S. I. Hayakawa and the African American Community in Chicago, 1939-1955.

Yusuke Torii

［要約］

カナダ生まれの日系人 S. I. ハヤカワは、1960 年代末、サンフランシスコ州立大学の学長代行として学生ストライキを強硬に鎮圧したことで保守政界の注目を集め、カリフォルニア州選出の共和党上院議員(1977-1983)を努めた。現在では主としてこの晩年の保守政治家としてのキャリアによって記憶されているハヤカワだが、かつて 1940 年代から 1950 年代にかけての彼は、シカゴの黒人地区に暮らし、地元の協同組合運動を指導し、主要黒人紙のコラムニストを努め、黒人音楽の文化的価値や人種偏見との戦い方について精力的に講演し、執筆するリベラルな知識人として知られていた。この大幅な政治的転向の中で、彼が首尾一貫して唱えていたのが、同化主義のイデオロギーであった。

本稿は、黒人紙『シカゴ・ディフェンダー』上のコラムをはじめとするハヤカワの執筆物を主な資料とし、その同化主義イデオロギーの形成過程を彼の黒人コミュニティとの関わりの中で明らかにしようとするものである。第二次世界大戦とその直後のシカゴの黒人コミュニティは、その言論と文化芸術をコミュニティの外部に発信する「人種の仲介者」を切に求める状況にあった。ハヤカワの強固な同化主義は、その期待に応えるなかで形成されたというのが本稿の主張である。

Introduction

On December 2, 1968, San Francisco State College was in the middle of the longest student strike in U.S. history. Strikers demanded the establishment of an autonomous school of ethnic studies, in which blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans would control faculty hiring, curricula, and admissions. It was still early in the morning when students parked a sound truck on the border of the campus, and were using the amplifier to agitate a crowd of about two hundred, chanting, “On strike, shut it down!” At about 8:10 a.m., the acting president Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa (1906-1992) came out from the administration building. With his trademark tam-o’-shanter hat on his head, he walked straight toward the strikers. To everyone’s surprise, he climbed upon the truck and ripped out the wires from its loud speakers. Angry protesters quickly surrounded and pushed him away. While no one was injured, the image of the diminutive professor physically confronting militant youngsters captivated Americans all over the nation who watched the evening newscasts on TV.

Before long S. I. Hayakawa became one of the most prominent and controversial men of Asian descent in American history. The nationally televised images of Hayakawa during the San Francisco State College Strike from 1968 to 1969 made him an instant favorite among those whom Richard Nixon called the “silent majority.” Riding the tide of the 1970s conservatism, Hayakawa was elected to the U.S. Senate on the Republican ticket in 1976. During his single term in office, he appalled Japanese Americans with his remark that the Nisei were actually better off for their incarceration during World War II. In 1983, he cofounded U.S. English, a lobbying group to advocate for declaring English the official language of the United States. Largely estranged from Japanese American and other minority communities, Hayakawa aligned himself with conservative forces for the rest of his political life.

What is less often remembered about Hayakawa is his earlier life as a liberal public intellectual. Born and educated in Canada, he emigrated to the United States in 1929 to do his doctorate in English at the University of Wisconsin. When he started teaching in Chicago, he and his wife Merge became deeply involved in the

city's African American community through the local cooperative movement. Once he achieved fame with his publication of the best-selling *Language in Action* (1941), he was invited by the *Chicago Defender*, one of the nation's leading black newspapers, to write a column together with such African American luminaries such as Walter White and Langston Hughes. His columns covered a wide range of subjects of interest for the black community, including race relations, the cooperative movement, and jazz music. As a popular lecturer, writer, and radio show host, he introduced both black and white audiences to his unique insights on race relations and the historical significance of African American experience and culture. When the modern civil rights movement gained momentum in the mid-1950s, he logically became an admirer and supporter of Martin Luther King Jr.[1] Therefore, Hayakawa's emergence as a national conservative hero in the late 1960s was a surprise for those who knew his past.

The wide political spectrum from left to right Hayakawa travelled in his life has recently attracted scholarly attention it deserved. Gerald and Janice Haslam's detailed and sympathetic biography, aptly subtitled "The Enigmatic Life of S. I. Hayakawa," explores his political turn with rich information on his private life as well as his public career. His troubles in marriage, frustration with academic politics, and his aversions to the confrontational style of communication all contributed to Hayakawa's determination to use police force to restore order on campus.[2] Daryl Maeda, in his study of Asian American youth activism of the 1960s and onward, emphasizes the consistency of Hayakawa's assimilationist ideology as opposed to the new rhetoric of Third World solidarity. According to Maeda, Hayakawa stayed where he was, and it was rather the field of racial identity politics that moved to the left after the late 1960s.[3] Greg Robinson, like Maeda, emphasizes Hayakawa's surprisingly consistent belief in assimilation throughout his liberal and conservative days. Robinson also situates Hayakawa among the diverse figures of Japanese Americans and reminds us that his reactionary attitude toward the youth radicalism was not atypical of Japanese Americans of his generation. Robinson also examines Japanese American attitudes in interaction with other minority groups such as African Americans and Mexican Americans and calls for further research on the relationships between different racial minority groups in this time period.[4]

This study will revisit Hayakawa's Chicago years from 1939 to 1955 in an attempt to explore how Hayakawa's assimilation ideology was shaped by interaction with Chicago's black community. Based on Hayakawa's writings and media coverage of his activities in this time period, I will argue that his assimilationist ideology and his self-appointed role of a racial middleman were not merely his idiosyncrasies but also products of the specific context of the mid-century Chicago, where the discipline of general semantics—in which most of Hayakawa's thoughts would be framed—was then being institutionalized, where a person of Japanese descent like Hayakawa could avoid the forced incarceration during World War II, and where a vibrant African American community with new generation of leaders was eager to recruit someone like Hayakawa, to act as a racial "middleman" who could mediate between black and white Americans and promote African American vernacular culture to broader audiences. In what follows, I will demonstrate how these conditions specific to Chicago in this time period shaped Hayakawa's ideology, which would remain consistent in his later conservative years.

