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“Spies and Spiders”: Langston Hughes and Transpacific Intelligence Dragnets

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The section of Langston Hughes’s memoir *I Wonder as I Wander* (1956) titled “Spies and Spiders” is more than the wanderlust-inspired story of a poet’s experience of being harassed by the Japanese police. As he recounts in the memoir, having freshly arrived in East Asia in June 1933 after a year in the Soviet Union, Hughes—the poet laureate of the Harlem Renaissance known in his time as a radical of the black Left—found himself a focus of Japanese authorities’ anti-Communist paranoia, which resulted in his expulsion from the country. Hughes makes the following observation about his humiliating experience: “I, a colored man, had lately been all around the world, but *only* in Japan, a colored country, had I been subjected to police interrogation and told to go home and not return again. The word ‘Fascist’ was just coming into general usage then. When I got to Honolulu, I said in a newspaper interview that in my opinion Japan was a Fascist country.”¹ Yet two decades later, even as he was composing his memoir about these events, Hughes suffered through another ordeal resulting from anti-Communist fervor, this time in the United States at the hands of Joseph McCarthy and, more portentously, General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in American-occupied postwar Japan. Published during the Cold War era, Hughes’s memoir, as I hope to show in this essay, affords

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significant insight into the intelligence dragnets created by multiple states before World War II and after, a theater of secret war on dissent that was not confined to a national scope.

Hughes's testimony before McCarthy's subcommittee during the reign of McCarthyist terror that attempted to silence dissent is a story familiar to scholars. Hughes was served with a subpoena to appear before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation and was subsequently questioned by McCarthy and his chief counsel, Roy Cohn, who had helped prosecute Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1951 for passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. Less well known is the poet's ensnarement in a red-baiting smear campaign conducted by the American occupying forces in postwar Japan. Over the course of this campaign, MacArthur used confiscated Japanese police and court records to produce intelligence reports on the Soviet spymaster, Richard Sorge, and his ring. MacArthur's reports from Tokyo unsettled the American nation with their revelations—such as their naming of Agnes Smedley, a radical writer and Hughes's friend, as both a principal member of the Sorge spy ring and an American “traitor” undermining the war against Communism in Asia, a charge with repercussions that eventually extended to Hughes. Thus in US-occupied postwar Japan, by exposing these archived reports, MacArthur resurrected charges of Soviet espionage that had been leveled against Hughes in the 1930s.

MacArthur's actions and the climate of civil liberties abuses in the McCarthy era notably influenced Hughes's retrospective narrative of his experience in Asia. He not only muted his sympathy for Communism but also omitted several important particulars about his travels from the published version of *I Wonder*, which I have attempted to recover through archival work. In this essay I retrace the underground (and surface) routes that Hughes took in navigating, and at times slipping right through, the intelligence dragnets and discuss how *I Wonder* committed to public memory the secret war on dissent in the 1930s, revealing it as a force that eerily shaped the international blueprint for the Cold War.

HUGHES GOES TO TOKYO

As described in *I Wonder*, Hughes's travels in Asia were from the start delimited by an anti-Soviet Japanese police net. After crossing the Soviet border into Japanese-ruled Korea, Hughes found himself trailed by Japanese agents, “always a dozen or so yards behind,” everywhere he went. Soon after he arrived in port in Japan proper, the police visited to inspect his

papers, asking “why [he] had been in Russia, how long, and for what good reason” (*IWAIW*, 237–38). Knowing that the Japanese customs authorities “confiscate most written material coming out of the Soviet Union,” he was careful not to bring with him manuscripts or photographs that might incriminate him as a radical. Hughes had sent such materials back to the United States in care of his friend and patron, Noël Sullivan.² These circumstances may suggest that Hughes, arriving from the Soviet Union, was regarded as *persona non grata* from the outset of his stay in Japan. Despite police xenophobia, however, Hughes recalls the many Japanese people who extended their hospitality to him as being “most gracious” (*IWAIW*, 242).

Hughes was not unknown as a poet to Japanese readers and critics. His picture had appeared on the front cover of a Japanese literary magazine, and in the memoir he recalls that in it, “I appeared quite Japanese, with my eyes slanting a bit” (*IWAIW*, 242). In an address to a luncheon at the prestigious Pan-Pacific Club in Tokyo, Hughes spoke on American racism and the pro-Japanese sentiments of black Americans in a manner that gratified his hosts, playing into their vanity. At least one member of the audience, however—the wife of a consular official of the American embassy, who had been seated next to Hughes—thought that the poet had done his country a disservice (*IWAIW*, 243). In any case, it is an irony of fate that the rhetorical conformity of this speech to Japanese expectations led the Federal Bureau of Investigation to regard it as demonstrating pan-colored identification with the Japanese on Hughes’s part.

Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover was informed that during the visit of Hughes to Japan, he talked of “the alleged ill-treatment of the negroes” and predicted that “there would one day come a war in which all the colored races, black, yellow, and red, would join in the subjugation of the whites.” The (female) informant who reported on the speech (who may or may not have been the wife of the American consular official—her name was blacked out in the released FBI file) claimed to have heard Hughes say that “there was a natural bond between these colored races and that their opposition to the white race should be expressed in combat.” Obviously, she attributed to Hughes these statements that she thought he would have made. She concluded, as quoted in a 1942 report, that “possibly HUGHES is presently engaged in subversive activities” in the United States.³

If the speech by Hughes in Tokyo led the informant—and the FBI—to suspect him of harboring dangerously pro-Japanese sentiments, how could

the poet's stock have ostensibly fallen so abruptly in Japan that the Japanese police would label him politically undesirable so soon afterward? The actions of the police leading up to his arrest were as mysterious to Hughes in 1933 as they may seem today. After his arrest, Hughes was astonished to learn that the Japanese police had compiled "an almost complete dossier on everything [he] had done in both Tokyo and Shanghai" (*IWAIW*, 268) and that this dossier aimed at supporting allegations that he was a Soviet spy rather than a tourist.

