



# W. E. B. Du Bois's writings for *The Crisis*, 1910-1934, from integration to voluntary segregation?

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# W. E. B. Du Bois's writings for *The Crisis* 1910 – 1934

## From integration to voluntary segregation?

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## Introduction

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The dream of racial justice began long before Martin Luther King made his famous “I have a dream” speech on August 28, 1963. By the end of the nineteenth century Americans were plunged into the belief that there were different races and that the black race was at the bottom of those races. Scientists, professors and others would have never imagined that a young black man from Massachusetts—William Edward Burghardt Du Bois—would be redefining the term “race theory” and give another vision of African Americans' character. In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois had predicted that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line, the relation of the darker to the lighter races.”<sup>1</sup>

The end of the American Civil War (1861-1865) marked a new era based on Reconstruction (1865-1877) during which the former Confederate states were restored to the Union. Four issues were going to be treated for African Americans: civil rights, land ownership, education and politics. The period of Reconstruction granted former slaves the right of citizenship, the right to vote and hold political offices and the right to own lands.<sup>2</sup> The Civil Rights Act of 1875 was validated by the U.S. Supreme Court, outlawing discrimination in public accommodations such as hotels and restaurants, and in transportation.<sup>3</sup> The Freedmen's Bureau was created in 1865 to assist African Americans in the transition from slavery to freedom in the South. They defended black Americans in courts and accomplished a lot especially in the field of education, their efforts yielded training schools and colleges for African Americans, including Howard University and Hampton Institute.<sup>4</sup> Many Southern whites opposed the Freedmen's Bureau and did not want the federal government to grant former slaves rights. Among them was President Andrew Johnson (1865-1869).<sup>5</sup>

The liberation of former slaves following the American Civil War revolted the South. For Southerners, the abolition of slavery “did not mean that Negroes were to be considered as citizens. They were to be 'equal before the law in the possession and enjoyment of all their rights of person—of liberty and of property’”<sup>6</sup> The promise of Reconstruction started to disappear increasingly in

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<sup>1</sup> Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Hine, *The African-American Odyssey*, 2010. 302-316.

<sup>3</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction : America's unfinished revolution : 1863-1877*, 1988. 553-56.

<sup>4</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 302, 307.

<sup>5</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction : America's unfinished revolution : 1863-1877*, 1988. 247-50.

<sup>6</sup> Gossett, *Race*, 1963. 256.

1868 to become a period of terrorism with the closure of the Freedmen's Bureau in 1872, the passing of laws designed to restrict the rights of black people such as the Black Codes and the expansion of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was originally founded in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee by former Confederate soldiers. Led by Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Klan was a terrorist organization during Reconstruction aimed to prevent African Americans to enjoy their rights of citizens especially the right to vote but also opposed any person sympathizing with black people.<sup>7</sup> After weeks of controversy, the 1876 election of the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes as president of the United States was based on an informal arrangement with the Democratic candidate, Samuel Jones Tilden to allow complete withdrawal of the northern military control from the South. This arrangement known as the "Compromise" of 1877—which proclaimed Hayes president despite the majority of votes for Tilden—was the catalyst from Reconstruction and its promises to the *Jim Crow* Era based on racial segregation and discrimination.<sup>8</sup>

*Jim Crow* was originally a dance to mock black people in the 1840s but turned to be a term meaning racial segregation and discrimination by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, racial segregation is:

The practice of restricting people to certain circumscribed areas of residence or to separate institutions (e.g., schools, churches) and facilities (parks, playgrounds, restaurants, restrooms) on the basis of race or alleged race. Racial segregation provides a means of maintaining the economic advantages and superior social status of the politically dominant group, and in recent times it has been employed primarily by white populations to maintain their ascendancy over other groups by means of legal and social colour bars.<sup>10</sup>

Whereas racial discrimination is based on the prejudicial treatment of people on the ground of race, causing inequality but also involves the recognition of the differences between one race and another and the ability to judge which race is higher or lower than others.<sup>11</sup> In 1883 the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated the Civil Rights Act of 1875 that outlawed discrimination in public accommodations.<sup>12</sup> Thus, black people were not admitted in schools, hospitals, hotels, and restaurants. They were also barred to sit in the same train section as white people. Racial segregation and discrimination expanded even more in the South that had still not put up with its defeat of 1865.<sup>13</sup> Many white southerners did not accept to share public facilities with black people, seeing themselves as a subordinate race. Between 1880 and 1920, white Americans generally thought that black Americans were not to be considered human beings capable of improvement and

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<sup>7</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 285, 332-335.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 285, 341.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>10</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. <<http://www.britannica.com/blackhistory/article-9062373>> April 4, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Oxford University Press <<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/discrimination?q=discrimination>> June 4, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 1998. 392.

<sup>13</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 358-61.



those who wrote about black people declared that the failures of Reconstruction and their “high statistics of crime, disease, poverty” and ignorance were “racially determined and unalterable.”<sup>14</sup> Henry W. Grady was one of them. He was the leader of the New South movement who expressed in his speech of 1887 that “the domination of the negro race resisted at all points and at all hazards—because the white race is the superior race.”<sup>15</sup>

Although racial segregation was already settled in the United States, in 1895 *Jim Crow* became constitutional with the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. In 1891, the state of Louisiana required segregated trains but one year later a black man named Homer Plessy decided to challenge the law and bought a first-class ticket, seating in the white section. Arrested for violating the new law, Plessy's lawyer argued that racial segregation violated the equal rights granted by the Fourteenth Amendment. Yet the Court maintained that segregation did not violate equal rights as long as the separate train section designed for black people provided the same accommodations as the white section. From this was created the “separate-but-equal” doctrine which expanded in most southerner states to separate white people from black people. “White” and “Colored” signs started to appear everywhere such as in railroad stations, restrooms, theaters and drinking fountains.<sup>16</sup>

James Kimble Vardaman was known as one of the main figures to embody white supremacy during the twentieth century, describing the black American as “a lazy, lying, lustful animal.” Also known as the White Chief, his campaign banner for the election of governor of Mississippi in 1903 said: “A VOTE FOR VARDAMAN IS A VOTE FOR WHITE SUPREMACY, SAFETY OF THE HOME, AND THE PROTECTION OF OUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.”<sup>17</sup> Black leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois described Vardaman as a “Negroes hater” and an assaulter of colored people's rights, advocating an “anti-negro propaganda.”<sup>18</sup> In order to fight white supremacy different black leaders emerged with different demands and ways of achievement. Among them was John Hope who claimed “equality and nothing less,” Booker T. Washington with the tactic of compromise, Marcus Garvey and his appeal to racial pride, and W. E. B. Du Bois and his strategy of protest.<sup>19</sup> “It was Du Bois who most explicitly revealed the impact of oppression and of the American creed in creating ambivalent loyalties toward race and nation in the minds of American Negroes,” said the scholar, August Meier.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gossett, *Race*, 1963. 286.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>16</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 358-61.

<sup>17</sup> Oshinsky, *Worse than Slavery*, 1996. 85-90.

<sup>18</sup> Du Bois, “Blease, Vardaman, Hardwick and Company,” *The Crisis*, October 1918. 268-269.

<sup>19</sup> Seaberg, *The Negro in American history. Vol. 2: Which Way to Equality?* 1968. 10-30,

<sup>20</sup> Meier, *Negro thought in America, 1880-1915 : racial ideologies in the age of Booker T. Washington*, 1966. 190.

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was a man of many parts—an intellectual and civil rights activist, a scholar and a poet, an educator and a historian—also renowned as a spokesman for the world's 'darker races' and as one of the most powerful figures of Black history.

Born in the North on February 23, 1868 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, William Du Bois was the only child of the African-French, Alfred Du Bois and the African-Dutch, Mary Sylvina Burghardt. His advanced intellectual capacities were revealed when he attended public schools in the 1870s and at only fifteen years old Du Bois became an occasional reporter for the black weekly, *New York Globe* and *Springfield Republican*, the most influential regional paper. Du Bois was the only African American in his high school class but did not experience racial oppression until he attended the southern Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1885. There, Du Bois studied liberal arts such as German, Latin, literature, philosophy, and ethics and edited the college newspaper, *Fisk Herald*. Back in the North he went to Harvard to study philosophy, economics and history. Rejected by social groups, Du Bois refused to live in Harvard's dormitory and stayed closer to the black community. He graduated from Harvard in 1890 with a BA in philosophy and a MA in history from the same university in 1891.<sup>21</sup> After having studied history, economics, and politics in Germany for two years, Du Bois started teaching at Wilberforce University in the northern state of Ohio in 1894 and received his PhD from Harvard one year later, making him the first African American to earn a doctorate from the university. In 1896, Du Bois published his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870* and moved to Philadelphia to teach the black community at the University of Pennsylvania. A year later, Du Bois became a history and economics professor at Atlanta University in the Southern state of Georgia. His experience in the South probably shaped the rest of his life as a social activist and led him to fight racial segregation and discrimination through protests. With the 1897 publication of his work “The Conservation of Races,” Du Bois began his criticisms of race theory in the United States.<sup>22</sup>

Maybe closer to Frederick Douglass in terms of full citizenship and integration, Du Bois was known as a “consistent agitator,” fighting ardently and brilliantly for integrating American culture and for equal rights no matter your race.<sup>23</sup> Integration is the inscription of an individual, previously segregated, into a society by social interaction for example in job or in the community.<sup>24</sup> Thus society has to agree on the arrival of the excluded individual as integration is based on voluntary gathering. As racial segregation was constitutional in the United States the exclusion of African

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<sup>21</sup> Zamir, *The Cambridge Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, 2008. Chronology, xi-xii.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>23</sup> Meier, *op. cit.*, 190.

<sup>24</sup> Ferréol, *Dictionnaire de l'altérité et des relations interculturelles*, 2003. 169.