Chicago and General Semantics

Hayakawa was born to Japanese parents on July 18, 1906, in Vancouver, British Columbia. His father was an ambitious man with high communicative skills and the family always moved to places where few other Japanese families were present. Young Hayakawa went to public schools in Calgary, Alberta, and earned a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Manitoba. He then pursued a master's degree from McGill University, Montreal. In 1929, he crossed the border to the United States to do his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. While working on his doctoral thesis on Oliver Wendell Holmes, he met Margedant Peters, a white woman, and married her.

By 1935 when he completed his Ph.D. degree, he had published a few academic literary analyses and his own poetries, and had substantial teaching experience as a teaching assistant. For the young Japanese Canadian scholar of English literature, however, finding a full-time tenure-track job was a struggle that seemed nearly impossible. He applied for jobs at places such as South Dakota State

College, Colorado College, Bowling Green State College, Colby College, the University of Michigan. He had a good feeling when his acquaintance lobbied for him at Hamlin College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, but in the end he lost to a candidate who had not finished a doctorate.[5] He had to take a better-than-nothing job at the University of Wisconsin Extension, in which he taught freshman composition to students who couldn't come to Madison at a public building in a remote city called Waupaca. Hayakawa was an instant curiosity. The *Waupaca County Post* on November 11, 1937 reported, "Young Scandinavian-American and German-American youths of this and nearby communities...are being taught this school year by a full-blooded Japanese, a Canadian and British subject, who is making a notable success of teaching the English language."[6] In 1939, he received a job offer from Illinois (then Armour) Institute of Technology and moved to Chicago. It was a solid but non-prestigious vocational college without English major or literature courses. Hayakawa was to teach freshman composition and technical writing to future engineers, architects, and librarians.

Hayakawa's initial moment of fame came in 1941 when he published *Language in Action*, which became an instant best seller as a selection of the Book of the Month Club. (It would also be a remarkably long-selling book. Retitled as *Language in Thought and Action* and revised a couple of times, the book is still in print in 2013.) *Language in Action* was based on Hayakawa's hand-made textbook for first-year English composition classes, and the essence of the book was a highly readable and accessible version of Alfred Korzybski's general semantics, with rich practical applications to everyday matters. The publication of this book would define Hayakawa's career as an academic as well as an educator and lecturer. While he had coedited a collection titled *Oliver Wendell Holmes: Representative Selections* in 1939, it would become one of his last publications in traditional literary scholarship. Hereafter he would be primarily identified as a general semanticist and the author of *Language in Action*. He would also be referred to, somewhat inaccurately, as a "semanticist" or "linguist," as general semantics was often confused with "semantics" as a subdiscipline of linguistics.

Hayakawa originally wrote *Language in Action* as a textbook for his freshman English classes. It is worth exploring how Hayakawa popularized a then-new field,

general semantics, in this book. Originated by Polish-American Alfred Korzybski, general semantics is a program that seeks to regulate the evaluative operations performed in the human brain. It has been frequently confused with semantics as a branch of linguistics, but general semantics is not generalized semantics. It was conceived as both a theoretical and practical system that incorporates biology, epistemology, mathematics, neurology, physics, psychiatry and so on, in order to alter human behavior in the direction of greater sanity. Korzybski suggested that training in general semantics could eventually unify all people and nations. "We need not blind ourselves with the old dogma that 'human nature cannot be changed,' " he wrote in 1947, "for we find that it can be changed." [7] Korzybski's seminars attracted a number of scholars in multiple fields over the 1930s, and he and his devotees established the Institute of General Semantics in 1938 near the University of Chicago. Hayakawa, who arranged and incorporated general semantics in his teaching, became one of the most prominent proponents of the field in the 1940s and on.

Hayakawa inherited Korzybski's optimistic belief in the malleability of human nature in the face of fascism and racial hatred of the late 1930s. General semantics would expose how propaganda and censorship worked, how people substituted stereotyping for rational thought, and how stereotyping and prejudice lead to social division. Training in general semantics would recover human sanity and rational communication, and thus save democratic societies. In *Language in Action* Hayakawa took himself as an illustration of how naming something equals classifying it:

> ...the present writer is by "race" a "Japanese," by "nationality" a "Canadian," but, his friends say, "essentially" an "American," since he thinks, talks, behaves, and dresses much like other Americans. Because he is "Japanese," he is excluded by law from becoming a citizen of the United States; because he is "Canadian," he has certain rights in all parts of the British Empire; because he is "American," he gets along with his friends and teaches in an American institution of higher learning without any noticeable special difficulties.[8]

For Hayakawa, race as a human category was fundamentally irrational. Unlike

other categories such as nationality and culture, race had no basis in rational judgments. This belief would stay consistent and later proved to be critical in distancing himself from organized politics based on racial and ethnic solidarity. Aside from the irony that all Japanese Americans in the west coast would soon be put into concentration camps, it is noteworthy that he claims to have no "noticeable special difficulties" in the U.S. academia thanks to his cultural assimilation to American culture. We know this was not exactly the case when Hayakawa hunted for a teaching post after his doctorate, but he strongly believed that society would eventually learn to be more rational, and assimilation on the part of minorities would eventually solve the problem.

