

Paul Robeson, Peekskill, and the Red Menace

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The weary, battered victims of an unforeseen riot gathered near a stage outside Peekskill, New York, on the night of August 27, 1949. The small group included the remnants of a concert audience that had traveled to Lakeland Acres picnic grounds for an evening concert by one of America's most remarkable performers, Paul Robeson. Instead, the concertgoers became witness to a night of ugly violence.

A protest march by local veterans in the early evening set the tone for the night and made the community's opposition to Robeson's presence explicit. Arriving concertgoers were jeered and insulted by a crowd who gathered near the site, then watched in horror as a cross was set afire on a nearby hillside. Robeson and the majority of the concertgoers never arrived, having been warned of trouble or turned away by the crowd. The few who had arrived early bore the brunt of the crowd's anger and eventually abandoned their efforts to control the picnic grounds. As they watched rioters make fires out of their camp chairs and music books, the concertgoers huddled before the stage and joined defiantly in singing "We Shall Not Be Moved."

Finally, two hours after the start of the riot, the police arrived; the injured received treatment and the rest safe escort out of the picnic grounds. Almost miraculously, there were no fatalities that night, although the threat of death was very real. Novelist Howard Fast, who was to have served as master of ceremonies for the evening, recalled "at one point I knew I would die in that terrible fight in Peekskill."¹

Shaken, but undeterred, the concert's planners quickly scheduled a concert for the following week and began organizing their own security to protect both performers and concertgoers. Peekskill townsmen likewise regrouped, adamant in their conviction that only a determined protest could safeguard community autonomy. The rising tension was aggravated by angry rhetoric as charges of "Communist," "fascist," "Nazi," "Nigger-lovers," and "Jew bastards" were exchanged. The ensuing concert and subsequent riot represented far more than a spontaneous eruption: both concertgoers and protesters entered the Peekskill area convinced of the need to defend fundamental American values. What was contested was not the music of Paul Robeson, but the very nature of American democracy.

"A Friendly Town?"

"Peekskill is a Friendly Town." At least that's what the sign at the town limits told visitors. Yet the veterans who protested Robeson's appearance might

have added: friendly did not mean naive. The Peekskill veterans felt that their protest march was part of the ongoing international struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was not Paul Robeson the singer whom they opposed, but Robeson the fellow traveler—the communist—whom they could not abide. And it was his followers, un-American in their politics and only recently American in their heritage, who aroused the fears and suspicions of many of the Peekskill veterans. The veterans brought their memories of Hitler, Tojo, and Mussolini to the events in Peekskill, but they also recognized that this Cold War represented a new kind of conflict. Communism was the enemy and Robeson, by virtue of his professions of love and fidelity to the Soviet Union, was merely an agent of the Kremlin. At best he was a dupe, at worst a traitor.

For the left-wing concertgoers, Robeson was not merely another singer, but a powerfully symbolic fighter for civil rights in America, against fascism in Spain, and against colonialism in Africa. By attacking the concerts the locals in Peekskill had accosted a near-sacred icon.

Regardless of his stature among people on the left, Peekskill residents had no intention of making Robeson feel welcome. When word of Robeson's proposed concert in Peekskill reached the public, the reaction from the area veterans' organizations was swift and unambiguous. Although he had appeared in the region in each of the previous three summers, in the summer of 1949 he attracted unwanted attention. Robeson's new notoriety stemmed largely from statements made at the April, 1949 Congress of the World Partisans of Peace in Paris. Robeson, professing to speak on behalf of all American workers, said that "our will to fight for peace is strong. We shall not make war on anyone. We shall not make war on the Soviet Union." There is some confusion regarding this statement because Robeson was quoted by the Associated Press as saying "it is unthinkable that American Negroes would go to war on behalf of those who oppressed us for generations against a country [the Soviet Union] which in one generation has raised our people to the full dignity of mankind."² When these words were reported in the United States they helped to cement the outspoken Robeson's growing reputation as an "un-American." In Peekskill, the *Evening Star* printed the wire service's report of Robeson's statement on page one under the headline "Robeson Says U.S. Negroes Won't Fight Russia."³

The Paris speech and his continued support of the Soviet Union made Robeson politically suspect in the tense atmosphere of the Cold War. Robeson's talents had not waned, but his politics were increasingly unpalatable to many Americans. Robeson sounded like a communist, associated with communists, and openly defended the Soviet Union. Even if he was not technically a Communist Party member, Robeson's public style placed him firmly in the communist camp.⁴

