THE MAKING OF A BLACK CONSERVATIVE: GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation, The Making Of A Black Conservative: George S. Schuyler, is a biographical study of George S. Schuyler, an African American journalist and novelist whose career extended from the early 1920's until his death in 1977. Schuyler was known for his conservative and reactionary opinions on African American issues such as the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement. Little has been written of this complex and controversial figure in 20th Century African American Intellectual History. My objective is to present a topical, chronological, and detailed overview of Schuyler's life and career from the 1920's to the 1970's, observing his evolution from a radical socialist in the 1920's to a far right-wing conservative in the 1960's. I also hope to facilitate more academic discussion on Schuyler and the field of African American Conservative Intellectual History.

George S. Schuyler was born on February 25, 1895 in Providence, Rhode Island and reared in Syracuse, New York until the age of 17, when he dropped out of high school
and enlisted in the U.S. Army. Schuyler rose to the rank of 1st Lieutenant before being honorably discharged in 1919. After his service, Schuyler was adrift between Syracuse and New York City, working odd jobs and adopting socialism briefly before returning to New York City in 1923 as a writer for The Messenger.

In 1924, Schuyler was hired by the Pittsburgh Courier as a journalist and stayed with the newspaper until 1966. During his career, Schuyler wrote several essays that won him acclaim and controversy such as "The Negro-Art Hokum" and "Our Greatest Gift To America." In 1931, he published his first literary work Black No More, a science-fiction parody of American race relations. He also wrote Slaves Today: A Story Of Liberia, an exposé of the Liberian slave trade.

In the late 1940's and early 1950's, Schuyler spoke out against Communism and became a vocal supporter of U.S. Senator Joseph P. McCarthy's anti-Communist movement. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, Schuyler's criticism increased as he editorially attacked African American leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, and labeled the Civil Rights Movement as Communist-influenced and dangerous to African Americans. In 1964, he made an unsuccessful bid
for the U.S. Congress by running against Adam Clayton Powell on the Conservative Party ticket and became a member of the John Birch Society. Schuyler spent his remaining years in New York City until his death on August 31, 1977.
To my parents and the late Dr. Helen Edmonds. Their dedication, perseverance, and sacrifice served as my inspiration.
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INTRODUCTION

The 1980's witnessed the dramatic rise of the American conservative movement. Originating after World War II, conservatives emerged in the 1960's when the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War protests, and other social movements antagonized many in the white working and middle classes. Right-wing conservatives took notice and mobilized this populous into a political force. Politicians such as Barry Goldwater and George Wallace attempted to win the presidency in 1964 and 1968, respectively, on conservative platforms that appealed to the "silent majority." Though they were unsuccessful, Richard Nixon won the presidential election of 1968 and 1972 on a similar platform. Perhaps no other political event demonstrated the arrival of the conservatives than the presidential election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, ushering in a new era of American conservative policy and ideology.¹

¹A detailed review of the right's rise to national power in the 1960's is found in Mary Brennan, Turning Right In the Sixties: The Conservative Capture Of The GOP (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 1995).
Closely aligned to the rising conservative movement is the black conservative movement. Like the white radical right, this movement provided a new strategy of reversing the programs of the Civil Rights Movement and the Great Society under President Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1960's. The messengers were African American, but the message was deeply rooted in white American conservative ideology.

Defining conservatism has always been a challenge. Although they share a common dislike for liberalism, conservatives also differ in ideologies.\(^{2}\) At best, one can list different types of conservatism that black conservatives have adhered to. Typically, Black conservatives are referred to as neo-conservatives, meaning that many shared liberal sentiments prior to

their conversion. Usually neo-conservatives reject government as a response to the problems of society.³ Black neo-conservatives apply that reasoning to the African American community, and argue that government programs such as welfare and affirmative action are more detrimental than helpful.

Favoring capitalism and a free market, black conservatives can also be considered Libertarian, meaning that they favor a minimum role of governmental influence in affairs both economic and social.⁴ Economically, black conservatives favor the participation of African Americans in free market capitalism, creating a wealthy middle class that would serve as the social and economic base for African American society.

The origins of the black conservatives in the 20th century can be traced to the philosophy of Booker T. Washington, educator and founder of Tuskegee University. As an African American in the South during the age of rampant lynchings and Jim Crow segregation, Washington reasoned that open agitation for racial equality and desegregation was impossible and suicidal for African

³Dunn & Woodard, The Conservative Tradition In America, 39.

⁴Ibid., 39-40.
As an alternative, he urged African Americans to focus more on developing work skills and trade and to accommodate to racial segregation. In his famous speech at the Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895, he told African Americans to "Cast down their bucket" in agriculture, mechanics, commerce, and domestic service. Emphasizing the desire for interracial cooperation without social integration, Washington proclaimed that "in all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Because of the mainstream appeal of Washington's speech, he was identified by white America as the leader of African Americans until his death in 1915.

Black conservatism would not gain similar recognition from whites until the 1980's. The presidential election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 ushered in a new era of American conservatism. Among the new conservatives were blacks who embraced the ideology of their white counterparts in regard to civil rights and social programs born out of the 1960's. This ideology considered programs such as affirmative action unfair to

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white Americans and labeled them as "reverse discrimination."

Spearheading the movement to discontinue affirmative action was economist Thomas Sowell, who was an early critic of the controversial program. In his 1975 book *Race & Economics*, Sowell attacked affirmative action programs for minorities by pointing out the success of ethnic groups such as Italian, Irish Polish, and Jewish immigrants that became successful supposedly without any preferential treatment. He also examined the success of free blacks during the Antebellum era and West Indian immigrants during the 20th Century. Sowell concluded his study with the declaration that:

> Perhaps the greatest dilemma in attempts to raise ethnic minority income is that those methods which have historically proved successful—self-reliance, work skills, education, business experience—are all slow developing, while those methods which are more direct and immediate—job quotas, charity, subsidies, preferential treatment—tend to undermine self reliance and pride of achievement in the long run.⁶

Black conservative and economist Walter Williams contended in 1981 that affirmative action programs established racial quotas that encouraged racial hostility, served only as temporary solutions, ignored

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more effective solutions, and failed the intended beneficiaries. In 1991, Stephen Carter stated that racial preferences in higher education actually stigmatized African American students rather than helped. He used his own experience with racial preferences as an example: when Harvard University initially rejected Carter for law school, officials re-admitted him when they found he was black. The revelation to Carter left him, he claimed, insulted and hurt.

As an alternative, black conservatives advocate programs that encourage self help and taking advantage of economic opportunities created by a free market. Williams suggests that African Americans are disadvantaged because their representatives have concentrated more on political aspects rather than economic aspects of their plight. Thus, the problems that African Americans face are inherently economic, not racial. Robert Woodson, founder of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, advocates a return to self-

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help neighborhood programs, stating that civil rights strategies of the 1960's are no longer relevant nor effective to African Americans  

One interesting aspect about black conservatives is that many profess of having philosophical origins rooted in liberal and radical ideologies. Some black conservatives who fall in this category are Glenn Loury, Stanley Crouch, Shelby Steele, and even Clarence Thomas. All have repudiated their past and have become staunch opponents of liberal activism. One has to wonder the reasons for their conversions and their opposition to affirmative action and social programs that have assisted them. Perhaps one can find answers in the life and career of one of the precursors of contemporary black conservatism: George Samuel Schuyler.

George Samuel Schuyler, journalist, critic, novelist, satirist, and avowed conservative, was one of the most prolific African Americans of the twentieth century. With pen in hand, Schuyler proceeded to tell the world his view of life. With his acidic wit, tinged with dogmatic cynicism, Schuyler boldly went against the grain of American society and bitterly chastised white

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and black America. Two of Schuyler's articles in the 1920's, "Blessed Are The Sons Of Ham" and "The Negro-Art Hokum," demonstrated his two-front attack on American culture. In "Blessed Are The Sons Of Ham," Schuyler wittingly comments on African Americans experiencing the "thrill of being entertained" daily through occurrences of racial confrontations and insults from whites. In "The Negro-Art Hokum," Schuyler focuses his attack on fellow African American artists of the Harlem Renaissance, asserting that "Negro Art" was not universal with all people of African descent. He made the bold declaration that "The Aframerican is merely a lampblacked Anglo-Saxon."¹¹ Using primarily the Messenger, the Nation, and the Pittsburgh Courier, Schuyler served as the leading black critic and satirist of major developments in African American life from the Harlem Renaissance through the Civil Rights movement.

Schuyler also demonstrated his skill as a novelist. In 1931, he published a brilliant satire of the Harlem Renaissance and American racism, Black No More. Set in 1930's Harlem, an African American scientist discovers a process to turn blacks to whites. Hailed as the first

African American science-fiction novel, *Black No More* is also a masterful satire as Schuyler shrewdly patterns story characters after such personalities as W.E.B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnson, and Marcus Garvey. Schuyler's second novel, *Slaves Today: A Story Of Liberia*, was also published in 1931. Sent by the League of Nations to investigate slavery in the African country, he compiled his findings in a fictional account of the slave trade in Liberia. The result is a image-shattering expose of Liberia's domestic affairs, which were tainted with greed, bribery, and other forms of corruption. In the mid 1930's, Schuyler wrote a series of short stories about Ethiopia's war with Italy that appeared in the *Courier*. Sympathetic with Ethiopia's plight, the stories reveal Schuyler's utopian dream of a powerful black nation steeped with technology and military might. In recent years, these stories have been posthumously released in book form as *Black Empire* (1991) and *Black Internationale* (1994).

Considered a radical during the 1920's and 1930's, Schuyler became more entrenched in conservatism after World War II. His primary target of scorn was Communism, a longtime subject of interest. Although Schuyler was a member of the Socialist Party of America for a brief
period in the 1920's, he also condemned the party as being the worst enemy of African Americans. In the early 1950's, Schuyler became a vocal advocate of U.S. Senator Joseph P. McCarthy and supported his tactics. In the 1960's, Schuyler had progressed to the point that he was a member of the John Birch Society and was writing for conservative publications such as American Opinion, The Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader, Review Of The News, and National Review. Schuyler loathed the Civil Rights Movement and its leaders, dismissing the movement as a Communist plot to destroy America by using African Americans, and dismissing its leaders as charlatans and criminals. By the late 1960's, Schuyler completely distanced himself from the African American press when the Courier dismissed him, ending over forty years of service. Schuyler continued his journalistic career until his death in 1977.

Although Schuyler was a prolific writer and an outspoken commentator during his fifty-four year career as a journalist, he has been overlooked by historians of 20th Century African American History. Since 1980, Schuyler has received some attention for his literary
achievements during the Harlem Renaissance.\textsuperscript{12}

Nonetheless, scholars have not focused on Schuyler's conservatism.\textsuperscript{13} The most reliable source of Schuyler's evolution into a conservative is his autobiography \textit{Black And Conservative}. Although informative, Schuyler's autobiography tends to be selective and somewhat vague in detailing reasons for his conservatism.\textsuperscript{14} Due to Schuyler's obscurity in African American Intellectual History and a growing interest in Black conservatism, this dissertation serves as a response to both dilemmas.

The intent of this dissertation is to discuss Schuyler's life, emphasizing his journalistic and


\textsuperscript{13}The only publication that discusses Schuyler's conservatism in detail is Harry McKinley Williams, Jr.'s "When Black Is Right: The Life And Writings Of George S. Schuyler," a 1988 dissertation from Brown University. Williams offers insight into Schuyler's literary career during the Harlem Renaissance period.

\textsuperscript{14}Schuyler was approached in 1964 shortly after his dismissal from the \textit{Pittsburgh Courier} by several right-wing publications and organizations. One of them, Arlington House Publishers, encouraged Schuyler to write an autobiography detailing his reasons for being a conservative. Although Schuyler talks in great detail about his journalistic career in the 1920's and 1930's, the autobiography is largely a propagandic tool for promoting right wing conservatism, anti-Civil Rights, and anti-Communism.
literary career, and his evolution from a Socialist in the 1920's to a John Birch conservative in the 1960's. Schuyler's philosophical odyssey serves as a reminder of the diversity and complexity of African American intellectual thought. A biographical study of Schuyler emphasizes this reality. Though Schuyler was personally more acquainted with those of the Civil Rights vanguard during the pre-World War II period than contemporary black conservatives are with their liberal counterparts, a study of his life serves as a vital prototype in understanding their motivations for adopting a conservative ideology deeply rooted in Eurocentric ideals. Lastly, it is hoped that this dissertation will facilitate increased interest not only in Schuyler, but in the field of African American Conservative Intellectual History.

This dissertation chronologically discusses Schuyler's life with a topical approach. The biographical study is divided into three parts. Part One discusses Schuyler's early life prior to his arrival in Harlem and becoming a writer for the African American socialist magazine the Messenger. Chapter one chronicles Schuyler's childhood in Syracuse, New York, concentrating on his family's background, their role in shaping his
philosophies, and conditions for African Americans in early 20th century Syracuse. Chapter two discusses Schuyler's Army years (1912-1919) and his post-World War I years as a drifter until his arrival in Harlem in 1923. This period is viewed as crucial to his development as a conservative because of 1) His exposure to large numbers of African Americans for the first time, 2) His experience with racism in the Army, and 3) The intensification of his delusion and bitterness during his post-war years.

Part two chronicles Schuyler's career as a journalist, novelist, satirist, and critic from the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's through World War II. Chapter three covers the Harlem Renaissance years of the 1920's. Among the highlights are his career at the Messenger, the socialist-based African American magazine edited by Asa Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen; his work at the Pittsburgh Courier, one of the leading African American newspapers of the period; his praise and criticism of the renaissance, and his alignment with and acceptance by white mainstream writers such as V.F. Calverton and H.L. Mencken, his mentor. Chapter four discusses his breakthrough as a novelist and reviews Black No More and Slaves Today. Chapter five addresses
Schuyler's career from the early 1930's through World War II. Topics discussed include a perilous 1932 NAACP investigation of peonage in Mississippi, an attempt to form a consumer cooperative for African Americans, Schuyler's tirades against Communism, and his reluctant support of World War II. Mentioned also is Schuyler's talented daughter, Philippa Duke Schuyler.

Part three reviews Schuyler's post-World War II career from the late 1940's until his death in 1977. During this period, Schuyler's conservatism became more pronounced and radical, as he became a member of the John Birch Society and severely criticized the Civil Rights Movement. Chapter six reviews Schuyler's anti-Communist sentiment embodied in his Courier articles, his unabashed support for U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, and his stormy relationship with the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. Chapter seven discusses Schuyler's severe criticism of the Civil Rights and Black Nationalistic Movements of the 1960's. Targets of Schuyler's criticism included leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Lastly, a discussion of Schuyler's relevance to the black conservative movement today concludes the biographical study of this complex figure of 20th Century African American Intellectual History.
CHAPTER 1
BEGINNINGS AND ORIGINS

George Samuel Schuyler's childhood was a period of careful instruction in conservatism and African American middle class elitism. Though his parents were domestics, they were domestics of the highest order in Syracuse's fragile African American class structure. Consequently, Schuyler acquired a discriminating attitude toward Southern African Americans, forming a base for his criticism of African American cultural movements in later years. His eccentric grandmother also left a lasting impression, displaying to Schuyler a strong sense of determination, individualism, and self-sufficiency as the head of the Schuyler household.

Despite Schuyler's glowing memories of childhood and praises to his mother and grandmother, Schuyler was also a product of the Jim Crow era. Although Syracuse was rich in a legacy of abolitionist activity during the Antebellum era, it had become by the early 1900's an industrial manufacturing center where African Americans were largely excluded from the skilled workforce due to
racial discrimination. Though Schuyler's parents were considered middle class, they were still domestics, an occupation not desirable to Schuyler. Syracuse for African Americans in the early 20th Century was socially limited, as they were excluded from most social functions for whites. For Schuyler, Syracuse was a place of little opportunity and perpetual servitude. Consequently, he dropped out of school and enlisted in the U.S. Army at seventeen. Closely analyzing Schuyler's ancestry, his childhood, and Syracuse in the early 1900's, it is not hard to understand his motivation for an exodus at an early age.

It seems fitting that a man so complex and eccentric would have such a dubious origin. Schuyler stated that he was born February 25, 1895 in Providence, Rhode Island.\textsuperscript{1} Despite the claim, Rhode Island does not have a record of Schuyler's birth.\textsuperscript{2} Though the absence of Schuyler's birth certificate does not prove to be significant itself, the manuscript U.S. Census of 1900


\textsuperscript{2}This discovery was first made by Harry McKinley Williams, Jr., author of the dissertation "When Black Is Right: The Life and Writings of George S. Schuyler." An inquiry by the author of this dissertation confirms Williams' revelation.
and 1910 reveal more controversy surrounding Schuyler's birth.

The 1900 manuscript census for Syracuse reports Schuyler's family living at 134 Oneida Street. Helen Fisher, Schuyler's grandmother, is reported as head of the household. Eliza Schuyler, Schuyler's mother, is reported as having no children and widowed, since her husband died two years earlier. As for Schuyler, his birthplace is listed New York, and is recorded as the "Adopted Grandson" of Fisher. The 1910 manuscript census reveals more intriguing facts. The household is listed at 1122 East Fayette Street, headed by Joseph E. Brown, Schuyler's stepfather. The fifteen-year old Schuyler is listed as a stepson, and is recorded as "mulatto", which is puzzling since Schuyler was dark-skinned. Although his birthplace was recorded in 1900 as New York, the 1910 census lists Massachusetts as his birthplace. Lastly, Eliza Fisher (now Brown) is listed

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3Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, manuscript census, twelfth district, Onondaga Co., Syracuse, New York, 161b-162a.

4Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, manuscript census, Onondaga Co., Syracuse, New York, 6b.

5Despite the listing in the 1910 census, Massachusetts does not have a record of Schuyler's birth.
as having three children, but only one surviving. Schuyler does not mention his mother having other children, nor being adopted. One can only assume that Schuyler either chose to be clandestine about his family or was never informed of the revelations in the census reports. Interestingly, the ambiguity revealed in the census reports seem to foreshadow his ambiguity on several issues later in life.

Schuyler boasted of an ancestry that he claimed was supposedly free from slavery, stating that his parents "boasted of having been free as far back as any of them could or wanted to remember," and looked down on other African Americans who had been in slavery. A close scrutiny of Schuyler's ancestry may reveal otherwise. His maternal ancestry originates with his great-grandmother, who originated from Madagascar. Schuyler claims that she was an indentured servant who was bonded

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6Williams in "When Black Is Right" asserts that Schuyler may have possibly been born out of wedlock, and that Helen Fisher reported him to be an adopted grandson to protect Eliza Schuyler or the family from shame. He also asserts that Schuyler may have been adopted, which could explain why he was dark-skinned while his parents were considered mulatto. As for his mother having more than one child, she may have given birth to two stillborn children like her mother, who indicated in the 1900 census that she bore eleven children, but only two were living.

7Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 4.
out in New Jersey. She was brought over by a German Saxe-Coeburg sea captain named Liedendraught, who piloted a trading ship between Madagascar and the U.S. He later married Schuyler's great-grandmother. Although indentured servitude of Africans did exist, it was also employed in the early 1800's as a disguise for smuggling African slaves into the Americas due to the ban of the Atlantic slave trade in 1808 and increased abolitionist activity in the U.S. Thus, Schuyler's great-grandfather may have been captain of a slave ship, and chose his great-grandmother from among his cargo.

Schuyler's paternal ancestry originates with his great-grandfather, who was believed to have fought under the famous Revolutionary War General Philip Schuyler, and later worked at the Watervilet Arsenal near Albany, New York after the war. It is not known whether Schuyler's great grandfather was related to the famed General and statesman. Nonetheless, Philip Schuyler did own slaves

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10Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 3.
at his Saratoga and Albany estates, who were manumitted in 1799. Schuyler even suggested that his ancestors may have gained the prominent last name by being servants of the family. As for participation in the Revolutionary war, Schuyler's great-grandfather may have been among the soldiers in the Continental Army in August 1777 of whom General Schuyler disappointingly remarked "one-third of whom are Negroes, boys, and men too aged for field or indeed any other service." 

Schuyler's grandparents and parents resided in the state of New York throughout their lives. Schuyler's maternal grandmother was born Helen Louisa Liedendraught in New York City in 1831. She married Philip Tod Fisher and from this union came Schuyler's mother, born in 1860. His paternal grandfather, Anthony Schuyler, was born 1797 in Troy, New York, where he married a woman named Phebe and had six children, one of whom was named George Francis, Schuyler's father. George was born


13George L. Schuyler, Correspondence and Remarks Upon Bancroft's History of the Northern Campaign of 1777 (New York: David C. Francis, 1867), 41.

14Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 3.
1842 in Troy and eventually became a cook on several ships, taking him to foreign ports. Schuyler remembers stories about his father traveling to Valparaiso, Chile, where he met "fierce, sexy girls."\textsuperscript{16} Eventually George Francis Schuyler and Eliza Fisher met and ultimately settled in Syracuse, where young George Schuyler was raised.

Schuyler's household was an industrious one. All the adults and children of working age (cousins Mary Watson and Mary Louise Worre) were domestics or laborers. His father was a head chef at a local hotel before passing away in 1898.\textsuperscript{17} His stepfather, Joseph Eugene Brown, was an industrious worker who eventually became a cook on passenger trains for the New York Central Railroad. Schuyler remembers his stepfather smuggling leftovers from the kitchen and dining cars, bringing them home for the family to dine on.\textsuperscript{18} His mother and cousins were domestics for various white families in the city while his grandmother worked in a local brewery as a

\textsuperscript{15}Williams "When Black Is Right," 7.
\textsuperscript{16}Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative}, 8.
\textsuperscript{17}ibid.
\textsuperscript{18}ibid., 15.
cleaning woman. Schuyler was limited to household chores before he became a newspaper delivery boy. Predictably, Schuyler's parents and grandmother were limited to menial occupations, as were most working African Americans in the early 1900's.

As in many American cities during the early 1900's, the African American class structure was centered around a workforce consisted of common laborers and domestics. In early 20th century Syracuse, Schuyler's parents were among the upper echelon of African Americans in the city. His father was a hotel chef who, Schuyler stated, "was an aristocrat in the colored community" who "affected baronial living, insisted on a good table, and dressed well." His mother was at one time the cook and housekeeper of a wealthy white family who allowed her and Schuyler to sit and eat with the family occasionally. Both, including his stepfather, were among the middle and upper classes of African American Syracuse, described by Schuyler as those "who worked for wealthy families, who were chefs, butlers, coachmen, and such." The

19Ibid., 8-9.

20Ibid.

remainder of Syracuse's African American class structure adhered to the following:

At the bottom were those associated with the underworld... pimps, gamblers, roustabouts, hoboes, and tramps... Above this underworld class were the laborers and domestics who were poor but respectable, who had homes but little schooling.²³

Within Schuyler's household, he received careful instruction in conservatism from his mother, Eliza Fisher. Although Schuyler's mother was a domestic with an eighth-grade education, Fisher exposed her son to a world she saw only through her occupation. She taught Schuyler the alphabet and how to count. When he was older, she introduced him to the world of books. One volume that influenced Schuyler was *The Black Phalanx*, by Joseph T. Wilson.²⁴ Published in 1890, *The Black Phalanx* was an account of African Americans in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and primarily, the Civil War. An African American Union soldier in the Civil War, Wilson easily recounted the efforts of African Americans participating and contributing to the Union Army. To Schuyler, who was not accustomed to African Americans

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²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 10, 22.
being cast in such a positive role, the revelation was fascinating. 25

Other African American role models mentioned to Schuyler were individuals such as Alexander Crummell, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Booker T. Washington. Since Fisher loved to take Schuyler to "all-colored shows such as Cole and Johnson's extravaganza 'The Red Moon' and Williams and Walker's musical comedies," 26 she may have taken her three-year-old son to hear Washington speak when he came to Syracuse in 1898. Speaking at Plymouth Church, Washington told the audience that "the Negro has within himself the possibility of working out his own salvation... His needs are more in the line of industrial training and instruction in the principles of economy." 27 He emphasized that "there is no prejudice in the American dollar. If the colored man produced what the white man wanted they came together without prejudice." 28 Lastly, Washington commented on African American efforts for political power, saying that

25bid., 13.

26bid.


28bid.
"The efforts made by the colored man in trying to get to congress and to make stump speeches, . . . had better be spent in becoming real estate agents and stock farmers.\textsuperscript{29} Presuming that the Schuyler family was in the audience that night, Washington's message certainly was not wasted on Schuyler's mother, nor her young son.

Accompanying his instruction in conservatism was a lesson in prejudice against Southern African Americans. The Schuylers did not care for their Southern counterparts, who they saw as "illiterate, ignorant, ill-bred, and amoral. . . The old Northern Negro families had the habits, traits, and outlook of the whites for whom they worked and whose prejudices they shared."\textsuperscript{30} Such was the case with Fisher, who chose not to associate with her Southern African American neighbors when the family lived on Wyman Avenue in the early 1900's. Commenting on her disposition toward the neighbors, Schuyler stated that:

She felt that they were uncouth. They were never invited to our home. They had no standards, she charged, and didn't know how to act. On the other hand, she was quite friendly with a couple of white families that lived across the fields on

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{30}Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative}, 4.
another street... These families were Yankees, and my mother said they were her kind of people.\textsuperscript{31}

Fisher's dislike of Southern African Americans was a trait that was found in Northern African Americans of the "Old Knickerbocker stamp", and Schuyler's family prided themselves of possessing such a distinguished last name of Knickerbocker ancestry.\textsuperscript{32} Southern migrants were sometimes viewed by Northern African Americans as "riff-raff, illiterate, thoughtless, lazy, over-demonstrative, boastful, uncouth, undesirable, and common."\textsuperscript{33} Fisher and other Northern African Americans based their dislike of the Southern migrants on factors real and imagined. Syracuse's African American population was estimated to be one thousand out of a total population of 100,000 in 1900.\textsuperscript{34} Yet, Fisher feared a migration of Southern African Americans for several reasons. With a fragile job market for African Americans in Syracuse, an influx of African Americans would result in increased job competition between African Americans, possibly resulting in Fisher losing out on domestic jobs she coveted.

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 12.


\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34}Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 4.
Another reason was a possible white backlash in Syracuse, which could result in a loss of jobs for African Americans or racial violence. Northern cities such as New York City, Philadelphia, Springfield, Ohio, and Springfield, Illinois experienced intense racial violence in the early 1900's. Many blamed the riots on the apprehension of whites against the steady Northward migration of African Americans. Though Syracuse would not experience a large increase of African Americans until after World War II, the rationale among whites and African Americans such as Eliza seemed to be a preservation of the status quo.

Despite Eliza's disdain for her Southern counterparts, she apparently took exception with Joseph Eugene Brown, her second husband. Originally from

35 Although there is no indication that race riots occurred in Syracuse during Schuyler's childhood, there was still racial hostility against African Americans during the early 1900's. An unidentified article from August 10, 1917 states that "The influx of Southern Negroes is becoming serious in Syracuse. While many of them have gone to the larger cities, at least 150 and probably many more located in that city within the last two months. They are looking for work and although laborers are needed, many people will not employ the Negroes because their white laborers quit rather than work with them." Taken from the Onondaga Historical Society, Syracuse, New York.

Milledgeville, Georgia, Brown came to Syracuse and lived as a border within the Schuyler household.\textsuperscript{37} Apparently Eliza, who was twenty years his senior, and Joseph became close, and married in 1900.\textsuperscript{38} Schuyler described Brown as a "stocky, light-colored man with wavy hair" who had little education, but was an "ambitious, industrious man."\textsuperscript{39} Though Schuyler could not understand his mother's reasoning for marrying Joseph, Eliza probably reasoned that such a young, industrious man with appealing physical features could be excused for being a Southerner. As for Schuyler, he seemed to respect his mother's choice for a husband. However, the two became distant after his mother's death in 1912.\textsuperscript{40} Years later, Schuyler credited his mother for "molding my thinking, my manners, and my outlook on the society in which I lived. A true conservative, she was an apostle of the possible, a strong believer in preserving the values of society, and a firm advocate of reasonable change. . . . She believed in principles and standards as guides to personal conduct and that one should adhere to them whether others agreed or one was alone."\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37}Twelfth U.S. Manuscript Census, 1900, Syracuse, New York, 162a.

\textsuperscript{38}Williams, "When Black is Right," 14.

\textsuperscript{39}Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative}, 10.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., 47-48.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.
While Eliza taught Schuyler lessons in conservatism, his grandmother, Helen Louisa Liedendraught (later Fisher) taught him lessons in independence, stubbornness, and individuality. Born in New York City in 1831, Helen married Philip Todd Fisher and had eleven children, but only Eliza and her sister Amy survived childhood.\textsuperscript{42}

Widowed in 1876, Helen became head of the family. She proved to be a fiercely independent matriarch who stubbornly clung to her beliefs. She was well versed in the Bible, but her greatest passion was a strong belief in witchcraft and herbalism. Schuyler would accompany his grandmother in search of medicinal herbs, which would be applied to homemade remedies for afflictions such as diphtheria, typhoid fever, and scarlet fever.\textsuperscript{43} Helen's daughters frowned upon their mother's faith and support of herbalism and witchcraft, dismissing the archaic practices as ignorance and superstition. Nonetheless, she was the matriarch of the family and refused to give up her beliefs. "What she knew, she knew," Schuyler stated, "and that was all there was to it."\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., 3., and Twelfth U.S. Manuscript Census, 1900.

\textsuperscript{43}Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 21.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 22.
Helen proved to be one of her grandson's role models. She demonstrated to be an uncompromising, stubborn yet determined leader. Schuyler attempted to emulate his grandmother in several ways. Inspired by his grandmother's stories of witchcraft and the devil, Schuyler decided to summon Satan by playing a violin in the woods at midnight. When he attempted his plan at the bewitching hour, the desolate woods and his imagination forced him to flee to the safety of his home. When he told Helen of his futile attempt, she laughed to the point of tears and warmly embraced Schuyler, saying "You damned little fool!"45

Another act of homage to his grandmother was his feat of drinking a quart of beer in one swallow during his Army years. When Helen took young Schuyler to the brewery office she cleaned, she would often take a break and drink a goblet of beer in one swallow, commenting afterward, "Aye, it cuts the phlegm!" Clearly, Helen Louisa Liedendraught inspired her young grandson to be the stubborn, agitating, and determined individual he would come to be in later years. When she passed away in January of 1910, Schuyler most likely was shaken.46

Though he loved and respected his mother, Helen was Schuyler's inspiration and model for his radicalism and stubbornness. The death also forced the fifteen-year-old Schuyler to deeply ponder his future as an African American in Syracuse.

Prior to the late 19th century, Syracuse was the scene of American slavery and abolitionist activity. The earliest mention of African Americans in the Syracuse area dates back to 1774, when two fugitive slaves mined salt from nearby Lake Onondaga and sold their product to the Iroquois Indians in the area.47 As Syracuse became a major salt-producing center in the early 1800's, slaves were brought in to mine salt from the lake. When construction of the Erie Canal reached Syracuse in the early 1820's, slaves were used in the construction of the canal. One slave by the name of Issac Wales worked on the canal and used $80 of his wages to purchase his

46 Burial records for Fisher family plot at Woodlawn Cemetery, Syracuse, New York. Buried with Helen are her daughters Eliza and Amy, and Eliza's husband, George Francis Schuyler. The cause of death for Helen is listed as "valvular heart disease."

freedom. In 1827, a few years after Wales' freedom, slavery in the state of New York was abolished.

In the 1830's Syracuse became a center of abolitionist activity. African American abolitionists came to the city to aid the anti-slavery cause. Among them were Jermain Wesley Lougen and Samuel Ringgold Ward. Lougen, born a slave in Tennessee, became pastor of Zion Methodist Episcopal Church in Syracuse. Ward became general agent of the Syracuse Fugitive Aid Society, an organization dedicated to the aid of fugitive slaves. Teamed with Samuel J. May, a white abolitionist and president of the society, the three headed the anti-slavery efforts in Syracuse and lobbied against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, an act passed to make the capture of fugitive slaves easier. In October 1851, the abolitionist forces would demonstrate their


51 Ibid.
opposition to the law in the famous "Jerry Rescue" incident.

William Henry, alias "Jerry," was a fugitive slave in Syracuse working in a barrel shop when Federal officers arrested him in violation of the Fugitive Slave Act. Abolitionists in Syracuse for an anti-slavery convention received word of the arrest and broke up courtroom proceedings of Henry's trial, whereupon he escaped but was shortly recaptured. Later that night, abolitionists stormed the jail where Henry was detained and set him free. After hiding out in Syracuse for several days, he was safely transported to Kingston, Ontario.\footnote{\textit{bid.}, 12.}

After the Civil War, the salt industry in Syracuse declined as the city emerged as a major railroad and manufacturing center. Among the migrants to Syracuse in the late 19th century were a small number of African Americans who came in search of jobs. Simultaneously, Syracuse experienced an influx of European ethnic groups such as Italians, Germans, Swedish, Greeks, and Polish. The European immigrants were able to find a variety of jobs in Syracuse, whereas African Americans were confined to domestic services and common labor. The luxury hotels
and New York Central passenger trains were seen as the premier jobs for African American men. For women, it was being a domestic for a wealthy white family.\textsuperscript{53} Schuyler's parents had achieved the highest positions possible for African Americans in the city as he explained:

Most Negroes were either laborers, janitors, messengers, butlers, maids, cooks, waiters, or bellhops, and they were in competition with whites. Thus, their employment was marginal and their income was low. There were no Negro clerks, city employees, policemen or firemen, not even street cleaners. Nor were Negroes employed in any of the factories, department stores, banks, warehouses, or other enterprises.\textsuperscript{54}

African Americans who tried to penetrate jobs occupied by whites were rudely shunned. Schuyler's cousin Mary Louise, who was of interracial parentage, obtained a job at a dress factory which mostly employed Italian women. When it was found that she was not white, she was abruptly dismissed from her job.\textsuperscript{55} African American professionals were also victim to Jim Crow in Syracuse. In 1912, William Johnson was the first African American to graduate from nearby Syracuse University's

\textsuperscript{53}Barbara Sheklin Davis, \textit{A History Of The Black Community Of Syracuse} (Onondaga Community College, 1980), 15.

\textsuperscript{54}Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative}, 23.

\textsuperscript{55}ibid., 24.
College of Law. Despite the achievement, he was unable to obtain work in Syracuse as an attorney and settled for the position of court clerk.56 Three years later, Isabella Vandervall, an African American graduate of the Women's Medical College of New York, was appointed as an intern at the Syracuse Hospital for Women and Children. When she arrived at the hospital, the superintendent refused Vandervall's appointment as an intern.57 A protest letter by J.B. Clarke Gil pointed out the irony that faced many African Americans during the period:

"As a Japanese, Dr. Vandervall would have been hailed as the eighth wonder of the world. As a Mexican half-breed, a Cuban of doubtful race, or an alien Jew, the very same young woman would have been received with open arms . . . but as an American 'Negro,' the authorities canceled her contract and with the greatest reluctance gave her two nights' lodging in a city which used to be the haven of the fugitive slave."58

Additionally, Syracuse in the early 1900's was socially hostile for African Americans. On Schuyler's first day of grammar school, an Italian classmate called him "nigger," whereupon Schuyler responded with his fists. Hurt by the incident, Schuyler remarked "I had

57"Mulatto Girl Not Accepted," Post-Standard, December 9, 1915.
58Ibid.
not thought of myself as different." In another incident, the family dog was suspected of being poisoned with ground glass by a neighbor who was a white Southerner and did not associate with Schuyler's parents. Interestingly, Schuyler was a playmate of the neighbor's son.

During the early 1900's, a small number of African Americans in Syracuse could be found in predominantly white working class neighborhoods. The Schuylers lived in similar neighborhoods where Schuyler became friends with other white children. In Syracuse, Schuyler attended an integrated yet predominantly white school system throughout his academic career where he made more white friends. Schuyler's memories of white playmates consisted of fond visits to each other's households. Nonetheless, as he became older, socialization with white playmates greatly declined because of discouragement of


60 Ibid., 12.

61 Close observation of the 1900 and 1910 U.S. manuscript census records reveals that the Schuylers lived in predominantly white working class neighborhoods where most working people were laborers or service employees such as Schuyler's parents. Despite the exception, most African Americans lived in the areas known as the sixth, seventh, and eighth wards during the early 1900's.
interracial socialization. In high school, Schuyler was not invited to his white friends' parties nor were other African Americans. Eventually, Schuyler and his former white playmates drifted apart and went their separate ways. Sadly enough, one former friend of Schuyler became an official of the Syracuse Ku Klux Klan during the late 1920's and early 1930's.

By the time he was seventeen, working a number of odd jobs and becoming an elevator boy at a downtown hotel, Schuyler was convinced that the city that was once rich in abolitionist sentiment was now poor in economic and social opportunities for African Americans. He did not wish to become a common laborer or a domestic like his parents. Although he was attending high school and considered a good student, he witnessed the fate of his cousin Lila, who could only find work as a domestic despite graduating from high school. Socially, Schuyler was limited to the African American community, which numbered 1,124 out of a total population of 137,249 in 1910. Within this small world, Schuyler could only

62 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 29.

63 Schuyler, Interview with Ingersoll, 17 May, 1960, Reminiscences of George S. Schuyler, 6.

64 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 24.
hope to become a member of an African American fraternal organization like his stepfather. Few African American girls in the community appealed to Schuyler, since he associated more with white friends. Consequently, he was became convinced that there was no future for him in Syracuse. "The colored people seemed to be in a rut" Schuyler stated, "and I did not want to stay down there with them." Faced with this dilemma, Schuyler sought an avenue of escape that enabled him to avoid his parents' fate and leave Syracuse: the U.S. Army.

Schuyler's fascination with the Army is traced back to reading The Black Phalanx years earlier. Schuyler remarked that he was impressed to know that not only African Americans fought in the country's major wars, but that an African American wrote such a book. To a young Schuyler who saw African Americans only as domestics and common laborers, the revelation was inspiring. It was even more inspiring to see these mythical figures in

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66Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 29.

67Ibid., 31.

68Ibid., 13.
person as he did in 1909. That year, the U.S. Army conducted maneuvers in the Syracuse area and camped African American soldiers at the New York State Fairgrounds outside the city. The fourteen-year-old Schuyler was awed at the sight of armed African American infantrymen, calvarymen, and noncommissioned officers sharply dressed, strictly disciplined, and seemingly in control of their destiny. The only African American males he had seen in uniform before were men in fraternal organizations, who he felt were "ludicrous, representing nothing." To Schuyler, the soldiers represented status, opportunity, respect, and travel:

The black infantrymen and calvarymen were something else again. We were impressed by their superb order and discipline, their haughty and immaculate noncommissioned officers, and their obvious authority... They were clean, upstanding, orderly, and polite. They talked of far-off places where they had served—The Philippines, Cuba, the Indian Territory, and the expanses of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico... How they contrasted with our uninviting lot in Syracuse! Schuyler quickly decided that the Army was his way out of Syracuse. At the age of seventeen, Schuyler dropped out of Central High School and promptly enlisted into the U.S. Army. Schuyler's mother consented and

69 ibid., 29.

70 ibid., 28.
signed papers saying that her son was eighteen.\textsuperscript{71} In July 1912, Schuyler boarded a New York Central passenger train and said farewell to his mother, friends, and the city of his childhood.\textsuperscript{72} Armed with the conservative wisdom of his mother and the rebellious determination of his grandmother, Schuyler set out into the world not to change it, but to become a participant of it.

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 31.

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., and Williams, "When Black Is Right," 21.
CHAPTER 2
PREWAR OPTIMISM AND POSTWAR BITTERNESS:
THE ARMY YEARS

George S. Schuyler's train took him from the familiar environs of Syracuse to New York City, where he was ferried to David's Island off New Rochelle, New York. He and other recruits were taken to the recruiting depot at Fort Slocum and sworn into the U.S. Army on July 18, 1912.¹ For the next six years, Schuyler's military odyssey would take him to Fort Lawton, Washington; Fort Presidio, California; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Fort Des Moines, Iowa; Fort Dix, New Jersey; Fort Meade, Maryland; and Governor's Island, New York. He was able to advance to the rank of 1st Lieutenant and travel to faraway places as he had hoped. Yet Schuyler could not escape the oppressive, harsh, and destructive racism that pervaded American society in the Early 1900's. As a result, he became more bitter and cynical toward American society.

¹Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 33.
Discharged after World War I, he found himself in postwar-depression America, where a series of odd jobs and unemployment added to his bitterness. Schuyler would try to assuage his frustration by joining the Socialist Party of America, but the party did not address his desires. Schuyler's postwar journey ended in Harlem, where he attempted to make sense of the ten years that had passed since his departure from Syracuse.

When Schuyler arrived at Fort Slocum, he was impressed by the grounds, resembling to him a college campus.² Housed with other African American recruits, he was thrust into a three-week regimen of military drill, calisthenics, work assignments, guard and fatigue duty, and memorization of the Soldier's Handbook, instructing him on how to carry out his duties.³ After his period of indoctrination, Schuyler was assigned to the 1st Battalion of the famous 25th U.S. Infantry, stationed at Fort Lawton, Washington, outside Seattle.

Formed from the remnants of African American soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War, the 25th Infantry was one of four African American regiments in

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 34.
the U.S. Army.⁴Prior to Schuyler's arrival, the 25th had seen military action in U.S. conflicts such as the American Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War, and the Philippines Campaign. In each conflict, the unit had performed its duties under extreme circumstances but served well, and had its share of decorated soldiers. Although there were no African American commissioned officers in the ranks, the non-commissioned officers were experienced, disciplined, and talented African American soldiers who received the utmost respect from their peers. Schuyler was in the midst of soldiers who were as experienced and qualified as their white counterparts.

Traveling by ferry to Hoboken, New Jersey, Schuyler and other recruits were placed in a special passenger car and proceeded on their way to Fort Lawton. To a seventeen year old Schuyler, the trip was exciting. "In 1912, what other way could a score of poor Negro

⁴African American regiments in the Army were established in 1866 by the efforts of Radical Republicans in Congress. The new regiments consisted of two cavalry (9th and 10th), and four infantry (38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st). Two years later the infantry regiments were combined into two regiments (24th and 25th infantry). The four regiments would remain the only Army units for African Americans until 1944, when the cavalry regiments were disbanded, and 1950, when the Army desegregated. See Marvin Fletcher, The Black Soldier and Officer in the United States Army, 1891-1917, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 20-21.
teenagers," quipped Schuyler, "see so much of the continent-wide country they were sworn to defend?"\textsuperscript{5}

Changing trains in Chicago, the young recruits were able to visit the sites in the city for one night, before continuing their journey. The remaining trip took them through the scenic U.S. Northwest before their arrival in Seattle.

Schuyler was assigned to Company B, where he served until 1915. During his stay at Fort Lawton, Schuyler lived reasonably off of the standard private salary of $15 a month and made local visits to Seattle, where he enjoyed occasional pursuits of food, drink, gambling, and women.\textsuperscript{6} An industrious private, he made extra money by teaching English and Geography to soldiers at the fort. Although a high school dropout, Schuyler possessed more formal education than most of his Southern counterparts. Chopping wood for the quartermaster was another financial pursuit that paid well for Schuyler.\textsuperscript{7}

Schuyler's days at Fort Lawton were remembered as pleasant ones. Nonetheless, a low point came in October when he received word that his mother passed away.

\textsuperscript{5}Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative}, 36.

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 45.
Schuyler was unable to travel back to Syracuse, so he had to cope with his grief and guilt alone. The death of his mother proved to be the death of his immediate family, as Schuyler and his stepfather drifted further apart.\textsuperscript{8} Despite the personal loss, he gradually adjusted to the fact of being alone in the world and attempted to make the most of his situation.

In November, the 25th received orders to be transferred to Schofield Barracks near Honolulu, Hawaii. To Schuyler, the news was most welcome. The 25th left Fort Lawton in late December and arrived in San Francisco on New Year's Day, 1913. Young, single, and armed with pay, Schuyler took advantage of the situation. After four days of recreation, the 25th set sail for Hawaii and arrived in Honolulu in mid January. Amazed by the scenic atmosphere he witnessed at the Honolulu docks, Schuyler commented that he felt superior to his friends he left behind in Syracuse.\textsuperscript{9}

Schuyler was drawn to the different cultures in Hawaii. Serving as a cross-cultural of people of Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Caucasian descent, Hawaii exemplified to him the possibility of

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., 47-48.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 52.
what a multiracial society could be. Socially, Hawaii did suffer from American-imported racism. The initial reaction of Hawaiians to African American soldiers was apprehension and fear. As time went on, the apprehension and fear gave way to a tentative acceptance as restaurant and bar owners in Honolulu welcomed the soldiers' pay. Similar was the case with Honolulu prostitutes, who were initially told by white American soldiers that their African American counterparts were "too enormous" for them.10

Nearing the end of his military service, Schuyler decided that Hawaii was a more favorable place to resume civilian life than the U.S. On July 17, 1915, Schuyler received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army. Attesting to his behavior in the Army, his enlistment record contained remarks such as "Very Good," and "Service Honest and Faithful," 11 As a civilian, Schuyler worked a number of odd jobs in Hawaii, from operating a car shuttle between Schofield Barracks and Honolulu, to working on an Army transport traveling

10Ibid., 52-53, 65.

