Propaganda or persuasion: The Communist Party and its campaign to integrate baseball

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PROPAGANDA OR PERSUASION: THE COMMUNIST PARTY
AND ITS CAMPAIGN TO INTEGRATE BASEBALL

by

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ABSTRACT

Propaganda or Persuasion:
The Communist Party
And Their Campaign
To Integrate
Baseball

By

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This thesis discusses whether propaganda, persuasion or a mix of both was used in the American Communist Party's (CPUSA) campaign to integrate professional baseball. Representative articles published in the Daily and Sunday Worker sports sections from 1936 through 1947 were chosen for examination and analysis. Specifically, the use of "god," "devil," and "charismatic" terms are identified and discussed how the terms were used to educate, motivate, and activate members to participate. The use of "charismatic" terms is also examined in relationship to "Aesopian" language. The author concludes that a mix of propaganda and persuasion was used because intent of the campaign to secure new African American members was hidden from the audience. At the same time, the CPUSA also actively supported integration and consistently argued in support of this belief. In regard to "Aesopian" language, with the exception of name changes and one article from an Editorial Board member, little evidence suggests this form of propaganda was used during this particular campaign.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the August 13 edition of the Sunday Worker in 1936, an advertisement appeared alerting readers: "Outlawed by Baseball! The Crime of the Big Leagues!" The message revealed that a conspiracy "hushed" by other newspapers was about to be revealed—that despite the achievements in the Olympics and on the baseball field, Negroes have been banned from the Major Leagues: "Beginning next Sunday, the SUNDAY WORKER\(^1\) will rip the veil from the "Crime of the Big Leagues"—mentioning names, giving, facts, sparing none of the most sacred figures in baseball officialdom" (p. 2). With this advertisement, the American Communist Party (hereafter known as CPUSA) announced the beginning of its formal and intense campaign to integrate professional baseball had begun.\(^2\) On August 16, the first articles were published and on September 21, the CPUSA introduced a sports section into the Daily Worker\(^3\) which, in addition to the Sunday Worker, gave the writers a daily outlet to conduct the campaign. The theme of fighting segregation and supporting equal rights for African Americans was not a new one for the CPUSA, as writers had reported countless acts of discrimination in the United States from the beginning of the Daily Worker’s first publication in 1924. (Morris U. Schappes, 1944)

The campaign to integrate professional baseball continued through 1947 when Jackie Robinson succeeded in breaking the color barrier. Other African-American players joined
him that same year. But during the years preceding and including 1947, the CPUSA was relentless in its quest to integrate America’s pastime. The question that comes to mind is, why? Why was the CPUSA so interested in this battle? According to Lester Rodney, the Sports Editor for the *Daily Worker* from 1936 until 1957, the issue was important to him because,

I believed in real democracy, not just the prattling of the word. Here was an apartheid ban in our “national pastime,” accepted in the culture of the times. Baseball was also a game I had played and followed avidly since about the age of eight. I should add, that ending discrimination was always a central task for the party. With all its rigidities and stupidities, it played a leading role in this fight. (Letter to Shoemaker from Rodney, July, 1998)

Research shows that from as early as the 1920’s, the CPUSA was interested in and made great effort to entice African Americans into the party as equal members to their white counterparts. Equality was a dominant component of communism and one of which the CPUSA was very supportive, argued for at every opportunity, and enforced within the established party membership. (Hutchinson, 1995) Such support also provided a possible way to increase party membership by sharing a common goal with African Americans.

Increasing party membership was a struggle for the CPUSA, especially during the period from 1928 to 1935. Party members appeared anti-American and preached the party line, isolating themselves from the people they wished to persuade to embrace communist ideology. In addition, fascism, a conflicting ideology, was spreading throughout Europe and was a potential threat to communism. In 1935, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International met and decided to combat the threat of fascism.
through a strategy they referred to as the "Popular Front." While revolutionary goals were not abandoned, the Popular Front advocated that CPUSA members redefine communism and project its image as being more pro-American. (Burghardt, 1980)

One of the ways to implement a pro-American appearance included changes to the *Daily Worker*. The publishers introduced film reviews, child rearing tips, and a sports section. (Levenstein, 1974) The addition of the daily sports section allowed *Daily Worker* reporters to have full press privileges including access to players for interviews (Letter from Rodney, July, 1998). Without this access, the campaign would not have had the power to influence readership.

The mainstream nature of a sports section attracted new readership and potential members. The detailed accounts of segregation in professional baseball published in the sports section allowed the CPUSA to make its main argument: American democracy and capitalism were flawed. This channel was a way for the CPUSA's message to blend into the mainstream American framework and offered a way to make its rhetorical argument for the cause of communism through a topic that the average person could relate to and understand. In fact, Rodney comments in an oral history compiled by UCLA in 1981 that during branch meetings it was acknowledged by party leaders that the sports section was a "good weapon to approach the masses in a concrete way" (p. 76).

This statement may lead one to think the CPUSA's campaign to integrate baseball was merely another way leaders manipulated rhetoric—using propaganda to achieve goals of legitimacy and furthering its cause. When one thinks of communist rhetoric, the word "propaganda" is not far behind in most people's minds. This association is originally due to the effects of the hearings by the House Un-American Activities Committee and J.
Edgar Hoover's determination to define the Communist movement as nothing but evil (Hoover, 1958). In this case, however, the CPUSA was right in that the segregation of professional baseball truly contradicted what American democracy was supposed to represent. Rodney was dedicated to this cause on a personal level because he firmly believed the situation to be unjust. While propaganda is often associated with movement rhetoric, one could argue that this campaign was a merely persuasive one, one which addressed a problem with American democracy, its true meaning, and that African Americans were not being treated in a democratic manner.

In this thesis, *Daily Worker* articles from the sports section during from 1936 through 1947 are analyzed to determine whether the baseball integration campaign was a persuasive one to change an injustice or a propaganda campaign where the goal was to entice new membership and further the CPUSA’s cause. The author utilizes propaganda analysis to help determine whether the rhetoric was the employment of persuasion, propaganda, or perhaps a hybrid of the two. In order to accomplish this goal, the terms "propaganda" and "persuasion" are defined, where "propaganda" includes the aspect of concealment, while persuasion does not. (Lumley, 1933; Taylor, 1976) Also, who stands to benefit becomes an issue - - the source or the receiver becomes a determinant because in persuasion both benefit, while in propaganda, the source is the supposed benefactor. (Jowett and McDonald, 1992)

In addition, the sports sections within the time period listed above are examined and analyzed in regard to recurring patterns of topic choice and/or mix of articles selected for publication. Within the articles, the use of "god," "devil," and "charismatic" terms as defined by Richard M. Weaver (1953) are identified and discussed in regard to their role in
the campaign to incite people to action. These terms are important because related to these terms and the idea of concealment is the use of Aesopian language. J. Edgar Hoover (1958) asserts that Aesopian language is either words or phrases used by the Communists as part of a conspiracy of propaganda that conceals their true motives of revolution. For example, he suggests that "democracy" is one of the words the CPUSA used in a way that concealed its true intentions. This, Hoover suggests, is because the Communists' meaning of the word "democracy" wasn't the meaning of "democracy" most Americans identified with but the Communists implied it was. (Hoover, 1958) This study examines the accuracy of this assertion in regard to the campaign articles.

Why is this study of value? First, as the literature review reveals, the American Communist movement itself has been primarily documented from a historical basis where either accounts of the movement have been recorded and/or the rhetoric is described. Rhetorical analyses have been published, but almost all of the emphasis has been placed on political documents. There is only one article to date (Naison, 1979) that addresses the rhetorical aspects of the CPUSA's interest in sports and the integration campaign, but the focus is more of a descriptive nature, emphasizing the importance of developing a sports culture within the CPUSA.

Second, communism and the Communist movement have evoked controversy in the world since their introduction in the late nineteenth century. People's and governments' fascination and fear of communist ideology have been dominant themes of the twentieth century. Perhaps with the Cold War over, and with decades passed to separate readers from earlier accusations of subversion, a new view can be introduced regarding the intention of the CPUSA's rhetoric.
A third reason the study is important is that an equally pervasive and controversial subject in America has been race relations. While the literature review shows a relationship between African Americans and the CPUSA, to date there has been no rhetorical analysis in this area of the movement. It is important to look at the campaign rhetoric and why it was written in order to understand more clearly the focus of the CPUSA’s relationship with the African American community and the impact it might have had in educating the average reader, Communist and non-Communist, about the negative aspects of prejudice and segregation.

Finally, in order to understand American society, scholars should examine not just the obvious political moments, but look inward to the cultural aspects of the past and hopefully learn from the day-to-day experiences. As researchers and scholars, it is important to revisit these ideas and times and determine what can be learned from a new perspective to help improve society.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature regarding the CPUSA divides into three parts: rhetorical works, historical works, and works about Jackie Robinson. While the importance of the rhetorical works is obvious, one needs to understand the historical works as many include a discussion of related rhetoric and the historical background is crucial to understanding the movement as a whole. Also, because of Robinson's key role in the latter years of the campaign, literature regarding his role is important to this work.

Also included in this section is a brief history of the Daily Worker, a discussion of the relationship between the CPUSA and African Americans, and a brief biographical sketch of the Daily Worker Sports Editor, Lester Rodney. As "channel," "receiver," and "source" of the message, it is important to understand how each came to play their respective roles within the campaign.

Rhetorical Works

Previous analyses focus on Communist political documents. For example, Richard Ilkka's (1974) *The Rhetorical Vision of the American Communist Movement: Origin and Debut, 1918-1920* analyzes political documents during the formation of the movement using Ernest Bormann's methodology of fantasy theme analysis. He concludes that while...
there were times that fantasy elements appeared, it was never consistent or complete
because of the repetitive and trite nature of the rhetoric. These characteristics gave the
message a hollow and predictable ring and information of new events became a way for
underscoring doctrine. He suggests that the impersonal nature of the rhetoric was unable
to capture participating individuals' interest in generating fantasy chains or create
excitement for the movement to progress.

Investigating a later period of the movement, Carl R. Burghardt (1980) performs a
comparative analysis of the pamphlet rhetoric of the Third Period (1928-1934) and the
Popular Front (1935-1939). He asserts that Third Period rhetoric alienated the general
public because of the distortion and exaggeration of current day problems and because
writers wasted time attacking potential allies such as the Socialist Party. Further, the
Marxist language used did not individualize the message and the writers themselves lived
an isolated existence away from American society.

Burghardt (1980) reports that the fear of the growth of fascism brought policy
changes at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International and the
establishment of the Popular Front. The CPUSA was instructed to interact with and
resemble American society and to redefine communism and its image as pro-American.
This redefinition included rhetorical changes, where words like “toilers” and “proletarians”
changed to “citizens” and “Americans.” “Fascism” was the new “devil word” (pp. 386-
387). Despite the increases in party membership due to its new image, the CPUSA was
damaged when the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany in 1939.

Dale G. Leathers (1973) analyzes the rhetoric of the late 1940’s and early 1950’s in
America Confronts the Internal Communist Menace. His analysis focuses on how
Communism became the dominant rhetorical theme of this period, what rhetoric fueled the confrontation between the CPUSA and the United States government, and the legacy of that period. He suggests that the movement of the Soviet Union from ally to enemy, the adoption of communism over capitalism by China, and the development and fear of the atomic bomb led to the confrontational rhetoric that ensued in the form of McCarthyism. Specifically, he asserts that the rhetorical strategies of this time included guilt by association, the dilemma of taking the Fifth Amendment and then appearing guilty, and use of ex-communist informants to substantiate claims. Leathers contends these strategies left behind a "public climate of almost unprecedented exploitation, repression, and fear" (p. 366) and that the persuasive appeals of the period seemed detached from verifiable proof. Finally, he concludes that other social movement groups have taken and refined these strategies to further their appearance as a supported movement.

Using a quantitative approach, Gabriel A. Almond (1954) researches why people join and then leave the Communist Party in *The Appeals of Communism*. The rhetorical sources he uses for this study include the (internal) rhetoric of Stalin's *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, the periodical *For a Lasting Peace, For a Lasting Democracy*, and the (external) *Daily Worker* 1948 editorials as well as interviews of former Communist Party members. His conclusions suggest that *Daily Worker* rhetoric emphasizes antagonism toward the American government and its agencies. Individuals entering the party are expected to accept an evil picture of the existing American order and that while *Daily Worker* rhetoric was specific when reporting grievances about the government, it was not so when reporting solutions. One way he demonstrates his findings is in his analysis of leadership rhetoric used. Almond's findings suggest that the internal
rhetoric describing leadership used specific terms such as “guides,” “directs,” and “leads the way,” while the *Daily Worker* external rhetoric used vague terms such as “inspiring” and “supportive” (pp. 82-83). Despite the more directional internal rhetoric, he concludes that individuals with general political grievances were attracted by the rhetoric, but when viable solutions were not offered and needs were not met, they chose to leave.

In contrast to the political documents analyzed, Mark Naison (1979) addresses a broader cultural perspective in *Lefties and Righties—the Communist Party and Sports during the Great Depression*. While focusing primarily on the history of the importance of sports and sports issues within the CPUSA, Naison does comment on the rhetoric of the *Daily Worker*. For example, he asserts that “Messages within the sports section rarely extended beyond the visceral appeals to labor solidarity or hatred of fascism” and that “they declined to discuss objectives that would strike the ‘average American worker’ as abstract or utopian” (p. 54).

**Historical Works**

There are several works on the actual history of the CPUSA that either scan the entire period or chose to highlight specific eras. In *The Roots of American Communism*, Theodore Draper (1957) traces the growth of Communism in the United States from socialist ideology transplanted here by immigrant populations. He discusses the interaction between the Soviet Union and the United States in the beginning and early years of Party formation and growth. He concludes that during this period in order to show their loyalty and allegiance to Moscow, leadership often surrendered their gains by choosing policies and procedures that alienated members.
In *The American Communist Party - A Critical History*, Irving Howe and Lewis Coser (1957) present a political history based on secondary resources focusing on how communism became significant in American life. They devote a majority of their work to the 1930's and conclude that the original ideology was distorted by the influence of Stalin and his terrorist ideology. This distortion, they conclude, makes the future of the Party uncertain.

William Z. Foster, former CPUSA party Chairman, presidential candidate, and political rival to Earl Browder (general secretary to the CPUSA from 1934-1946) offers a different focus in *History of the Communist Party of the United States* (1952). His work discusses the history of the working class in America starting as far back as 1793. Throughout his text, he interjects discussion of the struggle of African Americans, pointing out how capitalism has victimized the group. Highly influenced by Marx and Lenin, he concludes that capitalism will be replaced by socialism.

In *The Communist Party of the United States: From the Depression Years Until World War II*, Fraser M. Ottanelli (1991) integrates the evolution of the Party's policies at the leadership level with the social aspects of the CPUSA. He suggests that while Moscow played a major policy role, the lessons learned from involvement in the social concerns of this era also were a major force in policy decisions. He concludes that when Earl Browder was ousted from CPUSA leadership, the return to a more orthodox and revolutionary ideology along with the Cold War alienation weakened and isolated the CPUSA.

Philip J. Jaffe, member of the CPUSA and friend to General Secretary Earl Browder, also discusses the importance of Browder to the CPUSA. He asserts in the *Rise and Fall of American Communism* (1975) that the growth and demise of the party parallels that of
its leader. He suggests that American Communism failed because it was forced to adapt to the Soviet ideological and political model and therefore, never able to evolve into a model that really suited American members and society.

Former *Daily Worker* foreign editor Joseph R. Starobin (1972) also investigates the ousting of Browder and the problems that ensued in later years of the CPUSA in *American Communism In Crisis, 1943-57*. Starobin’s discussion of what transpired when Browder sought to move the CPUSA into a different place within the American political structure was particularly detailed. When Browder dissolved the CPUSA and renamed it the Communist Political Association, he did so under the assumption that Moscow approved of the change, including Browder’s comments that capitalism and communism could co-exist. Because of this belief, the CPUSA leadership was surprised when the famous letter criticizing the move was written by French Communist Jacques Duclos. Starobin suggests that Moscow leadership prompted the letter and political rival Foster supported the message. Ultimately, the episode was the undoing of Browder and he was forced from the CPUSA within the year. Starobin concludes that internal philosophical differences among key leaders, Moscow’s dominance in CPUSA’s policies, and the leaders’ inability to choose the correct Party structural and political path toward success were crucial to the destruction of the movement.

Finally, in *The American Communist Movement*, Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes (1992) detail the membership, leadership, organizational structure, and social strategy of the Communist movement from 1919 until 1990. They assert that throughout the movement’s history, the CPUSA’s rate of success mirrored whatever relationship the United States and the Soviet Union had at any given time. They also suggest that the
Communist movement’s influence was much larger within American life that it should have been given its actual size of membership and political clout. This imbalance was especially true in the Cold War era when constitutional concerns were raised because of the questionable treatment of Communist members by HUAC. They conclude that the idealism and loyalty of its members to the beliefs of the Communist movement were what made them such fierce political activists and a challenge to American democracy.