Once the *Evening Star* confirmed that Robeson was indeed on his way to Peekskill, it printed a series of articles, editorials, and letters to the editor that left little room for doubt as to the paper's position on the upcoming concert. The August 23, 1949 *Evening Star* ran a front-page headline reading "Robeson Concert Here Aids 'Subversive' Unit," and a controversial editorial entitled "The Discordant Note." "The time for tolerant silence that signifies approval is running out," wrote the editor. "No matter how masterful the decor, nor how sweet the music," Americans should not be duped into accepting communism in their own communities.⁵ The paper also repeated the charges of the California Committee on Un-American Activities that the Civil Rights Congress, for whose benefit Robeson was appearing, was a "Communist dominated organization."⁶ Although recognizing that Robeson had performed in the area before with little incident, the newspaper made clear that his welcome had faded by 1949 because over "the past several months Robeson has turned violently and loudly pro-Russian."⁷

The same edition also printed a letter to the editor from a local veterans' leader, Vincent J. Boyle:

The present days seem to be crucial ones for the residents of this area with the present epidemic of polio. Now we are being plagued with another, namely the appearance of Paul Robeson and his Communistic followers . . . It is an epidemic because they are coming here to induce others to join their . . . ranks and it is unfortunate that some of the weaker minded are susceptible to their fallacious teachings unless something is done by the loyal Americans of this area.

Quite a few years ago a similar organization, the Ku Klux Klan appeared in Verplanck and received their just reward. Needless to say they have never returned. I am not intimating violence in this case but I believe that we should give this matter serious consideration and strive to a remedy that will cope with the situation the same way as Verplanck and with the same result that they will never appear again in this area.

The irony of this meeting is that they intend to appear at Lakeland Acres Picnic Area. If you are familiar with this location you will find that it is located across the street from the Hillside and Assumption Cemeteries. Yes, directly across the street from the resting place of those men who paid the supreme sacrifice in order to insure our Democratic form of government.

Are we, as loyal Americans, going to forget these men and the principles they died for or are we going to follow their beliefs and rid ourselves of subversive organizations? . . . If we tolerate organizations such as these we are apt to face a repetition of the past and in the near future.⁸

Boyle's letter expresses the concerns and strategies of this new kind of war. He likens communism to polio, an insidious disease that strikes at unsuspecting members of society. He raises the issue of his readers' loyalty as opposed to that of Robeson and his "Communistic followers." Drawing on local history, Boyle reminds his townsmen of how the Ku Klux Klan was expelled from nearby Verplanck and suggests similar action against Robeson. Finally, Boyle invokes the legacy of World War Two and reminds readers of the sacrifices made by the veterans now resting in the cemeteries across the street from Lakeland Acres.

This letter, along with the news stories and editorials of August 23, 1949, set the tone for the next two weeks in Peekskill. The "Discordant Note" editorial sanctioned opposition to Robeson with an official voice while Boyle's letter served as a call to action. The issue at hand, according to the *Evening Star* and Vincent Boyle, was as much about local autonomy as it was about communism. Even if there was no way to legally prohibit the concert, other measures could be taken that would allow local citizens to express their opinions forcefully. For while most Peekskill residents realized that it was not illegal to be a communist, they certainly considered it un-American.

The *Evening Star* continued to print articles using words such as "communist" and "subversive" in connection with Robeson, and local civic leaders quickly concurred. "There is no room in this community," said Lloyd Whitaker, President of the Peekskill Chamber of Commerce, "for any person or group of persons whose ideology advocates allegiance to any other form of government than that which we enjoy here in these United States of America." Allan Grant, Cortlandt Town Supervisor, let it be known that he was "openly opposed to such gatherings, where the sponsors are listed as subversive and against our American way of life." Grant also complained that American citizens were "powerless to act" until communism was outlawed. "Whether or not a subversive front operates far away or in our locality," Grant exhorted, "it behooves every believer in the constitution of the United States to stand pat to see that the rights of the majority are not destroyed."⁹