11"Honorable Discharge from the United States Army, 1915" and "Enlistment Record", George S. Schuyler Papers, Manuscript Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, New York.
between the U.S. and the Pacific region. His experience on the transport was the most exciting, as he toured Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Guam, Manila, and Nagasaki. Schuyler was thrilled and awed at the Asian and Filipino cultures, marveling at the modernity of the cities compared to the U.S. Despite his travels, Schuyler found civilian life economically unstable. The car shuttle business faded away and his transport job failed to offer economic security. Schuyler re-enlisted and returned to the Army in November 1915.

After his return to Schofield Barracks, Schuyler was placed in Company H of the 25th and became a clerk in the orderly room. During his first stint in the Army, he learned clerical skills such as typing and shorthand. Thus, he was able to avoid physically demanding labor during his second stint and concentrate more on his writing and typing skills. Schuyler impressed his superiors in the orderly room and was immediately recognized for his talents. On March 29, 1916, Schuyler was promoted to Corporal, a promotion that gave him

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14 Schuyler, *Black and Conservative*, 76.
additional duties but enabled him to make himself more familiar with the non-commissioned officers he admired.  

Shortly after his promotion, Schuyler began to lay the groundwork for his future career when he began to submit satirical pieces for a local military magazine titled *The Service*. Catering to his fellow soldiers, Schuyler kept a captive reading audience with works titled "The Fable of the Self-Opinionated Chieftain," "The 16th Decisive Battle of the World," and "Waianae Waftings." He also submitted pieces to the local *Honolulu Commercial Advertiser* and published a bulletin-board newspaper for his company. Schuyler's literary achievements provided him immediate notoriety among his military peers, making him a candidate for a historic endeavor the following year.

When the U.S. entered World War I in April 1917, pressure mounted from African American leaders to have commissioned African American officers. Prior to 1917, African American leaders petitioned the War Department to reopen the U.S Military Academy at West Point, New York

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16Schuyler, *Black and Conservative*, 84.
to African Americans, but their efforts failed. 17
Instead, a committee known as the Central Committee of
Negro College Men was formed at Howard University to
spearhead efforts to create a separate officers' training
camp for African Americans. In the Spring of 1917, the
committee petitioned Secretary of War Newton D. Baker for
the creation of the camp. After much deliberation,
Secretary Baker authorized on May 23 the creation of a
separate officers' training camp at Fort Des Moines,
Iowa. 18 A total of 1,250 candidates were selected for
the program, of whom 250 were non-commissioned officers
from African American regiments in the Army. From the
25th Infantry, eighty-four were selected, including
Corporal George S. Schuyler. 19

Arriving at Fort Des Moines, Schuyler was placed in
the Twelfth Company, where he was a drill master. Most

17West Point began to admit African Americans in
1870. Between 1870 and 1889, the academy graduated three
African American cadets (Henry O. Flipper, John
Alexander, and Charles Young). West Point would not
graduate another African American cadet until 1936
(Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.). In Jack D. Foner, Blacks and
the Military in American History (New York: Praeger
Publishers, 1974), 64, 130; Gerald W. Patton, War and
Race: The Black Officer in the American Military, 1915-

18Patton, War and Race, 43.

19Ibid., 180-81.
of his fellow candidates were among the educated African American elite: forty percent of the candidates were college students from institutions such as Howard University, Fisk University, Tuskegee Institute, and Hampton University. The remainder were from the professional class who were trained as lawyers, teachers, engineers, doctors, ministers, and undertakers.  

Although Schuyler was a high school dropout, he seemed not to be intimidated by the presence of his educated counterparts. Nonetheless, he bonded with other noncommissioned officers and spent his spare time in the company of Jack Patterson, a young mulatto woman whom Schuyler shared a brief, but mutually enjoyable relationship during his stay at Fort Des Moines.  

After four months of training, Schuyler was one of 639 candidates who received commissions at Fort Des Moines. On October 15, 1917, Corporal Schuyler was promoted to 1st Lieutenant of infantry.  

Beaming with pride, Schuyler took leave and traveled back to Syracuse, his first visit since his departure. Staying with his

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20 Ibid., 57.

21 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 89-90.

22 Ibid., 91. Also, see Certificate of First Lieutenant Commission for George S. Schuyler, Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.
cousins Mary Louise and Lila, he was welcomed by old friends and given a tea party by a former employee of his mother's. After a visit to Boston to see a young lady he planned to marry, he was off to his assignment at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The young First Lieutenant was on top of the world. "I had always wanted to be somebody," stated Schuyler, "and now I was."24

Schuyler's military life forced him to confront a number of issues that helped to form his conservative philosophy and his cynicism. Serving in an all African American regiment, most of his comrades were from the South, which made him reflect upon his mother's ideas about Southern African Americans. Although he eventually formed professional and social relationships with other fellow soldiers, Schuyler had little to say about his African American regiment as a whole:

"Well, in the first place, about 90 percent of them were from the South, and we didn't have very much in common. They were people that hadn't read. They came from areas where the mores were different from those of my area, and the fact that we were all colored was somewhat beside the point. We, of course, got along all right, but you know, when you're among people who haven't read anything and have nothing particular to talk about, it makes you a little lonesome."25

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 93.
Despite his prejudicial opinion of Southern African Americans, he did manage to make an exception with a few soldiers. One exception was John Hudson, a recruit from Savannah, Georgia, who befriended Schuyler during his first tour in the Army. Although he was not as educated as Schuyler, Hudson taught his Northern cousin about the problems of growing up as an African American in the South. In return, Schuyler taught Hudson African American History.26

Schuyler also learned that there were many African Americans to admire in the Army. Usually he saved his admiration for non-commissioned officers who were known to be strict but immaculate disciplinarians. Nonetheless, Schuyler's greatest admiration was for the few commissioned African American infantry officers in the Army. One such officer was First Lieutenant John E. Green, one of three commissioned African American officers in the Army aside from chaplains.27 Green, a veteran of the Spanish American War, was a product of the non-commissioned ranks, a fact that thrilled Schuyler.


26 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 52.

27 Ibid., 57. The other two commissioned African American officers were 1st Lieutenant Benjamin O. Davis and Colonel Charles Young.
When he was assigned to the 25th Infantry in 1913, he was entitled to a house, much to the consternation of the white officers. When a white second lieutenant and his wife came to Schofield Barracks, Green was told to give up his house and live in temporary housing for lower ranking officers. Since there was not an official order to enforce the request, Green adhered to the order of rank and refused to move, much to the delight of Schuyler and other African American soldiers at the camp. 28 Another episode of Green's battle for respect came on a payday for the companies. Green was carrying a bag of paychecks when he walked past a white sergeant and his battery relaxing. Neither saluted the First Lieutenant until Green loudly reprimanded them for not recognizing an officer. In response, the sergeant and his men saluted him, while Schuyler and his company watched with beaming pride. Years later, Green retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel and celebrated his son's graduation from West Point over dinner in New York with Schuyler, while revealing to him his trying struggle as an African American officer in the age of Jim Crow. 29.

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28 Ibid., 59.
29 Ibid.
homage to his former comrades by writing several short stories of his Army days. Most memorable are "Woof," and "Black Warriors."

"Woof" is the story of Sergeant William Glass of Company H in the 25th Infantry. A veteran non-commissioned officer of twenty years at the time of Schuyler's second tour in Hawaii, he was known as a strict disciplinarian, a fierce drillmaster, and a rigid follower of Army regulations. Though despised and feared by the soldiers, Woof was respected for his dedication, fearlessness, and knowledge of his duty. Schuyler celebrated this seemingly mythical figure by reviewing his legendary exploits. One exploit involved a soldier who went insane before a company inspection, grabbed a loaded rifle, and started shooting wildly in the barracks. The soldiers ran out of the barracks in all directions. They were immediately confronted by Woof, who demanded action. "Why don't some of you people stop that man?" yelled Woof. "Why don't you stop him?" came a reply. Not to be outdone, Woof went inside the barracks, snatched the rifle from the crazed man, and knocked the man out with the rifle butt. After the man was taken away by an ambulance, Woof shouted to the soldiers, "All
right! You people hurry up and get ready for inspection!"  

"Black Warriors" is a collection of character sketches based on the various individuals Schuyler met during his Army days. Writing in stereotypical black dialect, Schuyler gave colorful descriptions of his Southern comrades. Schuyler starts with "Chicken Breast," a soldier with a voracious appetite who lived by the bugle mess call. After a night on the town, Chicken Breast fell into a drunken stupor and was unable to wake up. Finally, someone had the idea to blow mess call, whereupon Chicken Breast sprung to his feet and made a run for the mess hall, although his friends tried to tell him that it was not for real. "You niggahs caint fool me," cried Chicken Breast, "Ah knows ah Mess Call when ah hears it."  

Another memorable character is "Pap Echols," a veteran soldier who happens to be a veteran hoodlum. "Dredged out of the slums of Cincinnati," stated Schuyler, "he was inured to vice, crime and liquor, and the constant threat of military did not cause him to mend


his ways. "32 A violent man who often drank, Pap Echois would boast of his viciousness while in a drunken stupor:

"Ah'm th' goddamdest, baddest niggah that evah com tuh this goddamn Army. Ah don't give a damn 'bout nobody er nuthin'. Bettah not nobody fool wi' me. Ah'll cutcha goddamn hea't out an' stuff it down yo goddamn th' oat. 33

Although Echols thought he was invincible, he finally met his match when he befriended a local Chinese-Hawaiian gang. He was playing cards with his new friends one night when an attractive Asian woman walked into the room. Unknown to Echols, she was the wife of one of the gang members. He began making passes at the woman until her husband intervened. Echols took a swing and missed, falling to the floor, whereupon the husband and the rest of the gang unmercifully beat upon him and threw him out of a second-story window. Miraculously surviving the ordeal, Echols decided to change his ways and immediately became a model soldier.34

Despite the humorous tales, the most sobering account is the story of "Sergeant Jackson." Jackson, an outstanding non-commissioned officer in the 25th, was chosen to be one of the candidates at the officer

32 Ibid., 291.
33 Ibid., 292.
34 Ibid., 292-93
training camp in Des Moines. Enthusiastic about the camp and the war, he felt that World War I would bring about a better understanding between black and white. Predictably, Jackson was extremely patriotic, as he spouted "as much nonsense about democracy as a Four-Minute Man." As expected, Jackson received a commission and was promoted to Captain. During the Christmas holidays, Jackson took leave and went home to Mississippi to see his parents, proudly wearing his Captain's uniform. As he stepped from the Jim Crow passenger car in his hometown, Jackson quickly found out from a group of nearby white soldiers that not all shared his utopian idea of interracial harmony:

"Look at that nigger in captain's uniform," somebody yelled. Jackson hurried through the colored waiting room with his suitcase. At the street door a crowd of soldiers and civilians met him.

"Don't think we're gonna salute you nigger," they warned. Jackson tried to push his way through but they pushed back.

"Where'd you get that uniform darkey?" they asked. "Why don't you make us salute you?"

They had completely surrounded him by now and he glanced helplessly to the right and left. There was not a kind look on any of the faces circling him.

"Let me through please?" he requested, with as much dignity as he could muster.

"Oh, so yah wanna git away eh?" jeered the ringleader. "Well, wait'll we git some souvenirs."

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35 Ibid., 294.
Jackson's insignia and badges were immediately torn from his uniform. Others began to physically assault him. Wrestling himself away from the mob, Jackson fortunately came across a sympathetic white friend of his father's and jumped into his car, speeding away. While being nursed by his mother at home, the white friend called and warned that the mob was coming after him. Jackson left his home disguised in his father's clothes and in disgrace. He spent Christmas traveling in a crowded, dirty, Jim Crow car. The incident left a change in Jackson, as days later he shouted to a fellow soldier sarcastically reading war propaganda "For Christ' sake will you stop reading that bunk!" 37

The saga of Jackson was also the saga of Schuyler. Despite his praise for touring international cities and reminiscing on rowdy and exciting times with fellow soldiers, the reality was that the U.S. Army did not enable him to escape the shadow of racism. In the age of Jim Crow, African American soldiers were forced to suffer numerous indignities from hostile white soldiers, officers, and citizens. Regardless of their record or accomplishments, they were seen as inferior to their

36 Ibid., 295.

37 Ibid., 296.
white counterparts, although the African American regiments tended to have more experienced veteran soldiers than white units. Physical violence from hostile whites was a common danger, and could result in dire consequences, as the 25th found out in the infamous Brownsville Affair.

In 1906, the First Battalion of the 25th Infantry was ordered to be stationed at Fort Brown outside Brownsville, Texas, a small rural town near the Rio Grande. The order was greeted with mutual trepidation and disgust from soldiers, officers, and citizens of Brownsville. Veteran soldiers and officers knew the potential of racial violence from hostile white communities, particularly in the South, and feared the worst. Nonetheless, Companies B, C, and D relocated to Brownsville. Predictably, racial animosities flared between the soldiers and townspeople, reaching a boiling point in August, when fifteen to twenty unidentified armed men rode into Brownsville one night and fired indiscriminately into buildings, killing one citizen and wounding a policeman. Identifying the culprits as U.S. soldiers, the townspeople immediately labeled soldiers from the 25th as the guilty parties. An investigation was set up to gather evidence and question the soldiers.
All the soldiers denied any involvement with the incident. In November, President Theodore Roosevelt, after reading an official report of the investigation, instructed Secretary of War William Howard Taft to dismiss the entire First Battalion of the 25th Infantry without honor, deny them all pay and privileges, and bar them from re-enlistment and civil service. A total of 167 men fell victim to the order. Miraculously, only one member of the First Battalion, Sergeant William Blaney, was not dishonorably discharged, because of being on furlough at the time.\footnote{The Brownsville Affair created a storm of racial and political controversy. African Americans were angered and hurt by the decision, since it targeted a well-respected unit and was not made public until the day after Congressional Elections. White Americans supported the decision, upholding the official conclusion that the soldiers knew the real culprits and formed "a conspiracy of silence" to protect their identity. In early 1907, Senator Joseph B. Foraker of Ohio urged the Senate to form a committee to re-investigate the incident. Hearings were held between February 1907 and March 1908. The committee's findings concluded that despite testimony that the 25th's weapons had not been fired and that citizens themselves may have dressed up as soldiers in order to discredit them, soldiers from the 25th were responsible, but the committee could not identify them. Foraker submitted an additional bill calling for the soldiers' reinstatement and dropping of charges. Passed in 1909, the bill created a court of inquiry under the War Department and conducted a re-investigation of the incident. In November, the court upheld the original decision but cleared the names of fourteen men and called for their re-enlistment. The incident was forgotten by congress until 1971, when Rep. Augustus Hawkins introduced a bill to declare the discharges honorable.}
Although Schuyler never experienced a situation such as Brownsville, he experienced his own incidents of brutal racism. While stationed at Fort Lawton, a white woman from nearby claimed she was raped by one of the soldiers. As a result, all members of the 25th were lined up in units so that the woman could inspect them and name the alleged rapist. When the woman came to Schuyler, she indicated to officers that he was the culprit. Schuyler was about to be taken to the guard house when a white lieutenant testified that he was doing some work for him at the time of the rape. He was immediately released. Although Schuyler had experienced racism in Syracuse, this incident introduced him to a sobering fact: white civilians still outranked an African American in U.S. uniform. 39

Determined to restore the name of the discharged men, Hawkins found two survivors. In September of 1972, the army cleared the names of the men and changed their discharges to honorable. In 1973, Dorsey Willis, then the only surviving member, was granted by congress $25,000 in compensation. Commenting on the incident, Willis upheld his innocence, stating that it was a set-up from the beginning. "That dishonorable discharge kept me from improving my station," said Willis. "Only God knows what it did to the others." Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History, 95-103. Also see Fletcher, The Black Soldier, 119-52; Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 38.

39George Schuyler, "Blessed Are the Sons of Ham," The Nation, 23 March, 1927, 315. Interestingly, Schuyler
Racism in the army even reached abroad to haunt African American soldiers. While stationed in Hawaii, Schuyler and others experienced instances of racial hostility from white officers and natives alike, which were not always taken lightly by the soldiers. In 1915, African American soldiers in Hawaii prevented three times movies of a racist nature from being shown, once by pelting a theater with rocks. That same year, a riot occurred in Honolulu, which involved soldiers from the 25th Infantry and the 9th Calvary, who were en route to the U.S. from the Philippines. Soldiers from both regiments went to Honolulu to celebrate the presence of the 9th. Trouble started when soldiers touring the Iwilei district were refused patronage from newly-arrived white prostitutes who were chased out of San Francisco for the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Schuyler and a friend in the Ninth happened to be on their way to the infamous district when they witnessed the riot:

Black soldiers were milling about the narrow streets, tearing palings from the fence along the entrance road, cursing the terrified women, defying the local police and threatening the local firemen attempting to extinguish the several blazes. 1

never mentioned this incident in *Black and Conservative* or in his interviews at Columbia University in 1960.

*40Fletcher, The Black Soldier,* 100.
remembered all I had been told about the Brownsville incident and what resulted from it. 41

Schuyler and his friend immediately left the riot scene and quickly returned to their respective quarters. Both escaped punishment.

At Des Moines, Schuyler did not mention of any personal encounters of racism. Nonetheless, he and other non-commissioned officer candidates became suspicious of the officer training program when they noted that none of the courses given to white officer candidates were given to them. In addition, the officer candidate program at Des Moines was extended an extra month past the usual ninety-day period of training. Schuyler eventually lost interest after he realized the program was set up to fail. 42

41 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 65-67.

42 ibid., 87-88. The extra month added to the Des Moines officer training program was due to the indecision of the Army and the fears of Southern whites in regard to the presence of African American officers. Schuyler's observations about the training were justified, as the candidates would receive training only as infantrymen, despite their placement in other units such as artillery and engineering. In addition, Lt. Colonel Charles C. Ballou, commander of Fort Des Moines, stated in an assessment report in July 1917 that he had reservations about the "mental potential" of the candidates and their possession of "the higher qualities of character essential to command and leadership." See Patton, Race and War, pp. 54-72.
Schuyler did not take lightly all of his racist experiences during his military career. Schuyler felt that he was entitled to respect and dignity, and at times protested his treatment. During his service at Fort Lawton, Schuyler and other soldiers went to a bar in Seattle for drinks. After they finished their drinks, the bartender abruptly smashed the empty glasses on the floor, which was the custom to treat African American patrons. Defiantly the group ordered another round of drinks, whereupon their empty glasses were smashed once again. Not to be outdone, the group went back to the fort and returned with forty soldiers. The bartender finally conceded defeat and let the soldiers "have one on the house." Schuyler proudly boasted that he and his fellow soldiers had "staged the first stand-in and won."

Schuyler also seized the opportunity to protest the treatment of African Americans through his pen. In February 1917, Schuyler wrote a letter to the editor of the Honolulu Commercial Advertiser addressing a letter written by a Mr. Featherflight. Schuyler took offense to Featherflight's comment that "The American Negro objects to promiscuous association with the whites. He is

43Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 41-42.
exclusive, and the courtesy of the old South takes
cognizance of this." In reply, Schuyler stated that the
reason why the Negro was "exclusive" was because of the
"unconstitutional laws of that section (the South) of the
United States." Reviewing the contributions of African
Americans in various wars, he commented that despite
their service to the U.S., they were still "subjected to
the same treatment as lepers or criminals." Lastly,
Schuyler commented on the treatment of African Americans
in the South and the Southern whites' reaction to their
migration to the North:

It seems however that some of the good people
of the Southland look with disfavor upon the
exclusiveness of the Negro and we read too often of
necktie parties and burning bees of which he is an
unwilling participant. Even when the Negroes of the
South become weary of being used as fuel and
scarecrows, and endeavor to leave this Armenia of
America, they are prevented from doing so by armed
mobs of these courteous (?) Southerners. 44 . The
Negro is exclusive because he has to be.

Schuyler's war against racism finally came to a head
in Philadelphia during the summer of 1918. While waiting
in a train station to return to Fort Dix, Schuyler
stopped at a bootblack stand to have his puttees shined.
He was refused by the operator of the stand, a Greek

44Letter to the editor of the Advertiser, Schofield
Barracks, H.T., February 19, 1917. Schuyler Papers-
Syracuse.
immigrant, who said loudly that he would not serve "a nigger." Humiliated and angered, Schuyler muttered aloud "I'm a son-of-a-bitch if I'll serve this goddamn country any longer!" After six years of wearing patience, Schuyler decided he had enough of serving a country where African American officers did not command respect even from newly arrived immigrants. Carrying a suitcase of civilian clothes, he purchased a ticket to Chicago, boarded the train, changed into his clothes, and quietly deserted the U.S. Army.45

Another African American officer noticed his change and reported it. When Schuyler reached Chicago, he was arrested. He was released because of his ability to convince the authorities that it was common for soldiers to change out of uniform when not on duty. Schuyler continued on his journey and arrived days later in San Diego, California, where he became a dishwasher on a local ranch. Schuyler remained for three months until he found out that the 25th would pass through San Diego. Fearing that he would be recognized, Schuyler decided to

45Kathryn Talalay, Composition In Black And White: The Life Of Philippa Schuyler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 67. Talalay adds that Schuyler's autobiography nor his interviews for Columbia University discuss this incident during his military career. The source is the diary of his wife, Josephine Codgell Schuyler.
give himself up to the authorities. He was arrested, tried, and found guilty of being AWOL. Originally sentenced to five years, his sentence was reduced to one year by President Woodrow Wilson and served only nine months at Castle William of Governor’s Island in New York because of good behavior. 46 Ironically, Schuyler had passed the island six years before when he was a young recruit. He had now come full circle. He hoped that the military would offer him status, power, and immunity from racism. Instead, it made him more aware of its power and enforced Schuyler’s thoughts of his own racial inferiority.

Schuyler was fortunate to have been imprisoned at Castle William: the commandant of the barracks was Colonel John B. Hunt, a former captain in the 25th Infantry. Hunt was familiar with Schuyler when he was in Hawaii, and immediately struck a professional friendship with the former corporal. 47 When Schuyler finished his

46 Ibid. 67-68. At the time of Schuyler’s desertion, he was awaiting reassignment to Fort Dix from Fort Meade, Maryland, which was known as a hostile place for African American officers. White officers encouraged division between African American officers commissioned from the ranks and those from college-educated backgrounds. Some lieutenants were encouraged to spy on fellow officers and report any misconduct they witnessed. It is a possibility that the officer who reported Schuyler was an informer.
sentence and was discharged in 1919, Hunt recommended him for a temporary civil service job in the barracks as chief clerk for Colonel C.F. Humphrey, an executive officer in charge of processing military prisoners from the war.48 Meanwhile, Schuyler moved to a two-room apartment in Harlem and began a relationship with a former love interest named Myrtle. His plans for marriage to the young lady from Boston failed when she died suddenly in 1918. Myrtle, described as a nineteen-year-old "quadroon beauty, laughing and voluptuous," was living in New York, separated from her husband in Syracuse. The two had met before when Schuyler returned from Fort Des Moines. Now they were living together and blissfully enjoying Harlem's night life.49

Feeling optimistic about his future, Schuyler decided to apply for a civil service job at the U.S. Shipping Board in Hoboken, New Jersey. Years before in Hawaii, Schuyler applied for a civil service job but was not chosen, although he had one of the top three scores on the civil service exam.50 He felt that things would

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48 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 93.
49 Ibid., 96.
be different this time. He passed the civil service exam with a mark of 90 and confidently awaited word of an appointment. After a few days, Schuyler received a notice which said, "In view of the fact that you refused the position offered, your name has been removed from the list." Despite telephone calls and letters of protest, Schuyler was once again a qualified African American candidate without a position.

Schuyler's luck ran out in 1920 when his temporary civil service job was terminated. The nightly excursions to Harlem's nightspots came to an abrupt end when finances became strained. Myrtle attempted to help out by working as an elevator operator in an exclusive apartment complex in Harlem. Schuyler took a series of odd jobs that included back-breaking, hazardous labor. One job was at a brass factory, where Schuyler witnessed

50 Schuyler's civil service examination score was 86.10, which qualified him for the position. However, the provision was that the applicant would be chosen among the top three scores. His score was the second highest, although he stated that he was number one on the list. Subsequently, he felt that he was a victim of a "convenient provision of excluding the unwanted," since he was the only African American candidate. Ibid., 100; "United States Civil Service Examination Commission, Report of Ratings-Clerk Carrier Examination," September 30, 1916, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse; Williams, "When Black Is Right," 38.

51 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 99.
gruesome work accidents such as a worker's hand being crushed by rollers and another worker being permanently disfigured after falling into a vat of acid.\textsuperscript{52}

Schuyler subsequently found another job as a dishwasher at a busy restaurant on 96th Street and Broadway in Manhattan. Although the hazards were greatly reduced, the labor was just as strenuous and back-breaking as Schuyler washed ceiling-high piles of dirty dishes. While there, he met co-workers of several racial and ethnic backgrounds that made up what he called "a miniature League of Nations." There was Schwartz, a German dish scraper who was a Prussian patriot; Carl, a Polish Chef who boasted of newly created Slavic republics in Eastern Europe; Nick, a Russian vegetable man who worshipped Lenin; George, a Jamaican who praised Marcus Garvey; and Clarence, a British short-order cook who was an Anglophile. All served as inspirations for his short story "Memoirs of A Pearl Diver," published in the April 1931 edition of \textit{The American Mercury}.\textsuperscript{53}

Eventually the dishwasher job took its toll on Schuyler. Professionally and personally, his life seemed

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 103-04; Talaiay, \textit{Composition in Black and White}, 68.

\textsuperscript{53}Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative.}, 105-106.
to be at its lowest. The job allowed little time for Schuyler and Myrtle, and what little time they shared, it became apparent that the two were incompatible. Breakup seemed inevitable, so in 1921, Schuyler quit his job and Myrtle. In disgust and shame, he returned back to Syracuse, where he stayed with his cousins Lila and Mary Louise.

Ironically, Schuyler first worked as a domestic, traveling throughout the city to offer his services. Although he never lacked employment, he found his job to be unpredictable, since his assignments ranged from cleaning rooms to tending gardens and moving furniture. In addition some clients, particularly lonely housewives, confided in Schuyler and became attached to him, which made him uncomfortable. Ultimately he grew tired of being a domestic and took a construction job, where he became a union member of the International Hod Carriers Building and Common Laborers Union in Syracuse.\(^{54}\)

In his spare time, Schuyler tried to seek intellectual stimulation by reading books on astronomy and geology from the city library. He also read works by Plato and socialist philosophers such as Marx, Engels, Plechanov, and Wells. Although he claimed a lack of

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 112-117.
interest in Socialism, he found the Socialist Party in Syracuse intellectually stimulating. In November 1921, Schuyler became a member of the party and received his deep Scarlet Red membership card.\textsuperscript{55}

He immediately became involved with the party's lecture series and presented a lecture titled "An Intelligent Program for Intelligent Negro Workers" to an audience of ten.\textsuperscript{56} He also wrote pamphlets addressing the principles of socialism. He became friends with a fellow socialist named Rollen Bolton, who shared his cynicism. Both questioned the condemnation of capitalism and praising of Socialism as a societal cure-all, making them notorious at party meetings. Nonetheless, Schuyler enjoyed the attention and found his niche in being an iconoclast of Socialism. Despite the diversion, Schuyler quickly grew tired of the party and of Syracuse. In December of 1922, he said good-bye to his cousins and left again to return to New York City.

Settling once again in Harlem, Schuyler took a job as a worker for the Erie Railroad. He was placed in a track maintenance gang. However, the job proved to be

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., 113. Schuyler's membership card is among the Schuyler Papers in Syracuse.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 114-15.
temporary and he returned to New York. He found another railroad job in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, but immediately quit it after he found out it was a strikebreaking job.\footnote{Ibid., 125-27.} After hitchhiking his way back to New York he left Harlem and settled in the Bowery, where he entered the lifestyle called "Hobohemia."

The depression after World War I left many out of work, and those who were fortunate took temporary or dead-end wage jobs. Schuyler was among this group of disaffected workers who were disenchanted with society and cynically analyzed everything. In the Bowery, he stayed with other fellow transients in a basement of a church. Each person contributed a small portion of their earnings in a fund for purchasing food in order to stay at the shelter.\footnote{Ibid., 129-30.} Schuyler soon developed an admiration for his fellow bunkmates and commented on the their defiant attitude toward life:

The Hobohemians are the group in society who have revolted against the slavery of convention. They refuse to vegetate indefinitely amid the canyons and caves of steel, brick, concrete and stone which we term cities, and a continuous round of agricultural activities has little charm for them. They crave to see the vast country in which they find themselves . . . Some are young and pregnant with the urge of youth, some are matured,
sophisticated and cynical, some are old and facing the winter of their life with philosophical resignation. Some are only transients in Hobohemia, hoping soon to return to the folds of the 'respectable,' others follow the life from year to year and could not be persuaded to continue themselves indefinitely to the routine of home, job, church, lodge and union. But all are more or less dominated by the urge to move on to new scenes. 59

Schuyler's disenchantment with life was the culmination of ten years after his departure from Syracuse. He had started out as a teenager eager to see the world. He wanted to avoid the fate of being regulated to menial service and labor as his parents, cousins, and friends were. In the Army, he did get to travel and see the faraway places he had dreamed of and achieved the rank of 1st Lieutenant. Nonetheless, he did not escape the brutal racism that eventually drove him to go AWOL and end his career in a military prison. To Schuyler, the war to save democracy was simply the war to maintain the racial status quo in America. After the war, Schuyler fell into a period of various odd jobs and unemployment that confirmed his cynicism and fortified his bitterness. These two factors would serve as the basis of his conservatism later in life. In the meantime, Schuyler searched for something that would bring him respect and notoriety. In 1922, he crossed

paths with two men who would make an impact on his life:
Asa Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen.
CHAPTER 3
A CHANGE IN FORTUNE: SCHUYLER AND THE 1920's

George Schuyler's bleak Bowery days were enlightened by intellectual pursuits such as going to the public library on 42nd Street, roaming through the Museum of Natural History, and attending intellectual forums sponsored by the Friends of Negro Freedom, an African American organization headed by Asa Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen.¹ Held Sunday mornings in the basement of the Lafayette Theater in Harlem, the forum was the scene of energetic intellectual discussions on various subjects within and beyond the Harlem community. Among the participants were Owen, Randolph, Jamaican nationalist W. A. Domingo, historian J.A. Rogers, future NAACP officials William Pickens and William Bagnall, and Schuyler.²

Randolph, in particular, left an impression upon the young hobo-hyman. "A. Philip Randolph was about six years my elder, and one of the finest, most engaging men I had ever met" recalled Schuyler. "Slender, brown-

¹Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 133.
²"Reminiscences of George Schuyler," 72.
skinned, handsome, erect and always immaculately dressed, he was undemanding and easy to get along with. . . He had a keen sense of humor and laughed easily, even in adversity."³ Schuyler also came to know Chandler Owen, a socialist who he described as a "facile and acidulous writer, a man of ready wit and agile tongue endowed with the saving grace of cynicism." Schuyler and Owen shared a mutual opposition of Socialism. Schuyler remarked that Owen's hostility stemmed from his brother's experience of being rejected by Marxist clothing unions. As a result, Owen considered socialists as "frauds who actually cared little more for Negroes" than the Ku Klux Klan.⁴

Randolph and Owen came from similar backgrounds. Raised in the South and college educated, both shared an initial interest in Marxism, Socialism, and opposing Jim Crow Segregation. During World War I, Randolph and Owen were conscientious objectors who protested U.S. involvement in the war. In 1918, while speaking out against the war in Cleveland, Ohio, they were arrested for treason. Fortunately, the charges were dropped.

⁴Ibid., 137.
Ironically, Owen was drafted into the army shortly afterward. Randolph was spared because he was married.⁵

The year before, 1917, Randolph and Owen's activism motivated them to write for a New York waiters' union journal titled the Hotel Messenger. After penning a series of articles exposing corruption within the union, the two were removed from the journal. Undaunted by the setback, Randolph and Owen began their own magazine in November 1917. Aptly titled the Messenger, the magazine featured young African American writers who discussed subjects of race, politics, literature, theater, and music. In 1923, Randolph propositioned Schuyler to become a writer for the Messenger. Schuyler accepted the offer and assumed his duties in the small, cramped quarters of the magazine's office.

Schuyler wasted little time in establishing his journalistic career. His first article, "From Job To Job," appeared in the April 1923 edition of The World Tomorrow, a Christian Socialist magazine. In the article, Schuyler described his difficulties in seeking steady employment as an African American laborer in postwar America. His first feature article for the

Messenger appeared in June 1923. Entitled "Hobohemia," it vividly described his Bowery days and lavished admiration upon fellow hobohemians. Thus, Schuyler found his calling as a writer and began his fifty-four year career as a journalist.

Schuyler's writings soon earned him a feature column in the Messenger. Titled "Shafts and Darts: A Page of Calumny and Satire," the column was a tour-de-force of Schuyler's shrewd but merciless wit and biting satire. Collaborating with fellow writer Theophilus Lewis, Schuyler viciously lampooned African American and mainstream American life. Nothing was above ridicule as "Shafts and Darts" attacked issues of race, culture, religion, and politics. It remained his definitive column from 1923 until 1928, when the Messenger closed.

Schuyler's favorite targets of satire in his column ranged from white Protestant evangelists and Ku Klux Klan members to Marcus Garvey followers and fellow African American writers and intellectuals. For instance, commenting on Rev. Caleb Ridley, Imperial Kludd of the Ku Klux Klan, arrested in Atlanta, Georgia for drunk driving Schuyler quipped, "Kan't the Kludd of the Klan Karry a
Kan? If he Kan't who Kan."\(^6\) Another staple of "Shafts and Darts" was Schuyler's "Monthly Prize," which highlighted comments or actions from well known individuals as special targets of ridicule and satire. The unfortunate victims were awarded mythical prizes such as the "elegantly embossed and beautifully lacquered dill pickle" or the "beautiful cut glass thundermug." Among the distinguished recipients of Schuyler's monthly award was W.E.B. DuBois, who was awarded the "dill pickle" award for his Pan African Conference held in London in 1923. Commenting on a telegram from DuBois stating that the conference was a success and that six U.S. states were represented, Schuyler wryly commented that "Evidently Brother DuBois Represented only six states, instead of forty-eight, as we had thought."\(^7\)

Of all the subjects Schuyler addressed in "Shafts and Darts," none received so much attention and preoccupation than Pan Africanist Marcus Garvey, head of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Arriving in New York in 1915, Garvey launched his campaign of Pan-Africanism and race pride. By 1919

\(^6\)George Schuyler, "Shafts and Darts," The Messenger, November 1923, 862.

\(^7\)Schuyler, Ibid., January 1924, 8.
Garvey's UNIA boasted of a membership of over two million. Garvey made plans to have an exclusive shipping line, the Black Star Line, sail interested UNIA members to Africa in order to start a separate nation. Garvey ran into troubles in 1922 when the U.S. government arrested him on charges of mail fraud. Apparently, he had sold tickets for one of his ships, the S.S. Phyllis Wheatley, but the ship had not been purchased yet and angry stockholders asked why. This chain of events delighted several African-American leaders who did not care for Garvey and his movement. Among them were Randolph and Owen, who shared an intense distaste of the "Back To Africa" movement.

The two socialists had opposed Garvey from the early days of the Friends of Negro Freedom, and had experienced personal attacks from Garvey supporters that were sometimes violent. In January 1923, Owen headed a

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9Owen claimed that he had been physically assaulted by UNIA members at a speaking engagement in Pittsburgh in 1922. In September of that year, Randolph received a suspicious package from New Orleans. Fearing that it was a bomb, he called the police, whereupon the package was opened and revealed the severed hand of a white man. Accompanying it was a letter threatening Randolph with similar action if he did not join the UNIA. Although the
committee of eight prominent African Americans who sent a letter to U.S. Attorney General Harry Daughtery calling for the speedy trial and conviction of Garvey for mail fraud.10

Prior to his tenure at the Messenger, Schuyler had attended UNIA meetings in Liberty Hall, the headquarters letter was signed "KKK," the package was believed to be sent by a Garvey supporter. Kornweibel, No Crystal Stair, 140, 141.

10 In the letter to Daughtery dated January 15, 1923, the UNIA was described as an organization of "certain Negro criminals and potential murderers, both foreign and American born, who are moved and actuated by intense hatred against the white race," and that the UNIA was "composed chiefly of the most primitive and ignorant element of West Indian and American Negroes." Compiling an extensive list of alleged crimes and attacks against anti-UNIA supporters, and charges that Garvey was affiliated with the KKK, the letter concluded with a plea to Daughtery to "vigorously and speedily push the government's case against Marcus Garvey for using the mails to defraud," and to "use his full influence completely to disband and extirpate this vicious Movement." The signatures on the letter included Owen; Harry Pace, President of Black Swan Records; Robert Bagnall and William Pickens of the NAACP; Robert Abbot, editor of the Chicago Defender; Julia P. Coleman, president of a cosmetics firm; George W. Harris, editor of the New York News; and John E. Nail, a New York realtor. Garvey's reply to the letter was predictably condemnatory toward the "Committee of Eight." "Like the good old darkey," Garvey stated, "they believe they have some news to tell and they are telling it for all it is worth." Ibid., 142; Tony Martin, Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976; Dover, Massachusetts: The Majority Press, 1986), 326-27 (pages from reprint edition).
in Harlem, and stayed in the UNIA-owned Phyllis Wheatley Hotel. Although initially impressed with Garvey's oratory skills and dedicated following, Schuyler quickly decided that the UNIA was nothing more than a hatemongering organization that had a blind rage toward all whites and endangered African Americans' chances for complete integration into American society.\textsuperscript{11} Quickly offering his services to Owen and Randolph after his arrival at the \textit{Messenger}, Schuyler became a potent weapon for anti-Garvey supporters and was given the green light to denigrate and humiliate the UNIA leader as much as possible.

Schuyler naturally used "Shafts and Darts" as a vehicle to attack Garvey. In one column he satirically commented on the nonexistent \textit{S.S. Phyllis Wheatley}. Commenting on a theory that ships traveling East were lighter than traveling West, Schuyler proposed that "It is a long trip (East) from America to Africa. Is it not possible that during the long journey the "mystery ship" may have gotten so light that the wind blew it away?" When the UNIA newspaper \textit{The Negro World} printed for a headline "The Members of the UNIA Are the Strongest Negroes in the World," Schuyler wryly commented that

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Black and Conservative}, 120-21.
"Everyone who has ever been unfortunate enough to enter Liberty Hall (Harlem, New York headquarters for the UNIA) when the great mass of Garveyites within were stirring with emotion, and the windows, as usual, were closed, will heartily agree with this statement."\textsuperscript{12}

Even after Garvey's conviction and sentencing in September 1923, Schuyler was bent on humiliating him. In the July 1924 edition of \textit{The Messenger}, readers were treated to a feature article titled "A Tribute to Caesar." Written as a parody of Garvey, Schuyler "praised" the "black Napoleon" for his efforts: attracting the admiration of the Ku Klux Klan for his "Back to Africa" movement; being dexterous enough to fleece "washerwomen, porters, maids, and other hard-working people" of their savings; and operating a shipping line that had "the finest rat-trap (S.S. Shadyside) in the Harlem River;" In conclusion, Schuyler said that he would not expect any special favors from Carvey for his praising him. "Of course," Schuyler added, "I have never refused any material rewards, because, like Brother Marcus, my motto is: One God, One

\textsuperscript{12}George S. Schuyler, "Shafts and Darts," \textit{The Messenger}, December, 1923, 922-23.
Aim, One Destiny-The Almighty Dollar." Predictably, Schuyler's campaign against Garvey was not taken well by him. Years later, he often blamed Schuyler for his eventual downfall in the United States.

Although "Shafts and Darts" was his primary column, Schuyler exercised the same wit and satire in other contributions to the Messenger such as book reviews and feature articles. In addition, his writings revealed a conservative streak even in his "radical" period. One example of Schuyler's reluctance to support radical movements appeared in a review of Ghandi And Non-Violent Resistance, a compilation of Mahatma Ghandi's teachings:

Such a program striking at the root of government is bound to bring reprisals of violence by the forces of the government, and the people must either fight, be killed or give in. The masses of Hindus-likethe masses of all people-evidently believe that discretion is the better part of valor, especially when, as in the case of the Hindu masses, one has nothing but his fist while the other fellow has all the refinements of Christian warfare... So it is not surprising that Ghandism has failed... Instead of repudiating the machine for the spinning wheel, they should use the machine as a means toward their emancipation, both from the capitalists and from deadening labor.


14Cronon, Black Moses, 158.

15George Schuyler, review of Ghandi and Non-Violent Resistance, compiled by Blanche Watson, In the Messenger (September 1925): 331.
In aspects of race, Schuyler was predictably inflexible in his disdain for black nationalistic movements. Nonetheless, Schuyler did exhibit rare moments of race pride as in his favorable review of W.E.B. DuBois' *The Gift of Black Folk: The Negroes in the Making of America*:

The Negro was probably the greatest factor in making the United States what it is today. His labor created the wealth; traffic in his body filled the coffers of the Puritans of New England; it was his presence that accelerated the development of a real democracy; his valor and military prowess contributed very largely to the success of every war waged in Colonial and Post-Revolutionary times, with the exception of the Mexican land grab—and he should be proud that he wasn't in that. Negro women were pioneers actively and passively in the new movement for emancipation of womanhood; and Negro art, literature, music, and religious spirit contributed largely toward the gradual emancipation of America from the deadening influence of puritanical ethics and philosophy. It is a record that should fill the breast of every black man, woman, and child with a just pride in the fact that they are Negroes.16

Next to "Shafts and Darts," Schuyler's feature articles in the *Messenger* were among his best writings for the magazine. He clearly demonstrated his talent as a short story novelist, journalist, and satirist. In 1924, Schuyler wrote a series of feature articles on prominent African-Americans who had gained success and

fame in their professional fields. Usually the profiles emphasized the philosophy of self-help, that African-Americans could only improve their economic and social predicament by meeting the needs of their own communities while gaining economic independence. Schuyler emphasized this when he discussed Madam C.J. Walker, the prosperous African-American businesswoman who gained fame and fortune by making hair care products for African-American women:

One thing that makes the development of Negro business very important from the viewpoint of racial advancement is the opportunity afforded the young men and women of the race, who possess the training and qualifications to hold important positions that they would otherwise have great difficulty in obtaining in large firms owned and operated by white people. In this respect the Negro business man and woman have been a decided asset to the race. For after all, we must admit that economic advancement is the foundation upon which all other advancement is erected. Unless the foundation is sound, it cannot be expected that the structure will be sound. In the early flush of emancipation, and even at the present time, there is a large group within our group who have laid more emphasis on acquiring the evidences of wealth and leisure than on acquiring the solid economic basis that the possession of these things presupposes. Too many of us are yet satisfied to have "a five dollar hat on a fifty cent head" as Booker T. Washington put it.17

Another article featured Mortimer M. Harris, a prominent African American realtor in Washington, D.C.

Schuyler praised the shrewd realtor for providing his services for African American homebuyers in the city. "Mr. Mortimer Harris, an intelligent and energetic young lawyer, saw the need and rose to the occasion," stated Schuyler. "He saw the service that could be rendered by bringing the buyer and seller together. Only in this way, he knew, can people obtain proper habitation in a large complex urban community." ¹⁸

Among the feature pieces Schuyler wrote for the Messenger, his short stories were the most innovative. Schuyler had become a master at several forms of satire and, among other topics, used his talent to lampoon prevalent African American views of race. One classic story is "At The Darktown Charity Ball," where two gossips attend a social ball held by the Hand-To-Mouth Club, an organization of "the best people in Negro society." Schuyler's attack on African American upper society is relentless as the gossips share wry comments about the guests. One amusing comment is made by the second gossip about two men who appear to be white but are considered black:

"Those two gentlemen have admitted they are Negroes, and have been accepted as such by Negro

society. Of course, they are white men, but what are we to do? When they cannot make a living in white society . . . they come over to us . . . since the American Negro psychology is such that a man or woman rises higher and higher in our esteem, the whiter they are, it is only natural that these people immediately jump to a prominent position in Negro society.19

The irony of color is made even more clear when an unidentified woman walks in:

1st Gossip-(Alarmed)-Look! Who is that real black girl who just came in the door on the left? Surely she doesn't belong here!