Hughes speculates in *I Wonder* that the police began surveilling him when he visited the Tsukiji Little Theater. Visiting the Tsukiji was one of Hughes's first undertakings on arriving in Tokyo, where he stayed at the Imperial Hotel, and he believed that Seki Sano—a Japanese stage director in exile and a friend from Moscow who had helped him plan his trip to Tokyo—had probably written to members of the theater about his coming visit. In Hughes's account, he went backstage in order to meet the cast, who greeted him with open arms, hailing him as "the first Negro writer to visit their theater" (*IWAIW*, 241). Subsequently, through the acquaintances he made at Tsukiji, Hughes came to meet a circle of Japanese proletarian and left-wing writers, artists, directors, and actors who shared his intellectual views and political leanings.⁴

The Japanese police decoded these connections as suggesting an underground network of Communists, or members of the Comintern, who aimed at overthrowing the Japanese imperial government and establishing a Soviet Japan, and, as I shall discuss further, Hughes fell under suspicion for being a sort of "international courier" who used the role of tourist as a cover (*IWAIW*, 266). In *I Wonder*, the construal of Hughes's Asian travels by the Japanese police thus functions as a narrative contrapuntal to his own account of his aim of visiting sights of interest, which suggests that the route the poet traveled ran perilously close to the theater of counterintelligence operations meant to block the spread of dissent into Japan by crippling the Japanese Communist Party through one mass arrest after another of members and sympathizers.

SHANGHAI'S WHITE TERROR

The anti-Soviet police net in which Hughes became caught operated not just domestically but internationally as well, stretching as far as Shanghai, for which Hughes departed by ship on July 1, 1933. As biographer Faith Berry reports, "the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Board had warned the

Japanese consulate in Shanghai to track [Hughes’s] every move when he arrived there.”⁵ During his two weeks in Shanghai, Japanese intelligence agents apparently monitored his activities closely, as they had in Tokyo, compiling information that could support the case against “Spy Hughes.” The question remains, however, as to why the Japanese police continued to surveil the poet, and with increased intensity, in Shanghai. I suggest that the answer follows the status of Shanghai as a front in a cold war in Asia—that is, as a theater of an undeclared, secret war against Soviet Communism in the 1930s.

The international city of Shanghai was a haven for radical intellectuals and home to the active underground Chinese Communist Party, but it was simultaneously an environment notoriously hostile to Communists and Communist sympathizers. “All sorts of police” operated in the city, many focused on combating the Comintern and the Chinese Left. Hughes recounts in his memoir that during his stay, “a meeting of students at the Chinese Y.M.C.A. on Szechuen Road was invaded by the British Sikh police and broken up for harboring ‘radicals.’” Moreover, the “dreaded secret agents, the Blue Shirts” of the Kuomintang (KMT), the Nationalist Party that ruled much of China under Chiang Kai-shek, had earned a reputation in Shanghai as fascistic, given its members’ open admiration of Mussolini, anti-Communist sentiments, and use of violence (*IWAIW*, 248).⁶ Under the KMT’s white terror, left-wing Chinese people lived in constant danger of assassination or midnight arrest and summary execution, while students were “imprisoned for harboring ‘dangerous thoughts’ against Chiang Kai-Shek” (*IWAIW*, 249). The KMT government, which concentrated its efforts on suppressing the Chinese Communist Party rather than opposing Western imperialism in China, in effect colluded with foreign powers in China in the persecution of radicals based on their shared hostility to the Comintern and Chinese (and world) revolution.

Early drafts of *I Wonder* portray the poet as both a witness of and participant in this cold war, which in 1930s Shanghai was indeed rather intense. In a draft of a section titled “Shanghai Terror” that would be cut from the published 1956 version of the memoir—an omission that, as I will argue below, reflected the imperative that Hughes hide his connection with Agnes Smedley—Hughes recounts his navigation of the perilous channels of Soviet-allied internationalism in Shanghai. As he describes it, “the highly melodramatic situation that I walked into the next day in Shanghai I might have avoided had I realized the terror and tension in the Far East which the proximity of the Soviet Union, plus the undeclared Japanese-Chinese War,

had created.” Nonetheless, the day after he reached Shanghai, Hughes recalls telephoning the office of Harold R. Isaacs, a radical American journalist and editor of the *China Forum*, a newspaper serving Chinese Communists. No one answered Hughes’s call to the newspaper office. “No wonder!” writes Hughes, who walked over to Isaacs’s apartment from his hotel and learned that Chiang Kai-shek’s agents “had just wrecked [Isaacs’s] office with axes the day before.”⁷

According to early drafts of the memoir, Hughes had called on Isaacs at the urging of Smedley, who had left Shanghai for Russia shortly before Hughes left Moscow. He writes, “I could very well have gotten around Shanghai alone and found ways of enjoying myself. But because Agnes Smedly [*sic*] in Moscow had said I should meet Harold Isaacs, editor of the *China Forum*, according to her the brightest young American journalist in the Orient—I went to call on him.”⁸ Drafts of *I Wonder* also relate that in Moscow, Smedley “had wanted to give [Hughes] a letter to Madame Sun Yat Sen in Shanghai” but that the poet had declined in view of the turmoil in Asia.⁹ Madame Sun Yat-sen (Soong Ching-ling), the young widow of the founder of the Republic of China, was known for her left-wing sympathies and unguarded criticism of Chiang Kai-shek, her brother-in-law. Nonetheless, Hughes asked Isaacs to arrange a meeting for him with her, and a week or so after Isaacs phoned Madame Sun, she “graciously invited [Hughes] to her home in the French Concession for dinner.” Hughes knew that this arrangement might be “dangerous,” since Madame Sun was under constant surveillance and frequently threatened with assassination because of her politics. However, Chiang’s agents could not carry out this threat, as Madame Sun—“The First Lady of China,” as Hughes calls her—was too famous internationally to assassinate without great difficulty, and the meeting passed without incident. Madame Sun Yat-sen’s “own car took me to my hotel,” Hughes writes, adding, “Even the gangsters would hardly take a shot at her car—besides, it was bullet proof, too.”¹⁰ In the published version of *I Wonder*, there is no mention of Isaacs’s presence, and the meeting’s political undertone is treated circumspectly.

A reconstruction of Hughes’s sojourn in Shanghai from archival material, including drafts of *I Wonder* and his pocket diary, suggests that Hughes made contact with others of Smedley’s associates who would have been connected, whether directly or indirectly, to the Chinese Communist Party and the Comintern. Isaacs, Smedley’s colleague, not only arranged for Hughes to meet with Madame Sun but also with Lu Hsin (Lu Xun), a famous modern Chinese writer, who was then under the threat of the white terror in

Shanghai.¹¹ Since it was unsafe to meet in public, Isaacs invited the Chinese writer to his apartment on the evening of July 5, 1933,¹² an occasion that Hughes chose to describe simply as “a private gathering” in the published version of *I Wonder* (*IWAIW*, 256). The pocket diary that Hughes kept while in Shanghai also registers the names of leftist intellectuals and agents and their underground activities, in which Smedley and Isaacs closely collaborated. Hughes jotted down the following:

Lu Sin [*sic*]: Gorky of China. Supervises trans. from Russian and Japanese. Aids young writers . . . Head L. L. Writers. . . .
 Chen Han-seng—student of rural economy . . . Am. returned student. . . .
 League for Civil Rights active member and worker and Mrs. Sun. Now most workers terrorized by latest murder of Yang Chien, Pres.
 League still interested in Ruegg Case . . . Gertrude Ruegg Defense Comittie [*sic*].
 Chinese R. Aid must operate underground here. Many arrest in last 2 years. Most of work crushed.¹³

Some decoding is in order here. The “League for Civil Rights” to which Hughes refers was an organization chaired by Madame Sun in which Smedley, Isaacs, and Lu Hsin were active members. At the time, the league was being terrorized by Chiang Kai-shek, whose agents assassinated its general secretary in June 1933, shortly before Hughes’s arrival in Shanghai. Among other campaigns, the league was involved in defending Comintern agents Paul and Gertrude Ruegg, known as Mr. and Mrs. Hilaire Noulens, who had been arrested in June 1931 in what was known as the “Ruegg case.” Smedley and Isaacs had joined Madame Sun and Chen Han-seng, himself a Comintern agent, on the Ruegg Defense Committee, which was working to publicize the case internationally in order to pressure the KMT to release the foreign political prisoners. The organization that Hughes refers to as “Chinese R. Aid,” or the Chinese branch of International Red Aid, which was connected with the Comintern, had also mounted a campaign in support of the couple. Hughes records that this organization, under constant attack from Chiang’s white terror, which “crushed most of [its] work,” had to “operate underground.”

Hughes’s diary also reveals his contacts with the underground literary movement in Shanghai. In the passage cited above, “L. L. Writers” refers to the League of Left-Wing Writers established in March 1930 under the direction and control of the Chinese Communist Party to promote the

production of proletarian art. Lu Hsin was the head of the league. With the exception of several established writers, the membership comprised young writers. In early 1931, five members of the organization (now known as “the five martyrs”) were arrested by the British police in the Shanghai International Settlement, along with other nameless Chinese Communist Party members. They were turned over to the KMT authorities in Chinese territory and slaughtered. Hughes learned of this incident from Smedley in March 1931, right after it transpired, when he was in the United States. (News of the incident was also reflected in the league’s appeal and manifesto in memory of the Chinese writers “butchered” by the KMT, which appeared in *New Masses* in June.)¹⁴

To protest such civil liberties abuses, Hughes wrote an article titled “From Moscow to Shanghai” for the July 14, 1933, issue of the *China Forum* edited by Isaacs. In it, he offers the following scathing criticism of fascist oppression of cultural dissenters by the KMT, aided and abetted by Western imperialist powers in Shanghai:

Being a writer, naturally I am interested in how the Shanghai writers live, my fellow-workers in the craft of the word. But to my amazement, I learn that writers in Shanghai do not live—they are killed! . . . I have heard the names of the murdered writers before. See how long the list is: Hu Yeh-ping, Li Wei sen, Jou Shih, Feng Kang, and countless, nameless others. . . . Without shame the powers that be confer on young Chinese writers’ bodies full of bullets—as openly as medals of honor are awarded in the West. . . . [T]he more famous they become as writers, the more surely do their names go on the death-lists of the Nanking-Shanghai militarist-imperialist dictatorship. The government of China does not like writers.¹⁵

In contributing to the *China Forum* in this way, Hughes joined in the struggle to defend the pro-Communist literary front and the revolution in China (and the world).

To the extent that the sojourn of Hughes in Shanghai can be reconstructed from archival materials, the route he traveled coincided with locales associated with the Chinese Communist Party and the Comintern underground—a reality elided from the final text of *I Wonder*. Despite the white terror, Hughes managed to evade the calamities that befell his Chinese comrades; his extraterritorial status as a US citizen allowed him to act with relative impunity in Shanghai, where he remained beyond the reach of

Chinese law. (He traveled in Asia on a US passport issued in 1931, which included a Japanese visa issued at Yokohama on June 27, 1933.)¹⁶ However, during his two weeks in Shanghai, Japanese agents secretly tracked his movements. By the time he once again set foot on Japanese soil, the stage was set for him to be cast in the role of spy by a Japanese police dragnet.

MATA HARI AND SPY HUGHES

Though Hughes’s description of his encounter with the Tokyo police in *I Wonder* has frequently been viewed as a forthright depiction of Japanese authorities’ efforts to silence dissent under fascism, the poet’s narrative, which unfolds like a spy thriller, imbues this view with some ambiguity, as it renders the remembered past in a manner more fictitious than factual. Particularly in the section of *I Wonder* titled “Spies and Spiders,” as the narrative of the Japanese police pursuing suspicions that Hughes the character is a Soviet spy unfolds, Hughes the memoirist employs the “spy picture” *Mata Hari* as a subtext for evoking suspense and intrigue (*IWAIW*, 261). Given these problems of representation, “Spies and Spiders” conveys more about the memoirist writing in the 1950s than about the experiences he is recalling.

As he describes in *I Wonder*, Hughes sailed from Shanghai in mid-July aboard the Japanese ship *Taiyo Maru*, bound for San Francisco by way of Kobe and Yokohama. During the ship’s three-day layover in Yokohama, Hughes took a train to Tokyo and once again checked in at the Imperial Hotel. By nightfall on July 23, 1933, Hughes “found [himself] back in the same pleasant room [he] had had a month before at the Imperial, with the same water lilies floating on the pond in the courtyard outside [his] window” (*IWAIW*, 261). Behind the scenes, however, his situation was assuming a wholly different aspect.

Although Hughes was perhaps unaware of how his situation had changed at the time, by introducing a screening of *Mata Hari* to the narrative of “Spies and Spiders,” he invites the reader to engage in a double reading and regard his situation not only from his perspective but also from that of the Japanese secret police. In the narrative, Hughes goes to dine at the roof garden of the Imperial Hotel, where a movie is being shown. The movie is *Mata Hari* (1931), “a spy picture” starring Greta Garbo and Ramon Novarro, the latter of whom Hughes had met in California (*IWAIW*, 261). Loosely based on the life of Mata Hari, an exotic dancer executed for espionage during World War I, the film follows two plot lines: Mata Hari’s seduction

of a young Russian officer to obtain secret documents in his possession, and the efforts of the French secret police to track her down. In “Spies and Spiders,” this spy picture functions to inform the reader of the suspense and intrigue unfolding around the moviegoer Hughes, an alleged spy for the Soviet Union.

During the screening of the film on the roof garden, Hughes is interrupted twice by taps on his shoulder, signaling the intermingling of the interior and exterior spy stories: “A pageboy tapped me on the shoulder politely and said I was wanted on the phone. A voice on the wire identified itself as that of a writer whom I had met previously in Tokyo, and informed me that several other Japanese writers and himself wished to honor me with a luncheon the next day so that they might see me again before I left for America” (*IWAIW*, 261).