Other examples of racial and national groups Hayakawa used were "Koreans," "Czechs," "Jews," and of course, "Negroes." He asks:

> When, to take another example, is a person a "Negro"? By the definition accepted in the United States, any person with even a small amount of "Negro blood"—that is, whose parents or ancestors were classified as "Negroes"—is a "Negro." *Logically, it would be exactly as justifiable to say that any person with even a small amount of "white blood" is "white."* Why do they say one rather than the other? Because the former system of classification *suits the convenience of those making the classification.*[9]

Hayakawa's indictment of racism in the form of critical analysis of language resonated well with mid-century American racial liberalism embodied in Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* in 1944.[10] Myrdal, like Hayakawa, considered racism to be a set of irrational beliefs and actions, rather than a structural feature of American capitalism, and suggested that a continuous, rational appeal to white Americans would eventually end segregation and inequality. The wide readership *Language in Action* enjoyed caught the attention of the *Chicago Defender*, and that would bring Hayakawa deeper into the African American community in Chicago.

Hayakawa, the *Chicago Defender,* and Black Cultural Front

Hayakawa's *Language in Action* was reviewed on the December 13, 1941 issue of the *Chicago Defender*.[11] Within a year, the *Defender* recruited Hayakawa as one

of the five regular columnists starting from November 1942.[12] Titled "Second Thoughts," Hayakawa's column appeared every week on page 15 of the *Defender* along with Walter White's "People and Places" and Langston Hughes's "Here to Yonder." White had been serving as chief secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1929. Poet and writer Hughes, one of the driving figures of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, was about to reach a broader audience as a social commentator. The other two were journalist John Robert Badger and surgeon U.G. Dailey. Hayakawa was the very first non-African American to be a regular writer in the paper's history.

In his later interview, Hayakawa emphasized the coincidental nature of his tenure at the *Defender*, suggesting that then editor-in-chief Metz Lochard was almost single-handedly responsible for the decision to hire him. "He sort of fancied himself an intellectual," Hayakawa recalled, "I was glad to join in with him and treat him as one... I discovered that nobody else on the *Defender* staff had any particular enthusiasm for me. I never got to know them particularly well. Dr. Lochard took all my time on the occasion when I visited the *Chicago Defender* office."[13] Lochard's decision, however, was motivated by a lot more than a personal preference, as it involved a considerable risk for the paper. By then the war in the Pacific had started and the internment of Japanese Americans was under way on the West Coast. Although Hayakawa was himself exempt from the fate of internment because he resided in the Midwest, hostility toward people of Japanese descent was widespread. The loyalty of African Americans was not being taken for granted. The rumor of Japanese agents working in the black community to instigate disloyalty was being propagated by the Hearst newspapers. In September 1942, federal agents in Chicago made a series of raids in the black community and arrested eighty-five African Americans for disloyalty charges such as sedition and draft evasion.[14] Hayakawa later recalled that an administrator at Illinois Tech "thought it was very damaging and dangerous for any of us to be mixed up with a Negro newspaper, especially for a Japanese."[15]

The hiring of Hayakawa reflected the active part the *Chicago Defender* was taking in what historian Bill Mullen characterized as Chicago's black popular front.[16] Partly in response to the American Communist Party's policy toward an

expanded “cultural front” in the 1930s, prominent Chicago-affiliated black intellectuals like Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, and Arna Bontemps had made a clear leftward shift in their writing and political work. Younger and aspiring Chicago-based artists and intellectuals were joining the movement. Coupled with Associated Negro Press, the first African American news agency, and *Negro Story* magazine, the first magazine devoted to publishing short stories by and about black Americans, the *Defender* was a major medium for Chicago’s black cultural renaissance between 1936 and the end of World War II.

The *Chicago Defender* was founded in 1905 by Robert S. Abbot. He capitalized on the expanding black urban population during the Great Migration. With rich advertisements for clothing and cosmetics aimed at new migrants wishing to become cosmopolitan urbanites, the *Defender* lured more and more African Americans from the South, where the paper was widely distributed by Pullman porters. During the 1930s, the newspaper grew in circulation by reporting on the economic hardship facing black population, protesting residential segregation, and criticism against Southern Dixiecrats. By the time Japan struck Pearl Harbor, the *Defender* printed 100,000 copies each week, with 40 percent of those sold in Chicago.

Abbot’s passing in 1940 was a critical juncture for the younger generation of economic and cultural leaders of the black community in Chicago. Despite the paper’s dedicated critique of racism, economic inequality, and Jim Crow for decades, its inclination toward white emulation, pretentious entrepreneurism, journalistic sensationalism, and patronization of readers had begun to frustrate many readers of the younger generation. By 1940 the South Side of Chicago had a large-scale, settled African American population. Many of them were better educated than their parents, and read Richard Wright’s *Native Son* instead of dime novels. More and more participated in electoral politics as Democrats. An increasing numbers of blacks were getting positions in the Roosevelt administration. The South Side had by 1940 produced a black congressmen and a black alderman. These changes had strengthened the progressive alliance of black politicians, cultural workers, and activists working under the aegis of organizations such as the NAACP, Urban League, National Negro Congress, the Communist Party, and the CIO.