2nd Gossip-Don't get excited! That's only one of the maids. No one that dark ever becomes a social leader.20

Another memorable composition is Schuyler's "The Yellow Peril," a one-act play. Set in a Harlem apartment, the story centers on a mulatto woman who uses her beauty and color to acquire a legion of male suitors who lavish her with expensive gifts, including her apartment. She comments to her maid about her advantage over her darker sisters:

"Downtown, I was only another white girl. Up here I am worshipped by all the successful businessmen, professional fellows and society swells, because I am a high yaller . . . These college graduates and swell dames don't stand no chance with me, even if I didn't finish grammar school."21


20Ibid.
The story ends on a humorous note when all the suitors drop by unexpectedly and discover her plot and each other.

Schuyler's lampooning of race prejudice within the African American community did not please all of the Messenger's readers. In response to criticism, Schuyler wrote a reply in "Shafts and Darts" addressing "The Yellow Peril:"

"Dr. Schuyler wishes to announce that in the future he will continue to hold up the mirror to Aframerican life without camouflage. . . . It is hardly necessary to say that the Doctor is entirely devoid of any prejudice based on race, color, or nationality. He feels however, that since the Negroes have gained so many allies of late—thanks to the Ku Klux Klan—a little of the time and energy hitherto devoted to belaboring the Nordics can be spent in uncovering some of the skeletons in our racial closet. . . . We cannot decry the Caucasians for their prejudices when we have the same or worse prejudices right within our group. . . . If Negroes have an urge for pink skins and straight hair, this should be stated and portrayed, along with the evidences of material and cultural progress." 22

In the last two years at the Messenger, Schuyler became managing editor and wrote articles addressing African American labor. In 1925, Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), a labor


organization of Pullman Car Company porters. Schuyler aided in the effort by writing a feature article titled "Blessed Are The Organized." Although a short article, it discussed the efforts of the BSCP organizing to acquire better wages and work conditions for porters:

Unswerved from their indomitable purpose to organize the same as the (Pullman) stockholders, the porters have succeeded in obtaining a membership of well over 51 percent in the BSCP and enhanced their self respect and the respect of the world over 100 percent . . . (It is) Only a matter of time before they will get a decent wage for their unremitting toil. Only a matter of time until their powerful and aggressive union will force (Pullman) to give them a living wage . . . Blessed indeed are the organized for they shall inherit the earth!23

The following year, Schuyler wrote another feature article on African American labor. Titled "Negro Labor and Public Utilities," Schuyler addressed the dilemma for African American laborers to find positions of skilled employment at public utility companies despite being customers of their services. Investigating several telephone, telegraph, utility, and streetcar companies in the North and South, Schuyler found that most African Americans were employed in low paying unskilled positions such as common laborers and domestics. One company investigated was Western Union, where Schuyler found that in Wilmington, Delaware and Newark, New Jersey, there

were no African Americans employed. In Southern cities such as New Orleans, Louisiana and San Antonio, Texas, African Americans were employed only as janitors.²⁴

By the end of 1928, the Messenger had folded after eleven years. Owen had left the magazine years before, Randolph turned his full attention to the BSCP, and Schuyler went on to work for the W.B. Ziff Advertising Company to edit a weekly magazine for several African American newspapers. Prior to 1928, Schuyler had already lent his talents to other publications. Among them was the well-known newspaper the Pittsburgh Courier.

In 1924, while still with the Messenger, Schuyler was hired to write a feature column for the Pittsburgh Courier, one of the leading African American newspapers of the period. Headed by editor Robert L. Vann and business manager Ira F. Lewis, the Courier rivaled other major African American newspapers such as the Chicago Defender and had a national audience. Schuyler was offered a paltry salary of three dollars a month.

Despite the pay, the ambitious writer graciously accepted the offer.²⁵ Schuyler's column, "Thrusts and

Lungen," was a continuation of the *Messenger*’s "Shafts and Darts." He addressed similar issues in his typical confrontational manner and immediately became a favorite for *Courier* readers to admire or loathe. In 1925, the column’s name was changed to "Views and Reviews" and became a permanent feature in the newspaper. Schuyler’s hiring also was the beginning of a stormy and controversial forty-two year career at the *Courier*.

In late 1925, Vann asked Schuyler to tour the Southern United States for a future series for the paper. His tour would have a twofold purpose: 1) To make a socioeconomic observation of African American communities throughout the South, and 2) To increase the *Courier*’s circulation in the South by hiring distribution agents.26 Schuyler eagerly took the assignment and prepared for his tour. For the young journalist, the assignment represented a number of significant firsts: 1) It would be his first trip to the South. Although Schuyler had traveled extensively during his Army years, he had only traveled as far South as Maryland and his only exposure to Southern culture was from his fellow Army comrades.


26Ibid., 137.
2) He would be exposed to the dreaded Jim Crow segregation of the South. Although he had experienced segregation in the North and abroad, the assignment would give him a chance to observe the peculiarities of the system in the South. Lastly, 3) the assignment was his first as an investigative journalist. Schuyler had conducted interviews during his tenure at the Messenger. Nonetheless, the assignment presented a number of challenges and called for sharp journalistic and investigative techniques.

The assignment called for a nine-month tour of the South, from late 1925 into the Summer of 1926. Schuyler visited various towns and cities in the states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Georgia, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, and North and South Carolina, where the population was five thousand or more.\(^{27}\) He did include Northern cities close to the Mason-Dixon line, but his primary interest was the South. Traveling in the region, Schuyler had to endure Jim Crow segregation on trains and buses. Accommodations ranged, Schuyler stated, from good to the worst

\(^{27}\)Ibid.
imaginable. Nonetheless, he was determined to carry out his assignment despite segregation.

Most of the people interviewed for the assignment were African Americans ranging from laborers to professional. Most helpful were taxicab drivers, who assisted Schuyler in finding accommodations and served as reliable sources for revelations about the communities. In Selma, Alabama, a taxicab driver told Schuyler about the kidnapping of an African American woman from the town jail the previous night by a white mob. When he asked others, they claimed not to know anything about the incident. Other reliable sources of information were barbers, undertakers, and professionals such as doctors and school principals.

Schuyler would spend a day in a town or city, gaining as much information as possible on the African American community, before establishing contact with agents and moving on. Predictably, Schuyler was confronted with segregation. His approach was simple: he was there for an assignment, not to change the ways of the South:

28 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 154.

In the first place, I wasn't down there to challenge the authorities. All right, they had Jim Crowism - so they had it. That's the way it was. Same way, if I went to Siam or Morocco, I know what the customs are, I'm not going to walk into any holy place with my shoes on or whatever - I knew what the customs were, and my business was to do a certain thing. Since I had elected to - agreed to go on it, then I am bound by the circumstances that surround a person on such an assignment. I follow that practice all over the world. Because it would be foolish - of course, if I belonged to the American Committee on Africa or the NAACP or something, I might try to make an issue out of it, but you see, my tour would soon be ended too; probably ended in a prison camp. 30

Schuyler was also careful not to intimidate people who may be reluctant to discuss candidly the communities if they knew that he was interviewing. To gain quick information about a town or city, Schuyler would have taxicab drivers drive him around for an hour while he inquired about the community. Fearing that a notebook pad would intimidate the drivers, he tried to retain as much information as possible by memory, and wrote it down later. Sometimes, when the cabdriver mentioned an intriguing issue he had the cabby stop at a restroom, whereupon Schuyler would run in and try to write down what he mentioned. 31 Another strategy was observing the body language of people. Observing their faces and sometimes their feet, Schuyler would pursue a question if

30 Ibid., 163.

31 Ibid., 145-46.
he saw that the interviewee reacted to it by making an
to twitching their toes nervously.  

In his sleuthing, Schuyler often found unexpected
surprises. In Shreveport, Louisiana, for instance,
Schuyler interviewed an undertaker who was wary of
answering all of his questions. After several minutes of
conservation, Schuyler was able to break the ice with the
mention of corn liquor, whereupon the undertaker invited
him to sample some of his brew. Apparently the
undertaker was the main bootlegger in the city, and had a
safe full of liquor. He delivered his liquor in a coffin
carried by a hearse, and despite prohibition, he enjoyed
the protection of the police. Another revelation came
from an African American school principal in Mississippi
who confessed to Schuyler that he had gotten a
schoolteacher pregnant and sent her to New Orleans to
have her baby. African American and White members of the
community disapproved of the action and formed a mob to
lynch the principal. A sympathetic white grocer sent a
boy to alert the principal of the mob, whereupon the
principal quickly left town. Eventually the principal
came back when excitement died down, and joked to

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32 Ibid., 149-150.
33 Ibid., 153-54.
Schuyler about the affair. "They almost got me, you know," quipped the principal, "but they notified me."  

Schuyler's conversation with the principal demonstrated that the color line was not always rigidly drawn. Schuyler told of other peculiar tales of interracial relations in the heart of the Jim Crow South. One story from Augusta, Georgia involved an African American man who was accused of assaulting a white woman. His white friend knew that he was innocent and that the woman was really his girlfriend. To protect him from the mob, the friend hid the man in the rumble seat of his automobile while he joined the mob to supposedly find him. After the mob dispersed, the friend helped him escape to Philadelphia. Schuyler also learned about interracial relationships between the opposite sex when he visited a North Carolina town:

I remember in one place I went into . . . it was what they call a juke joint - a woman was running it, and a white man was sitting over there in shirt sleeves. He had a gun slung on him, but that's nothing unusual down there, and he had a pretty colored sitting on his lap, and they were drinking liquor. So I said to this fellow who was carrying me around, "How do they get away with this? I should think they'd be arrested - you know, the law?"

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34 Ibid., 163-65.
He said, "Well, that man is the law. He's deputy sheriff." 36

Schuyler visited over two hundred towns and cities throughout the South, collecting as much information as possible. 37 The result was an impressive weekly series titled "Aframerica Today." The Courier launched the series in November 1925 with a self-introductory essay written by Schuyler:

Mr. Schuyler is not an optimist or a pessimist; he is a realist. He approaches his subject with the objectivity of the true and reliable observer, leaning more toward science than sentiment. He is primarily interested in presenting a picture of such and such a community: how the people live, what work they do, who are the celebrities, the relation between the races, the school conditions the fraternal orders, the churches, cultural movements; in short, every phase of life in that community. What he gives you is an accurate picture of the community not "touched" by the propagandist. Mr. Schuyler is not interested in proving anything; he is presenting a word-photograph. It may or may not please you; you may like it or dislike it, but you will be impressed by its judicial poise, its keen penetration, its sophistication and urbanity and withal, the writers rich background of experience and information. 38

Schuyler's profile of the communities highlighted several factors such as the number of African American

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36 Ibid., 155-56.

37 Buni, Vann, 137.

38 George Schuyler, "Aframerica Today: An Entertaining Survey of the Principal Negro Communities," Pittsburgh Courier, November 1925, taken from a photocopy from Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
businesses, hospitals, hotels, churches, theaters, and social relations between whites and African Americans. Typically, he provided his shrewd yet condescending commentary to enrich his descriptions of the communities. Nonetheless, Schuyler gives a detailed, unique, and fairly accurate socioeconomic analysis of the African American South during the 1920's.

The first state Schuyler toured was West Virginia, visiting cities such as Wheeling, Huntington, Parkersburg, Bluefield, Clarksburg, Beckley, and Charleston. Although he was influenced by his mother's prejudices against the South, he did manage to compliment African Americans for ownership of businesses and homes. Commenting on Parkersburg, Schuyler stated "You know, instead of paying rent to the white man those Negroes have gone and bought their homes! Now what do you think of that?" Concluding his analysis of Parkersburg, Schuyler noted:

While it is an impossibility to get the Parkersburg Negroes together for anything at all (which is the cry everywhere about all peoples); while they raise their voice for their rights . . . while co-operative industrial enterprise is unheard of among them . . . still the town is so clean, their homes appear so neat, and the people are so

"folksy" that By Gosh! Even a critic leaves the town with pleasant thoughts and memories. May they be spared from the migration and the Uplifters!  

Charleston was another city that earned Schuyler's respect. Commenting on the numerous businesses owned by African Americans in the city, he stated "No matter what you desire, there is, with a few exceptions, a Negro business to supply it."  

Although he found fault with the infrastructure of some of the segregated schools for African American students, he was impressed with the campus of West Virginia Collegiate Institute (now West Virginia State University):

This school has been voted a total of $1,500,000 by the last three sessions of the (state) legislature. $500,000 has gone to build and equip an ultra-modern administration building housing all the classrooms . . . Salaries of teachers aggregate $100,000 per annum; 26 of the 42 receive in excess of $2,000 a year and two of this number get $3,000 or more . . I'll probably have to end up becoming a school teacher myself!  

Moving further South of the Mason-Dixon Line, Schuyler was even more impressed with the cities of Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Dubbing Tulsa as "Little Chicago," he praised the African American community for

\footnote{40ibid.}

\footnote{41Schuyler, "Aframerica Today: Charleston, W. Va.," \textit{Pittsburgh Courier}, December 1925, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.}

\footnote{42ibid.}
rebuilding the business district after it was destroyed four years earlier in a devastating race riot. "They are far ahead of many Negro communities with greater population and less handicaps." Oklahome City was also given a favorable recommendation from Schuyler:

The Negroes in Oklahoma City are forging ahead in business, enterprise, ownership of property, and what is even more commendable, in improving the appearance of that property. There are plenty of communities in the North that can learn a lot from the Negro quarter of Oklahoma City.44

Predictably, "Aframerica Today" discussed the state of social relations between African American and White communities. Interestingly, Schuyler mentioned that relations in most places were "cordial" and that there was little agitation. Despite his claim, Schuyler did mention "the spirit of the (Ku Klux) Klan" existing in most places. In Okmulgee, Oklahoma, he was greeted with a sign on a building reading "Entrance to Ku Klux Klan Hall." Subsequently, Okmulgee was labeled "Ku Klux Klan Uber Alles."45 Schuyler also mentioned of lynchings in communities such as Texarkana, Arkansas and Waco, Texas.


44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.
Muskogee, Oklahoma was labeled as a city "Where A Negro Cannot Be Lynched" because of vigilante action African Americans took to prevent lynchings. Schuyler reported that on three occasions Negroes armed themselves and mingled into the crowd of white lynchers. On one occasion they offered their help to the local sheriff to prevent the lynching of a white man. "Hence it comes about that not only can you not lynch a Negro in Muskogee but you can't lynch a white man either!"\textsuperscript{46}

Overall, "Aframerica Today" was a great success. In nine months, Schuyler compiled an impressive socioeconomic profile of more than two hundred African American communities in the South and hire distribution agents throughout the region. Vann estimated that Schuyler's efforts increased the Courier's circulation by about ten thousand readers, or 25%. For his efforts, Vann awarded the young journalist a position on the editorial staff, establishing him as one of the most well known African American journalists of the 1920's.\textsuperscript{47} In addition, the assignment proved to be an education personally and professionally for Schuyler. Although

\textsuperscript{46} Schuyler, "Aframerica Today: Muskogee, Okla.: Where A Negro Cannot Be Lynched," Pittsburgh Courier, March 6, 1926.

\textsuperscript{47} Buni, Vann, 138.
Schuyler retained his prejudices about Southern African Americans, he was greatly impressed with the determination of certain communities to prosper economically by meeting their needs. In the early 1930's, he would attempt to duplicate the self-help concept by forming the Young Negroes Cooperative League. Professionally, the assignment helped Schuyler become an experienced investigative reporter. His investigative techniques would be employed in future assignments such as investigating slavery in Liberia in 1930, a profile of African American laborers in industrial cities in 1937, and a tour of South America in 1948.

Outside of the Messenger and the Courier, Schuyler's work appeared in popular literary magazines of the day. Self-promoted as an "expert on race," Schuyler's essays addressed issues of racism and African American culture. Among the issues was the Harlem Renaissance. In the 1920's, the upper Manhattan community of Harlem was the site of the African American cultural movement known as the Harlem Renaissance. Writers, poets, musicians, and other artisans of African American and Afro Caribbean origin descended upon the community to take part in the renaissance. Renaissance writer Alain Locke wrote how the "old Negro" of moral debate and historical
controversy was disappearing and in its place was a "new Negro" who was not ashamed to express him or herself through African American culture. Locke provided Harlem as the center of the "New Negro:"

In Harlem, Negro life is seizing upon its first chances for group expression and self determination. It is - or promises to be - a race capital... Without pretense to their political significance, Harlem has the same role to play for the New Negro as Dublin has had for the New Ireland or Prauge for the New Czechoslovakia.48

As a resident of Harlem in the 1920's, Schuyler was not a stranger to the movement. Schuyler was familiar with many renaissance writers such as Wallace Thurman, who worked for the Messenger for a short period in 1926. Schuyler also reviewed many renaissance works and at times gave favorable comments to writers such as Jessie Fauget, James Weldon Johnson, and W.E.B. DuBois.

Nonetheless, Schuyler found himself to be unalterably opposed to the idea that the Harlem Renaissance was a definitive cultural movement for all African Americans. In addition, he did not share the optimism that fellow writers had about the renaissance and decried it for being authentic. Years later, he described the Harlem Renaissance as a "fraud" and labeled the participants as

"phonies." Schuyler's cynical outlook of the renaissance is demonstrated in "Ballad of Negro Artists," featured in his "Shafts and Darts" column in the August 1926 edition of the *Messenger*:

I.
Now old Merlin the wizard had nothing on us,
Though he conjured a castle up out of the dust;
For with nothing but gall and a stoutness of heart,
On this public we've foisted this New Negro Art.

Chorus:
Oh! this New Negro Art;
This "peculiar" art
On the gullible public
We've foisted our "art"

II.
If old Kinkle and "Rusty" of mendicant fame,
Grabbed off wads of cash in the panhandle game;
Cannot we alleged writers and singers and such,
Playing on "racial differences," cash in as much?

Chorus:
We can cash in as much-
Very nearly as much;
Though we know we're all hams,
We can cash in as much.

III.
By stupendous logrolling and licking of boots
And fawning around influential galoots;
We have gotten a place 'neath the calcium flare,
And paying our room rent and eating good fare.

Chorus:
Oh, we're eating good fare;
Eating mighty good fare;
Though once we went hungry,

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We now eat good fare.

IV
Our pet "racial differences" theory can
Be endorsed, it is true, by the Knights of the Klan;
But we care not for trifling matters like that,
When as "racial interpreters" we can grow fat.

Chorus:
Yes, we can grow fat
Get flabby and fat;
Eating three squares a day-
And all paid for that! 50

Schuyler's assault on the Harlem Renaissance was
introduced to a larger audience when one of his most
famous essays was published in 1926: "The Negro-Art
Hokum." Submitted to The Nation in late 1925, Freda
Kirchwey, editor of the magazine, sent Schuyler's article
to several renaissance figures, among them James Weldon
Johnson, in order to get their opinion about the article.
Meanwhile Schuyler, who was on assignment in the South
for the "Aframerica Today" series in the Courier, was
unaware of Kirchwey's circulation of his article. When
he found out, he was displeased, saying that "an editor
ought to be able to make up his mind, or her mind, about
what they're going to carry without questioning everybody

50 Chidi Ikonne, From DuBois to VanVechten: The Early
New Negro Literature, 1903-1926, (Westport, Connecticut:
Greenwood Press, 1981), 107-08. Schuyler's referrals of
"Kinkle" and "Rusty" may have been names for Marcus
Garvey and Robert Russa Morton, principal of Tuskegee
University.
in town."\(^{51}\) Nonetheless, Schuyler's essay appeared in the June 16, 1926 issue of The Nation.

"The Negro-Art Hokum" began with Schuyler asserting that the idea of "Negro art" existing in America was "self-evident foolishness." Schuyler stated that spirituals, the blues, jazz (which he asserted that whites had assisted in the development of the music) and "The Charleston" were foreign to

"Northern Negroes, West Indian Negroes, and African Negroes. They are no more expressive or characteristic of the Negro race than the music and dancing of the Appalachian highlanders or the Dalmatian peasantry are expressive or characteristic of the Caucasian race."

Schuyler then made the bold assertion that

The Aframerican is merely a lampblackened Anglo-Saxon. If the European immigrant after two or three generations of exposure to our schools, politics, advertising, moral crusades, and restaurants becomes indistinguishable from the mass of Americans of the older stock, . . . how much truer must it be of the sons of Ham who have been subjected to what the uplifters call Americanism for the last three hundred years. Aside from his color,\(^{52}\) . . your American Negro is just plain American.

It was not long before Schuyler received a response. The following week The Nation published a response essay from a poet who epitomized the Harlem Renaissance:

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\(^{51}\) Reminiscences of George S. Schuyler, 77.

Langston Hughes. Titled "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," Hughes began with a discussion of a fictional African American poet who wanted to be known as "a poet—not a Negro poet." Hughes expressed sorrow for his statement and constructed a possible picture of this poet's background, one that could have easily described Schuyler's:

His family is what I suppose one would call the Negro middle class: people who are by no means rich yet never uncomfortable nor hungry . . . The father goes to work every morning. He is a chief steward at a large white club. The mother sometimes does fancy sewing or supervises parties for the rich families of the town. The children go to a mixed school. In the home they read white papers and magazines. And the mother often says "don't be like niggers" when the children are bad. A frequent phrase from the father is "Look how well a white man does things." And so the word white comes to be a symbol of all the virtues. It holds for the children beauty, morality, and money.53

Hughes went on to describe the dilemma faced by African-American artists: whether to be truthful to their craft or to bow to societal pressure and "act white."

Hughes holds his ground of the Negro artist being truthful to his or her own creativity, and concluded with a defiant message:

Let the blare of Negro jazz bands and the bellowing voice of Bessie Smith singing Blues penetrate the closed ears of the colored near-

intellectuals until they listen and perhaps understand. Let Paul Robeson sing Water Boy, and Rudolph Fisher writing about the streets of Harlem, and Jean Toomer holding the heart of Georgia in his hands, and Aaron Douglas drawing strange black fantasies cause the smug Negro middle class to turn from their white, respectable, ordinary books and papers to catch a glimmer of their own beauty. We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame... We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free from within ourselves. 54

Despite Hughes affirmation of freedom of expression for African-American artists, Schuyler remained unmoved:

"Langston Hughes, in defending racial art in America, forgets that the Negro masses he describes are no different from the white masses we are all familiar with... If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: the South. They are American folk-songs, built around Anglo-Saxon religious concepts... Negro-propaganda art, even when glorifying the 'primitiveness' of the American Negro masses, is hardly more than a protest against a feeling of inferiority, and such a psychology seldom produces art." 55

Schuyler's reluctance to identify with African American cultural movements did not mean he was oblivious to the pervasive and brutal racism of the day. As an African American in early 20th Century America, he

54 Ibid., 694.

55 George S. Schuyler, "Correspondence: Negroes and Artists," The Nation, 14 July, 1926, 36.
was well aware of the unfair treatment and acts of brutality toward people of color. In turn, he was equally scornful of white America, berating it for practicing what Schuyler called "moronism." Some of his favorite targets were the Ku Klux Klan and white evangelists such as Billy Sunday. In regard to race prejudice, Schuyler did not hesitate to point out the fallacies and peculiarities of racism, while exercising his usual biting wit and satire.

Schuyler’s "Blessed Are the Sons of Ham," is a classic example of pain turned into parody. He asserted that the "Aframeicans" experienced the "thrill of being entertained" through everyday occurrences. He then pointed out several scenarios in which racism reared its ugly head. One scenario chronicles Schuyler attempting to cash a check in a hotel in Texas:

I enter the hotel lobby and march toward the desk. I think only of getting my money and leaving town. Negroes have been burned at the stake here. Everyone looks at me curiously. I, a humble black man, suddenly command the attention of the whole lobby.

"Take off your hat, boy!" The grating voice of the desk clerk sears me through. My heart leaps in my throat. I had entirely forgotten about the hat. Nearly everyone else has on a hat. All the guests and loiterers are waiting to see what I am going to do. Of course I hastily remove my hat. I must avoid trouble and delay. I have a schedule to make. I reach the desk after seeming centuries of travel through the ominously silent lobby. I politely tell
the clerk my mission. He cashes the order. Handing me the bills, he asks: "What are you president of one of those nigger colleges?"

"No," I reply, "I'm just a newspaperman. It's pretty hard for a boy to get a job as college president." 56

Schuyler also discussed the dilemma of African American professionals being perceived as an oddity by whites:

I am acquainted with many Negro poets, contractors, labor leaders, journalists, social workers, physicians, novelists... It does not strike me as strange that Negroes should be doing all sorts of work. But white people continue to be amazed when they hear of Negroes having such vocations. They regard successful Negroes as freaks, along with trained seals and infant chess prodigies. "How wonderful!" they say. Or, "Fancy, a Negro novelist!" Such delicious morsels stay with me for days. 57

Another classic parody of American racism is Schuyler's "Our Greatest Gift to America," an essay which asserts that the greatest gift African-Americans have given to society is the flattery of white people through racism. Schuyler portrays three fictional white characters to prove his point.

The first character, "Isadore Shankersoff," represents the European immigrant who moves to America and is automatically given the privilege of an American

56 George S. Schuyler, "Blessed Are the Sons of Ham," The Nation, 23 March 1927, 314.

57 Ibid.
white man, thus being superior to the Negro. The second character is "Cyrus Leviticus Dumbbell," who represents the poor white oppressed by the same forces that oppress African Americans. Nonetheless, he is encouraged that "this is a white man's country" and that he must defend it by joining the Ku Klux Klan. Lastly, there is "Dorothy Dunce," a white woman who is told all her life to stay away from "big, black, niggers" who would harm her. As a result, she fears every black man that approaches her. By being a white woman, she is automatically elevated to the exclusive status of white womanhood, a status that white men will swear to defend at the expense of black men.

Schuyler concludes the tirade with an indictment of American democracy:

It is not surprising, then, that democracy has worked better in this country than elsewhere. This belief in the equality of all white folks-making skin color the gauge of worth and the measure of citizenship rights-has caused the lowest to strive to become among the highest. Because of this great ferment, America has become the Utopia of the material world; the land of hope and opportunity. Without the transplanted African in their midst to bolster up the illusion, America would have unquestionably been a much different place; but instead the shine has served as a muddsill upon which all white people alike can stand and reach toward
the stars. I submit that here is the gift par excellence of the Negro to America.\(^{58}\)

Schuyler’s most famous essay on race during the 1920’s is "Our White Folks." Published in the December 1927 American Mercury, "Our White Folks" is an encompassing and intense attack on racism. Schuyler wastes little time in berating whites for their portrayal of African Americans in popular writings:

> We Ethiops, one gathers from this mass of evidence, are a childish, shiftless, immoral, primitive, incurably religious, genially incompetent, incredibly odoriferous, inherently musical, chronically excitable, mentally inferior people with pronounced homicidal tendencies. We are incapable of self-government or self-restraint, and irresponsible except when led by white folks. We possess a chant for assaulting white females and an inordinate appetite for chicken, gin, and watermelon. While it is finally and reluctantly admitted that we belong to the human race, we are accorded only the lowest position in the species, a notch or two above the great apes. We make good domestics but hopeless executives . . . In short, from examining the bulk of the evidence, the impartial investigator must conclude that the Negro has almost a monopoly of all the more discreditable characteristics of mankind.\(^ {59}\)

Schuyler also points out the inconsistency of Northern whites who prove to be contradictory in their own treatment of African Americans:


The attitude of the Northern white folks, in particular, puzzles and incenses him. Very often he feels that they are more dangerous to him than the Southerners. Here are folks who yawn continuously about liberty, justice, equality and democracy, and whoop with indignation every time a Senegambian is incinerated below the Potomac or the Belgians burn another village in the Congo, but toward the Negro in their midst they are quite as cruel as the Southern crackers. They are wont to shout, in their liberal moments, that the Negro is as good as they are - as if that were a compliment! - and give him a square deal and a chance in the world, but when he approaches them for a job they offer him a mop and pail or a bellhop's uniform, no matter what his education and training may be. And except in isolated instances they see that he remains permanently in the lowly position they have given him.60

Continuing in his assault on racism, Schuyler comments on the lack of common knowledge whites possess about African Americans:

The amazing ignorance of whites - even Southern whites - about Negroes is a constant source of amusement to all Aframericans. White men in registering surprise whenever they hear of or meet a Negro who has written a novel, a history, or a poem, or who can work a problem in calculus . . . Those Negroes who have entree to white intellectual circles do not return to their own society with regret, but rather with relief, for they rightly observe that the bulk of the white intellectuals have more form than content; that they have a great deal of information but are not so long on common sense; and that they lack that sense of humor and gentle cynicism which one expects to find in the really civilized person, and which are the chief characteristics of even the most lowly and miserable Aframerican.61

60 Ibid., 388.
61 Ibid., 390.
Lastly, Schuyler states that African Americans are more tolerant than whites and easily admit that not all whites are prejudiced against them:

The Ethiop is given to pointing out individual pinks who are exceptionally honorable, tolerant and unprejudiced. In this respect, I venture to say, he rises several notches higher than the generality of ofays, to whom, even in this day and time, all coons look alike. 62

As Schuyler's reputation grew, he gained the attention of several white literary critics and satirists intrigued by his criticism of the Harlem Renaissance and American racism. Among them was Henry Louis Mencken, critic, satirist, and editor of the American Mercury. Schuyler and Mencken were admirers of each other's editorial styles. Schuyler was a fan of Mencken's writings from his magazine The Smart Set, and The American Mercury. Mencken was greatly impressed with Schuyler's criticism of African American society as well as white society. Lastly, the two writers felt that the majority of American society suffered from "moronism" and only a few were blessed with intelligence.

As with many writers of the Harlem Renaissance, influential whites took an interest in their work and exposed them to a larger audience. In 1927, Schuyler was

62 Ibid., 392.
encouraged by Mencken to submit "Our White Folks" to the American Mercury. Mencken's contribution to the article was his encouragement to Schuyler to write honestly and candidly about whites, saying "Lay on... I'd be delighted to see (whites) dosed with the same kind of medicine that he has been giving the Ethiop for so many years." At the same time Mencken admonished Schuyler to be "cool-headed" in his approach, so that he would not seem emotional. The article was a success, and gave Schuyler the mainstream exposure he desired. As Schuyler's career progressed, he had several articles published in the American Mercury, and his professional friendship with Mencken would last until the publisher's death in 1956. Mencken was so enthralled with Schuyler's writings that he would be motivated to say that Schuyler was "the most competent Negro journalist ever heard of," a comment that Schuyler treasured.


Victor Francis Calverton (a.k.a. George Goetz) was another white critic impressed with Schuyler's writings. In 1929, Calverton featured Schuyler's "Our Greatest Gift To America" in his book *Anthology of American Negro Literature*. Remarking on Schuyler's prose, Calverton noted that "His clean-cut, biting style, inevitably in keeping with his theme and purpose, is at times superb . . . His writing is never sentimental; rather it has a hard metallic brilliance that convinces without endeavoring to caress." Schuyler's association with Calverton would prove to be an important one as the critic encouraged him to write a novel a year later that would bring Schuyler more critical acclaim. Schuyler would also have several articles published in Calverton's literary journal *The Modern Quarterly*.

In the summer of 1927, Schuyler's personal life was radically changed when a young, blond-haired, white woman introduced herself to him. Josephine Codgell, a contributing writer for the *Messenger*, had traveled from San Francisco to meet the pleasantly surprised journalist in his office. Born to a wealthy cattle rancher and banker in Granbury, Texas, Codgell was a free spirit who

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had traveled to California in the early 1920's where she become a model, actress, dancer, and writer. She began submitting articles and poems to the Messenger in 1923 and was an avid fan of Schuyler's column. Now she was finally able to meet the witty satirist.

Although Schuyler was extremely busy with work at the Messenger, he was taken aback by the young woman. "Beautiful, charming, vivacious, fashionably dressed, sharp, witty, and well-read, she was something very special," commented Schuyler.66 Codgell was equally smitten by Schuyler. "He was stunning. His black skin gleamed like satinwood and his hands were as long and graceful as the wing of a raven."67 Immediately the two began to talk about the Messenger and soon began to talk of other intellectual subjects such as literature, politics, writing, and art. When the evening came, they took a tour of Harlem nightlife, eating at a restaurant and dancing at the Savoy Ballroom.68

Over the summer Schuyler and Codgell became acquainted with each other, sharing intellectual conversations and eventually falling in love with each

66 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 163.

67 Talalay, Compositions in Black and White, 17.

68 Ibid., 18.
other. To Schuyler, Codgell was his perfect embodiment of a woman. Schuyler had dated white women before, but none as intellectually stimulating as her. Codgell had never met someone as witty and entertaining as Schuyler, and after ending a relationship with a painter and ignoring her family's prejudices against African Americans, she asked Schuyler at the Savoy to ask her to marry him. "Are you sure you want me to?" An astonished Schuyler asked. She nodded and Schuyler proposed, whereupon she accepted.69 On January 6, 1928, George Schuyler and Josephine Codgell became husband and wife at the Marriage Bureau in Manhattan.70

69Codgell's diaries of the period provide extensive detail of her relationship with Schuyler. Her ambivalence stemmed from fear of her family's reaction to her relationship to an African American. Her sister and her husband had visited her weeks before, both displaying their intense dislike of African Americans, although they did not know of Codgell's relationship with Schuyler. She also was grappling with her feelings for John Garth, a painter whom Codgell dated in California for over five years. When he made a surprise visit to see her in September, she told him of her relationship with Schuyler. Although Garth was an admirer of Schuyler's writings, he was incensed over her relationship with an African American. Strangely enough, the two met each other in an awkward meeting in Harlem, where Codgell and Garth posed as a couple and Schuyler and another African American woman posed as another. Later Schuyler reluctantly posed for a painting of Garth's at the request of Codgell, who posed as well. Parting on uneasy terms, Garth left New York in early October. Ibid., 16-30.
For Codgell, her marriage to an African American was a defiant action against her family's prejudices and a protest against the white South's social mores. It was also a realization of her early fascination with the family's African American servants. Most beloved was Big Jim, a ranch hand who worked for her father. Serving as a baby-sitter for young Josephine Codgell, he allowed her to follow him around the ranch while doing chores. He also taught young Josephine how to shoot, rope a cow, ride a horse, and other valuable frontier skills. Tragically, Big Jim was murdered years later when he tried to retrieve a horse from an incensed white renter. His murderer was acquitted in a mock trial.71

Although Codgell was guilty of miscegenation in the eyes of the South and her family, she was also guilty of practicing what white men in her family and community had been doing for years:

Early I had found out that the deacon of a local Baptist church, a most respectable man, had a

70At the marriage bureau, Codgell decided to mark herself on the marriage certificate as "colored" as a satirical gesture to some of her family members' relationships with African Americans and to diffuse any suspicion. "There's some colored blood in my family," she told an official at the bureau. "Does that make me colored?" "Oh yes, yes!" replied the official. Ibid., 38-39.

71Ibid., 34-35.
colored companion for twenty years with everyone aware of the intimacy... I knew, besides, that the same system existed in my family, with my father drawing no color line in his love life, and that of my eldest brother, publicly thought to be childless, had a colored daughter attending school outside the state. So interracial love was not unknown in my environment.  

For Schuyler, his marriage to a white woman was also a realization of his desire for interracial love. Schuyler delivered newspapers as a young boy, and his route passed through the red-light district in Syracuse. While there, he delivered newspapers to several bordellos, meeting many young white prostitutes who would hug and kiss him. Many times the madam of the house would also tell their cooks to give young Schuyler some ice cream.  

As a teenager, he realized the color line in Syracuse prevented him from attending dances with whites or dating white women.

After leaving Syracuse, Schuyler felt free to date women of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Although Schuyler dated African American women, usually they were

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72 Codgell's father was believed to have had an African American mistress for over forty years. Her brother was shot by an enraged husband for his tryst with an African American woman, leaving him unable to produce children. In turn, he shot the man at point-blank range. Ibid., 33; Josephine Schuyler, "17 Years of Mixed Marriage," Negro Digest, July 1946, 62.

73 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 20.
light-skinned and sometimes "passed" for white. Schuyler's desire for interracial love was not satisfied with African American women, thus he married Codgell to achieve his goal and to defy one of American society's greatest taboos. Anticipating racial animosity from Whites and African Americans, Schuyler appealed to his new wife that they were truly alone, and that they would have to rely on each other for support. Schuyler reiterated this advice in his famous 1928 article, "Racial Intermarriage In The United States,":

Realizing their status in society, cognizant of the added strain upon their relationship and aware of the greatly increased opportunities for developing flurries of temper, they seem to make unusual efforts to be as pleasant and inoffensive as possible to each other. Knowing that they are two against the world, they cling the closer together; expecting society to be always conspiring to separate them, they are prone to ignore gossip and rumors about each to the other.  

74 In the George Schuyler Manuscript Collection at Syracuse University, there are a collection of pictures of various women, most of them African American, who may have been love interests of Schuyler before Josephine Codgell. One photograph of an African American woman of interracial background is labeled "Myrtle," Schuyler's live-in girlfriend during his Harlem days of 1919-20. There are several photographs of an unidentified African American woman also of interracial background, one of which is labeled "Yours truly, Wife." Schuyler was to be engaged to a woman from Boston during World War I but she died. It is not known whether the woman in the pictures is her.

75 George Schuyler, "Racial Intermarriage In The United States," The American Parade, Fall 1928, 60.
In retrospect, the 1920's was a remarkable decade for George Schuyler. During the period 1923-1929, the young journalist had gone from an unemployed common laborer to one of the most prominent African American journalists of the decade. His critical essays on race earned him the label of race expert and his "Views and Reviews" column and "Aframerica Today" series earned him a permanent position on the editorial staff of one of the leading African American newspapers of the period.

His personal life was just as dramatic when he defied Jim Crow America and married a white woman from a wealthy and racially prejudiced Southern family. Despite the dramatic changes, Schuyler retained the characteristics that would define his career and political conservatism: dogmatic cynicism, belligerent and caustic writings, brutal criticism of African American culture, and an unbending support of his beliefs, whether right or wrong. In the following decades, these characteristics became more pronounced as his reputation grew and his conservatism matured.
CHAPTER 4
SATIRIST AND MUCKRAKER: SCHUYLER THE NOVELIST

The carefree spirit and rebellion of the 1920's came to an abrupt and brutal end in October 1929 when the Stock Market on Wall Street in Manhattan crashed. In its place came the stark reality of the Great Depression. Subsequently, the Harlem Renaissance came to an end as well. Writers of the movement felt the stinging effects of the economic disaster as funds from wealthy white sponsors disappeared. Schuyler also felt the effect as Vann drastically cut his salary at the Courier forty percent. Prior to the cut Schuyler wrote a letter to Vann inquiring about three weeks' back pay not received, whereupon Vann replied, "Your articles disclose that you know something about the general depression of the country, but your letters to us disclose that [you think] the depression has hit everyone but us."¹

Despite the setback at the Courier, the early 1930's were some of the most productive and successful years of Schuyler's career. He was able to buffer the depression

¹Buni, Vann, 225.
by publishing several articles in prominent magazines of the day. Schuyler was generously compensated by his mentor and friend H.L. Mencken when he submitted to the American Mercury in 1930 for publication essays such as "Traveling Jim Crow," a criticism of segregation in travel, and "Black Warriors," a homage to his Army years.\(^2\) During the heart of the depression, Schuyler and his wife lived in the exclusive Park Lincoln Apartments at 321 Edgecombe Avenue in Harlem's "Sugar Hill" district. Far from rich, the Schuyler's nonetheless lived a privileged life because of Schuyler's status as a prominent journalist and his productivity.\(^3\)

1931 proved to be an important year personally and professionally for Schuyler. On August 2, 1931, Josephine Schuyler gave birth to the family's only child. Born at home, the baby daughter was named Philippa Duke Schuyler and weighed 7 1/4 pounds.\(^4\) As she matured, Philippa would prove to be a bundle of joy and amazement for her parents. Schuyler also had another reason to cherish 1931: the critical success of his first novel

\(^2\)Schuyler was paid $150 each for his articles, which were published by Mencken. Receipts for "Traveling Jim Crow" and "Black Warriors," Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

\(^3\)Ttalalay, Composition in Black and White, 11-12.

\(^4\)Ibid.

During the previous year, V.F. Calverton had encouraged Schuyler to write a novel addressing race relations. The editor of the Modern Quarterly was greatly impressed with his critical essays on race, and felt that his views needed to be expanded in a greater forum. Schuyler accepted the challenge and proceeded to work on the novel. While writing Black No More, he sought advice from trusted individuals. Among them was friend and future NAACP Secretary Walter White. Schuyler sent copies of his manuscript to White for constructive criticism and helpful recommendations. Most helpful was Calverton, who was able to convince the Macaulay Company to publish Black No More in January 1931. Prior to the publication, Schuyler asked his mentor and friend H.L. Mencken to write an introduction for the novel. Mencken refused, on the grounds that he did not want to be seen as a patron of Schuyler. Although disappointed, Schuyler agreed, saying "There has, I believe, been altogether too

5 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 170.
6 Williams, "When Black Is Right," 201-06
7 Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 170.
much of it, especially in connection with work done by the dark brethren."  

*Black No More* is a tour-de-force of classic 20th century satire, irony, and a relentless condemnation of American racism. Schuyler was inspired to write his novel by a number of aspects of 1920's race relations. One was the rise of the Ku Klux Klan during the decade. Schuyler constantly lampooned the white supremacist organization in the *Messenger* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Another target was Marcus Garvey. Although the UNIA leader was deported from the U.S. in 1927, Schuyler still proceeded to mercilessly lampoon his Back-To-Africa movement. Primarily, the concept of *Black No More* was inspired by what Schuyler called "white is right" philosophies by African Americans. Schuyler loathed the advertisements for "skin-lightening" and "hair-straightening" cosmetics found in the *Courier* and even the *Messenger*. Ironically, Garvey shared the same distaste for African Americans who preferred lighter skin color. At the same time, Schuyler condemned all aspects of race chauvinism and attempted to show the absurdity.

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and dishonesty of white supremacy and black nationalism. In a satirical gesture to the concept of race purity, Schuyler dedicated Black No More to

"all Caucasians in the great republic who can trace their ancestry back ten generations and confidently assert that there are no Black leaves, twigs, limbs, or branches on their family trees."9

Black No More begins at a Harlem nightclub where Max Disher, the main character, and his sidekick Bunny Brown are celebrating New Year's Eve, 1933. Lamenting over the breakup with his "high yallah" girlfriend, Max is smitten by the beauty of a white woman with a party of whites at the club. After one of the party asks Max to buy some liquor outside of the club, he musters the courage to ask the unidentified white woman for a dance. Max is brutally rebuffed when she coldly states, "I Never dance with niggers."10 Dejected and angry, Max slinks away from the table but learns that the woman is from Atlanta.

The following morning, Max learns from Bunny that a Harlem doctor, Dr. Junius Crookman, has discovered a

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10 Ibid., 23.

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scientific treatment to turn blacks into whites.\footnote{In the preface of Black No More, Schuyler mentions a Dr. Yusaburo Noguchi of Beppu, Japan who supposedly found a treatment to turn blacks into whites. Based on a front page article from November 2, 1929, in the Pittsburgh Courier, Noguchi stated that the treatment involved glandular control and electrical nutrition. "Given time, I could change the Japanese into a race of tall blue-eyed blondes," quoted Noguchi. Ibid., 13-14; Peplow, George S. Schuyler, 123.}

Financially supported by Henry Johnson and Charlie Foster, two Harlem underworld figures, Crookman announces at a press conference the opening of his clinic Black-No-More, Incorporated. Max, who is friends with Crookman, convinces the doctor to use him as his first subject. On the day of the treatment, Max is escorted to a room where he is placed in a menacing electric chair and undergoes the painful but successful treatment. Once white, Max changes his name to Matthew Fisher and gleefully ventures into previously forbidden nightspots in Manhattan. Despite his initial pleasure, Max soon finds that being white in Harlem is not as enjoyable as he is shunned from his former haunts and is met with apprehension by former black friends and associates. Feeling that he needs a change in atmosphere, Max decides to leave New York and heads to Atlanta in search of the elusive woman.

