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Claudia Jones, circa 1947.

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**BOOK DISCUSSION:** Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008; 311 pages; ISBN 978-0-8223-4116-1 (paper).

# Locating the Transnational in Postwar African American History

**Kevin Gaines**

In 1975, writing very much in the moment of global “Black Liberation” struggles emerging out of multiple and varied histories of enslavement, colonization, migration, and racial oppression, the Afro-American scholar St. Clair Drake sought to establish guidelines for a diasporic framework for the study of peoples of African descent.<sup>1</sup> Drake’s international perspective was born of his lengthy career as intellectual and activist. Although perhaps best known as coauthor with Horace Cayton of *Black Metropolis* (1945), a study of African Americans in Chicago, Drake subsequently did his doctoral research during the late 1940s on the African, Arab, and West Indian migrant communities in Cardiff, Wales.<sup>2</sup> Drake’s expertise on the black and African presence in Britain was forged in the context of the convergence of US black struggles for equality, decolonization movements in Africa and the Caribbean, and the cold war. While based in London, Drake joined a Pan-African network of Caribbean and African activists and cemented comradely friendships with George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah, among others. With his wife, Elizabeth, also a sociologist, Drake conducted research in the Gold Coast colony on the impact of mass media on West African youth and its implications for national independence movements. Drake continued his politically engaged research on

1 St. Clair Drake, “The Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective,” *The Black Scholar* (September 1975): 2–13.

2 St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1945); St. Clair Drake, “Value Systems, Social Structure and Race Relations in the British Isles” (PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1954). I am indebted to Andrew Rosa for sharing with me a copy of Drake’s dissertation, which is located in the St. Clair Drake papers manuscripts collection at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York.

African affairs while living intermittently in Ghana as a supporter and defender of Nkrumah's radical Pan-African government to audiences in the United States. Drake experienced the overthrow of Nkrumah and the destruction of that project in deeply personal terms. Drake's subsequent interest in the African diaspora was also shaped by an exploration of his own Caribbean heritage as the son of a Barbadian Baptist minister and Garveyite.<sup>3</sup>

Drake proposed his transnational approach to the study of the African diaspora out of a sense of the limitations of an African American framework for a black world perspective. Afro-Americans, Drake claimed, were the largest and best-organized group of people of African descent in the West, and yet they were a group whose potential for leadership in Pan-African affairs was constrained by its location within the white-dominated US superpower. Drake argued that Barbados, by contrast, and despite its small size of only 166 square miles, was a sovereign nation and a United Nations member. The citizens of Barbados, Drake seems to have believed, possessed the independent perspective that African Americans lacked within U.S. politics. Drake hoped that the study of the black experience would be influenced by a Marxian-informed framework of relations between capitalist-imperialist expansionist states and third world peoples struggling against conditions of political, cultural, psychological, and economic dependency. Such scholarship, Drake held, must be "committed," adopting a research strategy that "maximizes Liberation activity." A concern with "alienation" in all of its aspects, including what Drake described as "false consciousness," would provide a crucial corrective for economic determinism and other ideological limitations.<sup>4</sup>

Drake's blueprint for research on the African diaspora anticipates the work of several scholars of "Black Marxism," "the Black Atlantic," and transnational approaches to African American studies.<sup>5</sup> It also reads, in retrospect, as a call for the important, path-breaking book Carole Boyce Davies has written on Claudia Jones.<sup>6</sup> One wonders, however, in light of the various political obstacles to black radical intellectual and political projects, whether Drake could have imagined such a study as Boyce Davies'. A staunch anticommunist along with his contemporaries Padmore, Richard Wright, C. L. R. James, and others, Drake, who had participated in US radical politics in the 1930s as a member of the National Negro Congress, was acutely sensitive to cold war accusations of disloyalty and the red-baiting of US black movement activism and African nationalism. While not an avid cold warrior, Drake nevertheless maintained a prudent distance from members of the Communist Party and fellow travelers among the black left. Claudia Jones's arrests and incarcerations under the Smith and McCarran acts for her political opinions and activities and high-level membership in the Communist Party could not have escaped Drake's notice. Jones was detained at Ellis Island for her political