Americans from the white American society was inevitable. Du Bois fought for many years to establish integration by refuting racial theories and was hoping that one day white Americans would recognize the true value of black Americans for finally including them into their society. W. E. B. Du Bois did not believe in the “separate-but-equal” doctrine but denounced its corruption by stating that the black section was separate from the white one but certainly not equal: “Separate cars for Whites and Blacks are not equal, can not be made equal, and . . . are not intended to be equal.”<sup>25</sup> What Du Bois did believe in was “equal justice and equal opportunity for all races,” tolerance, and real democracy no matter your race or sex.<sup>26</sup>

The man who will go against his advocacy of integration and demand for equal rights was Booker T. Washington, also known as the Tuskegee Machine, a man who was the most prominent black leader of the United States by the end of the nineteenth century. In a time when voting rights and education were not something that all African Americans had access to, Booker T. Washington favored accommodation, or the settling of a convenient arrangement with the white Americans. By adjusting his program to uplift African Americans' conditions, Washington embraced the rules and mentality of his surroundings at that time of not to provoke white people's anger.<sup>27</sup> His advocacy will be known as the strategy of compromise or conciliation. For some leaders such as Du Bois, Washington was still submissive to white supremacy. Born a slave, Booker T. Washington thought that the day will come when racial segregation and discrimination will be abolished but have to wait for white Americans to do it themselves and not forcing them. The black American should work on his conditions first with technical training, trade and labor to show their value to their country.<sup>28</sup> Unlike his rival, Du Bois continued to promote education, especially higher education, believing that it was the only solution to provoke racial pride and social equality. Yet the situation has not always been based on animosity between the two men. Du Bois congratulated Booker T. Washington for his Atlanta speech in 1895 and in 1899 Booker T. Washington offered Du Bois to work at Tuskegee Institute. Du Bois declined the offer for the reason that Tuskegee Institute focused on industrial training but not higher education. Not feeling at home in the deep South he moved to the North and applied for jobs. It was in 1903 with the publishing of *The Souls of Black Folk*, a severe criticism of Washington concerning his advocacy of accommodation, that the friendship between the two men became irreversible.<sup>29</sup> In order to improve the status of the black American a direct challenge toward racist theories was needed at that time and this what Du Bois planned to do with the creation of the Niagara Movement in 1905.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Meier, *op. cit.*, 206.

<sup>26</sup> Du Bois, “Good Will Toward Men,” *The Crisis*, December 1910. 16.

<sup>27</sup> Ferréol, *Dictionnaire de l'altérité et des relations interculturelles*, 2003. 322.

<sup>28</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 1901. 1, 114.

<sup>29</sup> Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals*, 2003. 56-65.

<sup>30</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 286.

The Niagara Movement was headed by W. E. B Du Bois and Monroe Trotter on July 10, 1905 in opposition to Booker T. Washington's separatist advocacy. Their goal was to improve the life conditions of the black community with a demand for civil and political rights. The movement asked for suffrage, civil liberty and equal treatment, economic opportunity, education, fair trials and health care but they also denounced *Jim Crow* laws through protest and agitation.<sup>31</sup>

Of the above grievances we do not hesitate to complain, and to complain loudly and insistently. To ignore, over-look, or apologize for these wrongs is to prove ourselves unworthy of freedom. Persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty, and toward this goal the Niagara Movement has started and asks the co-operation of all men of all races.<sup>32</sup>

The movement collapsed due to internal disagreements and financial problems, however, it led to the formation of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.).<sup>33</sup>

The N.A.A.C.P. which was created in 1909 with the assistance of W. E. B. Du Bois, Mary White Ovington, Ida B. Wells, Henry Moskowitz and William English Walling was recognized as the nation's most effective civil rights organization for black people. This militant organization, dedicated to racial justice, aimed their program to "ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all, and to eliminate radical hatred and racial discrimination. The N.A.A.C.P. strives for a society where all individuals are treated fairly and equally."<sup>34</sup> Du Bois said that the program of the organization was to make Americans:

*Physically free from peonage,  
Mentally free from ignorance,  
Politically free from disfranchisement,  
Socially free from insults.*<sup>35</sup>

At its creation this multiracial organization was financed and led by white figures which created tensions inside and outside the organization. One of them was the Jamaican, Marcus Garvey who ironically said that the N.A.A.C.P.'s representation had to be "as near white as possible" which led the man to call the organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Certain People.<sup>36</sup> Marcus Garvey was a full blood black man who claimed racial pride among black people. Du Bois's light complexion because of his various origins made him think, according to Garvey, that he was above all black people.<sup>37</sup> Du Bois was also full of hope and projects with the creation of the N.A.A.C.P. and the major project of his long career was to be found in the official organ of the

<sup>31</sup> The Niagara Movement, *Niagara's Declaration of Principles*, 1905 <<http://www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1152.htm>> June 5, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 71.

<sup>34</sup> N.A.A.C.P. <<http://www.naacphistory.org/Default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1#/home>> June 5, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Du Bois, "The Negro and Communism," *The Crisis*, September 1931 published in Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader*, 1995. 588.

<sup>36</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 459.

<sup>37</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 146-147.

organization, *The Crisis, A Record of The Darker Races*.

At the onset of its creation W. E. B. Du Bois had insisted on the characteristics of the magazine as being “an outspoken, vigorous publication” despite the reluctance of some members of the N.A.A.C.P.. His rhetoric and eloquence led him to be the director of publicity and research of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and editor of *The Crisis* which was created in November 1910 by W. E. B. Du Bois, Oswald Garrison Villard, J. Max Barber, Charles Edward Russell, Kelly Miller, W. S. Braithwaite, and M. D. Maclean. Du Bois had great plans for the magazine.<sup>38</sup> In the editorial of the first issue of *The Crisis* he stated that “the object of this publication is to set forth those facts and arguments which show the clanger of race prejudice, particularly as manifested to-day (sic) toward colored people.”<sup>39</sup> Publishing *The Crisis* was also an chance to enlist more people into the N.A.A.C.P. On January 1914, Du Bois wrote: “Join the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE or be strangled to a slow and painful death by growing prejudice.”<sup>40</sup> With the magazine's name, indicator of the crucial time in which African Americans were living in, Du Bois was hoping that *The Crisis* would open people's mind to protest against segregation and discrimination.<sup>41</sup>

*The Crisis* let people know about the various movements and events concerning racial issues concerning African Americans but also published literacy works: poems, fiction, plays, and essays, forwarding the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Writers such as Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Jessie R. Fauset, Jean Toomer, James W. Johnson, Countee Cullen, and Alain Locke published their works in *The Crisis* to express the oppression of the black community. For many years, *The Crisis* was the magazine African Americans turned to for news about the racial relations. Eighty percent of the readership were African American, mostly educated Northerners.<sup>42</sup> As members of N.A.A.C.P. were both, white and black people, Du Bois did not want to raise animosity with the white Americans with his writings for the magazine.

The rights of men, irrespective of color or race, for the highest ideals of American democracy, and for reasonable but earnest and persistent attempt to gain these rights and realize these ideals. The magazine will be the organ of no clique or party and will avoid personal rancor of all sorts. In the absence of proof to the contrary it will assume honesty of purpose on the part of all men, North and South, white and black.<sup>43</sup>

Du Bois had complete control of the content of the magazine, Du Bois did not hesitate in expressing himself on taboo subjects: criticizing American presidents and major black figures such

<sup>38</sup> “The Crisis.” *The CRISIS Magazine*. Nov. 1970 <<http://www.thecrisismagazine.com/history.html>> June 5, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Du Bois, “The Crisis,” *The Crisis*, November 1910. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Du Bois, “Join or Die,” *The Crisis*, January 1914. 133.

<sup>41</sup> “The Crisis,” *The CRISIS Magazine*. *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Johnson, *W.E.B. Du Bois : toward agnosticism, 1868-1934*, 2008. 106-107.

<sup>43</sup> Du Bois, “The Crisis,” *The Crisis*, November 1910. 10.

as Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey. The editorial of *The Crisis*, which was composed of several short articles written by Du Bois, was supposed to reflect the editor's opinion on racial issues and the director or supervisors' opinions that is to say the N.A.A.C.P. Yet at many occasions, Du Bois tended to put forward his own inflammatory opinions instead of the organization's which made it difficult to the readers to dissociate Du Bois' ideas from the N.A.A.C.P.'s.

Various authors such as David Levering Lewis did outstanding research about W. E. B. Du Bois's activist life and literary works. This research paper will be paying particular attention to W.E.B. Du Bois's writings for *The Crisis* magazine from 1910, date of its creation to 1934, date of his resignation as editor. This work will cover a period of twenty-four years which I judged relevant in W. E. B. Du Bois's career, studying his evolution as a person and of his progressive ideologies. My effort has been to explore how Du Bois's work in *The Crisis* reflected the rebellious views on segregation, either a multiform phenomenon that extended itself in all the spheres of the American society and that changed with time. I am also interested in understanding how Du Bois went from a diehard refusal of racial segregation and racial discrimination to a more reserved vision of integration.

To respond to these questions, my work has been to analyze and understand the events that have affected Du Bois's thinking and philosophy on segregation over the years. This is why I primarily meant to see how Du Bois used *The Crisis* to educate and mobilize African Americans on the racial problem in the United States. Whereas in a second step I will look into Du Bois's passage from a mass writing to an elite writing, still tackling the racial issue but in more widespread horizons (outside the U.S.A.) during World War I, for finally broaching the main reasons of his emphasize on a more economic writing in his last years as editor marked by the Great Depression.

## **PART 1**

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**Editing *The Crisis* 1910-1915**

**Mobilizing and educating African Americans  
about the “Negro Problem”**

## **PART ONE – W. E. B. Du Bois's editorials for *The Crisis* from 1910 to 1915:**

### **Educating and mobilizing African Americans about the “Negro Problem”**

At a time when someone needed to step up and give a voice to this people who had being made silent for so long, Du Bois with *The Crisis* broached the three demands that he was asking for in autobiographical work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, that is to say: civil rights, political rights and education. In this way, *The Crisis* magazine can be seen as an extending work of *Souls* in which Du Bois exposed the ruling of the South over African Americans which was depriving them from their status of American citizens and basing their judgment on racial theories.