Unlike Abbott, who was a staunch anti-communist, his successor John

Sengstackle directed the newspaper and the black press in general toward a more progressive national and cultural alliance. The paper began to cover radicals and Communists more sympathetically, and they in return began to participate as writers and editors. While the paper retained its generally conservative "core" of young local black talent, it also sought to hire national figures in black and white politics and culture who could recast the newspaper as allied with the most progressive forces in major cities like New York and San Francisco. These moves coincided with the paper's attempts to link itself commercially with a cooperative black-only network of black papers and media outlets across the country by forming all-black national press organizations like the Negro Newspaper Publisher's association. Inspired by small and left-wing magazines and newspapers, the *Defender* began to blur separations between journalism and creative literature. Borrowing from Popular Front-style, it erased distinctions between advertising and news in an attempt to foster an alliance between black capitalism and black journalism. The *Defender* became something of a black pastiche like white Popular Front papers such as *New Masses* and *PM*.

Ben Burns, a white Jewish editor who joined the *Defender* in 1942, recalled that he and Metz Lochard were the two staffers of the newspaper who were directly linked to the Communist party.[17] Burns worked on three different Communist daily papers in the 1930s. Although Sengstackle was not a communist, he favored Burns and let him work as he pleased. Lochard, who had been at the paper for years, had broad contacts in the South Side community from Communist activists to religious leaders. He was an open supporter and member of the board of directors of the Chicago Popular Front / Negro People's Front project, and the Abraham Lincoln School, which was a fraternal companion to the South Side Community Art Center. For Lochard and others, to be on good terms with Communists was consistent with their wartime struggle against racism. As Mullen has pointed out, the honeymoon between the black community and the Communist party in Chicago was working well into the 1940s.[18] From 1940 to 1945, the *Chicago Defender* hired Communists, ex-Communists, and fellow travelers regularly, including Ben Burns and Langston Hughes.

Hayakawa's tenure at the *Defender* needs to be understood in this context.

Although the *Defender* and other black newspapers failed to criticize the Japanese internment when it started in February 1942, by the fall of the year many in the black community understood the connection between their own plight under Jim Crow and that of the Japanese. The September issue of the NAACP magazine, the *Crisis*, carried an article titled "Americans in Concentration Camps" which reminded readers that if the government could confine American citizens of Japanese ancestry on a racial basis, it could do the same to African Americans.[19] By featuring a writer of Japanese ancestry as a columnist, the *Defender* could express solidarity with Japanese American community against possible censures from authorities and the mainstream media. Furthermore, Hayakawa was already active as a left-wing activist who lived in the South Side. The newspaper's new leadership and new commitment to the leftist cultural politics brought Hayakawa further into the black community in Chicago.

Hayakawa and the Cooperative Movement in Chicago

On Sunday, March 15, 1942, Hayakawa was a speaker at the Good Shepherd Center, 5120 South Parkway. The building, which was soon to be renamed as the Parkway Community House, was one of the powerhouses of Chicago Black Renaissance. Directed by sociologist and activist Horace Cayton, Jr., the Parkway Community House contained a mother's clinic, a nursery school, a girls' dormitory, a birth certificate bureau, a relief office, a selective service office, the Henry George School of Social Service and a servicemen's center. It also hosted a variety of events from labor union meetings to workshops in dance, drama, art and writing. It was where local African Americans would hear leading black intellectuals and celebrities such as Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, Claude Barnett, E. Franklin Frazier, Charles White, Willard and Archibald Motley, and others.[20] Hayakawa's topic was consumers' cooperatives. "Dr. Hayakawa," the *Defender*'s announcement reminded the readers, "has been instrumental in establishing a number of cooperatives throught[sic] the city."[21]

Hayakawa first involved himself with the consumer co-op movement while in Wisconsin, when he joined the Cloverbelt Cooperative, organized as a credit union

by local farmers in 1939.[22] On moving to Hyde Park neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, he and his wife Marge started taking leading roles. Marge joined the board of directors for the Hyde Park Co-op, volunteered for the staff of Central States Co-op, and edited *Co-op News*. They also joined and patronized the People's Cooperative, located deeper in the black neighborhood, which strengthened Hayakawa's belief that the cooperative movement was instrumental in fighting against racial prejudice. In July 1942, Hayakawa addressed a capacity crowd of African Americans who were members of the Thrift Co-op club, the Morgan Park Consumers' Co-operative, and the Ida B. Wells Co-operatives, all owned and operated by the black community. "Consumer co-operation," said Hayakawa, "is the most fruitful tool of American Negroes by which gain economic security and equality of opportunity." Black-owned enterprises would install managers "who will not kick anybody around." "Co-ops can operate industry without business men or political commissars" and "[t]hey prove that industry can be run by the people for the people." [23]

In his *Defender* columns, he continued to link Chicago's co-op scene and anti-racism. By 1945 Hayakawa had become a leading authority of the cooperative movement in the entire nation. When Chicago's Packard and Co. reissued Horace M. Kallen's *The Decline and Rise of the Consumer* (1936) in 1945, one of the theoretical backbones of the movement, it was Hayakawa who contributed the introduction in the capacity of the Director of the Central States Cooperatives and Vice-President of the Chicago Consumers Cooperative, as well as the author of *Language in Action*, and Associate Professor of English at the Illinois Institute of Technology. More Americans with business experience, Hayakawa wrote, are "unable to be reassured by the incantations of big business publicists regarding the inevitability of postwar prosperity under the corporate 'free enterprise' system." Now that they were "turning to consumer cooperatives for an answer," before too long the cooperative model would supplant the corporate model. Those who predict otherwise, he added, were "arguing that the horse would never be supplanted" by the automobile.[24]

Looking back in 1989, Hayakawa stated in a rather apologetic manner, "I don't know about you, but we were sort of ideologically against the whole capitalist profit

system, weren't we, and the cooperative was far from being communism. It was a way of conducting business that sort of guarantees through its very functioning a nonexploitative view toward the consumer."[25] Hayakawa certainly did not believed in communism. Yet by the time he was recruited by the *Chicago Defender* he was a recognized leftist activist in the African American community through his leadership in the cooperative movement.