**Jackie Robinson and Integration**

There have been several texts about Jackie Robinson and various aspects of his role in the integration of baseball. In 1948, he related his 1947 experiences in *Jackie Robinson-My Own Story*, as told to Wendell Smith, sports editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier-Journal*, one of the established African American newspapers. A more comprehensive biography, which details all aspects of Robinson’s life and his role in breaking the color barrier, is *Jackie Robinson - a Biography*, written by Arnold Rampersand (1997). Rampersand had access to personal correspondence between Robinson and his wife, Rachel, which substantially widens the personal perspective of the reader into the daily experiences and ordeals Robinson faced. Finally, *Jackie Robinson – Race, Sports and the American Dream*, edited by Joseph Dorinson and Joram Warmund (1998), is an anthology that discusses the elements involved in baseball integration surrounding Robinson, and his place in sports history. The papers selected were originally submitted for a conference held at Long Island University in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of Robinson’s promotion to the Major Leagues.
Along with these texts, there are several articles that discuss some aspect of
Robinson's first year in the Major Leagues, how newspapers covered the event, and how
the key people involved in the decision to integrate were influenced by newspaper
coverage and editorial pressure. For example, Pat Washburn (1981) analyzes three
metropolitan New York City newspapers and their coverage of Robinson's 1947 season.
He tabulates the number of times Robinson's name is used in game coverage, number of
times Robinson was identified as Black, and number of reported racial incidents. He
concludes that writers basically covered Robinson in a fair manner although some subtle
biases did show in the coverage of reported racial incidents.

William G. Kelly (1976) discusses how metropolitan newspapers, African American
newspapers, and magazines covered Jackie Robinson's signing with the Dodgers in his
article "Jackie Robinson and the Press." He concludes that the African American
newspapers covered the stories surrounding Robinson with more emotion and fervor. This
was especially true of the Pittsburgh Courier-Journal because its sports editor, Wendell
Smith, was one of the people instrumental in persuading Branch Rickey to sign Robinson.
Kelly also concludes that three magazines covered Robinson in a more human interest
manner, while the other magazines which were more news oriented, covered the story in a
news format with not much space devoted to the topic.

In "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the
Reintegration of Baseball," William Simons (1985) focuses on newspaper reaction and
public reaction to the signing of Robinson and demonstrates how the support of Robinson
reflected Gunnar Myrdal's findings in his study funded by the Carnegie Corporation, An
American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy. Myrdal's study
revealed that racism existed in all parts of the United States in varying degrees and that the racial issue is a moral dilemma within American society. Myrdal (1944) discusses the idea of an "American Creed" (p. 4) where ideally most Americans believed that people should be judged on ability and should receive certain rights including equal opportunity.

Two articles focus strictly on African American press involvement in the integration of baseball. First, in "Wendell Smith, the Pittsburgh Courier-Journal and the Campaign to Include Blacks in Organized Baseball, 1935-1945," David K. Wiggins (1983) explores the events leading up to Robinson's signing. In "The Black Press and the Assault on Professional Baseball's 'Color Line,' October 1945-April, 1947," Bill L. Weaver (1976) discusses the role of the African American press and its perception of the importance of racial advances in the context of this event. Wiggins and Weaver both admit that the Daily Worker played a significant role in the integration of baseball. For example, Wiggins notes that "The Daily Worker has also been waging a lengthy campaign against organized baseball's racial policies. The Communist Party, of course, relished the opportunity to point out the discrimination and other inadequacies that often characterized everyday life" (p. 16). Weaver (1976) adds that the Boston Chronicle gave credit to the Daily Worker for being responsible for starting the "crusade for integration" (p. 313).

**History of the Daily Worker**

Previous researchers recognize the role that the Daily Worker has played in the integration of sports. For example, Levenstein (1974) discusses the importance of the Daily Worker's sports section. "Perhaps most important, but least remembered," he writes, "is its continual campaign for integration in professional baseball" (p. 233). And
Gerald Horne (1993) contends that in 1943, thousands of signatures were presented to Branch Rickey from CPUSA members to add Negro star players to the Dodgers. He reports that several CPUSA members and Negro press reporters met with baseball owners to discuss desegregation. Earl Ofari Hutchinson (1995) also mentions the Daily Worker being used to promote the integration in baseball. He cites the 1937 published interview Lester Rodney conducted with Satchel Paige and its significance to the integration struggle. Because of this recognition, it is important to include a history of the Daily Worker to understand the role it played as the channel for the integration message.

In The American Radical Press, Harvey A. Levenstein (1974) discusses the beginnings of the Worker and the Daily Worker and describes the Daily Worker as probably “the most important single publication in the history of radical journalism” (p. 226). The history of the Daily Worker can be traced to its origins as a socialist paper. The Ohio Socialist evolved into the Toiler, the official organ of the Communist Labor Party in November 1919. The Toiler, published in Cleveland, was transferred to New York in October 1921 and became the Worker in February 1922. The decision to launch a daily newspaper was made at the Party’s National Committee held in New York in June 1923. A fund raising campaign began on September 12, 1923, directed by John J. Ballam. The decision became a reality on January 13, 1924, when the paper changed to a weekly and became the Daily Worker. (Morris U. Schappes, 1944; Draper, 1957)

The editors in the early years included J. Louis Engdahl and William F. Dunne. Engdahl had been an editor of The American Socialist and later ran the Scottsboro campaign. Previously Dunne was a labor editor for the Butte Daily Bulletin in Montana. (Schappes, 1944). But control of the paper originally was in the hands of the Comintern
which offered the original $50,000 to start the paper if the CPUSA could match it with $10,000. The control switched throughout its history to any group within the party who hoped to control the party itself. (Levenstein, 1974)

In 1933, with circulation decreasing, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) wrote a criticism of the *Daily Worker*. The ECCI pointed out that its main readership consisted primarily of workers born in the U.S. and yet it also needed to attract the immigrant workers and unite them in revolutionary work. The ECCI contended that the paper’s role in this was not only to supply the information, it also was to employ itself in political leadership and approach every piece of information it prints from this point of view. Further, “The worker must be helped to understand the material, to get the political idea of it, to draw conclusions for the organisation of the struggle, for understanding its slogans. This is the task of a newspaper which is a propagandist, agitator, and organiser” (p. 731). No longer was the *Daily Worker* to merely inform, it was to lead campaigns and unite the workers in its cause.

The *Daily Worker* made changes in 1935. First, expanded service began on October 6 with the addition of a Sunday edition. Also, non-political topics such as movie reviews and child rearing tips were introduced to readership. The use of new terminology such as “anti-fascist,” “progressive,” and “democracy” replaced “proletarian” and “dictatorship of the proletariat” (Levenstein, 1974). The latter change was due to the directives from the Seventh Congress to fight against fascism and to appear more pro-American. (Naison, 1979)

In 1936, *Daily Worker* editors hired a non-Communist, Lester Rodney as sports editor (Naison, 1993). Rodney was editor from September 1936 until June 1942 and
then again from October 1946 until 1958. The years in between were spent in the US Army working as a medical aide in the Pacific Theater during World War II. During his absence, Nat Low, originally a member of the Communist Youth League, was editor until the spring of 1946. Low developed a heart condition and Bill Mardo replaced Low as editor until Rodney returned from the war. Then Rodney and Mardo co-edited the section. (Interview with Rodney, November 1998; Letter from Rodney, February 1999).

At the time of the wording and format changes, Clarence Hathaway was managing editor. (Naison 1979) But according to Howard Rushmore (1940), a reporter working as a movie critic for the *Daily Worker* during this period, Sam Don was controlling editor as Browder found Hathaway threatening to his place on the Central Committee. Hathaway’s name remained on the masthead, but according to Rushmore, “Don ran the show” (p. 219). Hathaway was gone by 1941 and Leo Budenz eventually took over as editor until 1945 when he left the party. (Budenz, 1948) Alan Max, graduate of Columbia and Harvard, was editor in 1947. (Gates, 1958, p. 111)

While Clarence Hathaway and Alan Max were editors whose duties included the layout of the paper, Sam Don, and later Morris Childs were editors who actually had little newspaper experience. Their function was as liaison to the ninth floor, the area reserved for the party elite. (Interview with Rodney, November, 1998)

The *Daily Worker* was primarily distributed through newsstands, although it was mailed to some non-New Yorkers and some home delivery was performed by non-paid volunteers. (Letter from Rodney, July, 1998) Circulation figures are hard to determine, but generally the paper peaked at a circulation rate of about 31,000 daily in the late 1930’s
and early 1940’s. (Levenstein, 1974) Rodney suggests that the Sunday Worker circulation during these years often rose to close to 100,000. (Letter from Rodney, February, 1999)

As circulation dropped in the post-war era, editor Morris Childs (1946) presented his editorial strategy in “The Daily Worker—Problems and Prospects,” outlining the newspaper’s strengths and future goals in order to restore and enhance circulation. To clarify the ideological focus of the newspaper, he discussed the distinguishing feature of the Daily Worker:

Our clear-cut and militant fight against capitalism is what can set off our paper from all others. . . . Our Marxian understanding must be utilized to dig more deeply into the causes of class struggle in order to explain the immediate issues confronting the people. . . . We must learn how to expound Marxism, not through generalized essays about Marxism, but through a popularization of its theory and practice. (p. 829)

Childs (1946) also reminded the CPUSA members of Daily Worker reader demographics:

I should like to remind you again that the Daily Worker and Worker are not papers published for a small group of functionaries. We must aim to reach the average working man and woman. The papers must be written that they will be understood by people who are not yet acquainted with the Party’s program and work. (p. 830)

Childs (1946) also revealed that a policy change has been made regarding the use of regular news service stories; Daily Worker editors would rewrite all of the releases from the wire service before they were published. He also commented on some conflict regarding the need for the non-political sections of the Daily Worker. “The comrades
who think that our Sports Column is a waste of space, given to flippant things, are wrong. We need more sports news - more human interest stories-more satire and humor” (p. 831). Further, he suggested that an emphasis should be placed on covering news from New York to build circulation and to “increase our coverage of the activities of the Negro people” (p.835).

At the same meeting, John Williamson,12 Trade Union Director and National Board Member of the CPUSA discussed his views of how to improve the Daily Worker in a report entitled “Improve and Build our Communist Press-The Next Step in Party Building” (1946). He asserted that the importance of the Daily Worker was as “our chief propaganda weapon” (p. 817) and pointed out that one-third of all new recruits were African Americans. He agreed that it was important to carry special features such as sports, cultural, and women’s issues, but these were secondary compared to labor issues and the ideological views of the CPUSA.

In 1949, when circulation had decreased to 19,000 for the Daily Worker and 57,000 for the Sunday Worker, Joseph Roberts (1949) commented on the relationships between the issues of increasing membership and increasing circulation. The article was written in acknowledgement of the Daily Worker’s twenty-fifth anniversary. He insisted that the CPUSA and the editors must remember what Lenin first wrote about the importance of a newspaper and concluded that the Daily Worker must be strengthened as a “fighting paper” (p. 77). One of the ways to implement Lenin’s ideas was by adding special state editions and a special addition for Harlem. Once again, he repeated the same message in regard to the duty of the Daily Worker - - it must reach the masses “to educate, stimulate, and lead them to action” (p. 78).
In addition to this article, *Fighting Words - Selections from Twenty-Five Years of the Daily Worker* (1949) was published by the *Daily Worker* editors. It features reprints of memorable articles and includes Lester Rodney’s 1937 interview of Satchel Paige of baseball’s Negro Leagues.

By 1950, when CPUSA membership dropped to about 10,000, decisions were made to cut the size and number of days printed. (Levenstein, 1974). Debt was always present. The business office ran countless fund raising drives and Rodney remembers seeing “huge stacks of letters from all over, with fives, tens, and often a dollar or two” (Rodney 1998c). John Gates (1958) reports that “the last ten years of its existence the *Daily Worker* operated under an annual deficit of $200,000” (p. 111).

In 1953, the *Saturday Evening Post* featured an article about the *Daily Worker* entitled “Moscow’s Mouthpiece in New York” (Thompson) where the author described the prevailing Cold War mood toward the CPUSA:

> Its stories are written in a baffling amalgam of strident libel and Aesopian gibberish, and the legitimate news it does purvey is usually class-angled or party-angled beyond recognition. It employs sophomoric contempt or infantile hatred toward all institutions, persons and facts except the party line, the party liners, and the voice of Moscow. (p. 19)

In 1957, problems over ideological issues and lagging circulation forced some of the *Daily Worker* editorial staff including Johnny Gates, Alan Max, Abner Berry, and Lester Rodney to resign. (Interview with Rodney, November, 1998) Finally, the *Daily Worker* shut down with the last issue appearing on January 13, 1958. (Levenstein, 1974)
Lester Rodney, Sports Editor

Lester Rodney was hired in 1936 as editor of the newly created sports section. As editor, one of his duties was to wage a campaign for the integration of sports, particularly professional baseball. Rodney was active in the campaign from its inception in 1936 until June of 1942 and again in 1946 through 1957 when he returned from serving in the armed forces. Despite his absence, researchers acknowledge Rodney’s contribution to the campaign. For example, Ottanelli (1991) credits Rodney and asserts that he “successfully combined first class reporting with the denunciation of racial discrimination in professional sports” (p. 127). Naison (1993) concurs that Rodney “shaped one of the distinctive crusades of the popular front left - - a campaign to integrate major league baseball” (p. 63). Earl Ofari Hutchinson (1995) confirms that the Daily Worker was used to promote the integration in baseball. He reports that in an interview he conducted with Rodney in 1989 that Rodney said he was approached by a well-known former African American baseball player at an old-timers game and the player said to him “You guys never got any credit for us (sic) did you?” (p. 317, n. 9). Harvey A. Levenstein (1974), when assessing the campaign, mentions the importance of the posting of Negro Leagues baseball scores; the articles by Bill Mardo, a Harlem journalist covering African American achievements on sports, and the pressure Rodney put on Branch Rickey to give Jackie Robinson a chance in professional baseball. Finally, Joseph Starobin (1972), Daily Worker foreign editor and close friend of Rodney, argues that Rodney almost “single-handedly” persuaded Branch Rickey to hire African American baseball players (p. 30-31). Because of his involvement with the campaign, it is important to understand Rodney’s biographical and ideological background. In short, why did he become a member of the CPUSA and what prompted
him to write for them? Looking at his life gives clues to his level of involvement with the CPUSA and his degree of ideological commitment.

Lester Rodney was born April 17, 1911 in Brooklyn. He grew up during the depression with three siblings, Mabel, Kate, and Ira (Interview, November 13, 1998). His father, Max, a staunch Republican his entire life, lost his job as a silk salesman in the depression, and was forever affected by the loss of security. Ultimately, he was forced to take a lesser job as a peddler of auto parts in order to support his family. His father never recovered from the loss and died “castigating himself for having failed his family” (Letter from Rodney, February, 1999; Rodney, UCLA Oral History Interview, 1981, p. 7).

Always interested in sports, Rodney played tennis and ran track in high school. But his love of baseball was constant and unwavering. His best gift ever was a ticket to an opening day game at Ebbets Field, the home of the Dodgers. (Rodney, UCLA Oral History Interview, 1981).

After graduating from New Utrecht High School in 1929, Rodney took odd jobs and enrolled part-time at NYU where he took classes such as journalism, sociology, and political science. At this time he had no argument with a “system”; he “just began feeling that things were wrong, that people don’t get any breaks” (Rodney, UCLA Oral History Interview, 1981, p. 3). His views differed from communism until one day, while walking down Forty-Second Street, he heard a man speaking to a group of people about communism and capitalism. The man was soft-spoken but consistent with his thoughts about the problems with having an economy dependent on war. After the speech, the man bought Rodney a piece of cake and a cup of coffee and they talked at great length while they ate. Rodney never saw him again, but his message and their conversation stayed with
him. This is when he began to rethink his views on communism. (Rodney, UCLA Oral History Interview, 1981)

At this time, along with odd jobs, Rodney wrote a few articles for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle for minimum pay. In 1936, after seeing the Sunday Worker's sports coverage fraught with weaknesses, he wrote to the editors, suggesting improvements. The editor, Clarence Hathaway, contacted him and he began write a few articles on a volunteer, unpaid basis. When the Daily Worker editors decided to add a sports column, they had Rodney complete a questionnaire to determine his political beliefs and decided to hire him. In 1936, at 25 years of age, he not only became the editor of the sports section, but later that year formally joined the CPUSA. (Rodney, UCLA Oral History Interview, 1981; Naison, 1993; Interview with Rodney, November 1998)

Even from the first, Rodney insists he had no interference in regard to what he chose to run or write for the section throughout his term as editor. With no paid help until Nat Low joined him in 1942, he wrote most of the articles himself along with volunteer writers. In the early summer months of 1942, Rodney was drafted and served overseas in the Pacific as a medical technician. When drafted and first stationed at Fort Briggs, he was detained and watched because of his affiliation with the CPUSA. Finally, after his superiors were convinced of his fitness to serve, he was allowed to train as medical technician/nurse and made the cut to go overseas to the Pacific Theatre. (Interview with Rodney, November 1998)

His affiliation with the Daily Worker and the CPUSA never was an issue again until he was stationed in the Solomon Islands. A new commissioned officer (CO) called him in after reading his record and asked if he was a Communist. Rodney replied that he was
before he was drafted, and that he would be one when he returned, but for now he was just a soldier. Apparently the CO was familiar with the organizational skills of the CPUSA and its members because he relieved Rodney of his previous duties and assigned him to organize war information materials sent from Washington and to educate the men. Happily, Rodney carried out his new orders and held nighttime broadcasts for educational purposes. (Interview with Rodney, November, 1998)

Rodney returned in 1946 and resumed his duties at the *Daily Worker*. The same year he met and married Clare on April 21, a Communist Youth leader. He continued as sports editor along with Bill Mardo and was involved in other party activities including a time as section Education Director. These duties included the orientation and education of new members. Rodney admits that while he supported the Party and was involved in agitation and education, he preferred to spend his time with newspaper duties. However, as a member, these other duties were required and he also felt that his wife would not stay married to him if he did not participate. (Rodney, UCLA Oral History Interview, 1981; Interview with Rodney, November, 1998, Letter from Rodney, 1999)

Rodney remained in the Party throughout the McCarthy era until 1957, when he and other members, more aligned in theory with the ideas of Browder, challenged CPUSA ideas such as removing previous censorship rules when publishing letters to the editor. William Foster and Eugene Dennis, the leaders of the CPUSA at that time and more traditional in their ideology, controlled the purse strings of the paper and would not allow the changes to occur. Unable to revise the *Daily Worker* and move the CPUSA into a new direction away from its alliance with the Soviet Union, Rodney left the CPUSA along with
long-time members Johnny Gates, Alan Max, and Abner Berry. (Interview with Rodney, November, 1998)

**The Target Audience - African Americans**

The relationship between African Americans and the CPUSA can be traced back to socialist origins in the early 1900's. The Socialists believed that the Negro problem was one of class struggle and exploitation, not of race. In *Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in Early Twentieth-century American Socialism* (1996), Sally Miller argues that the Socialist Party was supportive of some African American goals such as suffrage in the south, but had no formal doctrine.