#### **I – Race theory as a threat for civil rights**

##### **The “Veil” of segregation drawing a “Color Line”**

When the benefits of Reconstruction for African Americans were halted, the establishment of segregation started to expand itself in every state, especially in the South, letting racial theories dictate their laws. Many scientists from the nineteenth century debated on how races differed and wrote several books and essays about these race theories. Most of them depicted black people as the lowest race in the world. In Thomas F. Gossett's book entitled *Race: The History of an Idea in America* the author argued that the first early race theories started with the discovery of America when the English Colonists encountered the Natives and with the arrival of the first boatload of African slaves in 1619.<sup>44</sup> But it was during the eighteenth century that the first attempt to classify all the races of mankind was suggested. The French physician, François Bernier argued, in 1684, that there were four general classification: “the Europeans, the Far Easterners, the 'blacks,' and the Lapps.”<sup>45</sup> For George Louis Leclerc Buffon, the white race was to be considered as the norm and that all other races were exotic variations. The English physician and surgeon, Dr. Charles White, argued that African Americans were the “intermediate species between the white man and the ape” and that their skulls and, therefore, brains were smaller in internal capacities.<sup>46</sup> The most convincing scientific theory came into American society during the nineteenth century with the comparison of human skulls of the physician Dr. Samuel George Morton, called craniology:

He arrived at the conclusion that the larger the size of the cranium, the greater the average of intelligence. . . . Nonetheless, he continued in his efforts to measure cranial capacity and to find the relationship between race and skull capacity. In 1849, one of his studies included the following results: the English skulls in his collection proved to be the largest. . . . At the

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<sup>44</sup> Gossett, *Race*, 1963. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 32.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 36, 48.



bottom of the list were the Negroes.<sup>47</sup>

These theories had a large impact on people's minds which would have influenced them to establish discrimination and then segregation. In the chapter "Of the Training of Black Men" in *The Souls of Black Folk* W. E. B. Du Bois talked about these race theories:

The second thought streaming from the death-ship and the curving river is the thought of the older South,—the sincere and passionate belief that somewhere between men and cattle, God created a tertium quid, and called it a Negro,—a clownish, simple creature, at times even lovable within its limitations, but straitly foreordained to walk within the Veil. To be sure, behind the thought lurks the afterthought,—some of them with favoring chance might become men, but in sheer self-defence we dare not let them, and we build about them walls so high, and hang between them and the light a veil so thick, that they shall not even think of breaking through.<sup>48</sup>

From the first editorial, one of the claims made by the editor of *The Crisis*, W. E. B. Du Bois, was about civil rights. Recognized as citizens by the Fourteenth Amendment, African Americans were hoping to have the same rights as white citizens of the United States. Yet living in a *Jim Crow* era the "Negro" of America did not benefit from the equal rights that the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and acts of Congress guaranteeing them. The Fourteenth Amendment, approved in 1868, provided that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States"<sup>49</sup> and ensures that a state may not deprive a citizen of his or her civil rights. These rights include: personal liberty, civil liberties, equal protection under the laws, due process of law and freedom from discrimination.

No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.<sup>50</sup>

W. E. B Du Bois believed in equality of human beings and by that equal rights for all human beings. While ending his chapter on Booker T. Washington in *The Souls of Black Folk* he quoted Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence of 1776: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Despite the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment discrimination did occur on the basis of race, color, sex, and national origin. In the late nineteenth century, the passage of *Jim Crow* laws separated the nation into two sections: the whites section, and the colored section; this forbade African American citizens to use the same public facilities and accommodations as whites, deprived

<sup>47</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 73-74.

<sup>48</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 55-56.

<sup>49</sup> The Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. *Cornell University Law School*. <<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxiv>> March 22, 2013.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

them of their right to vote, and prohibited interracial marriage. When the Supreme Court decided that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional, states such as Tennessee and Florida started passing laws in order to establish separate railway companies in 1881 and 1887.<sup>51</sup> As previously stated *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) was the mark court case where the jury concluded that segregation did not violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as long as the facilities that were provided for each race were 'separate but equal.' This was also the first occurrence that legally allowed the "separate-but-equal" doctrine to expand its power to public schools and other public facilities.<sup>52</sup> In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Dr. Du Bois used his abilities as a writer to define segregation with the poetic metaphor of the Veil: "The exchange [of visiting-cards] was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,—refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap (sic), in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil."<sup>53</sup> A vast veil that drew a line between two people of two different colors. To the great discontentment of some, this color line was accepted by other black citizens such as Booker T. Washington. In "Separation," Du Bois refused to let African Americans say that they want social separation:

[ Here is the letter of an honest colored man in the New Orleans Times-Democrat.]  
 "Whatever may be the opinion of others concerning the drawing of the color line in the South, the thoughtful Negro has accepted it as a fixed principle, realizing that the race has absolutely nothing to fear or lose by social separation...The Negro does not desire racial intermingling. All he wants is a square deal before the law."  
 [Du Bois responded] . . . this black man would better ask himself good and hard is this: Is such separation physically and politically possible, and under it is there the slightest likelihood of the segregated getting "a square deal"?  
 . . . the white South does not want Separation, but Subordination. They do not want separate Negro schools, but Negro schools under the control of white superintendence who hold the purse strings.  
 . . . Every man, then, that bows to the dogma of race separation must accept subordination and humiliation along with the destruction of the best ideals of democracy.<sup>54</sup>

African Americans were denied education and voting rights, even the option to go to church with whites was taken away. They were forced out of hotels, theaters and other leisure sites, and could not obtain a decent job or home beyond the lowest wage scale and exorbitant rent. Black citizens were not represented in Court or could not benefit from a fair trial.<sup>55</sup> African Americans were not seen as worthy to be treated as a gentleman or a lady. A black man would have to take his hat off in front of a white person but a white man was not forced to do so in front of a black lady.<sup>56</sup> African Americans were publicly insulted and were victims of lynching. Here is a list of grievances

<sup>51</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 358.

<sup>52</sup> *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896). *FindLaw*. <<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=163&invol=537>> May 3, 2013.

<sup>53</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Du Bois, "Separation," *The Crisis*, February 1911. 20-21.

<sup>55</sup> Du Bois, "Taxation without Representation," *The Crisis*, March 1914. 240.

<sup>56</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 360-361.

written by W. E. B. Du Bois asking for “social equality.”

At last we have a definition of the very elusive phrase "Social Equality" as applied to the Negro problem. In stating their grievances colored people have recently specified these points:

1. Disfranchisement, even of educated Negroes.
2. Curtailment of common school training.
3. Confinement to "Ghettos."
4. Discrimination in wages.
5. Confinement to menial employment.
6. Systematic insult of their women.
7. Lynching and miscarriage of justice.
8. Refusal to recognize fitness "in political or industrial life."
9. Personal discourtesy.<sup>57</sup>

In “Opportunity” Du Bois denounced the difficulties that African Americans encountered in the workforce: “Today Negroes may work freely as menials at low wages; they may work freely as farm laborers under conditions of semi-slavery; higher than that they meet unusual difficulties—the difficulty of saving capital from low wages to farm or go into business.”<sup>58</sup> In another editorial's article entitled “The Servant in the South” Du Bois listed the harsh “conditions under which a colored servant in the South must work:” endless hours, feeling of inferiority, mistreatment of black girls and low wages.

If people pay their laborers low wages and cheat them out of even these, they will get cheap labor, whether that labor be black, white or blue.

If the South or the North wants decent domestic service it must

- (1) Pay decent wages.
- (2) Give shorter hours and more definite duties.
- (3) Treat servants as men and women and not as cattle.<sup>59</sup>

The injustice that black people had to face was that in order to have decent living conditions and decent homes black people would have to pay “exorbitant rents” with their low wages.<sup>60</sup> According to the Fourteenth Amendment African American men should be able to have the freedom to sell or buy land according to the privileges mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. In “Baltimore” Du Bois discussed a Baltimore neighborhood named McCulloh, in which white residents complained and asked for a prohibition of the “invasion” of colored people into white residential districts. “Their argument sounds strong,” said Du Bois with irony. “Colored residents bring down the price of property, therefore get rid of colored residents.”<sup>61</sup> He qualified the Color Line as a “barbarous and unjust and unwise expedient” and accused the birth of the ghetto as being a “dangerous and undemocratic doctrine.” In “The Ghetto” the editor declared segregation as dangerous for both races but advocated assimilation and integration. “Suppose all ill-mannered

<sup>57</sup> Du Bois, “Social Equality,” *The Crisis*, January 1911. 20-21.

<sup>58</sup> Du Bois, “Opportunity,” *The Crisis*, January 1911. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Du Bois, “The Servant in the South,” *The Crisis*, April 1912. 245-246.

<sup>60</sup> Du Bois, “Home,” *The Crisis*, March 1912. 201.