Arriving in Atlanta, Max finds it difficult to find a job in depression-plagued America even as a white man.
In a desperate but shrewd move, Max schemes to infiltrate a white supremacist group called the Knights of Nordica. Posing as an anthropologist, Max is able to negotiate a meeting with Reverend Henry Givens, Imperial Grand Wizard of the Knights. Using racist philosophy, Max warns Givens of the growing "Black-No-More menace" and implores him to speak out against the treatment. Easily convinced, Givens invites Max to speak at an evening rally about Black-No-More. At the rally, Max immediately spots in the audience the woman from the nightclub. To his delight, he discovers that she is Givens' daughter Helen. A courtship develops and soon Max and Helen become husband and wife.

Meanwhile, Crookman and his associates become millionaires as blacks rush to become white. Social and political turmoil runs rampant in America as blacks disappear and nouveau whites appear in their place. Black neighborhoods become ghost towns and black businesses such as Madame Sisseretta Blandish's hair-straightening parlors in Harlem become relics of the past. Black organizations relying on black patronage such as the National Social Equality League and the Back-To-Africa Society are alarmed. White America is even more alarmed by the prospect of pretenders among their
racial ranks. A rash of black babies born to supposedly white parents breaks out throughout the country. Crookman offers a solution by providing hospitals where the infants undergo the Black-No-More process. In the South, former black laborers resurface as white laborers and strike for better wages and working conditions. Ironically, the strike is sabotaged when Max and an anglicized Bunny scheme to revive fears in white laborers of black laborers taking their jobs.

Max's life becomes more complicated in 1936 when the Knights of Nordica scheme to make Givens the Presidential candidate on the Democratic Party ticket. Predictably, the platform condemns Black-No-More, Inc. The Knights combine forces with the Anglo-Saxon Association, an organization dedicated to the "purity of the white race," to conduct a genealogical research project to expose the nouveau whites. Arthur Snobbcraft, head of the Anglo-Saxon Association, hires Dr. Samuel Buggerie to conduct the research. Snobbcraft grudgingly agrees to run on the Democratic ticket as Vice President. Although Max assists with the campaign, he realizes the danger of being exposed as a creation of Black-No-More, Inc. To make matters worse, Helen becomes pregnant and is unaware that she is carrying a black child.
Givens and Snobbcraft conduct their campaign of speaking out against Black No More, Inc. through a barnstorming tour of speeches, public appearances, and radio broadcasts. Angered by Givens' racially inflammatory speeches, overzealous supporters attack and set fire to a Black No More hospital in Cincinnati, killing several babies in the process. Despite the incident, Givens, Snobbcraft, and the Democrats are assured of winning the race for the Presidential office. Two days before the election, Buggerie confronts Snobbcraft with disturbing news about the project. Buggerie's research backfires when it reveals that at least 50% of whites in America, including Givens, Snobbcraft, and Buggerie, have black ancestry. The research also reveals that Max and Bunny are creations of Black No More, Inc. Alarmed, Snobbcraft and Buggerie rush to the headquarters of the Anglo-Saxon Association to destroy the cumbersome research. Once there, they find the research stolen. Initially frightened, Buggerie remembers that the summary of the research is back at Snobbcraft's house. When they arrive, they find the summary stolen by the Republican Party. The Republicans promptly release the information in the press and glide easily to a landslide victory. The Knights of Nordica
and the Anglo-Saxon Association are left to face bewildered and enraged white supporters.

Meanwhile, Helen has her baby and predictably, the child is born black. At the same time, the research is released in the press. Despite the revelation, Helen and her family decide that Max's character is more important than his racial makeup. To escape an enraged white mob, Max, Bunny, and the family fly to Europe where they live happily ever after on the funds of the defunct Knights of Nordica. Snobbcraft and Buggerie attempt to escape, but their fate ends at the hands of a white Christian fundamentalist cult who brutally lynch the unfortunate men. *Black No More* ends on an ironic note in 1940 when Crookman reveals that the nouveau whites are actually lighter than actual whites. He also discovers a process to turn whites into blacks, whereupon they rush to his clinics to undergo the process. The preferred color in America becomes black and a racial caste is drawn once again.

In *Black No More*, irony prevails as one of the major themes. Most of the characters are comical but tragic figures who attempt to be the opposite of what they are in reality. Characters such as Arthur Snobbcraft and Rev. Henry Givens revel in their perceived notions of
white supremacy. In reality, they are fools who suffer from ironic turns of fate. Snobbcraft's organization financially supports Givens' run for the presidency, even though he feels superior over his running mate. Toward the end of the story, Snobbcraft's racial beliefs are dramatically overturned when he discovers his black ancestry. Givens preaches sermons of hate and black inferiority, despite his own intellectual shortcomings. In the end, not only does he discover his black ancestry, he finds that the son-in-law who organizes his campaign is black as well.

Of all the literary devices in Black No More, parody stands out as the most prominent. Schuyler brilliantly makes fun of various individuals and organizations associated with race relations of the era. Organizations such as the NAACP, the UNIA, and the Ku Klux Klan are parodied respectively as the National Social Equality League, the Back-To-Africa Society, and the Knights of Nordica. Individuals such as pioneer black hairstylist Madame C.J. Walker, UNIA founder Marcus Garvey, and Ku Klux Klan Grand Imperial Wizard Rev. William Simmons are
parodies of Madame Sisseretta Blandish, Santop Licorice, and Rev. Henry Givens. 12

The best parody in Black No More is of the NAACP, when the National Social Equality League holds a conference of black leaders to discuss the dilemma of Crookman's invention. Among the leaders are Dr. Shakespeare Agamemnon Beard, Dr. Napoleon Wellington Jackson, Colonel Mortimer Roberts, and Walter Williams. In reality, the characters are thinly veiled parodies of W.E.B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnson, Robert Russa Morton, and Walter White. Most intriguing is Schuyler's description of Beard, closely resembling a description of DuBois:

In a very private inner office of the NSEL suite, Dr. Shakespeare Agamemnon Beard, founder of the league and a graduate of Harvard, Yale and Copenhagen (whose haughty being never failed to impress both Caucasians and Negroes), sat before a glass-topped desk, rubbing now his curly gray head, and now his full spade beard. For a mere six thousand dollars a year, the learned doctor wrote scholarly and biting editorials in The Dilemma denouncing the Caucasians whom he secretly admired and lauding the greatness of the Negroes whom he alternately pitied and despised. In limpid prose he told of the sufferings privations of the downtrodden black workers with whose lives he was totally and thankfully unfamiliar. Like most Negro leaders, he deified the black woman but abstained from employing aught save octoroons. He talked at white banquets about "we of the black race" and admitted in books

12Williams, "When Black Is Right," 188; Peplow, George S. Schuyler, 61, 64.
that he was part-French, part Russian, part-Indian and part-Negro. He bitterly denounced the Nordics for debauching Negro women while taking care to hire comely yellow stenographers with weak resistance. In a real way, he loved his people. In time of peace he was a Pink Socialist but when the clouds of war gathered he bivouacked at the feet of Mars.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Black No More} is also a manifesto of Schuyler's political and personal beliefs. Although Schuyler was involved with the NAACP in 1930, his prejudices toward African American activist organizations still prevailed. In the world of \textbf{Black No More}, race leaders are charlatans. Organizations such as The Knights of Nordica, The Anglo-Saxon Association, The Back-To-Africa Society, The National Social Equality League, and lastly, Black-No-More, Inc., are institutions that exploit people's ignorance, fear, and insecurities in order to make a financial profit.

Christianity is also a target in \textbf{Black No More}. Schuyler's skepticism of organized religion is probably rooted in his mother's irregular attendance of various churches during his childhood.\textsuperscript{14} "My mother was a religious woman," Schuyler explained, "but she was not a regular churchgoer."\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13}Schuyler, \textit{Black No More}, 90. The reference to \textit{The Dilemma} is Schuyler's parody of \textit{The Crisis}, the NAACP journal DuBois edited.

\textsuperscript{14}Williams, "When Black Is Right," 77-78.
various Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Seventh Day Adventist churches in Syracuse, but never joined or steadily attended any of them. To a young Schuyler, the irregular attendance probably seemed confusing and monotonous. As he became older, Schuyler's skepticism deepened into a contempt for white Christianity and the black church. Both churches, in his opinion, were full of ignorant and conniving ministers who easily and readily fleeced their congregations for personal gain. Interestingly, his atheism continued well into his later years, when his political views became more conservative. In *Black No More*, white Christianity is portrayed as the perpetuator of racism. Schuyler provides comical characters such as Rev. Henry Givens to show the crudity and hypocrisy of organized religion. At the same time, religion is the backdrop for the most brutal and gruesome part of the story: the lynchings of Samuel Buggerie and Arthur Snobbcraft.

When Buggerie's research backfires, he and Snobbcraft attempt to escape by plane, only to run out of gas and crash in Mississippi. The pilot is killed instantly, but Buggerie and Snobbcraft survive and wander to find help. Prior to the crash, the two men wipe shoe

polish on their faces to disguise themselves as black. They finally reach the town of Happy Hill, where they stumble upon a revival held by Alex McPhule of the True Faith Christ Lovers Church. McPhule is an evangelist who is portrayed as a lecherous adulterer. His congregation consists of uneducated, low-income whites who desire to lynch a black person since most disappeared because of Black-No-More, Inc. During the revival, McPhule prays to God to "send him a nigger for his congregation to lynch" when Buggerie and Snobbcraft are spotted by the crowd. Mistaken as "niggers," the two men are seized and marched to the town for the lynching. Amid loud protests, Buggerie and Snobbcraft prove that they are not black. Unfortunately, someone recognizes them from a newspaper story regarding Buggerie's research, and the two are lynched in the most brutal manner. Buggerie and Snobbcraft are stripped, their genitals and ears are cut off and sewn to their backs, and told to run whereupon the mob shoots them. Afterward, their bodies are burned at the stake, and McPhule and the congregation are satisfied. In an ironic twist, two or three whitened blacks in the crowd draw attention to themselves when they show their disgust. To quickly regain favor, they

\[16\] Schuyler, Black No More, 208.
began to shout and poke at the charred remains of Buggerie and Snobbycraft. Of all the ironies in Black No More, the Buggerie and Snobbycraft lynching is the most disturbing. Schuyler shows that not only is religion used to commit the most unspeakable acts, it is also used to be inhuman in the name of humanity.

Lastly, Black No More is a plea for acceptance of interracial love. Although Schuyler wrote the novel to criticize self-loathing among African Americans, he also wanted to demonstrate that a person’s character is more important than their racial makeup. The main character falls for a white woman from a wealthy Southern family that hates African Americans, but at the end of story, they learn to accept him and his child. Schuyler was probably motivated to write this ending by his real-life situation with his wife Josephine and her family. Although Josephine loved Schuyler, her family felt otherwise. The Codgells never accepted their African American son-in-law nor their beautiful and talented granddaughter Philippa. Even when Josephine did manage to visit her family in Texas, she went alone. Although this fact probably pained Schuyler, he still held hope.

17Ibid., 217-18.

18Talalay, Compositions in Black and White, 93-94.
that one day the Codgells would look beyond his dark skin, look at his character, and accept him into the family, as the Givens accepted Max Disher in Black No More.

Critical response to Black No More was varied. Favorable response seemed to come from African American critics who were intrigued by Schuyler's satiric portrayal of race relations. Alain Locke gave a short yet favorable review of Black No More, stating that although it sunk to the level of "farce and burlesque," it succeeded overall as a novel satire of race relations. "I believe that one of the great new veins of Negro fiction has been opened by this book," Locke praised. "May its tribe increase!" Rudolph Fisher also gave a favorable review of Black No More, stating that its major features were commendable. "The idea is large and suggestive, the general plan adequate, the movement swift and direct, and the climaxes satisfyingly inevitable," proclaimed Fisher.


Among the most enthusiastic reviews was W.E.B DuBois' in *The Crisis*. Despite being lampooned in *Black No More*, DuBois praised the novel for its unabashed satire of race in America. "Mr. Schuyler's satire is frank, straightforward, and universal," praised DuBois. "It carries not only scathing criticism of Negro leaders, but of the mass of Negroes, and then it passes over and slaps the white people just as hard and unflinchingly straight in the face."\footnote{W.E.B. DuBois, review of *Black No More*, by George S. Schuyler, in *The Crisis* (March 1931); quoted from *Book Reviews By W.E.B. DuBois* (Millwood, New York: KTO Press, 1977), edited by Herbert Aptheker, 153.}

Viewing *Black No More* as a "rollicking, keen, good-natured criticism of the Negro problem in the United States," DuBois instructed his audience to read the novel. "You are bound to enjoy it and to follow with joyous laughter the adventures of Max Disher and Bunny, Dr. Crookman, and - we say it with all reservations - Dr. Agamemnon Shakespeare Beard."\footnote{Ibid., 154.}

DuBois's comments were greatly appreciated by Schuyler and his wife Josephine, who wrote DuBois a short but gracious letter of thanks. "I have just read your review
of Black No More. It's a peach! You are indeed a sporting gentleman," declared Josephine.\(^{23}\)

Not all reviews of Black No More were favorable. Collectively, white reviewers were either disturbed by Schuyler's brutal satire of racism or completely disregarded it as a poor novel. The New York Times Book Review criticized Black No More as lacking originality and being overwritten. "Satire is made of sharper metal than Mr. Schuyler possesses," stated the Times. "Often, instead of using his knife to cut, he turns it into a trowel and slaps it on thick with the broadside."\(^{24}\) The New Republic stated that although Black No More was "racy and amusing in a sophomoric way, it would be more interesting if he had not achieved his cynicism quite so cheaply - by an unfunny and indiscriminate lampooning of the leaders of his race."\(^{25}\) Ironically, Schuyler's mentor and friend, H.L. Mencken, joined in the chorus of white critics, stating that although the first half of

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the story contained excellent scenes, his lampooning of black leaders was "uncomfortably savage."

Most peculiar and condescending was reviewer Dorothy Van Doren's assessment in the Nation. Reasoning that the Negro was better off in slavery than in contemporary times, Van Doren stated that "the Negro will never write great literature while he tries to write white literature. It maybe that he can express himself only by music and rhythm, and not by words." Although Schuyler was on assignment in Africa, Josephine was compelled to write Van Doren a reply to her statement regarding "white satire:"

Mrs. Van Doren calls [Black No More] "white satire" and this apparently is intended to condemn the book and its author. It is rather surprising that well-read people still assume that there is such a thing as a distinct Negro literature. There is not, and never has been, such a thing as "racial" literature; there is only national or sectional literature . . . It is noteworthy that Disraeli acted like an Englishman, Karl Marx like a German, Trotsky like a Russian, and Rabbi Wise certainly thinks and acts like an American . . . Why expect the American Negro not to write like an American? The sooner the white liberal accepts the Negro for what he is, just a dark-skinned, more exploited American, and not for a simple, primitive, exotic


being to be alternately pitied and patronized, the sooner the American color problem will be solved.\textsuperscript{28}

Towards the end of 1931, a second novel by Schuyler was released. Not as satirical, \textit{Slaves Today: A Story Of Liberia} addressed a grisly subject: domestic slavery in the country. Two years before, The League of Nations conducted an investigation into charges brought by J.R.F. Faulkner, head of the People's Party in Liberia. He charged that the Liberian government sold workers to the Spanish government for fifty dollars a head. The workers were then sent to plantations on the Spanish island of Fernando Po, located off the coast of Nigeria.\textsuperscript{29} The Firestone Rubber Company was investigated as well, since the company dominated the Liberian economy.\textsuperscript{30} A League of Nations commission concluded that the Firestone Company was not guilty of using forced labor but that domestic slavery did exist in Liberia.\textsuperscript{31} The commission

\textsuperscript{28}Josephine Schuyler, "Correspondence," \textit{The Nation}, April 8, 1931, 382.

\textsuperscript{29}Peplow, \textit{George S. Schuyler}, 87.

\textsuperscript{30}In 1927, the Liberian government agreed to a contract with the Firestone Rubber Company for a loan of $5 million in return for 2,000 acres of land reserved for experimental purposes, the right to lease up to 1 million acres of land, and construction of a harbor at Monrovia by the company. The expenditures were later paid by the Liberian government. John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, \textit{From Slavery To Freedom: A History Of African Americana}, 7th ed., (New York: McGraw, Inc., 1994), 307.
report gained the interest of publisher George Palmer Putnam, who was interested in a book on slavery in the country. Seeking the advice of future NAACP president Arthur Spingarn, he was recommended to Schuyler, who had earned a reputation as an investigative journalist with his "Aframerica Today" series in the Courier a few years before. Schuyler met Putnam and graciously accepted the offer. Once again, Schuyler would have the opportunity to demonstrate his talents as an investigative reporter and present a detailed report of Liberia. The assignment was also another opportunity for Schuyler to debunk the "Back To Africa" movement. Schuyler still loathed Marcus Garvey, and Liberia seemed to be an excellent contradiction of Garvey's Pan Africanism. The irony of an African country, inhabited by descendants of American slaves, practicing slavery on their own citizens was something Schuyler could not ignore. As a result, he exposed Liberia's domestic

31 Williams, "When Black Is Right," 213.
32 Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 173.
33 Liberia was established in 1821 due to the efforts of the American Colonization Society, an organization established to encourage the deportation of free blacks to Africa. Floundering as a colony in its first two decades, Liberia came under the control of Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the first African American governor of the colony. In 1847, Liberia became an independent country.
slavery, dispelling any assumptions of Pan African unity and cooperation.

Schuyler was careful not to discuss his assignment to anyone except to his wife Josephine, Spingarn, and a select few. After a month of preparation, Schuyler finally departed for Liverpool, England from New York on the R.M.S. Scythia on January 24, 1931.\textsuperscript{34} While in England, Schuyler visited several cooperative organizations in Liverpool, Manchester, and London in order to gain valuable information for his own cooperative organization in Harlem.\textsuperscript{35} On February 11, Schuyler departed from Liverpool on the M.V. Adda for the Liberian capital of Monrovia. Accompanying him on his journey was the newly-appointed U.S. Minister to Liberia Charles E. Mitchell and his wife. Schuyler had met Mitchell during his "Aframerica Today" tour in


\textsuperscript{34}Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 174, 176.

\textsuperscript{35}In 1930, Schuyler founded the Young Negroes Cooperative League, a cooperative designed to assist African American consumers and small businesses. A detailed discussion of the organization is in the following chapter.
Charleston, West Virginia, when he was a bank president and business manager of West Virginia State College.\footnote{Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative}, 179-180.}

Arriving in Monrovia, Schuyler stayed at the American Legation as the Mitchells' guest, and traveled with them around the city, to the Firestone plantations, and the Booker T. Washington Industrial School at Kakata.\footnote{Ibid.}

Naturally, Schuyler was grateful for their hospitality and assistance. With the assistance of Mitchell, Schuyler was able to acquire necessary documents and privileges from the Liberian government for his excursion, including permission to carry a pistol into the interior.\footnote{Ibid. 182.}

On March 10, Schuyler departed Monrovia with an entourage of fourteen porters and American Vice Consul William R. George for company. From March to mid April, Schuyler visited several tribal villages in Liberia and interviewed several villagers and chieftains about the domestic slave trade. Schuyler was able to fill several notebooks with valuable information before he took ill with malaria in early April. Amazingly, he struggled with the disease for over a month before his fever
subsided. Schuyler gave credit to a healthy diet of chopped steak, strawberries and cream, milk, raw clams, and salads recommended by the Rockefeller Institute of Tropical Disease. 39 Once healthy, Schuyler resumed his work and compiled his information into Slaves Today.

Prior to the release of Slaves Today, Schuyler's findings were initially revealed in a series of articles published in the Summer of 1931 in major newspapers such as the New York Evening Post, the Buffalo Express, the Philadelphia Public Ledger, and the Washington Post. 40 In September and October of 1931, the Pittsburgh Courier published a series of eight weekly articles of Schuyler's account of domestic slavery in Liberia. Written in a sensationalist manner, the articles told of stories of native Liberians being forcibly kidnapped. Young boys were sold into forced labor while young girls were bought by wealthy men, usually government officials, to become their concubines. Schuyler also told of how tribal chiefs were publicly humiliated and tortured by kidnappers in order to intimidate the villagers. Interestingly, Schuyler did not hold the Firestone Company accountable for the trade in his articles. On

39 Ibid., 185.
40 Ibid., 186.
the contrary, he stated that the Firestone plantations were an example of what Liberia could be under "intelligent control."\textsuperscript{41}

Schuyler did hold accountable the Liberian officials and missionaries who he felt were knowledgeable about the trade, but refused to recognize it. When an official argued that slavery was outlawed and that Liberian citizens could complain without fear to a public officer, Schuyler commented that "Your Liberian official is extremely legalistic and will argue for hours in this vein like an American prohibitionist contending that the United States is dry because the Eighteen Amendment and Volstead law are in operation."\textsuperscript{42} His greatest contempt was against the missionaries, viewing them as hypocritical bystanders who refused to help the same people they pledged to save. "Missionaries of the Lord sent out to the wilds of Africa to Christianize the so-called benighted native struck me as being singularly callous and indifferent about the fate of the aborigine," fumed Schuyler. "They are eager for his soul, but apparently not interested in his body. At least, they

\textsuperscript{41}George Schuyler, "Schuyler, In Liberia, Enters A 'New World'," Pittsburgh Courier, 10 October, 1931.

\textsuperscript{42}Schuyler, "Those Who Could Help Are The Exploiters," Pittsburgh Courier, 19 September, 1931.
have not been sufficiently concerned to protest to the world his enslavement and treatment."43

Predictably, Schuyler's series on Liberia created a storm of controversy and protest from Liberian officials and Pan Africanists. When Schuyler was answering questions at a meeting in Harlem of the Native African Union of America, he was confronted by a Garvey supporter asking why he did not approve of Garvey's plan of developing Africa. Schuyler coldly responded:

"I did not then and do not now approve of the loud mouthed, ignorant, inefficient manner in which Garvey went about the business . . . If Negroes are to develop Africa they will have to indulge in less wild talk and wilder mass meetings and go about the business in a businesslike way as do the white men they criticize. Africa can only be developed by brains plus capital."44

Fortunately for Schuyler, the meeting was adjourned when angered Garvey supporters began rising from their seats.45 Despite the criticism, Schuyler remained adamant in his position on Liberia. Much to the disappointment of his critics, the publishing company of


45 Ibid.

Based on Schuyler's investigation of slavery in Liberia, *Slaves Today* is a fictional account of a young Liberian couple whose marriage and lives are destroyed by the brutal system. Set in a contemporary time period, the story begins at Monrovia, where Sidney Cooper Johnson,\(^{46}\) president of Liberia, appoints David Jackson as a district commissioner. Jackson, a ruthless and brutal commissioner, is responsible for collecting tributes from the district and finding "boys" for the slave trade. Meanwhile, the Gola tribe in the village of Takama is celebrating the marriage of Pameta, the village chief's daughter, and Zo, the young hero of the story. During the celebration, Jackson and his Frontier Force of soldiers descend upon Takama to collect tributes of rice, palm oil, and other items. When the village fails to produce the items, Jackson orders the chief to be publicly whipped. After the whipping, the enraged chief and villagers rush toward Jackson, only to be shot and killed by the soldiers. Before leaving Takama, Jackson raises the tribute and forcefully seizes Pameta for his

\(^{46}\)Johnson is a satire of Edwin Barclay, the President of Liberia during Schuyler's visit.
pleasure. Outraged by Jackson's action, Zo sets out to rescue Pameta.

Reaching the district headquarters of Boloba, Zo finds Pameta imprisoned and tries to free her. Unfortunately, Jackson discovers them and orders Zo to be whipped and imprisoned. During his imprisonment, Zo meets Soki, a wise but cynical older man who befriends him and plots an escape. Much to their disappointment, the two are caught and sent to Monrovia to be sold to the Spanish. Zo and Soki are sent to the Spanish island of Fernando Po where they are sentenced to work for two years on a plantation occupied by Liberian prisoners and Spanish-Liberian guards.

Zo receives a brutal education in human cruelty as he experiences the harsh rule of the plantation guards and the grueling work. One of his lessons comes from a local prostitute who befriends Zo and convinces him to escape. Innocently, he gives her all of his saved money in order to escape. Unfortunately, he learns that the prostitute and a guard have schemed to take his money, leaving Zo brokenhearted and poor. Shortly thereafter, Zo becomes ill with malaria and is sent to the island hospital, where he witnesses fellow prisoners inflicted with severe cases of smallpox, syphilis, yellow fever,
and other diseases. Fortunately, he is cured of malaria and is released.

Meanwhile, Zo's wife Pameta is held captive at the district commissioner's house, where she is forced to be the concubine of Jackson and subject to the vicious wrath of his wife. Despite her dilemma, she is hopeful that she will eventually escape from Jackson and be reunited with Zo. In the meantime, Zo serves the remainder of his sentence and is released from Fernando Po. Nonetheless, he is sad because Soki remains in prison for attacking a guard on, ironically, his last day of sentence. He arrives in Monrovia and celebrates his freedom, only to be imprisoned once again for disturbing the peace. Tried and found guilty, he is fined his entire savings and leaves Monrovia, only to be kidnapped by soldiers and made a slave again. This time, Zo successfully escapes and sets out for Boloba to find Pameta.

At the district commissioner's house, Pameta falls ill with disease and pleads for help from Jackson. Jackson cruelly ignores her cries of help but instead rapes her and throws her out of the house. Pameta staggers to the road, delirious and close to death. Zo finally finds Pameta, only to witness her death in his arms. Angered and vengeful, Zo storms into Jackson's
house and stabs the horrified district commissioner to death. Zo's own life is ended by the bullet of Jackson's sentry. The story ends on an even more somber note when President Johnson, through a rigged election, defeats challenger Tom Saunders, a reformer who wishes to end the slave trade by ousting Johnson and his corrupt administration.\textsuperscript{47} The innocent lives of Zo and Pameta are destroyed and the destructive Liberian slave trade continues.

Despite the tragic ending of \textit{Slaves Today}, the novel gained favorable reviews for its muckraking journalism. The \textit{New York Times Book Review} praised \textit{Slaves Today} for its expose of conditions in Liberia. "Where a less objective author dealing with an exotic theme would lapse into sentimentality and high-flown descriptive writing, Mr. Schuyler has avoided these pitfalls," praised the \textit{Times}.\textsuperscript{48} The \textit{New York Evening Post} was equally commendable, stating that "Mr. Schuyler's interest in satire is beginning to be engaged not merely by conflict between races or within a race but by the more largely

\textsuperscript{47}Saunders is a character closely resembling Liberian reformer J.R.F. Faulkner.

human."\textsuperscript{49} Mary White Ovington of the NAACP passionately stated that "\textit{Slaves Today} should make every American Negro who reads it cease to talk of the brutal white man. Brutality does not depend upon race but upon opportunity."\textsuperscript{50} H.L. Mencken praised \textit{Slaves Today} for providing excellent pictures of native life in Liberia. Stating that the novel was in the manner of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Mencken added that Schuyler was "too indignant to be altogether convincing."

Addressing a sensitive and controversial issue, Schuyler naturally received unfavorable criticism for \textit{Slaves Today}. Most critical were African and African American reviewers who sharply criticized Schuyler for targeting the black republic and failing to address abuses in other African countries at the hands of European powers. Reviewer Ben N. Azikiwe stated that Schuyler's method of approach was "biased and superficial. He is sincere like all social reformers are, but a critic of colonial politics cannot be unilateral in the treatment of a subject that is of


international importance." W.E.B DuBois was also highly
critical of Schuyler's expose of Liberia. Although his
review in the Crisis failed to address the book, he
criticized him for not understanding the history of
Liberia and launched into a brief review of the country's
economic problems at the hands of Germany, England,
Spain, and France.\footnote{W.E.B. DuBois, Review of Slaves Today, By George
S. Schuyler, The Crisis, February 1932; quoted from Book
Reviews By W.E.B. DuBois (Millwood, New York: KTO Press,
1977), edited by Herbert Aptheker, 161-62.}
Unmoved by his defense of Liberia, Schuyler sent a detailed reply to DuBois:

\begin{quote}
I regret very much that in your review of my novel Slaves Today in the February Crisis, you
placed yourself in the very vulnerable position of fervently defending the rascally Liberian governing
class. In championing the cause of Negroes the
world over, I think you should discriminate between
those who are victims of injustice and those who are
proven wrong.\footnote{George S. Schuyler to W.E.B. DuBois, 27 January
1932. W.E.B. DuBois Papers; quoted in Williams, "When
Black Is Right," 235.}
\end{quote}

In his reply, Schuyler criticizes DuBois' argument of
European countries making it difficult for Liberia to trade:

\begin{quote}
"It is the fault only of the Liberians that they have refused to properly clean their palm oil
and grade their coffee ... The price paid for one
of the big shining limousines in which corrupt
government officials bounce along over the rocky
streets would pay for the requisite machinery.\footnote{"}
\end{quote}
Lastly, Schuyler blasts DuBois for his failure to criticize Liberia because of race:

You argue, like most Negroes here, that the Liberians are not to be strongly censured for exploiting and murdering their native wards because white colonial powers do the same thing. In other words, that the one is no worse than the other. But are we not to expect that Negro colonists who are so excessively religious and shout "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here" will be more humane to their black native wards than would white colonists? Especially when these black rulers boast of race patriotism? ... Right is right and wrong is wrong Dr. DuBois, regardless of the color of the individuals or groups involved, and admiring you immensely as I do for your courage and tenacity in persistently championing the cause of colored peoples, I am sorry that you permitted your belligerent and commendable Negrophilism to warp your vision in the case of the Liberian racketeers. 54

After Slaves Today, Schuyler's literary career faded. He did not publish another book until his autobiography in 1966. His fictional writing after 1931 was limited to short stories in the Pittsburgh Courier under his own name and several pseudonyms. 55 Despite his

53 Ibid., 236.
54 Ibid., 236-37.
55 Schuyler wrote over four hundred short stories for the Courier in the 1930's. Written in serial form, many of the stories were fictional cliffhangers involving blacks achieving vigilante justice over cruel whites. Among the most popular were "Black Internationale" and "Black Empire," where a syndicate of powerful blacks throughout the U.S. and Africa overthrow European rule in Africa and restore Africans to power. Written under the pen name of "Samuel I. Brooks," Schuyler seemed to be ashamed to take credit for the stories, since they
short career, Schuyler's literary contributions have received attention in recent years. Writer Ishmael Reed called *Black No More* the first black science-fiction novel. In the Foreword of the 1989 edition of *Black No More*, Professor James Miller of Trinity College declared the novel "the best work of prose satire to emerge from the Harlem Renaissance." Although *Slaves Today* is a forgotten book, Schuyler's account is a vivid and detailed, albeit one-sided, description of Liberia. His talents as an investigative journalist were validated by emphasized a strong Pan-African theme. "I have been greatly amused by the public enthusiasm for "The Black Internationale,"" wrote Schuyler to *Courier* business manager P.L. Prattis in 1937, "which is hokum and hack work of the purest vein. I deliberately set out to crowd as much race chauvinism and sheer improbability into it as my fertile imagination could conjure. The result vindicates my low opinion of the human race." Although Schuyler never mentioned the stories in his Columbia interviews or his autobiography, editors Robert A. Hill and R. Kent Rasmussen brought attention to "Black Internationale" and "Black Empire" in 1991 when they compiled the stories and put them in book form. In 1994, Hill also edited and put into book form "The Ethiopian Murder Mystery" and "Revolt In Ethiopia," two fictional accounts of Ethiopians overthrowing Italian rule in their country. A detailed discussion of "The Black Internationale," "Black Empire," and his sentiment toward Ethiopia is in the following chapter. Robert A. Hill & R. Kent Rasmussen, ed., *Black Empire: George S. Schuyler Writing As Samuel I. Brooks* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 259-60.


his expose of the Liberian slave trade, which led the way to additional international assignments in his journalistic career.

Politically, *Black No More* and *Slaves Today* were Schuyler's personal manifesto against race nationalism. Although *Black No More* attacked racism against African Americans, its true purpose was to denigrate and criticize race nationalism and prejudice within African American society. In addition, *Black No More* attacked Marcus Garvey's dream of Pan Africanism and labeled it as a farce designed to scheme gullible and vulnerable African Americans searching for a utopian black empire. The only true utopian society, according to Schuyler, was an integrated one where blacks and whites emphasized their similarities. In *Slaves Today*, Pan Africanism was assailed once again as Schuyler portrayed Liberia as a country abusing its own people in the name of race nationalism. Overall, both novels indicate a consistency throughout Schuyler's career. Although he was considered a radical in the 1930's, Schuyler still harbored an intense dislike of black nationalism. In the 1960's, his dislike would mature into a staunch conservative attack against the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the decade.
CHAPTER 5

ANTI-COMMUNIST FIGHTER AND RELUCTANT PATRIOT:
SCHUYLER DURING THE 1930'S AND WORLD WAR II

The 1930's were momentous years for Schuyler. In addition to having two novels published and earning a reputation as a well-known African American journalist and "race expert," Schuyler's personal life was enriched by his remarkable daughter Philippa. Weaned on a diet of organic food (including raw meat), Philippa rapidly advanced in her first year as she was able to walk and utter words and phrases. By nineteen months, she had learned her alphabet and was able to write at the age of two.¹ Although Schuyler was away on assignments during Philippa's early years, he was able to follow his daughter's maturation through the descriptive scrapbooks kept by his wife Josephine. Schuyler added his comments to the scrapbooks as he described his daughter in joyful and enthusiastic terms:

Philippa! It is the evening of October 4, 1932, and you are two days over 14 months of age!

¹Talalay, Composition In Black And White, 13; Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 235.
You are an excellent mimic. You clap your hands, snap your fingers, drum, dance, pat your stomach and rub your head all in direct imitation of your father. You play hide and seek with him and have a most jolly time. Yesterday . . . for the first time you walked on the sidewalk with your father and ran after dead leaves which you collected and brought to him. Today your mother took you out and you walked three blocks!²

Both parents were captivated by their daughter's physical features. Schuyler described Philippa as a beautiful girl who was the color of "lightly done toast with dark liquid eyes of a fawn, and eyelashes like the black glistening stems of maiden hair ferns, turned back almost to meet your eyebrows."³ Josephine was equally complimentary of her daughter's features. "You are slim and brown and trim with crinkly brown hair and gorgeous jewel-like black eyes. You have not the conventional prettiness of little girls—your beauty is handsome and smart rather than pretty."⁴

More impressive than Philippa's beauty was her accelerated intelligence. In 1936, Philippa was tested at Columbia University for her I.Q. at four and a half years old. Two years earlier, she was given mental development and social adjustment tests at Columbia,

²Talalay, Composition In Black And White, 13.
³Ibid., 14.
⁴Ibid., 15.
greatly impressing her observers as they concluded that Philippa was "endowed with superior mental ability."\textsuperscript{5} When her results were returned, her I.Q. was a score of 180. Her amazed parents then took her to New York University to be tested again. Her score was an E.Q. of 200 and an I.Q. between 179 and 185.\textsuperscript{6} She became an instant celebrity as the media learned about her scores.

Among the numerous talents Philippa possessed, music emerged as the most outstanding and favorite. Learning to play the piano at three years old, she soon demonstrated her mastery of the instrument. Under the tutelage of Arnetta Jones, a graduate of the Julliard School of Music, Philippa blossomed into a child prodigy of the piano.\textsuperscript{7} At four years old, she debuted on a radio program in New York and gave her first performance. More incredibly, she began to compose her own songs. In 1936, Philippa was entered into the National Piano Playing Tournament in New York. Playing a total of ten compositions, including six of her own, Philippa made

\textsuperscript{5}bid., 50.
\textsuperscript{6}bid.
\textsuperscript{7}bid.
history by not only being one of the seven winners in the
tournament, but being the youngest as well.\textsuperscript{8}

To the Schuylers, Philippa was a source of pride and
amazement. With Schuyler busy with his own career,
Josephine assumed responsibility of Philippa's upbringing
and musical career. Although the young pianist sometimes
balked at her mother's intervention, she enjoyed the
adulation and attention from her parents and admirers.
In 1936, she was featured in the music section in the
June 22 edition of \textit{Time} magazine. Accompanied with a
picture of Philippa playing the piano in a Shirley
Temple-like hairdo, the story told of her many talents
and abilities. Describing her parents, Josephine was
simply described as white while Schuyler was
disparagingly referred to as "coal-black."\textsuperscript{9} Nonetheless,
Schuyler was pleased about the article. Philippa's
success and fame were welcome to the journalist, who held
her up as an example of African American excellence.
"Born and reared in Harlem, she is an immense credit to
it," declared Schuyler.\textsuperscript{10} Moreover, Philippa's success
represented to Schuyler an affirmation of interracial

\textsuperscript{8}ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{9}ibid.
\textsuperscript{10}Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 235.
marriage and dispelled any theories of racial inferiority. "So-called race has nothing to do with it, nor has nationality . . . Individualism is the important thing," stated Schuyler.\footnote{11} When Schuyler was not busy playing with Philippa, he was naturally occupied with his career. The depression forced the journalist to consider other means to supplement his salary from the Courier. Thus, he attempted to augment his career with a number of independent projects. In addition, Schuyler contemplated feelings of activism. Although he decried black nationalism, Schuyler demonstrated an interest in African American issues when he joined the National Association For The Advancement Of Colored People (NAACP) in 1929 for the purpose of writing a series of "Open Letters" for recruitment.\footnote{12} Schuyler's involvement with the organization would last well into the 1940's. During his membership, he lent his talents for several endeavors, including a tenure of serving as the business editor of the NAACP magazine the Crisis.

\footnote{11}{Ibid., 252.}

\footnote{12}{For a detailed discussion of Schuyler's "Open Letter" campaign in 1929-1930, see Williams,"When Black Is Right," pp. 123-31.}
Nonetheless, Schuyler was still reluctant to believe that the NAACP was the savior of African Americans. Ironically, he felt that the organization was too conservative on various issues and catered to "Uncle Tom Negroes." A case in point was the awarding of the Spingarn Award in 1932 to Robert Russa Moton, President of Tuskegee Institute. Schuyler criticized the decision in an editorial, saying that "it might as well be awarded to Sunshine Sammy."\(^{13}\) Feeling that the NAACP had gone back on "us New Negroes," he cited a number of reasons for not awarding Moton. "While he asked for a black personnel for the jim crow veterans' hospital, nothing is said of his head-long desertion of his post," stated Schuyler, "when the Klan paraded thru Tuskegee's grounds leaving faculty and students to face alone the forces of bigotry."\(^{14}\)

Schuyler favored development of African American capitalism as an alternative. The journalist was impressed with various African American businesses he encountered in the South during his "Aframerica Today" tour. Despite their success, he felt that many of the


\(^{14}\) Ibid.
business were fatalistic in not cooperating with each other. Schuyler advocated self-help and economic development of African American communities through the creation of consumer cooperatives. "If the Negro, high and low, were not so enthralled by the bourgeois ideology, it might be possible for him to accomplish through consumers' cooperation what he is vainly trying to do through competitive business," commented Schuyler.\textsuperscript{15} He proclaimed that if African American businesses and consumers pooled their economic resources, the result would be cheaper goods and increased capital in the African American community. Consequently, Schuyler decided to make his economic philosophy a reality when he founded the Young Negroes Cooperative League (YNCL) in 1930.

Schuyler's intention was to create consumer cooperatives that would form buying clubs and open stores in their communities. The consumers would then buy their goods wholesale from distributors and sell them back to their communities for a cheaper price. The plan was also seen as a step toward interracial cooperation since most of the distributors were white. Assisting him with the

\textsuperscript{15}George S. Schuyler, "A Negro Looks Ahead," \textit{American Mercury,} February 1930, 216.
YNCL was civil rights pioneer Ella Baker, who became the organization's national director and assumed Schuyler's responsibilities when Schuyler went on tour to promote the YNCL.\textsuperscript{16} Blessed with organizational skills, Baker helped Schuyler establish and organize consumer cooperatives in cities such as New York City, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, and New Orleans.

During his voyage to Liberia, Schuyler stopped in England and visited several cooperatives in Liverpool, Manchester, and London to gain helpful information for the YNCL.\textsuperscript{17} Returning to the U.S., Schuyler wrote several essays promoting the organization. Most of the essays stressed that African Americans held economic power as consumers and that cooperatives were the best alternative. Commenting on a successful Milk distribution cooperative in Memphis, Schuyler stated that "If Negro consumers of milk in one city can supply themselves with the milk they need through a cooperative society, then Negroes can do likewise elsewhere. Only the will is necessary."\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{17}Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 177-78.
In October 1931, the YNCL held its first conference in Pittsburgh with thirty delegates present. Schuyler proclaimed the conference a success as he and Baker were re-elected respectively as president and national director. In May 1932, Schuyler addressed the NAACP Conference in Washington D.C. and stressed the need for more African American consumer cooperatives. He urged the NAACP to assist in the creation of consumer cooperatives and argued that economic power was more significant to African Americans than political power:

As long as the Negro's economic life is controlled by white capitalists, he will be their political victim no matter whether his so-called legislative representatives are white or black . . . The Negro today perhaps has more political power than ever before and he is worse off than ever before. It is not votes but dollars that count in this civilization.

Campaigning for the YNCL, he urged African Americans not to adopt belligerent tactics such as boycotts to gain jobs at stores that refused to hire African Americans. Speaking out against the NAACP's "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign of the late 1920's and 1930's,


19 Schuyler, "The New Negro Turns To Co-operation."

Schuyler considered the boycott as war and that "The Negro, characteristically enough, is unprepared for it." 21 Schuyler argued that an economic war waged by African Americans would prove to be fatal for them. "An insistence upon employment on a racial basis alone will be re-echoed with avidity by jobless whites and professional Anglo-Saxons," declared the journalist. 22

Declaring that a boycott would result in more unemployed African Americans and racial violence, Schuyler urged support of the cooperative not only for economic salvation, but for interracial cooperation. "Not by embarking upon futile and disastrous economic civil wars but by intelligent mutual aid in cooperation with white workers can Negroes improve their economic status," proclaimed Schuyler. 23

Despite Schuyler's efforts and a second YNCL conference in Washington D.C., where twenty delegates were in attendance, 24 the national and branch organizations suffered from lack of capital and

21 George S. Schuyler, "To Boycott Or Not To Boycott? A Deadly Boomerang," Crisis, September 1934, 259.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 274.

mismanagement. By 1934, the YNCL had become a memory. Schuyler credited the organization’s failure to lack of funds and interest from the African American community. Few individuals in depression-plagued America had the capital to invest in such a venture and were unwilling to wait for the YNCL’s long-term goals. In addition, Schuyler’s limited view of African American capitalism curtailed the organization’s potential.

In *The Crisis Of The Negro Intellectual*, author Harold Cruse points out that Schuyler was among those African Americans who called for black capitalism but did not want to be responsible for "a serious ghetto economic policy . . . What they apparently believe, deep down, is that we shall always have the poor with us, so let those of us who have an out make the best of those few financial opportunities that come our way."25 Perhaps Schuyler’s intention was not to assist all African American consumers but those of the middle and upper classes, thus automatically including himself among the African American elite. Despite the failure of the YNCL, Schuyler would continue his utopian desire for an

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economic African American elite well into his later years.

Schuyler's other endeavors included a brief stint in 1932 as editor of a weekly newspaper titled the National News. Making its debut on February 18, 1932, the National News, subtitled "The News Magazine Of Colored America," resembled the defunct Messenger. Filled with an eclectic collection of articles on African American issues in Harlem and nationwide, the newspaper boasted of contributing writers such as W.E.B. DuBois, Countee Cullen, Alice Dunbar Neison, Ella Baker, and Schuyler's wife Josephine.26

Coinciding with the YNCL, the National News unofficially served as the organization's newspaper as Schuyler printed several articles and editorials promoting the organization. Nonetheless, as the YNCL failed because of a lack of funds, the National News suffered a similar fate as the newspaper published its final edition on June 9, 1932. The folding of the newspaper forced Schuyler to find additional income in the form of free-lance journalism and lecture

26Josephine contributed an article titled "Classic Dancing Born In Africa" that appeared in the April 7, 1932 edition of the National News.
Journalism proved to be a more lucrative source of income as he used his influence to gain assignments. In late 1932, Schuyler accepted an offer by friend and NAACP Secretary Walter White to investigate charges of peonage in Mississippi. White felt that Schuyler was an ideal choice: The journalist had toured the state in the 1920's for his "Aframerica Today" series and had earned the reputation of a race expert.