Hayakawa and Chicago Black Renaissance

Hayakawa's involvement with Chicago's African American community through the cooperative movement and the *Defender* led to another important career as a cultural broker who interpreted and propagated African American vernacular culture to the broader public. Like the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, the black aesthetic movement encompassing literature, visual art, music, and dance flourished in Chicago during and after World War II. Having been an amateur musician since his Canada years, Hayakawa took advantage of his residence in the South Side to explore the local nightclubs and rent parties in the black community. He befriended jazz and blues pianists like Earl Hines, Meade "Lux" Lewis, and Jimmy Yancey, famed blues singers and musicians in Chicago like Estelle "Mama" Yancey (Jimmy's wife), Memphis Slim, and Ernest "Big" Crawford, as well as the gospel legends Mahalia Jackson and Brother Joe May. In the meantime Hayakawa studied local and national history of African American music, and began writing about them for the *Chicago Sun*, the oldest white daily in the city, as well as the *Defender*.[26]

By 1944 Hayakawa was a known jazz writer and lecturer in Chicago area. Langston Hughes, who had been instrumental in promoting jazz music since the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, appreciated the efforts of his fellow columnist at the *Defender*. Noting how African American jazz musicians such as Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, and Louis Armstrong were influencing people all over the world "who never heard of Walter White," Hughes wondered "why Negro writers have been so backward in writing about popular music and musicians." "I know of no book by a Negro writer," he wrote, but "[e]ven the Negro newspapers use little material about our sepia greats of the popular music world... The only regular

columnist on a major Negro newspaper writing with enthusiasm occasionally about our jazz leaders is not a Negro at all—but Hayakawa!"[27] As Hughes' exclamation mark implies, many black and white Americans found it odd that a Canadian Japanese academic was writing and lecturing about African American music for black and white audience.

Being a curiosity, however, was by then what Hayakawa was masterful at. Growing up mostly away from Japanese immigrant enclaves, he had always presented himself as someone who looked different but versed in the language and culture of the local community. African American community in Chicago, for their part, was in need of someone who was from outside the black community to endorse and propagate the value of black vernacular cultures, particularly those nurtured in Chicago's South Side, toward the broader public beyond racial and class boundaries.

A case in point was the series of lecture-concerts, or "musically illustrated lectures," that he organized as a benefit for the prestigious *Poetry* magazine of Chicago. The first of them was held in August 1943 at the exclusive Saddle and Cycle Club. Hayakawa brought several boogie-woogie pianists from the South Side to play there. His fame as best-seller author and his connection with the *Poetry* magazine enabled him to introduce the music of Jimmy and "Mama" Yancey, which had been nurtured in rent parties of the black working class, to Chicago's high society. The program was also designed to be interracial, featuring classically-trained white pianist Robert Crum. The pianists, Hayakawa wrote in his *Defender* column, "did more than perform a service for *Poetry* Magazine. They performed a service for race relations as well, by appearing together, white and Negro, in the camaraderie of their common musicianship." "Serious artists, and serious connoisseurs of the arts, whether boogie-woogie or of Beethoven," he concluded, "know no color line."[28]

Another benefit event for the *Poetry* was a concert-lecture titled "Reflections on the History of Jazz" at the Arts Club of Chicago.[29] It featured Hayakawa's lecture with musical demonstrations by musicians from New Orleans and Chicago. In this lecture, Hayakawa presented a survey jazz history with emphasis on jazz as a process of cultural hybridization. The "Negro folk music," itself a product of the blending of European folk music and African traditions, met the French musical

culture in New Orleans. The relative freedom and opportunities New Orleans blacks enjoyed, according to Hayakawa, was the driving force behind "a new musical synthesis of urban sophistication with folk music." Jazz, the resulting product, was "one of the greatest gifts any minority has brought" to American culture. Moreover, Hayakawa emphasized, it was almost immediately a blessing to the rest of the world:

> Jazz is most popular in the big cities, in Europe and Asia no less than in America. City people, I believe, consciously or unconsciously miss the directness that characterizes folk experience. In our highly technologized urban cultures, we miss that directness most of all. Yet we cannot regress to more unsophisticated modes of feeling. Jazz, therefore, meets a profound need in our civilization because it is a unique fusion of a high degree of technical resourcefulness and inventiveness with the undiluted, elemental down-to-earthness of folk expression. When that fusion isn't there, so far as I am concerned, it isn't jazz.[30]

He went on to discuss how musical cultures such as the rent parties in Chicago's black community was one of the centers for the development of jazz outside New Orleans. While Hayakawa built his historical facts largely on the work of early jazz historians like William Russell and Charles Edward Smith, he added his original insights, his direct experience with black culture in Chicago, and above all his exquisite clarity to produce a readable, appealing synthesis of jazz histories available to Americans at the time. Historian Bruce Boyd Raeburn, who examined the writing of American jazz history, emphasizes how Hayakawa "provided refreshing new angles from which to view the course of jazz history and its meaning" in this lecture, and how, unlike other professional jazz critics and historians, he did not feel impelled to condemn one jazz style over another. "As an exercise in jazz erudition and diplomacy," Raeburn wrote, "Hayakawa's reflections were a model for all to emulate."[31]