<sup>61</sup> Du Bois, “Baltimore,” *The Crisis*, November 1910. 11.

white folk were segregated, would that improve the world's deportment?" asked Du Bois to his readers. "Certainly not. It would make it distinctly and dangerously worse. It is association with well-bred that brings manners."<sup>62</sup> Yet living in the same community was not easy. In "Politeness" William Du Bois delivered to his readers the hard task of being courteous for both races. While white people considered the disrespect toward black people as a right, the disrespect of black people was instinctive as a defense or a revenge of previous insult or attacks from whites.<sup>63</sup> Racial etiquette was established by white southerners to maintain white supremacy: "black and white people did not shake hands. Black people did not look white people in the eyes . . . but stared at the ground. . . . White people did not use titles of respect when addressing black adults [but] black people were expected to use Mr., Mrs., or Miss when addressing white people."<sup>64</sup> Du Bois advocated a gentleman behavior from both sides which would lead to mutual respect and social recognition. "Social equality is simply the right to be treated as a gentleman when one is among gentlemen" and those who "are afraid to demand their rights as men, they can, at least, preserve dignified silence," said Du Bois, showing his intolerance toward submissive colored people.<sup>65</sup>

With the rumors that African Americans were not able to behave and were dangerous to the white community, white citizens were afraid and revolted against black citizens which increased the number of crimes. Many African Americans were accused of murder and assault without any proof of their guilt and could not benefit from protection of the law.<sup>66</sup> Immunities, mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, allows a citizen of the United States to be protected by law against any persecution from the government. Yet the article "The Old Story" tells the anecdote of a black man who had been arrested for a murder that he had not committed without proof of his guiltiness. Tortured and insulted, the only accusation held against him was his laziness and that he "drank whiskey" that day. Du Bois said: "Such justice is outrageous and such methods disgraceful. Black folk are willing to shoulder their own sins, but the difference between a vagabond and a murderer is too tremendous to be lightly ignored."<sup>67</sup> In a special case, named "Pink Franklin," Dr. Du Bois explained that self-defense was only recognized for white people but denied to black citizens, judging this "terrible sentence" as unfair.<sup>68</sup> The only solution to stop crimes, according to Du Bois, was to put an end to the lynching of "black folk" and finally treat them as equal and as human beings.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Du Bois, "The Ghetto," *The Crisis*, December 1910. 20-21.

<sup>63</sup> Du Bois, "Politeness," *The Crisis*, March 1911. 21.

<sup>64</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 360-361.

<sup>65</sup> Du Bois, "Social Equality," *The Crisis*, September 1911. 197.

<sup>66</sup> Du Bois, "The Old Story," *The Crisis*, January 1911. 20.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Du Bois, "Pink Franklin," *The Crisis*, February 1911. 17.

<sup>69</sup> Du Bois, "Crime and Lynching," *The Crisis*, January 1912. 113-114.

## Lynching, a crime against a minority

The writer Thomas Gossett claimed that “between 1882 and 1888, 595 whites and 440 Negroes were lynched in the United States” but that the situation reversed from 1906 to 1915, with 61 whites and 620 “Negroes” lynched. Lynching, according to white people, was justified as an instrument to settle justice against black men who raped white women and as a way to protect their own race, the Caucasian race.<sup>70</sup> 3,811 “Negroes” were lynched between 1889 and 1941 but only 641 were even accused of rape, either attempted or committed. In a January issue of 1911 of *The Crisis* it was written that “seventy-five per cent of the Negroes lynched have not even been accused of rape.”

### COLORED MEN LYNCHED WITHOUT TRIAL

1885.....	78	1899.....	84
1886.....	71	1900.....	107
1887.....	80	1901.....	107
1888.....	95	1902.....	86
1889.....	95	1903.....	86
1890.....	90	1904.....	83
1891.....	121	1905.....	61
1892.....	155	1906.....	64
1893.....	154	1907.....	60
1894.....	134	1908.....	93
1895.....	112	1909.....	73
1896.....	80	1910.....	65
1897.....	122	1911.....	63
1898.....	102		
Total.....		2,521	

Colored men lynched without trial 1885-1911. (*The Crisis*, May 1912)

### COLORED MEN LYNCHED BY YEARS, 1885-1916.

1885-1916.			
1885.....	78	1902.....	86
1886.....	71	1903.....	86
1887.....	80	1904.....	83
1888.....	95	1905.....	61
1889.....	95	1906.....	64
1890.....	90	1907.....	60
1891.....	121	1908.....	93
1892.....	155	1909.....	73
1893.....	154	1910.....	65
1894.....	134	1911.....	63
1895.....	112	1912.....	63
1896.....	80	1913.....	79
1897.....	122	1914.....	69
1898.....	102	1915.....	80
1899.....	84	1916 (5 mos.)	31
1900.....	107		
1901.....	107		
Total .....			2843

Colored men lynched by years, 1886-1916. (*The Crisis*, July 1916)

Lynchings were committed for 'crimes' such as “sue a white man, attempting to register to vote, . . . engaging in labor union activities, 'being disrespectful to' a white man occurred . . . or sometimes for no discoverable reason at all.”<sup>71</sup> “It is exceedingly difficult to get at the real cause of lynching but *The Crisis* is more and more convinced that the real cause is seldom the one alleged,” said Du Bois in “The Cause of Lynching.”<sup>72</sup> A series of editorials appeared in *The Crisis* to denounce the savagery of white citizens against the black community, among them is “Lynching” in which Du Bois defined another cause of lynching: “a disrespect for law and a growing cheapness of human life.” According to the editor, American citizens had lost respect for the law because the law lost its function and became “worthless” and “helpless.” “To cite an instance,” said Du Bois, “the

<sup>70</sup> Gossett. *op. cit.*, 269-270.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>72</sup> Du Bois, “The Cause of Lynching,” *The Crisis*, July 1914. 126.

Constitution of the United States, the highest law of the land, says that citizens of the United States cannot be disfranchised on account of race or color. Yet every schoolboy knows that Negro Americans are disfranchised in large areas of the South for no other reason than race and color.”<sup>73</sup> Did lynching violate the Thirteenth Amendment? Ratified in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution outlawed slavery and any other forms of involuntary servitude, “except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted,”<sup>74</sup> within the United States. Therefore, this last section of the Amendment allowed lynching as long as it was used to punish a crime.

Federal authorities did not want to interfere into the assault committed toward African Americans. Du Bois questioned the Federal government's system and emphasized its role to defend black Americans when they are attacked. In “Mr. Taft,” Du Bois accused the President of the United States of his lack of intervention in the lynching problem of black citizens: “On top of this, and in the face of a record of murder, lynching and burning in this country . . . Mr. Taft has blandly informed a deputation of colored men that any action on his part is quite outside his power, if not his interest.”<sup>75</sup> In “Lynching Again,” Du Bois published the request of the N.A.A.C.P. for a federal government's protection against lynchers. Following this request the federal government responded:

There is no authority in the United States Government to interfere because the parties committing such crimes violate the laws of the State where the offense is committed and are punishable in its courts having jurisdiction of the offense. The Federal authorities are not authorized to intervene unless it be for the purpose of protecting a citizen in the exercise of rights which he possesses by virtue of the Constitution and laws of the United States. (New York City, November 15, 1911)<sup>76</sup>

Du Bois countered by referencing the Fifth Amendment that Southern states were violating that amendment in their attitude to African Americans:

Well, in the name of justice, what rights does an American possess "by virtue of the Constitution and laws of the United States" if it is not the right not to "be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law" as the Fifth Amendment guarantees?<sup>77</sup>

A call to mobilize African Americans against lynching was made in the “Lynching” article of August 1911: “The result is mob and murder. The result is barbarism and cruelty. The result is human hatred. Come, Americans who love America, is it not time to rub our eyes and awake and act?”<sup>78</sup> William Du Bois with Ida B. Wells's help launched anti-lynching campaigns and organized

<sup>73</sup> Du Bois, “Lynching,” *The Crisis*, August 1911. 158-159.

<sup>74</sup> The Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. *Cornell University Law School*. <<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxiii>> March 22, 2013.

<sup>75</sup> Du Bois, “Mr. Taft,” *The Crisis*, October 1911. 243.

<sup>76</sup> Du Bois, “Lynching Again,” *The Crisis*, May 1912. 27.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Du Bois, “Lynching,” *The Crisis*, August 1911. 158-159.



an “Anti-Lynching Fund” in the 1916 July issue of *The Crisis*. In order to mobilize his readers W. E. B. Du Bois also allowed to publish pictures of lynching in the editorials of April and June 1916 and dedicated a supplement number in July 1916 which published the crudest pictures of a lynching.



“We make no apology for including in this number a detailed account with pictures of perhaps the most horrible lynching that has taken place in the United States.” *The Crisis*, July 1916.

### **Challenging race theory and “race prejudice”**

Senator Tom Watson of Georgia said that the South had “to lynch him [the African American] occasionally, and flog him, now and then, to keep him from blaspheming the Almighty, by his conduct, on account of his smell and his color.”<sup>79</sup> Dr. Du Bois was aware that he would have to change people's way of thinking about races before discussing of the validity of *Jim Crow* laws. Therefore he gave his readers a redefinition of these scientific theories of race. In “A Little Play” W. E. B. Du Bois played a scene where two fellows: “the Pale One” and “the Brown One” are talking about the content of mind and color of skin. “The Pale One” said black people were “dirty, ignorant, lazy, poor and rude. Until they become clean, intelligent, thrifty, well to do and polite they must expect to be treated badly.” “The Brown One” answered: “Are all colored people dirty, ignorant,

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<sup>79</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 271.

lazy and rude?” encouraging the readers to question themselves.<sup>80</sup> Du Bois also published in August 1911 an article entitled “Races” in which he explained the higher and lower races concept. This article was first presented at the Universal Races Congress in London—a meeting held in London devoted to counter and refute racial theories in July 1911 and then published in *The Crisis*:

1. (a) It is not legitimate to argue from differences in physical characteristics to differences in mental characteristics. (b) The mental characteristics differentiating a particular people or race are not (1) unchangeable, or (2) modifiable only through long ages of environmental pressure; but (3) marked improvements in mass education, in public sentiment, and in environment generally, may, apart from intermarriage.

