

AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TRANSITION,
1940–1950

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States emerged as the dominant imperial power, and in U.S. popular memory, World War II is remembered more vividly than the American Revolution. *American Literature in Transition, 1940–1950* provides crucial contexts for interpreting the literature of this period. Contributions from scholars in literature, history, art history, ethnic studies, and American studies show how writers intervened in the global struggles of the decade: World War II; the Cold War; and emerging movements over racial justice, gender and sexuality, labor, and decolonization. One recurrent motif is the centrality of the political impulse in art and culture. Artists and writers participated widely in left and liberal social movements that fundamentally transformed the terms of social life in the twentieth century, not by advocating specific legislation but by changing underlying cultural values. This book addresses all the political impulses fueling art and literature at the time, as well as the development of new forms and media, from modernism and noir to radio and the paperback.

CHRISTOPHER VIALS is associate professor of English at the University of Connecticut-Storrs, where he also serves as director of American Studies. He is the author of *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left, and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (2014), for which he was recently interviewed on NPR and CBC Radio. He is also the author of *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and US Culture 1935–1947* (2009), and his work has appeared in the *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *Criticism*, *Science and Society*, and other venues.

AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TRANSITION

American Literature in Transition captures the dynamic energies transmitted across the 20th- and 21st-century American literary landscapes. Revisionary and authoritative, the series offers a comprehensive new overview of the established literary landmarks that constitute American literary life. Ambitious in scope and depth, and accommodating new critical perspectives and approaches, this series captures the dynamic energies and ongoing change in 20th- and 21st-century American literature. These are decades of transition, but also periods of epochal upheaval. These decades – the Jazz Age, the Great Depression, the Cold War, the sixties, 9/11 – are turning points of real significance. But in a tumultuous century, these terms can mask deeper structural changes. Each one of these books challenges in different ways the dominant approaches to a period of literature by shifting the focus from what happened to understanding how and why it happened. They elucidate the multifaceted interaction between the social and literary fields and capture that era's place in the incremental evolution of American literature up to the present moment. Taken together, this series of books constitutes a new kind of literary history in a century of intense cultural and literary creation, a century of liberation and also of immense destruction too. As a revisionary project grounded in pre-existing debates, American Literature in Transition offers an unprecedented analysis of the American literary experience.

Books in the series

- American Literature in Transition, 1910–1920* edited by MARK W. VAN WIENEN
American Literature in Transition, 1920–1930 edited by ICHIRO TAKAYOSHI
American Literature in Transition, 1930–1940 edited by ICHIRO TAKAYOSHI
American Literature in Transition, 1940–1950 edited by CHRISTOPHER VIALS
American Literature in Transition, 1950–1960 edited by STEVEN BELLETT
American Literature in Transition, 1960–1970 edited by DAVID WYATT
American Literature in Transition, 1970–1980 edited by KIRK CURNUTT
American Literature in Transition, 1980–1990 edited by D. QUENTIN MILLER
American Literature in Transition, 1990–2000 edited by STEPHEN J. BURN
American Literature in Transition, 2000–2010 edited by RACHEL GREENWALD SMITH

AMERICAN LITERATURE
IN TRANSITION,
1940–1950

EDITED BY
CHRISTOPHER VIALS
University of Connecticut



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-14331-9 — American Literature in Transition, 1940–1950
Edited by Christopher Vials
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi - 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107143319
DOI: 10.1017/9781316534434

© Cambridge University Press 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-14331-9 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy
of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication,
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiv
<i>Chronology</i>	xv
Introduction: A Decade in Transition	I
PART I THE UNITED STATES IN THE WORLD	
1 <i>Why We Fight: Contending Narratives of World War II</i> <i>Christopher Vials</i>	13
2 Human Rights in American Political Discourse <i>Glenn Mitoma</i>	29
3 Fictions of Anti-Semitism and the Beginning of Holocaust Literature <i>Josh Lambert</i>	44
4 The Fatal Machine: The Postwar Imperial State and the Radical Novel <i>Benjamin Balthaser</i>	59
5 Antifascism as a Political Grammar and Cultural Force <i>Christopher Vials</i>	73
6 From Confession to Exposure: Transitions in 1940s Anticommunist Literature <i>Alex Goodall</i>	89
7 The Contested Origins of the Atomic Age and the Cold War <i>Christian G. Appy</i>	107