Hayakawa continued to bring jazz music to upscale and intellectual facilities, including college campuses. In January 1952, Hayakawa combined his two pursuits of jazz lecture-concerts and the cooperative movement, by featuring a band lead by pianist Don Ewell at Mandel Hall of the University of Chicago to benefit the

scholarship fund of the Hyde Park Cooperative Nursery School.[32] The lecture-concert Hayakawa organized in December 1953 in Mandel Hall on the campus of the University of Chicago was one of the highlights of his career as a jazz commentator in Chicago. It was an event to trace the history of jazz in Chicago, and attracted 800 students and music fans. The program was entitled "How Jazz Came to Chicago." Hayakawa's collaborator in this project was journalist/pianist Dan Burley. As a *New York Amsterdam News* reporter, Burley had published important works on the Harlem jazz scene during World War II, including *Dan Burley's Original Handbook of Harlem Jive* (1944), and had recently moved to Chicago to work on Chicago jazz history. Hayakawa's lecture was illustrated by Love Austin and her Serenaders, a group who dominated the South Side jazz scene of the 1920s, led by the female blues pianist Austin. Jimmy Yancey had by this time passed away, but his widow "Mama" Yancey sang with Austin's band. Other local old-timers also performed.[33]

Hayakawa's close friendship with gospel singer Mahalia Jackson is particularly noteworthy. In 1954, the ever-popular Hayakawa was hosting a radio show titled "Hayakawa's Jazz Seminar" on Chicago's fine-arts station, WFMT-FM.[34] On one program he interviewed Jackson. According to Jackson's biographer Laurraine Goreau, Jackson was at first somewhat overwhelmed by the title of a semanticist who taught at the University of Chicago, but Hayakawa's story of having been unable to move into an apartment building in a white neighborhood, which brought him closer to the African American district in the first place, gave her a sense of solidarity in their resistance to racial prejudice, and they quickly hit it off.[35] The fact that Hayakawa was not a full-time faculty member at the University of Chicago, and not entirely welcomed in Chicago's academic establishment, also invited her sympathy. Above all, Hayakawa's leadership in the cooperative movement in the black community convinced Jackson of his goodwill to her people.

The radio interview was highly successful for Hayakawa, who tried to delve further into African American roots music. He asked her about old-time blues and gospel music of black New Orleans. He was particularly interested in how Jackson would think of more polished forms of jazz music of Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw, and Gerry Mulligan Quartet. Jackson responded in a pleasant manner, for example,

identifying the gospel rhythm of *Rock My Brother* in a bebop performance. Discussing Bessie Smith, she compared the psychological effects of gospel and blues, claiming that blues keeps someone feeling burdened while gospel gives one relief. Hayakawa's interest in situating African American vernacular cultures in Chicago in the larger history of jazz benefited immensely from his contact with Jackson, who grew up in New Orleans and later moved to Chicago.

When Hayakawa later started lecturing and hosting lecture-concerts in San Francisco featuring Bob Scobey's band, Jackson joined and performed. Their friendship continued after Hayakawa moved to San Francisco State College and into his conservative years. Hayakawa was by no means the first person from outside the black community to approach Jackson for historicizing, authenticating, and advertising African American music. It was journalist and radio show host Studs Terkel of Chicago who first "discovered" Jackson for the white audience. Jackson had cut her first record with Apollo Records in 1946, and in the summer of 1951 she was invited to Lenox, Massachusetts as a guest of the Music Inn, an institute for a serious study of jazz music organized by Marshall Stearns. After appearing on Hayakawa's show, Jackson had her own show, "Mahalia Jackson Show," on CBS from September 26, 1954 to Feb 6 1955.[36] Still, Hayakawa's race and unique personality made him a special cultural broker, as well as a friend, for Jackson. Interestingly, Jackson believed he was an "anthropologist" till the end. Indeed, Hayakawa's participation in the South Side rent parties as the sole non-black person in the crowd made him look like an anthropologist on a participant observation. It gave him a peculiar credential as a racial middleman.

"The Semantics of Being Negro"

On February 12, 1953, Hayakawa gave an address titled "The Semantics of Being Negro" at the annual dinner of the Urban League of St. Louis, a branch of the National Urban League whose mission was to secure economic self-reliance and civil rights for African Americans.[37] Away from his Chicago base, he began his address with defining his position as a racial middleman, whose rare experience and knowledge enabled him to understand and mediate black and white worlds. "Ladies

and gentlemen: It would seem the utmost effrontery on my part," he said, "to speak to you on the subject of the psychological problems of being Negro. I am not a Negro, and never have been... But perhaps it is the temerity of a non-Negro offering to speak on the subject of being Negro that arouses your curiosity."[38] He first pointed out that he was a member of a minority group, even though he personally suffered less discrimination than most Japanese Americans. He then went on to discuss how he had led his professional and social life in the black community ever since he became a *Defender* columnist. In the process, he acquired "an emotional identification with the Negro world."[39]

Defining himself as a non-African American who happened to have an insider's perspective, however, was not enough for Hayakawa. "But I have one other claim... This claim transcends the others," he said, and he claimed that he had "been a close student of the new psychological discipline known as general semantics."[40] Indeed, the rest of his speech would be primarily a psychological analysis of race relations, particularly on the part of African Americans. He problematized, for example, that his black students sat together in the classroom and choose black writers for their paper topics even though they had not read them. He urged upper- and middle-class blacks to go to classical concerts more often, even when an African American singer Marian Anderson was not singing. He then gave an example of an anonymous Chinese-American professor of sociology who was an expert on Chinatowns but never spoke on anything else, and criticized how the titles of graduate-level dissertations at black universities were all about African Americans. The absence of other topics, for Hayakawa, was "a depressing commentary on the one-sidedness of academic life in many Negro colleges." He told the audience that the "Negro problem" needed to be relativized at a psychological level by studying the problems of other minority groups, including people with disabilities as well as white ethnic groups.[41]

