

## Chapter I

# “Double V for Victory” Mobilizes Black Detroit, 1941–1946

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Less than two months after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, plunging the United States into WWII, African Americans launched a highly organized “Double V for Victory” campaign in black communities across the United States. African Americans in Detroit were in the vanguard of this national effort, which utilized a “Double V” to symbolize the need to fight for victory over fascism abroad and second-class citizenship on the home front. Scholars have noted the great strides that African Americans made during WWII. The literature credits the strong demand for labor, which opened up job opportunities for African Americans as the nation prepared for and then fought in the war, as one reason for economic and social progress.<sup>1</sup> The legitimacy and visibility of the black freedom struggle moved higher on the nation’s agenda as the rhetoric of patriotic egalitarianism, engendering a vibrant sense of entitlement among African Americans, emerged from the cry for victory over fascism abroad, which permeated the air.<sup>2</sup>

While these factors are important, it is questionable just how great the strides would have been had African Americans not pushed for inclusion from below. Often it was the initiative of black workers that was decisive, turning the war effort into an opportunity for making inroads into war industries. The federal government did not hand Executive Order #8802, which prohibited discrimination in defense industries and agencies of the federal government, to black America. Black activists *demand*ed that President Roosevelt issue an executive order declaring fair employment

practices as the standard in all defense operations throughout the land. Finally, while African Americans may have drawn inspiration from victory over fascism in Germany, they utilized the patriotic rhetoric calling for victory for democracy in Europe to carry forward what A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), called the “unfinished task of emancipation.”<sup>3</sup> Citizenship discourse had been central to ongoing black freedom struggles since the 1860s.

To understand the forward progress that African Americans made during the war, we must step back. The dramatic shift that placed the African American freedom struggle on the national map during WWII grew out of previous struggles and the spirit of the March on Washington, which carried a politics of self-determination and independence from white control to the shop floor. African Americans began mobilizing against exclusion from war industries on the home front months before the United States entered the war. During the spring of 1941, African American workers helped usher in the United Auto Workers (UAW) at Ford and in the process laid the foundation for challenging the racial status quo in the auto workers’ union, within the automobile industry, and within the larger community. Community-wide networks, formed during the campaign to organize black workers at Ford, served as springboards for the ensuing challenge against the racial status quo. The simultaneous national call for a March on Washington, issued during the spring of 1941, added fuel to the effort.

A. Philip Randolph organized thousands of black Americans in 1941 for a March on Washington to demand jobs in rapidly expanding defense industries. Faced with the prospect of 100,000 angry black Americans descending on segregated Washington, Roosevelt issued Executive Order #8802 and created a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to implement the order. African Americans praised the executive order, calling it a new Emancipation and the “beginning of our economic freedom.” Randolph called off the march when the executive order was issued, but kept the March on Washington Movement (MOWM) intact to act as a watchdog over the FEPC and to mobilize local activism for citizenship rights. The MOWM did not die in cities like Detroit after the executive order was issued from the Oval Office and was fused with the “Double V for Victory” campaign in the winter of 1942, further strengthening the challenge against job discrimination. While black Detroit used the patriotic call for war against fascism as a vehicle to energize and validate the “Double V” campaign, the impulse for this giant step came from the 1930s when the push for greater opportunity accelerated considerably in Detroit.<sup>4</sup>

The foundation was laid through initiatives at the local level operating outside the orbit of mainstream black organizations, such as the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and National Urban League (NUL). On one level, African American workers employed by the Ford Motor Company, the single largest employer of black workers in Detroit, enjoyed some of the better jobs available to blacks. Henry Ford's paternalism was legendary and extended throughout the black community. He had cooperating ministers announce job openings from the pulpit, he supported the town of Inkster for black Ford employees, and he invited Marion Anderson and other famous African Americans to Detroit for the cultural enrichment of the black community.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, voices from a new crowd of black activists, frustrated with barriers to equal economic opportunity and impatient with the slow rate of reform espoused by the NAACP, grew louder during the 1930s. Desiring substantive change in the racial status quo, they departed from the gradual, legal approach that had been the hallmark of the NAACP, which committed its resources to making appeals in courts on a case-by-case basis and agitated by compiling facts and deluging government officials with information. The new crowd challenged the old guard in the NAACP, spearheaded the formation of the National Negro Congress (NNC), and mobilized the larger community by making demands backed by collective organization.<sup>6</sup> In order to address pressing civil rights issues, Snow Grigsby, a black postal worker, and Reverend William H. Peck, pastor of Detroit's second oldest and second largest black church, Bethel A.M.E., organized the Detroit Civil Rights Committee (CRC) in 1933. The independent organization was designed to mobilize black Detroiters around economic issues, an area where Grigsby, as a member of the NAACP's executive committee, felt the local branch moved too slowly when it moved at all.<sup>7</sup> The CRC lasted for close to ten years, during which time it challenged racist hiring practices of the Detroit Board of Education, the Post Office, the Fire Department, and the Detroit Edison Company. Shortly after Grigsby and Peck began the CRC, they were joined by the Reverend Charles A. Hill, minister of the popular Hartford Avenue Baptist Church, who also was a member of both the CRC and the NAACP.<sup>8</sup>

By 1936, protest networks organized under Grigsby's CRC began working with C. LeBron Simmons, a lawyer, and labor organizers Joseph Billups, Horace Sheffield, and Mason Hodges in the NNC. The NNC's agenda reflected the interests of this new crowd that rejected the racial status quo—including Ford's paternalism—prevailing in Detroit.<sup>9</sup> The NNC, like the CRC, was organized locally to meet the needs not addressed by the local NAACP, which was viewed as out of touch with workers' concerns and not interested in challenging paternalistic labor relations at Ford Motor Company. When A. Philip Randolph came to Detroit to organize black

workers as president of the NNC in 1938, major black churches refused to let him speak about union issues from the pulpit for fear of reprisals from Henry Ford. One exception was the Reverend Peck's Bethel Church, which opened its doors despite pressure to keep Randolph from speaking.<sup>10</sup> The NNC played a "definite role in raising the aspiration levels of Negroes, of making them feel that they could make their way in this democratic society," according to Geraldine Bledsoe, a black board member of the Detroit Urban League, who, by the late 1930s attended NNC meetings. Bledsoe argued that the NNC taught black Detroiters that they "had to be vigorous and uncompromising and demanding in order to find their place."<sup>11</sup>