Reports of African American workers being exploited on a levee construction project called the Mississippi River Flood Control Project prompted U.S. Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York to introduce a bill in 1932 to investigate the charges. The NAACP had initially investigated the charges through Helen Boardman, a Red Cross relief worker, in the Summer of 1932. In the fall, the organization decided to launch a full-scale investigation with Schuyler and NAACP Assistant Secretary Roy Wilkins disguising themselves as levee workers.

Schuyler and Wilkins left in December 1932 for Memphis, Tennessee, where the two investigators enjoyed the hospitality and assistance of Robert R. Church, a

27 Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 195.
28 Ibid., 198.
29 Ibid.
wealthy and influential African American politician who was familiar with Mississippi. After a few days in Memphis, the two departed by Jim Crow coach and arrived in Mississippi, where Wilkins departed in Greenville and Schuyler arrived in Vicksburg. Investigating separate regions, Wilkins toured levee camps in Mississippi while Schuyler did the same in Arkansas and Louisiana. 30

Touring several levee camps in disguise, Schuyler was able to obtain first-hand accounts of work conditions for African American laborers. Schuyler and Wilkins generally found that the workers were given scant daily wages for long work days and were charged outrageous fees for meals, living quarters, water, and other miscellaneous items. Wages varied at several camps, but all were extremely low. At one camp Schuyler infiltrated, workers received $1.50 a day. At another camp, workers received $2.00 a day and were charged a dollar for board. 31 Schuyler also found that conditions were hazardous for workers in several camps. At Lake Providence, Louisiana, Schuyler found workers living in filthy quarters and dirt-floor tents in the dead of winter. Lacking sewage disposal, Malaria was commonplace

30 Ibid., 198-99.

31 Ibid., 200.
and workers slow to bosses' orders were regularly beaten. 32

Staying in a segregated boarding house in Vicksburg, Schuyler attempted to stay out of trouble. Unfortunately, trouble found him one night when local policemen broke into Schuyler's room and arrested him for robbery. At the jail, he was questioned by the chief of police and the mayor, J.C. Hamilton. Sensing that the truth was the best policy, Schuyler told of his assignment, adding that he was actually working for the city's benefit. Accepting Schuyler's argument that the levee workers' pay enabled local businesses to pay their taxes, the authorities were convinced that he was not the culprit.

Later, Schuyler found out that he was arrested because the landlady of the rooming house heard about the robbery on the radio. Reporting to the police that "a suspicious looking Negro" was staying at the house, the authorities arrested Schuyler. 33 The next day, he was released, but was promptly told by a detective to leave Mississippi and never come back. To add insult to

32Ibid., 199.
33Ibid., 201-02.
injury, he was forced to leave without a fountain pen and thirty dollars confiscated by the police.\textsuperscript{34}

Fortunately, Schuyler hid twenty-five dollars in his sock. Running to the local Negro YMCA, he told the secretary to dispose of his work clothes, and find a driver to take him to Jackson. Arriving in Jackson, Schuyler immediately took an express train to Memphis, where he regrouped with Wilkins.\textsuperscript{35} Despite his experience, Schuyler and Wilkins and returned to Mississippi, where they resumed their investigation. Nonetheless, Schuyler received a sobering reminder of his experience when he and Wilkins were stopped on a country road by a carload of whites and interrogated by them. When it was disclosed that they were not workers from a local plantation, the two were told to "git up the road and make it snappy."\textsuperscript{36}

Meanwhile, Walter White publicized Schuyler's arrest and went on a letter-writing campaign to retrieve his thirty dollars and fountain pen. Sending a letter to the mayor, White asked Hamilton for the police department to

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 203.

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., 204.

\textsuperscript{36}"NAACP Levee Camp Investigators Jailed And Threatened In Mississippi," NAACP press release, 1933, NAACP Papers.
return Schuyler's effects. Hamilton claimed in a reply letter that all of his possessions were returned and that the police did not have Schuyler's belongings. Despite the unsuccessful effort, White made Schuyler and Wilkins celebrities when he brought them to New York to speak about their investigation. In early 1933, the NAACP compiled their findings in a pamphlet titled "Mississippi River Slavery-1932."

Schuyler gained a new perspective on the plight of African American workers in the South. Because of his unnerving experience in Mississippi, he became more aware of the precariousness of African American life in the South. "From what I have seen in the last three weeks, I have no hesitancy in declaring that the Mississippi Negro laborers are worse off in many respects than the natives in the hinterland of Liberia," Schuyler stated.37 He also charged that the helplessness of Southern African Americans existed even with professionals and businessmen, and that prostitution was "rife even in the circles of Negro society."38

37 Ibid.

emphasized the NAACP's suspicions of mistreatment of
workers and urged government intervention:

"The whole matter of the treatment of Negroes
on the plantation, and public works, including
government projects . . . borders on peonage and
there should be a congressional investigation so as
to bring out the truth in such a manner that the
public can understand."39

Schuyler's harrowing Mississippi experience did not
prevent him from visiting the state for future
assignments. Schuyler returned once again to Mississippi
in 1935 for another Courier assignment. The previous
year, Schuyler sent a proposal to editor Robert Vann and
business editor Ira Lewis for a Southern tour of fourteen
states, including Mississippi. Feature articles of the
various states would be printed in the Courier while
Schuyler would speak at churches and colleges.40

Despite the ambitious proposal, Lewis and Vann asked
Schuyler to limit his tour to Mississippi. Schuyler
agreed to their suggestions and introduced a new proposal
for a Mississippi tour. In the proposal, Schuyler
planned to visit several Mississippi towns and cities for

39"Labor Conditions Affecting The Negro Along The
Mississippi River," Investigation #2, December 1932,
NAACP Papers.

40Nickieann Fleener, "Breaking Down Buyer
Resistance: Marketing The 1935 Pittsburgh Courier To
Mississippi Blacks," Journalism History, Autumn-Winter
1986, 79.
three months. During the tour, he would establish a headquarters office in Jackson and hire several agents to distribute the Courier. Schuyler also proposed increased exposure of Mississippi in the national edition and a special edition for the state. With the exception of a $90 weekly salary that was reduced to a starting salary of $60, the proposal was approved.41

Arriving in Jackson in early September 1935, Schuyler wasted little time in establishing an office and busily contacting distribution agents. Aiming for a circulation increase of 10%, Schuyler instructed agents to send meaningful news about their localities and present a positive picture of African Americans in Mississippi. He also instructed them to send pictures of pretty women from their localities to attract readers. "The EYE is the mirror of the SOUL. The PHOTOGRAPH is the mirror of the NEWSPAPER," emphasized Schuyler in a bulletin to the agents.42 Lastly, he reminded the agents of their primary purpose:

41 Ibid., 80. In his proposal, Schuyler stated that the state edition would "stress the goodwill angle and tone down the atrocities about which too much is written anyway." Interestingly, his strategy for promoting the newspaper was using "Mississippi Negro psychology": having the paper approved by prominent whites (or "good" white folks) so that "the Negroes will buy it wholesale." Letter from George S. Schuyler to Ira Lewis, 6 June 1935.
"To MAKE MORE MONEY we must SELL MORE PAPERS . . . We must have MORE NEWS that MISSISSIPPIANS WANT TO READ - THAT MEANS NEWS ABOUT THEMSELVES; THEIR NEIGHBORS; THEIR TOWN and COUNTRY; news ABOUT MISSISSIPPI!. So, we are going to START OFF with a MISSISSIPPI EDITION!! It will contain ALL THE NEWS ABOUT MISSISSIPPI THAT IS WORTH PRINTING.\textsuperscript{43}

In his autobiography, Schuyler claimed that his stay in Mississippi was a pleasant one, mentioning that he found the people kindly, and cooperative, and that the "racial way of life" was not intolerable.\textsuperscript{44} Despite his generous compliments, Schuyler's actual feelings about the state and its inhabitants were the opposite. Greatly influenced by his prejudicial opinions of the South, Schuyler had little to say about the positive aspects of Mississippi and its inhabitants. In his numerous letters to Josephine, he bemoaned his surrounding conditions. Although he witnessed African Americans brutally subjected to Jim Crow segregation, he was still critical of them and seemingly unsympathetic. Commenting to Josephine in a letter, he stated that "I could not live

\textsuperscript{42}Letter from George S. Schuyler to Dear Friends and Fellow Workers, 10 September, 1935, George S. Schuyler Papers, Syracuse University' cited in "Breaking Down Buyer Resistance," 82.

\textsuperscript{43}Letter from George S. Schuyler, to Dear Friends and Fellow Workers, 14 September 1935, George S. Schuyler Papers, Syracuse University; cited in "Breaking Down Buyer Resistance," 81.

\textsuperscript{44}Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 228.
in this country. It is primitive, violent, amoral, intolerant, and rustic. And yet at the same time, it is picturesque, quaint and intriguing in its contradictions and glaring contrasts."\(^{45}\) In another letter, he confessed his true feelings about his Southern counterparts:

As I have often characterized them, they are, in the main, genial incompetents. Of efficiency they know little or nothing. In the harsh competition of the North and East, they are at a distinct disadvantage. Down here where the white folks are a little more efficient than are they, and where they are used to and tolerant of shiftlessness and happy-go-lucky manners of the dark folk, things go easier . . . The terror is present but usually dormant, so they get used to it. This may seem incomprehensible to a stranger but not to one who studies these people (italics added).\(^{46}\)

In his "Views and Reviews" column, he continued his condemnation of Mississippi and its African American population. Commenting on the condition of a segregated cemetery in Jackson, he stated that "The Negroes whose kin are buried there do not think enough of them to cut the weeds on their graves. Even the graves of cannibals in Africa are cared for carefully."\(^{47}\) Schuyler harangued them on a number of issues.

\(^{45}\) Letter from George Schuyler to Josephine Schuyler, 4 November, 1935, Ibid., 83.

\(^{46}\) Letter from George Schuyler to Josephine Schuyler, 6 October, 1935, Ibid.
I often marvel at the false sense of values which my colored brethren possess. For every family that owns a bathtub down here, there are three or four that own an automobile. They will have an expensive radio blaring in their front room and have to walk out in a muddy backyard to go to the lavatory. A professional man sporting a limousine will sometimes have an office with leaking ceiling, dingy floor and paper hanging off the wall. Negroes will raise money to send delegates to some worthless convention 1,000 nukes away when there is no sidewalk in front of their church, no lawn and no shrubbery.48

Bordering on the edge of frivolity, their medicinal and dietary habits were also criticized by the hostile columnist:

It is amazing and pathetic how much patent medicines these people buy. There seem to be thousands of brands for sale, and whites and blacks try to buy all of them. This must be a great expense, considering the low salaries paid. There is, accordingly, more sickness and misery here than anywhere else in the country. Aspirin and quinine, two dangerous drugs, are swallowed like chickens down corn.

Of course the real trouble lies in their diet, which is atrocious. Anything that is not fried, boiled, or baked to death seems to be anathema. Consumption of salads, fresh fruit, oranges, lemons and fresh milk is low. Hot biscuits, white bread and white rice are staples, and of course worthless, as everybody knows who has the slightest acquaintance with the influence of diet on the health.49

47 George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 28 September, 1935.
48 Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 5 October, 1935.
49 Ibid. Although Schuyler's opinions of the South were influenced by his mother's prejudices, Mencken's comments about the region may have encouraged Schuyler to
Schuyler concluded that the state of Mississippi was indeed, according to his mentor H.L. Mencken, the "worst American state"\(^{50}\) and that Jim Crow segregation created a dependent, powerless, and passive group of African Americans. "Nowhere are Negroes more improvident, more economically dependent, more harassed by swarms of white creditors and collectors than in Mississippi," commented Schuyler, "and nowhere are less efforts being made by Negroes as a group to extricate themselves from this debased and ignoble status."\(^{51}\) Despite his personal feelings, Schuyler was able to reach his desired increase of ten percent and establish a Mississippi edition of the Courier, an accomplishment he was proud of when he departed Jackson in late November 1935 for New York.

The 1930's also proved to be a period of dramatic change for Schuyler as his race philosophies began to be

\(^{50}\)Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 19 October, 1935.

\(^{51}\)Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 26 October, 1935.
overshadowed by a growing anti-Communist fervor that began in the 1920's. In June of 1923, he debated Otto Huiswoud, a Communist from Dutch Guyana, at a public forum at the 135th Street public library in Harlem (now the Schomburg Center). Discussing the Negro and Communism, Schuyler naturally rejected Communism as a solution. Referring to a hostile social climate heightened by a revived Ku Klux Klan and race riots, Schuyler felt that an embrace of Communism by African Americans would result in a race war and definite extermination. Lastly, Schuyler referred to the deportation of accused white Communists and reasoned that if Communism brought misery to whites, what could it possibly offer non-whites? This was Schuyler's primary reason for rejecting Communism: a fear of heightened racial tensions. Although the Socialist idea of a united black and white proletariat was enticing, African Americans embracing Communism, Schuyler reasoned, meant increased racial polarization and segregation of African Americans.

Another reason for opposing Communism was that acceptance of the ideology did not necessarily mean an elimination of racism. Using the example of Jewish

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52 Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 146.
Communist students being harassed at Russian institutions, Schuyler reasoned that the elimination of capitalism would not guarantee the disappearance of color prejudice:

This prophecy is based on the theory that color prejudice . . . has an economic basis, and that once economic rivalry is eliminated . . . color prejudice will also become conspicuous by its absence. This is a very fetching theory in which there is considerable truth, but these revolutionary gentlemen seem to lose sight of the very important fact that effects can sometimes become more potent than original causes. Assuming that color has an economic basis, is it not just possible that this prejudice can become so deeply imbedded in a society or an individual that even the removal of the original cause of it will do little to change the current prejudices? Certainly I think this would be the case in this country for at least a couple of generations after any revolutionary movement had changed our system of ownership.53

In 1931, Schuyler's opposition of Communism matured into an intense one-man crusade against the party and its supporters. In late March of that year, nine young black men, aged 13 to 19, were removed from a freight train at Paint Rock, Alabama and arrested after whites they fought and threw off the train ran to the authorities. Taken to the nearby town and Jackson County seat of Scottsboro, they were later charged with rape. Victoria Price and Ruby Bates, two young white women riding the train,

53 Untitled article, possibly "Views and Reviews," dated 1928, taken from Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
accused the nine of raping them. After narrowly escaping the wrath of a hostile white mob, they were placed on trial five days after their arrest. Within two weeks, all except one of the boys were found guilty and sentenced to death. This proved to be the beginning of the controversial and sensational Scottsboro Trials.

The Scottsboro Trials created a storm of controversy when the Communist-affiliated International Labor Defense (ILD) took an active interest in defending the Scottsboro boys. In early 1932, a letter written by Ruby Bates was found saying that she was coerced by the police to say that she was raped by the nine boys. Later she retracted her accusation and became a supporter of the ILD and the Scottsboro Boys. At an ILD rally, she stated that she wanted to tell the truth but that she was "afraid of the Southern white class ruling people." Victoria Price held strong to her accusation throughout the trials. Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy Of The American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 6, 186-87, 249-250.

The Scottsboro Boys Trials lasted from 1931 to 1937. During that time the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the convictions of the boys two times in separate cases. Haywood Patterson, one of the Scottsboro Boys, was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death a total of four times. In 1937, four of the Scottsboro Boys (Eugene Williams, Olen Montgomery, Willie Robertson, and Roy Wright) were released when the State of Alabama dropped charges against them. With the exception of Patterson, the remaining Scottsboro Boys were eventually paroled and released by 1950. Patterson escaped from prison in 1948 and fled to Detroit, Michigan, where he was caught in 1950. The Governor of Michigan refused to release Patterson to the custody of Alabama and extradition procedures were dropped. Two years later, Patterson died at age thirty-nine. James Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 393-397.
Boys. The NAACP at first was reluctant to intervene, but decided to act when inquiries came from outsider sources such as other NAACP branches, independent organizations, and well-known individuals such as criminal lawyer Clarence Darrow. The simultaneous involvement of the ILD and the NAACP resulted in a bitter struggle for complete control of the legal defense of the Scottsboro Boys. The ILD aggressively pursued complete control of the legal defense by gaining the complete trust of the boys' families. The ILD attempted to portray the NAACP as an organization insensitive to the Scottsboro defendants and held rallies attacking the organization. NAACP meetings were also disrupted by ILD and Communist supporters planted in crowds. Lastly, the NAACP was severely criticized in the Communist newspaper The Daily Worker. NAACP officials such as White, William

56 Carter, Scottsboro, 53.

57 The ILD easily persuaded the parents of the Scottsboro Boys to support their efforts to defend their sons. In turn, the parents easily persuaded their sons to choose the ILD over the NAACP. At a meeting between the boys and their parents at the Birmingham City Jail the father of Haywood Patterson told his son "Listen son, this is our bunch. You stay with them." When NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White asked Scottsboro defendant Andrew Wright if he agreed with his mother's decision to support the ILD, Wright responded, "Mr. White, if you can't trust your mother, who can you trust?" Ibid., 58, 93.
Pickens, and others were incensed at the ILD’s campaign against them, and despite a strong attempt to gain the Scottsboro Boys' trust, they were forced to withdraw from the case in January 1932.\footnote{Ibid., 59-63.}

Closely affiliated with White and other NAACP officials, Schuyler easily sympathized with the organization and its efforts to defend the Scottsboro Boys. The ILD’s campaign against the NAACP also confirmed his worst fears about the Communists: They would use a racially explosive issue to further their own cause and divide African Americans, leaving them exposed to increased racial hostility from whites. With the approval of anti-Communist \textit{Courier} editor Robert Vann, Schuyler turned the editorial page of the \textit{Pittsburgh Courier} into a fervent, anti-Communist manifesto against the party and the ILD. Just as he hammered Marcus Garvey and the UNIA through blistering editorial attacks, Schuyler proceeded to apply the same tactics to his new campaign.

Schuyler addressed the Communist involvement in the Scottsboro case as early as July 1931, when he criticized African American support of the Communists. "Of course, \footnote{Ibid., 102.}
one rather expects something like that since the Communists are white while the thousands of men and women who support the NAACP are Negroes," commented Schuyler, "and many of us are still burdened down with a racial inferiority complex which naturally sees white people as abler than black."\(^60\) Schuyler also informed his readers that:

The Communists in the United States are more of a menace than a promise to Negroes. Their policy is to make political capital out of the race problem, just like the Bleases and Heflins do down South. They care nothing for the individual unfortunate Negroes they appear so eager to defend. What they are seeking to do is to stir up revolutionary activity and sentiment toward the day when the government can be overthrown. I personally have no objection to seeing the present government out of a job, but I seriously doubt, like every other sensible Negro, that any good is going to come to our group by rowdy demonstrations, fighting policemen and making soap box orations in the courts of the land.\(^61\)

As the Scottsboro Trials progressed, Schuyler continued to attack the ILD and the Communist Party. When defendant Haywood Patterson was convicted after a second trial, Schuyler stated that the ILD and Communist Party should withdraw from the case:

There are any number of lawyers in this country, North and South, who could go into Decatur

\(^60\)George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 18 July, 1931.

\(^61\)ibid.
[site of the second trials] or any other Alabama town and conduct a prosecution and a defense absolutely within the law and rules of court, without inflaming public sentiment, without insulting the judge or the jury, and, at the same time, without sacrificing a single legal right to which the defendants are entitled.62

Schuyler also challenged the ILD to release a report of the Scottsboro defense funds when it was charged that most of the funds were spent on propaganda instead of the actual defense. "The colored people of this country who have contributed heavily from their meager resources to help free the nine black victims of Southern injustice are entitled to know where their money has gone and for what purpose it has been spent," demanded Schuyler.63

Lastly, Schuyler criticized the ILD for its lack of legal experience with African American cases:

I would be the last to declare that the NAACP is above criticism. No one has criticized the organization more frequently. But it cannot be accused of endangering the lives of Negroes by ignorant handling of civil rights and criminal cases it has taken up. It fought the Southern jury exclusion policy long before the Communist chiselers organized the ILD. The Elaine sharecroppers case, the Houston rioters case, the Texas primary case, the Sweet case, the Louisville housing segregation case, the Parker case and now the Crawford case in Boston are all great victories to its credit, to say

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62George S. Schuyler, "Scottsboro Ad Infinitum," Pittsburgh Courier, 22 April, 1933.

63George S. Schuyler, "Collecting and Discounting," Pittsburgh Courier, 29 April, 1933.
nothing of scores of minor cases. THE ILD HAS NOT WON A SINGLE CASE!64

Predictably, Schuyler's editorials against the Communists and the ILD brought sharp criticism against him from irate readers. One reader, exasperated with Schuyler's tirade against Communism, sharply criticized the journalist. The reader said that he did not have "guts enough" to join the Communists. "However, if I haven't got guts enough to join the struggle and help strike the coming blow for freedom then I won't be lackey sycophant, or Uncle Tom enough to go around shouting down with Communism and long live Old Mas'r!"65 Among the most irate readers was Eugene Gordon, writer and journalist for the Boston Post. A supporter of the Communists, Gordon accused Schuyler of accommodating to the desires of upper class Southern whites. "Apologist for the Bourbon South? Better than that! Mr. Schuyler, in his interpretation of the South's psychology and analysis of the South's temper, becomes one of the South's most rabid defenders," stated Gordon.66 "Having

64 George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 6 May, 1933.


followed Schuyler's attack on the working class thus far . . . one realizes that when this apologist speaks of the 'majority of the white people of the South' he is referring to those who control the South."67 Lastly, he condemned Schuyler for urging African Americans not to join the Communists. "Since the 'majority of the white people' whom he eulogizes will never 'endorse the Communist program' . . . it is evident that the Negro workers, if they followed Schuyler's advice, would be further enslaved and crushed rather than liberated."68

Always one to have the last word, Schuyler quickly retaliated. "Eugene has always shown more heat than light, more malice than mentality, more shallowness than depth, more ambition than ability," answered the incensed journalist.69 "Only recently introduced to Karl Marx and the working-class movement, one can afford to charitably excuse his sophomoric vehemence and vituperation, which always exceeds his intelligence and information. After all, the Communists have given him the limelight he so long sought vainly elsewhere."70

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 10 June, 1933.

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been a Socialist for fifteen years, Schuyler disregarded his claim that he was "a paid minion of the capitalists."

He also charged that Gordon's motivation for his support of Communism was his failed career as a Harlem Renaissance critic:

Mr. Gordon at that time aspired to be a "true artist," not a propagandist, "true art" being then the vogue current under the leadership and influence of Carl Van Vechten, James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke, et al. Gordon yearned to crash the literary gates, so propaganda was definitely out. But the literary gates having proved too high for Eugene to hurdle, he now grabs the red flag and denounces his former love as petite bourgeois. Communism happens currently to be the vogue, so Eugene, the Apostle of Consistency, is all for propaganda. He is the perfect opportunist.71

Lastly, Schuyler declared Gordon and the ILD hypocrites of their own propaganda and campaign:

Gordon holds that it is "a dangerous illusion" to tell Negro workers that justice may be won in capitalist courts as does the NAACP. If this be true, why then does the ILD collect funds to defend Negroes in the capitalist courts? Why, if this be true, does it continue to defend the Scottsboro Boys, the Alabama sharecroppers, and Angelo Herndon? . . . Why continue aping NAACP "legalism" if, as Gordon says, court victories "are futile" because capitalists "can brush them away as easily as they granted them?" The reason, dear readers, is that Gordon and his Communist friends are seeking martyrdom for Negroes, using them as the spearhead of the "revolution" without regard to individual

70: Ibid.
71: Ibid.
lives, in a vain and mistaken effort to further their cause.\textsuperscript{72}

In 1934, Schuyler created an additional storm of controversy when he addressed the Angelo Herndon affair. Herndon, a young African American Communist party worker, was arrested in Atlanta, Georgia in July 1932 for attempting to incite insurrection. Herndon had led a demonstration of African American and White Communist supporters protesting lack of relief for the poor and unemployed. Police were able to trace Herndon through leaflets with his address circulated at the demonstration.\textsuperscript{73} Tried in January 1933, Herndon was found guilty by an all-white jury and sentenced from 18 to 20 years in prison.\textsuperscript{74} The verdict inspired the ILD to work for his release and overturn his conviction. In August 1934, Herndon was released from Fulton County Tower Prison on $15,000 bail. A few days later, Herndon was greeted by an enthusiastic and supportive crowd of six thousand at Pennsylvania Station in New York City.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{72}ibid.

\textsuperscript{73}Charles H. Martin, \textit{The Angelo Herndon Case And Southern Justice} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 5, 7.

\textsuperscript{74}ibid., 61.

\textsuperscript{75}ibid., 115-16, 118.
Schuyler addressed the Herndon case shortly after his imprisonment. Using the jailed Communist as an example, the journalist declared that Communist tactics used in the South were wrong. "On the other hand, misguided enthusiasts who have gone to the deep South to agitate for Communism have only succeeded in getting beaten up, jailed, deported, or killed," declared Schuyler.76 He added that:

If Herndon dies, the responsibility for his death will rest not only upon the planter–manufacturer dictatorship of Georgia, but upon the Communist party, which persists in callously sending these youngsters down to certain imprisonment and death. His imprisonment and the jailing of others in Georgia and adjoining States is not only a disgrace to American civilization, but a severe indictment of the Communist party policy, which persistently ignores realities while chasing Marxist will-o’-the-wisps.77

Schuyler’s concern for Herndon quickly disappeared a year and a half later when he assailed the Communists in his August 25 "Views and Reviews" column. Although he was criticizing the Communists in general, his casual but harsh remarks about Herndon’s recent release on bail attracted the most attention. "Herndon is out on bail and will probably skip it, like all the rest, and the

76 George S. Schuyler, "The Herndon Case," Pittsburgh Courier, 4 February, 1933.

77 Ibid.
Scottsboro meal ticket will soon be gone." 78 Although Schuyler used the statement in the context that the Communists were failing because of lack of funds, angered and incensed Herndon and Communist supporters interpreted his statement as a mean-spirited attack against the cause-célèbre, thus inspiring a full-fledged war against the iconoclastic journalist.

Among the first to personally respond to Schuyler was Eugene Gordon. Angered by his comments about the ILD a year earlier, Gordon was outraged by his Herndon statement. The fellow journalist sent Schuyler a response that clearly articulated his disdain for him:

What you said there about Herndon proved to me that you could actually descend lower, in the estimation of a one-time friend who admired you, than you had recently descended in your attacks on the Scottsboro defense. I had thought that the Scottsboro defense attacks were a new low for you. You prove in your column of August 25, however, that you possess an unmeasured capacity for thriving even under the surface of capitalist gutter-slime. For this rare capacity, you deserve the commendation of one who, although he cannot longer admire either you or the company you keep, can and does admire anybody who can so adapt himself to living under the surface of a cesspool as to be perfectly happy and content down there. 79

79 Letter from Eugene Gordon to George S. Schuyler, 1 September, 1934, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
The condemnation of Schuyler became more controversial when the Communist Party newspaper, the Daily Worker, published a detailed reply from Herndon in its August 28 edition. Herndon replied that "just as you have repeatedly knifed the Scottsboro Boys, so have you attempted to knife me also." 80 He also pointed out that Schuyler was a hindrance to African American movements:

You pretend to represent the Negro people. You have high position. You have an important place with one of the largest of the Negro newspapers. You are a leading member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. And each time that the Negroes move to better themselves, to organize in order to gain their rights, you appear on the scene to make your barbed attacks, to sneer at their efforts, to discourage them whenever possible.

Mr. Schuyler, you have in any case one gift: the gift of consistency. You have never missed your opportunity to betray the struggles of the Negro people. 81

Lastly, Herndon asked Schuyler:

Who is the Uncle Tom? It is you, George Schuyler, belittling the program of struggle, advising subordination and submission in the face of attacks by the white rulers, knifing in the back the fight to free the Scottsboro Boys and myself. 82

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80 "Angeio Herndon Replies To Cowardly Insult Of George Schuyler, Pittsburgh Columnist, That 'He Will Skip Bail'," Daily Worker, 28 August, 1934.

81 ibid.

82 ibid.
Shortly after Herndon’s reply, Schuyler received a letter of condemnation that echoed Herndon’s accusation. “Your attacks upon the defense of Angelo Herndon and the Scottsboro boys are attacks upon us as members of the Negro group,” stated the letter.83 “Your entire intent, as shown by our recent articles, is to betray and crush every spark of militant resistance which has flared up among the Negro people, in their indignation at these outrageous frame-ups.”84 The letter demanded Schuyler to retract his statement about Herndon and the Scottsboro boys trials, to quit obstructing the ILD’s efforts, and held the Courier jointly responsible for his attacks against the Communists and the ILD.85

Despite the fiery rhetoric of the letter, the most intriguing aspect of the letter was the list of twenty-four supporters of the letter. Among the names were well-known personalities such as Langston Hughes, Aaron Douglass, Eugene Gordon, and Channing Tobias.86

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83 Letter to George S. Schuyler, 4 September, 1934, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Hughes had reason to oppose Schuyler’s attacks against Communism. In 1932, he was one of the participants who traveled to the USSR to make a Communist-sponsored film about the plight of African
supporters also sent a letter to the Courier, condemning the newspaper for supporting Schuyler and calling for his dismissal. "We do not understand how the Pittsburgh Courier can publish such attacks upon the Scottsboro and Herndon defense, unless it shares these views and wishes to promote them," stated the letter. 87

The last straw for Schuyler came when he received a letter in late September from the American Workers Party. Signed by Ann Shane and Larry Cohen, respectively, secretary of the Membership Committee and New York organizer, the letter demanded Schuyler, who was addressed as "Dear Comrade," to appear at the next Membership Committee meeting to explain his condemnation of the Communists in the Courier and other Americans. Titled Black and White, the film project was canceled when several problems from lack of financial support and dispute over the script appeared. For several years, Schuyler lampooned the project and its participants in his column, saying "it is spring and there is still no Black and White." Aaron Douglass, an artist and neighbor of Schuyler, headed the effort to draft and send the letter. Tobias claimed that his name was used without his permission, stating that he would not ask for Schuyler's dismissal on the principle of free speech. Ibid.; Mark Naison, Communists In Harlem During The Depression (Urbana: University Of Illinois Press, 1983), 73-74; Schuyler, Black and Conservative, 205-07, 221.

87 Letter to Pittsburgh Courier, not dated, taken from George S. Schuyler Papers at the Schomburg Center For Research In Black Culture, New York Public Library System, Harlem, New York.
publications. Amused but irritated by the letter, Schuyler sent back a reply characteristic of his belligerent writings:

My Dear Friends,

I shall have to disappoint you by refusing to be the guest of honor at your inquisition on Tuesday evening, October 2nd. In the first place I decided some time ago to the be a member of any of the numerous political parties, conservative, liberal or radical, and you are hereby notified that I do not consider myself to be a member of the American Workers Party. Although I have never been sent a copy of your party platform, I felt at one time that you were going to be a real American party. Your present contemplated action convinces me that you have taken over the methods of the Communist Party and of course I refuse to accept the regimentation of thought which that so-called party imposes.

I have always said and written just what I thought without apologies to anyone, and I intend to continue doing so. Whatever I think is right I shall continue to attack. Whatever I think is right I shall continue to laud, whether it be left, right or center. In doing so, of course, I incur the enmity of some people from time to time, but I have always been more concerned with being true to myself than to any group or groups. I shall continue to pursue this somewhat lonely and iconoclastic course.

Since you apparently read my VIEWS AND REVIEWS in The Pittsburgh Courier with avidity, you must know that therein I pull no critical punches. When that newspaper was Republican, I did not whoop for Hoover, and now that it is Democratic I do not shout for Roosevelt, despite the fact that I have been on the Courier payroll for ten years. Whenever I am compelled to trim my sails and curb my criticism, I shall cease being a critic or even cease writing altogether on public questions. I am sure your group must have known this all along and I am rather surprised that up to now you have not officially

88 Letter from American Workers Party to George Schuyler, 28 September, 1934, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
objected to it. It is obvious that one like myself who refuses to be gagged and straightjacketed has no place in your group. This attitude may cause me to be interned or beheaded by the forces of liberation when the Revolution comes, but I shall have to take that chance.\textsuperscript{89}

Fortunately for Schuyler, the Herndon affair motivated some to support the outspoken journalist's right to free speech. California journalist Chauncy Townsend was one supporter who made it clear that he defended Schuyler's right to free speech but not his opinion. "I am no admirer of Mr. Schuyler's. To me, he has always appeared as a contemptuous clown, laughing at every virtue, and poking fun at some to the most sacred things in our racial life," stated Townsend.\textsuperscript{90} "But he is a working journalist, and his opinions are his opinions; and as a working journalist, it is his constitutional right to express them."\textsuperscript{91} In addition, he admonished the Courrier not to acquiesce to demands for Schuyler's dismissal. "If the Pittsburgh Courrier condescends so low as to bow in submission to these gentlemen whose intolerance is no less than that of the

\textsuperscript{89}Letter to Ann Shane and Larry Cohen from George S. Schuyler, 29 September, 1934, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

\textsuperscript{90}"Demand Upon Courier To Dismiss Schuyler Seen As Effort To Throttle Freedom Of Press By California Journalist," Pittsburgh Courrier, 22 September, 1934.

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid.

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most prejudiced 'cracker,' it will be a blow to a free Negro press in America."\textsuperscript{92}

Another supporter was Vann, who agreed with Schuyler's anti-Communist statements. Most important, Vann knew that Schuyler was a talented writer who was able to attract readers with his outspoken and brash editorials.\textsuperscript{93} Sometimes Vann and editor Ira Lewis did admonish Schuyler to be cautious in his editorial attacks of certain issues and individuals. Nonetheless, the confident journalist claimed that their intervention was never more than a half-dozen times. "I instinctively knew where and how to tread, and there was never a reprimand for having overstepped the bounds," asserted Schuyler.\textsuperscript{94}

Schuyler found support for his anti-Communist views from \textit{Courier} readers as well. One reader, Jess Caraway, admired the columnist for his unpopular but stoic position on issues. "If one goes back over Mr. Schuyler's column for the last several years he will see every movement and every popular opinion which has for

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93}Buni, \textit{Vann}, 140

\textsuperscript{94}Ibid.
the moment gripped the mob has been weighed and
criticized by your columnist," commented Caraway.95
Answering the question as to why Schuyler was one of the
most widely known and discussed Negro columnists, Caraway
stated that "I think it's because people always enjoy a
fight and Mr. Schuyler is always one."96

Another reader, James W. Ivy, seemed to echo
Schuyler's comments when discussing attacks upon the
journalist. "Such tactics certainly don't corral the
Negroes, either bourgeois or proletarian; they simply
convince them that the Communist are the envious boobs
that they had suspected them to be," remarked Ivy.97 "At
bottom our Communists are more intolerant and fanatical
than the plutocrats they affect to despise. And they are
more resentful of criticism than a Holy roller."98
Fortunately for Schuyler, criticism of his comments
against Herndon subsided and he continued his attacks
against the Communists. As for Herndon, the ILD's appeal

95"Schuyler Speaks Truth," Pittsburgh Courier, 13
October, 1934.
96Ibid.
97"Defends Schuyler," Pittsburgh Courier, 20
October, 1934.
98Ibid.
to the U.S. Supreme Court resulted in a 5-4 vote to overturn his conviction in April 1937.\textsuperscript{99}

Schuyler's tirade against Communism appeared in literary form as well. In 1935, he was encouraged by H.L. Mencken to address the movement for a separate black state in the South among Black Nationalists and interested Communist supporters.\textsuperscript{100} "I hope you don't take the Negro State scheme too lightly. It is so magnificently idiotic that it is sure to win customers.\textsuperscript{101} Schuyler took his mentor's advice and wrote the essay titled "The Separate State Hokum."

Appearing in the May 1935 edition of the \textit{Crisis}, "The Separate State Hokum" condemned the idea of a

\textsuperscript{99}Martin, \textit{The Angelo Herndon Case}, 182.

\textsuperscript{100}In the late 1920's, Soviet nationality experts with the help of African American Communist Harry Haywood attempted to gain African American support by drafting a proposal stating that African Americans had the right to "self-determination" in Southern areas where they were the majority. In the 1930's, Black Nationalists supported the National Movement for the Establishment of the 49th State, which gained the interest of African American Communists. However, concerned party officials felt that the nationalistic movements threatened the relations between African American Communists and the party, and formally abandoned the "self-determination" movement in November, 1935. Naison, \textit{Communists in Harlem}, 17, 108, 173.

separate state for African Americans. Schuyler offered a number of reasons for disregarding the plan, such as the cost of purchasing land for the state, constitutional difficulties, and unwillingness on the part of whites to give up their land and finance the relocation of African Americans. Not surprisingly, he declared the separate state proposal as "pure fantasy, or worse, pure mendacity," and considered the proposal "more ridiculous than the wildest ravings of Marcus Garvey." 102 H.L. Mencken praised the grateful journalist for his efforts, stating "As usual, you blow the quacks 10,000 feet into the air." 103

Another anti-Communist essay by Schuyler was "Negroes Reject Communism." Appearing in the June 1939 edition of the American Mercury, the essay declared that the Communists had failed to gain support among African Americans. "During his three-century struggle to avoid extermination, he has developed special techniques of survival, and most communist methods run counter to them," proclaimed Schuyler. 104 Claiming that the Negro

102 George S. Schuyler, "The Separate State Hokum," The Crisis, May 1935, 149.

had become wary of "schemes of instant salvation" for a century, Schuyler stated that "the Aframerican is perhaps the most cynical fellow in the Union, and is less likely than the white proletarian to sign his death warrant in a moment of emotional intoxication." 105 Another reason for a failure of Communism among African Americans, according to Schuyler, was a desire for capitalism:

Like his white brother in the USA, the American Negro is a proletarian by compulsion and not by choice. He regards the bourgeoisie with adulation rather than antagonism and, like most other Americans, cannot see "culture" except in white tie and tails. His consuming ambition is to become a bourgeois himself, and in this he is a carbon copy of the his white fellow-American. 106

Schuyler continued his disdain of African American nationalistic movements throughout the 1930's. Nonetheless, Schuyler made an exception in 1935 when Ethiopia was invaded and occupied by Italy under the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini. Paying close attention to Italian military operations in Ethiopia during the summer, Schuyler was motivated to comment on the prospect of war and its enticing appeal. "As an old soldier, I would certainly like to participate in such an adventure

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105 Ibid., 177.
106 Ibid.
and press a machine-gun trigger on the Italian hordes as they toiled over the Ethiopian terrain," remarked Schuyler. 107 Claiming that the Italo-Ethiopian War was the prelude to another world war, the journalist predicted that the war would have an adverse effect on Europe and America. "All the great exploiting powers of the world who are squeezing and exploiting the colored brethren in Africa, Asia and America stand to lose everything by another world war," commented Schuyler. 108 He also prophesied that "The exploited blacks and browns and yellows stand to gain much. There is no reason then why they should be for peace." 109

As the conflict progressed into 1936, Schuyler continued to address the importance of an Ethiopian victory against Italy in the Courier's editorial page. "We all ought to know what the defeat and dismemberment of Ethiopia will mean to not only to all of Africa, but also to darker America," warned Schuyler in the March 7, 1936 "Views and Reviews" column. 110 "It is one of the


108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.
few remaining exceptions to imperialist rule. It stands as a living disproof of the assertions of our detractors that Negroes have always been slaves and are incapable of self-government.”

The Italo-Ethiopian War also inspired him to write a pulp fiction novel based on the conflict. During the 1930's, Schuyler wrote serial novels that appeared in weekly installments in the Courier. Assuming pseudonyms such as "Rachel Call," "Samuel I. Brooks," and "Rachel Love," Schuyler wrote stories that dealt mostly with African Americans achieving revenge against racist whites. In 1936, Schuyler published the first of two stories that dealt with the theme of Black Nationalism: "The Black Internationale: A Story Of Black Genius Against The World."

Published in thirty-three chapters from November 21, 1936 to July 3, 1937, "The Black Internationale," published under the alias of "Samuel I. Brooks," is a

111 Ibid.
112 Refer to footnote #55 in the previous chapter for a discussion of Schuyler's serial novels in the Courier. In addition, Black Empire has a bibliography of the journalist's serial fiction novels printed from 1933-1939 in the Courier, including "The Black Internationale" and "Black Empire." Ibid., 337-344.
science-fiction novel chronicling the rise of a secret but powerful organization of talented African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and Africans united in their desire to overthrow the colonial powers in Europe and the U.S. The Courier promoted the series by printing a front-page banner that read:

THE BLACK INTERNATIONALE
Action . . . Intrigue . . . Thrills
An amazing story of black genius against the world\(^{113}\)

Claiming that the series would break sales records for serial fiction "with its fantastic, blood-chilling, heart-stopping plot and action," Schuyler paused to say that the story was "about Negroes everywhere, united by a common bond of hatred of white exploitation, persecution, and ostracism."\(^{114}\)

Told from the observations of Carl Slater, a black reporter and narrator of the story, "The Black Internationale" begins at a Harlem nightclub, where Slater observes a well-dressed but mysterious black man accompanied by an attractive white woman. Following the couple, Slater witnesses the man brutally choke the woman

\(^{113}\)ibid., 267.
\(^{114}\)ibid.
to death. The reporter attempts to confront the murderer, only to be taken at gunpoint into a limousine and forced to drink a potion that leaves him unconscious.

Slater regains consciousness and finds himself prisoner in a luxurious bedroom dressed in silk pajamas. Approached by a large and mysteriously silent butler, Slater is motioned to wash and get dressed. Following the butler to an elegant dining room, Slater meets the mysterious man again, whom he discovers is Dr. Henry Belsidus, a Harlem physician whose clientele is mostly wealthy white women. Reluctantly sitting down to breakfast, Slater listens to Belsidus explain where he is (his mansion and hideaway), the reason for the woman's murder (her failure to retrieve vital information), the butler's silence (a tongue burned from his mouth from an attempted lynching), and his plan: African domination of the world. The mysterious doctor then offers Slater the choice of being his personal secretary or certain death. Slater naturally accepts the offer and accompanies Belsidus to a secret conference of his organization, the Black Internationale.

Held at an old lodge in the Catskill Mountains, Belsidus explains to the fifty delegates in attendance his plans for world domination, beginning with the
recapture of Africa. Prior to his discussion, the calculating doctor assures the delegates' cooperation and the secrecy of his plans by murdering three informers before the startled and terrified delegates. At the conference, Slater is introduced to Patricia Givens, an attractive black woman who intrigues the smitten reporter. He later learns that she is in charge of the Black Internationale's secret air force, a fact that intrigues as well as intimidates the reporter. Sensing Slater's attraction, Givens alludes to a mutual attraction but keeps him at a distance, making it clear to him that her primary interest is preparing the air force for its invasion of Africa.

Meanwhile, Slater learns more about the Black Internationale and its business interests of futuristic underwater farms, factories, and other clandestine businesses. He also learns about the organization's Church of Love and hears its message of self-love and black nationalism. Belsidus's plan of world domination is initially executed when he causes the white U.S. population to be divided between Protestants and Catholics.

Using the lynching of a black man in the town of Newton, Mississippi as an incentive, Belsidus orders the
bombing of the town by air. Although personally horrified, Slater accompanies Givens on her mission and witnesses the bombing. Thousands of leaflets are dispensed from the plane, which credit the bombing to the Catholics. The two narrowly escape capture when their plane breaks down in Alabama and are spotted by two white farmers. Belsidus also orders the farmers to be killed and have their murders blamed on the Catholics. Through the shrewd use of divide and conquer, Belsidus is able to create a social upheaval among American whites as Catholics and Protestants exchange accusations and violent retributions.

Meanwhile, Belsidus uses the confusion as a smoke screen for his invasion of Africa. Mobilizing an army of five thousand soldiers, Belsidus sends the army to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where they prepare for their conquest of Liberia. Led by Belsidus, the army marches into the capital city of Monrovia, overthrows the colonial government and its president, and claims victory when Belsidus declares himself president. Predictably, European countries become alarmed at Belsidus' arming of Liberia and take action. France sends its consul to persuade Belsidus to demilitarize Liberia's borders. He assures the consul that there is no cause for alarm, but
after his departure Belsidus, enraged by the consul's demands, aggressively prepares for an offensive to capture Africa.

To prevent European countries from mobilizing against Liberia, Belsidus calls for a relentless campaign of sabotage against France, Italy, and Great Britain, causing a war between the three countries and its allies. In Africa, native subjects rebel at the signal of Belsidus and European colonists are expelled or killed. Colonial buildings, offices, and other infrastructures are destroyed. Finally, after two months of warfare, Belsidus declares victory as he holds a Black Internationale conference in the new capital city of Kakata and proclaims Africa back in the hands of Africans. The story ends on a positive note as Slater and Givens proclaim their love for each other.