Theodore Draper (1957) argues that CPUSA (called The Workers Party until 1922) adopted this same philosophy in regard to Negroes at the time of its formation in 1919. Foster (1952) focuses on the labor aspect in the relationship between the CPUSA and African Americans, especially during the earlier years when the party was forming. He reports that the CPUSA embraced the philosophical notion that “The racial expression of the Negro is simply the expression of his economic bondage and oppressing each intensifying the other. This complicates the Negro problem, but does not alter its proletarian character” (p. 173).

No formal doctrine about racial issues emerged until 1928 during the meeting of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern). In *American Communism and Black Americans - A Documentary History, 1919-1929*, editors Philip S. Foner and James S. Allen (1987) present documents from the Sixth World Congress that spell out Communist Party (CP) philosophy:
In the United States more than ten million Negroes represent an enormous reserve for the revolutionary proletariat of America, one that can be a mighty ally in its struggle against American capitalism. In order to transform this potential into an actual ally the C.P. should work out a corresponding revolutionary strategy and tactics in regard to the Negroes and their movement. . . . To this end it is necessary to ensure the confidence of the Negro masses in the Party. . . . Such activities should be the re-education of the white workers and the Communists themselves in the first place, in order to speed up the process of outliving racial prejudices, with at the same time a declaration of a ruthless ideological struggle against such prejudice within the party influence and also the concentration of special attention on the racial questions in the everyday struggle of the Party. (pp. 165-166)

The documents also show a plan to develop a separate nation for African Americans within the United States. The Communists at that time believed that African Americans had nationalistic tendencies due to their interest and support in the previous decade Marcus Garvey’s “Back to Africa” movement. Also, they believed self-determination should occur in the agrarian south since the majority of African Americans lived there and because it was where the most severe economic and political oppression existed:

Only the proletarian revolution is able to fully uproot the remnants of slavery and to liberate the Negro masses in the agrarian regions of the South from the bounds of the oppression. . . . To fulfill this mission it is the duty of the Negro proletariat to mobilize the broad masses of the Negro
population and to organize the struggle of the Negro land workers and tenants against the semi-feudal oppression in all its aspects. At the same time the Communist party must come forward as the vanguard fighter for the rights of the oppressed Negro race and for full independence. While raising and fighting for full social and political right for the Negro, in view of the above mentioned factors leading to a national revolutionary movement, the party must support without reserve the right of national self-determination up to separation and the erection of an independent Negro state. (p. 177)

Starobin (1972) discusses how the CPUSA interprets the position of the self-determination that results from the Sixth Congress:

The Party did not propose secession of this conjectured Republic but emphasized its right to secede if the Negro majority so desired; the exercise of this right would depend on the level of cooperation between the white minority and the black majority and the level of political advance in the United States as a whole. Negro self-determination was thus seen as being possible before the establishment of socialism. (p. 131)

This strategy drives the CPUSA and is most successful during the latter 1930's when the CPUSA reached its highest membership levels in the African American communities. For example, Ottanelli (1991) discusses the role the Scottsboro Case had in uniting the CPUSA and the African American community, and the tactics used within the African American community to increase membership. In *Communists in Harlem During the Depression*, Mark Naison (1983) determines whether the African American community
struggle for civil rights was helped or hindered because of Communist interaction. In New Studies in the Politics and Culture of U.S. Communism (1993), Gerald Horne devotes his chapter "The Red and the Black: The Communist Party and African Americans in Historical Perspective," to the aspect of race within the Communist Party. He points out that race was important to the CPUSA because it devoted more written material to the African Americans than any other segment in the country.

In 1944, CPUSA general secretary Earl Browder, challenged the separate Negro nation theory (Starobin, 1972). He suggested that abolishing discrimination and achieving equal rights was possible, but only because African Americans exercised their "right of self-determination by opting for integration" (p. 132). Browder also at this time dissolved the CPUSA and renamed it the Communist Political Association. His position implied that a coexistence between capitalism and communism could be achieved. However, in 1945 a letter written by a French communist named Jacques Duclos, criticized Browder's actions, eventually resulting in his removal as head of the CPUSA and ousting him from the CPUSA itself. (Gates, 1958; Starobin, 1972; Klehr and Haynes, 1992) Foster and Eugene Dennis took over leadership, re-established the CPUSA as well as the self-determination doctrine. Along with these crises, an emergency national convention was held at this time where the CPUSA leaders confessed to not fighting as hard as they should have for the Negro cause during the war years. (Wilson Record, 1958, 1964)

In 1947, the CPUSA published The Communist Position on the Negro Question. In the introduction, Nat Ross clarified the CPUSA's current position, refuting Browder's more liberal approach:
The resolution, which should be carefully studied, reaffirms the basic Marxist characterization of the Negro question in the United States as a national question. At the same time it drastically corrects the sectarian and schematic use during the 30's of the Marxist concept of self-determination and strikes a body blow to an revisionist and bourgeois liberal approach to the Negro question that may still persist in Communist ranks. (p.8)

A most recent interpretation of the relationship between the CPUSA and African Americans is Earl Ofari Hutchinson's *Blacks and Reds - Race and Class in Conflict, 1919-1990*. Hutchinson (1995) includes many social aspects of their relationship including the prejudice that the CPUSA members exhibited toward African Americans and their methods to eliminate this problem. Also included is an extensive discussion of the CPUSA's choice of an African American, James Ford, as a vice-presidential candidate. Hutchinson also discusses how whites in America learned about and began to appreciate African American culture because of the CPUSA. Finally, Hutchinson incorporates the use of newspapers for documentation and illustrates throughout his work the importance the medium had in influencing people. In particular, he continually cites the *Daily Worker* as a source for bringing news to African American members of the CPUSA.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In order to discuss whether the campaign’s rhetoric is propaganda or persuasion, the first step is to define propaganda. In 1933, Frederick E. Lumley (1933) suggested that propaganda is “promotion which is veiled in one way or another as to (1) its origin or sources, (2) the interests involved, (3) the methods employed, (4) the content spread, and (5) the results accruing to the victims” (p. 44). This definition reflects the perception of propaganda during the 1930’s, where propaganda was deemed as evil and people exposed to propaganda were “victims.”

Even though Richard Taylor (1979) acknowledges Lumley’s idea of concealment, he moves away from the idea of propaganda as evil when he defines propaganda as “the attempt to influence the public opinions of an audience through the transmission of ideas and values” (p.28). The use of the word influence is far less sinister and allows for the communication process to be less one-sided in regard to responsibility of involvement.

Anthony R. Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson (1991) agree that the meaning of propaganda has been tainted by twentieth century interpretations and define it as “communication of a point of view with the ultimate goal of having the recipient of the appeal come to ‘voluntarily’ accept this position as if it were his or her own” (p. 9). This definition too is fairly neutral yet still suggests manipulation.
Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (1992) include much of what is expressed in the above definitions when they assert that propaganda is "the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (p. 4). This definition not only includes manipulation, but explains that the outcome is to the direct benefit to only the source. In contrast, they define persuasion as a "communicative process to influence others" where both persuader and persuadee have their needs met. In other words, persuasion is a reciprocal process whereas propaganda is one-sided. 15

Along with defining propaganda and persuasion, Jowett and O'Donnell (1992) offer a methodology to use when analyzing propaganda. The ten stages or steps include:

. . . the ideology and purpose of the propaganda campaign; the context in which the propaganda occurs; identification of the propagandist, the structure of the propaganda organization; the target audience; media utilization techniques; special various techniques; audience reaction to various techniques; counterpropaganda, if any; and effects and evaluation.  

(p. 213)

The first five of the above are addressed in the literature review of this paper. For the purposes of the thesis, the author has chosen to concentrate on media utilization techniques, and special various techniques. Specifically, the analysis focuses on the integration campaign articles featured in the sports section of the Daily Worker from 1936 through 1947. The articles published within this time period are examined to determine any patterns in regard to topics covered. Since the Daily Worker was the primary medium used, topics chosen, the choice of topics over time, and the mix of the articles within the
sports section could be related to a persuasive or propaganda effort. If a pattern exists, the technique of mixing "straight reporting" (articles that covered the basics of a sporting event) with "political commentary" (articles that exposed flaws in American democracy) could be viewed as a way to introduce a non-communist to party ideology.

Another media utilization technique examined is the use of language. In particular, the author identifies "devil," "god," and/or "charismatic" terms and discusses their use. Richard M. Weaver (1953) defines "god" terms as "an expression about which all other expressions are ranked as subordinate and serving dominations and powers. Its force imparts to the others the lesser degree of force, and fixes the scale by which degrees of comparison are understood" (p. 212). He suggests "American," or "the American way" are two examples of "god" terms. In contrast, "devil" terms are "terms of repulsion" (p. 222). Examples of these are "un-American" and "fascist." Weaver defines "charismatic" terms as terms that have

... a power which is not derived, but which is in some mysterious way given. By this I mean to say we cannot explain their compulsiveness through referents of objectively known character and tendency. ... these terms seem to have broken loose somehow and to operate independently of referential connections. ... Their content proceeds out of a popular will that they shall mean something. In effect they are rhetorical by common consent, or by "charisma." (p. 227)

Examples of charismatic terms are "freedom" and "democracy," words that take on a meaning through popular will. When examining the articles, the critic should ask if these kinds of terms and phrases were used to persuade people to look at the issue of
segregation as a societal problem, a flaw in American democracy? Or are the authors of
the articles trying to conceal information or relay hidden messages?

The terms Weaver describes bear close resemblance to Aesopian language, a special
technique to maximize effect. In particular, the author examines whether campaign
rhetoric included the use of Aesopian language and whether it differed from the above
language described by Weaver. Another question that is explored is if Aesopian language
was different, what is the relationship among the words and phrases used in the campaign
articles and Aesopian language, a form of propaganda. J. Edgar Hoover (1958) comments
on in Masters of Deceit?

In Masters of Deceit, Hoover describes Aesopian language and discusses Lenin’s use
of the technique. Since Lenin and his followers couldn’t openly discuss revolution, Hoover
states that they resorted to “hints, theoretical discussions, even substituting words which,
though fooling the censor, were understood by the ‘initiated,’ that is, individuals trained in
party terminology” (p. 101).

One example of Aesopian language, according to Hoover, is how the CPUSA uses
the word “democracy:”

The word “democracy” is one of the communists’ favorite Aesopian
terms. They say they favor democracy, that communism will bring the
fullest democracy in the history of mankind. But, to the communists,
democracy does not mean free speech, free elections, or the right of
minorities to exist. Democracy means the domination of the communist
state, the complete supremacy of the party. The greater the communist
control, the more “democracy.” “Full democracy,” to the communist, will come only when all noncommunist opposition is liquidated. (p. 102)

Other words/phrases used in this manner, in Hoover’s opinion, are “equality,” “freedom,” “justice,” and “the Communist Party is American.” He states that the manner in which these words are used is a “typical Aesopian trick” (p. 103). He asks, “How can communism be American when it employs every form of treason and trickery to bring about the ultimate domination of the United States by a foreign power?” (p. 103).

Louis Budenz (1948), managing editor of the Daily Worker during much of the Popular Front period and, later, informant to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), defines Aesopian language as a “slave language resorted to by Aesop to permit him to comment on his masters without being successfully pinned down as disrespectful” (p. 8). Budenz asserts that Aesopian language was used in many Daily Worker political articles such as the support of Roosevelt to hide messages so only party members knew the true meaning. He also credits Lenin for the idea of Aesopian language. In his pamphlet, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin discusses this elusive and roundabout technique:

This pamphlet was written with an eye to the tsarsist censorship. Hence, I was not only forced to confine myself strictly to an exclusively theoretical, mainly economic analysis of facts, but to formulate the few necessary observations on politics with extreme caution, by hints, in that Aesopian language-in that cursed Aesopian language-to which tsarism compelled all revolutionaries to have recourse whenever they took up their pens to write a “legal” work. (p. 7)
Specifically, Lenin points out that he substituted Japan when he really was referring to Russia, and used Korea when he meant other Russian regions such as Ukraine, Poland, etc.

This is not the first time that Aesopian language enters into the political arena. In the *Fables of Power*, Annabel Patterson (1991) discusses how political history was intertwined with Aesopian writing in England as far back as the sixteenth century. Various forms of fables date back even further, as Aesop, the so-called father of fables and slave from Phyrgia, lived during the sixth century B.C. In her first chapter, Patterson discusses what the Aesopian fable succeeds in doing: it speaks about unequal power relationships; those without the power must “encode their commentary” if they wish to discuss the relationship; the author is named for legitimacy purposes; the metaphor’s role is to “mediate between human consciousness and human survival”; and, wit, or ingenuity often is present (pp. 15-16). Patterson also suggests, while these are all qualities of an Aesopian fable, they need all not be present to be successful.

Aesopian language has been used in more recent times. For example, Kevin Moss analyzes and critiques a Soviet made-for-television movie, *The Very Same Munchausen*, in regard to Aesopian language. He suggests that Aesopian language is used in a manner that allows the reader to discover the meaning of the name changes, riddles, and/or metaphors used to conceal the Soviet reality. Moss then analyzes how the Aesopian technique is applied to *The Very Same Munchausen* through shifts in settings (German instead of Russian), scenes/allusions that refer to Soviet events such as burning manuscripts, the implementation of quotations of Russian writers, parodies of leaders such as Brezhnev,
and references to characteristics of the Soviets such as the shoddiness of material goods, something that is not characteristic of the Germans.

In a different medium, Norma L. Rudinsky (1992) analyzes an autobiography of a known dissident and suggests the techniques used to write the text are similar to ones used in writing Aesopian fiction. While she does not specifically define the term Aesopian, she describes the writing technique as one "masked in dissidence to gain official tolerance or at least to avoid suppression" (p. 49). Further, she asserts that this technique was important prior to 1989 in Eastern Europe because with this method writers were able to covertly discuss collectivism and religion, topics that would not openly survive censorship.

An analysis of the use of Aesopian language is crucial because it helps to answer the question whether the campaign was propaganda or persuasion in regard to concealment. Hoover's interpretation is related to Weaver's "god," "devil," and "charismatic" terms because according to Weaver, the meanings of the words and/or phrases are held by the source of the message with the hope that the receiver will identify with them on a shared level. The concealment comes into play when the definition of the same word or phrase is intentionally different for the source and the receiver. The question is, in regard to the campaign, is this the case? Was it a deliberate attempt to conceal?
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

In the analysis, four aspects of the rhetoric are discussed. First, the relevance of the types of articles and consistency of topics are examined. Second, "god," "devil," and "charismatic" terms within the articles are identified and use of these terms is analyzed. Third, the relationship of "charismatic" terms to Aesopian language is examined. Finally, the terms are discussed in regard to persuasion and propaganda. These aspects or steps are modeled after Robert L. Ivie's (1990) method in "Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention of Cold War 'Idealists'," where he analyzes the metaphors used by Henry Wallace, J. William Fulbright, and Helen Caldicott to describe the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Article Topic and Sports Section Format

The campaign to integrate professional baseball revealed itself in a variety of types of articles. This pattern was consistent throughout the campaign, although the topics varied slightly as each hurdle was overcome. For example, the most obvious article type was one specifically expressing the injustice in baseball. Articles were also included that revealed discrimination practices in collegiate and professional sports such as boxing, football, basketball, tennis, and bowling.
In addition, mini-campaigns were used to exploit a certain aspect of the discrimination and to point the finger at a person or situation that appeared as a roadblock to eliminating segregation. At first, this tactic was used to attack the owners as a group, but became more focused when the baseball commissioner, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, becomes the identified “devil,” because of his leadership role and alleged participation in segregation practices in the Major Leagues. Specifically, many articles were directed at him and implored him to remove the law that enforced segregation practices. The messages in these articles prodded readers to write to Landis (listing an address where readers could write) and tell him of their displeasure in this law. The writers, Rodney and Low, often suggested that the letters come from the writers’ labor union. Variations of this message were repeated until Landis made a statement that there was no written law prohibiting African Americans from participating in professional baseball.

These mini-campaigns were also used to make Branch Rickey\textsuperscript{17} the “devil” until he signed Robinson. After Robinson was signed, the focus of the rhetoric turned to the remaining owners who had yet to sign an African American to their roster. These mini-campaigns clearly demonstrated the directives mentioned as early as 1933 by the ECCI in regard to informing the workers of the injustice and then educating them as to how to become involved in the campaign.

Another way readers could become active in the campaign was to sign petitions introduced by various allied groups and announced through the \textit{Daily Worker}. For example, the Communist Youth League ran several petition drives and presented signatures to baseball dignitaries in order to convince them to change the segregation
policy. This coverage was a way that the *Daily Worker* covered the story and at the same time, activated, educated, and motivated members and non-members into action.