Young people were finding their place in the Youth Division of the local branch of the NAACP. Under the leadership of Gloster Current, who was personally encouraged by Charles Houston, the NAACP's chief legal strategist, the Youth Division was connected to the local branch in name only. Black youth collaborated with the NNC and its campaign to free imprisoned labor activist Angelo Herndon, a black Communist sentenced to 18 years in prison for speaking out for the rights of black workers in Atlanta. While the branch NAACP president, Dr. James McClendon, ignored the case, the black community largely supported the plight of Herndon. The local NNC urged black auto workers to join the UAW, talking with black workers and developing community-wide networks of black union activists.<sup>12</sup>

Still, recruiting was not easy in a community that had depended on recommendations from ministers for getting jobs with Ford Motor Company at its River Rouge plant near Detroit. Years later, C. LeBron Simmons recalled that the NNC, together with the Civil Rights Congress, was in the forefront of organizations "who took the initiative, rather than waiting to see what the government officials were going to do. We started getting people moving in the direction for change." The NNC, along with the CRC, broke new ground by combining labor and civil rights issues in its campaign for the advancement of black Detroiters, "rather than following the same old pattern that had been staked out before."<sup>13</sup> To aid the progressives in their struggle, the Nat Turner Club, headed by Joseph Billups, was formed in Detroit in the 1930s to educate citizens about democratic rights by organizing around unemployment, evictions, and industrial unionism. Organized and shaped by the left-wing, new-crowd activists, the Nat Turner Club laid the foundation for black caucuses that emerged within the UAW during WWII.<sup>14</sup>

In April 1941, African Americans played a significant role in organizing black workers at the River Rouge plant in Detroit for the UAW-Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO). By then, the NNC networks had expanded to include the Reverend Horace White, who spoke for organized

labor from the pulpit of Plymouth Congregational Church. The network also gained the support of the *Michigan Chronicle* and Robert Evans, Snow Grigsby, and the Reverends Charles Hill and Horace White. When black leaders in the local NAACP chapter held out against the union movement during the strike against Ford in April 1941, Walter White, executive secretary of the national NAACP, flew into Detroit to try to persuade the local chapter to back the workers' movement. White, sensing that the Ford strike went beyond union representation, declared from the loudspeaker of a union sound truck that "Negro Ford workers ... cannot afford to rely on the personal kindness of any individual when what the workers want is justice." White defended his controversial support of the UAW's strike by explaining to local NAACP leaders that an alliance between the black community and the union movement represented "the new order of things."<sup>15</sup>

The new order was in place before the United States entered WWII. As the *Chicago Defender* warned shortly before Pearl Harbor, "We are not exaggerating when we say that the American Negro is damned tired of spilling his blood for empty promises of better days."<sup>16</sup> Once the United States officially entered the war, Randolph and MOWM organizers linked the war for democracy in Europe and Asia to the war for democracy on the home front with the slogan, "Winning Democracy for the Negro is Winning the War for Democracy." The phrase resonated with black Americans who understood they were now, as philosopher Alaine Locke noted, "a touchstone the world over of our democratic integrity."<sup>17</sup> Building on the "Double V for Victory" campaign, initiated by the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Randolph announced plans "to stage a series of giant protest meetings ... 'to win the democratic rights for Negroes now during the war.'"<sup>18</sup> By the summer of 1942, the MOWM, waving the banner of the "Double V for Victory," basked in the success of the series of large rallies that it had organized in major cities to champion full citizenship rights.

With the intentional exclusion of whites from participation in the MOWM, a politics of black self-determination rose to the fore. The all-black tactic was designed not so much to keep out the Communists, as some have suggested, or to borrow from Marcus Garvey.<sup>19</sup> Randolph used black nationalism as a tool to shatter barriers—social, economic, political—that barred African Americans from full participation in American society. When Randolph resigned as president of the NNC in the spring of 1940, he blasted the Communist Party for violating the independence of black Americans by its alliance with the Soviet Union, which was then a partner with Hitler. He also warned black Americans of the problems inherent in dependence on white financial support of their organizations. For Randolph, the motivation for excluding white participation grew out of

his preoccupation with removing the stigma of second-class status from black Americans. Although Randolph severed his ties with the NNC, black activists in Detroit had no trouble working closely with the Communists in the NNC while supporting the MOWM. Randolph hoped the MOWM would be not just a national organization but the means to form local networks, where the experience of building the MOWM at the local level would be in the hands of African Americans.<sup>20</sup> To avoid situations in which white Americans could impose boundaries in interracial strategy sessions as a way to control the decision-making process, black Americans had to formulate their own tactics and agenda based on the interests of the black community; they had to be free from the politics of civility that tried to channel dissent away from protest and toward moderation. By examining activities inspired and supported by the MOWM and the "Double V" campaign in Detroit, we can trace the emergence of the spirit and philosophy embodied in the "March Movement," which framed the direction of black protest politics in Detroit during the war.

MOWM taught black community activists the importance of using mass demonstrations as a tool to challenge existing power relations. Black workers drew from the march formula to demand changes in race relations, particularly within the CIO. When industrial management, government, or union officials dragged their feet over issues involving discrimination in workplaces, black workers expressed their impatience by initiating wildcat strikes and work stoppages, applying the lessons inspired by the politics of MOWM to break down barriers to equal economic opportunity on the shop floor.

Before the ink was dry on Executive Order #8802, black workers at Dodge Truck and Dodge Main in Detroit took matters into their own hands. They protested the transfer of white workers only from foundries at Dodge to defense production jobs at the Chrysler tank arsenal. Key issues were restricting black workers to unskilled jobs and locking them out of training programs (funded by federal tax dollars) to which white unskilled and semiskilled workers had easy access. Robert Weaver, a member of the Labor Division of the National Defense Advisory Commission, documented hundreds of cases of industrialists hiring out-of-town white workers rather than employing local black workers. Seventy-five percent of defense jobs required trained workers. "The greatest needs for workers," as Weaver pointed out, "were concentrated in the very occupations in which colored men had not been used and where often there were the strongest resistances to their training and employment." Thus, gaining access to training programs to learn new job skills was a necessity if black Americans were to work in the arsenals for democracy in significant numbers.<sup>21</sup>