Response to "The Black Internationale" was overwhelmingly enthusiastic from the Courier's staff and its readers. "Your story 'The Black Internationale' should be the answer to a circulation man's prayers," praised managing editor William G. Nunn. "Its getting better and better and everyone in the office makes a
grand rush when it comes in.\textsuperscript{115} One reader, Islamic minister Josef Mohammed, said that he and other Muslims were inspired by "The Black Internationale," and that the story would revolutionize the world.\textsuperscript{116} Another reader, a Chicago woman, was so convinced by Schuyler's novel that she inquired about Dr. Belsidus. "I want to understand about this Dr. Henry Belsidus. Is his conquest going on now, at the present time, in Africa?"\textsuperscript{117}

Inspired by the favorable response from \textit{Courier} readers, Schuyler was motivated to write a sequel to "The Black Internationale." Titled "Black Empire: An Imaginative Story Of A Great New Civilization In Africa," the story appeared in twenty-nine chapters from October 2, 1937 to April 16, 1938 in the \textit{Courier}.\textsuperscript{118} Told once again from the narration of Carl Slater, "Black Empire" involves Belsidus' efforts to resist the recapture of Africa by European colonial powers. Belsidus employs the use of his powerful army and deadly futuristic weapons.

\textsuperscript{115}Letter from William G. Nunn to George Schuyler, 11 January, 1937, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
\textsuperscript{116}Letter from W.P. Bayless, to George Schuyler, undated, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
\textsuperscript{117}Hill and Rassmussem, ed., \textit{Black Empire}, 268.
\textsuperscript{118}Ibid., 344.
such as a death ray to thwart the armies, navies, and air forces of Italy, France, and Great Britain. Despite plot twists such as Slater and Givens barely escaping from a cannibalistic African tribe, and a relationship between Belsidus and Martha Gaskins, a beautiful white woman who heads the Black internationale's sabotage campaign in Europe, Africa is saved from European re-colonization and emerges as a new world power.

"Black internationale" and "Black Empire" emphasized Schuyler's growing interest with international affairs. Observing world events such as Mussolini's Ethiopian invasion, Adolf Hitler's revival of Germany under Nazi rule, and Japan's invasion and conquest of China, Schuyler felt that people of African descent would also fight for their own independence in the next world war. In 1938, Schuyler asserted that "The New Negro" was knowledgable of world affairs, stating that "He is aware that the balance of power is shifting in the world and so are his cousins in Africa, in India, in Malaysia, the Caribbean and China."119 Discussing the threat of increasing European nationalism to non-white peoples of the world, Schuyler stressed the importance of a Black

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Internationale of liberation to combat the White
Internationale of oppression:

He sees and welcomes a community of interest of all colored peoples. No longer ignorant, terrorized or lacking confidence, he waits and schemes and plans. He is the Damoclean sword dangling over the white world. Everywhere he is on the march, he cannot be stopped, and he knows it.120

As the 1930's came to a close, Schuyler reconsidered his support for world war and favored an isolationist position on American involvement in a possible world war. In 1940, he joined the Negroes Against War Committee and wrote several editorials condemning the prospect of war and urging African Americans to join the "America First Committee."121 Coincidentally, many of the editorials were rooted in an intense dislike of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

As early as 1933 Schuyler criticized Roosevelt's New Deal programs. He warned Courier readers that the New Deal was a futile attempt to move toward a state capitalism like Nazi Germany, which would result in increased racial hostility toward African Americans by Whites.122 By the end of Roosevelt's first

120 Ibid.

121 James O. Young, Black Writers Of The Thirties (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 92.
administration, Schuyler criticized the president for failing to protect African Americans from racial discrimination and lynching. Moreover, he claimed that the New Deal abetted in the exclusion of African American labor from its agencies in the South.

Commenting on the National Recovery Administration (NRA), Schuyler cynically stated that "Negro labor has discovered that NRA means Negroes Robbed Again."123 The Social Security Act of 1935 was criticized as well for its exclusion of domestic and agricultural workers, many of whom were African American, from receiving old age pensions. "The U.S. Social Security Act not only takes the Aframerican for a ride, but aids immeasurably in perpetuating his inferior status," complained Schuyler.124 "What we see here, is in most of the other 'liberal' legislation, is a further stratifying of the Negro at the bottom of the ladder of life."125

As Roosevelt began to openly support allied powers such as Great Britain and made preparations for the

123George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 2 March, 1935.
124George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 26 December, 1936.
125Ibid.
possible U.S. involvement in World War, Schuyler wrote essays that encouraged African Americans not to support the U.S. as long as segregation was practiced. "It is grimly ironical, a cruel jest, that they should even be ASKED to fight to preserve a system that ridicules, demeans and degrades them," remarked Schuyler in a Courier editorial.126 He also stated that "The white man is at least encouraged to believe that this is his country . . . The Negro, on the other hand, is informed in season and out that despite his 300-year residence he is still an alien."127

Schuyler's reasons for opposing African American participation in World War II were primarily rooted in his own brutal experience with racism while serving in the Army during World War I. "I saw what was done to the Negro during the last war and I heard a lot more than I saw. I consider the Negro's treatment during that period unforgivable and indefensible. I foresee that his treatment during the next war will be the same," predicted a cynical Schuyler.128

126George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 2 December, 1939.

127Ibid.

128George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 12 August, 1939.
The journalist also mentioned of African Americans' discontent with segregation and their demands for respect in return for their patriotism. "I think there is a growing feeling among intelligent colored folk that loyalty should be reciprocal: that one should only be loyal to those who return that feeling in word and action," declared Schuyler.129 Almost a precursor to the Courier's "Double V" campaign during World War II, Schuyler also emphasized that African Americans' true enemy was not the Axis powers but segregation in the U.S.:

Our war is not against Hitler in Europe, but against the Hitlers in America. Our war is not to defend democracy, but get a democracy we have never had. Our war is not against the Mussolinis and Stalins, but against the dominant American spirit of Bilboism.130

Equally infuriating to the journalist was support for the upcoming war among African Americans. When A. Philip Randolph and William Pickens wrote pamphlets for the Committee To Defend America By Aiding The Allies, urging African Americans to support U.S. assistance of Great Britain, Schuyler criticized them in a "Views and Reviews" editorial. "These are all admirable gentlemen

129George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 21 December, 1940.
130Ibid.

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but I think they are misguided as between the British and
german butchers there is nothing to choose," replied
Schuyler. 131 The journalist also mentioned of Great
Britain's colonies, labeling them as "an imperial slave
pen stocked with 400 million colored people," and the
Axis powers' desire to take away Great Britain's "ill-
gotten gains." 132 Schuyler concluded his condemnation
with a commentary on Democracy:

The democratic flubdubbery is a fraud because
political democracy without industrial democracy is
meaningless. Liberty is merely a phrase to enslave
colored folk, whether in England or America, and to
most of the whites. Our alleged leaders should stop
kidding us. 133

Schuyler's tirade against African American
participation in a possible world war was somberly
dverted when Japan bombed the U.S. Pacific Naval Fleet
at the Pearl Harbor Naval base in Honolulu, Hawaii.
Remembering his Army days of serving in the 25th Infantry
while stationed at the Schofield Barracks in Honolulu,
Schuyler felt a sadness over the attack. "No one who has
ever visited or lived in Hawaii, as I have, could help

131 George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 12 October, 1940.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
but experience a pang of horror at the thought of that lovely place subjected to ruthless bombing from the air," exclaimed Schuyler. Selectively ignoring his own experiences of racism in Hawaii, he praised the island as "one of the few places under the American flag where the various peoples of the world live in peace, amity and tolerance" in a Courier editorial addressing the attack. Despite his flowering descriptions of Hawaii, he also prophesied the fate of its Japanese American citizens in retribution of the attack:

It is sad, however, that what has been truly a noble experiment in interracial living should be ended or at least interrupted. Now there will be suspicion, hatred and intolerance between those of Japanese ancestry . . . and the other natives. There will be divisions among the Japanese Americans themselves, because some are American citizens by right of birth while those born in Japan are subjects of the Mikado. The Japanese Americans are overwhelmingly loyal, but they have always borne the burden of white American suspicion, and that burden will increase. Thousands may be penned in camps.

134 George S. Schuyler, "Views and Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 20 December, 1941.
135 Ibid.
136 Shortly after Schuyler's editorial the U.S. began to roundup Japanese Americans, confiscated their property, and sent them to internment camps in the Southwest, where they remained until the end of the war. Ibid.
In January 1942, the Courier received a letter from James Thompson, an African American cafeteria worker at the Cessna Aircraft Corporation in Wichita, Kansas. Expressing his loyalty for the U.S. war effort, Thompson also wondered another victory could be achieved as well. "Being an American of dark complexion . . . these questions flash through my mind: Should I sacrifice my life to live half American?" Thompson asked.\footnote{Patrick S. Washburn, \textit{A Question Of Sedition: The Federal Government's Investigation Of The Black Press During World War II} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 55.} "Will things be better for the next generation in the peace to follow? Would it be too much to demanding too much to demand full citizenship rights in exchange for the sacrificing of my life?" \footnote{Ibid.} Stressing the importance of true democracy in the U.S., Thompson proposed a symbolic gesture for African Americans:

The V for victory sign is being displayed prominently in all so called democratic countries which are fighting for victory over aggression, slavery and tyranny. If this V sign means that to those now engaged in this great conflict, then let we colored Americans adopt the double VV for a double victory. The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for victory over our enemies from within. For surely those who perpetuate these ugly prejudices here are seeking to destroy our democratic form of government just as surely as the Axis forces.
Inspired by Thompson's letter, the Courier was motivated to initiate the Double V campaign in February 1942. The Courier began to aggressively emphasize the Double V sign by regularly printing it on their front page. Several photographs of African American citizens and celebrities such as Marian Anderson, Lionel Hampton, and Adam Clayton Powell displaying the Double V sign began to appear regularly in the Courier as well. Even White celebrities such as Sinclair Lewis, Humphrey Bogart, and Wendell Wilkie appeared either with the Double V sign or reading the Courier.\textsuperscript{139}

The campaign was an instant success as Courier readers expressed their enthusiastic support for the Double V effort. A Texas woman stressed the importance of the campaign "because many Americans are more dangerous to us (blacks) than some of our enemies abroad."\textsuperscript{140} Other readers emphasized the importance of blacks and whites working together for the war effort. "If and when the American White Man loses this war, I am wondering if he will think why he did not give the


\textsuperscript{140}ibid., 6.
colored man a chance with the white in the Navy?" asked a reader from Columbus, Ohio. "He may ask why he did not give the colored man a bigger part to play in the war... We have found that we could have won the war with his aid, that we couldn't win without him." 141

Equally supportive of the Double V campaign was Schuyler. When asked years later if the campaign was necessary, Schuyler replied yes, stressing the government's reluctance to include African Americans in the war effort. "You see, every gain that Negroes made has been gained by a fight of some kind, by building a fire under somebody," emphasized Schuyler. "Because there's a reluctance there - not to rock the boat - but as I've always said, I never heard of a boat getting anywhere without being rocked. So this was necessary, to keep their feet to the fire at all times." 142

Despite the success of the Double V campaign, the campaign and other related stories of racial discrimination were seen as subversive, unpatriotic, and threatening by alarmed whites. Among the opponents was Westbrook Pegler, a white columnist for the New York

141 Ibid.

World-Telegram. In the April 18, 1942 edition, he attacked the Courier and the Chicago Defender for its support of the campaign, considering it "reminiscent of (William Randolph) Hearst at his worst in their sensationalism." In addition, Pegler added that "in their obvious inflammatory bias in the treatment of news they resemble such one-sided publications as the Communist Party's Daily Worker and (Father) Coughlin's Social Justice."143

Incensed by Westbrook's column, Schuyler did not hesitate to return the journalistic volley with a round of his own. In the May 27, 1942 edition of the Courier, Schuyler told African Americans that they should not be surprised by "such attacks from the journalistic Gestapo of American fascism." Furthermore, he stated that "the closing down of every Negro newspaper in the U.S.A. would be of no help to white supremacy. The old days of sacred, timid, ignorant Negroes are gone forever."144

By 1943, the Courier had discontinued its' Double V campaign and replaced it with stories of achievements of


144George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews," 27 May, 1942; cited in Ibid.
African American soldiers and civilian war efforts. Reasons for the change include more African Americans finding work in defense industries after increased pressure from activist groups. Another reason is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) pressure on African American newspapers to stop printing stories of racial violence against African American soldiers and civilians. Among the newspapers investigated was the Courier, as the FBI documented articles they considered seditious and visited the offices to intimidate the Courier staff.


147 Courier journalist Frank Bolden recalled FBI agents visiting the office and lecturing them. "They'd
In the FBI's report on the Courier, Schuyler was quoted several times as he made statements that were seen as pro-Japanese and potentially seditious. One statement taken from his "Views And Reviews" column in the March 28, 1942 edition of the Courier quoted Schuyler admiring the Japanese "for their cleanliness, their courtesy, their ingenuity, and their efficiency." 148 Another statement was cited from the "Views And Reviews" column of February 20, 1943, when Schuyler commented on Robert Moses, an African American who was sentenced to three years imprisonment for evading the draft and stated, 'I have no country.' "What Moses said, many Negroes could be thinking and it is up to American white people to make them think otherwise," declared Schuyler. "Jailing them will not change their minds but democracy, fair play, citizenship rights, and equality of opportunity will . . ." 149

tell us to shut our mouths, you're hurting the war effort, and we'd just laugh at them." Washburn, "The Pittsburgh Courier's Double V Campaign," 23. To view the FBI's reports on African American newspapers, see The FBI's RACON: Racial Conditions In The United States During World War II, Compiled and Edited by Robert A. Hill (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1995), 419-442.

148 Hill, ed., The FBI's RACON, 440.

149 Ibid., 442.
Fortunately, Schuyler and other African American journalists did not lose their jobs nor were charged with sedition by the government. Nonetheless Schuyler, who still criticized the treatment of African American soldiers and civilians throughout the war, began to write essays that encouraged African American support of World War II. In a November 1943 Crisis article titled "A Long War Will Aid The Negro," Schuyler stated that:

Not only will a long war develop a new white outlook but a new black outlook as well. The increasingly widespread utilization of Negroes in industry, commerce and the armed forces will demonstrate as nothing else could the capacity of colored Americans to measure up to the highest standards.\(^{150}\)

In addition, Schuyler founded an organization that was not only patriotic but designed to improve African Americans' image in the eyes of whites: the Association for Tolerance in America (ATA).

Alarmed by increased racial confrontations between African Americans and Whites during the war, Schuyler felt that an organization was needed to recondition whites' views of African Americans through "scientific propaganda."\(^{151}\) In 1938, Schuyler emphasized a similar


\(^{151}\)Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 259.
approach in an essay addressing NAACP branch organizations. In a paragraph sub-titled "Educating White People," Schuyler emphasized that propaganda such as a special pamphlet for whites and speakers available for white organizations should be used to promote the NAACP. In addition, NAACP branch organizations should take steps to include whites. "Every prominent white person in the community should be approached to join the association. Whether he does or not, such solicitation will at least help advertise the Association and its purpose," stated Schuyler.152 Whether or not the NAACP branches followed the advice, Schuyler formed the ATA based on the same philosophy in January 1943.

Assisting Schuyler's ATA were individuals Corinne Dean, Secretary of the organization, and consulting artists Constance Bradley, Louise Jefferson, and Elton Fax.153 Soliciting funds for the ATA, Schuyler sent out hundreds of letters describing the organization as "a group dedicated to the task of eliminating color prejudice through mass education."154 Among the


153 Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 260.
interested replies was Robert Carroll, Principal of Scott High School in Glenn Rogers, West Virginia. Pledging the requested amount of $1.00, Carroll accepted Schuyler's position that it was African Americans' responsibility to teach Whites. "All along, I have felt that it is our job to sell them the picture of ourselves that we want them to see," affirmed Carroll. "Yes, that is our very definite responsibility." 155

With the artistic assistance of Faux, Schuyler was able to construct a six-page booklet with illustrations designed to encourage African Americans to join the ATA and to stress the importance of changing Whites' image of African Americans. With a drawing of an African American soldier on the front page, Schuyler asked the question, "How will America treat him . . . when he returns?" He also stressed the importance of the ATA's goal:

Let us not 'kid' ourselves. We cannot win full citizenship rights for colored Americans until we have changed the minds of white Americans. What they think about you determines your status. They will not agree to a change of your status until you change their minds. The minds of these people constituting 90 percent of the American population can be changed, and this can be done by using the same means through which their minds were made up. With your financial aid and spiritual help we plan to use billboards and pamphlets, postcards and car

154 Ibid.

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cards, newspapers and magazines, the radio and films.\textsuperscript{156}

The pamphlet concludes with a drawing of a white male worker with the captioned texts above and below, "You've got to convince him! Unless This ordinary white American believes you deserve a fair deal, you cannot win it. Let's change his mind!"\textsuperscript{157}

Schuyler and Fax also designed ATA advertising cards for buses, streetcars, and subways. Showing the face of an African American soldier, the captioned texts read "500,000 of these lads are fighting for You! Let Them and Theirs Share in Our Democracy. ASSOCIATION FOR TOLERANCE IN AMERICA."\textsuperscript{158} The ATA also had radio announcements run on stations in New York. One announcement read:

The Association for Tolerance in America says--

ONLY A UNITED AMERICA CAN BE VICTORIOUS, AND ONLY A TOLERANT AMERICA CAN BE UNITED.

TOLERANCE MEANS SYMPATHY, COURTESY, CHARITY AND BROTHERHOOD.

\textsuperscript{156}Association For Tolerance In America pamphlet, 1, Schuyler Papers--Schomburg; Schuyler, \textit{Black and Conservative}, 260.

\textsuperscript{157}Association For Tolerance In America pamphlet, 5.

\textsuperscript{158}Ibid., 6.
UNLESS TOLERANCE IS EXTENDED TOWARD THE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT LOOK, THINK OR ACT LIKE YOU, THEN IT IS MEANINGLESS.

TOLERANCE MEANS TREATING THE OTHER FELLOW AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED, WHETHER HE IS WHITE OR BLACK.

IF YOU APPROVE OF THIS SENTIMENT, SEND A POSTCARD TO THE ASSOCIATION FOR TOLERANCE IN AMERICA, IN CARE OF THIS STATION.159

The ATA also stressed the importance of African Americans presenting a positive image to whites by dressing well and refraining from behavior seen as stereotypical. "Much intolerance is caused or increased among white Americans by the bad conduct of many Negroes with whom they come in contact," stressed Schuyler in an ATA Report to Associates. "So any improvement in the conduct of Negroes will lessen intolerance and misunderstanding among whites --- and that is our great aim."160 The ATA also circulated posters with an African American soldier surrounded by captioned texts that read, "You Can Help Make America Better For Them By Your Conduct . . . You are judged by your TALK, your LOOKS, your ACTIONS . . . Be Neat, Sober, Clean, Steady, Thrifty, Healthy, Punctual, Courteous, Industrious."161

159 Transcript of radio announcement for Association for Tolerance in America, Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.

160 Report To Associates, Association For Tolerance In America, July-August 1943, Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.
Despite Schuyler's hope for interracial cooperation, few advertising companies were willing to display the ATA's advertisements. One company, National Transitads, refused to run the ATA's advertising cards in Mobile, Alabama and Gary, Indiana. The company's failure to run the ads in Mobile were attributed to claims of unavailable space.\textsuperscript{162} In Gary, the cards appeared briefly but were taken down in June 1943 due to fears that they were "a danger spot." A bloody and violent race riot had occurred in Detroit, Michigan the same month, and fears of Gary, described as "a large industrial town having close contacts with Detroit," experiencing similar hostilities were prevalent.\textsuperscript{163}

In response to the Gary action, Schuyler wrote a reply letter to Myron T. Hershaw, Vice President of

\textsuperscript{161}Press Release, "Good Conduct Drive Launched," Association For Tolerance In America, 27 August, (1943?), Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.
\textsuperscript{162}Letter from Robert W. Ranson to George S. Schuyler, 28 April, 1943, Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.
\textsuperscript{163}During June 20-22, 1943, Detroit experienced a violent race riot that was preceded by a year of violent confrontations between African Americans and Whites over housing and job competition in defense industries and automobile plants. 25 African Americans and 9 Whites were killed, and property damage was estimated at several hundred thousand dollars. It was the most violent race riot during the war and to date. Franklin and Moss, \textit{From Slavery To Freedom}, 453; Letter from Myron T. Harshaw to George S. Schuyler, 30 June, 1943, Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.
National Transit ads. Arguing that Gary was an appropriate city for the ads, he stated that "If similar displays had been appearing regularly in Detroit, Beaumont, Mobile and other industrial cities where there have been clashes and pogroms, these unfortunate occurrences would probably not have taken place."164 Schuyler also reiterated the ATA's goal of re-educating Whites about their perceptions of African Americans:

Color prejudice and the multiple economic and social problems flowing from it are due primarily to miseducation, as you must well know, and yet when an attempt like ours is made to correct the imbalance through mass education there is objection from those people whose responsibility it is to foster and stimulate national amity. To say the least, it is discouraging.165

Fortunately for Schuyler, the ATA ads ran successfully with the New York Subways Advertising Company, where it appeared also on the Brooklyn Surface Lines.166 Nonetheless, by the end of the year, Schuyler had to concede defeat again for another failed personal project. The ads had failed to generate significant interest and the ATA suffered from a familiar malady to

164 Letter from George S. Schuyler to Myron T. Hershaw, 3 July, 1943, Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.
165 Ibid.
166 Letter From Francis J. Joyce to George S. Schuyler, 17 September, 1943, Schuyler Papers-Schomburg.
Schuyler: lack of funds. Wartime racial tensions also made it difficult for Schuyler to carry out his program of interracial cooperation and re-education of Whites. Lastly, African Americans most likely did not agree with Schuyler's position. Observing that racial hostility from whites still remained despite American loyalty and attempts of inclusion and assimilation into American society, most African Americans probably felt that the ATA was a futile attempt to make Whites accept African Americans. Even Schuyler may have felt his own organization was futile, as he retreated into his familiar cynical beliefs of American race relations.

Discouraged by the increase of race riots, continued segregation, and the failure of the ATA, Schuyler became convinced that the extension of equal citizenship rights to African Americans was crucial to preventing a possible repeat of postwar race riots. In his essay, "More Race Riots Are Coming," Schuyler warned of the impatient mood of African Americans and stressed that the U.S. government needed to do the following: 1) Pass antidiscrimination laws for employment and housing, and 2) abolish segregation of the armed forces. "If white America is ready to extend complete democratic rights to

colored people, there will be no race, no racial tension, and soon no race prejudice on either side," admonished Schuyler. "But we can be sure that any movement 'back to normalcy' in race relations will be bitter resisted by colored people. It is now up to white America to make its choice, and the time is growing short."168

Another essay reiterating Schuyler's urgent concern for race relations is "The Caucasian Problem." Appearing in Rayford Logan's book What The Negro Wants, "The Caucasian Problem" asserts that the "Negro Problem" lies in the European's dominant control over African peoples:

The so-called Negroes did not inaugurate the trans-Atlantic slave traffic... They have not invaded anybody's territory for almost a millennium. They have passed few if any Jim Crow laws, established no Jim Crow customs, set up few white ghettos, carried on no discriminatory practices against whites and have not devoted centuries to propaganda attempting to prove the superiority of blacks over whites.169

Schuyler also discussed the universality of the Caucasian problem:

Stated briefly, the problem confronting the colored peoples of the world is how to live in freedom, peace and security without being invaded,


subjugated, expropriated, exploited, persecuted and humiliated by Caucasians justifying their actions by the myth of white racial superiority. ... They are nauseated by the fictions and hypocrisy cloaking military aggression and crass materialism, and everywhere today their dream is to rid themselves of the whole Caucasian problem which is basically the same throughout the world. 170

Aside from its bold analysis of race relations, "The Caucasian Problem" is important because it marks Schuyler's last significant essay where he labels white supremacy as the primary agent of domestic and international race prejudice. 171 The end of World War II in 1945 also meant the end of a fifteen-year political transformation of Schuyler. The journalist began the 1930's as an advocate of African American consumer cooperation but an opponent of black nationalism. His literary tirades against the ILD's defense of the Scottsboro boys also demonstrated his intense hatred of Communism as well.

In the mid to late 1930's, Schuyler contradicted his denunciation of black nationalism and demonstrated a sense of race chauvinism in championing Ethiopia's struggle against Italy in fiction and real life. Even more dramatic was his avocation of African Americans to reject the call of World War II until the U.S. began to

170 ibid., 283.

grant them equal citizenship rights and abolish racial segregation. Characteristic of Schuyler, the journalist changed his anti-war sentiment and advocated African Americans to support the U.S. war effort and convince whites to give up their stereotypical beliefs of African Americans. Nonetheless, race relations during World War II made his utopian ideals difficult to achieve. After fifteen years of oscillating between political beliefs and failing at three projects, Schuyler retreated into his usual cynicism. At the same time, he embraced a previous campaign that became an obsession during the post-war period: the fight against Communism.
CHAPTER 6
ARRIVAL AT THE RIGHT: SCHUYLER AND THE COMMUNISTS

Near the end of World War II, George Schuyler had served over twenty years as a journalist for the Pittsburgh Courier, considered by many to be the leading newspaper of the African American press. He also served as the business editor of the NAACP magazine Crisis, retiring in 1944 after seven years of service. Years later, Schuyler paid homage to the magazine by writing a short but laudatory essay that appeared in the March 1951 issue. Declaring the Crisis to be a revelation to white and black America, Schuyler stated that "It is no exaggeration to say that the early Crisis created an intellectual revolution in the most out-of-the-way places."¹

A year before, Schuyler paid the African American press a similar compliment by writing a pamphlet titled Fifty Years Of Progress In Negro Journalism. Reviewing the history of the African American press from the

¹George S. Schuyler, "Forty Years Of The Crisis," Crisis, June 1951, 163.
establishment of the first African American newspaper, Freedom's Journal, in 1827, to the press' role in reporting racial conditions for African American soldiers and civilians during World War II, the seven-page pamphlet championed the efforts of the press to educate and inform its readers. "Altogether the Negro press has been a unifying educational force throughout its history, strengthening the bonds of that freemasonry which exists between all westernized Africans," exclaimed Schuyler. "It has taught them to not only expect and demand better things but also to prepare themselves to accept the full responsibilities of citizenship in the republic."\(^2\)

Schuyler's career was busy as ever at the Courier. Although his main occupation was serving the associate editor for the newspaper's New York edition, he still contributed essays for his "Views and Reviews" column and another column, "The World Today." Schuyler also continued to be a correspondence for the Courier, traveling throughout the U.S. and abroad. In 1948, Schuyler made his most significant assignment to date: a tour of Latin America. Proposed a decade before by the journalist, the assignment was approved by editor Ira F. 

Lewis in the Spring of 1948 as he was finishing an assignment on Harlem. The Courier was assisting the fight to integrate the Armed Forces by publishing articles and editorials supporting President Harry Truman signing an executive order to end the practice. Lewis and other Courier editors, including Schuyler, felt that Latin America's interracial military and government was a prime example of successful integration. Enthusiastic about the assignment, Schuyler departed in June 1948 for Latin America.

Traveling by airplane, Schuyler visited ten Latin American countries in a six-week period. Schuyler's objective was to make a socioeconomic observation of Latin America and to discuss the racial atmosphere in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Panama, Argentina and Brazil. An experienced reporter, Schuyler was able to employ the same techniques he used over twenty years ago in his "Aframérica Today" assignment and gained valuable information about Latin America.

Focusing on integration in the military and social conditions in Latin America, Schuyler found some successful models. In Venezuela, Schuyler claimed that

3 Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 289.

4 "Reminiscences of George Schuyler," 630.
segregation in the military was impossible, since the population was multiracial. "For nearly 400 years, Negroes, Indians, and Europeans have mixed and mated here with the result that any street scene reveals a color scale ranging from chocolate brown to a light cafe con leche complexion . . . there are comparatively few 'pure Negroes' or Caucasians," exclaimed Schuyler.\(^5\) He was greatly impressed with the presence of non-whites in higher military and political circles in Venezuela. Commenting on the military, Schuyler claimed that the number of brown officers in Venezuela's military was close to 10,000. In addition, he remarked that a meeting of the Venezuelan Congress "would remind one of attending a conference of the NAACP."\(^6\)

In his search for an integrated armed force in Latin America, Schuyler praised the country of Brazil for its non-segregation policy. "In Brazil's Army, Navy, and Air Corps, men of all colors and racial backgrounds serve side by side as Brazilians, and if there has ever been any tension or strife because of this liberal policy, there is no record of it."\(^7\) Schuyler also mentioned of


\(^6\)Ibid.

\(^7\)Ibid.
Afro-Latinos in powerful positions. Discussing his visit to Colombia, Schuyler mentioned Luis Cordova, a lawyer and member of the Colombian Senate, who was known for defending the poor, many of whom were Afro-Colombians.8 Discussing Panama, Schuyler mentioned distinguished Afro-Latinos such as Carlos Mendoza, a former President of Panama, Sidney Young, editor of the country's newspaper the Panama Tribune, and Felipe Escobar, a criminal lawyer who briefly served as an Attorney General.9

Although Schuyler was impressed with Afro-Latinos serving in positions of power, he commented on racism in Latin America as well. Remarkingly on Venezuela, Schuyler stated that "Like many other lands in this part of the world a ridiculous white complex has taken root. It would be inexcusable in Nordic whites but in mulattos and quadroons (black and white) it is intolerable."10 In the military, Schuyler noticed that although Latin American countries practiced integration, many of the officers

10Schuyler, "No Segregation In Venezuela," 16.
were whites. One example was Peru, where despite its armed forces were labeled a "Democratic Army," Schuyler reported that most of the officers were white, while the remainder were mestizos (black and Indian), Indian, and black. In Brazil, where a large portion of the military was of black and Indian heritage, a Brazilian Army Captain told Schuyler that 10 percent of Army officers were black whereas the remainder of the officers were predominantly white and mulatto.

Casually observing Latin American society from a black traveler's perspective, Schuyler found that racism was unavoidable. Schuyler recalled an incident at a luxury hotel in Rio de Janeiro where Schuyler had a reservation for a room and bath. When he arrived, instead of a friendly greeting from the bellhops, he was abruptly asked "Got Reservation?" Stating he had one, the bellhops reluctantly took his baggage into the hotel. At the desk, Schuyler asked for his reservation, whereupon the clerk told him that there was none for him. Concerned, Schuyler waited in the lobby for a call from a contact for another reservation. During his wait, he


12 Schuyler, "Brazil's Army Policy Shames United States."
observed that none of the arriving white guests were abruptly questioned for a reservation. Fortunately, Schuyler was able to find a suite reservation at another hotel through his cabby.  

Another incident occurred in Panama, where Schuyler was attempting to get a flight reservation to Colombia. At the airport, he was informed that he could not have a reservation since visas were not being issued because of an insurrection in Colombia months before. Emphasizing the impossibility of Schuyler getting a visa, the clerk stated that "There are big white people here, representing powerful American companies, who have been here for weeks awaiting visas." To the clerk's surprise, Schuyler showed him his visa, whereupon the clerk asked how he was able to get it. "Well, I know people that those white American salesmen don't know," Schuyler coolly replied.  

Schuyler was also critical of the segregation he encountered in Latin America. Of all the countries he visited, Schuyler found the American-controlled Panama Canal Zone to be the most segregated. Despite the

13George S. Schuyler, "Brazilian Color Bias Growing More Rampant," Pittsburgh Courier, 4 September, 1948 6; Black And Conservative, 304-05.  

14Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 296.
country's population being overwhelmingly Afro-Caribbean, many of them West Indian workers brought in years before to build the Panama Canal, the investigative reporter found a color caste system in the Canal Zone closely resembling Jim Crow segregation in America. Facilities and institutions were racially segregated by using labels such as "Gold" and "Silver" (respective terms for "white" and "colored"). Predictably, "Gold" facilities and institutions were superior to "Silver" facilities and institutions. "Gold" workers were paid better wages and salaries than "Silver" workers.15 Schuyler emphasized the intensity of the Canal Zone's Jim Crow system when he discussed how a cemetery buried white and non-whites at certain hours of the day and even segregated the caretaking of the graves.16

As in all of the Latin American countries he visited, Schuyler noted that the majority of the poor and uneducated in the Panama Canal Zone were non-whites, many of them Afro-Caribbean. He also discussed the growing hostility many of them had toward Americans. "There exists a general feeling in Panama . . . of resentment against the arrogance of the Canal Zone Americans . . .

15 bid., 294-95.
16 bid., 295.
This is understandable in view of the attitude displayed by these Americans and, more importantly, by the treatment accorded [to] colored people, Panamanian and otherwise employed in the Canal Zone," stated Schuyler.\textsuperscript{17}

In conclusion, Schuyler condemned America's Canal Zone policy and called for increased assistance to the small area:

Compared to the little Republic of Panama which is spending one third of its budget on education, paying better teachers' salaries than the Zone's 'Silver' standard, giving better instruction and building wonderfully attractive and sanitary social security apartments to replace old rookeries, the United States in the Canal Zone provides a sorry picture. It could well spend a couple hundred million of the money now being squandered in Europe to give an example of democracy at work on the isthmus.\textsuperscript{18}

Schuyler's assignment proved to be another success for the \textit{Courier} as readers were intrigued by the reporter's vivid descriptions of Latin America. Schuyler also demonstrated that integration in the armed forces was possible and successful by emphasizing the inclusion of Afro Latin Americans and Indians into the ranks of the

\textsuperscript{17}Schuyler, "America's Canal Zone Policy Is A Disgrace," 16.

\textsuperscript{18}Schuyler's was probably referring to Secretary Of State George C. Marshall's plan to rebuild Western European countries at a original cost of $5.8 billion. Ibid.; Robert H. Ferrell, \textit{American Diplomacy: A History}, 3rd edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975), 633-36.
military and in levels of government. At the same time, he also found that Latin America fell victim to racism and a strict color code. Poverty was widespread and usually among non-whites. Lastly, the U.S. policy toward Latin America did not seem to benefit Latin Americans, particularly in the Panama Canal Zone.

Nonetheless, he recommended the region as a safe haven for African American travelers. "I hasten to state that it is possible for the Negro traveler to enjoy swimming, hunting, skating and skiing, to stop at the finest hotels, have the ritziest service obtainable and not be shadowed by Dr. James Crow or any of his offspring, by simply going to Latin America," declared Schuyler.19 Schuyler himself enjoyed several aspects of Latin America, and returned a year later to write another Courier series on the Caribbean.

While Schuyler was busy with Courier assignments, speaking engagements, and numerous articles and columns, relations with his family suffered. Aside from dealing with the burdens of an interracial marriage, Schuyler's wife Josephine became lonely because of his constant business trips and engagements. She also suspected him

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of having extramarital affairs on the road despite Schuyler's passionate letters professing his love for her. As a result, the two became distant and immersed themselves into separate projects. Schuyler became more involved with his career and Josephine became more involved with the career of her daughter Philippa.

In the late 1940's Philippa, now a teenager, had a distinguished career as a pianist. At age twelve she composed one of her most famous compositions, "Manhattan Nocturne," during a trip to Mexico and performed it on her thirteenth birthday in front of a selective audience of guests and reporters. In April 1945, it was performed by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra for the Young People's Concert Program at Carnegie Hall. A child prodigy, Philippa went through eight grades of education in three years and began her college studies at Manhattanville College.

Despite the accolades heaped upon Philippa, she did not enjoy a typical childhood. Most of her time was

20Talalay, *Composition In Black And White*, 115.

21bid., 101-02.

spent with tutors, playing concerts, and with her mother, who assumed full responsibility of managing her career. Her relationship with Schuyler was limited since he was involved with his career. Nonetheless, he was proud of his daughter's achievements and cherished the numerous scrapbooks of Philippa that were kept by his wife.\textsuperscript{23} To Philippa, however, her career seemed at times oppressive. Typically, as she became older, she often balked at her mother's direction and at times proved to be difficult.

One example of Philippa and Josephine at odds was in a letter to Schuyler from an American tour in 1948. Writing from Texas, Josephine complained that Philippa was being difficult by refusing to play selections, playing obsessively at the piano, and failing to be gracious and congenial to guests. "When this tour is over, I am through!" declared Josephine. "You don't know how much I do to make them successful."\textsuperscript{24}

One possible reason for Philippa's increasing antagonism was her first real exposure to racism on the American tour. Philippa had never been exposed to racism because of her parents' efforts to shield her. At age

\textsuperscript{23} Talalay, \textit{Compositions In Black And White}, 103. Philippa's scrapbooks can be found in the Philippa Duke Schuyler Papers at Syracuse University.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 110.
sixteen, however, she was given a dose of reality when she toured over twenty cities, many of them in the South and before predominantly African American audiences. Playing before African Americans was not a problem: getting white audiences in the South to listen to her was. When she played at a black church in Dallas, Josephine's family refused to see or even acknowledge her. Only a few black servants from the household came to see her.²⁵

As time went on, it would become harder for Philippa to have concert engagements in the U.S. because of racism. She was no longer a novel child prodigy, but an African American woman who refuted racist theories of interracial marriage and white supremacy. In turn, she began to play concerts abroad in Europe, South America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Concerts in America were restricted to Town Hall recitals and predominantly African American audiences.²⁶ Years later, Philippa commented on her jarring experience:

I was born and grew up ... without any consciousness of America's race prejudice ... ²⁵

²⁵Ibid., 111.

[but] I became intellectually aware of it when I . . . entered the world of economic competition as a full-fledged adult. Then I encountered vicious barriers of prejudice in the field of employment because I was the off-spring of what America calls a 'mixed marriage.' It was a ruthless shock to me that, at first, made the walls of my self-confidence crumble. It horrified, humiliated me. But instead of breaking under the strain, I adjusted to it. I left.27

Despite the urgency of his family life, Schuyler chose to preoccupy himself with two important aspects of his post-war career: the growing conservative intellectual movement and the looming reactionary right-wing anti-Communist movement. Schuyler identified with many of the conservatives whose intellectual and political roots were found in liberalism. Neo-conservatives such as Max Eastman, Will Herberg, John Dos Passos, and James Burnham abandoned liberal philosophies such as socialism, embraced the defense of American values in postwar America, and joined the anti-Communist movement.28 Opposing the New Deal a decade before, many of them felt that the threat of a socialist America was real and fervently defended American capitalism.


28A detailed analysis of Eastman's, Herberg's, Dos Passos's, and Burnham's, conversion to intellectual conservatism is found in John P. Diggins, Up From Communism: Conservative Oddseys In American Intellectual History, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975.
Schuyler felt an intellectual kinship with many of the former leftists and joined their cause, defending not only American capitalism but the country's race relations.

Schuyler's dramatic move to the intellectual Right can be based on several factors. First, Schuyler contended that African Americans, despite gains in civil rights and employment, were still a fragile class. Communist activities in the Soviet Union and China, coupled with the increasing Civil Rights Movement in America, caused him to worry about a renewed interest in Communism among African Americans: the threat of increased racial strife seemed imminent. Consequently, Schuyler went on a one-man campaign of warning African Americans of the dangers of Communism. He also emphasized that African Americans fared better in the U.S. than other ethnic and racial groups worldwide, and stated that they were loyal anti-Communists who favored capitalism.

Second, the conservative intellectual movement in postwar America symbolized to Schuyler another opportunity for mainstream status.\(^{29}\) Although he had achieved notoriety as a journalist and considered a race

\(^{29}\)Williams, "When Black Is Right," 315-16. 

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expert, Schuyler wanted to be accepted and known among the James Burnhams, John Dos Passos, and William Buckleys of the world. Subsequently, he joined the conservative intellectual bandwagon in the late 1940's and became the most vocal African American anti-Communist supporter during the Cold War period.30

Lastly, Schuyler joining the Right Wing movement symbolized the fruition of his own conservative beliefs. From the early 1920's to the mid 1940's, the journalist oscillated between socialist-based ideologies of the black and white proletariat joining forces, support of black capitalism, criticism of racism, and brief flirtations with black nationalism. Now in his fifties, Schuyler had decided to forego his battle with white America and turned his energies toward the anti-Communist movement. In turn, he signaled his peace by attacking "Black Reds" and African American protest. He urged African Americans to concentrate more on self-help capitalism and work within the framework of the American courts and economy to improve conditions.31


31Schuyler's economic philosophy and aversion of Communism can be summed up by Wilson Record's conclusion of African Americans and Communism. "Negroes in the
Schuyler naturally used his "Views and Reviews" column to spearhead his anti-Communist campaign. From the late 1940's through the mid 1950's, Schuyler tirelessly bombarded Courier readers with editorials admonishing them not to join or be persuaded by the Communists. "It is bad enough to be black. It is infinitely worse to be black and Communist," read one editorial.32 Assuming to be the spokesperson for the Courier, Schuyler stated that:

The Courier takes this position, not out of hatred for the Russians, the Communists, or anybody else, but out of pure love for the United States and its would-be Negro citizens. The Courier, therefore, believes the time has come to advise all Negroes and all Negro organizations to take positive steps to remove any suspicion of Communism from its ranks.33

When asked by a reader why he was unalterably opposed to Communism, Schuyler simply stated that he

United States have had plenty of provocation to revolt. But they have chosen to protest within the constitutional framework . . . And because the aspirations of the American Negro are essentially egalitarian, a 'bourgeois' document like the American Constitution has a liberating potential in the Black Belt of Alabama and in the ghetto of Harlem that the Communist Manifesto could never hope to have." Wilson Record, The Negro And The Communist Party (Chapel Hill, University Of North Carolina Press, 1951), 315.


33Ibid.
opposed the totalitarian state that had been established in the Soviet Union under Russian dictator Joseph Stalin. "Where the state is supreme, all religious, social, and educational institutions are subordinate to it," declared Schuyler. Interestingly Schuyler, who claimed to be a feminist, argued against Communism by using male chauvinistic arguments as well:

Communism loudly proclaims equality of the sexes. In practice this means putting women to work on men's jobs in mines, in factories, in construction camps and on docks, with time off for nursing infants. Every intelligent, humane person must oppose such reactionism.34

Schuyler often used extreme analogies to discourage African Americans from becoming Communists. Discussing the fate of persecuted Jews in Communist Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union, Schuyler warned that African Americans could face the same fate if the Communists took over the U.S.:

One can imagine what would happen in this country with the Reds in charge, using former Kluxers as administrators and police officials (as Eastern European Communist-ruled countries have used former Nazis), and black comrades pointing out the most effective means of fleecing, enslaving and destroying Negroes. Every Negro organization and

34George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews: Explains Opposition To Communism," Pittsburgh Courier, 1 July, 1950, 15.
institution here has already been infiltrated by this vicious element.\textsuperscript{35}

When Schuyler was not trying to intimidate African Americans from joining the Communists, he was haranguing those for either criticizing the anti-Communist movement or complaining about racial conditions in America. In a Courier editorial titled "Misleading The Negro," Schuyler chided those who complained that the treatment of African Americans hurt the image of the U.S. abroad:

Negroes keep looking for help from outside. They have a Santa Claus complex. They do not yet understand that nobody is going to aid them and that evil-wishing the United States is not going to help them. Indeed, if the United States actually lost its power and prestige the Negroes would feel it worse than anybody else.

So let's stop chasing rainbows and indulging in boozy daydreams, and get back to earth. Learn the sources of power and exploit them to the utmost, economically, financially and politically, and take a rain check on revenge.\textsuperscript{36}

Schuyler saved his greatest criticism for African Americans who spoke out against anti-Communist organizations such as the House of Representatives on Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). When a number of notable African Americans such as W.E.B. DuBois,

\textsuperscript{35}George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews: What Could Happen Here With The Reds In Charge," Pittsburgh Courier, 18 June, 1949, 15.

\textsuperscript{36}George S. Schuyler, "Misleading The Negro," Pittsburgh Courier; cited in Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader, 20 September, 1951.