Hayakawa then advised younger generation of African Americans not to be discouraged by the experience of their elders who became Pullman porters after training to be electrical engineers. The job ceiling was not as rigid as it used to be, and it could not be taken down by legislation alone, because "not even an FEPC law can compel the hiring of a non-engineer for an engineer's job." General semantics,

he explained, teaches people how to be "extensional," which means to be open to changes and differences. A particular chair is not the same as another particular chair, and generalizations may or may not be true. Mr. Jones (1940) is not Mr. Jones (1942), and likewise Supreme Court (1950) is not Supreme Court (1954).[42]

The last point Hayakawa made was prophetic. On the eve of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision, he advocated for freedom from "Jim Crow of the mind" and black self-betterment. The times were indeed changing, and there were reasons for Hayakawa to believe in the slow but steady progress, and the prospect of general semantics to foster sanity in public debate and break racial barriers at a psychological level. Legal battles needed to be fought, and the "White" and "Colored" signs needed to be taken down, but no confrontational politics were necessary or desirable. At this historical moment, Hayakawa's "utmost effrontery" to preach to African Americans about their psychological problem was not only tolerated but also welcomed by many in the black community.

After Chicago

For several years after moving to San Francisco in 1955, Hayakawa remained a liberal intellectual/activist. He was involved in the founding of "Friends of Free Radio" to support KPFA-FM in Berkeley as a "progressive" source of information and entertainment. He and his wife Marge were also active in the Berkeley Consumers' Cooperative, which was by then the nation's largest coop.[43] However, when the civil rights demonstrations expanded outside the South, and what has come to be known as the free speech movement took shape on college campuses, Hayakawa began to feel uncomfortable with the demonstrators' means, even though he agreed with their ends. When Paul Jacobs, a radical writer and participant in Hayakawa's colloquium hosted by the San Francisco chapter of the ISGS, endorsed the U.C. Berkeley students' activism, Hayakawa showed an adamant disapproval. Some of Hayakawa's associates at the time now look back on this incident as the sign of his right turn in 1968.[44] At the time of the Watts Riot in 1966, while blaming the American "caste system" as the fundamental cause, Hayakawa also opposed the New Left's use of civil rights in criticizing the national administration and the war in

Vietnam. It was, for Hayakawa, “an attempt to use the disadvantaged Negro as an instrument with which to embarrass and discredit a national administration which...has ever done more for the Negro in three years than *any* previous administration has ever done in a comparable period.” [45] In 1967, the Berkeley Consumers’ Cooperative, of which Marge Hayakawa was the director, was split over the question of whether to participate in the local anti-war protests, boycotts and strikes. Hayakawa wrote to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and called this “the new Berkeley mentality...a kind of dogmatic zealotry.” [46]

Conclusion

Hayakawa’s discomfort with the radical left in the late 1960s was in some ways characteristic of a mid-century liberal. While he was committed to liberal causes of anti-racism and economic equality, he was offended by the New Left linkage of anti-war, civil rights, and free speech in an attempt to challenge the entire status quo. He believed in the ability of the American democratic system to adjust itself in the long run, one issue at a time. However, his determination to fight the campus radicalism, particularly that of black students and faculty, reflected another important factor; because of his Chicago years, Hayakawa believed he had an expert knowledge of and unique experience with African Americans and race relations. He believed in assimilation as the ultimate and sole solution to all racial minorities, whether they were black or Asian.

In light of his career after San Francisco State University, it is tempting to see Hayakawa as a uniquely reactionary figure among prominent Japanese Americans. But we need to remember that many Japanese Americans of Hayakawa’s generation had been ambivalent to the confrontational activism of the civil rights movement during the 1960s. Like Hayakawa, many bought into the “model minority” narrative praising Asian American assimilation that was supposedly accomplished without any confrontational political activism. In this sense Hayakawa’s right turn was not particularly enigmatic. What was truly unique about Hayakawa was his success as a racial middleman during the 1940s and 1950s. He believed he could perform the same task in the late 1960s and on. The new generation of African Americans and

Japanese Americans, however, chose a different course, that of creating an interracial alliance of minorities under the moniker of “Third World.” The movement would lead to a successful identity politics in higher education which overcame the limitations of assimilationist racial liberalism to the benefit of following generations of minorities. At least in this perspective, Hayakawa proved to be standing on the wrong side of the history.

And yet, as Greg Robinson has noted, we should not confuse Hayakawa’s assimilationism with conformism. Through the years of World War II, Japanese internment, and the postwar resurgence of the Popular Front liberalism in African American community, Hayakawa fought his way against the anti-communist scrutiny to promote a constructive dialogue among African Americans, Japanese Americans, and the progressive white mainstream, by playing the role of racial middleman. His later years of increasingly shaky relationship with organized politics of ethnic minorities and final confrontation with the younger generation of multiethnic movement should not be interpreted merely as his cooptation into the white American mainstream. Instead, it was a manifestation of his (over)confidence as a racial middleman based on his Chicago experience, as well as his continuous belief that American society could always be made better and more worthy of assimilation.