The situation in Detroit is illustrative because the city was one of the most important arsenals during WWII.<sup>22</sup> Despite the presence of a few black workers in skilled positions at Ford Motor Company where, in 1941, approximately 12,000 black workers made up over 12 percent of the labor force, the majority of black employees at Ford worked in foundries, as "general laborers," or as janitors. The A. C. Spark Plug Company in Detroit employed 23 black men and women as janitors out of its 3,500 workers; Vickers, Incorporated, employed about 90 black janitors and stock handlers among its 3,000 employees. During the spring of 1941, Chrysler hired approximately 1,850 black workers who constituted about 2.5 percent of the total labor force in its Detroit plants. Of this total, 1,400 were foundry workers and janitors in the Dodge Motor Division. At the same time, about 4 percent of the 10,000 workers at Packard Motor Car Company were blacks, also employed primarily in the foundry. At Hudson Motor Company, approximately 225 unskilled blacks were counted among its 12,200 workers.<sup>23</sup>

Conversion to war production entailed changes in production, with implications for the occupational future of black workers. The majority of automobile firms needed to reduce drastically the number of foundry jobs, the one area of the auto factory where black workers were dominant. Black workers understood that they would either enter general production jobs along with other foundry workers or be reassigned to traditional dead-end jobs. Generally, management resisted introducing black workers on assembly lines because they alleged that white workers would not accept them. Although a few firms honored the government policy against discrimination in defense employment, it was clear to black workers that they must seize the opportunities for upgrading to higher-paid and skilled jobs.<sup>24</sup> At times, their challenge to the occupational status quo forced a face-off between the rank-and-file and union officials, which led to walk-outs, mass demonstrations, work stoppages, and wildcat strikes, as black workers relied on direct action to first secure, and then maintain, new positions in industry.<sup>25</sup>

In July of 1941, black workers at Dodge Truck in Detroit walked out of work when neither their union nor management would transfer them to the assembly line; and in August, black workers at Dodge Main staged two more work stoppages demanding transfer to defense jobs at Chrysler. Both management and local union officials insisted that only management could make transfer decisions. Black workers had stopped work when their grievance was dismissed, which led to an official investigation of racial bias by the Federal Office of Production Management (OPM), to which the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) was attached. Although black workers continued working in the Dodge foundry, the

investigation persuaded the international leadership of the UAW that they ought to pressure the local union to follow the governmental edict lest the UAW-CIO lose support within the black community.<sup>26</sup>

Black workers threatened a third walkout at Dodge when white janitors were transferred to skilled work at Chrysler, despite the fact that black janitors with more seniority were barred from such jobs. Again, the OPM intervened and set up a meeting between labor and management to discuss the matter. Although management and the international union blamed the local union, neither was willing to take bold action. Nevertheless, black workers from Dodge were eventually upgraded from Dodge Main to defense work at the Chrysler tank arsenal. In these instances, the pattern of restricting black workers to unskilled and foundry work was broken because black workers were willing to challenge a prerogative—transfers and upgrading—that management had claimed was its own. Generally, only after black workers acted did the UAW international union representatives, at the behest of black staff members, according to Weaver, admit “the need for firmer control over locals which did not exhaust established grievance machinery set up for such a purpose.”<sup>27</sup>

A similar pattern unfolded at the Packard Motor Company’s main plant in Detroit. After officials of UAW Local 190 at Packard largely dismissed complaints about FEPC violations, Arthur Perry, Christopher C. Alston, and Tom January, three black unionists, appealed to R. J. Thomas, president of the UAW, to “put teeth” in an agreement that there would be no discrimination against black workers in transferring from non-defense to defense production. Perry, Alston, and January acted after 250 white workers staged a sit-down strike to protest the transfer of two black metal polishers to skilled defense production in September 1941. Management asked the two metal polishers to return to their civilian jobs until the local union could settle the matter. The local union delayed acting on the matter; even when the international union intervened, the local continued to procrastinate. Finally, Local 190 told management that the metal polishers should be transferred to skilled work. At that point, the company refused to issue the transfers because they believed such action would arouse white workers. The situation settled into what *Fortune* magazine called “a wrestling match” between the government, the union, and the company “over two American citizens’ rights to contribute their skill to the production of tanks.” After six months of negotiations by Thomas and representatives from the FEPC, black workers were placed back on the tank production lines at Packard.<sup>28</sup>

Although relations between black and white workers at Packard remained contested for the next three years, the situation revealed a pattern



that repeated itself in many plants, with black workers using wildcat strikes and work stoppages to gain an expanded foothold in the workplace and white workers responding by staging "hate strikes." Some managers quietly encouraged the white hate-strikers, and the Ku Klux Klan used what historian George Lipsitz has described as both "covert and overt mobilization inside the local union."<sup>29</sup> Moreover, August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, authors of *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*, have called C. E. Weiss, industrial relations manager at Packard, "probably the most unabashedly bigoted executive in the industry... [who] constantly [mouthed] racist clichés." Packard officials encouraged hate strikes and resistance to black upgrading while the leadership of Local 190 split over how to proceed, giving black workers a "runaround" when they made complaints.<sup>30</sup> By utilizing the wildcat strike—banned by every union leader—and operating outside of legitimate channels for negotiating labor grievances, African Americans put into practice MOWM's belief that only "mass action by Negroes" would secure meaningful economic rights of citizenship. As Randolph said, black Americans "must take the lead in fighting their own battles—they cannot expect whites to do it for them."<sup>31</sup>

During the winter and spring of 1942, African American workers expanded their protests to housing when they joined forces with a network in the black community demanding that the federal government uphold its commitment to house black Detroiters at the Sojourner Truth Housing Project.<sup>32</sup> The Reverend Horace White, a leader of the Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee, also led the MOWM local in Detroit. Although White limited membership in the MOWM to black Detroiters to ensure, as a MOWM directive put it, "against whites... dominating... in an unhealthy way,"<sup>33</sup> after the Sojourner Project was organized, he welcomed the cooperation of white groups and individuals who wished to *follow* the black agenda. The alliance included a few leaders from traditional black advancement organizations and the UAW. Shelton Tappes, Horace Sheffield, and Joseph Billups, veteran black organizers at the River Rouge plant, joined with Simmons and the Reverends White and Hill to orchestrate direct action against the government's exclusion of black citizens from the Sojourner Project, using strategies they had learned during the 1930s. In February 1942, these new-crowd leaders organized daily picketing of City Hall and the Detroit Housing Commission and sent thousands of postcards to President Roosevelt protesting the restriction of the Sojourner Project to white residents. When negotiations stalled, several members of the Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee—against the advice of NAACP lawyers—arrived in Washington and threatened to bring 10,000 additional black American protestors to the Capitol. At that point,

the federal government reversed its previous actions and opened the Sojourner Project to black residents.<sup>34</sup> The message to the larger white community was that the new-crowd black worker and citizen was not going to accept the racial status quo, even when the power reinforcing local housing patterns was that of the federal government. By April, militant pressure from the black community had forced the government to keep the housing project open to African Americans.<sup>35</sup>