Hughes accepts the luncheon invitation and returns to his table and the spy picture. By this time in the film, Ramon Novarro, playing the Russian officer, “[is] about to be locked in the arms of the spy, Mata Hari.” As Hughes watches the intrigue approach its climax, he is once again interrupted: “Another gentle tap on my shoulder. The pageboy again. This time he said there were some gentlemen downstairs in the lobby to see me” (*IWAIW*, 261).

Hughes hesitates. He “really wanted to see how the picture about spies would turn out,” but the movie “delayed so long in reaching its climax that [he] had to leave before Greta Garbo met her fate” (*IWAIW*, 261).

The suspense building around Mata Hari at the climax of the film is thus displaced onto Hughes in “Spies and Spiders,” for it becomes clear that the gentlemen in the lobby are two Japanese secret agents who look like “fat spiders” and have come to entice Hughes into divulging incriminating information and perhaps take him into custody. To ensnare Hughes in their web of intrigue, the “two portly Japanese gentlemen in European clothes” have disguised themselves as writers and brought along a small man in a kimono whom they introduce as “Naoshi Takunaga [*sic*], the famous author of *The Street Without Sun* that had been published in the United States.” Tokunaga was a proletarian writer who had recently been imprisoned, as Hughes had learned while in Shanghai. Hughes says to Tokunaga, “But I thought you were in jail?” One of the disguised agents answers for the supposed writer, “He was, but is now free, and wanted so much to meet you” (*IWAIW*, 262).

The agents have succeeded in luring Hughes away from the film showing on the rooftop garden, but as he speaks with them, he grows suspicious,

especially when they ask him about Mike Gold, John Dos Passos, Claude McKay, and Theodore Dreiser—“American left-wing writers”—in an effort to trick him into exposing his liaisons with a literary network of Communists. He realizes that his visitors “were not writers, they were policemen pretending to be writers—except perhaps the little man in the dark kimono who [Hughes] sensed was a prisoner.” When Hughes refuses to divulge any information, the writer in the kimono “smiled wanly as if to indicate he was relieved that I had found out I was the center of a police trap” (*IWAIW*, 262). Their operation having failed, the agents withdraw from the lobby, taking their bait, Tokunaga, between them. As they leave, Hughes says to Tokunaga, “I hope everything comes out all right for you,” to which the latter replies in halting English, “I, too.” Feeling that he has narrowly escaped the police trap, Hughes returns to his room and goes to bed “wondering how *Mata Hari* ended on the screen” (*IWAIW*, 263).

Despite the prominence of the roles that Hughes assigns to *Mata Hari* and Tokunaga in “Spies and Spiders,” a chain of conflated memories problematizes his representation of both. Although Naoshi (Sunao) Tokunaga was a contemporary historical figure, he was neither a political prisoner nor in jail at the time the poet visited Japan. Moreover, Tokunaga’s novel *Taiyo no nai Machi* (The street without sun) was never published in English in the United States, though Hughes’s characterization of it suggests the contrary. Nor is there any historical evidence to support Hughes’s representation of the Japanese writer whom he met in the police trap as Tokunaga. Even more problematic is a seeming slip of the pen that Hughes makes about the spy picture *Mata Hari*. After relating his encounter with Tokunaga, Hughes writes, “Pola Negri was such a beautiful spy!” (*IWAIW*, 263). This statement may lead the reader to wonder whether the movie that Hughes was watching when the police sprang their trap was *Mata Hari*, which stars Greta Garbo, or *L’ultimo addio* (*Hotel Imperial*), which stars Pola Negri as a chambermaid who aids an Austrian officer in defeating a Russian military spy.¹⁷

Regardless of whether Hughes viewed any movie on the night in question, or whether the police conducted the operation he describes, it is interesting to consider why Hughes might have recalled the movie—whichever it was—as “a spy picture” and why, in particular, he recalled it being *Mata Hari*. Either *Mata Hari* or *Hotel Imperial* would have served equally well to add color to the narrative, since both involve Russia, spies, and romance. However, Hughes’s reference to *Mata Hari* emerges as particularly evocative on closer examination of his (inaccurate) recollection of Tokunaga

as the bait in the supposed police trap that he narrowly escaped.

Given that it is historically implausible that Tokunaga played the role Hughes describes, the reader must look elsewhere to account both for Hughes's knowledge of *The Street without Sun* and his (perhaps unconscious) urge to insert its author into the text of his spy narrative. As his research notes for *I Wonder* reveal, Hughes did not remember the writer's name when he was drafting the manuscript. In attempting to come up with a name of a decoy writer, Hughes used the title of *The Street without Sun* as a notation. In a memo in his research notes, he types,⁵ "INSERT: . . . 'STREET WITHOUT SUN'⁶—name of author," with scribbles added in the margin: "Check" and "Tukonaga [*sic*] (Naoshi)." Another memo bears related notations reading "Library-Info: . . . 'Street Without Sun' (1929) Tokunaga (Naoshi) 1899—," with the word "inserted" added.¹⁸ The possibility exists, of course, that a Japanese agent may have been posing as Tokunaga in the police operation, and Hughes may have been deceived. However, it is more likely, and less speculative, to conclude that the poet's displacement (if unconscious) of Tokunaga's identity onto the person who served as bait in the police trap originated with Agnes Smedley.

It was from Smedley that Hughes learned of Tokunaga and his novel. In 1931, the poet sent Smedley an inscribed copy of his *Not without Laughter*, a novel that a *New Masses* reviewer observed paralleled Smedley's *Daughter of Earth* (1929). In a letter that she sent Hughes in response, Smedley recommended that Hughes read Tokunaga, whose name she misspelled as "Tokagawa":

Have you read Tokagawa's [*sic*] "The Street Without Sun?" Here we have a Japanese left writer who has taken one single strike and in that [he] has shown us the entire history of the working class, wedding the deepest class consciousness with art. You have a technique of writing superior to his—but you need—as do I—his intensity of thought, his historic knowledge, his revolutionary consciousness. I have read his book only in German, but it must be in English. . . . By reading it I learned what is wrong with my book—and through it I see what is wrong with yours.¹⁹

Thus, Hughes did indeed encounter Tokunaga, but through Smedley's letter rather than in a trap the Tokyo police set for him.