PART II EMERGENT PUBLICS

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 8 | Crosscurrents: World War II and the Increasing Visibility of Race
<i>Bill V. Mullen</i> | 129 |
| 9 | Good Asian/Bad Asian: Asian American Racial Formation
<i>Floyd Cheung</i> | 144 |
| 10 | Social Realism, the Ghetto, and African American Literature
<i>James Smethurst</i> | 161 |
| 11 | From Factory to Home? The Crisis in the Gendered Division of Labor
<i>Julia L. Mickenberg</i> | 178 |
| 12 | Public Excursions in Fierce Truth-Telling: Literary Cultures and Homosexuality
<i>Aaron Lecklider</i> | 193 |
| 13 | Resurgence: Conservatives Organize against the New Deal
<i>Kathryn S. Olmsted</i> | 212 |

PART III MEDIA AND GENRE

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 14 | Late Modernisms, Latent Realisms: The Politics of Literary Interpretation
<i>Sarah Ehlers</i> | 229 |
| 15 | Naked Cities: The Literature of Urban Renewal
<i>Sean McCann</i> | 246 |
| 16 | Noir and the Ebb of Radical Hope
<i>Alan Wald</i> | 262 |
| 17 | Narrating the War
<i>Philip Beidler</i> | 278 |
| 18 | Paperbacks and the Literary Marketplace
<i>Erin A. Smith</i> | 291 |
| 19 | Literary Radicals in Radio's Public Sphere
<i>Judith E. Smith</i> | 309 |

	<i>Contents</i>	vii
20	The State Cultural Apparatus: Federal Funding of Arts and Letters <i>A. Joan Saab</i>	334
	<i>Index</i>	349

Illustrations

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Miné Okubo, eating lunch while awaiting departure inside the Civil Control Station, Berkeley, California, 1942 | <i>page</i> 150 |
| 2 | Still from the film, <i>Naked City</i> (1948) | 248 |
| 3 | Esther Bublely, <i>Sailors Boarding the Bus</i> (1943) | 343 |

Contributors

CHRISTIAN APPY is a professor of history at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he recently received the Chancellor's Medal and the Distinguished Teaching Award. He is the author of *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (2015), *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (2003), and *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (1993). He is currently working on a book about the impact of nuclear weapons on American political culture since World War II.

BENJAMIN BALTHASER is Associate Professor of Multi-Ethnic US Literature, Post 1900, at Indiana University-South Bend. His recent book, *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (2015), explores connections between cross-border, anti-imperialist movements and the making of modernist culture at mid-century. His essays have appeared or are forthcoming in journals or collections such as *American Quarterly*, *Boston Review*, *Jacobin*, *Criticism*, and *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*. He is currently working on a manuscript project titled *Dialectics of Race: Modernism and the Search for a Racial Subject*.

PHILIP BEIDLER is the Margaret and William Going Professor of English at the University of Alabama, where he has taught American literature since receiving his PhD from the University of Virginia in 1974. An armored cavalry veteran of the Vietnam War, his books include *The Good War's Greatest Hits: World War II and American Remembering*, *Re-Writing America: Vietnam Authors in Their Generation*, and *Late Thoughts on an Old War: The Legacy of Vietnam*. His most recent books are *The Victory Album: Reflections on the Good Life after the Good War*, *The Island Called Paradise: Cuba in History, Literature, and the Arts*; and *Beautiful War: Studies in a Dreadful Fascination*.

FLOYD CHEUNG is Professor of English language and literature and of American studies at Smith College. He helped found the Five College Asian/Pacific/American Studies Certificate Program in 2001. His scholarly work focuses on the recovery of lesser-known early Asian American literature, including a new edition of H. T. Tsiang's *And China Has Hands* (2016) and *Sadakichi Hartmann: Collected Poems, 1886–1944* (2016). With Keith Lawrence, he coedited and contributed to *Recovered Legacies: Authority and Identity in Early Asian American Literature* (2005).

SARAH EHLERS is an assistant professor of English at the University of Houston. Her first book, *Left of Poetry: Depression America and the Formation of Modern Poetics*, excavates radical Depression-era poetry and criticism in order to rethink scholarly discourses about poetics. Her articles on modern and contemporary poetry have appeared in journals and edited volumes such as *Modern Language Quarterly*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Mosaic*, and *Lineages of the Literary Left*.

ALEX GOODALL is a senior lecturer in history at University College London. He works on the history of radicalism and antiradicalism in the United States and beyond, particularly in the years prior to the McCarthy era. He is the author of *Loyalty and Liberty: American Countersubversion from World War One to the McCarthy Era* (2013) and of a series of articles on American anticommunism published in the *Historical Journal*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, *Journal of American Studies*, and several edited collections.