When the MOWM held a national policy conference in Detroit in September 1942, it reaffirmed limiting membership to African Americans.<sup>36</sup> Randolph told the Detroit Policy Conference that collective organization among black Americans must come from within the black community to be effective. Although black Americans are highly organized, traditional black "organizations are not built to deal with and manipulate the mechanics of power. ... They don't seek to transform the socio-economic racial milieu," which was the ultimate aim of the MOWM through its "action program."<sup>37</sup> The all-black directive was about power—how to get it and how to keep it. When Randolph issued the call for a massive protest march on Washington during the spring of 1941, he told his fellow African Americans, "Be not dismayed" for "you possess power, great power. Our problem is to hitch it up for action" on a "gigantic scale." During the Detroit Policy Conference, Randolph reminded his audience, "We want the full works of citizenship with no reservations. We will accept nothing less."<sup>38</sup>

Although the NAACP had cooperated with MOWM in 1941, by the fall of 1942 the all-black directive worried more moderate leaders like Walter White and Roy Wilkins because, they argued, it flew in the face of the larger goal of complete integration. Randolph, too, supported complete integration in the long run but believed that black Americans had to formulate their own strategies and tactics for achieving that goal. At the same time, white labor leaders were increasingly uncomfortable with MOWM's politics of black self-determination, referred to as "march behavior," which entailed not only shutting out white advice and suggestions but also the control implicit in accepting direction from whites. "Inevitably," Randolph told the Detroit Policy Conference, the expectation that whites will lead intrudes in "mixed organizations that are supposed to be in the interests of the Negro."<sup>39</sup> As the black rank and file continued its push for immediate access to new jobs created by the demand for war material, new-crowd leaders working within the structure of organized labor felt pressure from union officials whose interests diverged from those of the rank and file. We can perhaps best appreciate the complicated nature of the relationship that emerged between black activists and liberal labor leaders by examining two figures from that time: Walter Hardin and R. J. Thomas.

One year before the Detroit MOWM Policy Conference, in response to wildcat strikes and direct action by black workers on the shop floor, R. J. Thomas created the Inter-Racial Committee, appointed six black UAW international staff members to the committee, and chose Walter Hardin, one of the UAW's first black organizers and the first black representative on the UAW's international staff, as chair of the committee.<sup>40</sup> But by the summer of 1943, Thomas abolished the committee and adopted a more moderate stance in terms of black rights within the union and plant.<sup>41</sup> Why did Thomas's attitude change?

Between 1941 and 1943, the Inter-Racial Committee may have deflected and contained factional disputes within the UAW, particularly between the left-leaning George Addes wing, which included Communists who placed black rights high on their agenda, and the Walter P. Reuther group, which appealed to more conservative interests within the union. Both factions supported the Inter-Racial Committee and competed for black political support. Thus, in the early 1940s, civil rights issues, as Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein note, were high on the agenda of white UAW officials. But the committee enjoyed very little independence, and Hardin was not able to execute substantive remedies, which may have added to the frustrations felt by many in the black rank and file.<sup>42</sup>

Black activists responded by taking matters into their own hands and expanding their struggle to include jobs not just for black men but also for black women. Inspired by the "Double V for Victory" campaign, victory committees were organized by black workers to organize and bring pressure on the "International and insist on ... Constitutional rights as UAW members," as Sheldon Tappes, recording secretary of Ford Local 600, recalled. Tappes claimed that just about every active black working in a UAW plant was involved in victory committees, which focused on aiding the war by producing for the war against fascism and realizing economic rights of citizenship.<sup>43</sup> While the MOWM and the "Double V" campaigns may have appeared symbolic, the spirit they unleashed frustrated local union officials who had to contend with the activism inspired by these campaigns operating through networks beyond the union's control. Murray Body, Chrysler, Plymouth, and Packard all had victory committees that ostensibly served to aid the war effort but were also designed to realize the "potential of the Negro" in the workplace and within the union, to "safeguard ... seniority rights, promotions on the union staff as well as on the job."<sup>44</sup>

The victory committees were "a pressure group upon the UAW leadership." Loosely organized, they nevertheless met regularly and "actually went into the local union meetings as a caucus, to fight for their rights."<sup>45</sup> Through the victory committees, we see black workers taking charge outside

the formal structure of the union in order to better safeguard their rights. The victory committees laid the foundation for the Metropolitan Labor Council, which was formally founded in 1943 as a means to bring together black union workers from several plants throughout Detroit so they could “concentrate the force of these groups. . . . They could then apply to the International and insist on their constitutional rights as UAW members.”<sup>46</sup>

During this same period, Hardin felt increasingly unable to fight individual grievances or resolve crisis situations from within the UAW and announced that he wanted to quit his “job with the UAW-CIO and go back into the shop unless some of the Negro’s labor problems are solved.”<sup>47</sup> As a member of the UAW’s Inter-Racial Committee, he was, as Meier and Rudwick note, “powerless to fight individual grievances or resolve crisis situations.”<sup>48</sup>

During the spring of 1943, the situation at Packard came apart at the seams. Black workers, frustrated with the glacial pace of change, took direct action on the shop floor and into the streets.<sup>49</sup> But in the process, the strategy again challenged the traditional relationship between labor union management and black workers. With Packard continuing to proceed very slowly in upgrading black workers to production line work, Walter Hardin turned to the Citizens Committee for Jobs in War Industry, a militant protest network established by the Reverend Charles Hill, to mobilize a march and mass rally at Cadillac Square in Detroit in April 1943. More than 10,000 black and white citizens protested continuing discrimination in war plants and listened to speeches by NAACP head McClendon, Reverend Hill, and Walter Reuther, UAW vice president. An important goal of the march was to “focus attention on the large number of Negro women available for war jobs.” Protesters included great numbers of women carrying signs that read, “Hire Negro Women!” “Democracy Begins at Home,” and “We Die Together, Let’s Work and Live Together.”<sup>50</sup> A “Cadillac Charter,” drafted by joint efforts of the UAW Inter-Racial Committee and the Labor Committee of the Detroit NAACP, declared allegiance to seven “Articles of Democracy,” including an article declaring “that all industry participating in the war effort treat all labor alike, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, or national origin, in hiring, upgrading and training of men and women, fully observing Executive Order 8802.”<sup>51</sup>