Notes

[1] In addition to expressing support for the movement, Hayakawa made monetary contributions to Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the early 1960s. See Letter From S. I. Hayakawa to MLK. July 26, 1963; Letter from Wyatt T. Walker to S. I. Hayakawa. July 30, 1963. The King Center Archive collection.

[2] Gerald W. Haslam, *In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S.I. Hayakawa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

[3] Daryl J. Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

[4] Greg Robinson, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[5] Haslam, 84-5.

[6] Cited in Haslam, 86.

[7] Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* (Brooklyn, NY: Institute of General Semantics, 1994), xxxv.

[8] S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Action*(New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), 117.

[9] Ibid., 117-8.

[10] Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944).

[11] Isolde A.Henninger, “Book Review: Language In Action by S. I. Hayakawa,” the *Chicago Defender*, 13 Dec. 1941, 15.

[12] S. I. Hayakawa, “Second Thoughts,” the *Chicago Defender*, 21 Nov. 1942, 15.

[13] Cited in Haslam, 145-6.

[14] Ernest Allen, Jr., “When Japan Was ‘Champion of the Darker Races’: Satokata Takahashi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism,” *The Black Scholar* no. 24 (Winter 1994), 23–46.

[15] Hayakawa, “From Semantics to the U.S Senate,” interview, 1989, Online Archive of California; Also cited in Haslam, 131-2.

[16] Bill Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

[17] Mullen, 54.

[18] Ibid., 55.

[19] Harry Paxton Howard, “Americans in Concentration Camps,” *Crisis* no. 49 (September 1942), 281-4, 301-2.

[20] Jay Mulberry, *The Parkway Community House and the Golden Age of Bronzeville*. <http://www.hydeparkhistory.org/herald/ParkwayCenter.pdf> (accessed 6 June 2013).

[21] Elizabeth Galbreath, “Typovision.” the *Chicago Defender*, 14 May 1942, 16.

[22] Haslam, 88.

[23] “Consumer Cooperatives Urged As Best Bet For American Negroes.” *Atlanta Daily World*, 20 July 1942, 1.

[24] S. I. Hayakawa, “Introduction to the Second Edition” in Horace Kallen, *Decline and Rise of the Consumer: A Philosophy of Consumer Cooperation* (Chicago: Packard and Co., 1945), vii-xiv.

[25] Hayakawa, “From semantics to the U.S Senate,” [Interview 5: May 3, 1989] Online Archive of California.

[26] Haslam, 150-1.

[27] Langston Hughes, “Here to Yonder,” the *Chicago Defender*, 13 May1944, 12.

[28] Hayakawa, “Second Thoughts,” the *Chicago Defender*, 28 Aug. 1943, 15. Hayakawa’s role as a cultural broker for African Americans was in fact not limited to music. In November 1944, for example, he was one of the judges to choose a mural “The Negro in Professional Life” sponsored by the Chicago Urban League and other civil rights organizations. He later became a well-known collector of African art.

[29] Eleanor Page, “Jazz Talk Sets Blue-Blooded Toes Tapping,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 March 1945, 15; Hayakawa had given this lecture earlier in another event at a private apartment, also to benefit the *Poetry* magazine. See Judith Cass, “Poetry’s Aids to confer on Benefit Plans,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 24 Feb., 1945, 11.

[30] S. I. Hayakawa, *35th and State: Reflections on the History of Jazz* (Chicago: privately printed, 1945), reprinted in *Jazz Report* vol.10 no.1-3 (1982).

[31] Bruce Boyd Raeburn, *New Orleans Style and the Writing of American Jazz History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 175-6.

[32] Will Leonard, “Tower Ticker,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 Jan. 1952, N5.

[33] “Jam Session Traces Origin Of Jam For Chicago Musicians.” the *Chicago Defender*, 19 Dec. 1953, 18.

[34] Robert Lewis Shayon, “Syncopated Semantics: Hayakawa’s Jazz Seminar.” *Saturday Review of Literature* no. 37 (June 5, 1954), 28.

[35] Laurraine Goreau, *Just Mahalia, Baby: The Mahalia Jackson Story* (Gretna, La: Pelican Pub. Co, 1984), 173.

[36] Jules Victor Schwerin, *Got to Tell It: Mahalia Jackson, Queen of Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 85.

[37] This lecture was reprinted in Hayakawa, S. I. “The Semantics of Being Negro.” *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* no. 10 (1953), 163–75.

[38] Ibid., 163.

[39] Ibid., 164.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 172-3.

[42] Ibid., 174.

[43] Haslam, 260.

[44] Ibid., 260-2.

[45] Cited in Haslam, 265.

[46] Ibid., 268-9.

（Summary）
Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa (1906-1992) is best remembered as acting president of San Francisco State University who put down the nationally televised student strike of 1968-69 and a conservative Republican senator from 1977 to 1983. Prior to the late 1960s, however, he was a known liberal. What was consistent was his belief in assimilation. This study will revisit Hayakawa's Chicago years from 1939 to 1955 in an attempt to demonstrate how Hayakawa's assimilation ideology was shaped by interaction with Chicago's black community. Based on Hayakawa's writings and media coverage of his activities in this time period, I will argue that his assimilationist ideology and his self-appointed role of a racial middleman were not merely his idiosyncrasies but also products of the specific context of the mid-century Chicago, where the discipline of general semantics was then being institutionalized, where a person of Japanese descent like Hayakawa could avoid the forced incarceration during World War II, and where a vibrant African American community with new generation of leaders was eager to recruit someone like Hayakawa, to act as a racial "middleman" who could mediate between black and white Americans and promote African American vernacular culture to broader audiences.