JOSH LAMBERT is the academic director of the Yiddish Book Center and visiting assistant professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is the author of *Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture* (2014), which won a Jordan Schnitzer Book Award from the Association for Jewish Studies, and *American Jewish Fiction* (2009). His reviews and essays have appeared in several publications, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Haaretz*, and the *Forward*.

AARON LECKLIDER is an associate professor of American studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He is the author of *Inventing the Egghead: The Battle over Brainpower in American Culture* (2013) and the forthcoming *Love's Next Meeting: Homosexuality and the Left in American Culture*.

SEAN MCCANN is Professor of English at Wesleyan University. He is the author of *A Pinnacle of Feeling: American Literature and Presidential*

List of Contributors

xi

Government (2008) and *Gumshoe America: Hard-boiled Crime Fiction and the Rise and Fall of New Deal Liberalism* (2000).

JULIA L. MICKENBERG is an associate professor of American studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of *American Girls in Red Russia: Chasing the Soviet Dream* (2017) and *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States* (2006), as well as co-editor of *Tales for Little Rebels: A Collection of Radical Children's Literature* and *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature*. She has also published articles in *American Literary History*, *American Quarterly*, and the *Journal of American History*.

GLENN MITOMA is an assistant professor of human rights and education at the University of Connecticut, jointly appointed with the Human Rights Institute and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and is director of the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. His work appears in *Human Rights Quarterly*, *Journal of Human Rights*, *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, and *History*. His first book, *Human Rights and the Negotiation of American Power*, examines the mid-twentieth century ascendancies of the United States as the preeminent global power and human rights as the most compelling global ethic.

BILL V. MULLEN is a professor of American studies at Purdue University. He is the author of *Un-American: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Century of World Revolution* (2015); *Afro-Orientalism* (2004), and *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935–1946* (1999). He is a member of the organizing collective of the United States Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. He is also co-editor, with Ashley Dawson, of *Against Apartheid: The Case for Boycotting Israeli Universities* (2015) and is currently at work on a biography of James Baldwin.

KATHRYN S. OLMSTED is a professor of history at the University of California, Davis. She is the author of four books: *Right out of California: The 1930s and the Big Business Roots of Modern Conservatism* (2015), *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11* (2009), *Red Spy Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth Bentley* (2002), and *Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI* (1996).

A. JOAN SAAB is Susan B. Anthony Professor and Chair of Art and Art History at the University of Rochester. Her first book, *For the Millions:*

American Art and Culture between the Wars (2004, 2nd ed. 2009) was the inaugural volume in the “Arts and Intellectual Life in Modern America” series. She has just completed a born-digital “book” titled *Searching for Siqueiros* on the digital publishing platform Scalar and is currently writing the volume on visual culture for a series on sensory history titled, *Making Sense of What We See*; she is also editing the *Companion to Visual Culture*. Her next project is tentatively titled, *Tales From the Crypt: Vincent Price and American Art*.

JAMES SMETHURST is a professor of Afro-American studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is the author of *The African American Roots of Modernism: From Reconstruction to the Harlem Renaissance* (2011), *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (2005), and *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930–1946* (1999). He also co-edited *Left of the Color Line: Race, Radicalism and Twentieth-Century Literature of the United States* (2003), *Radicalism in the South since Reconstruction* (2006), and *SOS – Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader* (2014).

ERIN A. SMITH is Professor of American studies at the University of Texas at Dallas, where she teaches courses in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literatures and cultures and gender studies. She is the author of *What Would Jesus Read? Popular Religious Books and Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century America* (2015), *Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines* (2000), and numerous articles on American popular books and reading. Her research has been supported by fellowships and stipends from the National Humanities Center, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Louisville Institute, and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation.

JUDITH E. SMITH is Professor of American studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Her writing on postwar film, stage, radio and television have appeared in various published essays and in *Visions of Belonging: Family Stories, Popular Culture, and Postwar Democracy, 1940–1960* (2004). Her recent book *Becoming Belafonte: Black Artist, Public Radical* (2014), explores Belafonte’s leading man performance on multiple stages – in nightclubs and concert halls, on Broadway, in television and film production, and at civil rights and peace demonstrations in the 1950s and 1960s. An essay on the 1964 film, *Nothing but a Man*, in *The Poetics and Politics of Black Film: Nothing but a Man* (2015) is part of the research for her new project, provisionally titled “Alternative

List of Contributors

xiii

Freedom Dreams: Black Arts Radicals Represent Multi-Racial Citizenship, 1945–1970.”