2. The civilization of a . . . race at any particular moment of time offers no index to its innate or inherited capacities.<sup>81</sup>

Du Bois never denied that people could have physical differences, which can classify them into different races but refused to admit that the black race was inferior to the white race. In the *Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race*, Anthony Appiah said:

In “The Conservation of Races” Du Bois elected, in effect, to admit that color was a sign of a racial essence but to deny that the cultural capacities of the black-skinned, curly-haired members of humankind were inferior to those of the white-skinned, straighter-haired ones. But the collapse of the sciences of racial inferiority led Du Bois to deny the connection between cultural capacity and gross morphology.<sup>82</sup>

In the August 1911 issue Du Bois rejected the claim that morphological differences had an impact on intellectual and moral capacities and that skin color does not define the content of the mind:

7. (a) So far at least as intellectual and moral aptitudes are concerned, we ought to speak of civilizations where we now speak of races. (b) Indeed, even the physical characteristics, excluding the skin color of a people, are to no small extent the direct result of the physical and social environment under which it is living. . . . These physical characteristics are furthermore too indefinite and elusive to serve as a basis for any rigid classification or division of human groups.

“People who resemble each other in one important respect ought to resemble each other in all important respects and therefore be treated alike.” Du Bois countered this statement by saying that “It is not inevitable. It is criminal injustice. It is inhuman treatment and it is socially dangerous. It is based on the unscientific assumption that human beings who resemble each other in one important particular, like color of skin, resemble each other in all particulars.”<sup>83</sup> He explained it is not because one colored man acted wrong that every colored man would do the same. In “Discrimination” the editor accused race theories of being “silly,” “dehumanizing,” “unchristian,” “uncivilized” and he ended up the article saying that ignorance “is a matter of learning, not of

<sup>80</sup> Du Bois, “A Little Play,” *The Crisis*, March 1914. 241.

<sup>81</sup> Du Bois, “Races,” *The Crisis*, August 1911. 157-158. See the appendix pp.75-76.

<sup>82</sup> Appiah, *Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race*, in *Critical Inquiry*, 1985. 30.

<sup>83</sup> Du Bois, “The Inevitable,” *The Crisis*, December 1910. 21.



blood, and can be cured by schools.”<sup>84</sup> Du Bois also wrote in the same article that some northerners defended race discrimination and the “separate-but-equal” doctrine, joining Governor James K. Vardaman of Mississippi on his argument about the inferiority and criminality of black men. “Men, families, nations and races differ, but humanity is one,” said the editor of *The Crisis*.<sup>85</sup>

William Du Bois did not omit to recall his readers that race theories which led to race hatred was the cause of World War I saying that Germany was “the most contemptible of 'Nigger' hating nations.” He announced his support for France and England and said that those nations’ “triumph will most tend to postpone if not to make unnecessary a world war of races.” Dr. Du Bois also took this opportunity of talking about World War I to remind his readers about race prejudice in the United States:

Many colored persons, and persons interested in them, may easily make the mistake of supposing that the present war is far removed from the color problem of America and that in the face of this great catastrophe we may forget for a moment such local problems and give all attention and contributions to the seemingly more pressing cause. . . . This attitude is a mistake. The present war in Europe is one of the great disasters due to race and color prejudice and it but foreshadows greater disasters in the future.<sup>86</sup>

The lack of democracy from the white civilization was, for Du Bois, a source of hatred and war. The only solution for some African Americans was to protest in order to be heard while others advocated conciliation to whites’ claims in order to be rewarded later. These two stances led to a split of the black community: the agitators and the conciliators.

### **W. E. B. Du Bois's advocacy of protest not submission**

*“Agitate then, brother; protest, reveal the truth and refuse to be silenced.”*<sup>87</sup>

W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Crisis*, January 1913.

According to W. E. B. Du Bois discrimination and segregation were dangerous to African American men because they caused “misunderstanding,” “hatred” and therefore “war.”<sup>88</sup> In an “Open Letter to Woodrow Wilson” published in the March 1913 issue of *The Crisis* William Du Bois told the President that “the Negro problem is in many respects the greatest problem facing the nation, and we believe that you have the opportunity of beginning a just and righteous solution of this burning human wrong.”<sup>89</sup> Du Bois insisted on the full integration of African Americans into

<sup>84</sup> Du Bois, “Discrimination,” *The Crisis*, July 1911. 114.

<sup>85</sup> Du Bois, “Knowledge,” *The Crisis*, October 1911. 245.

<sup>86</sup> Du Bois, “World War And The Color Line,” *The Crisis*, November 1914. 28-30.

<sup>87</sup> Du Bois, “Our Own Consent,” *The Crisis*, January 1913. 29.

<sup>88</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation,” *The Crisis*, November 1910. 10.

<sup>89</sup> Du Bois, “Open Letter to Woodrow Wilson,” *The Crisis*, March 1913. 236-237.

society and so did the N.A.A.C.P. He was completely refused submission that, according to him, Booker T. Washington was standing for and did not hesitate to attack his main rival in the January 1911 article “Envy.” Booker T. Washington was not interested in the social equality that Du Bois was claiming. At the Atlanta Exposition Address he said: “In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.”<sup>90</sup> Segregation that Booker T. Washington accepted if not advocated in his speech was seen as submission for Du Bois and would lead to numerous consequences linked to discrimination according to the editor:

Mr. Washington's propaganda for the last fifteen years. . . . has, however, been ineffective in practice and logically dangerous. . . . We have seen wholesale disfranchisement of colored voters, color caste carried to the point of positive cruelty, the rule of the mob and the lynching of 2,000 men without legal trial, growing discrimination in schools, travel, and public conveniences. . . . What has been the result of this? It has been an intensified prejudice as shown in the new Ghetto laws, the strikes against black workers, spread of civil discrimination, and the crystallization of the disfranchising sentiment.<sup>91</sup>

W. E. B. Du Bois ironically concluded this article against Booker T. Washington entitled “Starvation and Prejudice” saying that “Mr. Washington is reported to have said at the recent Unitarian dinner that 'Prejudice still exists, but it is not so bitter as it was.'” The disagreement between the two men started here. Du Bois could not understand that Booker T. Washington's priority was not to challenge white supremacy but wait for white people to recognize African Americans. As Du Bois said in his work entitled *Dusk of Dawn*, he “was strongly in favor of more open agitation against wrongs”<sup>92</sup> than Washington. In the 1890s Du Bois agreed with Washington's strategy but became tired of not seeing more equality but an increasing discrimination. The only solution that he found was to complain in order to be heard.

William Du Bois's advocacy of integration was, of course, influenced by his background. Raised in an integrated neighborhood and town, Du Bois was not directly touched by segregation in his early years, which gave him the opportunity to attend school. “Human contact, human acquaintanceship, human sympathy is the great solvent of human problems,” said Du Bois.<sup>93</sup> Known as being the first black man to earn a PhD from Harvard University, Du Bois's skills to write were revealed from the first editorial of November 1910 in “Agitation,” using poetic devices such as embodiments and metaphors to describe discrimination and segregation. By writing this article the editor of *The Crisis* magazine wanted to stress the importance of protest against segregation. He explained that the pain that someone feels when he has a toothache is useful, it tells the person that

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<sup>90</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 1901. 107

<sup>91</sup> Du Bois, “Envy,” *The Crisis*, June 1911. 63.

<sup>92</sup> Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, (1<sup>st</sup> edition) 1940, 1975. 70.

<sup>93</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation,” *The Crisis*, November 1910. 10.

his teeth are dying and need a treatment to be cured. The use of a medical metaphor was made to inform the colored people that complaining about their pain caused by segregation was not a bad thing but “a necessary evil” that would allow them to solve the problem. For Du Bois, *The Crisis* had a function to denounce the disease African Americans were suffering from. That is to say segregation and therefore discrimination. He reassured his readers not to fear but to protest against Federal authorities or Southern states because it would not lead to aggravation but “Remedy,”<sup>94</sup> such as the passing of laws against lynching and the abolition of *Jim Crow* laws. Du Bois knew that the passing of laws in favor of African Americans was not going to happen if black Americans did not claim political rights, which was another theme appearing in *The Crisis*.

## **II – Fighting Political Disfranchisement**

### **The ruling of the old South**

The liberation of former slaves by Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863 with the Emancipation Proclamation during the American Civil War revolted the South.<sup>95</sup> For Southerners, the abolition of slavery “did not mean that Negroes were to be considered as citizens. They were to be 'equal before the law in the possession and enjoyment of all their rights of person—of liberty and of property'”<sup>96</sup> As soon as southern politicians were able to do so, several Southern states passed laws, referred as “Black Codes,” which sought to restrict the civil rights and liberties of the former slaves. The Black Codes prevented black people from holding office, renting lands, voting, doing military service, serving on juries, marrying white people or holding weapons.<sup>97</sup> The Black Codes were passed in the state of Mississippi in 1865 and 1866 for South Carolina. The editor, H. Melville Myers explained that since the Black Codes had passed the Negro race had “been excluded, as a separate class, from all civilized governments and the family of nations.”<sup>98</sup>

After the American Civil War, the Radical Republicans passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867 which allowed black men to vote and barred whites of the South to vote or hold offices until the Southern states join back the Union and redefine their government. The passing of the bill was the beginning of a long journey on the road of hatred, rising the animosity of the whites toward black people.<sup>99</sup> The most famous of all the organizations was, of course, the Ku Klux Klan, which

<sup>94</sup> Du Bois, “Agitation,” *The Crisis*, November 1910. 11. See the appendix p.77.

<sup>95</sup> Lincoln, *The Emancipation Proclamation*. Library of Congress <[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/scsmbib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(scsm001016\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/scsmbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(scsm001016)))> July 4, 2013.

<sup>96</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 256.

<sup>97</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 312.

<sup>98</sup> H. Melville Myers was the editor of the Black Codes of South Carolina. Gossett, *op. cit.*, 256.

<sup>99</sup> Oshinsky, *Worse than Slavery*, 1996. 22.

came to birth in 1867 to intimidate black people who were now able to hold offices and vote.

Adopted in 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment granted political rights to any person born in the United States. After forbidding slavery and giving citizenship to African Americans, the Constitution of the United States outlawed any type of racial or physical discrimination preventing the non-white race from voting.