Another consistent pattern in the *Daily Worker* was the use of Satchel Paige as the consummate player. Paige, the "god" of the Negro Leagues, represented what talent was being wasted by not signing African Americans to the professional teams. Mention of Paige began as early as 1936, but Rodney's 1937 interview where Paige expressed interest in playing in the professional leagues was considered the seminal article about Paige and what he represented to the cause. Coverage of Paige continued throughout in regard to games he played and was victorious in, and in particular, when he was successful against White players.

In 1945 Robinson became the next "god" when he became the most viable candidate for the Major Leagues, replacing Paige. The cycle mentioned above is similar with Robinson when countless articles appeared about his batting average, his physical prowess as a player, his experiences with discrimination, and how he was the ideal candidate (much like Paige originally was) to play in the Major Leagues.

Favorable opinions about player integration from renowned athletes and others were also reported by the *Daily Worker* writers to emphasize that sports peers agreed with the idea of integration and that something should be done to resolve the injustice. Opinions solicited from and reported on included baseball stars such as Joe DiMaggio and Bob Feller, boxing legend Joe Louis, other newspaper writers, and actor celebrities such as Paul Robeson.

Of course, the topic of segregation also appeared frequently in the sports editorial section. Here the topic appeared in three ways. The most obvious was when it is the main
topic of discussion, such as discrimination in sports. The topic was also introduced as a "letter to the editor" where the writer always agreed with the campaign and/or offered advice as to how to proceed. But often the topic appeared more subtly when a sentence about discrimination was tied to a seemingly unrelated topic and interjected in the middle of the editorial or at the end expressing a problem and how the elimination of segregation will solve the problem.

Finally, sporadic coverage of the results of the Negro Leagues and their outstanding players (besides Paige) was another way the topic of discrimination was introduced into the sports section. For example, articles included discussions of the merits of players such as Josh Gibson. Also, the outcome and scores of a particular series between two teams were reported and additional coverage was given when a Negro League team played a Major League team in order to comment on the interracial aspect of the event.

In regards to page placement, all of the types of articles discussed above are placed among regular coverage. It was not unusual to have a headline about discrimination and a feature story on the topic with an adjacent article reporting strictly on the outcome of a game held somewhere in New York City or elsewhere. This mixture allowed the sports section an appearance of a normal newspaper where normally racial politics were not featured during this time period, especially on a continual basis. As a matter of fact, the writers of the *Daily Worker* often pointed out that besides the Negro newspapers, the *Daily Worker* was the only paper that covered this topic and led the fight for integration.

In order to wage a campaign so completely and vociferously, many articles had to be written and due to the constraints of time and space, all of the over 1,000 articles will not be analyzed. Instead, representative articles were chosen to reflect the topics addressed

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above and illustrate the consistent usage of "devil," "god," and "charismatic" terms used throughout the campaign. "The "devil" terms chosen for discussion include "Jim Crow," "fascist" and "Hitler," "Judge Landis," and "Branch Rickey." "God" terms include "Satchel Paige" and "Jackie Robinson," and "charismatic" terms include "American" and "democracy." These terms were chosen because through their usage, Daily Worker reporters attempted to persuade the readers to take action. Also, these terms demonstrate the changes made in the rhetoric over time and any progress made within the campaign.

Jim Crow

"Jim Crow" refers to the unwritten and written laws enacted throughout the United States in the aftermath of the Civil War in order to continue the servitude of African Americans. Written laws usually took the form of poll taxes on the state level in order to restrict voting rights, but the culmination of injustices came in the Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court decision in 1897. This decision legally allowed for separate facilities including schools as long as they were "equal." This ideal was never met.

This term also applies to all of the unwritten laws that segregated African Americans in restaurants, retail outlets, public facilities such as restrooms. Most importantly, it also banned them from most well-paying employment. This was not just a Southern mentality, but existed throughout the country.

Used extensively in the political and news sections of the Daily and Sunday Worker before the baseball integration campaign even began, "Jim Crow" was a transitional term in the respect that readers already understood the meaning from its appearance in other sections. So as the campaign began, it was used throughout the sports section as a verb, a
noun, and most often an adjective to describe the evil of segregation. It is probably the most consistently used term throughout the campaign as it is found in almost every article. The following discussion illustrates but a few of the numerous examples of how this "devil" term was used in an attempt to further the campaign's goal of integration.

From the beginning, "Jim Crow" was allied with an evil that must be eliminated and sports writers attempted to draw fan participation in to eliminate the "evil." For example, of the formal campaign began on August 16, 1936, with the headline that "Fans Ask End of Jim Crow Baseball" on page one of the Sunday edition. The unnamed reporter wrote: "The fans demand that the bars be let down and that the great Negro baseball stars of America be admitted to the American and National leagues" (pp. 1, 15). In 1937, in an editorial about Satchel Paige, Ted Benson stated that "It seems to be the hope of many of our readers that the owners of the Flatbush Filberts will wise up to the fact that Jim Crowism has no place in baseball" (The Readers Ask For Satchel Paige, March 22, p. 8).

In 1938, a published letter to Rodney suggested that "Instead of these sporadic attempts to break down Jim Crowism in the Major Leagues, why not have some real concrete and collective action?" The writer went on to say that "Petitions could be circulated and progressives could literally bombard the baseball magnates with letters, all voicing their disapproval of the existing undemocratic conditions" (Letter from Jerome Snyder, The Postman Always Brings Two Knocks, May 27, p. 8). This passage identified "Jim Crow" with undemocratic practices. On June 11, 1939, a column entitled "Young Communists Open Fight on Baseball Jim Crow" initiated one of the many petition drives. Within the article, there was a passage that linked "Jim Crow" practices with being un-American: "Urging that the last remnant of Un-Americanism be removed from our
national pastime, the Young Communist League yesterday opened a campaign, which will last through the summer, to end baseball Jim-Crow” (p. 8).

On August 18, 1940, Nat Low, reporter and political cartoon artist, illustrated the fight against the evil opponent “Jim Crow” by literally drawing “him” in a ring boxing and going four rounds. The four rounds highlight the history of the campaign to eliminate Jim Crow. “Jim Crow” was drawn as a mean-looking, overweight, White man with overdeveloped arms and scowl on his face. By the fourth round, Low has the taller, leaner, opponent bending over “Jim Crow” beating him senseless. The opponent and winner of the round represents the “Committee of Sports Formed to End Jim Crow” (Now For the Knockout Punch, p. 8). This carton made an attempt to humanize the term and show “Jim Crow” as an evil oppressor that must be eliminated.

In “Keep Punching Against Baseball’s Jim Crow,” (1941, April 15) the reporter updated the campaign progress in persuading Judge Landis to end segregation in baseball. The unnamed reporter suggested in the opening that “the pressure of protest pouring in to Landis and the magnates put a dent in the Jim Crow wall” (p. 8). And in 1942, the Letters to the Editor column was titled “Now’s the Time to End Jim-Crow In Baseball.” One of the letters from a reader stated that “On the Jim Crow issue no one plugs as continuously as the Daily Worker. One dozen more like it and problem would be gone forever” (January 28, p. 8). These articles reminded the reader of the wall that “Jim Crow” practices has put up and that the work must continue to remove it. The rhetoric also suggested that it was primarily through the (Communist) Daily Worker’s efforts that some progress was being made. In effect, the CPUSA was the potential slayer of the “devil.”
The importance of the CPUSA is again tied to the destruction of "Jim Crow" in an editorial written by Nat Low on November 12, 1943. Three CPUSA members had been elected to City Council positions. Low asserts that "The election of Mike Quill, Ben Davis, and Pete Cacchione to the Council is a body blow to Jim Crow in baseball" (The low down: Election of Pete, Ben and Mike Body Blow to Baseball, p. 5). The idea of the body blow again humanized the effort against the "devil" that was corrupting baseball.

The vilification of "Jim Crow" was no more evident than in Low's editorial when he discussed an "All-America" baseball game involving young boys sponsored by Esquire. He complains that once again, African American youngsters had not been included and theorized upon this situation:

Certainly the average sandlot youngster has very little, if any, Jim Crow feeling. I have seen hundreds and even thousands of sandlot games all over the country where there was not even the slightest indication of bad feeling or discrimination. Why, then, in this first organized All-American game, should Jim Crow rule?

The answer lies not alone in the serious mistake of the Esquire people in doing it but in the Jim Crow which exists in the major leagues. Major league baseball dominates and influences to an extraordinary degree all baseball played in our country. Thus, because the majors are still ruled by an archaic and reactionary theory based solely upon Hitler's Aryan supremacy cult that we are now fighting with our blood, so much of our public life is infested with the same disease. (The low down: Esquire's All-American Game Not Quite That, 1944, August 7, p. 10)
Low illustrated with his rhetoric how young people learned to practice "Jim Crow" through the examples provided by the Major Leagues and also identified the similarities of Jim Crow practices in baseball to Hitler's actions, the most notorious devil of them all.²⁰

In 1945, the spelling of "Jim Crow" changed to "Jimcrow". This change was not commented upon in the sports articles, but it perhaps could have signaled the beginning of a new era with the end of World war II or even Montreal’s signing of Robinson. An example of the new spelling is found in Low’s article on committee findings in regard to baseball. In “Report to Mayor Demands End of Baseball Jimcrow” (1945, November 20), Low asserted that the findings recommend that African Americans should be given the opportunity to play in the Major Leagues and that Branch Rickey’s signing of Jackie Robinson is a commendable step toward this goal. He ended the article by saying: "The report cannot but have a profound influence upon the further fight against Jimcrow in baseball. If it is followed up and supported by the Mayor, if it is supplemented by action by all real democrats, it can go a long way towards finally ridding ALL organized baseball of the shame of Jimcrow" (p. 10).

The use of "Jimcrow" in regard to baseball made the front page on March 5, 1946, when Bill Mardo reported on Jackie Robinson and John Wright and their morning activities. In Florida with the Montreal Minor League team, they were preparing for a game with the team from St. Paul:

"Well, this is it," murmured Jackie Robinson as he and pitcher John Wright stepped onto the sunbaked Sanford ballpark today and became the first two Negroes to crack modern organized baseball’s Jimcrow.
It all happened quite simply—just as democracy itself is a simple thing
when allowed to function freely. There’s a long way to go before Jimcrow
is wiped out of America’s national pastime, but today’s beginning was a
good one to see. (Robinson Snappy at Bat in Florida, p. 1)

Once again, the spelling is different than before Robinson was signed. The use of the term
has not changed. It still represented a devil to be removed, or “wiped out” in this case. But
the tone was more hopeful, a change was beginning to occur.

In 1947, when the Dodgers signed Robinson, “Jimcrow” helped to describes the long-
fought battle: “In this manner, the 11-year old fight to break down organized baseball’s
Jimcrow achieved its first great victory, and the way was opened for the complete ending
of the unpopular ban” (Dodgers Sign Robinson, April 11, pp. 3, 10). Finally, Robinson’s
move to the Major Leagues defeated the “devil.”

While the term “Jimcrow” was mentioned less frequently in 1947 than in previous
years because of this initial victory, its use did continue, as the war was not completely
won in the eyes of the CPUSA. For example, in the article mentioned above on page ten,
Robinson’s health was discussed and it was mentioned that he was weakened due to his
forced segregation from the team in Havana: “Robinson is recovering from an attack of
colitis brought on by eating poor food in a third-rate non-Jimcrow hotel” (p. 10) The term
was used later as a verb on May 12 when an article titled “Memo Philly Fans: Same Hotel
That Bars Jackie Jimcrowed NYU in ’46 Too” (p. 10). Now that the “devil” had been
exorcised from baseball, “Jimcrow” was used to identify remaining pockets of resistance
and point out that the problem persists in other societal forms. The use of a verb
suggested people were not devils themselves, but they were performing "devilish" or evil deeds.

**Hitler and Fascist**

Other "devil" terms used throughout the campaign include "fascist" or "fascism," and "Hitler," or "Hitler-like." Like "Jim Crow," the use of these terms originated in the political and news sections depicting these terms as evil. While used less in the campaign than "Jim Crow," their appearance linked world issues to the campaign as well as engaged readers to look at the integration campaign as a war against evil.

These "devil" terms appear as early as 1936. In the initial August 16 article, the writer identified anyone in America who practiced segregation as being like Hitler:

Those of us who believe that the color of a man's skin has nothing to do with the reward paid to him for his work realize that there is not much difference between the Hitler who, like the coward he is, runs away before he will shake Jesse Owens' hand and the American coward who won't give the American Negro equal rights, equal pay, and equal opportunities. (Fans Opposr Jim-Crow in Big League Baseball, p. 15)

Both "fascist" and "Hitler" were linked to baseball in an article on August 2, 1938, when Lester Rodney editorialized on the inappropriate behavior of Yankee team member, Jake Powell: "If the fascist dictators really went in more seriously for the granting of awards to those Americans whose acts meet with their approval, there is no doubt that Jake Powell of the Yankees would be on the list for some small token from Messrs. Mussolini and Hitler" (Some Information about Jake Powell, p. 8). Apparently, Powell, as
a former police officer, told a reporter that he used to “club Negroes.” For this comment Judge Landis suspended him for several days. In addition, Rodney pointed out that Powell, in one game, intentionally hurt Jewish American Hank Greenberg, a member of the Detroit Tigers. Rodney ended the editorial by stating: “There should be no room in American’s National Pastime for outspoken anti-Semites, Anti-Negroes, anti-Catholics, or any men of such ilk” (p. 8). In effect, Powell became a devil in his own right and was used to identify prejudiced people with fascism and fascist leaders.

In 1939 when the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler and the CPUSA was forced to take a neutral stand in the war in Europe, these terms disappeared for the most part from the news section and ultimately from the sports section. In June of 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union, articles reappeared in the Daily and Sunday Worker news section citing the evils of fascism, but it really was not until 1942 after the United States entered World War II that they reappeared in the baseball integration campaign rhetoric. For example, in April 13, 1942, Nat Low wrote an article titled “What Hitler Would Destroy — Baseball is Deep-Rooted in American Democracy” (p. 8). The article was framed by photos of the Dodgers and listed beneath was each player’s name and ethnic heritage. Low discussed the history of baseball, how it has attracted immigrants, and how the devils, fascists and Hitler are attempting to take away American traditions:

Baseball is deep-rooted in the tradition of democracy. It is as much a part of our country as elections, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights. In essence, it is anti-fascist, and can be nothing else. That perhaps is the basic reason for its immense popularity with the people in America. . . . Yes, baseball is
part of the American scene, and this year, in the midst of the world war against fascism, no less than any other, baseball is doing its part in the struggle. . . . It is in this setting that the 1942 baseball season opens tomorrow. And as it opens it is well to remember that the equality and freedom which Hitler and his gang would destroy, is best shown by the roster of the big leagues. (p. 8)

Low asserted that without Negroes in the mix of players, baseball was not representative because of those who control the game. He identified and linked the owners and Judge Landis, who controlled the game internally in America and were destroying the ethnic diversity traditionally inherent in baseball by denying African Americans the right to play to Hitler and fascists who were "devils" who could externally destroy the game.

In 1943, after Landis remarked that there was no written ban anywhere in regard to African American players, Low wrote an article expressing his outrage that owners advertised for baseball players and no one was willing to tap into the valuable source of players, specifically, African Americans: "This latest act of disgrace on the part of the ball owners must serve as a challenge to all America—all trade unionists, all progressives—all people who are winning this war against fascism" (A Disgrace That Must be Ended Now, March 9, p. 6). Here Low identified the act of omitting African Americans to the term "fascism" to incite people to action. Later in the article, Low asserted that: "The country cannot tolerate any longer the continuance of this disgraceful, Hitler-like policy towards Negro players. The magnates must be forced to act and act fast." Here Low attempted to identify and associate the segregationist policy with not only the term "disgraceful," but a much worse adjective, "Hitler-like" (p. 6).
Low also linked the segregationist policy practiced by Branch Rickey to its similarities with Hitler’s policies and related it to African Americans’ war participation. When he wrote an article in 1944 discussing why Branch Rickey doesn’t hire African Americans after Rickey stated that if anyone knows where he can find players, he would hire them. Low asks: “Does Mr. Rickey have any objections to hiring Negro players? Is he against the nation’s policy of equality for the 13,000,000 of our Negro citizens? Is Mr. Rickey willing to play Hitler’s game of discrimination when our country is engaged in a bloody war against the Axis and hundreds of thousands of Negro soldiers are engaged in this war?” (The Time Has Come To Speak Frankly, 1944, July 14, p. 10)

On June 15, 1945, a letter was published from a Private Alfred A. Duckett, who commented on a statement made by Rickey that integration is evolutionary, not revolutionary. This letter was a response to the failure of two African American players to be successful in tryouts held in the Dodger organization. Once again, segregation was linked to the evils of fascism:

Those of us who have been told we are fighting for fascism, I am sure, will feel inclined to retch at the not even clever crack by Branch Rickey that the integration of Negro players into baseball must be evolutionary and not revolutionary. Even the most profound of the isolationists have come to the conclusion that the fight for democracy—against Nazism and Fascism—must take place. This fight is a physical fight—a bloody and a bitter fight. It cost lives. It hurts. There is nothing evolutionary in the cross-marked graves of the thousands of Americans of every race, creed, and color. This is revolution and it is paid for in the blood of fighting men,
the tears of those who survive him and the sweat of those who support him in his sacrifice. Black Americans too have fallen in the line of battle. They may die in the revolution against Fascism, but their sons and kid brothers, say this great Rickey, must await some vague evolution in order to be allowed to play in Yankee Stadium against the kids they played in childhood on the sidewalks of New York. (The low down: Soldier in France Condemns Baseball’s Jim Crow, p. 10)

Not only is “Jim Crow” linked to fascism, but being supportive of integration, the reverse of it, is being supportive of the war effort and the men of all colors who are fighting against it.

Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis and Branch Rickey

The two quotes above examples of how “fascism” and “Hitler” were used as “devil” terms. In addition, they also illustrate how Branch Rickey was used as a “devil” when he is slow to move on integration. Rickey was actually only one of the many men used in this manner. From the beginning and throughout the campaign, Rodney cited the owners, or “magnates” or “moguls,” those that had the money and controlled the Major League rosters as evil doers because of their stand as segregationists. The use of powerful capitalists portrayed as evil doers or “devils” is similar to how CPUSA news writers identified and wrote negative articles about capitalists with power within a specific industry. This method translated nicely into the sports section in the opening day of the campaign in the Sunday Worker on August 16, when the fans were told, “Fans, it’s up to
you! Tell the big league magnates that you’re sick of the poor pitching in the American League. You want to see Satchel Paige out there on the mound” (p. 15).

In 1938, Rodney devoted an entire editorial to the owners titled “Pinning A Magnate Down On Jim-Crow” (January 10, p. 8). Rodney reported that “The campaign to end discrimination against Negro baseball players is getting hot. It’s beginning to burn the seats of some moguls who have successfully kept it under control and out of the newspapers for some years.” (p. 8) Rodney then commented on an interview published in the Washington Herald with the Washington Senators president, Clark Griffiths. He relayed that the President said there is no by-law banning African Americans from playing, that there were not as many good Negro players as one suggested, and that if allowed to play that they would face a variety of problems when traveling and playing in certain parts of the country, especially when players engaged in arguments on the field. His solution was to have a separate Negro League, which Rodney pointed out already exists. This editorial identified the owners with segregation and the current “separate but equal” attitude prevalent in the 1930’s.

In 1939, the focus of the campaign on the owners and leaders in the Major Leagues was narrowed and the “devil” chosen was Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, Commissioner of the Major Leagues. Dave Farrell, a reporter who covered West Coast sports and who sporadically wrote for the Daily Worker in the column “Personal—But Not Private,” mentioned Landis as a potential “devil.” Specifically, he wrote:

Lester Rodney on the Daily Worker in New York and Norman Schmidt on the ‘Record’ in Chicago have been putting up the good fight for the right of the Negro Ball players to play baseball in the leagues. But I haven’t done
a thing about it so far this season, except to promise myself that I would do
a couple of columns about the greatest injustice in modern sports. If by
pounding away for the next couple of years we can finally break down the
Old Judge and make him come through with a ruling, it will be wonderful.
(Personal - - - but not Private, 1939, August 2, p. 8)

This article was followed by a letter published in Rodney’s editorial column, “On the
Scoreboard,” written by Gil Green, president of the Young Communist League (YCL).
Initiating a petition drive and asking readers to participate. Green argued:

The major league owners must be proven that the lifting of this ban will
not injure their gate receipts. They must be shown that the people of this
country, the hundreds of thousands of fans, are opposed to a continuation
of a practice that is un-American and which can serve no other purpose but
to give encouragement to other forms of racial bigotry and
misunderstanding. . . . Could you not, in the name of your organization,
address a letter to Judge Landis, the Dean of baseball, and the major clubs,
asking them to lift the ban upon Negro players? (1939, August 17, p. 8)

And later that year on December 12, “Text of Letter to Judge Landis Asking the End of
Jim Crow” (p. 8) was published. The letter, written by Robert Gunkel, Secretary of the
Hamilton County Comunist Party, explained that enclosed with the letter to Landis was a
petition containing 50,000 signatures and that:

The employment of Negro players in the Big Leagues will not solve all the
problems of the Negro people in their struggle for equality. But, in
removing the evil of discrimination from America’s most popular sport, it
will be an important step forward. And to baseball, through greater
democracy, it will give new life and vitality. (1939, p. 8)

These articles identified Landis as the leader of the owners and linked him to "the evil of
discrimination" if he did not lift the ban. The "devil" was in place.

On September 8, 1940, Dave Farrell instructed readers in his *Sunday Worker* column
to "Pour the Mail Into Landis,"— that letters should now be directly mailed and listed the
address for all readers. Specifically, he assured the readers:

That is if we want to dent the consciousness of the moguls of baseball, we
have to pour the heat on the Grand Mahout himself, Judge Kenesaw
Mountian Landis. . . . Believe me, if enough of you write him, if the mail
gets good and heavy, if you give the postman fallen arches from delivering
the mail, the Judge is going to have a few words to say to the men who
have the most to gain by lifting the phony Jim Crow Law. (Section one, p.
8).

Similar articles appeared in 1941 that implored readers to continue the letters to Landis.
For example, on April 27, Rodney wrote in "Lest the Baseball Magnates Forget," that
"Baseball fans, just as all other American sports fans, believe athletes should be judged by
their abilities, not by the color of their skins. Half a million said so in petitions to
Commissioner Landis last year and more petitions are pouring in right now" (*Sunday
Worker*, Section one, p. 8). Rodney cited baseball athletes and managers that have
commented favorably on integration and ended by including Landis' address.

In 1942, the focus intensified and increasing numbers and reminders appeared in
regard to whom was denying integration to African American players. For example, on
March 23, the headline story was “‘Get After Landis, We’d Welcome You,’ Sox Manager Tells Young Negro Stars” (p. 8). African American players who had potential were discussed and the article ended with Landis’ address and this statement: “The campaign to end Jim Crow, started originally by the Daily Worker five years ago, has made giant strides, but Commissioner Landis has clamped the lid on the subject” (p. 8).

In addition, boxed messages at the top of the page next to the masthead suggested ideas such as “Reminder: The Man Who Can End Jim Crow in Baseball Is Judge Landis, 333 N. Michigan, Chicago” (1942, May 4, p. 8). And Low added to the visual literacy of the “devil” by illustrating an oversized hand with an extended finger pointing at a smaller Judge Landis on May 6 with an accompanying article titled “Time for Stalling Is Over, Judge Landis” (1942, May 6, p. 8).

Finally, on July 18, Nat Low reported that Landis, pressured to make a comment for several years, decided on the integration issue: “The ruling of Judge K. M. Landis Thursday, stating that Negro baseball players can be signed to play in the major leagues, is a great victory for the American people and a real cause for rejoicing” (Landis’ O. K. on Negro Stars Is A Great Democratic Victory For All Americans, 1942, p. 8). Not only did it signal that the “devil” was defeated, but Low redefined Landis as a defender of democracy: “Judge Landis, who is the Commissioner of Baseball, has struck a mighty blow for unity and democracy in his forthright statement issued to the press of the nation after a talk with Leo Durocher, manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, in reference to an article which appeared in the Daily Worker” (p. 8). This statement also suggested that the Daily Worker influenced Landis’ decision.
Since Landis was elevated to „defender of democracy,” a new „devil” needed to be
selected from among the owners and presidents of the League teams. The obvious choice
was someone in the Daily Worker’s own backyard, and Branch Rickey became the heir to
the devil’s throne and the rhetorical focus. On April 13, 1943, Low addressed his article
“Dear Mr. Rickey” and announced that:

Within a few days thousands of petitions will be flooding the offices of
Branch Rickey, president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, urging him to sign
Negro stars to the team in order to win the pennant in 1943.

The petitions are being circulated all through Brooklyn by members and
friends of the Young Communist league who last week opened up a
nationwide campaign to end Hitler’s shame in the major league. (p. 6)

Not only was segregation evil, it was now shameful and Hitler-like and identified with
Branch Rickey. For example, on August 11, another letter by Low was published where
he reported that the Dodger fans were unhappy with Rickey because he was not reacting
to the fact that the Dodgers as a team were not winning by hiring African American
athletes that could remedy the situation. Low contended: „They are not in the big leagues
only because you and your fellow magnates have followed a policy which would fit into
Nazi Germany and not free, democratic America. You and your fellow magnates have
kept them from their rightful places, these magnificent stars, only because their skin is
dark” (The Fans Are The Real Owners, Mr. Rickey…!, 1943, August 11, p. 6).

As previously mentioned, Branch Rickey was also identified with Hitler and fascism
because of his decision not to hire African American players in articles by Low on July 14,
1944 (Time has Come To Speak Frankly, p. 10) and on June 15, 1945 (The low down:
Soldier in France Condemns Baseball's Jim Crow, p. 10). This all comes to an end when Rickey signs Jackie Robinson in October 1945. On October 25 that year, an unnamed reporter wrote in “Dodger Signing of Negro Hailed” that Benjamin Davis, City Councilman and Communist is quoted as saying, “The signing of Jackie Robinson, great Negro athlete, is a victory for American democracy, organized baseball, and for equality of citizenship of the Negro people” (p. 12). Credit was given to many including the End Jimcrow in Baseball Committee, the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) who earlier in the year helped to pass the Ives-Quinn Bill anti-discrimination in Albany, the Negro newspapers such as the Pittsburgh Courier, and the Daily Worker. Unlike Landis, who became the “defender of democracy,” Rickey was not elevated until Robinson was brought up to the Major Leagues. Even in 1946 when Robinson was successful in Montreal, Rickey was not credited. For example, while C. E. Dexter mentioned that it was Rickey who signed Jackie Robinson and four other African American players, Rickey was not complemented and the writer identified and vilified owners of the other New York City teams. Specifically, C. E. Dexter wrote in “Other Teams Must Be Forced To Sign Negroes,” that:

The fight for real racial democracy in baseball, however, will not be won until other major league clubs have signed Negroes. And now the finger is pointing precisely at Larry McPhail and Horace Stoneham, owners of the Yankees and Giants, respectively.

It is a fact that the good work done by the Negro players in the Dodger chain has in a measure lulled the progressive and labor forces which have been in the forefront of the end-Jimcrow campaign for ten years—with the
result that little pressure has been brought this season against other big
league magnates. (1946, August 14, p. 10)

Finally, Rickey was removed from the “devil” list on April 11, 1947, when Bill Mardo
editorialized about Robinson’s move to the Dodger team and what a great day it was for
Robinson and the fans. Within the article, Mardo included a few comments about Rickey
and any notion of him being a “devil” was replaced with grudging respect:21

You think of Branch Rickey, a man whose many-sided personality is one
of the most unique things in sports. A practical businessman with a
knowledge of baseball that nobody else can match. A man, who once
convinced that Negroes in big league baseball was some day inevitable,
yielded to the popular demands of Brooklyn fans, and, once he took the
plunge, never faltered.

He has earned the respect of decent citizens everywhere who want to
know not of a man’s color but of his ability and his fundamental rights as a
human being. (In this corner: Robinson’s a Dodger, p. 10)

Satchel Paige and Jackie Robinson

While the CPUSA sports writers made “devils” of people like Judge Landis and then
Branch Rickey, they also created “gods,” or images of people who ranked at the top of
their field, in this case baseball. These “gods” were used for comparison primarily based
on their athletic prowess. While many African American players are mentioned throughout
the campaign as potential Major League candidates, the two that emerged and ascended to
a “godlike” status were Satchel Paige and Jackie Robinson.
Satchel Paige, a pitcher in the Negro Leagues, became a "god" because of his expertise on the mound against both African American and White players. His inability to cross over to play in the Major Leagues because of the segregation practices in place at this time brought him to the forefront as a tool of comparison for the CPUSA. As early as the first day of the formal campaign, he is identified: "Satchel Paige, of the Crawfords, is considered one of the best pitchers in professional baseball, and one of the best players to watch." ("Fanning With Negro Baseball Stars," 1936, August 16, p. 15)

Paige's expertise continued throughout the campaign to be the main focus and used as a comparison whenever possible. In 1937, in an article that included letters from readers, Paige was referred to as the "Jesse Owens of Baseball," and, "Now, more than ever, the time is advantageous to gain support for all Satchel Paiges in all fields of sports." (Ted Bensen, The Readers Ask For Satchel Paige, March 22, p. 8)

Later in the year, a young Joe DiMaggio was quoted as saying, "Satchel Paige is the greatest pitcher I ever batted against" (DiMaggio Calls Negro Greatest Pitcher - Says Satchell (sic) Paige is Tops - - - A Whack At Jim Crow, 1937, September 13, p. 8). DiMaggio was described in the same article as "the Yankee outfielder who is rocketing to fame as one of the greatest ball players of all time, talking about the ace Negro twirler who is banned from his rightful place in the big leagues by the unwritten Jim Crow that is baseball's greatest bane" (p. 8). While at this time, no one really knew that DiMaggio would become a "god" of baseball in his own right, this early quote was repeated throughout the campaign as DiMaggio gained in stature.

As Paige's expertise was being exalted, the CPUSA writers began solidifying Paige's position within the campaign as an African American who wished to enter the Major
League arena. Rodney conducted and published an interview with Paige in 1937 that established him as a gifted player. Rodney started by asking Paige how many times the Major Leagues all-star team beat a Negro team when he was pitching during an after season game in California. He responded with “I don’t remember exactly, but they never beat me in four years trying” (Paige Asks Test For Negro Stars, 1937, September 16, p. 8). In addition, Rodney included three propositions suggested by Paige as conditions for entry into the Major Leagues:

1. His Negro all-star team will play the winners of the World Series at the Yankee Stadium and if they don’t beat them, won’t ask for money—despite—despite the fact that the house would be sure to be packed.

2. He will join any big league club next year at his own expense until he had proven his worth as a pitching star—and if he doesn’t prove his worth he will forget the whole thing.

3. Let there be a vote cast by all baseball fans entering big league ball parks as to whether they want Negro players in the game or not. (p. 8)

Through these expressed propositions Paige appeared that he was above mere mortal monetary rewards, that there was a higher goal to be obtained. Paige was willing to be the “test case” to show that African Americans were more than capable to play professional baseball.

As the campaign progressed, Paige was quoted, commented upon, and/or compared to and his image as the “god” of the Negro Leagues and of Negro players continued to grow. In 1938, Rodney quoted Paige’s experiences with Southern fans in order to dispel
the fears that African Americans couldn’t play in the South without problems. Rodney wrote:

Satchell (sic) Paige, brilliant Negro pitcher kept out of the Big League
baseball by the same Jim Crow minority, once told me of his tour through
the South with an all-Negro ball club. Before they entered Texas, Paige
was solemnly warned that no Texas crowds would tolerate a game in which
Negro played White on equal terms.

“Never heard louder or more enthusiastic cheers than from those Texas
crowds when we beat one of their local teams,” Satchell (sic) replied with a
smile. “And that was the story from one end of the state to the other, win
or lose. (“On the Scoreboard,” 1938, October 21, p. 8)

This text was written to prove to readers that Paige, the “brilliant” pitcher, had the ability
to appeal to any color of fans. Also, he transcended racial problems even in Texas, one of
the most racially segregated states in the South.

In 1939, the Sunday Worker magazine section featured an article on Negro League
Players titled “They Get No Breaks.” (May 5, p. 5). Here, Norman Reissman discussed
how Negro players are underpaid in the United States and often go to foreign countries
such as Venezuela, Japan, the Soviet Union, and Santo Domingo in order to be paid in
relationship to their talents. While many players were mentioned, at least one-third of the
article is devoted Satchel Paige. Reissman stated that:

No career has ever had the excitement of Paige’s. The lean speedballer
has lived a soldier-of-fortune’s life, and has always taken what he thought
he had coming to him. While in good standing with the National League, 
he’d bring home forty to fifty victories a year for the Crawfords. . . . He 
has grown up with a weird habit of running away to seek his fortune . . . 
with that urge for traveling and letting the world catch a glimpse of the 
man rated by many as the greatest pitcher in existence. . . . In Santo 
Domingo, Paige is so much a hero that not even a guy like Dizzy Dean 
would be able to steal his spotlight. (p. 5)

Here, the “greatest pitcher in existence” had yet another image - - a soldier-of-fortune!
These descriptive words removed Paige from the mainstream and placed him into lifestyle 
that something most readers could only imagine and dream about. In addition, Reissman 
suggested that a Negro player could be more popular than a White player by comparing 
his popularity with the then famous ball player Dizzy Dean.

A final word about this article is regarding placement. It shared the page in the 
magazine section with an article titled “Racial Superiority” (Which is labeled a “science 
feature”) where the author, J.B.S. Haldane, asserted that there is no scientific basis for 
Hitler’s philosophy of a supreme Aryan race. Specifically, he argued that Whites score 
higher on tests than African Americans because Whites have written the tests. This 
placement was probably one of the most overt examples of how layout was carefully 
planned by the editors to maximize the impact of articles dealing with unjust racial 
discrimination in baseball.

Into the early 1940’s, Satchel Paige remained the Negro player most sought after and 
remained the most frequently mentioned. With his status established in the 1930’s, there 
then began to be an air of familiarity about him in comparison to the other players. For
example, Dave Farrell commented about how the owners need new talent and should look to the Negro players: "The magnates are really getting stuck for talent, badly stuck. They know they need new heroes at the gate. And what a shot in the arm fellows like "Ol Satchel, Josh Gibson, Mule Suttles, Kenny Washington, and Jackie Robinson would be."

(Personal—But Not Private, 1940, September 5, p. 8)

In 1941, when Life Magazine printed what Rodney felt was an unfavorable image of Paige, Rodney responded with his editorial "Different Stories On Paige" (1941, June 11, p. 8). Rodney contended that Life's agenda was to "make Paige out as quite happy and oblivious to the discrimination that denies him a chance to take his place as one of the baseball immortals in America's National Pastime" (p. 8). Following this comment in the article was a reprinting of the 1937 story in which Paige proposed ways to gain entry into the Major Leagues. With this article, "Ol' Satchel" had become immortal.