CHRISTOPHER VIALS is an associate professor of English at the University of Connecticut-Storrs, where he also serves as director of American studies. He is the author of *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left, and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (2015) and *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and US Culture, 1935–1947* (2009). With co-editor Bill Mullen, he is now at work on *The US Antifascism Reader* and on a third monograph on the fraying appeal of neoliberal temporality in US culture.

ALAN WALD is H. Chandler Davis Collegiate Professor Emeritus in English Literature and American Culture at the University of Michigan. He is the author of a trilogy about the US literary left, and the thirtieth-anniversary edition of his *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left* is to be published in late 2017.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank Ray Ryan and Edgar Mendez at Cambridge University Press for all their support and guidance through this whole process. I also owe a singular debt of gratitude to my colleague Clare Eby at the University of Connecticut for her trust and generosity. I would also like to thank the contributors to this collection for agreeing to share such fine work: Christian Appy, Benjamin Balthaser, Philip Beidler, Floyd Cheung, Sarah Ehlers, Alex Goodall, Josh Lambert, Aaron Lecklider, Sean McCann, Julia L. Mickenberg, Glenn Mitoma, Bill Mullen, Kathy Olmstead, Joan Saab, James Smethurst, Erin Smith, Judith Smith, and Alan Wald. I would also like to thank Benjamin Balthaser and the American studies Writing Group at the University of Connecticut for reading a draft of Chapter 1. For laying the foundations for so much of the analysis found in these pages, I thank Michael Denning, Barbara Foley, Paula Rabinowitz, and Alan Wald. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Cathy Schlund-Vials – my best editor, finest colleague, and most patient supporter.

Chronology

1939

September 1 Germany invades Poland, triggering World War II in Europe

1940

May 10 Germany launches Blitzkrieg against Western Europe

June 22 Fall of France; France signs armistice in which the northern part of the country is under direct Nazi occupation, while a collaborationist regime is established in southern France with its capital in Vichy

July 10 German air assault on Britain begins

September 22 Japan invades French Indochina

October 16 Roosevelt signs the Selective Service and Training Act, requiring all male citizens aged twenty-six to thirty-five to register for the military draft

November 5 Roosevelt elected to third term, defeating Wendell Willkie

Publications of 1940 Raymond Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*; Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*; Carson McCullers, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*; Richard Wright, *Native Son*

1941

January 6 Roosevelt outlines the “Four Freedoms” in his State of the Union address

xvi

Chronology

- March 11 Lend-Lease Act signed into law, marking a major step in US intervention on the side of the Allies
- June 25 In response to March on Washington Movement, Roosevelt issues Executive Order 8802 creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee to prevent racial discrimination in defense industry; first federal step toward civil rights since Reconstruction
- July 22 Germany and Axis partners invade the Soviet Union in “Operation Barbarossa”; Germany now fighting a two-front war
- July 26 United States finally embargoes gas, oil, and metal shipments to Japan, four years after its great push into mainland China
- August 14 Roosevelt and Churchill release the Atlantic Charter, a policy statement outlining goals for a postwar order; becomes the basis for the Declaration of the United Nations
- August 28 Office of Price Administration (OPA) created by Executive Order 8875; imposes price controls to control inflation, marking a significant expansion of New Deal economics
- December 6 Soviet counteroffensive finally halts German advance, outside Moscow
- December 7–8 Japan bombs Pearl Harbor; the following day, the United States declares war on Japan, and Japan begins its invasion of the Philippines
- December 11 United States declares war on Germany and Italy
- December 24 Roosevelt announces a “no strike pledge” brokered with the AFL and the CIO for the duration of the war; periodic “wildcat strikes” continue, however, and union membership increases during the conflict
- Publications of 1941** Walker Evans and James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*; Lillian Hellman, *Watch on the Rhine*; William Shirer, *Berlin Diary*; Richard Wright, *Twelve Million Black Voices*