On August 25, 1949 the Joint Veterans' Council (JVC), a body consisting of representatives of various veterans' organizations, convened a special meeting to discuss the Robeson concert. Even before the JVC could meet, the local posts of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars had already endorsed a protest parade as a means of taking a "definite stand against the appearance of Paul Robeson."¹⁰ The JVC followed the lead of its members and called for a "peaceful and orderly" demonstration to be conducted "in the best traditions of our country. We can thus illustrate," the JVC statement continued, "the democratic form of expression and protest in contrast to the force and violence as practiced in Communistic and dictatorship countries." Although the JVC called for a peaceful demonstration, the parade was intended

to be confrontational. The veterans planned to march along Hillside Avenue in front of the entrance to Lakeland Acres during the concert performance. A JVC statement in the *Evening Star* invited non-veterans to join them in the march, but asked that they “follow the orders of the ex-G.I.’s who will be acquainted with the overall plan.”¹¹ The protest march was carefully planned and organized and clearly intended to physically confront the concertgoers.

Other community groups in Peekskill quickly lent their voices to the anti-Robeson chorus as the concert drew near. The Chamber of Commerce, Jaycees, Kiwanis Club, Knights of Columbus, and other civic organizations went on record as opposing Robeson’s appearance.

Although they were few in number, there were dissenting voices. American Labor Party member Victor Sharrow, a resident of nearby Crompound, wrote an appeal to the New York Attorney General claiming that the *Evening Star* was acting in an inflammatory manner and requesting police protection for the concert.¹² In a letter to the *Evening Star*, one area resident accused the newspaper and the parade organizers of losing “faith in the fundamental soundness of democracy . . . and . . . adopt one or more of the very methods of Communists which we detest in them.” The greatest threat lay not in Paul Robeson or communism, but in what the results would be if “those who think of themselves as good Americans should become panicky and forget (if they ever fully understood and truly appreciated) the great value of Democratic principles.”¹³ These minority opinions were drowned in a sea of anti-Robeson and anticommunist feelings.

In the days before the concert, the *Evening Star*, the central player in the drama, defended itself against accusations, like those of Victor Sharrow, which blamed the paper for any trouble that might occur at the concert. In a rare front-page editorial entitled “Music or Politics?” the newspaper made its reply:

At no time, either in its columns or editorially has the *Evening Star* ever advocated “violence” as a means of disrupting this, or any other kind of program. We did state, however, and do here reaffirm, our conviction that the time for tolerant silence that signifies approval has run out, and that it is high time to speak forth.

The newspaper justified this unusual use of the front page because of the recent “glib misrepresentations” by outside groups who were trying to “discredit the newspaper’s opposition to the Robeson concert, which has been made strictly on patriotic grounds.” The paper commended the veterans’ plans for a peaceful demonstration and reasserted its position concluding, “violence? Absolutely not! Let such tactics remain elsewhere—in the trick bags of the undemocratic.”¹⁴

On the day of the concert the paper fired one more editorial blast, entitled "Minority Intolerance":

Sponsors of the Paul Robeson concert to be held this evening in Peekskill have protested to the County Executive and the District Attorney because the Peekskill Evening Star has told its readers in plain language just exactly the kind of man Robeson is and just who are his political sponsors.

Those who protest this frank newspaper treatment are always the first to cry aloud for the right of free speech when they think their own civil rights imperiled. In fact the minorities that are the most vehement in demand of their own rights are the most intolerant in granting similar privileges to the majority.¹⁵

The *Evening Star* pursued its anti-Robeson campaign throughout the pages of the August 27 edition. The paper reminded its readers that the "Russia-loving Negro baritone" was going to sing that night for the benefit of a "Communist front organization."¹⁶ The lines of conflict were clearly marked in the pages of the *Evening Star*; it was to be minority versus majority rights, outsiders versus locals, and "Communists" versus "Americans."

Joe Albertson, the editor of the *Evening Star*, had put his paper in the middle of the conflict and on the day of the concert his message was clear: the rights of Robeson and his fans need not be taken too seriously because they obviously cared little about the rights of the majority in Peekskill. The degree to which the newspaper can be held accountable of the violence of August 27 is debatable. At the very least, though, its editorials and feature stories gave voice to and inflamed the anticommunist, anti-Robeson sentiment in the community.

While the newspaper, veterans' organizations, and other town leaders all supported the protest parade, there is no evidence to suggest that any of them foresaw or planned the violence that followed. Ironically, Allan Grant asked the state police to send some troopers because he was worried that some "toughies" from New York City might come to the concert and cause trouble.¹⁷ In reality, most of the concert crowd was drawn from people who vacationed in the Peekskill area.