By publicizing the commitment of the black community to job equality and the spirit and principles inscribed in Executive Order #8802, the demonstration at Cadillac Square placed Hardin in an increasingly uneasy position both within the UAW and within traditional leadership circles in the NAACP. His attempt to connect the Inter-Racial Committee with black community activism—with white hostility to black upgrading and the

hiring of black women workers swirling in the background—appeared to operate at cross-purposes with the union's agenda, despite Reuther's ostensible endorsement of the rally. In addition, old-guard leaders in the Detroit branch of the NAACP, who felt slighted when Hardin organized the Cadillac Square protest march without their advice, disapproved of the rally. Hardin resigned in frustration from his NAACP position shortly after the demonstration.<sup>52</sup>

A month later, as union officials were attempting to reign in grassroots activities, the situation at Packard escalated. White women had walked off the job several times during the spring to protest the hiring of three black females trained to work drill presses.<sup>53</sup> In May, after the company upgraded three black men to the aircraft assembly line, several hundred white workers walked out and would not agree to return until the union local removed the black workers. The union proposed settling the matter by calling a mass meeting. The majority of black workers interpreted the union's decision as indecisiveness, which led black union steward Christopher Alston to call a walkout. Since the majority of black workers were in the foundry, this action closed the foundry for three days. At this point, management, government, and the union had to appeal directly to the black insurgents to get the foundry moving again. Black workers finally returned, but only after the three men were restored to their jobs. White workers then retaliated by walking off the job, and the black workers were removed from the aircraft assembly line again.<sup>54</sup> Before the protest was settled, over 25,000 white workers walked out, which shut down the entire plant. The War Labor Board ordered Packard workers back to work and simultaneously suspended 30 black and white ringleaders. Colonel George E. Strong, a government contract compliance officer called in by Thomas to settle the strike, told Christopher Alston, who was 31 years old with dependents, that if he did not modify his position, he would be drafted.<sup>55</sup> In the wake of the Packard strike, Colonel Strong delivered on his promise: Alston was fired and inducted into the army. The message to black community activists was clear: Fighting for democracy at home could land one in the midst of the war abroad.

Thomas intervened to encourage government agencies to take decisive action against Packard, which he then vigorously supported. As Meier and Rudwick suggest, from the perspective of the black community, Thomas successfully settled the strike, when he announced that the union would not tolerate white racism and would expel those who did not comply with the government's order. Although Thomas's prestige with black community leaders may have increased, Sheldon Tappes recalled many years later that during 1943, Thomas no longer identified with the

“left wing group.”<sup>56</sup> The Packard situation highlighted the difficulties that union officials faced when trying to address the concerns of various constituencies within the UAW.

By June of 1943, the patience of Thomas and Reuther had apparently worn thin with “march behavior” exhibited by black rank-and-file activists who, rather than follow union procedure, took matters into their own hands, using the language of protest politics. Operating beyond the boundaries of conventional union politics, such behavior demonstrated contempt for union authority. But it also made a mockery of the no-strike pledge agreement between union leadership and the government, which placed UAW leaders Thomas and Reuther in the position of curbing workers’ insurgency in exchange for a “modified union shop” contract and dues checkoff.<sup>57</sup> Thomas and Walter Reuther apparently rationalized this awkward position between the interests of workers and those of management and government by claiming that only by demanding a policy of self-restraint regarding work stoppages could the union be spared assault from the right.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, the no-strike pledge, which by the middle of 1943 was threatening to wreak havoc within the UAW, placed union officials in a tricky position. Thomas and Reuther learned to tread carefully through the thickets of this issue since large numbers of both black and white members of the rank and file agreed that the strike was a worker’s ultimate weapon. Reuther, who “played his cards with ... finesse,” according to Nelson Lichtenstein, viewed maintenance of the no-strike pledge in terms of political tactics. While he straddled the issues, he understood the importance of remaining in the good graces of Washington. The issue was complicated by the Communist Party at the local level, which advocated a no-strike policy in theory but maintained a good relationship with black radicals by scoring points on civil rights and support for a black seat on the UAW executive board—something Reuther denounced. Although the Popular Front’s support for the no-strike pledge suggested that victory over fascism must precede further advancement of black civil rights, black radicals in UAW Local 600 seemed to notice the party’s identification with civil rights issues more than its allegiance to Moscow.<sup>59</sup>

Hardin remained a staff member of the UAW-CIO for one more year, but his relationship with Thomas deteriorated during the months between the Cadillac Square demonstration in April and the wildcat strikes of late May. Thomas dissolved the Inter-Racial Committee in June 1943, and Hardin was dismissed from the international staff in 1944.<sup>60</sup> Although Thomas did not say why he dissolved the Inter-Racial Committee, Dominic Capeci argues that UAW officers feared an autonomous interracial body that was capable of “outstepping their gradualism and alienating their

constituencies."<sup>61</sup> Gradualism had inspired direct action by black workers, who were frustrated over the slow gains they had made on the production line, but aggressive action, or "march behavior," was linked to the MOWM.<sup>62</sup>

"March behavior" was apparently on the minds of Thomas and Reuther. A NAACP memo claimed that Thomas and Reuther were concerned because black workers in Detroit, who were inspired by the spirit of the "March on Washington," were in a position to "close down three or four shops." Work stoppages and wildcat strikes, they believed, would tear "down whatever work they have done to get Negroes into the shops" and hurt the UAW.<sup>63</sup> The problem with the MOWM, according to the UAW leadership, was that it "intensifies the wrong type of racial consciousness."<sup>64</sup> They did not like either the MOWM all-black policy or its militant approach to winning fair employment practices. In an effort to control the situation, the UAW leaders decided to tell Randolph "that he has got to tone it down and make it interracial."<sup>65</sup>