Chronology

xvii

1942

- January 1–2 Declaration of the United Nations: treaty of twenty-two nations allied against the Axis powers
- January 20 Nazis convene Wannsee Conference to plan a European-wide “Final Solution to the Jewish Question”
- February 19 Roosevelt issues Executive Order 9066, authorizing the deportation and forced incarceration of Japanese Americans; War Relocation Authority is created the following month to administer the camps
- May 8 Final surrender of US forces in the Philippines to Japan
- June First large-scale gas chamber in operation at Auschwitz-Birkenau
- July 13 Roosevelt creates the Office of War Information
- August 4 Federal government creates the “Bracero program,” a coordinated system for Mexican “guest workers” in the United States
- November 3 Midterm elections give conservative coalition of southern Democrats and northern Republicans control over both houses of Congress; concerns about the war and FDR fatigue are the conventional explanations for their victory.
- November 8 US and British troops begin Operation Torch, the invasion of French North Africa
- Publications of 1942** Nelson Algren, *Never Come Morning*; Pearl Buck, *Dragon Seed*; Vera Caspary, *Laura*; William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*; John Steinbeck, *The Moon Is Down*; José García Villa, *Have Come, Am Here*; Margaret Walker, *For My People*

1943

- February 2 German troops surrender at Stalingrad; generally regarded as the turning point of the war in Europe

xviii	<i>Chronology</i>
April	Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
June 3	So-called Zoot Suit riots begin in Los Angeles; white mobs assault Mexican and Mexican American youth in the streets, injuring more than 150 people
June 20	“Race riots” begin in Detroit; 34 people killed and 433 wounded, overwhelmingly black
July 10	US and British troops land in Sicily, beginning the Italian campaign
September	First Armed Services Edition (ASE) book series printed; by the end of the war, more than 122 million ASE books were distributed to servicemen and women
September 13	Tule Lake internment camp begins to be realigned as a camp for “dissenters”
December 17	Chinese Exclusion Act repealed
Publications of 1943	T. S. Eliot, <i>Four Quartets</i> ; Elizabeth Hawes, <i>Why Women Cry: Or, Wenches with Wrenches</i> ; Ayn Rand, <i>The Fountainhead</i> ; Betty Smith, <i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i> ; Anna Louise Strong, <i>Wild River</i> ; Richard Tregaskis, <i>Guadalcanal Diary</i> ; Wendell Willkie, <i>One World</i>

1944

June 6	Operation Overlord: US, British, and Canadian troops land in Normandy and begin to retake Western Europe
June 22	Soviets launch Operation Bagration, a major offensive in the East to retake Belarus; operation is comparable in scale to the Normandy invasion
June 22	G.I. Bill signed by Roosevelt provides low-interest loans for housing and free tuition for veterans; massively expands higher education system in the United States
October 20	US troops land in the Philippines
November 7	Roosevelt elected for fourth term, defeating Thomas E. Dewey; liberal Democrats expand

Chronology

xix

December 18

gains in House of Representatives, reflecting happiness over the course of the war

Supreme Court decides *Korematsu v. United States*, ruling that the Japanese American interment did not violate the Constitution

Publications of 1944

John Hersey, *A Bell for Adano*; Margaret Landon, *Anna and the King of Siam*; Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*; Lillian Smith, *Strange Fruit*; Carlos Bulosan, *Laughter of My Father*

1945

January 12

Soviet Union launches new offensive, capturing Poland in January and Budapest the following month

January 27

Red Army liberates Auschwitz-Birkenau

February 4

Yalta Conference: Allied leaders meet to outline the postwar occupation of Germany and prosecution of war criminals

February 23

US forces retake Manila

March 7

US troops cross Rhine and enter Germany

April 12

Franklin Roosevelt suddenly dies at Warm Spring, Georgia; Harry S. Truman sworn in as president

April 29

US troops liberate Dachau

May 7–9

Germany surrenders; victory in Europe

June 26

Representatives of fifty nations meet in San Francisco to draw up the United Nations Charter

August 6 and 8

United States drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively

August 15

Japan announces its surrender, ending World War II; US occupation begins in earnest the following month

September 2

Ho Chi Minh declares the independence of Vietnam from France

October 15–21

Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, England; largely viewed as the most important of these congresses, because it

xx

Chronology

- brought together black leaders from across the globe to chart the course of anticolonial struggle in the years to come
- October 24 United Nations officially comes into existence as Charter is ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States; the same day, Syria wins independence from France
- November 19 Trials of the International Military Tribunal begin in Nuremberg to prosecute the highest-ranking Nazi war criminals
- Publications of 1945** Gwendolyn Brooks, *A Street in Bronzeville*; Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*; Arthur Miller, *Focus*; Ezra Pound, *The Pisan Cantos*; Gertrude Stein, *Brewsie and Willie*; Weegee, *Naked City*; Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