3 For its discussion of Drake's involvement with Pan-Africanism and Ghana, see Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

4 Drake, "Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective," 2-4.

5 Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983; reprint, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

6 Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); hereafter cited in text.

activities as was C. L. R. James, and like Paul Robeson she endured a campaign of vilification. There is no doubt that Claudia Jones would have been a prominent cautionary example for Drake and those of his generation. Drake, along with many black activists who had been active in left-liberal civil rights organizations, including Pauli Murray and Ralph Bunche, had been chastened during the high tide of cold war repression for past associations. Drake and other black activists and public figures with a record of prior leftwing involvement may well have viewed Jones as a tragic, yet dangerous and perhaps suspect, figure. For Drake and those of his mindset, it was a matter of pragmatism and survival that required them to avoid speaking of her.<sup>7</sup>

It would be fascinating to know more about what Drake—and other African American progressives and liberals outside Jones’s immediate circle of comrades who rose to her defense—thought of Jones. There is little doubt that Jones’s unrepentant left politics and her deportation for her membership in the Communist Party placed her advocacy of peace and economic justice, and even her justifiable condemnations of “white chauvinism” and Jim Crow segregation, beyond the pale of political respectability in the eyes of many. One is tempted to wonder what impact Jones may have had on Drake. Jones was a creation of empire as a defining feature of the twentieth century. Jones’s life—from her birth in Trinidad, to her coming of age in Harlem and her collision with US global ambitions after World War II, to London where she helped build a black Caribbean community in resistance to colonial racism—suggests that locating the transnational also means grounding it historically in the phenomenon of empire. The same could be said of Drake. If we can pinpoint Drake as an anticipatory figure for current scholarly interest in a transnational African diaspora, it is tempting to wonder what lessons from Jones’s life and career might be found in Drake’s subsequent reflections on the African diaspora and black liberation.

Boyce Davies’ study of Jones is a major contribution toward the ongoing project of a transnational history of black modernity, one that not only spans the disparate locations of the African diaspora, but also synthesizes disparate historiographies that have replicated the scattering and alienating effects of histories of racial oppression. Where is this thing we call transnational? Perhaps in the postwar era the moment is as salient, if not more so, than the geographical location. The transnational approach to the study of black and African liberation struggles must contend with the conjuncture of the cold war, African and Caribbean decolonization movements, and the US civil rights movement. For Boyce Davies’ recovery of Jones as an exemplary black activist-intellectual of the post-World War II era, the US terrain is critical for her emergence as a leading Caribbean activist-intellectual. Jones and her family emigrated to Harlem from Trinidad, where her father worked as a journalist in the black press and where she was politicized by the cosmopolitan, diasporic world of New Negro radicalism. A deep hatred of the exploitation and poverty that was a factor in her mother’s untimely death helped

7 When conducting research for my book on black expatriates in Ghana, I had the experience of several informants for my study pointedly refusing to answer questions about or discuss contemporaries known to have been associated with the left.