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Historian Luther P. Jackson, and Bennett College
President Dr. David D. Jones lent their support toward
the denunciation of the HUAC, Schuyler was motivated to
condemn their actions:

It has long been my view that these naive Negro
intellectual leaders who have unwittingly or
unwittingly played the Russian game are a menace to
the 14,000,000 Negroes of this country. It is
obviously suicidal for Negroes to become identified
in any way with the international conspiracy whose
avowed purpose is to destroy the United States and
place it under the rule of the Kremlin. And yet
here we find people commanding the esteem of tens of
thousands of Negroes rushing to the defense of an
enemy of this country. What recklessness! Or what
ignorance? 37

Schuyler often used his columns and articles to
humiliate well known African American sympathizers and
supporters of Communism. In 1947, Schuyler wrote in the
conservative intellectual magazine Plain Talk that
actress Lena Horne was the Communist Party's latest
recruit because of her outspoken protests against racial
segregation and support for entertainer and Communist
supporter Paul Robeson. 38 He also commented that:

It is ironical that such darlings of the
capitalists as Lena Horne and Paul Robeson - who
have been accorded recognition honors and

37 George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews,"
Pittsburgh Courier, 8 March, 1947, 7.

38 George S. Schuyler, "Lovely Lena Toes The Line,"
Plain Talk, November 1947, 8; cited in Williams, "When
Black Is Right," 335.
opportunities such as few white artists of equal or superior talents have enjoyed—should succumb to the Red rumble-bumble about 'race hatred' and bite the hand that has fed them. That's gratitude! 39

Schuyler was equally harsh against singer Josephine Baker when she became vocal about racial segregation after her incident at the New York Stork Club, where she was denied service in 1951. When she visited Argentina, dictator Juan Peron to speak out against segregation, Schuyler accused her of being biased against the U.S. and neglecting international examples of racial persecution:

With a world organization opposed to racial discrimination, you would expect attacks on its existence everywhere . . . but Josie denounces only the U.S.A. brand. She said nothing against it in Brazil where it is a national disgrace. Nor in Cuba where she was barred from the swank lily-white El Nacional Hotel. She has not mentioned the periodic head-whippings the Paris gendarmes give hapless North Africans sojournning there, nor the persecutions throughout French Africa. For her, apparently, the South African shambles don't exist.

Why does this one-woman jeremiad against the United States coincide with the current Soviet propaganda against U.S. "genocide?"

Ah! St. Louis woman with her diamond rings! 40

When third party candidate Henry A. Wallace ran for the U.S. Presidency in 1948 on the Communist-supported Progressive Party ticket, Schuyler aimed his editorial attacks at several well-known African American


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personalities who supported the candidate's platform of world peace and U.S.-Soviet cooperation. Among the personalities were DuBois and Robeson.

When DuBois openly endorsed Wallace for President, Schuyler challenged him by arguing that Wallace was a "warmonger before and during the last war (World War II)" and that he supported the atomic bomb research "but now wants to give the information away." He also grouped DuBois with other Wallace supporters who were categorized as "the lunatic fringe of colored and white 'intellectuals,' the Stalinist Labor Unions, and the Communist Party."\(^41\) When DuBois came under fire from the U.S. State Department in 1951 for his alleged involvement with the Communist Party, Schuyler offered no sympathy when he accused him of heading the Communist-supported Peace Information Center in New York and argued that "Increasingly for the past twenty years DuBois has been moving in the totalitarian direction."\(^42\)

Schuyler aimed his most bitter attacks against Robeson. A talented singer, athlete, and actor, Robeson


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increasingly began to speak out against U.S. racial segregation and openly supported the Communist Party in the late 1940's. Schuyler instantly became one of Robeson's arch enemies in the African American press as he criticized several of his pro-Communist statements and actions. In 1947, Schuyler called Robeson "a darling for the Reds" who was an "artistic Charlie McCarthy" who "mouths Communist clichés at every opportunity."

Schuyler also remarked that it was ironic that Robeson denounced capitalism, "for think of no one who has received more favors from the hands of the rich and powerful despite the fact that his talents are mediocre as any objective music or dramatic critic will admit."\(^43\)

When Robeson campaigned for Wallace's bid for the presidency in 1948, Schuyler joined in the chorus of accusing the entertainer as a Communist:

After considerable baiting by newspapers reporters, Robeson has denied that he is a Communist party member and there is no way to prove it except by his actions. However, anything that looks like a dog, acts like a dog and barks like a dog, is a dog. The same is true of people who look and act like Communists. Robeson acts and talks like a Communist and his record would seem to offer substantial

evidence that he is as much a Communist as Ben Davis
or William Z. Foster, whether he admits it or not.44

He also added that:

Robeson properly rates the Order of Lenin or
some other Soviet decoration for his service to
Communism in this country, whether or not he is a
member of the party. He has performed yeoman
service for which the Reds must certainly be
grateful. He has done his bit in fostering hatred
and ill-will designed to increase disunity here to
weaken the U.S.A in the fight against Soviet world
aggression. He has done a good job in this
direction, pulled many votes for Wallace: i.e.,
Stalin, and should receive some appropriate
reward.45

In 1949, Robeson created a storm of controversy when
he delivered a speech at the World Congress Of Partisans
Of Peace in Paris, France on April 20. In the speech he
stated that "It is unthinkable that American Negroes with
goto war in behalf of those who have oppress us for
generations . . . against a country (the Soviet Union)
which in one generation has raised our people to full
human dignity of mankind."46 The result was a flood of
condemnation of Robeson from several African American

44George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews: Time To
Consider The Curious Case Of Paul Robeson," Pittsburgh
Courier, 16 October, 1948, 7.

45Ibid.

46Speech by Paul Robeson delivered at the World
Congress Of Partisans Of Peace, Paris, France, 20 April
1949; cited in Philip S. Foner, ed., Paul Robeson Speaks:
Writings, Speeches, Interviews (New York: Brunner/Mazel
Leading the attack was Schuyler and the Pittsburgh Courier. In the April 30 edition of the Courier, the newspaper issued an editorial which stated:

This was a pathetic statement because Mr. Robeson, who belongs to more than a half hundred Communist-front organizations (while denying he is a Communist), cannot conceivably speak for American Negroes. No one has delegated him to speak for them and no one will, if we know the American Negroes. The colored citizens if this country have fought in every war waged for the defense of their country and they will continue to do so.

Typically, Schuyler was not at a loss of words when he addressed Robeson's statement. "Robeson's smearing of 14,000,000 Negroes as potential traitors played right into the hands of our worst enemies, the Negrophobes of

47 The Baltimore Afro-American wrote an editorial stating that "Robeson does not speak for us and millions of colored people. But it is a remarkable fact that there are hundreds and very likely thousands of colored and white people who believe as Robeson does. And they will energetically fight that cause inside and outside the United States." In addition, a journalist for the Chicago Defender wrote, "Does Mr. Robeson really believe that if the Russians attacked our country that American Negroes would refuse to fight them? If he does, he has permitted his enthusiasm for the Russian way of life to run away with his reason . . . Some of our intellectuals and so-called heroes who win some acceptance in the white world get so far away from the race they represent that they lose their moorings. They do not realize that they are generals without armies, that when they speak they do not necessarily speak for their race." Baltimore Afro-American, 30 April, 1949, 4; Chicago Defender, 30 April, 1949, 6; cited in Von Herald, "Reaction Of The African American Press," 48-49.

48 Pittsburgh Courier, 30 April, 1949; cited in Ibid.
this country," declared Schuyler. "Certainly all of these prejudiced whites would be glad to seize upon the charge that Negroes are treasonable as a justification for herding them into concentration camps with the inevitable result."49 He also reminded his readers that African Americans were loyal and did not agree with Robeson:

Of course, Mr. Robeson has never had any mandate to speak for colored Americans and never will have any. Like other Americans they will fight as they have always fought against foreign aggressors and internal foes, and will cover themselves with glory in the process. They will do so not only because they are patriotic Americans but because even the least intellectual American Negro knows that he is better off in this country under this system than anybody anywhere else, granted that it is far from perfect and that he suffers many disabilities and proscriptions.50

Schuyler also used his editorials to cite examples of African American loyalty and success in America. When Schuyler discussed about the increase of African American professionals in the U.S. and abroad, he stated that the trend was the most effective answer to Communist propaganda.51 When a group of Korean War African

49 George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews: So, Along Comes Paul Robeson With The Clincher!," Pittsburgh Courier, 7 May, 1949, 15.
50 Ibid.

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American POW's talked about their rejection of Communist indoctrination, Schuyler celebrated their efforts:

The Reds failed because these Negro soldiers were native Americans of three centuries' residence, with deep roots here, with no feeling of kinship whatever with 'the colored races of the world,' with no desire to live anywhere else, and, contrary to many learned psychiatrists, no feeling of inferiority because of their color. They found the U.S. Negro as American as corn-on-the-cob, with the same background as the white prisoners, and the same loyalty.\textsuperscript{52}

Schuyler championed his anti-Communist pro-American cause in several articles and essays. Among his earliest in the postwar period is the article "The Negro And Communism." Schuyler emphasized that despite the efforts of the Communists over a twenty-five year period (1921-1946), African Americans overwhelmingly rejected Communism due to "basic common sense and Americanism."

"The masses of Negroes do not want to overthrow the government; they want to participate in it," exclaimed Schuyler. "They do not want to despoil the rich; they want to get rich themselves."\textsuperscript{53} Supporting his


\textsuperscript{52}George S. Schuyler, "For The Record," 17 February, 1954. Taken from Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

statement, Schuyler offered his theory on why African Americans rejected the Communist plan of collective farming. "It is distasteful to the average normal Aframerican to associate with, or to go around looking like a tramp. It is probably that the average Negro here spends a larger sum per capita on personal appearance than white people," stated Schuyler.\textsuperscript{54} Finally, he lauded those who did not follow Communism and emphasized their loyalty and patriotism:

\begin{quote}
they seem to sense in some uncanny manner that the Communist-lauded (African American) leaders have been taken in by people whom they sense as being alien to the American way of life, and the Aframerican is the most American of all the Americans with no connection or interest in anything that is not American... They know their problem better than anybody else and feel that they are best equipped to solve it in a manner that will enable them to make progress in the right direction without imperiling their existence. They know that with all their disabilities, frustrations and injustices in American life, the United States is the best place in the world for them and all other Americans, and while they bitterly resent discrimination and segregation they have no intention of jeopardizing their position in America by becoming identified in anyway with an alien conspiracy.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

While stressing the loyalty of African Americans, he emphasized that the Communists were plotting to undermine them by inciting African Americans to rebel against the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 55.
\end{itemize}
U.S. by encouraging them to support the "self-determination" Black Belt program. In his pamphlet *The Communist Conspiracy Against The Negroes*, Schuyler stated that "Obviously Negroes are to be stirred to rebellion to win political control of the Black Belt, the country is to become wracked with civil war, and in the resultant confusion the communists are to seize power and destroy democracy as they did in Russia." Schuyler also emphasized that the Communists' plan also involved a global strategy of involving other non-whites in their scheme:

To destroy modern civilization and institute the new slavery, they have schemed to use the American, West Indian and African Negroes, along with the impoverished masses of the Orient, as "expendable" spearheads to open the way. So much the better, they argue, if civil strife and wholesale destruction of these peoples result. To them racial and religious amity is anathema and tolerance taboo. While promising defense they plot to destroy, while screaming for unity they scheme for disunity, while professing love for the lowly, they actually despise them and aim to enslave them. It is a tribute to the intelligence of American Negroes that they have seen through this Red conspiracy and rejected all its blandishments.

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56 Refer to footnote 100 in Chapter Five for early criticism by Schuyler of the Self-Determination program.


58 Ibid., 16.
In 1950, Schuyler experienced a pinnacle in his career when he was invited to be a delegate for the first conference of the anti-Communist organization the Committee For Cultural Freedom (CCF). Through the suggestion of Sidney Hook, fellow member and Professor of Philosophy at New York University, CCF member and editor of the intellectual magazine Der Monat Melvin J. Lasky invited Schuyler to the conference, which he gladly accepted.\textsuperscript{59} The conference was held in West Berlin, Germany as a symbolic gesture of making the city a "showcase of freedom."\textsuperscript{60} To Schuyler, an invitation to the conference meant that he had finally reached the level of mainstream acceptance and respect. Commenting on the conference, Schuyler remarked that it was "an exhilarating atmosphere amidst the great and near great of the intellectual world" and that "Several of the delegates had prices on their heads" by East German Communists who were eager to kidnap the delegates and imprison them.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59}Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 317.


\textsuperscript{61}Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 318; Williams, "When Black Is Right," 341.
From June 26 to June 30, 1950, a total of one hundred delegates attended the CCF's first meeting. Among the distinguished guests were Schuyler, James Burnham, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Hook, Irving Brown, Tennessee Williams, and Max Yergan, a former member of the Communist-affiliated National Negro Congress.\(^{62}\)

Composed of a collection of former leftists and staunch anti-Communist supporters, the convention featured speeches that attacked liberalism.\(^{63}\) Aside from the anti-liberal rhetoric, Schuyler's contribution to the conference was his analysis of social, economic, and educational conditions for African Americans. The result was a nine-page essay that signaled Schuyler's abandonment of the African American struggle: "The Negro Question Without Propaganda."

Delivered on the fourth day of the conference before an audience at Amerika Haus in Berlin, Schuyler set forth to refute stories of African Americans being disfranchised, oppressed, and abused by the American system. "The prostitute press and radio of the Communist camorra have presented a picture of Negro existence in America so fantastic, so false, so contrary to the facts."

\(^{62}\)Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 317.

\(^{63}\)Lasch, Agony Of The American Left, 66.
of his everyday life in the forty-eight states as to be unrecognizable by anyone familiar with the nation," declared Schuyler.\(^{64}\) He stated that "the progressive improvement of interracial relations in the United States is the most flattering of the many examples of the superiority of the free American civilization over the soul-shackling reactionism of totalitarian regimes."\(^{65}\)

Schuyler emphasized his position by citing a number of examples where African Americans had fared better than their Eastern European and Soviet counterparts. By far the most incredulous analogy was slavery:

During America's 225 years of legalized chattel slavery, ten million Africans were brought to the plantations of the Western Hemisphere. Because they represented economic value to their masters, every effort was made to preserve their health and productivity as long as possible. This should be contrasted with the slave system of Soviet Russia which from 1930 onwards continually was held from fifteen to twenty million victims in servitude under conditions so savage and heartless that millions have died from mistreatment (italics added).\(^{66}\)

Throughout the speech, Schuyler cited a number of examples where African Americans had vastly improved


\(^{65}\) Ibid.

\(^{66}\) Ibid.
their position in areas such as education, economics, voting, religion, social conditions, and the military. Addressing the issue of segregation in the U.S., Schuyler added that "the Negroes have always been free to move where they chose and without asking anyone's permission. Thus between 1930 and 1940 the Negro population increased 15.8 percent in the North, 41.8 percent in the West, and 5.8 percent in the South."\textsuperscript{67}

In closing, Schuyler argued that despite the reality of segregation and racial violence in the South, "there has been such unprecedented progress toward social homogeneity and justice in every direction."\textsuperscript{68} Lastly, the record of improvement for African Americans, according to Schuyler, explained not only their progress but their loyalty to the American system. "American Negroes understand, far better than Soviet propagandists, that in the American system lies the hope for all submerged peoples who have the ability and determination to rise to the full stature of free men."\textsuperscript{69}

"The Negro Question Without Propaganda" was considered a success by several American dignitaries.

\textsuperscript{67}Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{69}Ibid.
Philip M. Kaiser, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, made Schuyler's essay available for circulation by having his department publish it. Congresswoman Frances Bolton of Ohio included the entire essay into the Congressional Record for August 30, 1950. Because of the success of his speech, Schuyler condensed "The Negro Question Without Propaganda" and rewrote it as an article, "The Phantom American Negro." Once again, Schuyler reiterated his position that conditions for African Americans were much better than in Communist countries. "The most 'exploited Negroes in Mississippi are better off than the citizens of Russia or her satellites," declared Schuyler. After providing several examples of African American gains he reemphasized the progress America had made in its race relations:

Admittedly we have a long way to go before we reach Utopia and all Americans in truth become brothers and sisters. But considering all of the factors involved, the facts of human nature and the brief span of years since most Negroes were property and men shed their blood over whether they should be admitted to the national family, where can the record be equaled? Certainly not in India, China, Russia, or the British, French and Belgian empires.

Instead of being apologetic about it, Americans should be proud that their free system has been capable of such elasticity and that within the

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70 Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 322.

lifetime of our grandparents this nation has moved so close to solving so difficult a problem. Only those who are blind to human experience elsewhere in the world will deny America the credit which is her due.\footnote{bid., 459.}

As a supporter of the Far Right, Schuyler was also a supporter of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy's crusade of fanatical anti-Communism. From 1950 to 1954 McCarthy went on a campaign of accusing several prominent individuals in government of being Communist supporters. Even President Harry S. Truman was not immune to McCarthy's accusations when the reckless Senator accused him in 1953 of knowingly appointing a Soviet agent to the International Monetary Fund.\footnote{Thomas C. Reeves, ed., \textit{McCarthyism}, 3rd edition (Malabar, Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1989), 4.} McCarthy's end came in 1954 when he made a disastrous showing on television in the infamous McCarthy-Army hearings. Shortly afterward, the U.S. Senate moved to censure him. Despite his downfall, McCarthy had earned the respect and admiration of hard-line Right Wing anti-Communists such as Schuyler, who considered the Senator "a well intentioned politician."\footnote{Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 330.} An example of Schuyler's admiration was
demonstrated in an editorial written in defense of McCarthy:

Undoubtedly recognizing that one of the biggest thorns in its side is Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, the Truman Administration has launched an all-out campaign to drive him from the Senate and public life. . . . A smear campaign of truly gigantic proportions has been carried on by some of the best intellectuals in the country and they have been able to popularize the term 'McCarthyism' for the alleged crimes of which the Wisconsin solon is guilty . . . Anywhere else in the world Senator McCarthy would be praised as having performed a great patriotic service in bringing this issue to a head when the Government and the 'intellectuals' wanted it soft-pedaled, and even President Truman referred to it as a 'red herring.' 75

Naturally, Schuyler became a detested man in the eyes of his critics, many of whom were African Americans who did not care for his whitewashing of racial segregation or his anti-Communist statements. Among his most severe critics was Abner Berry, an African American journalist and columnist for the Communist newspaper The Worker (also Daily Worker). During Schuyler's campaign of anti-Communism and American loyalty, the columnist bitterly assailed Schuyler's writings and tactics in his own weekly column. Referring to Schuyler's column, Berry stated that "These weekly essays are displays of

political and economic illiteracy, embellished with the obsolete literary style of the cynical 1920's and the calculated vulgarity of Westbrook Pegler."  

He also added that:

Schuyler's column makes it clear each week what big capital has in store for the Negro people — a fascist political brew whose main ingredients will be a clique of powerful white rulers administering their conception of the U.S. creed over a world of pliant, slogan-soothed wards of all races and creeds.

In one column, Berry stated that "Schuyler is the picture of a Negro who is an ex-Negro now arrived at full integration" and that other African Americans who were trying to attain first class citizenship were "knuckle-headed New Dealers" and "Race hustlers" that Schuyler looked down upon with contempt "from the heights of white supremacy he fancies he has scaled."  

In another column, Berry compared Schuyler to an early African American conservative: Booker T. Washington: "He (Schuyler) does for 20th Century imperialism and the

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76 Abner Berry, "Negro Exponent Of White Supremacy," Daily Worker, 1 May, 1953. Westbrook Pegler was a critic who wrote similar cynical essays on American culture. Schuyler was also dubbed as the "Negro Westbrook Pegler."

77 Ibid.

white supremacy-minded monopoly what [Washington] did for the rapidly expanding robber barons immediately following the Civil War."\(^79\) In conclusion, Berry condemned Schuyler's manipulation of history to fit his anti-Communist rhetoric:

To make his credo conform completely to that of the white rulers, he would re-write Negro History along with American History into an inspiration to the 'underprivileged and disadvantaged to abandon sloth and indifference and strive to make their mark in the world.' Well, Schuyler has 'made his mark.' But can the Negro people and the nation afford this type of social growth, downward like a cow's tail?\(^80\)

Other writers from The Worker were critical of Schuyler as well. In January 1946, on the eve of the Cold-War era, writer Eugene Gordon, once a friend but now a longtime enemy of Schuyler, dedicated an article to the journalist. Titled "Who Is George S. Schuyler," the article proceeded to deconstruct the journalist into an unflattering portrayal of an unfulfilled, bitter, and uncreative writer:

Schuyler's 'cynicism' is really a personal bitterness against those he blames for his failure as a 'great' writer. He has tried, and failed, year after year, to win a Guggenheim or a Rosenwald fellowship in literature. In consequence, he is

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\(^80\)Ibid.
jealous or envious of every successful younger Negro writer.

He arches and purrs with satisfaction when he is called a cynic by friend or enemy. He fell very early under the influence of Henry L. Mencken, who, in publishing Schuyler in the (American) Mercury, praised him as 'the best Negro' journalist. Already an admirer of Mencken's iconoclasm, the superficial and adolescent Schuyler began slavishly to intimidate both the style and the content of 'the master.'

... Schuyler cannot be chided or shamed into behaving decently. He considers his column a failure when it does not bring violent disagreement or anger from some quarter. He is an aberration of an unhealthy social situation and must be so treated.81

Schuyler also faced criticism from his targets and fellow journalists. In 1947, Schuyler called a distinguished group of African Americans "lame brains" for purchasing an ad in African American newspapers for the purpose of criticizing Secretary of Labor Lewis B. Schwellenbach's attempt to outlaw the American Communist Party.82 One of the "lame brains," fellow Courier writer and columnist Joseph D. Bibb, responded to Schuyler's attack:

The citizens assailed [by Schuyler] stand upon their records of public service and there is nothing that this scribe can 'add to or detract from.' We will comment categorically that the majority of those who signed that petition are neither ignoramuses, lame brains nor enemies of their

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people. Schuyler, who has won his spurs as a writer, is eminently entitled to his opinions about Communism . . . But we denounce and decry his vilification and vituperation. I was one of those who signed the petition and even a battle-scarred veteran does not fancy being dubbed and smeared with the sweep of an angry critic's brush. 83

Robeson also addressed Schuyler's attacks in the Courier. In a convention speech to the National Negro Labor Council in October 1951, he stated that "It won't do good for . . . the Schuylers to be shouting about how good it is for Negroes in the United States today, . . .. No they won't get away with that. Somewhere they are not doing fine, but we got to see to it that they do fine." 84 An opponent of McCarthyism, Robeson also chided Schuyler for his unabashed support of the Senator's anti-Communist campaign. "Let Mr. George Schuyler marry Joe McCarthy if he wants to - we beg to be excused from the ceremony." 85

One of the most sweeping criticisms of Schuyler during the Cold-War era was Carl T. Rowan's indictment of his essay "The Phantom American Negro". Rowan, then a journalist for the Minneapolis (Minn.) Morning Tribune,


called Schuyler a "show off" that "exhibited a passion next to crankiness for 'being different.'"\textsuperscript{86} He also credited Schuyler for exhibiting his shrewdness by telling white America what it wanted to hear and for trying to portray himself as "the grand American patriot" and "defender of democracy."\textsuperscript{87} Rowan then launched into a tirade against Schuyler' pseudo-jingoism and downplaying of American racism:

> In his narrow thinking, Schuyler has classified as an anti-American propagandist every American who dares say that the Negro still is being denied freedom; he has labeled these same Americans, as well as the custodians of the fourth estate, "Communists, fellow-travelers and self-seeking race hustlers." . . . According to Schuyler, one has to be anti-American to speak against the imperfections in her social and economic framework, and appeal to the basic decency of Americans themselves to join hands and right the wrongs.

And in accusing the American press of promoting a sinister Communist plot by spotlighting racial injustices in the United States, Schuyler has exceeded himself in ludicrous absurdity . . . The press has, to a large extent, been guilty of doing the Negro a disservice by portraying him, as did the movies, as an irresponsible half-human with monstrous criminal tendencies.

It cannot be denied that the press of foreign nations gives what Schuyler and many Americans less "patriotic" consider undue prominence to stories of racial inequality and conflict in America. But it is grossly unfair to the American Negro, to democracy, or to American critics of bigotry in America to say that American critics work with the


\textsuperscript{87}Ibid.
desire of such disproportionate publicity in the foreign press.

Schuyler deplores the critics, rather than the conditions that make such criticism possible and necessary. He would put the Negro in the position of a stepchild, being lashed by his stepfather and warned at the same time not to cry out because doing so would jeopardize the stepfather's reputation as a kind, lovable parent.88

Rowan then stated that Schuyler's most damaging action was engaging in "mental gymnastics" that impeded racial progress. Commenting on Schuyler's statement that America's record of race relations could not be equaled by India, China, Russia, or the French or Belgian empires, Rowan noted that "This line is damaging because it is one easily gobbled up by the Americans who can be content with the smug belief that whatever America has or does is better than the comparable thing for any other nation."89 Rowan concluded his condemnation with reasons as to why Schuyler was dangerous to African Americans:

... White America believes Schuyler, primarily because his articles soothe their conscience. Schuyler sugar-talks away their guilt complexes by asserting that such guilt ought not to exist, that they are products of Communist skullduggery and treachery. White America also believes because it considers Schuyler sincere, intelligent, and learned on the subject.90

88Ibid., 202-03.
89Ibid., 203.
90Ibid., 204.
Despite the numerous criticisms and tirades against Schuyler, he proceeded to write articles and columns dedicated to anti-Communism and increasingly regulated his professional and social associations with Right Wing intellectuals. In 1951, Schuyler joined the newly-established American Committee For Cultural Freedom (ACCF). Formed out of the CCF, the ACCF was an eclectic coalition of liberals and hard-line anti-Communists. The executive committee read like a who's who of prominent conservative and liberal intellectuals: James Burnham, James Farrell, Sidney Hook, Arthur Schlesinger, John Dos Passos, Irving Kristol, and Daniel Bell.\footnote{Lasch, Agony Of The American Left, 78, 82.} To Schuyler, membership in the ACCF was another indication of his arrival to the American intellectual elite and the far Right.

As a member of the ACCF, Schuyler served on the executive committee along with Max Yergan, the only other African American member.\footnote{Schuyler, Black And Conservative, 329; Williams, "When Black Is Right," 346-47. Yergan was also another African American conservative who espoused views of anti-Communism and American race relations similar to Schuyler's.} Fellow executive committee member Daniel Bell recalled Schuyler as a pleasant individual who was cordial, smiled often, but was
noticeably silent in ACCF meetings.\textsuperscript{93} Schuyler's own recollection of the ACCF meetings were overall pleasant. At the same time, he recalled that his differences with the organization crystallized early in his membership.\textsuperscript{94} Schuyler's differences stemmed from a natural division that occurred in the ACCF. Although members were united in their opposition of Communism, they were divided over strategies and tactics. Most controversial was the issue of McCarthyism, which divided the organization into anti and pro-McCarthy supporters. Not surprisingly, Schuyler was among the pro-McCarthy ranks, which included conservative intellectuals such as Dos Passos, Burnham, and Kristol.\textsuperscript{95}

Increasingly, Schuyler began to criticize the ACCF's reluctance to expand the organization to colleges, universities, and high school faculties. Instead, "these people were primarily concerned with maintaining a small clique," Schuyler argued, "rather than reaching out to the wide intellectual community."\textsuperscript{96} Schuyler also joined

\begin{itemize}
  \item Daniel Bell, Telephone interview by author, 6 February, 1997.
  \item Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 329.
  \item Lasch, \textit{Ageny Of The American Left}, 80-81, 86.
  \item Schuyler, \textit{Black And Conservative}, 329.
\end{itemize}

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the argument among hard-line anti-Communists that the ACCF was more "anti anti-Communist" than anti-Communist. As McCarthy's campaign came under attack in the early 1950's, Schuyler and other McCarthy supporters spoke out against the ACCF's position of opposing McCarthyism. Schuyler's final break came in 1954, when the ACCF supported the publication of *McCarthy And The Communists*, an attack of McCarthyism. Two months after founder James Burnham resigned from the ACCF after an embroiled battle with McCarthy opponents,97 Schuyler followed suit by submitting an exhaustive three-page letter that detailed his reasons for resignation. A full reprint of the letter reveals the extent of Schuyler's Right Wing sentiments and anti-Communism:

September 20, 1954

Mr. Robert Gorham Davis, Chairman,
American Committee For Cultural Freedom,
35 West 53rd Street,
New York, N.Y.

My Dear Mr. Davis,

97In the fall of 1953 Burnham wrote a preface to *The Secret Fight For The A-Bomb*, a book that accused American scientists of giving atomic secrets to Soviet agents and allowing nuclear materials to be stolen from the United States. Scientists who were members of the ACCF immediately called for Burnham's resignation, which he did in July 1954.
After long and careful consideration, I have reluctantly decided to resign, after four years membership, from the American Committee for Cultural Freedom and from its Executive Committee.

As one of the founders of the Congress for Cultural Freedom at Berlin in June 1950, a signer of its Manifesto and a member of its organization committee at Brussels in November 1950, I remain in agreement with the principles set forth in the Berlin Manifesto but I have concluded that the American Committee has been steadily veering away from them. It seems to me that the ACCF is steadily encroaching upon the preserves of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Americans for Democratic Action, the Anti-Defamation League and kindred organizations.

Ever since our return from the historic Berlin meeting, I have urged the Committee to widen its influence and membership to include the extensive cultural community from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to the Gulf which is concerned with the issue of preserving and strengthening cultural freedom. I have been discouragingly unsuccessful, and the ACCF has remained a small in-grown group of some three hundred self-styled intellectuals largely concentrated on the Eastern seaboard and influenced chiefly by the ideas and prejudices predominating in that area. As a result the Committee lacks the financial support accruing from a large membership and has had to depend for its life on occasional grants from funds, foundations and other sources with selfish interests not always in accord with our professed ideals. Economic freedom is a prerequisite of intellectual and cultural freedom.

While the Berlin manifesto called for each government to submit to the control and inspection of its acts by the people whom it governs, the Committee has unashamedly joined the hysterical hue and cry against investigations of government departments and agencies by the elected representatives of the American people delegated for that purpose, enlisting in the anti-McCarthy lynching bee with a vindictive and rancorous abandon.

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98 Years later, it was disclosed that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had funded the ACCF's predecessor the Congress For Cultural Freedom for several years. Lasch, *Agony Of The American Left*, 100-01.
which has greatly aided the Communist conspiracy. It has added force to the false view that the Executive departments should not be "embarrassed by probing into their administrations.

While the Berlin Manifesto asserts that "Freedom is based on toleration of divergent opinions," the ACCF has shown in some of its officials actions of a singular and unbecoming intolerance. One instance was its recent successful intervention with the National Broadcasting Company against free time for M.L. Hunt's Facts Forum, presumably because the viewpoints expressed on this program diverge from their own. However, when threats from garment union officials compelled elimination of reference to Benjamin "Benny" Levine, millionaire garment manufacturer linked to Murder, Inc., from the NBC-TV script of "The Steve Allen Show" with former assistant Kings County district attorney Burton Turkus on the panel, the ACCF not only did not protest against this flagrant violation of cultural freedom, but the Executive Director professed not to know anything about it, although the story appeared twice in the evening newspaper in New York with the largest circulation. Could there conceivably be any connection between this failure to act and the expectation of promised financial support from the same source that so violated cultural freedom?

The ACCF on several occasions has injected itself into matters which I believe to be outside its cultural scope. It criticized the Government's judgment in denying a passport to Leftist playwright Arthur Miller. It protested against Attorney General McGranery's refusal of a re-entry permit to Charlie Chaplin. It opposed dismissal of government employees adjudged security risks. It has continuously inveighed against careful and deliberate examination of aliens seeking entrance visa, especially where former communist intellectuals were concerned, and constantly sniped at the McCarran-Walter Act. In the Lorwin Case, it demanded the disbarment of U.S. Justice Department prosecutor Gallagher in a case far removed from cultural freedom. It protested to Chairman J. Carrol Reece of the House Special Committee to Investigate Tax-Exempt Foundations, insinuating that his Committee's probe was a prelude to having Congress "legislate in the field of ideas," whereas
the House group was simply seeking to ascertain the extent of the influence of these Funds and Foundations which is obviously considerable, as in the case of the related and Foundation-supported Institute of Pacific Relations.

Under the pretense that the efforts of Senator McCarthy's Committee to smoke out Communists, unrepentant ex-Communists, fellow travelers and their dupes inbeded in the framework of sensitive government agencies were aiding Communists and disrupting government, the ACCF solicited funds, hired writers, secured a published, edited and publicly sponsored a political polemic (McCarthy & The Communists) filled with snide insinuations and far fetched accusations, which had no logical connection with the issue of cultural freedom in America. This is being palmed off as an unbiased and "liberal" undertaking although clearly political. The Committee then solicited money from "angels" of a political party to advertise this book in conjunction with a pamphlet reprint of an anti-McCarthy smear recently authored by McCarthy's erstwhile "friend" Frederick Woltman for the Scripps-Howard newspapers. This is the sort of thing which might more appropriately been done by the agencies which specialize in character-assassination. The Berlin Manifesto says: "Freedom is based on the toleration of divergent opinions." The principle of toleration does not logically permit the practice of intolerance.

As far back as last April the ACCF injected itself into the case of physicist Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer by writing to the Personal Security Board of the Atomic Energy Commission with what amounted to a plea to go easy on the scientist. It asserted extraneously that Oppenheimer had helped the ACCF and the Congress For Cultural Freedom in a way to make his anti-Communist position "quite clear"; that he had been a sponsor of its Congress for Science and Freedom in Hamburg in 1953 (although not then an ACCF member), and had cooperated with the Committee in dissuading scientists "from becoming involved with Communist-line organizations."99

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99 Oppenheimer, a member of the ACCF, was among those scientists who were mentioned in The Secret Fight For The
This intervention proving of no avail, and the Atomic Energy Commission having decided by a four to one vote that Dr. Oppenheimer was a security risk, the ACCF Executive Committee with immature defiance voted him a member of the Committee despite his admitted connections with and protection of Communists and his past financial support of the Party; thus disregarding the AEC findings and the decision of the President of the United States.

When a Communist-front group sought to exploit a birthday celebration for Albert Einstein, the Committee performed a service by promptly exposing the plot, whereupon Dr. Einstein withdrew his sanction and refused to attend. But when Einstein urged another scientist not to testify before a Congressional committee probing Communist infiltration, the ACCF remained mum. This is not the attitude thoughtful Americans can approve.

The Executive Committee has done a disservice to America by initiating and promoting the phony propaganda about anti-intellectualism in this government and various public and private institutions and organizations have sought to rid themselves of a few Reds, security risks and fellow travelers. This propaganda, promptly snapped up for various reasons by the foreign press, professors and politicians, has been gleefully circulated abroad as evidence of the American barbarism. This has properly distressed many members of the Committee but they seem to be less concerned about what America needs to do as the main target of Communism and anti-Americanism than by what Europeans think. We have shown no concern whatever about what Latin America, Asia and Africa think since none of the ACCF forums have dealt with them, although I have several times suggested it.

The high hopes that I had for the Committee have not been realized, and feeling that its aims are increasingly becoming more political than cultural, no worthwhile purpose can be served by my continued membership. I have enjoyed the personal associations and for this reason I regret the necessity of this action.

A Bomb and called for Burnham's resignation. Diggins, Up From Communism, 328.
With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

Schuyler’s departure from the ACCF truly symbolized his alignment with the reactionary far right. At the same time, his departure probably stemmed from the group’s refusal to implement his suggestions as well. Whatever the true cause, Schuyler’s conservatism had blossomed. After thirty years as a controversial, opinionated, but talented journalist and columnist, Schuyler seized the Cold War frenzy to create a new image. Not only was he seen as a radical, far-right anti-Communist, he was also seen by African Americans as a traitor, an “uncle tom,” and as a dangerous weapon for white segregationists. His final break with African Americans would come in the following decade, when he decided to speak out against the most profound social movement in American history: the Civil Rights Movement. His reactionary conservatism would also motivate him to join the Right-Wing John Birch Society.

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CHAPTER 7
THE LONELY ICONOCLAST: SCHUYLER AND
THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered a Supreme Court decision involving the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Composed of five separate cases where African Americans challenged segregated school systems in Kansas, Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., the case had been fought for three years by the NAACP and its talented legal defense team headed by Thurgood Marshall.¹ On that eventual day in May, Warren, who stated that "Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children,"² declared that:

Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.³

¹Bardolph, The Civil Rights Record, 276.
²Ibid., 278.
³Franklin & Moss, From Slavery To Freedom, 412.
The decision reversed the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court
decision of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, which validated the
segregation of public facilities.4 Thus, the modern-day
Civil Rights Movement was born. The decision was
received unanimously by the African American press,
including George Schuyler, who praised the decision. In
his accolades of the decision, Schuyler made a prophetic
ought to be the next appointee to the Supreme Court, and
he will be if the Negro Republican politicians get
solidly behind him," stated Schuyler. "He has
demonstrated once again that his is one of the greatest
legal minds in this country, and in the years to come
America needs a man of such caliber on the high court."5
He also praised the decision as an affirmation of his
faith in the American system. "Has any other country
with a comparable racial, religious or nationalist
problem met it more forthrightly and in keeping with the
principles of republicanism?"6

4A brief discussion of the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case
can be found in Bardolph, *The Civil Rights Record*, 149-50.
Six years later, Schuyler's opinion had changed in regard to Brown vs. Board of Education. When asked if he felt that the decision and its aftermath was a step backward, Schuyler replied that despite the success of indirect approaches to desegregation, it depended upon what would be accepted by [white] people in the South and elsewhere. He also added that "sometimes all you do is frighten and alarm people, and that makes them get up their defenses sooner than they ordinarily would have."  

Schuyler also criticized the arguments made for integration before the Supreme Court, particularly that of black children benefiting from sitting with white children:

I think that the job of the people in the community is to improve their schools in the community, in the curriculum. Even Negro parents, as you know, don't wish to send children off all the way across town . . . to some school just for the dubious advantage of sitting in a classroom with white children.

    Now, I never went to a segregated school. Every class I ever sat in, there was about one Negro to about 50, 60, 80 whites. But I don't see that is any particular advantage, and I haven't found anybody else who's had that experience who would say so. I don't know a single advantage that it had.  

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7William Ingersoll, Interview with George S. Schuyler, 6 November, 1960; cited in "Reminiscences Of George S. Schuyler," 621.

8Ibid., 626.
Schuyler's analysis of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision indicated an acceleration of his conservative views. During the 1960's Schuyler disassociated himself from the growing Civil Rights Movement and became the most prominent African American critic of the movement and had become a potent weapon for the growing "silent majority" of white Americans opposed to the movement.

Schuyler's opposition to African American protest was evident throughout his career. In the fall of 1941, former Messenger editor and friend A. Philip Randolph formed the March On Washington Movement (MOWM), an organization that originated from Randolph's threat to lead a march of African Americans on Washington a few months before. In 1942, the MOWM was criticized by the NAACP and the African American press as an organization that lacked direction, practiced autocratic rule, and threatened to alienate potential white allies with its...

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9In January 1941, Randolph urged the idea of 50,000 to 100,000 African Americans to march on Washington D.C. to protest the continued racial discrimination and exclusion of African American workers from the growing defense industries. On June 25, President Franklin D. Roosevelt thwarted the march by signing into law Executive Order 8802, which outlawed the discrimination of workers because of race, creed, color, or national origin. The executive order also enacted the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), which investigated complaints of racial discrimination. Franklin & Moss, From Slavery To Freedom, 437.
Schuyler joined in the criticism of Randolph's MOWM when he called into question his ability to lead. "Mr. Randolph knows how to appeal to the emotions of the people and to get a great following together, but there his leadership ends because he has nowhere to lead them and would not know if he had," exclaimed Schuyler. He also added that "Organization is not merely a matter of ballyhoo and oratory, it is a Science, and one that is largely a closed book to Mr. Randolph. Mass leadership in times like these also requires a little more guts than any of the Negro leaders posses."  

Rarely, he did praise some civil rights organizations. In 1948, Schuyler wrote a favorable editorial on the Congress Of Racial Equality (CORE) and their pioneer sit-in movements. "These earnest young white and colored people ACT and do not simply TALK," stated Schuyler. "They go directly to some 'tough' restaurant in a group of four or five and when rebuffed


12Ibid., 265-66.
they go back the next day with forty or fifty, fill up all of the seats and then announce that they will not move until they are served." 13 Schuyler also admired the organization's effort to include whites into their activities. "Instead of emphasizing racial conflict as so much propaganda does, CORE emphasizes interracial cooperation. These are not just Negroes contending for human rights, privileges and sympathies, but Americans of both groups who sincerely believe in practicing what the church preaches." 14

Despite his praise for CORE, Schuyler's sentiments had drastically changed by the mid 1950's. Tensions flared in the South when hostile whites began to organize against the Brown vs. Board Of Education decision and enacted a campaign of terror against innocent African American victims. Schuyler deplored the violence, but he also criticized the strategy or, in his opinion, lack of strategy that civil rights leaders and organizations exhibited. In a 1955 editorial, Schuyler declared

13George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 3 April, 1948. CORE's tactics may have reminded Schuyler of his own experience in the Army, when he and his fellow comrades desegregated a saloon in Seattle the same manner. See Chapter Two of dissertation, page 62.

14Ibid.
"desegregation is a flop in those areas where two-thirds of the Negroes reside," and that "Due to our misleadership which has mistaken legal shadow for economic substance and orations for organization, we have not used the weapons and resources we possess for the warfare which was implicit in the prematurely accelerated drive for integration." Schuyler argued for a more economically secure African American society to combat segregation:

Were we possessed of as many cooperative societies, credit unions, business enterprises, factories and banks in Hogg and Hominy Land and North, East and West as we have social clubs, fraternities, churches and NAACP branches, we could laugh at the crackers' threats. As it is, we can't and there's no point in pretending that we can. You can't bring about equality by ukase, not even from the Supreme Court.16

Schuyler's argument for African American capitalism was emphasized years later in an article on the black-owned Carver Federal Savings and Loan Association in New York City. Impressed with the institution's assets of $16 million, Schuyler felt that it had the greatest potential and ability to solve the urban problems of African Americans in New York City and serve as a model


16Ibid.
for other cities. "It is all very well to stage sit-downs, picketings, freedom rides, . . . but, fundamentally, in a financial commercial civilization, one can make an impression and influence people only by financial power and economic control," declared Schuyler. "Once this lesson is better digested, problems will be closer to solution."17

Schuyler criticized other significant movements such as the 1956 Montgomery, Alabama Bus Boycott. Schuyler used the boycott to stress the concept of self-help capitalism by chiding those who did not enfranchise African American businesses. "Why do they discriminate against their own professional and business folk who live in the community, are identified with the community, rear families in the community and whose success aids the community?"18 In another editorial, he criticized the use of economic boycotts, stressing that they were failures and were no fundamental solution to the "colored brother's ills."19 He also claimed that civil rights


18George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 18 February, 1956, 11.

legislation was a failure as well, since the enforcement would be left to local and state governments. "Indeed, abolition of every law and regulation establishing racial segregation and discrimination would not alter the status of American Negroes," argued Schuyler. Despite the desegregation of the Montgomery city busses in 1957, Schuyler was still critical of the boycott's outcome. "The Montgomery bus boycott might have been a noble experiment but now that it has been 'won' . . . so what?" questioned the skeptical journalist. "Montgomery Negroes could have owned the bus company without doing all that walking if they had used their heads instead of their feet and their tonsils."  

Schuyler also supported other African Americans who criticized the movement. When Professor Clennon King at Alcorn A & M College (now Alcorn State University) was berated for writing a series of essays in the Jackson (Miss.) State Times criticizing integration tactics of the NAACP, Schuyler came to his defense. "Everybody

20 Ibid.


22 King's essays caused a fervor at Alcorn A & M, resulting in the walkout and the expulsion of four-fifths of the student body, and the firing of King and President J.R. Otis by Mississippi Governor J.P. Coleman. Feeling
who differs from the generally accepted 'liberal' line or
casts the slightest doubt on many of the questionable
assumptions of the 'advanced' group," declared Schuyler,
"is subjected to worse than name calling and denunciation
than that of which the much maligned Senator McCarthy was
accused by the same people. It is saddening to find an
increasing number of Negroes slavishly picking up this
practice."23 He also stated that "Unanimity of opinion
is characteristic of savages, and civilization only
advances as more and more people have the right to call
wrong what the majority calls right . . ."24

Aside from marches and demonstrations, Schuyler was
critical of personalities of the Civil Rights Movement.
Naturally, Schuyler aimed his criticism at Reverend Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr. and his organization the Southern
Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Carrying a

betrayed by white supporters and rejected by African
Americans, King became remorseful and pledged to stand in
front of the Mississippi State Capitol in Jackson until
he fell or was killed by whites. Fortunately, he was
persuaded not to follow his plan. "Alcorn College
Professor Tells Courier: 'I'm Biggest Fool In Miss.!',"
Pittsburgh Courier, 16 March 1957, 3. For an explanation
by King, also see "King's Version Of Alcorn College

23George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews,"
Pittsburgh Courier, 13 April, 1957, 8.