Press Reactions

The Peekskill riot of August 27, 1949 did not long remain a local issue. News of the riot quickly spread across the country via the radio and wire services. The initial United Press coverage inaccurately told of how a "mob of young men tonight set fire to the stage at a picnic area near here [Peekskill] in trying to halt a scheduled concert by Negro Paul Robeson."¹⁸ News of the riot

at Lakeland Acres soon reached into American living rooms. In the days that followed, the Peekskill riot developed from a simple wire service story into a political lesson for the nation.

Throughout the Northeast, the riot received both news coverage and extensive editorial commentary. From Washington to Albany, editorials on Peekskill exhibited a rhetorical consistency by embracing the Peekskill veterans' cause but denouncing the violence. In so doing, most editorialists took as assumed knowledge two important premises: 1) Robeson was, at the very least, a fellow traveler, and 2) Communist subversion represented a very real threat.

Even in the restrained *New York Times*, which strongly defended the rights of the concertgoers, the editor tweaked Robeson while upholding his right to sing in Peekskill: "Lamenting the twisted thinking that is ruining Paul Robeson's great career, we defend his right to carry his art to whatever peaceably assembled groups of people he wishes. That is the American way."¹⁹

Other editors were less generous. Most editorials did not protest the violence because of the injuries suffered, or even because of the violation of civil liberties, but because violence played into the hands of communist propagandists. The editor of the *Philadelphia Tribune* spoke for many of his colleagues when he argued that anticommunism itself was not a legitimate excuse to riot because "those who are opposed to Communism can not destroy it with violence. Force and strong arm tactics are the handmaidens of communistic procedures. They love it. They thrive on it."²⁰ The editor of the Albany, New York, *Knickerbocker News* charged that the Peekskill veterans had actually weakened the cause of anticommunism. "We deplore any action that might tend to dignify, or perhaps even martyrize the Negro singer. And that," according to the editor, "is precisely what happened Saturday night in Peekskill." The editor further warned that the "danger is that the Red singer, who otherwise seems destined for involuntary obscurity, might gain stature through such incidents." Without mentioning the right of free expression, the editorial cautioned against even "peaceful demonstrations," as they tended to "lend undue importance" to controversial events such as the Robeson concert. And the onset of violence, "with its inevitable publicity, multiplies by many times the notice accorded." The *Knickerbocker News* did find a silver lining in the bad news that attended the Robeson concert. The publicity, although it probably provided fuel for the communist propaganda mill, also served to expose Robeson "thoroughly" as a "self-appointed crusader for the Communists." Americans, argued the editor, need never be confused about Paul Robeson again since he had proven himself to be "a disgrace to his race and country."²¹

Other publications also decided that the propaganda value of the riot to the communists was the real story. The editor of New York's *Herald Tribune* condemned the violence in Peekskill because "Americanism cannot be defended

by aimless violence or riotous demonstrations” as “Communists thrive in such an atmosphere of chaos.” He claimed that the “veterans groups played into the hands of their opponents, either in righteous, or misguided indignation.” The editor underlined his point by asserting that the “communists” not only provoked the conflict, but exulted in it as well. The riot created a “new set of martyrs,” he argued, which was enough “in the Communist book, to make the concert a howling success.” Despite the “provocative and offensive” statements Robeson would undoubtedly have made had the concert proceeded, the protesters should have been willing to “let the irony and the facts of the case stand as sufficient refutation of the charges of the concert’s sponsors.”²² Even though he was willing to blame the protesters for falling into a trap set by the “communists,” the editor of the *Herald Tribune* charged that Robeson and his followers were subversives who, although technically the victims in the riot, had to be viewed with suspicion. Protesting subversion was not in itself wrong, argued the editor, but being lured into violence was inexcusable.