lead her to the Communist Party. As if to refute the myth of the willingness of white Americans to make an exceptional, favored category for the exotic, or foreign-born, Negro, Boyce Davies persuasively shows how the combination of Claudia Jones's outspoken radical politics along with her foreign status as a Caribbean immigrant made her particularly vulnerable to the criminalization of her membership in the Communist Party at the height of the cold war. In providing the particulars of official attempts to silence Jones, Boyce Davies contributes to a more comprehensive account of the varied mechanisms employed by US officialdom to demonize black radicals and the systematic policing of black dissenters, including immigrants and visitors. Jones, with others, paid the most extreme price, but the net of surveillance cast by the virulent combination of cold war hegemony and white supremacy was wide and affected the political choices of many. For George Lamming, the enabling possibilities of what he called exile—in his case, travel to the United States on a Guggenheim fellowship—were soured by the lengthy interrogation and loyalty oath extracted as the conditions for his entry into the country.<sup>8</sup> Jones's persecution and deportation isolated her from African American activists, with the exception of her counterparts on the black left, some of whom, like W. E. B. Du Bois and Alphaeus Hunton, also faced prosecution for their political views and associations and were for all intents and purposes forced into exile. Du Bois and Hunton, and their progressive partners Shirley Graham Du Bois and Dorothy Hunton, fellow members with Jones of the radical black women's group Sojourners for Truth and Justice, were among those political refugees from the hostile climate of Jim Crow and the cold war who were welcomed to Ghana, a country that emerged, with its prime minister, Kwame Nkrumah, as a major challenger to US hegemonic aspirations in Africa.

Anticommunist hysteria and the red baiting of US black civil rights and African decolonization movements was by no means monopolized by the United States. Figures like George Padmore, also from Trinidad and who had been politically active both in the United States and London (though differing from Jones in having weathered a nasty break with the Communist Party), could discourse at length on the similarities and differences between US white supremacy and British colonial "pukka" racism. Martin Luther King, having visited London in 1957 fresh from witnessing the festivities celebrating Ghana's independence, equated US racism and British colonialism by drawing affinities between Ghana's achievement and the battles yet to be won against segregation in the United States.

Jones was doubly victimized, initially by the official US campaign targeting the left and its most prominent activists, culminating in her deportation, then again by the silence and neglect of scholars. This double silencing makes Boyce Davies' study all the more valuable as the recovery of an important and emblematic figure that deepens our understanding of her times and places. Specifically, Jones's career makes visible the tacit erasure of empire by a US-centered, African American narrative of racial integration. By tracing the political ideas and

8 George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 188.

solidarities Jones forged in her international career, Boyce Davies contributes significantly to our understanding of transnational black radicalism.

Boyce Davies devotes considerable attention to the question of why Jones has been overlooked. I agree that sexism is undoubtedly a factor, but there are other circumstances that help explain her relative obscurity. To begin with, as already noted her deportation and exile removed her from the US scene, erasing her from a narrative of African American activism. The political and ideological strictures of cold war anticommunism lingered long after the mid-1950s, not only restricting the freedom of expression and mobility of black dissenters but subsequently shaping the perspective of scholars of US civil rights and antiracism struggles. In the US academy, this meant a tendency to ignore, dismiss, or misrepresent the black left, and to emphasize mainstream black civil rights organizations and leadership as the only form of black activism that mattered. By this way of thinking, for a generation the Communist Party was portrayed by liberal and Black Nationalist scholars as hostile to African Americans' agency and independence.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Drake's insistence in 1975 on a Marxian intellectual approach to the African diaspora pushed back against what he experienced as the repudiation of Marx by separatists and nationalists as a "white" theorist irrelevant to black liberation struggles.<sup>10</sup>

Overcoming such external cold war strictures and internal racist biases (what Drake termed "false consciousness"), which resulted in an African American studies whose critical acuity was limited by a form of American exceptionalism, would require several overlapping developments in US, British, and Caribbean academic networks, including the recovery of a Black Marxist intellectual tradition, through, for example, the "discovery" of such figures as C. L. R. James as emblematic "postcolonial" theorists and the publication of reprint editions of his works; a coming to terms with the leftist views of W. E. B. Du Bois among the African American intelligentsia, in part due to the work of leftist practitioners of "Negro history"; the emergence of scholarship on the indigenous sources of black political agency and radicalism; the recovery of a tradition of Caribbean radicalism in the United States; and the displacement of an intellectual framework of bipolar cold war politics by a proliferation of scholarship situating US black struggles within a transnational analytical frame defined by decolonization and nonaligned movements and their relation to the cold war. These developments, which amount to reinterpreting the history of the United States through its global relationships, have lent momentum to the study of black radicalism in international perspective and have set the stage, as it were, for the long overdue comprehensive assessment of Jones's career.<sup>11</sup>

9 See Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (New York: Atheneum, 1971); and Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Morrow, 1967).