*Section 1* The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.<sup>100</sup>

After the Fifteenth Amendment passed into the U.S. Constitution African American men thought they would finally enjoy their voting rights. Yet through the use of poll taxes, literacy tests, the grandfather clause, the white primary Southern states found a “legal” way to disfranchise African Americans despite the Reconstruction Act of 1867. It would take almost a century for African Americans of the South to be registered to vote with the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Convinced that the white race was superior, as described in Henry W. Grady's speech of 1887,<sup>101</sup> Southerners were determined to gain back their authority. Now that the black man was tolerated as a voter by the Fifteenth Amendment the only legal way to prevent him from voting “was to adopt a measure that made no mention of race,” not to violate the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, but that disenfranchised the black people.<sup>102</sup> In order to to be registered to vote citizens of the United States were supposed to pay poll taxes and pass literacy tests. Literacy tests first appeared in the state constitution of Mississippi in 1890 and required any citizen of the United States to be able to read, understand, and interpret any section of the U.S. Constitution. In Louisiana, 130,000 black voters were registered in 1896 but the number fell at 1,342 in 1903 with the passing of poll taxes and literacy tests.<sup>103</sup> Du Bois, like Booker T. Washington, was not against literacy tests and property qualifications during the 1890s as long as it was not based on the account of race.<sup>104</sup> Noticing that disfranchisement did happen on the account of race, Du Bois changed his mind and asked for the abolition of this device. In “The Truth,” W. E. B. Du Bois denounced the state constitution of New Orleans requiring that “every elector (voter) must either be able to read and write or, in case of illiteracy, he must pay taxes on ordinary assessable property of the minimum value of \$300.”<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> The Fifteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. *Cornell University Law School*.  
<<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxv>> March 22, 2013.

<sup>101</sup> Henry W. Grady expressed in his speech of 1887 that “the domination of the negro race resisted at all point and at all hazards—because the white race is the superior race.” Gossett, *op. cit.*, 264.

<sup>102</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 1998. 224.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>104</sup> Washington, *op. cit.*, 115.

<sup>105</sup> *New Orleans Picayune* published in *The Crisis*, January 1911. 16.

Afraid that poll taxes and literacy tests were also about to prevent the poor whites from voting, the state of Louisiana passed in 1898 the “grandfather clause.” The grandfather clause required that “only men who had been eligible to vote before 1867—or whose father or grandfather had been eligible before that year—would be qualified to vote.”<sup>106</sup> The passing of the grandfather clause had huge consequences: the number of registered voters fell from 127,000 in 1896 to 3,300 in 1900<sup>107</sup> as almost no black men were able to vote before 1867, a couple of years after the abolition of slavery. Du Bois objected to this law and wrote: “Let him vote it, not because his father did. . . . but because after intelligent consideration he thinks the success of that ticket best for his people and his country.”<sup>108</sup>

After the grandfather clause had been declared unconstitutional with the case of *Guinn v. Oklahoma* in 1915.<sup>109</sup> Many Southern states were willing to find another way to restrict the black vote, a movement known as “white primaries.” In order to get around the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments the Democratic Party, the dominant party in the South by the 1920s, “barred black people from membership, which excluded them from voting in Democratic primaries.”<sup>110</sup> Therefore this legislature was not the concern of federal authorities and could not violate the U.S. Constitution. Mississippi was the toughest state to grant black people political rights: “There is no such thing as Negro suffrage in Mississippi and never will be as long as the white men of the State stand together,” said Senator Percy of Mississippi. The result of “this curious combination of law and mob rule,” said Du Bois was “class and race hatred.”<sup>111</sup> In an editorial of 1911, Du Bois accused the white primary system of disfranchising a large part of the black populations of Louisiana: “over 150,000 Negro males 21 years of age and over (of whom nearly 70,000 could read and write) there were in 1908 only 1,743 registered as voters.”<sup>112</sup> Despite the establishment of all these disfranchising laws William Du Bois reported that “never before since Emancipation have so many colored voters cast the Democratic ticket.”<sup>113</sup>

The Federal government did not take actions against the disfranchisement of the black community but chose to remain mute to the black population's protests. Among them were William McKinley, president from 1897 to 1901 and Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909). In “Mr. Taft” Du Bois accused “the Taft Doctrine of recognizing race prejudice, instead of fitness, in Federal

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<sup>106</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 357.

<sup>107</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 266.

<sup>108</sup> Du Bois, “Voting,” *The Crisis*, November 1911. 11.

<sup>109</sup> *Guinn v. United States*, 323 US 347 (1915). *FindLaw*. <<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=349&invol=155>> May 3, 2013.

<sup>110</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 455.

<sup>111</sup> Du Bois, “The White Primary,” *The Crisis*, March 1911. 20-21.

<sup>112</sup> Du Bois, “The Truth,” *The Crisis*, January 1911. 17.

<sup>113</sup> Du Bois, “Elections,” *The Crisis*, December 1910. 20.

appointments.”<sup>114</sup> President Taft (1909-1913) did not only refuse black people into office but decided not to intervene into the lynching problem. “We declare that such a man has no business to be President of the United States,” said Du Bois in the same article. For the 1912 elections for Presidency, W. E. B. Du Bois supported Woodrow Wilson, “a cultivated scholar.”

We have, therefore, a conviction that Mr. Wilson will treat black men and their interests with farsighted fairness. He will not be our friend, but he will not belong to the gang of which Tillman, Vardaman, Hoke Smith and Blease are the brilliant expositors. . . . He will remember that the Negro in the United States has a right to be heard and considered. . . . We thank God that Theodore Roosevelt has been eliminated.<sup>115</sup>

Yet it was the administration of Woodrow Wilson which “took the most drastic action” against the black community. In 1912, Wilson allowed racial segregation in offices and employment. Contesting this policy would lead to a dismiss.<sup>116</sup>

### **W. E. B. Du Bois and the right to vote**

W. E. B. Du Bois was really concerned about the voting right and dedicated a special edition in *The Crisis* in August 1915 with several articles, pictures, poems and advertisements focused on voting. In his autobiographical work *The Souls of Black Folk* Du Bois wrote: “The ideal of liberty demanded for its attainment powerful means, and these the Fifteenth Amendment gave him. The ballot, which before he had looked upon as a visible sign of freedom, he now regarded as the chief means of gaining and perfecting the liberty with which war had partially endowed him.”<sup>117</sup> Like many other black men, Du Bois was aware of the political power. The right to vote would give a chance of civil rights that would improve the access to education allowing black citizens to gain respect. “Negroes must insist continually, in season and out of season, that voting is necessary to modern manhood, that color discrimination is barbarism, and that black boys need education as well as white boys.”<sup>118</sup> Writing for *The Crisis* magazine was an opportunity for William Du Bois to campaign against the disfranchisement of the Negro and rise awareness.

While Du Bois was claiming political rights for African American citizens, Booker T. Washington advocated a more accommodating approach to the whites. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois wrote that “the time is come when one may speak in all sincerity and utter courtesy of the mistakes and shortcomings of Mr. Washington’s career.”<sup>119</sup> In the chapter called “Of Mr. Booker T.

<sup>114</sup> Du Bois, “Mr. Taft,” *The Crisis*, October 1911. 243.

<sup>115</sup> Du Bois, “Politics,” *The Crisis*, August 1912. 181.

<sup>116</sup> Gossett, *Race*, 1963. 279.

<sup>117</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 4.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>119</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 26.

Washington and Others,” Du Bois accused Mr. Washington of asking black people to give up political power. “Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission. . . . [his] programme (sic) practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races.”<sup>120</sup> Eight years later, William Du Bois continued his fight against the Tuskegee machine<sup>121</sup> in *The Crisis* articles “Starvation and Prejudice” (June 1911) and “Envy” (January 1911), in which he, once again, criticized Booker T. Washington's submission to white men. In *Up from Slavery*, Booker T. Washington explained that it was not the right time to ask for political rights but that patience, not protest, will lead to recognition from the whites: “the time will come when the South will encourage all of its citizens to vote.”<sup>122</sup>

My own belief is, although I have never before said so in so many words, that the time will come when the Negro in the South will be accorded all the political rights which his ability, character, and material possessions entitle him to. I think, though, that the opportunity to freely exercise such political rights will not come in any large degree through outside or artificial forcing, but will be accorded to the Negro by the Southern white people themselves, and that they will protect him in the exercise of those rights. . . . I believe it is the duty of the Negro—as the greater part of the race is already doing—to deport himself modestly in regard to political claims.<sup>123</sup>

After having opposed Booker T. Washington's program which he judged as “hopeless,” the disfranchisement of the Negro, explained Du Bois, had been the result of his advocacy for accommodation to whites' requests.<sup>124</sup> “Mr. Washington thus faces the triple paradox of his career,” said Du Bois. The first one was that “it is utterly impossible . . . for workingmen and property-owners to defend their rights and exist without the right of suffrage.”<sup>125</sup> After paying tribute to Booker T. Washington who died in November 1915, Du Bois did not miss the opportunity to add that “we must lay on the soul of this man, a heavy responsibility for the consummation of Negro disfranchisement, the decline of the Negro college and the firmer establishment of color caste in this hand.”<sup>126</sup>

As far as the demand for political rights for African American men was concerned, Du Bois did not forget those who suffered from a double prejudice: women. Mary Church Terrell explained that “a white woman has only one handicap to overcome—that of sex. I have two—both sex and race. . . . Colored men have only one—that of race.”<sup>127</sup> *The Crisis* published a considerable amount of articles about woman's suffrage exceeding those about African American male's suffrage. William Du Bois could identify himself in the woman cause. Refusing the right to vote to women

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>121</sup> Booker T. Washington's nickname as he was the founder of Tuskegee Institute.

<sup>122</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 1901. 115.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>124</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*, 31.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Du Bois, “Booker T. Washington,” *The Crisis*, December 1915. 82.