Newspaper editorials in Washington, D.C. focused their attention on the victims of the violence in Peekskill, but expressed little sympathy. While the Peekskill veterans were criticized for attempting to prevent the concert, thus “adopting the Communist technique and playing the Communist game,” the concertgoers were held up for special ridicule. “The anguished outcries of Mr. Robeson should not be taken seriously,” wrote the editor of the *Washington Evening Star*, because “they do not appeal to public opinion with clean hands.” Unconcerned with questions of constitutional rights, the editor claimed that, so far as the “communists” were concerned, “their shrill demands for the protection of the Bill of Rights ought to be appraised accordingly.”²³ The editor of the *Washington Post* was somewhat less strident than his crosstown peer when he wrote, “it is hard to say which side is more to blame for this disgraceful and ominous episode.” In the end, however, he concluded that Robeson, for “his disparagements of his native country and his fulsome glorification of Soviet Russia,” deserved most of the blame. The *Post* editor reminded his readers that “since he [Robeson] has refused to deny that he is a Communist, he is open to suspicion.”²⁴

These editorials are remarkable for their willingness to take what amounts to a wartime attitude towards suspected sedition. Civil liberties rarely entered editorials and then only to point out that those violently preventing the Robeson concert had adopted a “communist tactic.” Otherwise, the editors seemed to have had few qualms about the suspension of free expression where Robeson was concerned. There was little concern that Robeson’s rights were violated, only fear that the “communists” would capitalize on the incidents.

While residents of other cities read about the riot in their daily newspapers, the people of Peekskill were still living in its wake. The *Evening Star*, accused by many in the pro-Robeson camp of complicity in the violence, had its own

interpretation of the riot. While the paper's coverage was filled with the same negative references, like "subversive," "Communist front," and "Russia-loving Negro," as other papers, its first accounts of the riot were more critical than supportive of the protesters and rioters.

The *Evening Star's* August 29, 1949 editorial echoed its big city counterparts when lamenting the termination of the otherwise "orderly and peaceful" protest in violence. The editor of the *Evening Star* expressed regret over the personal injuries and property damage, but mostly worried that the "undemocratic show of leaderless disorder," which was "precipitated by a few unruly persons," occurred at a time when there was insufficient police protection to prevent violence and actually "played right into the hands of the concert supporters." Although the editor formally condemned the riot, he was obviously pleased at seeing the communist issue brought out into the open. The Peekskill veterans, according to the editor, showed that they "are in no mood to appreciate the political gall of those who scream for rights and benefits as American citizens, only to use these sacred privileges to serve un-American ends."²⁵ Like those in Philadelphia, Albany, New York City, and Washington, the editor in Peekskill was more than willing to ignore the subtleties of civil liberties in favor of sweeping anticommunism.

In the aftermath of the riot the editor of the *Evening Star* condemned the violence, but without implicating individual protesters or rioters in any serious wrongdoing. The policy set the tone for both editorials on the events and the content of the news stories regarding the riot. In its first edition following the violence, the paper ran a front-page story reporting "bitter" fighting when "nearly 300 young veterans and others battled a group of youthful Communist sympathizers." The young veterans, according to the story, could not be restrained and "drove Robeson sympathizers back down a dirt road leading to the concert grounds with their fists." When the Deputy Sheriffs on hand ordered them back to Hillside Avenue, "they circled [sic] around through the hills and wreaked destruction to the concert equipment and chairs." According to the newspaper account, the departing concertgoers were forced to run a gauntlet of log, rock, and barbed wire roadblocks as "the demonstrators secreted themselves along the dusty road as the first cars began speeding out of the grounds. As the vehicles bounced over the log, they rose in unison and battered the automobile with a terrific barrage of stones."²⁶

Based on this account a strong case can be made that the veterans instigated the violence. The rioters were depicted as aggressive, semi-organized, uncontrollable, and, most importantly, clearly identifiable as veterans. By the time the next issue of the *Evening Star* hit the streets on August 30, the picture had become somewhat more clouded. In a front page headline that edition reprinted the veterans' charges that "Armed Commie 'Goon' Squads" provoked the attack. This marked both a reporting and an interpretive shift for the

paper. From this point forward, the *Evening Star* stopped portraying the veterans as aggressors and moved towards a position that claimed the veterans had not participated in the violence at all. One unidentified veteran told the newspaper that “there wouldn’t have been any trouble if the Communists had not imported ‘goon’ squads and armed them for trouble.” The so-called “goon squads” consisted of men who were “dressed for violence. They wore old clothes and carried knives, blackjacks, brass knuckles, and clubs.” Protest organizer Vincent Boyle told a reporter that it was “regrettable that the ugly face of mob violence was exposed after the veterans dispersed.” Besides, said Boyle, Robeson’s “patrolmen caused the riot when they came armed and with a belligerent attitude.”²⁷

The obvious contradictions in these stories were complicated by the fact that the veterans, had they actually dispersed and gone home, could not possibly have known who started the fight or whether anyone was armed. Nor did the fact that the police found no weapons among the concertgoers influence the newspapers’ opinions. Whether this interpretive change was a conscious editorial decision or reflected new information gathered by the paper is not clear.²⁸

