



Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism

Erik S. McDuffie

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Sojourning for Freedom portrays pioneering black women activists from the early twentieth century through the 1970s, focusing on their participation in the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA) between 1919 and 1956. Erik S. McDuffie considers how women from diverse locales and backgrounds became radicalized, joined the CPUSA, and advocated a pathbreaking politics committed to black liberation, women's rights, decolonization, economic justice, peace, and international solidarity. McDuffie explores the lives of black left feminists, including the bohemian world traveler Louise Thompson Patterson, who wrote about the "triple exploitation" of race, gender, and class; Esther Cooper Jackson, an Alabama-based civil rights activist who chronicled the experiences of black female domestic workers; and Claudia Jones, the Trinidad-born activist who emerged as one of the Communist Party's leading theorists of black women's exploitation. Drawing on more than forty oral histories collected from veteran black women radicals and their family members, McDuffie examines how these women negotiated race, gender, class, sexuality, and politics within the CPUSA. In *Sojourning for Freedom*, he depicts a community of radical black women activist intellectuals who helped to lay the foundation for a transnational modern black feminism.

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