24Ibid.
longtime grudge against the African American clergy, Schuyler criticized the SCLC for its Prayer Pilgrimage March in May of 1957, as it urged Congress to pass a Civil Rights Bill. Asking what the march had accomplished, Schuyler then stated that "A much more fruitful pilgrimage led by the reverend clergy would be one to the registration booth, making possible the greatest use of the Negro's potential political power."25

In another editorial, he posed the question, "If the improvement of society is the aim of the social gospel, then why don't the reverend clergy make a pilgrimage in that direction?"26 In 1959, when King suggested a march in Mississippi to protest a lynching,27 Schuyler criticized the plan, calling it irrational and that an


26George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 1 June, 1957, 9.

27This was probably referring to the lynching of Mack Charles Parker, a black man suspected of raping a white woman who was taken out of a Mississippi jail cell and murdered by a mob of white men. The FBI sent a team of agents to investigate the murder, but because of the refusal of the Mississippi courts to comply with the investigation, the case was dismissed. Taylor Branch, Parting The Waters: America In The King Years, 1954-63 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 258-59. For a detailed analysis of the Parker lynching, see Howard Smead, Blood Justice: The Lynching Of Mack Charles Parker (New York: Oxford Press, 1986).
attempted march in Mississippi would only "enrich the undertakers in the volatile region." 28 In 1960, Schuyler criticized King's statement that unjust laws should not be obeyed. "Obviously if citizens are to choose the laws they want to obey, the result will be anarchy and chaos, with Negroes the worst sufferers," declared Schuyler.

"They have reached their present state of development because the majority of white people were tolerant and helpful, and willing to obey most of the laws enacted in the Negro's behalf and supported by the courts." 29

Schuyler also opposed the Black Power movements of the 1960's. Although Schuyler shared their disdain of nonviolent resistance, he did not approve of the idea of race solidarity and separatism that many Black Power organizations promoted. One particular example was Schuyler's criticism of the Nation Of Islam (NOI) and its prominent leaders Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. Surprisingly, Schuyler grudgingly approved of the NOI's programs of self improvement for African Americans in a 1959 Courier editorial. "Mr. Muhammad may be a rogue and


a charlatan," quipped Schuyler, "but when anybody can get
tens of thousands of Negroes to practice economic
solidarity, respect their women, alter their atrocious
diet, give up liquor, stop crime, juvenile delinquency
and adultery, he is doing more for the Negro's welfare
than any current Negro leader I know." 30

In 1961, Schuyler took part in a radio broadcast
debate with Malcolm X, James Baldwin, and C. Eric
Lincoln, author of The Black Muslims In America. Hosted
by Professor Eric Goldman of Princeton University, the
program centered on the NOI (Black Muslims) and their
impact on African Americans. Goldman asked each panelist
their opinion of the NOI. Predictably, Schuyler came out
against the organization's nationalistic approach to
solving African Americans' social problems. When Malcolm
X discussed the NOI's goal of separatism from white
America, Schuyler was moved to comment, thereby leading
to a discourse between the two:

Schuyler: Just wait a minute, now. At the risk
of going into politics, I would like to know how any
group in the United States is going to separate part
of the United States for them to live in without
having something to do with politics. Do you plan
to do this through warfare?

30George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews," 30 May,
1959; cited in C. Eric Lincoln, The Black Muslims In
America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 142.
X: Sir, I don't think that its necessary to bring about any warfare. If the ex-slave in America has to go to war with his former slavemaster to get what is his by right, then that in itself is a condemnation of the former slavemaster. If Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation a hundred years ago . . . and yet at the same time today the so-called Negro is knocking at the White House door, still begging his master to pass legislation that will give him recognition or protection by the constitution that is supposed to represent him, I think sir that the man who is depriving him of these rights cannot open up his mouth and say that it would be war. 31

During the debate Schuyler did praise the NOI for its self-improvement programs and especially its emphasis on economic uplift of African Americans. Nonetheless, Schuyler's overall position was that the NOI was a dictatorial black nationalist organization that thrived on a hatred of whites. When Malcolm X replied to Schuyler's criticism by quoting an editorial where he praised the NOI, Schuyler lightheartedly commented "Well you see there, that's what you get for being nice." 32 Interestingly, Roy Wilkins commented that the only man who could keep up with Malcolm X's sharp wit was

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31 Malcolm X and George Schuyler, excerpts from roundtable discussion "The Black Muslims In America," 23 April, 1961; Malcolm X: Great Debate With James Baldwin & Others, Cassette 161, Paul Winley Records.

32 Ibid.
Schuyler. "I always thought that Malcolm and George made a splendid set of antipodes," commented Wilkins.33

Although Schuyler and X may have been similar in their intellectual gymnastics, the journalist did not share any affection or admiration for the slain leader years after his assassination in 1965. In an 1973 article in American Opinion, Schuyler called Malcolm X "a bold, outspoken, ignorant man of no occupation after he gave up pimping, gambling, and dope-selling to follow Mr. (Elijah) Muhammad."34 Dismissing the NOI as an insignificant group of no more than ten thousand, he also categorized other African American organizations as "insignificant groups of hustlers and braggarts organized to bulldoze white people into handing out charity or to snatch a little transient graft."35 Lastly, Schuyler commented on the movement to memorialize Malcolm X by stating that "we might as well call out the schoolchildren to celebrate the birthday of Benedict Arnold. Or to raise a memorial to Alger Hiss."36


35Ibid.
Eventually, Schuyler's hard-line editorials against the Civil Rights Movement aroused the ire of readers. "It is my belief that George S. Schuyler should retire permanently from the public, he would do the Negro race one of the greatest services that have been attempted by a 'jellyfish,'" commented one reader. The Courier management also became impatient with his editorial attacks on civil rights demonstrators and leaders. In 1962, Schuyler received a memo from William G. Nunn, Editor of the Pittsburgh Courier, instructing him and other reporters to "lay off" of sniping at Martin Luther King Jr. "We here feel that King is doing a tremendous job. He's a symbol of a new kind of thinking among Negroes," declared Nunn. "Right or wrong, his courage and singleness of purpose is continually putting the White South on the defensive."\(^{37}\) Declaring him to be "the most articulate voice Negroes have," he then stated that "The Courier should go all-out in its support of the man and his actions."\(^{38}\)

\(^{36}\)bid., 36.


\(^{38}\)bid.
Schuyler was unmoved by Nunn's request. "If, as you say, there is a tendency on the part of Courier reporters 'to continue sniping at Martin Luther King Jr.' ... it is undoubtedly due to the fact," stated Schuyler, "that they have detected the essential fraudulence of that demagogue and recognize that he and his ilk will do the Negro's cause a great deal of harm in the long run."  

Commenting on Nunn's statement of King being the most articulate voice for Negroes, Schuyler replied that "Courage and singleness of purpose mean nothing in themselves because both can lead to disaster and often do."  

He also replied that:

Being articulate also means nothing in itself. Some of the worst enemies of the Negro have been articulate. And you are quite wrong if you think that Rev. King and his crackpot ilk are accomplishing more for Negroes than the NAACP and the Urban League, which have a more definite policy based on experience and intelligence, and are carrying it out. Again, embarrassment of the South ... is only worth while to the extent that it does not stir reprisals - and what have Negroes go to fight with, except mouth?

Schuyler also had much to say about expressing his opinion in editorials:

As for my personal opinion, I shall continue to express it in my signed column regardless of whether

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40 Ibid.

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others agree or not. I do not regard the purpose of a column to be a rubber stamp for management, a sort of affirmation of the paper's policy. . . . I cannot accept the belief that anybody who leads thousands of Negroes to be find whatever white courts think they should be find is doing the impoverished Negro community any good, whether in Albany, Ga. or Pittsburgh, Pa. If the column is distasteful, it can be left out; but I personally deplore running a newspaper like a plantation - and that's what the Courier risks.41

As the Civil Rights Movement progressed, so did Schuyler's rigid stance against its leaders and activities. Aside from editorials, Schuyler also spoke out against the movement publicly. In November 1963, the journalist gave a lecture as to why civil rights laws should not be passed by Congress. "The Civil Rights Laws are another typically American attempt to use the force of law to compel the public to drastically change its attitude toward and treatment of a racial group," stated Schuyler, "which the overwhelming majority of the population does not care to associate itself with, does not in the main wish to attend school with, does not choose to share its white collar and technical jobs with, and is opposed to sharing lodging with, and all the social contacts these involve."42

41 Ibid.

Arguing that the success of civil rights laws depended upon the tolerance and will of the majority, Schuyler emphasized that social and political gains for African Americans would come on a gradual basis. "Changes have been slow since 1865, but there have been marked changes; and civil rights laws, state or federal, have had little to do with it," declared Schuyler. "They have been enforced and accepted only when the dominant majority acquiesced and have generally lain dormant in the law books. In short, custom has dictated the pace of compliance."43

Lastly, Schuyler declared that the 14th Amendment was adequate enough for African Americans' civil rights but that its implementation was impossible because of the will of the majority. "[The majority] is more interested in white racial unity than interracial justice, and has no desire to punish the disfranchising of Negroes by penalizing the South."44 Nonetheless, Schuyler was optimistic that there would eventually be African Americans voting, holding public office, and working civil service jobs in the South. "The process is slow,

43 Ibid., 3-4.
44 Ibid., 7.
of course, but it will be solid because [it will be] based on a true public will."\textsuperscript{45}

Schuyler's conflict with \textit{Courier} management finally came to a head in 1964, when his sentiment with the far Right became more prevalent. As usual, his editorials bitterly criticized civil rights leaders and demonstrators. In May, Schuyler wrote four consecutive \textit{Courier} editorials that assailed civil rights leadership. "They have revealed by their tactics and strategy an irresponsibility and ignorance which has presented a shocking image of the American Negro which will take another generation to erase," clamored Schuyler in one editorial. "In shouting their way to a dubious leadership, they have insulted, denounced and traduce every Negro of good sense who disagreed with their suicidal program and was capable of carrying on the communication they demanded."\textsuperscript{46}

Schuyler berated the SCLC in another May editorial. "What sort of image has been presented by the organized rowdies, with their deceitful hymn-singing and praying, and indictments to civil disobedience and Hitlerian

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}

street-fighting?" questioned Schuyler. "These tactics led to golden opportunities for Southern cops to manhandle, mistreat and jail thousands of young Negroes who should have been in school, learning how to make a decent living."47

The journalist also pointed out that many civil rights leaders did not focus on economic advancement of African Americans by failing to emphasize the creation of jobs within the black community. "In the strident yells for whites to supply Negroes jobs, not a word is said about Negroes themselves supplying some for their unemployed youth."48 Schuyler emphasized this dilemma in his last May editorial, when he pointed out that demonstrators at the March On Washington probably did not wear shoes made by or purchased from an African American business. "And yet not a single one of the tonsil-torturing leaders has come up with a plan to raise capital to finance a factory to make 'Freedom Shoes' with which their 'Marching Blacks' could buy and where some Negro dropouts could work," added Schuyler.49


Aside from critical editorials, Schuyler's outside activities with the far Right added to mounting tensions between the Courier and the conservative journalist. During the Spring of 1964, Schuyler announced his candidacy for U.S. Congressman in the 18th District of Manhattan, the congressional district of incumbent Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Running on the Conservative Party ticket, Schuyler attacked Powell by calling him a "playboy," declaring him irresponsible, and considered him to be "New York's Number One demagogue." 50 Schuyler's hostility toward Powell was deeply rooted in a longtime resentment of the charismatic politician. Inquiring about Powell to journalists, Schuyler often said "I wonder what that yellow nigger is up to now." 51


51 Another source of Schuyler's hostility toward Powell may have been the experience he and Roy Wilkins had in Powell Sr.'s Abyssinian Baptist Church in January 1933. Arriving from Mississippi to discuss their NAACP investigation of levee workers, hecklers from the Communist Party in Harlem disrupted their presentation called them fakes and frauds. Even more disheartening, Powell failed to defend Schuyler and Wilkins, sowing the seeds of resentment in the bitter journalist. Will Haygood, King Of The Cats: The Life And Times Of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 55-56; Wilkins, Standing Fast, 125.
Running more on principle and visibility rather than a realistic chance to win, Schuyler came in last with 0.6% of the popular vote (637 votes) compared to Powell's overwhelming re-election with 84.6% of the popular vote (94,222).\(^{52}\) Nonetheless, Schuyler served his purpose of promoting the Conservative Party and himself.

Another issue that irritated *Courier* editors was Schuyler being one of the members of the grand jury that failed to indict New York City Police Lieutenant Thomas Gilligan for shooting James Powell, a fifteen year old African American teenager whose death caused six days of rioting in Harlem and Bedfard-Stuyvestant in Brooklyn.\(^{53}\)

As one of two African Americans on the grand jury, Schuyler supported the majority opinion and defended his decision. "I did the right thing and so did the rest of the jury," declared Schuyler. "We heard everything and we're more expert on the subject because we were there."


\(^{53}\)The grand jury concluded that because Powell was armed with a knife and confronted Gilligan, the officer was acting in an official manner and was not liable for the teenager's death. The toll from the riot was one person dead, 118 injured, and 465 arrested. Fred C. Shapiro and James W. Sullivan, *Race Riots: New York, 1964* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964), 1-2. The District Attorney's report of the grand jury's findings can be found in the Appendix, 209-22.
I've been on juries for the last twenty years and so I think I know what I'm talking about."  

The incident that seemed to be the breaking point for the Courier was Schuyler's extremely vocal support for Presidential Republican candidate and right-wing conservative Barry Goldwater. The Courier overwhelmingly supported President Lyndon B. Johnson and disapproved of Goldwater's anti-civil rights position. Despite the Courier's position, Schuyler supported the Republican candidate by writing an editorial that praised the Arizona Senator. "Goldwater is an honest straightforward man who does not gull the mob and shift ground to cadge votes," said Schuyler.  

A week later, the journalist appeared on radio station KMOX in St. Louis, Missouri, where he expressed his support for Goldwater once again.  

\[54\] Ibid., 16.  

\[55\] It is interesting to note that a disclaimer, which had appeared above Schuyler's column years ago, reappeared, stating that "The views expressed by Mr. Schuyler in this column are strictly those of the writer and in no way represent the policy of the newspaper." George S. Schuyler, "Views And Reviews," Pittsburgh Courier, 1 August, 1964.  

\[56\] "Courier Relieves George Schuyler Of Title Over 'Goldwater Incident,'" Philadelphia Tribune, 22 September, 1964, 6; Claude A. Barnett Papers, Library Of Congress, Washington D.C.
The radio program made *Courier* editor P.L. Prattis furious when they received word of readers canceling subscriptions and of one man in Washington D.C. who bought all the copies of the Courier from a newsstand, tore them up, and threw them into a trash can.57 "Your KMOX interview has done us incalculable harm," scolded Prattis. "We can't believe that you had any idea what the reaction would be or that your opinions and position would be taken to be those of The Courier."58 Prattis then instructed Schuyler to make it clear in his writings and other activities that his opinions did not reflect those of the *Courier*.59

Schuyler was unmoved by Prattis' warning and felt that he and other *Courier* editors were overreacting to his statements. "I think the damage you mention is [somewhat] exaggerated vis a vis circulation." declared Schuyler. "Losing subscribers is an occupational hazard which occurs only when something worthwhile is being said."60 Instead, Schuyler felt the newspaper should try

57 Letter from P.L. Prattis to George S. Schuyler, 7 August, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.
to "cash in on it" and encourage more debate on civil rights demonstrations, President Johnson's War On Poverty programs, urban riots, and other controversial "An article by Gov. Wallace would not be amiss!" declared Schuyler. Schuyler was not supportive of Schuyler's suggestion and attempted once again to sway the journalist's opinion with an impassioned plea:

We could very well rationalize about what is taking place among Negroes today . . . But you and I both know that during the last two thousand years, no other people have fought for fair treatment with less violence than Negroes. The Irish didn't. The Scots didn't. The Poles didn't. The French didn't. The Spaniards didn't. And the nations of Asia are doing so today. But no matter how nice we have been, our lord and master is still choking hell out of us. He still refuses to let us join the mainstream. It makes no difference that what he lets fall from his table to us makes us better off than the Somalis. We deserve the rights to be able to try to be as well off as our Lord and master . . . We want to restore the pride which our people once had in The Courier.

Between Schuyler's unbending support for the Right and the Courier's support for the Civil Rights Movement,

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60 George S. Schuyler, "Letter from George S. Schuyler to Eleanor A. Lofton, 13 August, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

61 Schuyler was referring to Alabama Governor George Wallace, whose symbolic refusal to allow two African Americans to desegregate the University Of Alabama a year before made him one of the most visual opponents of civil rights. Ibid.

it was a matter of time before the two factions would separate for good. In September 1964, the Courier announced that it would demote Schuyler from the title of associate editor. Arguing that Schuyler's title was more honorary than real, Prattis stated that Schuyler would be still allowed to write his column for the Courier.63 Schuyler was displeased with the decision. Angry over the statement released by Prattis to the New York Times, Schuyler stated to Prattis that his letter was "needlessly dishonest and libelous, aside from being erroneously phrased."64 Two months later, when the Courier rejected an editorial criticizing the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to King, he was bluntly told not to submit anymore editorials to the newspaper.65 Schuyler's editorials continued to appearing the Courier until November 1966, when the newspaper came under new management.66 In reality, Schuyler's relationship with the Courier had ended long before the Goldwater incident. Since the late 1940's, Schuyler had flirted with the neo-

63"Courier Relieves George Schuyler."

64Letter from George S. Schuyler to P.L. Prattis, 11 September, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

65Letter from P.L. Prattis to George S. Schuyler, 10 November, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

conservatives and the far Right, hoping to become part of their clique. His chance came soon after his demotion at the Courier, when newspaper editor and Right-Wing conservative William Loeb came calling.

Loeb, editor of the Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader, was a longtime fan and had taken an active interest in Schuyler's conservative viewpoint of the Civil Rights Movement. Agreeing with his statements against demonstrations, civil rights leaders, and urban riots, Loeb felt that Schuyler was an ideal weapon of choice against the movement. To gain Schuyler's interest, he shrewdly exploited the journalist's dismissal from the Courier. "Frankly I am surprised that they haven't come sooner. As you know, there is a really filthy campaign against you," said Loeb of Schuyler's troubles with the Courier. "You have a great amount of guts. Very few people would stick out their necks the way you are doing. My hat is off to you, sir."67

Loeb attempted to assist Schuyler by inquiring to see if other newspapers throughout the U.S. were interested in syndicating his editorials. Writing a

letter to editor Brady Black of the Cincinnati Enquirer, Loeb asked if he knew of ten newspapers that could carry Schuyler's column. "George is very much of a conservative and writes intelligently and vividly on the Negro question," stated Loeb to Black. "While he is naturally proud of his race, he takes the attitude that acceptance must be earned and what Negroes should do is become competent and acceptance would then take care of himself."68 Meanwhile, Schuyler continued to write, and in November 1964, the journalist received the break he desired with an editorial criticizing the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Initially rejected by the Courier, Schuyler then submitted it to Loeb, who printed it in the November 10 edition of the Union Leader, a month before King received the Nobel Prize.69 Schuyler argued that King was not deserving of the award since he had not made a contribution to world or domestic peace. "Methinks the Lenin Prize would have been more appropriate," stated Schuyler, alluding to his alleged Communist Party

68 Letter from William Loeb to Brady Black, 17 September, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

affiliation. "Dr. King's principal contribution to world peace has been to roam the country like some sable Typhoid Mary, infecting the mentally disturbed with perversion of Christian doctrine, and grabbing fat lecture fees from the shallow pated." 70

Schuyler continued with his assault on King with additional criticism. "His incitement packed jails with Negroes and some whites," accused Schuyler, "getting them beaten, bitten and firehosed, thereby bankrupting communities raising bail and fines, to the vast enrichment of Southern 'law 'n' order.'" 71 Lastly, he concluded that "Alfred Bernard Nobel will probably whirl in his tomb on Dec. 10 when Dr. King receives the bauble and the bankroll." 72

Schuyler received critical acclaim for his editorial from several conservatives, namely Loeb. "You are a wonderful writer," exclaimed the editor. "I don't know when I have enjoyed anything as much as your piece on the ridiculousness of Martin Luther King being given the

70George S. Schuyler, "King No Help To Peace," Manchester Union Leader, 10 November, 1964, 25.

71Ibid.

72Ibid.
Nobel Peace Prize."73 He also gained the attention of Theodore Lit, Senior Editor of Arlington House Publishers. Sponsored by the Conservative Book Club, Lit in late November contacted Schuyler and proposed an autobiography, tailored to discussing the problem of "being a Negro and Conservative. What are the experiences of being at once a Negro and Conservative? How do people react and how do you react to their reactions?" asked Lit.74 Schuyler agreed to Lit's proposal and added an immediate answer to his inquiries. "I do not look upon these matters as a Negro but simply as an American individual," replied Schuyler. "I think that there is much to conserve in American society, including what Negroes have (which happens to be more than anywhere else I know)."75 Two years later, Arlington House published Schuyler's autobiography under the originally-proposed title Black And Conservative.

The following year, Schuyler's opportunities and activities with the Right increased as he was hired by

73 Letter from William Loeb to George S. Schuyler, 5 November, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
74 Letter from Theodore Lit to George S. Schuyler, 23 November, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
75 Letter from George S. Schuyler to Theodore Lit, 16 December, 1964, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
Sidney Goldberg, president of the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA), a newspaper syndicate that sold articles and columns to more than 150 daily newspapers. Continuing with his attack on civil rights, Schuyler contributed more reactionary essays that targeted the movement and other racial issues. In August 1965 Watts, California, a predominantly African American section of Los Angeles, exploded in a riot, resulting in 34 deaths, 1,032 injured, 3,952 arrested, and approximately $40 million in property destruction. Schuyler was compelled to criticize the destruction and looting in an editorial syndicated by NANA.

Titled "Anatomy Of Black Insurrection," Schuyler emphasized a familiar theme in his analysis of the riot: Communist-influenced civil rights organizations and "self-styled" civil rights leaders vying for position were to blame for Watts. "... the net result of this long encouragement of civil disobedience, disdain for authority and general disrespect for public morals," stated Schuyler, "was to set the stage for the successive disgraceful orgies of burning, looting, vandalism and

76 Williams, "When Black Is Right," 364.
77 Franklin & Moss, From Slavery To Freedom, 514.
death, with the criminal elements of the slum proletariat taking over."

He also targeted King and the SCLC, accusing them of "infecting the mentally retarded with the germs of civil disobedience, camouflaged as non-violence and love of white people." He additionally stated that "Phony prayers for the salvation of white 'oppressors' and chanting slave songs fooled nobody except possibly the utopians of the National Council Of Churches and the socialist Roman Catholics." He concluded his editorial by emphasizing a stricter approach to suppress civil rights demonstrations:

What this country badly needs is public officials who will not temporize with illegality and disorder garbed in the mantle of civil rights and equality; who will not suppress crime and violence regardless of color; judges who will act with speed and vigor to jail disturbers of the peace; and a more responsible communications media that will refrain from persistently exciting the idle, envious and lawless.

In the October 1965 edition of The Crisis, a short editorial addressed Schuyler's criticism of the Watts riot.


79 Ibid., 2.

80 Ibid., 3.

81 Ibid., 6.
riot. "Under the Schuyler formula, all the multiple evils which beset the Negro community might possibly begin to be ameliorated after 2065, if only, in the meanwhile, Negroes sit quiet and stop rocking the boat," stated the article. 82 Stressing to whites that Schuyler did not speak for the majority of African Americans, the editorial concluded that

Mr. Schuyler does not even comprehend the depth and fury of the Negro's resentment against the restrictions imposed upon him solely because of his race. All in his years, Mr. Schuyler has been too busy breaking idols to learn this lesson. 83

Despite the criticism, Schuyler continued to lend his talents to the Right as his notoriety increased. In late October, Schuyler was approached by Robert Welch, President of the John Birch Society, to become a member of the ultra-conservative organization. 84 Schuyler eagerly accepted the offer, stating that "I could have been (a member) a long time ago because I feel that's

82 "George S. Schuyler, Iconoclast," The Crisis, October 1965, 485.

83 Ibid.

where I belong, so here it is without any ado."  

Shortly after his membership, Welch did not waste time to utilize Schuyler as he was invited to speak at the organization's National Council Meeting the following December in New York. Interestingly, Schuyler spoke before Selma, Alabama Sheriff Jim Clark, who had gained an infamous reputation for his strong-arm tactics against civil rights demonstrators.  

Welch employed Schuyler's talents as a writer as the journalist claimed a new professional home with American Opinion and Review Of The News, two John Birch publications. Schuyler also wrote for Human Events, another conservative publication. In addition, he willed his speaking talents to American Opinion's Speakers Bureau, lecturing at several college campuses, universities, and organizations throughout the U.S against the Civil Rights and emerging Black Power movements. Coupled with his NANA articles, Schuyler amassed a massive amount of anti-civil rights literature that was mostly read by his new-found audience of


predominantly white, middle class, conservative Americans who desired to hear an African American disagree with the movement.

The journalist did not disappoint his audience as he attacked several issues such as urban riots, welfare, public housing, and other pertinent issues. In April 1968, Schuyler received his greatest acclaim as an ultra-conservative journalist when he wrote an essay that addressed the life and career of Martin Luther King, Jr. Felled by an assassin's bullet, King's death set off a period of rioting in more than 100 cities and mass mourning by black and white Americans.\textsuperscript{87} Schuyler, a longtime critic of King, was not swayed by the emotions of the moment, and proceeded to write a critical essay that was released in several American newspapers by NANA shortly after King's death.

Coldly titled "He Reaped The Whirlwind: A Cool And Critical Appraisal Martin Luther King's Works," the essay wasted little time in adhering to its title. "The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. tragically emphasizes again the fact that 'militant non-violence' always ends violently" began Schuyler. "Countless mass demonstrations which started to advance a good cause have

\textsuperscript{87}Franklin & Moss, \textit{From Slavery To Freedom}, 518.
ended in clashes with police, looting, vandalism and killing rather than the goodwill and understanding originally intended."^88

Schuyler criticized King’s tactics of nonviolent resistance and argued that moderation and compromise was a better solution than inciting African Americans to protest, resulting in increased hostility from whites. "Wherever the Negro lives in the United States, he prospers only to the extent that he has the goodwill, tolerance and acceptance of his white neighbors and fellow workers," argued Schuyler. "This is a necessarily slow process, when trying to maintain the most delicate balance. It cannot be speeded by razzle-dazzle tactics which arouse suspicion and lend support to the propaganda of Negrophobes."^89

Schuyler also criticized King’s efforts to protest the Vietnam War, another cause the conservative journalist supported, and felt that his tactics resulted in attracting the outer fringe of society. "There are too many [retarded], half-witted, criminally-inclined

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^89Ibid., 2.
people in our population whose expectations have to be kept in check," declared Schuyler.\textsuperscript{90} Schuyler concluded his essay with the prediction that continued demonstrations would only result in deteriorated race relations. "Dr. King, tragically, never learned this. His followers had better."\textsuperscript{91}

Shortly after its release, Schuyler received several letters from critics and admirers. Not surprisingly, most of his critics were African Americans who were incensed over his remarks. "... what an indictment of [the] U.S. and of yourself, exclaimed one critic who disagreed with his statement regarding white acceptance and Negro prosperity.\textsuperscript{92} Another reader from Chicago, who addressed Schuyler as "you black traitor," vehemently disagreed with his proposal of moderation. "I say because [King] didn't compromise, we sit on the front of Montgomery busses, eat in the best Southern restaurants and vote in every county of America," argued Schuyler's critic.\textsuperscript{93} "I ask you Old Man, what had your approaches

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 4.

\textsuperscript{92} Letter from Gene Johnson to George S. Schuyler, undated, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

\textsuperscript{93} Letter from Judson C. Mitchell to George S. Schuyler, 8 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
done for America before King," the critic proposed. "Perpetuated a system of bowing, humble, 'Nigras,' happy to be second class citizens. You ought to write speeches to George Wallace." A third critic, also from Chicago, mentioned that "Dr. King appealed many times for help from people of the right wing and never got it." He concluded by stating that "any man who has the courage to take up his cross and follow the Lord should not be critical - that's the least you could do."  

Schuyler also received numerous letters from supporters. Mostly white conservatives who shared an aversion of civil rights, the journalist received from his admirers accolades and thanks for stating what many had thought of King and the Civil Rights Movement. "I cannot help but tell you the words therein had more meaning than anything I have observed, editorially, for years and years," exclaimed one reader from Chicago.  

"You so ably said what I wanted to say. I wish I had your ability to write," stated another reader from Nashville, Tennessee. "I know there are many Negroes who  

94 Ibid.  
95 Letter from Lorandes Lambert to George S. Schuyler, 8 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.  
96 Letter from Mrs. Edward M. Ray to George S. Schuyler, 12 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.
feel the same as you do, and I truly hope your life will be long and fruitful."\footnote{Letter from U.B. Overton to George S. Schuyler, 15 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.}

Another reader from Chicago asked, "Why can't all Negro people be like you? Then, they would have a man to be proud of - and proud to be called an American."\footnote{Letter from Clara Whisenant to George S. Schuyler, 10 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.} "If everyone had the same trend of thought as you have, this entire universe would be a 'Utopia,'" exclaimed a reader from Florida. "As it is now, it is sickening."\footnote{Letter from Jenne Oatley to George S. Schuyler, 11 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.}

Many also shared their opinions of King and the Civil Rights Movement. "I do not believe that Dr. King should have been in the demonstrations at all," stated a minister from Tennessee. "If he had the truth of God to preach, he should have rendered unto God as a Minister, the things of God, and not been in the things of Caesar."\footnote{Letter from H.V. Massey to George S. Schuyler, 10 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.} "I think most of the so called Civil Rights legislation does more harm than good," stated a Nebraska reader. "Most of them build up the hope of Utopia in many Negroes . . . Most of our problems are moral and
must be corrected by a change of heart, not by laws." 101
Another Chicago reader simply stated that "the races of
all colors should have equality but they should not
expect things on a silver platter. We all work for what
we want, we would not get it otherwise." 102

Schuyler had truly reached the pinnacle of his
ultra-conservative career. Syndicated in several
American newspapers and right wing publications, the
journalist finally received the recognition, fame, and
attention he desired. In 1968 and 1969, Schuyler
received respectively the American Legion Award and the
Catholic War Veterans Award. 103 He also was a favorite
speaker for many right wing organizations on college
campuses and universities. Despite his success,
Schuyler's career seemed to come at the cost of his
family. Schuyler's wife still remained married to him
but had lost interest in their relationship years ago.
With her husband busy with speaking engagements and his
writings, Josephine's only hope was to keep herself busy
with their daughter Philippa.

101 Letter from Mr. and Mrs. Larry Davis to George S.
Schuyler, 8 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

102 Letter from Bernan Loracc to George S. Schuyler,
12 April, 1968, Schuyler Papers-Syracuse.

103 Peplow, George S. Schuyler, 14-15.
As a young woman, Philippa enjoyed a prosperous and active career despite racial limitations on concert appearances in America. The talented pianist instead went to Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa to play a number of State Department-sponsored concerts. As with many African American artists shunned by their own country, she was received warmly by her foreign audiences and was greeted by royalty, among them Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, whom she played for in 1959.104

Philippa also became a journalist and author when her humanitarian interests increased. Traveling throughout the world, she became greatly interested in the plight of the impoverished in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. At the same time, she had adopted the same conservative ideology her father possess. As a result, Phillipa became a humanitarian who took a conservative approach to solving the problems of the Third World, namely African countries. In the early 1960's, Philippa focused her attention on Kenya and the Belgian Congo. Taking a conservative position on African independence, she felt that both countries still needed to be colonies and that independence would only bring confusion and trouble.105

104 Talalay, Composition In Black And White, picture section.
In 1962, Philippa wrote and published *Who Killed The Congo?*, a sensational account of the Belgian Congo's bloody and tumultuous period of independence. Siding with Moise Tshombe, the pro-Belgian President of the Congo province of Katanga, Philippa argued that Belgium's presence was still needed to assist in the Congo's independence.\(^{106}\) Schuyler also wrote about her accounts in the Congo and Kenya as a correspondence reporter for the *Union Leader*. Loeb was also pleased with Philippa's accounts of African independence, often placed on the front page and greatly supported by additional editorials written by Loeb, which emphasized that because Philippa was "a Negro" she could not be accused of racism because of her conservative views.\(^{107}\)

Despite her career, Philippa's personal life seemed to be in turmoil. Aside from a busy schedule and failed personal relationships, her biggest personal dilemma seemed to be coping with her racial identity. Travelling abroad, very few people knew of her relation to Schuyler. In turn, she tried to identify herself as anything but African American. In January 1963, Philippa received a

\(^{105}\)Diggs-Brown, "Philippa Duke Schuyler," 34.

\(^{106}\)Ibid., 30, 37-38; Talalay, 205-08.

passport under a new alias: Felipa Monterro y Schuyler. Passing as someone of Latin heritage, she reasoned that she could break the color barrier for American concerts.\textsuperscript{108} In turn, she divested her African American heritage, particularly her relation to Schuyler. She dictated to both parents that it was not to be disclosed that she was related to her well-known but black journalist father. When Schuyler was working on a manuscript for an African American History book titled \textit{The Negro In America}, he wrote a five-page biography on Philippa. When she found out, she expressed her indignation. "Apparently he wishes to handicap me ... Get me OUT of that book," she told her mother. "Everyone here [Europe] thinks of me as a Latin, and that's the way I want it."\textsuperscript{109}

When Philippa went to Vietnam in 1966 as a foreign correspondence for the \textit{Union Leader}, her views began to change. Witnessing the brutal treatment given to the South Vietnamese by the VietCong and American soldiers, the treatment of African American soldiers by their white

\textsuperscript{108}Talalay, \textit{Composition In Black And White}, 223.

\textsuperscript{109}Approximately fifteen hundred pages, Schuyler's manuscript was never published. Today it is among the Schuyler Papers at the Schomburg Center in Harlem, New York. \textit{Ibid.}, 223-224.
counterparts, and her own treatment by the American embassy and white American soldiers, she reconsidered her position on the Vietnam War and her own ideas on race. She also began to sympathize with the Civil Rights Movement and condemned her father in her last letter to her mother:

Now if George, instead of letting himself be segregated all his life, had had the guts to go forth into integration and try to thrust his way into white companies and white neighborhoods, he would have found out why the Stokley Carmichaels are necessary now — as a pressure valve. I am not going to cravenly accept segregation. Nor will I bring any child up into segregation. 110

Tragically, Philippa did not have the chance to explore her new-found identity. On May 9, 1967, Philippa Duke Schuyler was instantly killed in a helicopter crash that claimed three lives. On a mission rescuing Vietnamese children, Schuyler was on her way back to Da Nang when the helicopter descended rapidly, crashing into Da Nang Bay. 111 Philippa's stunned and grief-stricken parents made the somber preparations for their daughter's funeral. On May 17, she was given an elaborate funeral

110 Letter from Philippa Schuyler to Josephine Schuyler, 6 May, 1967; cited in Ibid., 274.

111 Ibid., 3-4.
procession in Harlem which ended at St. Patrick's Cathedral, where she was laid to rest.112

Philippa's death took a toll on both parents, particularly on Schuyler's wife Josephine. Suffering from depression, her health rapidly declined. Nonetheless, she continued to honor her daughter in death. She founded the Philippa Schuyler Memorial Foundation to assist in humanitarian causes in Vietnam.113 Josephine also wrote a book of poems titled Philippa: The Beautiful American, eulogizing her daughter's achievements.114 As time went on, Josephine's suffering proved to be too great to bear. On May 2, 1969, a few days before the second anniversary of Philippa's death, Schuyler walked into Josephine's bedroom only to find his wife hanging in the doorway and a suicide note.115

In a period of approximately two years, George Schuyler had lost his entire family. For the usually

112Ibid., 7.
113Ibid., 277.

114A copy can be found in the Philippa Schuyler Papers at Syracuse University and possibly the Schomburg Center in Harlem.

115Ibid, 278; The suicide note is among the George Schuyler Papers at Syracuse University.
stoic journalist, the loss proved to be unbearable. Although he kept busy with his criticism of the Civil Rights Movement, he confessed his personal anguish to Union Leader editor William Loeb:

Yes, I truly expected that both Josephine and Philippa would outlive me, and now it is the reverse. But I doubt that I shall be here very long. I have tried to fight the good fight for what I have considered right, but now the long battle has worn me down. It is hard to hold one's head high and to carry on under crushing burdens of responsibility.116

Eight years later, on August 31, 1977, George Samuel Schuyler joined his family when he passed away at New York Hospital at the age of 82.117


CONCLUSION

George Samuel Schuyler's death was remarked upon by the New York Times and the Washington Post. "I used to tell people that George got up in the morning, waited to see which way the world was turning then struck out in the opposite direction," commented John Henrik Clarke in the Times.1 "He could cut deeply and sometimes unfairly, but he was always interesting to read," commented Rayford Logan in the Post.2 The conservative world also noted Schuyler's passing in the National Review. "He showed the distinctive courage of a mind cast in one ideological mold who broke loose from it," commented the Review, "recognizing in America the abundance of opportunities which he himself took in advancing his professional career."3

The death of Schuyler marked the end of a fifty-four year professional career in journalism and the end of a


2 West, "George S. Schuyler."

complex eighty-two year political journey. Twenty years after his death, one ponders the reasons for Schuyler's conservatism and his disdain for his fellow African Americans. Looking at Clarke's observation of Schuyler, one can easily say that the cantankerous journalist was arbitrarily belligerent and lived for confrontation.

Betty Culpeper, Team Leader of Social Sciences at the Library Of Congress, categorized Schuyler and Zora Neale Hurston as those who supported segregation and advocated a gradual elimination. At the same time, she considered them to be conservatives who purposely took their position to aggravate and irritate others.⁴

Another shrewd observation is Samuel Putnam's comments on the "Lost Generation" - the writers of the 1920's. In *Paris Was Our Mistress: Memoirs Of A Lost And Found Generation*, Putnam categorized the Lost Generation writers as follows:

The revolt was of a mixed character, being marked on the one hand by a popular democratic trend as in Anderson, Sandburg, and Lindsay, and on the other hand by a certain tendency to esotericism and a contempt for the arts of the people that with Mencken and his followers became a contempt for the people themselves (Italics added).⁵


As an avid follower and admirer of H.L. Mencken, Schuyler was attracted by the writer's disdain for American society and immediately felt a bond with Mencken. Schuyler also felt a kinship with other Lost Generation writers who were disillusioned with life after World War I. Given the numerous racial affronts Schuyler faced in the Army, he was an easy convert to Socialism, Bohemia, and other alternative lifestyles in the 1920's. By the 1960's, Schuyler's disdain for American society gradually turned into a defense of its ideals. Although his rebellious side still remained, he was now rebelling against the grain of African American protest and intellectual thought. Ironically the system that he came to hate became the system he blindly defended.

Answers to Schuyler's conservatism may also be found in his childhood. Among the authority figures that stand prominent are his mother and grandmother. Both were strong matriarchs who influenced Schuyler in their respective ways. His mother served as a teacher for his overall contempt of African Americans while his grandmother inspired him to be stubborn and belligerent. Overall, his mother proved to be the dominant force.

87-88; cited in Cruse, Crisis Of The Negro Intellectual, 62.
throughout his life as he refused to take cause with any black nationalistic or protest movements.

Interestingly, from the 1920's to the mid 1940's Schuyler did exhibit some interest in certain movements. One example was the Italo-Ethiopian war, in which he wrote several editorials and pulp-fiction novels favoring Ethiopia and a united African front against European colonization. Schuyler even encouraged African Americans not to participate in World War II until their civil rights were respected. In the background of Schuyler's mind, however, was the voice of his mother, admonishing her young son not to associate with African Americans and to side with whites.

One also has to wonder what type of household Schuyler resided in. From his accounts, Schuyler lived in a modest home that provided him the essentials of food, clothing, shelter, and loving attention. At the same time, there seem to be a number of ambiguities in Schuyler's childhood such as his legitimacy of birth and whether he was adopted. Seemingly, Schuyler's conservatism was part of his perpetual search for an identity, a tangible answer to questions about his origins. Consequently, Schuyler felt lost and confused
because these questions were not answered, resulting in his bitterness toward life.

One also has to wonder whether Schuyler suffered indignities as a dark-skinned African American in what was categorized as a Mulatto family. He may have suffered a fate similar to that of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. As a child, Thomas was plagued by fellow black classmates denigrating his dark-skinned features with horrible nicknames such as "Nigger Naps" or "ABC (America's Blackest Child)." When he was at Yale, he confided to close friends his contempt for lighter-skinned blacks and argued that they benefited most from the civil rights movement. At the same time, many colleagues at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recalled Thomas preferring lighter-skinned black women and whites, while showing contempt for those similar to him. Schuyler shared a similar bizarre love-hate relationship with lighter-skinned blacks. Although he sharply criticized racial prejudice among African Americans, Schuyler mostly dated lighter-skinned black women, white women, and became close friends with


7Ibid., 45-46.
lighter-skinned blacks such as Walter White. Perhaps Schuyler suffered racial slights from members of his own family and the African American community in Syracuse, helping to form his contempt.

Lastly, one must look at the constant rage exhibited in Schuyler's writings. Whatever position the journalist took, he always attacked his subject with reckless abandon, using caustic words and phrases designed to hurt and denigrate. Schuyler struggled greatly with the inner demons of racial anger and self-hate, becoming more hostile toward African Americans. At the same time, Schuyler still harbored racial hostility against whites, but as his status as a journalist and race expert increased, impoverished and disenfranchised African Americans increasingly became his target of scorn. Serving as a constant reminder of his own precarious status in American society and the journalistic world, Schuyler’s contempt toward African Americans deepened as his attack against segregation lessened.8

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In the Post-civil rights period of the 1980's and 1990's, there has been a revival in black conservatism as the American conservative movement has increased. Schuyler's relevance to these new anti-civil rights activists is evident in the fact that many of them are echoing the same sentiments he shared years ago. In the 1960's, Schuyler argued that civil rights bills and laws would not end racism and only increase them. Today, many of the black conservatives have echoed Schuyler's declarations, arguing that civil rights and affirmative action have worked to create a racial backlash in whites while creating inferiority in blacks.\textsuperscript{9} Also, similar to Schuyler's association with the Right in the 1950's and 1960's, they have been given a pulpit in the media to voice their objections to civil rights and African American protest, greatly increasing their notoriety.

At the same time, Schuyler differs from most black conservatives of today in that his conservative views were formed during the age of Jim Crow, making his conversion more remarkable. Most black conservatives today came of age during the end of the civil rights or post-civil rights period. Also, he was closely

associated with the civil rights vanguard of the 1920's through the 1940's, whereas most black conservatives of today did not share the same association with civil rights spokesmen.

In the final analysis of George S. Schuyler, one can interpret him in two ways. On a positive note, the political odyssey of Schuyler represents the desire of one voice striving to be different from others, and a declaration that African Americans are not a monolith in intellectual thought. The phenomenon of Schuyler also forces civil rights activists to vigorously defend and strengthen their own beliefs of militant activism for African Americans.

At the same time, Schuyler's analysis of issues denotes a disturbing characteristic of black conservatism. Motivated by a desire for acceptance by conservative whites rather than an accurate analysis of American race relations, Schuyler analyzed African American issues in a narrow, prejudicial manner, creating a superficial, false picture that ignored the reality of race in America. As a result, Schuyler held African Americans responsible for their own dilemma rather than indict white supremacy. Despite his own bitter experiences with racism during the Jim Crow era, Schuyler
chose to ignore and repress them in the inner depths of his soul. Yet he was haunted by racism throughout his life.

At best, Schuyler's dilemma can be explained by the classic thesis introduced by W.E.B. DuBois in 1903:

One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.10

Schuyler constantly warred with his twoness, struggling to be part of the American mainstream while trying to resist the call of his African American contemporaries to join the struggle. In the end, Schuyler chose to be American, sacrificing his identity and, eventually, his own family.

Although Schuyler's life can be viewed easily as a tragedy, it should be viewed it as a challenge. Although his views can be easily dismissed as the writings of a bitter, self-hating, caustic individual, they also challenge African American society to look at itself and to examine their own beliefs. Schuyler also offers a challenge to American scholars. In order to understand the complexity and diversity of American and African

American intellectual History, a study of black conservatism must be taken into consideration. It is hoped that this historical overview and analysis of George Samuel Schuyler has greatly contributed to that goal.
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