The new account of the events did not implicate any individuals or groups from the Peekskill area who could be held responsible for the violence. Beginning on August 30, the *Evening Star* suggests that the Peekskill veterans were not the aggressors in the confrontation with the concertgoers; in fact, as the days passed, the veterans began to appear more like the victims in the riot. After all, it was one of their own, William Secor, who had received the most serious injury, and, according to Secor’s account, that injury occurred only after the concertgoers started a fight. This abrupt reversal may also have been prompted by veterans who had a vested interest in protecting themselves from liability for the property damage caused by the riot. The veracity of the veterans’ statements is even more suspect given that many who were used as sources by the *Evening Star* refused to give their names for fear of being held responsible for the damage at Lakeland Acres. While the veterans’ organizations steadfastly maintained that their members were not at fault, some were clearly worried. Emphasizing the communist threat allowed these men to shift attention away from themselves and lay the blame on Robeson and his followers. The August 30 editorial completed the shift by clearly stating that preventing riots could only be accomplished by removing the source of the violence—the subversive threat.

Ultimately, that was not the responsibility of the community, but of Washington. The national government compiled lists of subversives, but authorized few legal sanctions against them.²⁹ Although the *Evening Star*’s coverage of the riots was clearly biased against the concertgoers, this August 30 editorial raised an interesting argument. If citizens were told by trustworthy

sources, in this case the Department of Justice, that a person or organization has loyalties that threaten the national welfare, how should the citizenry react when such organizations enter their communities? By this logic, it was government negligence that ultimately led to the riot. The *Evening Star* deplored the violence in Peekskill, as did most other papers, but the *Star* also offered a distinctly local perspective on the dilemma: If Paul Robeson represented the face of communism in America and communism was the enemy, what were “good Americans” to do when confronted with subversive acts in their hometowns?

Notes

1. Howard Fast, *The Naked God* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1957), 22.
2. Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 342. For his part Robeson never disavowed the comments as reported by the Associated Press.
3. Robeson Says U.S. Negroes Won't Fight Russia,” *Peekskill Evening Star*, 21 April 1949, 1.
4. In his biography of Robeson, Martin Duberman concludes that Robeson never actually became a member of the Communist Party. At the time, the FBI had very different ideas. An internal FBI memo in 1949 reported that “Paul Robeson, singer and actor, was a member of the Communist Party and that his party name was John Thomas.” R. W. Wall to H. B. Fletcher, 22 April 1949, FBI Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, Washington, D.C., file #100-12304-122, section 3.
5. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 22 August 1949, 4.
6. *Ibid.*, 1.
7. *Ibid.*, 3.
8. *Ibid.*, 4.
9. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 24 August 1949, 2.
10. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 25 August 1949, 1.
11. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 26 August 1949, 1.
12. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 24 August 1949, 1.
13. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 26 August 1949, 4.
14. *Ibid.*, 1.
15. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 27 August 1949, 4.
16. *Ibid.*, 1.
17. Allan Grant interview by Lt. R. W. Ficke, 29 August 1949, Dewey Papers, 5:222:36. Lt. Ficke confirms that Grant did indeed call him on 25 August and ask for police protection.
18. *Washington Post*, 28 August 1949, 1.
19. “Interrupted Concert,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1949, 16.
20. *Philadelphia Tribune*, 3 September 1949, 4.
21. *Knickerbocker News*, 2 September 1949, 3.
22. *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 September 1949, 10.
23. *Washington Evening Star*, 30 August 1949, 8.
24. *Washington Post*, 29 August 1949, 6.
25. *Peekskill Evening Star*, 29 August 1949, 4. *The Evening Star's* first stories on the riot did not appear until August 29, two days after the event, because the paper did not publish a Sunday edition.
26. *Ibid.*, 1-2.
27. *Ibid.*, 1.
28. It is, of course, conceivable that the editor of the *Evening Star* made a decision to change the tone of his paper's coverage so as to protect individuals from possible prosecution. However, it should be noted that the version of events which holds that it was non-veterans who instigated and carried out most of the violence corresponds to later investigations of the riots by the ACLU and the Westchester County Grand Jury.
29. *Ibid.*, 4.

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7th

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**REV. THOMAS S. HARTEN
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