10 Drake, "Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective," 4.

11 The list of works introducing James to US academics includes Paul Buhle, *The Life and Work of C. L. R. James* (London: Allison and Busby, 1986); and Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain, eds., *C. L. R. James: His Intellectual Legacies* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995). Important reprint editions include James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Washington DC: Drum and Spear Press, 1969); James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); and James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1989). On Du Bois, see Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Selections, 1944–1963*, vol. 3 of *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978); Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Black American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of

There are other equally telling factors that bedevil the recovery of a figure such as Jones. Boyce Davies struggles productively with one of them, namely, an unfortunate dearth of sources by and about Jones. This difficulty makes it necessary for Boyce Davies to rely on oral interviews and valuable preliminary attempts among writers, scholars, and black Caribbean comrades in Britain to preserve her memory and legacy. The somewhat paltry record also leads Boyce Davies to interpret Jones's thought and activities by resorting to a number of imaginative juxtapositions, a strategy that brings mixed results. Although it is well worth noting that Jones is buried adjacent to Karl Marx, locating her, symbolically and rhetorically, "to the left of Karl Marx" does not illuminate the distinctiveness of Jones's contributions. And while Boyce Davies' astute discussion of Jones's prison writing and poetry offers valuable insight into her subjectivity and the affective dimension of her politics, the author's comparison of Jones's creative writing with such examples of "resistance literature" as slam poetry or hip-hop comes off as a less than convincing attempt to assert her contemporary relevance.

Boyce Davies makes a much more compelling case for Jones's relevance through the study's brilliant and moving treatment of Jones's deportation and exile, elaborating the larger US hegemonic project of the criminalization of dissent as a crucial antecedent in a genealogy of exclusionary and repressive state policies targeting those defined as threats to national security. Those policies include the federal counterintelligence surveillance programs (COINTELPRO) targeting black activists and organizations during the 1960s and 1970s, and the recent draconian policies of detention, exclusion, deportation, and curbs on civil liberties after 9/11, effected in large part by the manipulative official rhetoric of a global "war on terror" with no end in sight. It has been well established that this flawed strategy of domestic surveillance and violation of the Geneva Convention has been more effective in trampling constitutional rights in the United States and human rights abroad than in making us safer by defeating actual enemies and neutralizing threats to security abroad.<sup>12</sup>

Boyce Davies highlights the serviceability of the catch-all cold war phrase "Conspiracy to advocate forcible overthrow of the government" that criminalized what was in fact Jones's constitutional right to publish her political views (195, 197). Upon her arrival in London Jones stated, "I was deported from the USA because as a Negro woman Communist of West Indian descent, I was a thorn in their side in my opposition to Jim Crow racist discrimination against

New York Press, 1986); Manning Marable, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (Boston: Twayne, 1986); and David L. Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963* (New York: Holt, 2000). On the indigenous sources of black politics, see Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); and Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994). On Caribbean radical traditions, see Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America* (London: Verso, 1989); and Michelle Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914–1962* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005). Some of the works situating postwar African American history within a global frame are Horne, *Black and Red*; Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); and Cynthia Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

12 Jane Mayer, *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).



16 million Negro Americans in the United States. . . . I was deported and refused an opportunity to complete my American citizenship because I fought for peace, against the huge arms budget which funds should be directed to improving the social needs of the people. I was deported because I urged the prosecution of lynchers rather than prosecution of Communists and other democratic Americans who oppose the lynchers and big financiers and war-mongers, the real advocates of force and violence in the USA” (143–44).

