* newspaper, which Claudia Jones founded and managed until her death, represented a watershed venture in the formation of a sense of black British culture and community in post-war Britain. 'Anti-imperialist in orientation, pan-Africanist in politics, [and] feminist in its leadership and concern for women', the *Gazette*, one of the earliest black newspapers circulated in the post-war period, reflected Jones's diasporic and internationalist perspectives on racism and black identity (p. 86). Operating as both a tool for political advocacy and a vehicle of community mobilization, the paper effectively linked local concerns affecting black Britons, including the passage of restrictive immigration policies in the 1960s, to global and diasporic issues including support of the West Indies Federation, US civil rights campaigns, apartheid protests, worker's rights, disarmament and nationalist movements in Africa and Asia. In addition to its political coverage, the paper also provided an important venue for the work of Caribbean writers including George Lamming and Jan Carew, and oftentimes featured Jones's own poetry—a genre which Davies notes offered Jones a means to express pain and resistance during her incarceration in the US.

While Claudia Jones maintained a somewhat strained relationship with the Communist Party in Britain, she was actively involved in a number of leftist causes and anti-racist organizations in London including the Afro-Asian Conference and Africa House. What is, however, the most enduring legacy of Jones's tenure in Britain is reflected in the Notting Hill carnival, which continues to be one of the largest street festivals in Europe. Initially devised as a means to promote solidarity among Caribbeans in the aftermath of highly publicized episodes of racial violence, including the murder of Kelso Cochrane in 1959, Claudia Jones spearheaded the first Caribbean carnival in London which Davies insists 'has had perhaps a greater impact than any other initiative or event in making Caribbean culture central to the British experience' (p. 174). Indicative of her belief that 'a people's art is the genesis of their freedom', for Jones, the London carnivals collapsed the boundaries between culture and politics (p. 166). Reminiscent of carnival traditions in Trinidad, the early London carnivals featured steel bands, calypso and masqueraders and culminated in the celebration of black womanhood with the coronation of a carnival queen.

What makes Davies's study compelling is its reliance on a wide variety of Claudia Jones's writings. Thus, readers discover Jones on her own terms, through her own modalities of articulation and in relation to a political consciousness and identity fashioned out of her experiences of migration, deportation, exile, struggle and resistance. Historians are likely to want more contextual details to properly situate Jones's writings and activism in relation to key events in post-war black British history including the 1958 'race riots' and the passage of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 which are only given cursory mentions by Davies. But, this is not necessarily Davies's central concern. Rather, she sets out to counter the types of 'flawed and biased analyses' of Jones's work that criminalized her political beliefs and marked her as a 'deportable subject' in the USA (p. 197). Davies challenges scholars to remember the voice and work of Claudia Jones as a Caribbean intellectual with a trans-Atlantic political appeal. Moreover, she persuasively demonstrates that Jones's involvement within Caribbean communities in Britain makes her an important figure in our understanding of black Britain as a derivative and constituent of a larger black Atlantic political culture (p. 95).

In doing so, much like Claudia Jones, Davies reminds us that the history of twentieth-century Britain is indeed a history that encompasses the Caribbean, the Atlantic and the African Diaspora.

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The Labour Party and Constitutional Reform: A History of Constitutional Conservatism. By Peter Dorey. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York, 2008. 410 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-20535-2, £60.

Peter Dorey's book examines the Labour Party's approach to constitutional reform from 1900 to the present day. It demonstrates that whilst this issue featured consistently as one of their many policy considerations for much of the century, the priority it was afforded changed according to national and international circumstances. He argues that the absence of a consistent philosophical or ideological approach to constitutional reform has meant that the approach of all twentieth-century Labour governments to this issue was characterized by caution and minimalism (p. 379). Whilst this argument, at first glance, appears controversial, Dorey's systematic analysis and thought-provoking insight, mapped out in nine thematic chapters, each chronologically tracing the party's approach to constitutional reform, makes this a very forceful and persuasive argument. This study examines Electoral Reform; The House of Commons; The House of Lords; The Civil Service; Open Government; Scottish Devolution; Welsh Devolution; English Regionalism; and Northern Ireland. He demonstrates that the constitutional reform measures pursued by