The Detroit Race Riot of June 20, 1943, which left 34 people dead, dampened the militant spirit of many new-crowd activists. A study of the riot by the Governor's Committee cited the demands for equality made by black radical agitators among the factors that led to the violent upheaval.<sup>66</sup> The militant "assertiveness" of black Americans engendered a backlash from portions of the white community in Detroit and throughout the nation. Many incidents centered on white fears of black economic competition. A group of black citizens was driven from a Louisiana town that had set up a welding school for black workers. Those who opposed the school did not want "the colored folk to learn to be anything but sharecroppers and servants."<sup>67</sup> As a *New Republic* article put it, throughout the South a black man in uniform symbolized someone "not knowing his place." The situation encouraged many white Americans to increase their efforts to keep black Americans in "their place."<sup>68</sup> After the Detroit Race Riot, black Americans were increasingly suspected of disloyalty for not toeing the line and controlling their resentment, leading some to declare that "the more they get the more they want."<sup>69</sup> The response to white intransigence was for "mature, tough-minded, thinking Negroes,"—the new crowd—to intensify their resolve to fight against second-class citizenship by asserting their rights as Americans. While white Americans were quick to call the new aggressiveness revolutionary, few may have noted, as a contemporary journalist did, that the battle was not "against the Constitution" but the "great mass of legal and extra-legal Jim Crow practices that have shut him off from many rights that the Constitution grants him."<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, black demands for equal rights were often portrayed as the behavior of "uppity, out of line Negroes."<sup>71</sup>

In the short run, Thomas and Reuther's attempt to control the insurgency of black workers failed. Wildcat strikes and work stoppages continued to plague production at Packard and other factories.<sup>72</sup> When black foundry workers staged a walkout in November 1943 to protest lack of transfers, Packard quickly upgraded 200 workers by the end of the month; by the end of 1943, Packard had transferred nearly 500 out of the foundry to production jobs previously held only by white workers. Militancy paid off.<sup>73</sup> Black workers helped shape the aggressive democratic spirit that emerged from the war among the rank and file and "made militancy on civil rights the sine qua non of serious political leadership in the UAW" by the end of the war, as Korstad and Lichtenstein argue.<sup>74</sup>

These shop-floor gains were sometimes transitory as several scholars have recently shown.<sup>75</sup> By early 1944, the UAW executive board decided to abandon what they called "the kid-glove tactics of yesterday," suspend local union leaders who defended wildcat strikers, and place their locals under an international administratorship.<sup>76</sup> A large turnover of black UAW organizers and staff shifted their allegiance to the Reuther camp after his successful quest for control of the UAW in 1946. Walter Hardin, who had regained a position on the UAW staff, was ousted once again, along with George Crockett, John Conyers, Sr., and Coleman Young, all new-crowd activists who had been instrumental in organizing black workers and citizens of Detroit in support of the UAW. Although Reuther endorsed civil rights—he was a member of the NAACP board of directors in the late 1940s and the UAW contributed considerable amounts of money to the organization—he structured his relationships with the black community around a politics of civility. Simultaneously, the top leadership in the NAACP increasingly fought the war for first-class citizenship in the courts.<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, the pattern established during the war on the home front to secure jobs and break down occupational barriers to better jobs rewarded new-crowd tactics that challenged arrangements of the racial status quo and the politics of civility. Changes and improvements did occur. As Robert Weaver argued, much of what happened between 1940 and 1945 represented a departure from older practices, resulting in greater industrial and occupational diversification than had occurred for black workers in the preceding 75 years. It was the first chance many had to perform basic skilled and semiskilled jobs in a wide range of industries and plants, and it gave black and white workers an opportunity to work alongside each other on the "basis of industrial equality."<sup>78</sup> When black working-class activists seized the "window of opportunity" that the war presented for assaulting Jim Crow both within the union and within the community, their efforts mobilized the larger community and politicized the home front by pushing



the issue of black self-determination to a deeper level, carrying forward strategies pioneered by the new crowd during the 1930s.<sup>79</sup>

Although recession, seniority struggles, and layoffs weakened the activism of the black working class in the aftermath of WWII, the seeds planted by black activists in the 1930s and cultivated during the war bore fruit. Despite the bureaucratization and appropriation of the Fair Practices Department after Walter Reuther successfully rose to the presidency of the UAW, the elimination of militant black activists from staff positions within the UAW, the force of Taft-Hartley, and the power of anti-Communist propaganda to silence challenges to the status quo, networks formed during the 1930s, which fostered the activism during the war, did not die. As early as 1949, plans were laid by black activists within UAW Local 600 for the creation of the National Negro Labor Council (NNLC) in the early 1950s. Many of those who came of age during WWII in Detroit carried the struggle for full democratic rights, imbued by a politics of black self-determination, to other arenas. George Crockett used his legal expertise to win election as judge in the Recorders Court in 1966 and later as congressman, representing the Detroit area. James Boggs, an autoworker at Chrysler, took note of the contradictions exposed during WWII, utilized that knowledge to arm himself, and launched his career as a black intellectual and community activist. John Conyers, Jr., became Detroit's second black congressman in 1964. Coleman Young became mayor of Detroit in 1973. Quill Pettway, a member of Local 600 and one of the first blacks to gain entrance to the elite corps of tool and die workers at Ford's Rouge River plant, maintains that although many of the organizations failed to achieve, success in the short run, the process of struggle kept networks intact. In 1956, although the NNLC was in shambles and the power of Local 600 was considerably diluted, several workers from the black caucus at the River Rouge plant collected money to fly Rosa Parks up to Detroit to talk to the local about the Montgomery Bus Boycott, unleashing cooperation and support between northern and southern civil rights struggles.<sup>80</sup>

The Detroit story during WWII suggests that activists mobilized through the MOWM and the "Double V for Victory" campaign posed a problem in the eyes of the dominant culture when they followed a different drummer by insisting on setting their own agenda to fight for their rights. The politics of self-determination was part of a larger, long-term goal to remove vestiges of inferior status embedded in a system that was still coming to terms with accepting black Americans as first-class citizens. The legacy of this period was its contribution to building networks that relied on independent, collective mass action to checkmate the dominant culture's ability to keep African Americans in an inferior place.