1946

- January 17 First meeting of the United Nations Security Council, in London
- February 22 George Kennan sends his famous “Long Telegram” to the US State Department, helping consolidate the emergent US policy toward the Soviet Union
- April 29 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal convenes
- July 2 Luce-Celler Act allows Filipinos and Asian Indians to become naturalized US citizens; also sets an immigration quota of 100 Filipinos and 100 Indians per year
- July 4 Treaty of Manila: United States recognizes independence of the Philippines
- October 1 Trials of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg are completed; twelve defendants sentenced to death by hanging
- November 5 Midterm elections: Republicans become a majority in the US House of Representatives for the first time since 1930

Chronology

xxi

Novels of 1946

Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*;
 Kenneth Fearing, *The Big Clock*; John Hersey,
Hiroshima; Carson McCullers, *Member of the
 Wedding*; Miné Okubo, *Citizen 13660*; Ann
 Petry, *The Street*; Jo Sinclair, *Wasteland*;
 Benjamin Spock, *The Common Sense Book of
 Baby and Child Care*

1947

- March 12 Truman issues his “Truman Doctrine” speech to Congress, firmly signaling a foreign policy course against communism globally
- March 21 Truman issues Executive Order 9835, known as the “Loyalty Order,” to root out communist influence in the federal government
- April 3 US Attorney General’s Office publishes its “List of Subversive Organizations,” which includes many antifascist and civil rights organizations of the 1930s
- May 29 OPA formally abolished, despite significant protests to maintain it
- June 23 Taft-Hartley Act enacted over Truman’s veto, which allowed states to opt out of the National Labor Relations Act of 1936 and become “right to work” states; significant rollback of the New Deal, passed after a two-year postwar strike wave
- July 18 Britain recognizes independence of British India and partitions it into the states of India and Pakistan
- October 20 House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) begins hearings on communist influence in the motion picture industry
- November 24 US House of Representatives cites “the Hollywood Ten” with contempt of Congress; they are each sentenced to a year in prison
- Publications of 1947** Saul Bellow, *The Victim*; John Horne Burns, *The Gallery*; Chester Himes, *Lonely Crusade*; Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano*; James

Chronology

Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific*; Arthur Miller, *All My Sons*; Willard Motley, *Knock on Any Door*; Lionel Trilling, *The Middle of the Journey*; Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

1948

- January 13 Final issue of *The New Masses*, the cultural magazine of the Communist Party USA
- May 14 State of Israel established
- July 26 Truman issues Executive Order 9981, ending formal segregation in the military
- August 17 / September 9 South Korea and North Korea established as per a UN agreement dividing the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel
- November 2 Truman defeats Thomas Dewey in upset victory; Democrats take control of both houses of Congress after much of the public finds the Republican rollbacks of the New Deal detrimental; except for a brief interlude in 1952–1954, Democrats continue to control Congress until 1980
- November 12 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal adjourns; six high-ranking figures in the Japanese military and government sentenced to death
- December 10 Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly
- Publications of 1948** William Faulkner, *Intruder in the Dust*; Alfred Kinsey, *Sexuality and the Human Male*; Norman Mailer, *Naked and the Dead*; Irwin Shaw, *Young Lions*

1949

- January 20 Truman inaugurated president for second term
- May 23 Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) created, ending the period of military occupation by Western allies

Chronology

xxiii

August 29	First successful Soviet atomic test
October 1	Mao Zedong declares the creation of the People's Republic of China
October 7	German Democratic Republic (East Germany) created
December 27	Holland finally recognizes Indonesian independence after four-year national liberation struggle
Publications of 1949	Nelson Algren, <i>Man with the Golden Arm</i> ; Gwendolyn Brooks, <i>Annie Allen</i> ; Richard Crossman, ed., <i>The God that Failed: A Confession</i> ; Arthur Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i> ; Toshio Mori, <i>Yokohama, California</i> ; George Orwell, <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> ; William Carlos Williams, <i>Patterson</i>

1950

February 9	Joseph McCarthy gives his speech on communist infiltration in Wheeling, West Virginia, catapulting him to the national stage as leading red-hunter in the United States
April 14	National Security Council policy paper NSC-68 presented to Truman; outlines blueprint for military-industrial complex
June 27	UN Security Council passes resolution calling on all members to help repel invasion of South Korea by North Korea
September 15	Amphibious landing at Inchon, the first major engagement of US troops in the Korean War
November 11	First meeting of the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles, one of the first gay rights organizations in the United States
Publications of 1950	James Baldwin, <i>Giovanni's Room</i> (1950)