When discussing upcoming African American talent in 1942, one candidate, Nate Moreland, a pitcher, was mentioned in terms of ability:

Moreland starred in 1940 as a pitcher for the Baltimore team in the Negro National League and last year was the ace of the Mexican League pitching for Tampico. He is rated a potential Satchel Paige. (Paige, a veteran Negro hurler, has been unqualifiedly called the greatest pitcher of the era by big league players and mangers. In exhibition games, he never lost to a big league team in seven straight years. (Get After Landis, We'd Welcome You, Sox Manager Tells Young Negro Stars, 1942, March 23, p. 8)

While still maintaining his "god" status for use in comparison, Paige was now labeled a veteran. Soon Paige would be replaced with another "god," Jackie Robinson. Robinson
was also mentioned in the above mentioned article as an upcoming league star, and Chicago White Sox coach Jimmy Dykes suggested to the unnamed reported that "Robinson was easily worth $50,000 to any big league ball club" (p. 8). The reporter also included a history of Robinson's collegiate activities:

Jackie graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) last year after a career in which he was a star football back, basketball high scorer and track ace in addition to being the finest college shortstop. A terrific long hitter, classy fielder and sparkling base runner, he was named on the All California Semi-pro team last year. (p. 8)

While the reporter identified Robinson's athletic accomaplishes and clearly set the scene for his ascendency to eventually replace Paige as "god," this does not occur until late in 1945. Robinson's sports career was interrupted to serve in the Armed Forces during World War II and Paige continued to be "god-like" player used as the model for comparison. For example, on November 12, 1943, it was reported that:

Satchel Paige, putting on a show for 8,000 howling customers that isn't likely to be equaled for a long time, pitched and helped to bat the Negro Giants to a thrilling 4 to 3 victory over the Major-Minor All-Stars at Gilmore Fields, October 31.

Paige, apparently his old self after a siege of illness, struck out 14 and played a big part in his club's four-run ninth-inning rally. ("Satchell (sic) Beats Major Stars, Strikes Out 14," p. 5)

Here Paige was portrayed as a super-human or god as he overcame mortal illness not only to win, but win in epic proportions with a large strike-out count. But in 1944 and 1945,
the rhetoric mentioning Paige was less frequent, and he became one of many players to be suggested as possible candidates for the Major Leagues. An example of this inclusion was Low's editorial where he and a "friend" chose their ideal players for the Dodger and Cardinal teams. Low reported, "I "drafted" Josh Gibson, the greatest hitter in baseball, Satchel Paige, the old master, Hilton Smith, the magnificent pitcher of the Kansas City Monarchs and Jesse Williams, just about the finest shortstop I have ever seen" (The Low Down: Spring and Baseball Come Back To Snow-Covered 8th Street, 1944, April 17, p. 5). While Paige was still mentioned, he is not listed first and another pitcher is toted. "The old master" suggested that Paige, while once great, was now at the end of his career. This same type of listing occurred again on March 7, 1945 when Low reported on the passage and significance of the Ives-Quinn Anti-Discrimination Bill in regard to baseball. He suggested that:

The next steps will be taken by Negro players themselves who will undoubtedly apply formally for jobs with the three New York major league teams and many other clubs in the minor leagues . . . The Josh Gibsons, Dave Barnhills, Satchel Paiges, Sammy Bankheads, Roy Campanellas and others are great by any method of comparison—but when played alongside the so-called major leaguers now in baseball uniform, they tower like titans.

(FEPC Heralds End Of Baseball Jimcrow, 1945, March 7, p. 10)

While still a great player who might tower above other White players, Paige had now been grouped with other players and now longer was described in the image as a "god" above all players. That position actually, went to none of the above mentioned, because in October 1945, Jackie Robinson ascended as the first Negro player to be signed.
As mentioned above, Robinson was discussed as early as 1940 as a possible player in the Major Leagues. After he was signed by Branch Rickey in 1945, he quickly became the player to be watched and compared to. In Low’s editorial column on October 25, Robinson is reported as saying upon signing his contract: "Of course, I cannot begin to tell you how happy I am to be the first member of my race in organized baseball. I realize how much it means to me, to my people, and to baseball. I can only say I’ll do my very best to come through in every manner” (The low down, p. 10). As previously mentioned, on March 5, 1946, Robinson’s picture fielding a play was featured on page one of the *Daily Worker* and the caption read “Robinson Snappy At Bat in Florida.” Like Paige before him Robinson’s expertise was the focus but Robinson’s athletic ability as well as his personal demeanor went under far more scrutiny than Paige to show he was the best, the “god” who will deliver democracy to baseball. In the article, Robinson’s demeanor was described as “free and easy,” in front of reporters and his comfortable manner of answering questions was compared to that of the boxing legend, Joe Louis. In the same article, Low also reported on Robinson’s weight, shoe size, his great ability during batting practice, his superb golf game played in Venezuela when touring previously with the Negro League, and his innate ability to have positive relationships with White team members. Low painted this picture of perfection that tied Robinson to his ability to attain democracy for the members of his race. Low united the “god” with the ideal by remarking: “And that’s how the historic morning went—smooth and easy, just like democracy—when left to function freely” (p. 10).

As the season with Montreal progressed, Robinson’s stature as a “god” grew. On April 19, the headlines in the sports section on page 14 read: “Robinson Sensational in
Debut; Dodgers Rip Giants in Opener 8-1.” The article by Mardo titled “Negro Ace Leads Montreal Win With Homer, 3 Other Hits,” opened with the following paragraph that moves Robinson’s “god-like” image to the forefront because of his expertise:

Almost everything he did was pure gold. And when the lopsided Montreal triumph over Jersey City ended at 5:30 tonight, hundreds of young American baseball fans stormed the Roosevelt Stadium infield and all but carried Jackie Robinson into the dugout. (p. 14)

And later in the article, Mardo united Robinson’s extraordinary accomplishments to the successful fight against segregation in baseball:

One word—Robinson—was on everyone’s lips as they excitedly filed out of the Jersey ball park. Nobody was thinking of the 14-1 shellacking which the Montreal Royals had handed the Little Giants in the International League opener today. Nobody thought too long about the fine eight-hitter twirled by the Royal’s Bernie De Forge. No, none of it mattered on this memorable occasion, because this day, April 18, belonged to Jackie Robinson . . . and all the progressive forces who fought so tirelessly to drive a wedge into baseball’s Jimcrow ban. (p. 14)

Nearing the season’s end, Mardo credited Robinson alone for his success in the fight against segregation in an editorial he wrote on September 15: “And once again hats off to Jackie Robinson for putting the word democracy up in lights for all to see—whether it be in the International League, the highly important post-season exhibition games . . . or in the major leagues, which is just where he’s gonna spell out that word next year” (In this
corner: Bravo! Jackie Shows Way With Mixed Team, 1946, September 15, p. 10). Here, Mardo equated Robinson as this heroic “god” who alone could change the system.

The stature of Robinson also increased when it was pointed out that not only was Robinson a “god-like” player and fighter for equality, but he also was a huge moneymaker for organized baseball. Specifically, Mardo asserted in an editorial titled “Some Pertinent Talk About Jackie,” that:

As a phenomenal player and also the first Negro in the big leagues, Jackie Robinson will be the biggest box-office draw in baseball next year. With the Royals alone, he has been the main magnet, which has lured nearly a million fans through the turnstyles at Royal games both home and on the road. Don’t think this fact has escaped Branch Rickey. (1946, September 10, p. 10)

This discussion arose because of the fear that Robinson would not be moved to the Dodger team due to Southern players’ resistance to play alongside African Americans. Mardo asserted that because Robinson was currently the hottest player that it did not matter what players such as Dixie Walker felt because they would not draw as large of an audience as Robinson. Again, Robinson was used as a comparison and came out on top, interestingly, the “god” of laissez-faire.

Finally, for 1946, money was not the only issue used to insure Robinson’s move to the Major Leagues. His exemplary batting expertise was also used to persuade other owners to hire other Negro players in a published open letter from co-editors Mardo and Rodney on October 17. Specifically, they wrote:
There are now five Negro players under contract with the Dodger organization. They have all sparked their clubs to highly successful seasons. Jackie Robinson's .349 batting average topped the International League and paced the Montreal Royals to the pennant and the Little World Series championship. (Letter to 15 Magnates, p. 10)

As the 1947 season unfolded, the anticipation of Robinson's successful move to the Dodger team inspired more discussion and on April 10, the Dodgers purchased Robinson's contract. He first appeared as a Dodger on April 11 in an exhibition game with the Yankees. On April 12, the Daily Worker reported on the historic event with coverage not only in the sports section but also with a front-page picture of Robinson signing autographs for White fans. On April 15, Rodney wrote an editorial about opening day and what Robinson meant to organized baseball. Along with the mention of Robinson's importance, Rodney discussed a moment with Robinson on the field and the pressure Robinson was under to be a "god" among men:

After chatting with Jackie on the field on the first day he was in a Dodger uniform and becoming overwhelmed with the feeling of pressure and tension thrown willy nilly upon his broad shoulders by the spotlight of publicity, the scrambling photographers oblivious of all else, even the kids rushing for autographs at his every move, it took no remarkable perception to know that beneath Jackie's smile was at least a little wish to be let alone and treated just like any other rookie, on his merit. (On the Scoreboard, p. 10)
Rodney discussed his conflict with covering Robinson as this icon, this “god” and giving the man his space to be a regular ball player. He came to the conclusion:

For like it or not, Jackie Robinson was not “just another ball player’ down there. Not yet! The continuing cheers from the 25,000 strong cross section crowd was actually expressing America’s great inherent sense of sportsmanship, equality, and Bill of Rights democracy if you will, was insisting on expressing it fully when given the dramatic concentrated chance to do so. (p. 10)

The intense coverage on Robinson continued by the CPUSA writers even as other players such as Larry Doby and Roy Campanella entered the Major Leagues that same year. The focus was initially on Robinson’s incredible athletic prowess and his assigned role as the fighter for democracy. For example, incidents of segregation were reported such as when Robinson was barred from staying at the Ben Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia and had to find accommodations away from the team. (Memo Philly Fans; Same Hotel That bars Jackie Jimcrowed NYU in’46 Too, 1947, May 12, p. 10)

But as the season progressed and ended, fewer articles identified Robinson as defender of democracy and concentrated more on more to his athletic prowess. For example, on July 1, the headlines read “Jackie Hitting His Full Stride” and Rodney reported on Robinson’s continued improvement as a player. For example, Rodney stated:

On the bases Robinson showed why he is leading the league in steals. Because of his deftness in anticipating the pitcher’s move and getting back, he can afford a longer lead than most. When he breaks, he is almost immediately in full stride, a facility of every great football back. Jackie was
a great back and you can also see that in the way he cuts the pivot sharply at 2nd without losing speed while flying from 1st to 3rd. Not the smooth, flowing kind of runner, Jackie has tremendous leg drive. (p. 10)

And on September 5, Mardo reported that the Boston Record and United Press have cast early ballots for Robinson as the “Rookie of the Year.” While Mardo discussed other possible candidates, he concluded that Robinson would receive his vote because of his extraordinary play and his contribution to the Dodger team improvements over last year. (In this corner: An Early Vote For Most ‘Valuable,’ p. 10) In both articles, Rodney and Mardo elevated Robinson to “god” status, but strictly based on his superior athletic abilities, abilities compared against both African American and White players. They made no mention of his responsibility for the success of the integration of professional baseball. By the end of 1947 this was becoming unnecessary as integration policies were now in place.

American and Democracy

Besides the use of “devil” and “god” terms, “charismatic” terms are also used throughout the campaign. The two terms chosen for discussion here are “America” and “democracy” and their derivations. Their use in the campaign fits the “charismatic” definition in that their power as terms comes from an undisclosed source and a popular will consents to the identification of this power associated with the term. In many cases, “America” and “democracy” could both be considered “god” terms. But in the case of baseball integration campaign rhetoric this does not apply. While it was true there were used in a comparative manner, it was not show dominance above others. Rather, it was to
show how the term's "charismatic" definition did not match the societal reality. For example, in 1936, in the initial article on August 16, the unnamed reporter asked the fans to "demand Americanism in baseball" (Fans Oppose Jim Crow In Big League Baseball, p. 15). In other words, Major League baseball was lacking the social ingredients needed to be "American."

Another way the term was used to show that major League baseball was less than it should be was in the DiMaggio story in 1937. Specifically, when DiMaggio was reported to have said that Paige was the greatest pitcher he ever faced, the writer remarked: "This forthright statement by the great Italian star, who threw out the first ball at the International Workers Order Youth Tournament Saturday, is sure to add to the growing demand that America's "National Pastime" become just that by ending its un-American race discrimination" (DiMaggio Calls Negro Greatest Pitcher, 1937, September 13, p. 8). This statement suggested to readers that their "national pastime" was tainted, it was, in fact, un-American.

Rodney used "un-American" again when he encouraged fans to contact sports writers in their respective areas to express their support for integration. Specifically, he appealed to the fans' sense of sportsmanship and associated it with their sense of who they were as Americans and what that meant to them: "And any poll of American sports fans, who comprise nothing less than the common people, would be 9-1 or more for ending the unsportsmanlike and un-American ban on talented performers for reason of the color of their skin" (On the Scoreboard, 1939, April 8, p. 8).

In 1940, the meaning of un-American was identified as a plague-like problem when an unnamed reporter made this statement in an article about the Young Communist League's
participation in the campaign: “Steele insisted that the YCL must again take the lead and
the initiative as it did in the past to circulate petitions in the tens of thousands to rid our
national game of the Unamericanism” (Young Communists To Throw Full Forces Into
Fight On Jim Crow, June 18, 1940, p.8).

In their New Year message to the readers, Daily Worker writers described qualities to
“American” fans and contrasted their intelligence with the stupidity of the baseball
magnates: “Americans are sportsmen who hate discrimination and phony inequality.
American fandom is much bigger than the handful of reactionary magnates and their
stooge Judge Landis” (A Happy New Year To Sports Fans, 1941, January 1, p. 8). In this
statement, the writer empowered his audience by complementing them on being what the
term “American” meant – supportive of integration.

In 1943, Paul Robeson, African American actor, collegiate athlete, and ardent
Communist, along with other integration supporters, met with owners at the Hotel
Roosevelt to plead the case of integration. It was reported by Low that:

Robeson ended his impassioned plea for the immediate entrance of
Negroes into baseball by declaring, “I urge you to decide favorably on this
request and that action be taken this very season. I believe you can be
assured they will reflect the highest credit on the game and the American
people will commend you for this action which reflects the best in the
American spirit.” (Major League Paves Way For Negroes, 1943, December
12, pp. 1, 15)

Reporting this quote linked the term “American” to the readers and with the indefinable,
intangible “spirit” that was and still is associated with being American. On another level,
Robeson’s use of the term attempted to demonstrate to the owners that by being good “Americans,” they would receive credit from the fans and would experience that inner, intangible feeling that comes from acting in an “American-like” manner.

In an article describing fans’ reactions to Robinson’s first day as a Dodger, “Abner W. Berry, editor of Negro Affairs for the CPUSA wrote:

The sentiment of the crowd was unmistakable. They were not only applauding Jackie, but, as another young fan said to me: “You just can’t have American sports and exclude Negroes from them.” He went on to give some experiences from other sports. He was glad to see that baseball was made into a real American sport—in Brooklyn, that is. (Fans Welcome Jackie In Dodger Debut, 1947, April, 12, p. 3)

In this example, Berry contended that sports could not include segregation if it was to be labeled “American”. The use of the adjective “real” to clarify baseball in Brooklyn as an “American sport” was chosen to remind readers that the Dodgers were the only team as yet to integrate. More work was needed in changing discriminatory practices in other cities and on their teams in order to make the National Pastime “American” and demonstrate that the term truly represented the “charismatic” definition.

Besides “American,” CPUSA writers used “democracy” to point out flaws in the society by clarifying or redefining what type of “democracy” really existed and how that did not match the “charismatic” definition. For example, from a previously mentioned letter, a reader wrote to Rodney making suggestions as to how to run the campaign:
For instance, petitions could be circulated and progressives could literally bombard the baseball magnates with letters, all voicing their disapproval of the existing undemocratic conditions.

Really there is no need for me to tell you how to carry on a campaign, and, with no written laws preventing Negro players from participation, the owners could be put to the acid test and be made to answer those fans who believe in democratic conditions. (Letter From Jerome Snyder, The Postman Always Brings Two Knocks, May 27, 1938, p. 8)

Snyder’s message that the current segregated conditions in baseball were undemocratic clarified what segregation represented. He also explained that this was contrary to fans whose definition of “democracy” included integration.

In 1940, Rodney reported that other editors had written in support of sports integration: “Thirteen college sports editors in the Metropolitan Area took up the fight to end the ban on Negro players in organized baseball over the weekend as plans were made to drive the campaign for full democracy in our National Pastime” (15 Sports Editors Join Fight on Jim Crow, April 16, p. 8). This statement suggested that “democracy” as readers knew it was not complete, that it needed work to be “full.”

Along with idea that the “democracy” was not “full” or complete, was the comment Low made in an open letter to Branch Rickey in regard to hiring Negro players: “Mr. Rickey, the time for long-winded speeches and fancy words are over. I have to be brief and sharp. The people of Brooklyn are a democratic people. They want a team to represent their fair borough and they will move heaven and earth to get one” (Dear Mr.
Rickey, 1943, August 11, p. 6). “Democracy” as Low described was not representative if it was not inclusive of African Americans.