## Notes

1. Robert Weaver, *Negro Labor: A National Problem* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1946); Nelson Lichtenstein, "Class Politics and the State during World War Two," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 58 (Fall 2000); George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Michael Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Roger Horowitz, "Negro and White, Unite and Fight!": A Social History of Industrial Unionism in Meatpacking, 1930-1990 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American History* 75 (December 1988): 786-811.
2. Lichtenstein, "Class Politics and the State," 269.
3. A. Philip Randolph, "The Indictment," *Messenger* 8:4 (April 1926): 114.
4. For more on black workers fighting for economic rights of citizenship, see Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).
5. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 6-10.
6. For a more detailed analysis of the emergence of a new crowd within the black community, see Beth Tompkins Bates, "A New Crowd Challenges the Agenda of the Old Guard in the NAACP, 1933-1941," *American Historical Review* 102:2 (April 1997): 340-377. Strategies and approaches utilized by the new crowd did not drop out of the sky. They had roots in the history of African American communities. The new crowd and their approach to racial reform was new in relation to the direction and approach of the NAACP, which had been the standard bearer for challenging the racial status quo.
7. Snow Grigsby interview, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs of Wayne State University, Reuther Library, Detroit (hereafter cited as ALUA), 3, 4.
8. Grigsby interview, ALUA, 6.
9. For example, a report of Daisy E. Lampkin's activities as field secretary of the NAACP between October 1 and November 30, 1938, finds her addressing a NNC forum in Baltimore October 7, 1938, I-C-69; Lampkin to Walter White, December 27, 1938, I-C-69, NAACP Papers. Robin Kelley noted a similar correlation in Birmingham, Alabama, between increased militancy on the part of the local chapter and increased popularity of the NAACP. See "Hamer n' Hoe: Black Radicalism and the Communist Party in Alabama, 1929-1941" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1987), 522-523.
10. Interview with C. LeBron Simmons, president of Detroit chapter of the NNC, 2, Box 33.15, Series VI, Nat Ganley Collection, ALUA.
11. Geraldine Bledsoe, interviewed by Norman McRae, 1970, ALUA, 6.
12. For more on Angelo Herndon's case, see Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression*

- Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 150, 151. For more on the black community in Detroit, see Bates, "A New Crowd Challenges the Agenda of the Old Guard," 373-374.
13. Interview with C. Lebron Simmons, 9, 10, Folder 15, Box 33, Nat Ganley Collection, ALUA; Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 6-10; and interview by Norman McRae, with C. Lebron Simmons, 1969, 3-5, "Blacks in the Labor Movement," Oral History Transcripts, ALUA.
  14. Interview with Joseph Billups by Herbert Hill, 1967, in Detroit, used by permission of Herbert Hill, 3, 5, "Blacks in the Labor Movement," Oral History Transcripts, ALUA.
  15. Walter White to A. J. Muste, April 15, 1941, NAACP file: Ford Strike; quote is from notes by Walter White, from Ford Strike, n.d., file: Ford Strike, II-A-333, NAACP Papers.
  16. Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 324
  17. Editorial, *Black Worker*, April 1942, 4; Alaine Locke, "The Unfinished Business of Democracy," *Survey Graphic* 31:11 (November 1942), 458.
  18. "March on Washington Movement Plans Giant Meeting," *Black Worker*, March 1942, 4.
  19. For keeping out the Communists, see Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 315; John Sengstacke's column, *Chicago Defender*, January 18, 1941. For borrowing from Garvey, see Paula F. Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 58. For more on the politics of the all-black strategy adopted by MOWM, see Bates, *Pullman Porters*, 148-174.
  20. Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 112; for Randolph's resignation from the NNC and his warning to black people of the dangers of depending on whites, see Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 29-30; for black activists working with the Communists while supporting the MOWM, see Angela Denise Dillard, "From the Reverend Charles A. Hill to the Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr.: Change and Continuity in the Patterns of Civil Rights Mobilizations in Detroit" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1995), 133.
  21. My analysis on the economic situation of black workers during WWII would not be possible without the scholarship of Robert C. Weaver, whose *Negro Labor* provides the foundation for much of what follows. Robert Weaver, *Negro Labor*, 65; Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 135.
  22. Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 17-31.
  23. Weaver, *Negro Labor*, 60-65.
  24. Weaver, *Negro Labor*, 64.
  25. Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 73.
  26. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 120-124.
  27. *Ibid.*, 122, 123; Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 74; Weaver, *Negro Labor*, 68, 69.

28. For the quote from *Fortune*, see Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 127; for petition from Perry, Alston, and January, see To Inter-Racial Committee, UAW-CIO from Perry, Alston, and January, November 13, 1941, UAW War Policy Collection, ALUA. See also larger discussion on Packard, in Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 125–136, and Dominic J. Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit: The Sojourner Truth Housing Controversy of 1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984) 70–74.
29. Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 75.
30. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 165–166.
31. “March on Washington Movement: What Do We Stand For?” pamphlet, 2, 3, Box 26, A. Philip Randolph Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
32. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 183.
33. “March on Washington Movement; What Do We Stand For?,” 3.
34. Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit*, 85–87; Dillard, “From the Reverend Charles A. Hill to the Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr.,” 150–156; Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 176–180.
35. For Sojourner Truth Project controversy, see Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 176–184; for composition of the Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee, see Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit*, 83, 84; for forces arrayed against black occupancy, see Korstad and Lichtenstein, “Opportunities Found and Lost,” 797; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 72–75.
36. “MOWM: What Do We Stand For!,” Box 26, A. Philip Randolph Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
37. A. Philip Randolph, “Address to the Policy Conference,” 8, Detroit, II-A-417, NAACP Papers.
38. “Keynote Address to the Policy Conference of the March on Washington Movement,” A. Philip Randolph, 5 (September 26, 27, 1942), Detroit, II-A-417, NAACP Papers.
39. Randolph, “Keynote Address to Policy Conference of MOWM,” 6.
40. Minutes, UAW International Executive Board (IEB) meeting, September 16, 1941, UAW IEB Meetings Collection, Box 2; “UAW-CIO Board Demands Negro Discrimination End,” clipping from newspaper, October 1, 1941, UAW International Activities Vertical File Collection, Box 72; Herbert Hill interview of Sheldon Tappes, 51, “Blacks in the Labor Movement,” ALUA; Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 40, 41, 121–123; Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit*, 68.
41. Sheldon Tappes noted that during 1943, Thomas was no longer part of the “left wing group.” Herbert Hill interview with Sheldon Tappes, “Blacks in the Labor Movement,” no. 1, part 2, 58, ALUA.
42. Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit*, 68–69; Korstad and Lichtenstein, “Opportunities Found and Lost,” 799.
43. Hill interview with Joseph Billups, 11, 12.
44. *Ibid.*, 11.
45. Hill interview with Sheldon Tappes and Joseph Billups, 11.