Jones’s deportation for her writings, which sharply opposed the tactics of domestic propaganda during the Korean War, and her uncompromising criticism of US domestic and foreign policy as a foreign-born, black woman Communist, are instructive for the myriad affronts to freedom and civil liberties committed since the terror attacks of 9/11. Boyce Davies’ account of Jones’s confrontation with the state’s campaign against radical dissent speaks directly to the present crisis in civil liberties posed by the government’s use of deportation as a mechanism for bringing domestic populations, including US citizens, to heel, precisely as the government expands its domestic surveillance apparatus. For illuminating the connection between past and present US hegemonic projects that pursue silence and compliance in the name of security, Boyce Davies has rendered a great service.

At the same time, in noting the sketchiness of the historical record, particularly the dearth of autobiographical writings by Jones, Boyce Davies points out one of the ironies confronted by those who would write the history of African American radicalism: efforts by the US government and particularly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to destroy black radicals and their organizations through an elaborate network of infiltration, surveillance, and criminalization have generated documentation of these movements that has been indispensable for researchers.

Thanks in part to Jones’s voluminous (though still heavily redacted) FBI file and its dutiful amassing of Jones’s supposedly incriminating writings, Boyce Davies’ study literally rescues Jones from obscurity and goes much farther than prior attempts to assess her significance. Jones’s writings calling for the participation of African American women in the Communist Party’s campaign for peace elicited the wrath of the US state, and Jones’s defiance during her trial leading to her deportation calls to mind that displayed by Paul Robeson when he appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). As with Robeson, Jones’s unapologetic insistence on her constitutional right to her political opinions and affiliations earned her the profound admiration of her circle of radical colleagues, including those on the black left, among them the Robesons, W. E. B. Du Bois, Lorraine Hansberry, John Henrik Clarke, and others. Boyce Davies presents us with Jones as a pivotal and influential figure, not so much in relation to a Soviet Communist party line and its campaign for peace (and Boyce Davies argues pointedly that Jones was by no means a Stalinist apologist) but rather as an integral part of an African American radical culture of dissent linking US domestic and foreign policy. Younger black leftists, some of whom had served in the segregated US military, understandably shared an African American commonsense view of the Korean

War (with its racist slurs against the enemy) as “not their fight.” Despite President Harry S. Truman’s endorsement of civil rights and his executive order calling for the desegregation of the US military, black radicals rejected the hollow promise of integration through African Americans’ military service, particularly if they were compelled to serve in imperialist wars of expansion. In William Branch’s play *A Medal for Willie* (1951), an African American mother’s refusal to accept a posthumous medal on behalf of her son killed in combat becomes a protest against US racism and militarism. That play, bearing a strong similarity to Jones’s position on black women’s role in peace activism, reflected the protest sentiments of a generation of young black playwrights and actors, including Branch, Julian Mayfield, Alice Childress, Beah Richards (a founding member of Sojourners for Truth and Justice), Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, and Lorraine Hansberry.<sup>13</sup>

Boyce Davies’ engagement with Jones’s writings on “the struggle for peace” locates Jones solidly within a US black left worldview and trajectory. But as one of the more visible party activists, Jones was arrested on 29 June 1951 (she had previously been arrested under the Smith Act in 1948) and arrested again with eighteen other Communist leaders that October under the McCarren-Walter Act. As a prominent party activist, founding member of the Sojourners for Truth and Justice, and familiar presence among black leftists, Jones was an influential figure in the emergence of black feminist subculture during the 1950s and 1960s. It would be fascinating to trace in greater detail the influence of Jones’s references to the triple oppression (race, sex, and class) faced by African American women, on subsequent iterations of black feminist thought and activism. Jones’s black feminist critique was obviously part of a formation of black women activists who perhaps experienced the organized left as the most egalitarian institution with regard to gender than any African American institution not specifically defined by women’s concerns and membership. This iteration of anti-imperialist, internationalist black feminism, of which Jones was a central figure, was often featured in the pages of Paul Robeson’s *Freedom*, a newspaper in Harlem, and its successor, the journal *Freedomways*, to which Jones contributed an essay on the Caribbean presence in Britain in 1964.<sup>14</sup>

Finally deported to London in 1955, Jones met with indifference among the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain. She then devoted herself to community-building efforts for Caribbean emigrant communities, working as editor of the *West Indian Gazette*, a newspaper that sought to affirm the existence of West Indians in Britain. The *West Indian Gazette* addressed the local needs and global perspectives of its target audience. It opposed racism in Britain and provided its readership with international affairs coverage of anticolonial and nationalist movements in the Caribbean and Africa.