“Democracy” was not complete until April 12, 1947, when Berry announced it in his opening paragraph about Robinson’s debut:

Yesterday at Ebbets Field I saw 18 men introduce democracy to baseball—and they were successful. It was hard to tell whether the 24,000 fans came for the sport or whether they came to witness history in the making. It was Jackie Robinson’s first game as a Big league player, the first Negro in history. (Fans Welcome Jackie in Dodger Debut, p. 3)

Berry’s phrase “introduce democracy” suggested that people had never witnessed or knew what “democracy” looked like. On that same day, Rodney also addressed and identified the entrance of “democracy” and described how it often appeared or acted:

In the surprising—yes surprising to me too—depths of the cheers for Robinson was real democracy of the vast majority of our people, a democracy sometimes blurred, stultified, confused, rationalized, and diverted but still in there waiting to come through.

And here it was!

You can’t ask people to measure, to control their democracy. Cheer on for a while, you people of Brooklyn, cheer on for democracy! (On the Scoreboard, April 12, 1947, p. 10)

Although “democracy” was reported successful at Ebbets Field, it still remained a struggle in other parts of society. On May 12, 1947, Mardo reported on the Philadelphia Ben Franklin Hotel’s history of discrimination when
management refused to allow Robinson to stay with the rest of the Dodger team.

Mardo revealed that this same establishment also discriminated against a collegiate player the year before and stated: "So this is the foul history of a hotel which today continues to defy the democratic traditions of the city which seated the signers of the Declaration of Independence" (Memo Philly Fans: Same Hotel That Bars jackie Jimcrowed NYU in '46 Too, p. 10). Mardo associated "democracy" with the Declaration of Independence and all that the document represented in regard to freedom and equality to demonstrate how this discriminatory practice defied what the document represented.

While there are numerous separate ways the terms "democracy" and "America" were used, because of their relationship CPUSA writers sometimes employed them together in the same sentence to intensify the meanings and/or used one as an adjective to redefine the other. An example of their use in the same sentence appeared in Mardo's September 10, 1946 editorial about Jackie Robinson and his chances for promotion to the Dodgers. He addressed the concerns that players from the South would resist the idea by contending: "By and large most of the players are ordinary Joes from the mines, farms, and factories of America and their inherent sense of democracy will more than overwhelm the small few who are eaten up with poisonous prejudices" (In this corner, p. 10). Mardo implied here that most average "Americans" were "democratic" just because they were "Americans." In other words, the terms were synonymous.

Their use as an adjective was demonstrated in the title of Low's article "What Hitler Would Destroy- - Baseball is Deep-Rooted in American Democracy" (April 13, 1942, p. 8). By using these terms in the title, the writer linked baseball with a specific type of
“democracy,” namely “American.” In addition, the use of these terms in the title also linked the tradition of baseball and American democracy to his topic in the article, which was the idea that the owners were fascists because they were upsetting the traditions of baseball when they did not allow all men, regardless of their ethnicity into the game. This led a reader to believe this form of “democracy” was flawed because it appeared to have fascist characteristics.

**Aesopian Language**

The charismatic appeal of “America” and “democracy” and how the CPUSA used them to express unhappiness with the ideological and social systems in place in the United States prompted J. Edgar Hoover to contend that the CPUSA codified its rhetoric into hidden messages he referred to as “Aesopian language.” He asserted that, as explained in a previous section, the Communist Party’s definition of “democracy” did not mean the right of minorities to exist; rather, it meant the right of communism to be the dominate ideology and therefore, the termination of all other ideologies.

It was true that CPUSA often utilized “communism” or “socialism,” and the “Soviet Union” as its “god” terms, to illuminate the many weaknesses of the “devil” ideology “capitalism” associated with American democracy. These terms were used in a comparative manner to demonstrate superiority above other countries, including the United States.

Originally appearing in news articles, they appeared in some of the sports articles. For example, in the article “They Get No Breaks” (*Sunday Worker Magazine* section, May 5, 1939, p. 5), the reporter contended that Negro players leave America to travel to the
Soviet Union, among other countries, in order to be paid appropriate wages in
commensurate with their worth. And Rodney used the Soviet Union for comparative
purposes in his editorial on September 29, 1939 when he asked for contributions to help
support the Daily Worker. One of his reasons to contribute to the newspaper was that,
“no other sports page carries through a campaign against the irksome and very un-
democratic ban against Negro players in organized baseball” (On the Scoreboard, p. 8).
Another reason was that “certainly you won’t find in any other sports page about the
exciting sports story of history, that of the unprecedented sports life of the people of the
Soviet Union, where every fan gets his own chance to take a cut at the ball.” This
statement suggested that everyone participated equally in sports in the Soviet Union and
that this situation did not exist in any other country. Finally, Rodney justified asking for
funds because “no other sports page is a part of a paper that has no owners, no stocks,
and bonds, no capital, except for the people” (p.8). The last justification made reference to
the evil of “capitalism” because of its association with Wall Street.

On October 25, 1939, these “god” terms appeared in the rhetoric in a direct way. Co-
written by Rodney and Stan Kurman, the editorial focused on the relationship of sports
reporting and its historical and political importance to society. Specifically, they made
clear to the readers their intent for recording sports history and what sports as a societial
vehicle represented:

Our Coast friend, whom we’ll call Jack Orr, really seems to be ignorant of
exactly what the Communists are fighting for. Sure, there is a “world
situation” today. There always has been a world situation. World situation
means that the great majority of people are fighting for a better society, an
equitable way of life in a world where there is potential abundance for all. We’ll call that way of life Socialism. That’s a society in which all people have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest, without exploitation by a minority in control. Sports and recreation are a part of the culture of a nation. Communists are the only ones fighting for a way of life where there will be more, not less sports for all. . . . A Communist sports writer has many things to do besides recording the various events. . . . We fight discrimination in sports. The capitalist sports pages don’t. We support the fight for higher salaries for underpaid athletes. We take active part in the fight for more and more facilities in sports. The capitalist sports pages don’t. We show the American athletes, who come almost 100 per cent from the common people, the working class (Wall St. and Park Ave. don’t produce champions) as the intelligent human beings they are, interested in the in the world they live in and its betterment. The capitalist pages don’t. Oh no. . . . The Communists want to see people have more of the things they aspire to, and includes more sports. Communists want to see a better society, socialism. That’s why they are Communists. And exactly because these are the things that the great majority of people want, nobody is going to stop the Communists from fighting for them, or to stop them from coming. (On the Scoreboard: Historians of Trivia, p. 8)

This kind of article that attacked capitalism and promoted communism alarmed Hoover and in fact, he specifically named Rodney in his text, Masters of Deceit (1958) as a propagandist who used sports as a way to spread ideology. Hoover illustrated with a
different example than above where Rodney praised sports in the Soviet Union and said its success was due to socialism. Hoover continued by saying, “With obvious glee Rodney writes: So fellow sports lovers, this socialism deserves a little open-minded study, at least, that’s clear. There’s a little school over on Sixth Ave. and 16th St. where you can study it if you’re lucky enough to be a New Yorker” (Hoover, 1957, p. 164). Rodney was referring to the Jefferson School, where courses on Marxism and other CPUSA-related topics were offered. Hoover claimed the school was a front operation for the CPUSA.

While there is no question that these articles promoted the replacement of capitalism, they did not hide their allegiance to a different ideology, nor did they promote the destruction of the people of the United States. The rhetoric suggests that Rodney and the other writers chose to support the socialist ideology because they were convinced that it would promote a better form of democracy, one that would endorse such issues as integration and equal opportunity. In his text, Hoover stereotyped Communists as all one type of people, ardent and fanatical zealots, instead of acknowledging them as each having a separate identity which included their own unique version of what it meant to be a Communist. People like Rodney never traveled to the Soviet Union; they only had access to information given to them by higher CPUSA members. One could say this lack of access to highly classified information is much like most American citizens have access to as compared with members of Congress. When speaking with Rodney, he stated that he was not aware of the less than ideal circumstances in the Soviet Union until his good friend, Joseph Starobin, foreign editor in the 1940’s, told him that conditions were more harsh and oppressive than they were led to believe. (Interview with Rodney, November 1998)
Also, just because Hoover and other American government officials rejected socialism as an ideology, that did not make it evil. Ideologies become evil because of the corruption of the people implementing them. And Hoover, as history has revealed, was just as corrupt, bigoted, and manipulative as many of his generation.

While specific references to the ideal lifestyle athletes experienced under socialism, a supposed higher form of democracy, were mentioned in the sports section, the campaign articles focused specifically on the injustices due to Jim Crow practices in professional baseball. The use of “god,” “devil,” and “charismatic” terms certainly heightened the emotion to entice fans to action, but it is clear that the staff writers and sports editors voiced a legitimate complaint with the form of American democracy practiced in professional baseball during this time in that it did not fit the “charismatic” definition held by the majority of Americans. Gunnar Myrdal’s 1944 study confirmed that Americans felt that people recognized this inconsistency in the United States pre-World War II social culture. Further, nothing was untrue that the reporting staff revealed in regard to the specific examples of discrimination that existed and perpetuated. Many baseball officials were indeed bigoted, greedy “devils” and discrimination was and is un-democratic and un-American.

However, there are two examples in the sports section that may fit the definition of Aesopian language as discussed in a previous section. The first is in regard to the names of the writers. Charles Dexter, C.E. Dexter, and “Scorer” were the same person. In addition, Dexter was not his real name. Rodney revealed in a November 1998 interview that “Dexter” was a well-known resident of New York City who could not reveal his true relationship with the CPUSA because his family and reputation in the New York City area...
would be damaged. The "name changing," was a tactic Lenin (1917) used in pre-revolutionary days and commented upon in his pamphlet, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. While Dexter wrote many articles for the sports section, he was for the most part, not involved with baseball integration rhetoric. Those duties were primarily in the hands of the sports editors, Rodney, Low, and Mardo.

The second example appeared in an article by Abner W. Berry, editor of Negro Affairs, and Editorial Board member, in 1947. Substituting for Rodney that day, Berry's column titled, "Fans and Robby," told a story about two of Robinson's fans, both children, one who was African American and the other who was White. He began the article with this statement:

> There are two little boys—one Negro and the other white—who could say a lot about this Un-Americanism business. But they are too young to understand the Truman loyalty oaths and the persecution of trade unionists and foreign-born anti-fascists.

> One thing they do know, though—Jackie Robinson's entry into Big League baseball has been a big moment in their lives. And they're better Americans because of it. Both of them are too young to remember the pioneering of the Communist Party and the Daily Worker joined by the labor movements and the progressives. They take Jackie's appearance each day in the Brooklyn Dodgers line-up as a natural development in history.

(September 12, 1947, p. 10)

Berry then described the boys' different racial perspectives based on experiences in their respective worlds – the African American child lived in the North whereas the White child

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was from Birmingham, visiting Ebbets Field that day with his father. Berry discussed how
the father of the White child, who had a traditional view of race, gained a new perspective
because his son had learned to judge Robinson on his ability, not because of his race. He
completed the “fable” with these two paragraphs:

Jackie’s playing on the Dodger team has made more fans for the game.

More people are better Americans. The Negro boy is a better American.

The southern white boy cannot remain indifferent—nor can his family—to
Ku Kluxism in the face of Robinson’s performance. He’s becoming a better
American. And the run-of-the-mill baseball fan is a more responsible citizen
than ever before.

The folks who supported the campaign to break Big League baseball
Jimcrown made that development possible. And the Communists were
definitely a part of them. Can our Un-Americans match this achievement?

(September 12, 1947, p. 10)

This article can be interpreted much like an Aesopian fable where there was a hidden or
“Aesopian message” within a story. The exterior story was one that promoted the idea
that racism was evil and that through integration, people begin judging people based on
who they were, not what they looked like. The exterior “fable” was a story that anyone,
member or non-member, can ascertain from the text.

In contrast, the hidden or “Aesopian message” was addressed to members of the
CPUSA. One interpretation could be:

Despite the attempts by the U.S. government to suppress our activities

(through implementation of the Truman loyalty oath and laws prohibiting

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Soviet citizens from emigrating into the U.S.) the CPUSA remains successful at implementing a higher form of democracy, one that is inclusive of all races. As members of the CPUSA, we should be proud of our accomplishments and not let these obstacles interfere with our struggle because our achievements are of the highest order. The defenders of the current system of capitalism (the UN-Americans) can never match our achievements because of the corrupt nature of their ideology as witnessed by their resistance to social integration, a basic freedom covered under their own political documents, yet never upheld.

The reasoning behind this interpretation is that once Berry introduced issues such as the Truman loyalty oath, the story no longer was strictly about the success of Robinson and how it translated into society. Like Aesop, he wanted to talk about those in charge, without them knowing it. In doing so, Berry had turned the article into an overtly political format filled with references seemingly unrelated to a story about children, their introduction into a racially-torn society, and how they overcame this problem.

Discussion

This leads the researcher to the original question: was the rhetoric written by the CPUSA to promote the integration of professional baseball persuasion or propaganda? In answering that question there are two issues to consider. First, the author needs to return to the idea of concealment. What was the intent of the message? Was the campaign attempting to change the segregation policies so all baseball players would have equal opportunities as the rhetoric asserted or did the message have a hidden agenda to attract African Americans to the CPUSA's cause of social revolution by pointing out the flaws in
American democracy? Second, was the rhetoric used to communicate information to influence others where both persuader and persuadee have their needs met, or was the outcome one-sided? In other words, did the campaign effect change where the CPUSA attained their goal of membership and equal rights or did both the CPUSA and the African Americans benefit? These are complicated issues and the answer seems that it was both, or a hybrid of persuasion and propaganda.

To find the reason for this answer one must look at the Daily Worker organizational structure and at the people who created the rhetoric. On one level were the CPUSA elite, many of whom sat on the Editorial Board (including Abner W. Berry) who were concerned with membership as any social movement normally is. But they also had to endorse, uphold, and promote the Communist Party doctrine of equality. That they did uphold this doctrine is well documented by Hutchinson (1995) and others. Rodney also commented that sources told him that Berry’s vocal disagreements with some CPUSA doctrines such as the separate nation theory were more tolerated because he was African American and they could not afford to lose an African American member. (Interview with Rodney, November 1998)

On another level there are lesser ranking members, Americans like Rodney, Low, and Mardo, who for their own personal reasons joined the Party because they believed in what it stood for in regard to changing society for the better. They each joined the newspaper staff for different reasons and believed in the actual tenets of the CPUSA in various degrees. For example, Rodney, like Berry, felt that the CPUSA theory that African Americans should create a separate nation within the United States was ridiculous. He also originally contacted the Daily Worker because he was interested in offering suggestions
for the sports column he had read in the *Sunday Worker*. And when asked during the November 1998 interview, where would he place himself on a scale of one to ten, if ten represented the zealot Communist that believed all polices and supported all CPUSA decisions, he answered that he would be way below 5. He reasoned that was because being a newspaperman that one was inherently skeptical. (Interview with Rodney, November 1998; Rodney, UCLA Oral History, 1981) These facts about Rodney and his own personal labels suggest that he thought of himself first as a newspaperman, and second as a Communist.

While there is little information available about Nat Low, his affiliation with the Young Communist League would suggest that his leanings toward the “ten” on the scale described above would be more in order, although his focus on the topic of integration never really strayed to incorporate other issues. And Bill Mardo, an African-American, would have had a personal stake in the outcome of the campaign as it would directly affect his social experiences in the future.²⁴ Mardo made his feelings known about the relationship between sports and politics when he was asked why he wrote about sports when so many other more pressing issues concerned the world. Mardo defended the incorporation of sports and politics in “In this corner: Sports As a Weapon For Democracy:”

And my answer was: the sports world and its athletes are as integral and vital a part of the American struggle as almost anything you’d care to name. And haven’t prominent sports figures often furthered the democratic good by using their profession and its wide appeal to aid the cause of the people? . . . And such is history of the sports world. For instance, a Joe
DiMaggio will speak out against Jim Crow by calling Satchel Paige the greatest pitcher he ever faced. A Jesse Owens gives the lie to Hitler’s Aryan baloney by personally making monkeys out of his Nazi competition on the Berlin cinder paths. A Joe Louis recognizes the broader implications involved in his second setto with Max Schmeling, identifies the nazi braggard’s pre-bout statements for what they are, and then proceeds to belt his Aryan brains out in two minutes of avengeful slugging. . . . And the athletes involved haven’t suffered from this “pamphleteering.” To the contrary, it has always been an affirmation that no phase of endeavor is separate and apart from the main stream of democratic political welfare.

(February 12, 1946, p. 10)

The word “pamphleteering” alluded to the propaganda aspect of the combination of sports and politics, but Mardo argued that they were ultimately linked because of their place within society. Also, it was important to write about this issue because it “furthered the democratic good” (p. 10). In other words, it was beneficial for all members of society.

These two levels of organization within the CPUSA and the perspectives that they bring to the problems of membership and segregation suggest that both equality and membership were sought and the two levels combined their efforts, consciously or unconsciously, to accomplish both with the campaign rhetoric. So while one intention, the desire for increased African American membership was hidden, the endorsement of an equal society was not. Because of this, the rhetoric was not really specifically persuasion nor propaganda, but a hybrid.
Finally, as far as whether both the African Americans and the CPUSA benefited from the campaign, it is conceivable, but not provable that the campaign probably brought in new African American members as reported numbers were often inflated to suggest success. Further, if all African American had remained members, it would have been unnecessary to devote the amount of time and effort both the *Daily Worker* writers and others had to entice African American membership throughout the Party’s existence. Unfortunately, the “separate nation” doctrine, the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact, and the ousting of Earl Browder, the man who envisioned that the CPUSA needed distance from Soviet influence in order for the Party to flourish in America, drove away new and potential members. So in effect, the campaign succeeded in regard to educating and activating members to participate in ridding professional baseball of discriminatory practices, but failed to sustain membership within the African American community.
CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

On August 16, 1936, the CPUSA began a formal rhetorical campaign in the Sunday Worker to integrate professional baseball. On September 21 that same year the Party expanded its sports format to the Daily Worker editions. Led by Sports Editor Lester Rodney, the campaign lasted for eleven years until Jackie Robinson moved to the Dodger organization and became the first African American player to play in the Major Leagues.