46. Ibid.
47. For quote, see Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 164.
48. Quote is cited in Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 164 (from *Michigan Chronicle*, March 27, 1943).
49. Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 89, 90; quote found in Lipsitz, p. 90, from *Michigan Chronicle*, April 17, 1943.
50. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 113–115, 163, 164; C. L. R. James, *Fighting Racism*, 235; "Forward With Action" (Annual Report, 1943, of Detroit Branch of NAACP), especially 20, 21, 37, Branch Files: Detroit, II-C-87, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress.
51. "The Cadillac Charter," Branch File: Detroit, II-C-86, NAACP Papers.
52. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 164, 212, 213. By the summer of 1943, R. J. Thomas pleaded, as Nelson Lichtenstein points out, "for an end to wild-cat strikes" as pressure mounted to control factions within the union and black workers insurgency even as Thomas and Reuther struggled to maintain its compact with the government to uphold the no-strike pledge. See Nelson Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther: the Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 211, 212.
53. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 166.
54. For the Packard uprising of late spring 1943, see the excellent analysis in Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 165–174.
55. For Strong's threat to induct Alston into the army, see interview by author with Marti Alston, December 11, 1999, Detroit, Michigan. Strong's threat to Alston was a dramatic contrast from his previous role as an interventionist who helped expand black economic opportunity (see Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 158). The link between the war production and workers insurgency was underscored by the presence of military officers in uniform in all war production plants. Scholar Martin Glaberman notes that military officers regularly intervened in strikes and potential strikes. See Martin Glaberman, *Wartime Strikes: The Struggle Against the No-Strike Pledge in the UAW During World War II* (Detroit: Bewick/ed, 1980), 49.
56. For more on the relationship between R. J. Thomas, Colonel Strong, and the Packard strike, see Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 165–172. For Sheldon Tappes on R. J. Thomas, see Hill interview with Sheldon Tappes, no. 1, part 2, 58, ALUA.
57. Nelson Lichtenstein, "Defending the No-Strike Pledge: CIO Politics During World War II," in *Workers' Struggles, Past and Present: A "Radical America" Reader*, James Green, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 272.
58. Ibid., 276.
59. Lichtenstein, *Walter Reuther*, 211–214; Korstad and Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost," 797.
60. For the "increasingly strained" relationship between Hardin and Thomas and the dissolution of the Inter-Racial Committee see, Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 117, 118, 212, 213.

61. Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit*, 68–69.
62. See Leslie Perry to Walter White, May 4, 1943, "MOWC General," II-A-416, NAACP Papers.
63. Lichtenstein, "Defending the No-Strike Pledge," 272.
64. Perry to White, May 4, 1943, "MOWC General."
65. *Ibid.*
66. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War*, 70; Harvard Sitkoff, "The Detroit Race Riot of 1943," *Michigan History* 53:3 (1969): 199–204; Charles S. Johnson, "News Summary of National Events and Trends In Race Relations," August 1943, prepared for Julius Rosenwald Fund, 4, 17–21; File: Rosenwald Fund, II-A-513, NAACP Papers.
67. These two incidents are related in Harvard Sitkoff, "Racial Militancy and Interracial Violence in the Second World War," *Journal of American History* 58:3 (December 1971): 672.
68. "Negroes in the Armed Forces," *New Republic* 109 (October 18, 1943): 542–543.
69. Harvard Sitkoff, "Racial Militancy," 669, 670.
70. Sancton, "Something's Happened to the Negro," *New Republic* 108:6 (February 8, 1943), first quote, 178; second quote, 176.
71. Sitkoff, "Racial Militancy," 673.
72. Finally, there were many exceptions to the Packard pattern. When Briggs Manufacturing Company, Kelsey-Hayes Wheel Company, and Consolidated Brass Company initiated programs of upgrading black workers to higher-paying defense jobs, no trouble erupted. Weaver attributes the difference to the firm stand that both management and labor took in expediting the transfers. Another incident, at the Chrysler Corporation, reinforces this reasoning. Chrysler ordered all loaders and boxers at Dodge transferred to defense work at the Chrysler Highland Park plant, and management declared that the transfers would take place despite rumors of a white workers' hate strike. Management was backed by both the local and international union. When a stoppage did occur, union representatives told "management to fire all workers who refused to return to their jobs." One day after the transfer, management said all was well (see Weaver, *Negro Labor*, 71). The situation of upgrading was nevertheless volatile and filled with uncertainty. Even at plants where hate strikes had been resolved in favor of black workers, hiring black workers could set off new eruptions from white workers. At the Briggs's Mack Avenue plant in Detroit, a hate strike followed the placement of black women on an assembly line despite its history of amicable relations between black and white workers. But Emil Mazey, the white president of Local 212, promptly terminated the walkout by whites when he directed the UAW plant chairman to let the strikers know that if they stayed out, the union would back the company in firing them. Within ten minutes, "everyone returned to work." In this instance, Mazey was able to draw upon his record as someone who meant what he said. In 1938 he was the first white union officer to hire a black secretary for a local union office. When the white secretaries objected, Mazey told them they would be fired if they did not treat

the black women as equals. They complied. (This analysis draws from the work of Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 42, 162, 163.)

73. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 173; Glaberman, *Wartime Strikes*, 51–60.
74. Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 92, 99; For transfer of black workers out of the Packard foundry, see Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 173; quote from Korstad and Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost," 799.
75. William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), chapters 5 and 6; Korstad and Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost," 786–811; Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights*; Michael Honey, "Industrial Unionism and Racial Justice in Memphis," in *Organized Labor in the Twentieth Century South*, Robert Zieger, ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).
76. Quote is from Lichtenstein, "Defending the No-Strike Pledge," 276.
77. Meier and Rudwick, *Black Detroit*, 212, 213; Korstad and Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost," 800, 806, 807.
78. Weaver, *Negro Labor*, 78, 79.
79. This argument is cited in Karen Tucker Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired: Black Women Workers during World War II," *Journal of American History* 69:1 (June 1983): 95. See also discussion of this topic by Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 338.
80. Interview with Quill Pettway, February 3, 2001, conducted by author, L. Todd Duncan, and Kathryn Lindberg, February 3, 2001, Department of Africana Studies, Wayne State University.