Hughes knew that Smedley worked for the Chinese Communist Party and the Comintern and that she was closely watched as a spy, a Mata Hari,

by the police. As Smedley describes in her memoir, *Battle Hymn of China*, which appeared in the summer of 1943 when she and Hughes spent time together at the Yaddo writers and artists colony in Saratoga Springs, New York, the Japanese newspaper *Nichi-Nichi* of Shanghai charged her with being a member of the GPU (the Soviet secret police) and of “sleeping with military men to worm their secrets out of them.” The Japanese paper declared that “this was easy” for Smedley because she was “a singer and dancer!” as Smedley recalls with amusement.²⁰ It is also suggestive that Smedley took the keenest interest in Hughes’s arrest. When she learned of Hughes’s expulsion from Japan, she wrote to him from Shanghai, asking him for an account of his interrogation in Tokyo. In particular, she wanted him to explain Japan’s “charges that you admitted you were [an] ‘agent.’” Smedley supplied Hughes with her “strictly confidential address,” instructing him to put the address of Randall Gould, her fellow American journalist and editor of the *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury*, on the outside of the envelope and inside, “my initials. A. S.,”²¹ an arrangement indicating that she was under police surveillance. In light of displaced memories in the text, I suggest that Hughes’s compositional process and textual unconscious were haunted by Smedley and that “Spies and Spiders” may be read as a story about the poet’s ensnarement in the web of intrigue that Smedley, a Mata Hari, seemed to have cast over him while in Asia (as much as one about the Tokyo police’s trap, with their bait being the proletarian writer Tokunaga, whom Smedley recommended Hughes read). Indeed, in the McCarthy era from which the memoir emerged, Smedley was facing a charge for having spied for Soviet Russia in Asia, as I will discuss.

The Tokyo police arrested Hughes on July 24, 1933, along with the Japanese “writer friends” who came to see him at the Imperial Hotel (*IWAIW*, 263). Once they had him in custody at the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Headquarters, the police interrogated him about his activities in Moscow, Tokyo, and Shanghai, including his contacts with Sano, the Tsukiji, Madame Sun, and Isaacs. Hughes recalls the police interrogation proceeding as follows:

“How did you happen to have met Seki Sano?”

“At Meyerhold’s Theater in Moscow.”

“He did not give you letters to bring here?”

“He did not!”

“No one gave you messages to bring here?”

“You flatter me,” I said, “if you think I am an international courier or

something. I'm not. I'm just a writer." (*IWAIW*, 266)

In the published version of *I Wonder*, Hughes chose to omit any mention of the fact revealed in earlier drafts that, his responses to the police here notwithstanding, he had indeed been asked by friends in Moscow—Sano, Smedley, Sergei Tretiakov, and Si-Lan Chen—to deliver messages in Tokyo and Shanghai.²²

In grilling Hughes about his travels in the Soviet Union, China, and Japan, the Tokyo police revealed their deep concern with the kind of internationalism that Hughes engaged in, which they feared provided an avenue for the transmission of secret information beyond the reach of their immigration and thought control mechanisms, as he could use his public persona as a cover to traverse state boundaries with impunity. Hughes found his treatment by the Tokyo police so disgraceful that, on landing in San Francisco, he wrote a sharp letter of protest to the US Department of State, in which he recounts that he was detained “for more than seven hours” and that “when [he] discovered [he] was under arrest,” his request to call the American consulate was refused. In this letter, Hughes describes how, at the end of the long interrogation, he was “asked to swear that [he] had brought no ‘Communitic messages’” into Tokyo, and the police finally ordered him to “go home and stay there” and to refrain from any further communication with Japanese nationals before his departure.²³ Hughes also includes these details in his memoir.

In *I Wonder*, Hughes describes the police harassment that he encountered as extending to a fellow American citizen whom he befriended in Tokyo. After his release from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Headquarters, Hughes goes to dinner at the Imperial Hotel, where a young man stops at his table to pay his respects. The young man, who has been “in Japan for two years, working as an industrial chemist,” graduated from Hughes’s alma mater, Central High School in Cleveland, and ends up keeping Hughes company during his meal (*IWAIW*, 273). Hughes is at this time under surveillance by two plainclothes detectives seated at a nearby table, and later he learns that the young man would subsequently be “requested to leave Japan” by the Tokyo police—presumably for speaking to Hughes (*IWAIW*, 279).

For Hughes, the acme of Japan’s unfair treatment of him was a made-up interview that the Tokyo police released to the press and that was published in Japan’s leading newspaper, the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi*. In his memoir, Hughes recalls with indignation that the Japanese newspaper quoted him as having said that “Japan was the destined savior of the darker races of the world, the

leader of Asia, and a great stabilizing force” in China—tenets of Japanese propaganda to which he never subscribed. “This fake interview” in the *Nichi-Nichi*, writes Hughes, “seemed to me a most dastardly and contemptible thing to impose upon a visitor” (*IWAIW*, 278), one last mistreatment after many others that the Japanese police had accorded him in the summer of 1933.

From the reader’s vantage point, the made-up interview is an especially puzzling episode, for no such article appears to have been published in the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi*, as Hughes claims. The *Nichi-Nichi* did publish two news items concerning the police interrogation of Hughes on July 25, 1933, one of which the poet read in English translation, but neither contained the interview that Hughes describes. By pointing out this discrepancy, my aim is not to suggest that Hughes fabricated the episode but rather to consider the source and extent of his knowledge of the news coverage of his expulsion in the Japanese press.

Not knowing the Japanese language, Hughes relied for his knowledge of Japanese press coverage of his case on translated newspaper clippings sent to him from Japan. The man who furnished Hughes with these clippings was Alexander Buchman, who appears anonymously in *I Wonder* as the young graduate of Central High School whom Hughes befriended at the dinner following his interrogation.²⁴ In a letter to Buchman dated August 21, 1933, and sent from San Francisco, Hughes complains that some of the Japanese newspapers “are as yellow in their journalism as are our worst American papers.”²⁵

It is not certain whether Buchman received Hughes’s letter in Tokyo. On August 22, 1933, the *New York Times* and other newspapers reported that Buchman was arrested “during a police drive against ‘foreign radicals and pacifists’”; he was charged with “engaging in radical propaganda” and ordered to leave Japan immediately. Having reportedly arrived in Japan from the United States two months prior to his arrest, Buchman was accused of violating the terms of his one-month visa and, moreover, “propagating parlor bolshevism among young men and women” in Tokyo. After his expulsion, Buchman set out on his own journey to Shanghai, where he attended the Chinese congress of the World Committee against Imperialist War, a conference “promoted and financed by the Communist International, adherence to which is a criminal offence in Japan.”²⁶ He was one of about three hundred delegates from China and abroad—Harold Isaacs was also a delegate—who planned to attend the antiwar congress organized under the chairmanship of Madame Sun Yat-sen. In the end, the young nameless

graduate of Central High School in *I Wonder* was not merely an “industrial chemist,” as the memoir suggests; he did not live in Japan “for two years” and was not expelled simply for speaking to Hughes. The Tokyo police had cause for suspecting this “friend of Langston Hughes, American Negro poet and critic” of maintaining clandestine connections to Soviet-allied organizations under the cover of tourism, much as they thought Hughes had done.²⁷ In his sightseeing adventure in Asia, Hughes thus did brush up against what the Tokyo police suspected to be an underground network of Communists.