The CPUSA was interested in the battle because inherent to the Communist philosophy was the idea of equality among the masses and because as a social movement they were dependent on membership to succeed in its mission of replacing capitalism with socialism. Even before the campaign, the CPUSA had sought rights for African Americans in such cases as the Scotsboro Trial and had brought this news to its members and potential members through the Daily Worker. Prior to 1936, membership was in jeopardy, in part because of the interest in its rival ideology, fascism. Also, the CPUSA had isolated itself from mainstream America and this strategy negatively affected interest in membership.

Throughout the campaign, writers utilized “god,” “devil,” and “charismatic” terms in order to educate, motivate, and activate its members to action against the un-
democratic practices within professional baseball. "God" terms included "Satchel Paige" and "Jackie Robinson," the names of African American men who were at the height of their athletic profession who CPUSA writers asserted should be judged on their ability and not on their race.

"Devil" terms included "Jim Crow," and "Hitler" and "fascism." These terms were originally used in the news portion of the Daily and Sunday Worker and imported into the sports sections. "Jim Crow" was a term that represented the written and unwritten laws that banned African Americans from voting privileges, certain buildings, restaurants, restrooms, schools, and employment opportunities. The term was used as an adjective, noun, and verb to illustrate the destructive nature of discrimination. "Hitler" and "fascism" were often used as comparative terms that suggested that discrimination and the people who practiced it were as evil as Hitler or the fascist ideology.

Other "devil" terms included the use of "Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis" and "Branch Rickey." Judge Landis was the Commissioner of Baseball, and in effect, the leader of the owners. The CPUSA directed the campaign at him and his unwillingness until the summer of 1942 to make a public statement that there was no written law banning African Americans from Major League play. Branch Rickey, president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, was made the "devil" until he signed Jackie Robinson in late 1945 to play for the Montreal, the Dodger organization farm team.

The "charismatic terms" "America" and "democracy" appeared throughout the campaign to remind readers that as a democracy, the policy of discrimination was contrary to what "America" and "Americans" represented. Because these terms had (and still have) elusive definitions, rhetoric was subject to scrutiny by J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI as
they suspected a hidden meaning, or an “Aesopian message” directed strictly to members regarding the overthrow of the U.S. government. While the author cannot speak for the news and political section of the *Daily Worker*, only minor indications of any rhetoric that would fall under the category of “Aesopian language” was evident in the campaign. For example, false names were used by one of the writers to protect his identity. Also, Abner W. Berry, the editor of Negro Affairs and member of the Editorial Board, wrote an article late in the campaign when pressure was increasing to break the CPUSA that could be interpreted as an Aesopian message.

Because the intent of securing new members by campaigning was not revealed in the rhetoric, one might say this was propaganda. However, the campaign itself endorsed a continuing policy of equality that was inherent in Communist theory. Further, the actual writers were lower ranking members of the CPUSA whose personal ideologies supported the cause. So in their case, an argument in support of persuasion can be noted. Finally, the fact that both the CPUSA achieved the goal of integration, although not the hidden goal of increased membership, and the African American community, the source of the message, also achieved the goal of integration, both persuadee and persuader benefited from the outcome. These outcomes suggest that a hybrid of the two, persuasion and propaganda, was utilized in the campaign.

Rhetorically, this conclusion suggests a new way to look at social movement rhetoric, branding it as neither propaganda nor persuasion, but a *mix*. This may help to neutralize the stigma that often accompanies the social movement rhetoric where people take either a negative (propaganda) or positive (persuasion) stand on what they have read or heard.
Also, the thesis reopens the discussion on Aesopian language. While it was not used to any real degree in the baseball campaign, the door is left ajar as to whether it might have appeared in some form in other sections of the paper, or whether it was just one of Hoover’s paranoid ideas.

This work is unique in that it attempts to combine politics and the popular culture of sports to discuss the rhetorical and historical significance of the campaign writings. Emphasis on research done on the CPUSA in the past has been primarily on political documents associated with the movement and this work clearly moves away from that area. Focusing on more of what lesser ranking members have written instead of movement leaders is important because one can get a better sense of the diversity and levels within the movement. This work helps to make it more understandable as to what attracts people to a cause, how they participate on an individual basis, and how they incorporate the movement rhetoric into their own words and expressions.

The research presented also challenges the stereotypes created during the Cold War which continue to exist about CPUSA members. Investigating the background of members like Rodney and discovering his sometimes-skeptical assessment of communist theories demonstrates members were unique individuals, not zealots who only believed and espoused the “party line.”

Finally, the work also challenges the Cold War stereotype that the CPUSA was entirely evil. It is important to note that whatever one thinks of Communism or the CPUSA, the writers brought important information to both African American and White readership. While the Black community was certainly familiar with the problem, it was probably the first time many Whites were consistently exposed to or thought about what
an inhuman policy segregation represented and how it was contrary to the American ideal. Through the campaign rhetoric, the writers were able to convey that African Americans were human beings with the same concerns, hopes, and goals as any one else in America. This campaign was an important step in the ongoing struggle for equality in America and it is time that the writers were recognized and applauded.

**Further Research**

This thesis represents a small amount of the rhetoric employed in the campaign to integrate professional baseball. A more complete analysis including additional “god,” “devil,” and “charismatic” terms used by the CPUSA should be examined and analyzed. In addition, a metaphorical analysis similar to Ivie’s mentioned in a previous section would also add to the literature.

Another topic for research involves the comparison of the rhetorical styles used by the three sports editors in their campaign coverage. Because of their different backgrounds, their reasons for working for the *Daily Worker*, and their personal interest in the campaign, there should be some interesting and significant analytical findings.

Jackie Robinson and how the CPUSA covered him throughout his years as an athlete is another potential topic from both a rhetorical and historical perspective. Robinson’s name actually appeared in the *Daily Worker* as early as 1939 when he played for the UCLA football team. His relationship to the campaign really began there and it would be interesting to trace his role and look at the rhetoric used by the *Daily Worker* writers in comparison with either other metropolitan newspapers or the African-American press.
Lester Rodney’s writing during and after his time in the CPUSA offers another topic for research. Upon resigning from the Party, Rodney moved to California and wrote for two newspapers, eventually securing a position as a religious editor for the Long Beach area newspaper. The comparisons of his work are of interest as well as his experiences as an ex-Communist and the trouble he and his family experienced because of their affiliation with the Party.

Other areas of interest that became apparent when researching the campaign included women’s and children’s roles in the CPUSA. Specifically, were women treated equally and were their rights argued for like those for African Americans were? How were women’s issues covered and what rhetoric, if any, was used to entice their membership into the CPUSA? And what was the role of children? In the 1930’s, children’s columns were introduced where games, puzzles, contests, and short articles were geared to the child in the readership audience. A more in-depth analysis is needed to see not only what was covered but also what messages were sent to the children in these columns.

Finally, the largest problem the author faced during the literature review was the absence of any extensive history of the Daily Worker. Not only are pieces of information scattered throughout the various works reviewed, but some of it is inaccurate when compared to the original Daily Worker newspaper editions. It is suggested that this project, though definitely a huge undertaking, is a high priority for future researchers in this field of interest.


1 In January of 1936, The American Communist Party added a sports section in the Sunday Worker.

2 There are a handful of articles specifically addressing this issue prior to 1936, but a formal campaign really did not start until that year.

3 The Sunday Worker was managed and written by the same staff as the Daily Worker.

4 Rodney was drafted during World War II and served from 1942 until the beginning of 1946. He states he had no contact with the CPUSA at that time. During his absence, First, Nat Low and later Bill Mardo filled in as sports editor.

5 While there is no recorded evidence that the sports section attracted specific numbers, Rodney told me that the sports section attracted the most letters from readers. (Interview with Rodney, November, 1998)


7 At this time, there were no African American daily newspapers, only weeklies.

8 Horne cites the Daily Worker Articles from 1943 and also the Pete Cacchione papers. Cacchione was a member of the CPUSA who was also a New York City councilman.

9 The editors actually advertised that Ted Benson, a writer on the West Coast, as editor, but Rodney said that was never the plan to his knowledge, that it was done to create interest in the column before its debut in September. (Interview with Rodney, November, 1998)

10 Rodney became a member of the Communist Party very shortly after being hired by the Daily Worker.

11 Low wrote for a while in California and then tragically died at the age of 34 in the late 1940’s. Rodney said his condition was one that could have been cured with penicillin, but that access to the drug in mass quantities was not available in time for Low to recover (Interview, November 1998).

12 Rodney reported in the February 1999 letter that Williamson, a Scotsman, was eventually deported with his wife and two children in the late 1940’s or early 1950’s to the British Isles.

13 Ira Rodney, died as a young boy when a brakeless truck ran over him (Interview with Rodney, November, 1998).

14 The Scottsboro Case involved nine African American boys, aged 13 to 19, accused of raping two white women. The CPUSA became interested when the boys were convicted in a matter of a few weeks without due process. They supplied a well-known lawyer and
publicity about the trial. Eventually, along with the NAACP and other groups’ cooperation, the defendants were freed. The reason this was significant to the CPUSA was because it provided the first opportunity to speak to African American church groups and community organizations.

If this is true, then the campaign should have only benefited the CPUSA. This will be addressed in the conclusion section of the thesis.

There was extensive writing done on the plight of African Americans in boxing. The articles were written primarily about Joe Louis and his ordeal in breaking the color barrier in the boxing ring.

Branch Rickey was also made to appear as a “devil” because the CPUSA disagreed with the farm team system, asserting that it exploited players.

The reason for this comment is because the Editors of the Daily Worker publish a tribute to the newspaper in 1945 including the articles they feel are the outstanding contributions to their cause. The Paige article is one that is chosen and among this group.

Josh Gibson was another African American player who had the potential to play in the Major Leagues. He was often used an example along with men like Roy Campanella and Ernest Bankhead. Tragically, he died at age 35 from a massive stroke and never was able to see integration become a reality.

While people were fearful of the war and Hitler’s aggression, it should be remembered that at this time, the extent of Hitler’s atrocities were unknown to the majority of the people. So the effectiveness of use of the word “Hitler” must be weighed accordingly.

The respect and admiration for Rickey was limited because of Rickey’s open dislike for the CPUSA and its leftist policies. Mardo especially blasts Rickey’s contribution to integration in his article “Robinson-Robeson,” in Jackie Robinson-Race, Sports, and the American Dream (1998). He contends that Rickey is incorrectly remembered as the man who brought integration about, and in fact, he had a much smaller role in the process.

Jesse Owens was an African American track star in the 1936 Olympics.

There is no listing of the citation for the article in Hoover’s text.

The author is currently trying to reach Mr. Mardo as he is currently living in New York City.
APPENDIX I

TIME LINE
## TIME LINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>Marxist Theory begins to enter US through German immigration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td><em>Plessy vs. Ferguson</em> decision - “Separate but Equal” upheld -Jimcrow legally in place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Socialist Party formed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>NAACP formed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Marcus Garvey’s “back to Africa” movement begins (Universal Negro Improvement Association)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Communist Revolution in Russia; US Involvement in World War I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Socialist Party splits into factions</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Worker’s Party formed (becomes CPUSA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Communist Party - “Negro as exploited worker” philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NAACP membership up to ½ million</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td><em>Daily Worker</em> established</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>National Negro Congress (NNC) suggested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>The Third Period; Self-determination doctrine- ‘nation within a nation’ established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Stock market crash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Scottsboro- International Labor Defense formed - replaced with Scottsboro Defense - Committee made up of CPUSA, NAACP, ACLU, League for Industrial Democracy, and Methodist Federation of Social Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>African American James Ford is Vice Presidential Candidate for CPUSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>National Negro Congress (NNC) successfully formed; <em>Daily Worker</em> changes format to include topics such as sports, movie reviews, child rearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td><em>Sunday Worker</em> sports section begins January 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Daily Worker</em> Sports section begins September 21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Joe DiMaggio states that he thinks Satchel Paige is a great pitcher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lester Rodney interviews Satchel Paige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Committee on un-American Activities formed (HUAC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>WWII in Europe; Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact formed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Smith Act - crime to advocate government overthrow; also required fingerprinting and registration of aliens and made them deportable if they join an group that endorses overthrow policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>NNC begins to lose effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany Invades Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US involvement begins in WWII</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis admits that no written ban on African American players exists; Executive Order 8802 issued - (FEPC) ends discrimination for workers in defense industries, or government positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Due to shortage of players, pressure from black press, and from CPUSA, meetings held in New York City regarding integration of baseball</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1944

*An American Dilemma* published (Gunnar Myrdal)
Browder makes statement that communism and capitalism can co-exist
Also states African Americans want integration, not ‘nation within a nation
Dissolves CPUSA and renames it Communist Political Association

1945

Branch Rickey signs Jackie Robinson to play for Dodger farm team in Montreal
Jacques Duclos letter criticizing Browder is published
WWII ends/ Soviet moves into Eastern Europe
Browder ousted and Dennis and Foster in charge of CPUSA
Stalin states Communism and Capitalism are incompatible

1946

Iron Curtain Speech; Atomic Energy Act - forbade disclosure of information regarding atomic weapons
Jackie Robinson makes debut for Montreal

1947

Jackie Robinson plays for Dodgers at Ebbets Field
Truman Loyalty Oath - Federal Loyalty Program instituted to find subversives in government

1948

Integration of Armed Services

1949

Berlin Blockade; Truman Doctrine of Containment; Soviets successfully explode atomic device; CPUSA members arrested and tried

1950

McCarran Act - Set up Subversive Activities Control Board; required registration and disclosure of all subversive/revolutionary groups; allowed for concentration camps

1954

*Brown Vs. Board of Education of Topeka* “Separate but Equal” Overturned

1958

*Daily Worker* folds

1964

Civil Rights Legislation
APPENDIX II

HUMAN SUBJECT PROTOCOL SHEET
DATE: March 12, 1999

TO: Martha Shoemaker
School of Communication
M/S 5007

FROM: Dr. William E. Schulze, Director
Office of Sponsored Programs (X1357)

RE: Status of Human Subject Protocol Entitled:
"Propaganda or Persuasion: the Communist Party and Its Campaign to Integrate Baseball"

OSP #381s0399-220e

The protocol for the project referenced above has been reviewed by the Office of Sponsored Programs and it has been determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from full review by the UNLV human subjects Institutional Review Board. This protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of this notification and work on the project may proceed.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond a year from the date of this notification, it will be necessary to request an extension.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Marsha Green in the Office of Sponsored Programs at 895-1357.

cc: R. Jensen (CS-5007)
OSP File
REFERENCE LIST

Books


Pamphlets


Articles


Naison, Mark. (1979). Lefties and righties - the communist party and sports during the great depression, Radical America, 13 (4), 46-59.


Review of the “daily worker”. (1933, November 1). The Communist International, 10 726-739.


Newspaper Articles


Farrell, Dave. (1940, September 8). Pour the mail into Landis! *Sunday Worker*, Section one, p. 8.


Keep punching against baseball’s jim crow! (1941, April 15). *Daily Worker*, p. 8.

Low, Nat. (1940, August 18). Now for the knockout punch! (Cartoon) *Sunday Worker*, Section one, p. 8.


Low, Nat. (1943, August 11). The fans are the real owners of the Dodgers, Mr. Rickey . . .! Daily Worker, p. 6.

Low, Nat. (1943, November 12). The low down: Election of Pete, Ben, and Mike body blow to baseball jim crow. Daily Worker, p. 5.


Low, Nat. (1944, April 7). The low down: Spring and baseball come back to snow-covered 8th St. Daily Worker, p. 5.

Low, Nat. (1944, July 14). Time has come to speak frankly. Daily Worker, p. 10.

Low, Nat. (1944, August 7). The low down: Esquire’s all-American game not quite that. Daily Worker, p. 10.


Low, Nat. (1945, October 25). The low down: The victory is won, but it must be secured. Daily Worker, p. 10.


Mardo, Bill. (1946, February 12). In this corner: Sports as a weapon for democracy. Daily Worker, p. 10.

Mardo, Bill. (1946, March 5). Robinson snappy at bat in Florida. Daily Worker, pp. 1, 10.


Mardo, Bill. (1946, September 10). In this corner: Some pertinent talk about jackie. *Daily Worker*, p. 10.


Mardo, Bill. (1947, April 11). In this corner: ‘Robinson’s a Dodger,’ the guy said. *Daily Worker*, p. 10.


Mardo, Bill. (1947, September 5). In this corner: An early vote for ‘most valuable.’ *Daily Worker*, p. 10.


Reissman, Norman. (1939, May 7). They get no breaks. *Sunday Worker*, Magazine Section, p. 5.


Satchell (sic) beats major stars, strikes out 14. (1943, November 12). Daily Worker, p. 5.


Young Communists to throw full forces into fight on jim crow. (1940, June 18). Daily Worker, p. 8.
Other


Lester Rodney, audio taped interview conducted November 13, 1998 with Martha Shoemaker, three hours.

VITA

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Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Richard Jenson
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Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. John Bowen