

Department of Political Science/The University of Michigan



5601 Haven Hall  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

January 11, 1972

James and Grace Boggs  
3061 Field Street  
Detroit, Michigan 48214

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Boggs:

Enclosed is the information I spoke to Mrs. Boggs about concerning the course. We are going to try to get together an honorarium at \$150 a session. We should like you for two sessions beginning in the period from mid-February and ending in mid-March. The dates we have in mind are the 21st and 28th of February and the 7th and 14th of March. I will be getting in touch with you towards the latter part of this week and I hope you will have available time to join us in this course.

Sincerely yours,

*Cedric Robinson*  
Cedric Robinson  
Lecturer

CR:jd

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THE COLLECTIONS OF  
ARCHIVES OF LABOR & URBAN AFFAIRS  
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In the past fifty years of the American past radical political thought and activity has come to be associated almost exclusively with socialism: the "ideology of the working classes". And in contemporary American mythology: ideology: "thought", socialism has come to mean "Marxism" and/or "Communism", i.e. Karl Marx-V.I. Lenin, Stalin, Soviet Russia, "Red China", totalitarianism, spies, conspirators, etc. The slippage into these facile associations has been true for academics as well as non-academics.

Thus the identification of "radicalism" (a term which can be taken as meaning either that which is fundamental and/or basic, or that which "is taken to its farthest limit") with Marxism and Communism has allowed for the development of a sometimes hysterical counter-ideology as a political movement: anti-Communism. A political movement, by the way, which avoids the fundamental issues raised by Marxist analyses concerning bourgeois or Capitalist society. This political movement (through which Richard Nixon and Robert Kennedy first came into national prominence in the late '40's and '50's) has largely replaced Protestantism and Liberal Democracy as one of the resident ideologies of American Capitalism, complimenting Capitalism, racism and sexism. For no other reason except these relationships, it could be anticipated that some workers, Blacks (and other oppressed ethnics: Chicanos, Puerto-riquenos, eastern and southern Europeans, etc.) and women would be attracted to "Communism" as an alternative (see Gabriel Almond's The Appeals of Communism).

But there were "other" reasons, reasons which this course is designed to investigate. The purpose of this course is to reconstruct the historic relations between the Black Liberation movement (of the 20th century) and the various "Marxist" oriented organizations, historic relations which have been of continuing concern among students of radical politics. What has Marxism meant to the struggle for Black Liberation? Indeed, can there or should there be a Black Marxist? These are some of the questions that will be critically assessed in this course. It is hoped that such an assessment will lead to a fuller understanding of the necessity for a correct political strategy if Black people are to be liberated.

Readings:

- Robert Allen, Black Awakening in Cuba  
 James Boggs, Racism and the Class Struggle  
 Harold Cruse, The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual  
 Rebellion or Revolution  
 George Padmore, Pan-Africanism or Communism

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The course will consist of two meetings a week: one 2-hour seminar, and one 2-hour section-discussion meeting. A term paper and the discussion sections will be the primary evaluating vehicles (an examination is optional to the student).

**Seminarists:**

Harold Cruse, Director, Center for AfroAmerican & African Studies  
 Ernest Mkalimoto, Instructor, CAAS  
 Nellie Varner, Director, Affirmative Action Program; Asst. Prof. of Political Science  
 C.L.R. James, Caribbean Marxist scholar and revolutionary

**General Organization of seminars:**

- I. Historical development of Black Marxist Thought and Organization in America; implications and currents of the contemporary movement; 3 seminars: Harold Cruse
- II. The Caribbean, PanAfricanism and Marxism: 1 seminar (weekend): C.L.R. James
- III. International Black Marxist Elites; 1 seminar: Nellie Varner
- IV. Black Labor, Black Nationalism and Marxism; 5 seminars: Ernest Mkalimoto
- V. Summary and Assessment; 1 seminar: Curtis Stokes (Black graduate student, Political Science)

**Supplementary Readings:**

Wilson Record, The Negro and the Communist Party, Race and Radicalism  
 William Nolan, American Communism and the Negro  
 Theodore Draper, American Communism and Soviet Russia, the Formative Period  
The Roots of American Communism