What emerges behind the Asian travels that Hughes recounts in *I Wonder* is the theater of a silent war on dissent that was not confined to a national scope. Subsequent to the deportation of Hughes (and Buchman), the Tokyo police transmitted their dossier on Hughes to the Japanese consulate in Shanghai via confidential memoranda. Hughes did not know when he appealed to Washington to support his protest against Japan that the US State Department was in possession of this dossier. The State Department received a dispatch from the US consul general in Shanghai that included the Tokyo police record documenting Hughes’s movements in the Far East, along with the testimony the poet gave Japanese interrogators. This report was transmitted “from the police of the International Settlement containing information received by the police from the Japanese Consulate General.”²⁸ In short, Hughes’s dossier was transmitted in a succession of confidential memos from the Metropolitan Police Board in Tokyo, to the Japanese consulate in Shanghai, to the police of the International Settlement (where it was translated into English by the Special Branch of the British-run Shanghai Municipal Police [SMP]), to the American consulate in Shanghai, and finally to the US State Department, for shared use against Soviet Communism. In its reply to Hughes’s letter, the State Department wrote that the poet’s activities “apparently gave rise to a suspicion that you may have connected with some organization advocating the overthrow of the ‘system of private property,’ membership in which, under Japanese law, is a criminal offense punishable by severe penalties” and that the US government had no grounds for approaching their government about the matter.²⁹

The Japanese police record on Hughes would remain classified until 1972 as part of the State Department’s confidential file on Hughes, the “Communist negro,”³⁰ which it opened in 1932 while Hughes was in the Soviet Union. In the transcript of Hughes’s interrogation in the Tokyo police detention room, he is quoted as saying:

I am connected with the following organizations:
 International Revolutionary Writers League.
 International Revolutionary Plot Writers League.
 Authors League.
 Dramatist Guild.
 National Association for Advancement of Coloured People.
 Labourers Cultural League.

Being a Negro I have been struggling for the emancipation of the Negroes [*sic*] and of the oppressed masses and will continue my struggle forever. Communism aims at the emancipation of the oppressed masses but I still doubt whether or not complete freedom can be secured through the realization of communism. I do not claim to be a communist but I do not object to be regarded as a sympathizer because I sympathize with and support all Communist movements and also the oppressed people. After all I am a liberalist who is interested in communism and the struggles for the emancipation of the oppressed.³¹

In these statements to the Japanese police, Hughes explicitly acknowledged that he was a Communist sympathizer, though he did not admit that he was an “agent.” He insisted that the object of his visit to Shanghai in 1933 was simply “sightseeing.”³²

However, the police in the International Settlement, or more precisely the Special Branch of the SMP, which relayed the Tokyo police record to the US government, may not have accepted Hughes’s tourism claim. The Special Branch, which operated, in effect, as a Far Eastern arm of MI6, the British Secret Intelligence Service, also opened a file on Hughes.³³ An SMP document titled “James Langston Hughes—American Negro Intellectual” reported that Hughes was “frequently seen whilst in Shanghai” with Harold Isaacs, whom “he had never previously met,” but that Isaacs’s “name was given him by a mutual friend”—namely, Smedley—“whilst he was in Moscow.”³⁴

In *I Wonder*, Hughes’s Asian travels end with his arrival in Hawai‘i following his expulsion from Japan. Significantly, the narration of this final scene on US territory in the Pacific registers the presence of an FBI agent. Why the FBI agent turned up “to meet” him is not explained; in the narrative, the agent appears briefly, only to disappear without uttering a word (*IWAIW*, 278–79). Yet given that *I Wonder* was published in the 1950s, the appearance of the FBI agent may be understood to signal to the reader that the intelligence dragnet to silence dissenters, which ensnared Hughes in its spider-like web,

had already spread across the Pacific by the 1930s.

“MY WORLD WILL NOT END”

Hughes closes *I Wonder* with a description of his accidental reunion with his Japanese comrade Seki Sano in Paris on New Year’s Eve, 1937. As the bells toll, the two old friends lift their glasses and toast the entrance of the new year and the (seeming) exit of the poet’s decade that had been marked by his wanderlust-inspired travels through Cuba, Haiti, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, Mexico, Spain, and France in the 1930s. The narrative thus draws this Japanese stage director into the poet’s international orbit once again, aligning the lives of the two “fellow travelers” of color—one cast out of Japan on suspicion of being a Soviet spy and the other, as the reader learns, cast out of the Soviet Union for similar reasons.³⁵ As the memoir reaches its troubled ending, which is at once a nonending, Hughes insists, “My world will not end” (*IWAIW*, 405). *I Wonder* thus recounts a past that has refused to end, one that continued to haunt Hughes even as he wrote the final version of the text.

I suggest that what made it so difficult for Hughes to bring his radical past to a close is the historical moment of fear and suspicion of 1950s America, when he faced a red-baiting smear campaign conducted by US occupation forces in postwar Japan. The campaign was an offshoot of the Cold War project to contain the spread of Soviet Communism in Asia, which the US occupation forces had inherited, ironically, from “fascist” Japan. Over the course of this campaign, General MacArthur and his chief of military intelligence, or G-2 Tokyo, Major-General Charles A. Willoughby (whom the general described as “my lovable fascist”) issued reports on a Soviet spy ring headed by the spymaster Richard Sorge. Sorge had been operating in Shanghai and Tokyo when Hughes visited Asia in the 1930s and was eventually executed by the Japanese wartime government on November 7, 1944. Confiscated prewar Japanese police files and court records that survived wartime bombing reveal that Sorge had gathered information through Hotsumi Ozaki. Ozaki was a journalist and member in the brain trust of the Japanese government’s Konoye Cabinet, and as well was a translator of Agnes Smedley’s novel *Daughter of Earth*.

