and theory for its faults while introducing original theoretical contributions specialized to the Black community and its distinct historical and cultural experiences. Providing refreshingly new observation-based frameworks for future studies on Black class identity formation, Karyn Lacy's groundbreaking work on the Black middle-class, *Blue-Chip Black*, produces a plethora of terms, suggestions, and theories that will enhance not only African American social thought but also, more importantly, the study of African people from their own perspective, which is the purpose of Black studies.

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Howard, W. T. (Ed.). (2008). *Black Communists Speak on Scottsboro: A Documentary History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

DOI: 10.1177/0021934708319405

For those familiar with African American history, the story of the Scottsboro case needs no introduction. It is a story of nine African American males who were charged with raping two White girls in 1930s Alabama, yet there was little evidence to support this claim. Walter T. Howard sheds new light on these events in his book *Black Communists Speak on Scottsboro: A Documentary History*. Howard uses newly released primary sources to explore two rarely investigated aspects of the case. He first posits that Black Communists took center stage in the defense and support of the Scottsboro Nine. Howard continues his argument by reexamining the relationship between African Americans and the Communist Party and argues that African Americans had more autonomy within the party than previously believed.

Black Communists comprises eight chapters, a section titled "Profiles of Black Communists," an appendix, selected bibliography, and an index. In the introduction, Howard frames the Scottsboro case in the context of the American South and the Communist Party. He not only explores the details of the events that led up to the imprisonment and trials of the Scottsboro Nine but also examines the evolution of Black communism in the United States. Howard argues,

> All through the Scottsboro episode Black Communists played major roles. . . . Their efforts indicate that they acted not only as members of the Communist Party of the United States, but also as indigenous black radicals who were responding to unique American radical conditions. (p. 21)

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This statement exemplifies Howard's thesis that Black communists made autonomous decisions on many issues, specifically the Scottsboro case.

Black Communists relies heavily on primary sources such as letters and statements made by Black communists, the families of the Scottsboro Nine, and other political activists. Two Black communists to whom Howard pays particular attention are Harry Haywood and William Patterson. In the chapters titled "Harry Haywood Speaks" and "William Patterson Speaks," Howard documents the numerous articles, statements, and letters written by these two men concerning the case. Howard thoroughly demonstrates their personal commitment to the cause of the Scottsboro Nine within these chapters. Howard's extensive use of primary documents allows readers the opportunity to arrive at an independent conclusion about the involvement of Black communists and the American Communist Party in the Scottsboro case.

With *Black Communists Speak on Scottsboro: A Documentary History*, Howard has revealed new complexities of the Scottsboro case. This text will prove extremely useful for those interested in African American, American, Southern American, and/or Communist Party history. His exploration of the agency of Black communists, their relationship to the larger Communist Party, and the exposure of other rare documents provide new dimensions to the historical analysis of the Scottsboro case.

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