<sup>127</sup> Terrell, *A Colored Woman in a White World*, 1940, quoted in Hine, *op. cit.*, 422.

because of their sex was the same refusal that black people had to bear for their race:

Every argument for Negro suffrage is an argument for woman's suffrage; every argument for woman suffrage is an argument for Negro suffrage; both are great movements in democracy. There should be on the part of Negroes absolutely no hesitation whenever and wherever responsible human beings are without voice in their government. The man of Negro blood who hesitates to do them justice is false to his race, his ideals and his country.<sup>128</sup>

Dr. Du Bois was constantly involved in the women's fight for suffrage. He thought as the proportion of black women was more important than whites the women's suffrage would increase if not double the number of votes among African Americans.<sup>129</sup> By 1900 only four states granted women the right to vote: Wyoming, Utah, Colorado and Idaho.<sup>130</sup> In "Ohio," W. E. B. Du Bois listed five arguments in favor of woman's suffrage:

The general proportion that women ought to have the right to vote surely needs no argument among disfranchised colored folk:  
Women are workers; workers should vote.  
Women are taxpayers; taxpayers should vote.  
Women have brains; voting needs brains.  
Women organize, direct and largely support the family; families should vote.  
Women are mothers of men; if men vote, why not women?<sup>131</sup>

Women such as Mary Church Terrell and Ida Wells Barnett supported black voting rights, hoping that it would end lynching and would give an other status rise to women.<sup>132</sup> Du Bois gave voice to Anna Shaw, president of the women's suffrage movement, in the editorial of June 1912, in which the women claimed: "Our association does not recognize either Negro blood or white blood; what we stand for is the demand for equal political rights for women with men, and we know no distinction of race."<sup>133</sup> In September 1912, Du Bois dedicated a special edition of *The Crisis* called *Women's Suffrage Number*, in which he focused his editorial on the article entitled "Votes for Women." In the same month issue Mary Church Terrell wrote the article "The Justice of Woman Suffrage." In 1915, in the United States, women had to take initiatives and worked in factories as most of men were fighting in Europe. Women succeeded in proving that they could accomplish other tasks than housewives were used to do at home. In "Woman Suffrage" Dr. Du Bois gave a voice to the woman cause:

If we turn to easily available statistics we find that instead of the women of this country or of any other country being confined chiefly to childbearing they are as a matter of fact engaged and engaged successfully in practically every pursuit in which men are engaged. The actual work of the world today depends more largely upon women than upon men. Consequently this man-ruled world faces an astonishing dilemma: either Woman the

<sup>128</sup> Du Bois, "Woman Suffrage," *The Crisis*, April 1915. 285.

<sup>129</sup> Du Bois, "Ohio," *The Crisis*, August 1912. 181-182.

<sup>130</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 424.

<sup>131</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*, 182.

<sup>132</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 365, 422.

<sup>133</sup> Du Bois, "Suffering Suffragettes," *The Crisis*, June 1912. 76.



Worker is doing the world's work successfully or not. If she is not doing it well why do we not take from her the necessity of working? If she is doing it well why not treat her as a worker with a voice in the direction of work?<sup>134</sup>

Women would have to wait for the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, stating that “vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”<sup>135</sup>

White southerners were aware that giving the right to vote to women would increase the black vote, which made them protest against the proposal of the Nineteenth Amendment.<sup>136</sup> In order to challenge this protest for the black vote D. W. Griffith wrote, produced and realized the movie *The Birth of a Nation*, based on Thomas F. Dixon's book *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (1905) depicting black men as ignorant brutes, and vicious rapists of innocent white women, also stealing the vote from white men.<sup>137</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois and the N.A.A.C.P. asked for censorship, accusing Dixon of “brutally falsifying history,” but failed.<sup>138</sup> The film was very successful. “No previous picture had ever been so publicized, and millions flocked to see it,” said Deems Taylor. “*The Birth of a Nation* long held the record for box-office grosses—more than fifteen million dollars. It is still shown occasionally and, propaganda or not, is still a great film.”<sup>139</sup> As the South found out that disfranchising black citizens “would not bring about federal intervention,”<sup>140</sup> Southerners decided to go further than disfranchisement. “Since many whites readily agreed that the Negro as a voter was a ‘menace,’ why should the South provide the education that would enable him to vote and hold office?”<sup>141</sup>

### **III – Education for all**

#### **A separate-but-unequal education**

Although the “separate-but-equal” doctrine was legalized in 1896 and led to an expansion of segregation in all public facilities such as restaurants, hotels and schools some states such as Ohio and Indiana already separated schools but with equal facilities in 1871 and 1874.<sup>142</sup> The first obstacle that African Americans had to face was tuition. Most of black people were poor farmers

<sup>134</sup> Du Bois, “Woman Suffrage,” *The Crisis*, November 1915. 37-38.

<sup>135</sup> Nineteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. *Cornell University Law School*. <<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxix>> March 22, 2013.

<sup>136</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 424.

<sup>137</sup> D. W. Griffith, *Birth of a Nation*, 1915 (film)

<sup>138</sup> Du Bois, “The Clansman,” *The Crisis*, May 1915. 33.

<sup>139</sup> Taylor, *A Pictorial History of the Movies*, 1943. 46.

<sup>140</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 265.

<sup>141</sup> Litwack, *op. cit.*, 99.

<sup>142</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 274.

and could not afford to pay such an amount for education.<sup>143</sup> The proposal of the Blair Education Bill was introduced to the Senate of the United States in 1881 stating that “instruction shall be free to all, without distinction of race, color, nativity or condition of life.”<sup>144</sup> Debated for ten years, the bill never came to an end and was finally rejected in 1890. In 1910, 30.5% of the black population were illiterate, whereas 5% of white citizens were.<sup>145</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois claimed that the refusal of the Blair Bill was responsible for the six million illiterates in 1910 without counting those who did not admit their illiteracy. To remedy it Du Bois concluded his article of March 1911 as follow: “We have to-day in the United States a staggering problem of sheer ignorance. Can we found democratic government on such a basis? REVIVE THE BLAIR BILL.”<sup>146</sup> Du Bois was deeply convinced that illiteracy and ignorance was due to the lack of education and not blood as white southerners were stating.<sup>147</sup>

Percentage of persons 14 years old and over who were illiterate (unable to read or write in any language), by race and nativity: 1870 to 1979

Year	Total	White			Black and other
		Total	Native	Foreign-born	
1870	20.0	11.5	—	—	79.9
1880	17.0	9.4	8.7	12.0	70.0
1890	13.3	7.7	6.2	13.1	56.8
1900	10.7	6.2	4.6	12.9	44.5
1910	7.7	5.0	3.0	12.7	30.5
1920	6.0	4.0	2.0	13.1	23.0
1930	4.3	3.0	1.6	10.8	16.4
1940	2.9	2.0	1.1	9.0	11.5
1950	3.2	—	—	—	—
1959	2.2	1.6	—	—	7.5
1969	1.0	0.7	—	—	3.6
1979	0.6	0.4	—	—	1.6

\* Based on black population only  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970; and Current Population Reports, Series P-23, Ancestry and Language in the United States: November 1979. (This table was prepared in September 1992.)

Illiteracy 1870-1979. <[http://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit\\_history.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp)> May 5, 2013.

The “Remedy” to illiteracy was to be found in schools. In an article called “Education” Du Bois published the report of the United States Commissioner of Education (1909) in which it was revealed that only 33.7% of colored children, 5-18 years of age, attended schools.<sup>148</sup> “In one Alabama county out of 10,758 Negro children only 1,000 were in school.”<sup>149</sup> In 1915, the *Georgian*

<sup>143</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 383.

<sup>144</sup> Du Bois, “The Blair Bill,” *The Crisis*, March 1911. 16-17.

<sup>145</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, <[http://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit\\_history.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp)> May 04, 2013

<sup>146</sup> Du Bois. *op. cit.*, 17.

<sup>147</sup> Du Bois, “Discrimination,” *The Crisis*, July 1911. 114.

<sup>148</sup> Du Bois, “Education,” *The Crisis*, February 1911. 16-17.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

newspaper did not hesitate to publish an untrue report stating that of the 10,018 black people living in Georgia, 5,924 attended school in 1915. The right number was revealed in Du Bois's editorial of May 1915 as being 2,924.<sup>150</sup> Once African Americans succeeded in enrolling in schools they soon realized that white and black schools were far from being equal.

*“Educational facilities are not good throughout the North, while in the South they are, on the whole, wretched.”*<sup>151</sup>

W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Crisis*, June 1911.

W. E. B. Du Bois was aware that if black students were able to go to school it would be in a bad and dangerous area and it would “have the poorest houses and equipment.”<sup>152</sup> As soon as James K. Vardaman newly became governor of Mississippi in 1904 he “drastically reduced the amount of state money spent for Negro schools,” claiming that education would ruin them.<sup>153</sup> While the leader of the New South movement, Henry W. Grady, maintained that white and black facilities were approximately equal, the author of *Trouble in Mind*, Leon F. Litwack defined rural southern schools as “makeshift, primitive, unpainted one-room board structures, with shaky floors and cracks in the walls and roof.”<sup>154</sup> In “Segregation” Du Bois described colored schools as being “less well equipped and less well supervised.”<sup>155</sup> V. P. Thomas reported that although the white and colored populations of Louisiana were nearly equal in number, “the value of all schoolhouses, sites and furniture for whites is \$6,503,019.57” whereas “the value of all schoolhouses, sites and furniture for colored is \$273,147.50.”<sup>156</sup> Du Bois added, in another editorial of *The Crisis* that throughout the South, “the Negro in direct and indirect taxation is not only paying for his own wretched schooling accommodations, but is also contributing to the schools of the rich whites and then double-taxing himself by contributions to decent colored private schools.”<sup>157</sup>

The South was known to have a lower teachers' salary and shorter school term than the North. The differences also appeared throughout the South among the black and white community. In order to build new schoolhouses the only solution was to close down schools for couple of months and “use teachers' salaries to buy the materials.”<sup>158</sup> Black schools had shorter terms than white schools. Thus black students benefited from only five months of school a year, sometimes

<sup>150</sup> Du Bois, “Life,” *The Crisis*, May 1915. 30.