A February 1949 press release on the intelligence report from Tokyo titled “The Sorge Spy Ring: A Case Study in International Espionage in the Far East” from the Department of the Army in Washington aroused widespread controversy in the United States, not least because it characterized

an American writer and citizen, Smedley,³⁶ as both a member of the spy ring and a perpetrator “of the hoax that the Chinese Communists were . . . only local agrarian revolutionists” with no connections to the Soviet Union. Smedley, reportedly an “American-Soviet spy,” “recruited Ozaki” for Sorge in the Shanghai phase of his ring in the early 1930s. The report also claimed that Smedley’s “hoax” swayed American foreign policy on China, purportedly undermining the war against Communism in Asia, and ultimately enabling Communism to overrun China despite America’s support for Chiang Kai-shek, who would have remained America’s ally in Asia.³⁷

Smedley reacted vehemently to this public account of her espionage activities. She termed it a “despicable lie,” pointing to the fact that the charges were based on the files of the prewar Japanese secret police, “the most discredited agency of that enemy government.” In her view, MacArthur’s real end in libeling her was to “condition the American people into allowing him’ more troops and money to build Japan into a mighty military base” and thus to build up a former enemy, Japan, as an anti-Soviet bastion against Red China, because of “the defeats suffered by the Chinese Nationalist Government.”³⁸ Confronted with Smedley’s recriminations, the Army in Washington admitted to a “faux pas” in making the report from Tokyo public. “A person is innocent until proven guilty,” the Army allowed, noting that they had insufficient proof of the accusations they had leveled at the time the report was issued.³⁹

Smedley’s defiance—and the Army’s retraction of their public release of the “secret” report with “quasi-apologies”—insulted Willoughby and spurred him to launch an “epic search” for further proof to authenticate the Sorge spy story.⁴⁰ With the assistance of the Central Intelligence Agency, Willoughby tracked down and procured a substantial portion of the records of the SMP prior to the Communist takeover in China on October 1, 1949. The SMP files proved to be a Pandora’s box, opening up “an astonishing vista on a fantastic array of Communist fronts, ancillary agencies, and the vast interlocking operations of the Third International in China.”⁴¹ Corroborating the reports from Tokyo, they revealed Smedley’s underground activities and the numerous Chinese Communist front organizations for which she worked, including the Noulens Defense Committee set up by the International Red Aid and the China League for Civil Rights. Moreover, the SMP records named Smedley’s “red and pink associations,” as Willoughby dubbed them, including those with Harold Isaacs, Lu Hsin, and Langston Hughes. As discussed, the file on Hughes that the Special Branch of the

SMP opened in the early 1930s was among the records obtained by Willoughby and the CIA. Willoughby thus successfully and hostilely recovered the radical past of Hughes, or the “American Communist and staff member of the International League of Revolutionary Writers,” as he calls him, from the dusty archives of Asia.⁴²

The spy charges against Smedley, fueled by the Cold War red-baiting campaign, had been extended to Hughes. In 1952, Willoughby published an innuendo-filled book titled *Shanghai Conspiracy: The Sorge Spy Ring*, in which he quotes Hughes’s poem “Goodbye Christ” (a revolutionary poem that Hughes wrote while in the Soviet Union) to demonstrate Hughes’s Communist sympathies. “Goodbye Christ” was a profane verse of his Soviet year that he later “dismissed . . . as a regrettable error of his immature youth.” Hughes—according to biographer Arnold Rampersad—practically begged the publisher E. P. Dutton not to quote his poem in Willoughby’s book, but his pleas were unsuccessful.⁴³ Willoughby quotes the poem as epitomizing the “traitorous and corrosive quality” of “the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and its American offshoot, the League of American Writers,” of which Hughes and Smedley were members. In view of this “typical sample of Hughes’s poetic style,” Willoughby argues, “it requires no imagination to know what would happen to the Christian churches in America if men of his ilk were ever to get the upper hand. All anyone has to do to visualize the blood bath which they would stage is to refresh one’s memory about the pattern of the Soviet purges.”⁴⁴ A year later, Hughes was summoned to appear before McCarthy’s subcommittee.

During the Cold War smear campaign that US military intelligence launched in Tokyo, recouping the past was a political imperative. In *Shanghai Conspiracy*, the reader is presented with a Pacific-centered world map that designates the routes that Comintern agents, fellow travelers, and associates in the 1930s navigated from Moscow, Tokyo, and Shanghai to San Francisco and beyond. The map indicates a worldwide espionage network, or what Willoughby called “the Communist ‘jihad’ for the subjugation of the Western world,”⁴⁵ the routes and headquarters of which suggestively overlap with Hughes’s route through Asia. In the published version of *I Wonder*, Hughes largely eliminated political undertones from the narrative of his sojourn in Asia, to the extent that he chose to accord Smedley only a minimal presence in the text. Nonetheless, the narrative of Hughes’s framing as a Soviet spy in prewar Japan makes *I Wonder* resonant with the historical moment at home, where McCarthyist terror had reached its height and America had begun its anti-Communist war in Asia, in which

Japan, the former “fascist” power, played the role of America’s principal ally against Communist China. Thus, Hughes’s memoir not only serves as a testimony of his encounter with a colored “Fascist country.” It offers insight into the transpacific intelligence dragnets that endeavored to silence dissenters as eerily prefiguring the international Cold War blueprint.

NOTES

¹ Langston Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander: An Autobiographical Journey* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 277. Further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *IWAIW*.

² Langston Hughes to Noël Sullivan, Trans-Siberian Express, June 12, 1933, box 40, Noël Sullivan Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

³ R. P. Hood (Special Agent in Charge) to J. Edgar Hoover, Los Angeles, February 7, 1942, Langston Hughes, FBI file no. 100-151-39.

⁴ Hughes recorded in the pocket diary the following names of leading Japanese proletarian theater activists and writers: Korea Senda, Tomoyoshi Murayama (a Japan Communist Party member who was then in jail), Mikio Osawa, Sakae Kubo, and S. (Seikichi) Fujimori. Langston Hughes, pocket diary: kept while in China and Japan, (1933), Papers of Langston Hughes, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter cited as Hughes Papers/HL).

⁵ Faith Berry, *Langston Hughes: Before and beyond Harlem* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1983), 193.

⁶ For the Blue Shirts and fascism, see Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927–1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 31–84.

⁷ “I Wonder as I Wander,” draft, 519, box 307, folder 5014, Langston Hughes Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven (hereafter cited as Hughes Papers/YU); see also “I Wonder as I Wander,” draft, 519, box 306, folder 5013, Hughes Papers/YU.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 510; see also “I Wonder as I Wander,” draft, 508–9, box 306, folder 5013, Hughes Papers/YU.

¹⁰ “I Wonder as I Wander,” draft, 521–22, box 307, folder 5014, Hughes Papers/YU; see also “I Wonder as I Wander,” draft, 520–21, box 306, folder 5013, Hughes Papers/YU.