13 N. Graham Nesmith, “William Branch: (A Conversation) Reminiscence,” *African American Review* 38 (September 2004): 477–88.

14 Kevin Gaines, “From Center to Margin: Internationalism and the Origins of Black Feminism,” in Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson, eds., *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 294–313.

The transnational scope of Jones's career occasions reflections on the significance of exile for Jones and her counterparts, black intellectuals from the United States and the Caribbean, for whom the experiences of exile and emigration were common. Through Boyce Davies' efforts, one may also situate Jones within a Caribbean narrative of exile, one ironically enough in which her involuntary uprooting and settling in London fosters the blossoming of a distinct intellectual and political project. As painful, traumatic, and damaging to her health as her experiences of incarceration and her protracted legal defense in the United States had been, her central role in the development of a Black British community suggests that her exile arguably produced a more substantive and everlasting contribution on British terrain than anything she had achieved, or could have achieved, in the United States. This of course came at an enormous personal cost of her health and longevity. But just as James, Padmore, Lamming, Braithwaite, and others found emigration to the metropole and escape from the parochial colonial conditions of Caribbean societies enabling, so did Jones's escape from the belly of the beast of US hegemony and empire yield greater possibilities and achievements in community building and movement activism. The particular selflessness of Jones's contribution in this regard is noteworthy and offers perhaps another gendered explanation for her relative obscurity.

Jones's editorship of the *West Indian Gazette*, a newspaper with the goals of community formation and international coverage of the black world, is representative of a particularly fertile moment of transnational political activism during the 1960s. It is perhaps best appreciated in conjunction with analogous projects cultivating a radical diasporic black consciousness and critique of empire in all its manifestations, such as the international travel and speaking engagements of the post-Nation of Islam Malcolm X while he and his comrades worked to establish the Organization of Afro-American Unity in Harlem. Malcolm had visited Ghana, where he interacted with Julian Mayfield, Victoria Garvin, Jean Carey Bond, Maya Angelou, and other African American expatriates who, from the relative freedom of Nkrumah's Ghana, published the *African Review*. This hard-hitting political journal of African political economy was staunchly anti-imperialist and unrelenting in its assault on US military interventions in the Congo and Vietnam and, like other exposés of US racism in the Ghanaian press penned by the expatriates, gave fits to American diplomats stationed at the US Embassy in Accra. Meanwhile, Drake, who spent half the year in Ghana, applied himself to the various tasks of training US Peace Corps volunteers, and writing letters to the editor of US newspapers defending Nkrumah from attacks by US congressmen and seeking to assure officials in US foundations that Nkrumah shared his own pragmatic outlook.

As should be apparent, Jones was a major presence within this black world conjuncture that encompassed an ideologically diverse group of black radicals. The formation of transnational black counterpublics transcended the divide between Communists and anti-Communists symbolized by the juxtaposition of Jones and Drake. These local movements with global reach were separated by distance, but all shared an opposition to the global

reach of US hegemony and white supremacy, as manifested in such racist disturbances as the Notting Hill riots in Britain and oppressive white minority regimes in southern Africa. It is a tragic moment, made so by Jones's and Malcolm's untimely deaths, and the overthrow of Nkrumah (and the ouster, before and after the mid-sixties, of other governments in Iran, the Congo, and Chile that led to brutal US-backed dictatorships). Yet, however tragic, the fullness and possibility of that moment and its ability to inform our understanding of the particular challenges we face today are powerfully brought home in Boyce Davies' immensely valuable and timely study of Claudia Jones.