¹¹ This famous Chinese writer’s name is also spelled Lu Hsün in the Wade-Giles system. I adopt “Lu Hsin” here as Hughes used this transliteration in his memoir.

¹² Shen Pengnian, “Lu Xun Huijian Xiushi Jiqi Beiwu Shijian” [The meeting between

Lu Xun and Hughes and the incident of Lu being falsely accused], *Shaoxing Lu Xun Yanjiu* 27 (July 2005): 125–26.

¹³ Hughes, pocket diary, Hughes Papers/HL.

¹⁴ Agnes Smedley to Langston Hughes, Shanghai, March 13, 1931, box 147, folder 2735, Hughes Papers/YU; Left Writers' League of China, "A Letter to the World: An Appeal from the Writers of China," *New Masses*, June 1931, 14–15.

¹⁵ Langston Hughes, "From Moscow to Shanghai," *China Forum*, July 14, 1933, 5.

¹⁶ Shanghai Municipal Police, "James Langston Hughes—American Negro Intellectual," 1, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, RG 263, box 40, file D-5127 (Microfilm series M-1750, roll 16), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD.

¹⁷ Hughes may have conflated the movies because of the linguistic association of *Hotel Imperial* and the Imperial Hotel, where he supposedly watched the movie. The University of Missouri Press edition of *I Wonder as I Wander* changes "Greta Garbo" to "Pola Negri" throughout, as typographical errors.

¹⁸ Research note, box 304, folder 4997; research note, box 304, folder 4996, Hughes Papers/YU.

¹⁹ Agnes Smedley to Langston Hughes, Shanghai, March 14, 1931, box 147, folder 2735, Hughes Papers/YU.

²⁰ Agnes Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), 97.

²¹ Agnes Smedley to Langston Hughes, Shanghai, October 31, 1934, Hughes Papers/HL.

²² "I Wonder as I Wander," draft, 510, box 307, folder 5014, Hughes Papers/YU; see also "I Wonder as I Wander," draft, 508–9, box 306, folder 5013, Hughes Papers/YU.

²³ Langston Hughes to US Department of State, San Francisco, August 30, 1933, box 157, folder 2907, Hughes Papers/YU.

²⁴ Alex Buchman to Langston Hughes, Tokyo, July 24, 1933, box 36, folder 630, Hughes Papers/YU.

²⁵ Langston Hughes to Alex Buchman, San Francisco, August 21, 1933, box 36, folder 630, Hughes Papers/YU.

²⁶ "American 'Radical' Ordered from Japan," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 24, 1933, 3; "Tokyo Police Oust American Pacifist: Alexander Buchman Is Suspected of Radical Activity on Way to Shanghai Anti-War Parley," *New York Times*, August 23, 1933, 11; "Japanese Order American Youth to Quit Country," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 23, 1933, 12.

²⁷ "Japan Deports Anti-War Congress Delegates," August 23, 1933, newspaper clipping, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, RG 263, entry Murphy Papers China, box 15, NARA.

²⁸ Edwin S. Cunningham (American Consul General, Shanghai) to Secretary of State,

dispatch, August 28, 1933, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, box 4507, 800.00B Langston Hughes, NARA.

²⁹ Stanley K. Hornbeck, Chief of Division of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, to Langston Hughes, September 25, 1933, box 157, folder 2907, Hughes Papers/YU.

³⁰ Embassy of the United States of America, London, to Secretary of State, memorandum, May 29, 1933, RG 59, box 4507, 800.00B Langston Hughes, NARA.

³¹ S. 2. Special Branch of the Shanghai Municipal Police, “Movements of James Langston Hughes, American Nigger Writer, in Japan,” August 21, 1933, a copy enclosed in Cunningham to Secretary of State, RG 59, box 4507, 800.00B Langston Hughes, NARA.

³² Ibid.

³³ Shanghai Municipal Police file card on Langston Hughes, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, RG 263, entry Shanghai Police Files, box 5, NARA.

³⁴ “James Langston Hughes—American Negro Intellectual,” 2.

³⁵ Sano was ordered out of the country by Soviet authorities in 1937. By the time of Hughes’s reunion with Sano, the Soviet Union was at the height of both the Stalinist purge and a wave of antifascist paranoia in response to the Anti-Comintern Pact that Japan had concluded with Nazi Germany. Virtually all Japanese in the Soviet Union, including Communist Party members and sympathizers, fell under suspicion of espionage. As *Pravda*, the news organ of the Soviet Communist Party, warned in July 1937 (a month before Sano’s expulsion), Japanese residing in the Soviet Union—generally, leftist intellectuals such as Sano—were all “potentially Japanese spies” that the Japanese government planted in the country. Quote in Tetsuro Kato, “The Japanese Victims of Stalinist Terror in the USSR,” *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 32, no. 1 (July 2000): 12. Some resident Japanese were shot to death, or “liquidated” in the parlance of the era, while others were sent to concentration camps or prisons, and still others, like Sano, were expelled. See Tetsuro Kato, *Mosukuwa de Shukuseisareta Nihonjin* [The Japanese purged in Moscow] (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1994).

³⁶ For an account of the espionage charges leveled against Smedley by Gen. MacArthur, see Ruth Price, *The Lives of Agnes Smedley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), chaps. 17–18. Price claims that Smedley was indeed guilty of the charges.

³⁷ “The Sorge Spy Ring: A Case Study in International Espionage in the Far East,” report, *Congressional Record Appendix*, 81st Cong., 1st sess. (1949), vol. 95, pt. 12: A707.

³⁸ “Spy Charge Denied by Miss Smedley,” *New York Times*, February 11, 1949, 4; “Army Admits Spy Faux Pas: No Proof on Agnes Smedley,” *New York Times*, February 19, 1949, 6.

³⁹ “Army Admits Spy Faux Pas,” 1.

⁴⁰ “Officer Welcomes Suit on Spy Report: U.S. Intelligence Chief in Tokyo Waives

Immunity to Face Action by Agnes Smedley,” *New York Times*, February 22, 1949, 11; Charles A. Willoughby, *Shanghai Conspiracy: The Sorge Spy Ring* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1952), 247, 271.

⁴¹ Willoughby, *Shanghai Conspiracy*, 273–74.

⁴² “Willoughby Exhibit No. 40: Smedley and Associates: 1918–48,” document, in *Hearings on American Aspects of the Richard Sorge Spy Case (Based on Testimony of Mitsusada Yoshikawa and Maj. Gen. Charles A. Willoughby): Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-Second Congress, First Session, August 9, 22, and 23, 1951* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), 1219, 1222–23.

⁴³ Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2: 4, 197.

⁴⁴ Willoughby, *Shanghai Conspiracy*, 254–56, 298–99.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 275.