<sup>151</sup> Du Bois, “Education,” *The Crisis*, June 1911. 62.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 277.

<sup>154</sup> Litwack, *op. cit.*, 64.

<sup>155</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation,” *The Crisis*, November 1910. 11.

<sup>156</sup> V. P. Thomas quoted in “Education,” *The Crisis*, February 1911. 16.

<sup>157</sup> Du Bois, “The Cost of Education,” *The Crisis*, December 1911. 69.

<sup>158</sup> Litwack, *op. cit.*, 62.

less.<sup>159</sup> Black teachers were also paid much less than white teachers:

The average monthly salary of the white female teacher is \$50.80; that of the colored female teacher \$28.67. The white and colored populations are very nearly equal, yet the white teachers' salaries amount to \$2,404,062.54; the colored teachers' salaries amount to \$202,251.13.<sup>160</sup>

For many years, scientists were convinced that races differed in intelligence. It was during the beginning of twentieth century that they demonstrated that in general, through IQ tests, black Americans had lower results than white Americans.<sup>161</sup> Gossett mentioned Dr. John Van Evrie's theory saying that "education for the Negro, if it was possible at all, would do irrevocable damage to his brain. . . . the Negro's center of gravity would be disturbed, and he would find it impossible to stand erect or to walk."<sup>162</sup> Du Bois argued in "Segregation" that it was "impossible to judge the mind of a man by the color of his face" and that was a "truth" that the United States needed to recognize. He believed that African Americans "are capable of improvement . . . if they are persistent."<sup>163</sup> Du Bois knew that it would be difficult but encouraged African Americans to challenge the opinions that scientists had on them if they wanted things to change.

### **W. E. B. Du Bois's writings to create consciousness to mobilize**

Through *The Crisis*, William Du Bois wanted to create consciousness in order to mobilize the American population to fight for the "black" cause. This consciousness that he already evoked in *The Souls of Black Folk* meant that black Americans had to understand that they were both American and African, and that their only wish would be to be accepted by his fellow, "without being cursed and spit upon . . ., without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face."<sup>164</sup>

The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Du Bois, "Education," *The Crisis*, February 1911. 16.

<sup>160</sup> V. P. Thomas, *op. cit.*

<sup>161</sup> Corcos, *The Myth of Races*, 1997. 111, 116.

<sup>162</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 263.

<sup>163</sup> Du Bois, "Segregation," *The Crisis*, November 1910. 10.

<sup>164</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 3.

<sup>165</sup> Du Bois. *op. cit.*, 2.

He announced in “Schools” that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People would give support for the buildings of schools whenever they can.<sup>166</sup> Du Bois also called for black people to rally and support the building of new high schools.<sup>167</sup> It is only by taking actions and helping themselves that the actual issue will be fixed. Du Bois's concept was clear: if you want to be helped you would have to help yourself first. Numerous editorials appeared in *The Crisis*, encouraging education, with appealing titles such as “Go to school.” Du Bois adopted a more rebelling writing in “Voter, Attention!” in which he asked his readers to “write a protest” and “vote against the re-election” of a given list of Senators who refused to give funds impartially among white and black students.<sup>168</sup>

William Du Bois saw in the building of schools, that he qualified with “great work,” the opportunity for African Americans to be publicly recognized by America.<sup>169</sup> He truly believed that education will lead the black American to gain respect. Education was also a field that Du Bois disagreed with Booker T. Washington. Even if both agreed on common-schools, Du Bois advocated an education in liberal arts and the expansion of higher education, while Booker T. Washington was defending industrial education.<sup>170</sup> The Tuskegee Machine thought that “the people needed something more than mere book-learning.”<sup>171</sup> His goal, when he started teaching at Tuskegee University was to “to give them such a practical knowledge of some one industry, together with the spirit of industry, thrift, and economy, that they would be sure of knowing how to make a living after they had left us.”<sup>172</sup> While Mr. Washington was “developing a substantial propertied class of landowners and businessmen,”<sup>173</sup> William Du Bois was raising a class of intellectual. His education at Great Barrington High School, Fisk University and Harvard gave him the ability to write the most eloquent texts of *The Crisis* using a flow of literary devices and imagery in his writings for Easter, Christmas and Thanksgiving.

By 1911 the monthly net paid circulation of *The Crisis* was 9,000 copies.<sup>174</sup> In 1915 the number jumped to be 32,156.<sup>175</sup> “In January, 1916, the CRISIS became entirely self-supporting,” said Du Bois.<sup>176</sup> Sondra Kathryn Wilson wrote in her introduction of *The Crisis Reader* that Du Bois “soon made *The Crisis* one of the most influential journals on social and political thought ever

<sup>166</sup> Du Bois, “Schools,” *The Crisis*, January 1911. 20.

<sup>167</sup> Du Bois, “The High School,” *The Crisis*, July 1911. 114.

<sup>168</sup> Du Bois, “Voter, Attention!,” *The Crisis*, June 1914. 78-79.

<sup>169</sup> Du Bois, “The High School,” *The Crisis*, July 1911. 113.

<sup>170</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 31.

<sup>171</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 1901. 60.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 61.

<sup>173</sup> Meier, *op. cit.*, 104.

<sup>174</sup> Du Bois, “Editing The Crisis,” March 1951 quoted in *The Crisis Reader*. xxix.

<sup>175</sup> “Timeline,” *The CRISIS Magazine*. <<http://www.thecrisismagazine.com/timeline.html>> May 05, 2013.

<sup>176</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*

seen in America. Under his editorship, *The Crisis* became widely read even beyond N.A.A.C.P. membership.”<sup>177</sup> In an essay written in March 1951 Du Bois said that *The Crisis* circulated in every states of the North and also foreign countries such as Africa. He also added that “The CRISIS was known to circulate among Negro workers of low income. Moreover it antagonized many white powerful interests; it had been denounced in Congress and many respectable Negroes were afraid to be seen reading it. Mississippi passed laws against it and some of our agents were driven from home.”<sup>178</sup> One reader named James O. Jones congratulated W. E. B. Du Bois on his writings for *The Crisis* and added to his letter: “at your service to do my bit to bring the truth to light and secure justice.”<sup>179</sup> Another reader from Boston wrote that *The Crisis* was “one of the best journals.”<sup>180</sup> Even if some articles were difficult to understand by all African American people, those who did not go to school, *The Crisis* still had a large impact. William Du Bois started to publish articles concerning higher education such as “Fisk University” in 1913, “The Vigilance Committee: a Call to Arms” in 1913 and “College Education” in 1914, which will tend to increase between 1915 and 1918.

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<sup>177</sup> Wilson, *The Crisis Reader*, 1999. xx.

<sup>178</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*, xxx.

<sup>179</sup> Jones, James O., *Letter from James O. Jones to W. E. B. Du Bois*, May 13, 1915.

<sup>180</sup> Clement, Edward. H., *Letter from E. H. Clement to W. E. B. Du Bois*, May 28, 1912.

## **PART 2**

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**Editing *The Crisis* 1915-1924**

**From mass writing to elite writing  
The giving up of the “special grievances”**

## **PART TWO – Evolution of W. E. B. Du Bois's writings from 1915 to 1924: from mass writing to elite writing?**

W. E. B. Du Bois was not afraid of counterattacking white and black individuals who attempted to pull down the image of black Americans or made them appear submissive to white power. To overthrow this authority, Du Bois extended his denunciation of *Jim Crow* laws to the army which led him to focus more on the black problem in Europe and all over the world. But before his intervention on the international stage, Du Bois kept encouraging black people to go to school all along of his career for *The Crisis*: “GET WISDOM! Do not wait—do not hesitate. Our life depends upon it.”<sup>181</sup> The second step was to encourage them to go to college and fight for their development. The readers will see that his editorials between 1915 and 1918 focused more on higher education, adopting a elitist accent.

### **I – A more “*Talented Tenth*” vision of education**

“*Teach the workers to work and the thinkers to think.*”<sup>182</sup>

W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903.

The Kentucky Act of March 22, 1904, stated that “it shall be unlawful for any person . . . to maintain or operate any college, school, or institution where persons of the white and negro races are both received as pupils for instruction.”<sup>183</sup> On October 8, 1904, the grand jury of Madison county, Kentucky, used this act to charge Berea College of teaching white and black students in the same institution of learning. The State Court of Kentucky concluded on November 9, 1908 that it was “competent for the state to forbid all teaching of the two races together, in the same institution, at the same time, no matter by whom the teaching was done.”<sup>184</sup> With James K. Vardaman as a governor of Mississippi it was obvious that states colleges for African Americans were closed.<sup>185</sup> “There are to-day [1903] less than 3,000 living Negro college graduates in the United States, and less than 1,000 Negroes in college.”<sup>186</sup> President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard banned any African Americans from living in dormitories.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>181</sup> Du Bois, “School,” *The Crisis*, October 1918. 267.

<sup>182</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 54.

<sup>183</sup> Berea College v. Kentucky, 211 US 45 (1909). *FindLaw*. <<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=211&invol=45>> May 3, 2013.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Gossett, *Race*, 1963. 277.

<sup>186</sup> Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth,” *The Negro Problem*, 1903 at *Teaching American History*. <<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-talented-tenth/>> February 2, 2013.

<sup>187</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 372.



After the introduction of mental tests in the United States in the 1890s the results proved that black Americans were inferior to white Americans in intelligence. The American psychologist Lewis Terman split the scientists into two groups: those who believed that “‘blacks’ differ genetically from ‘whites’ in intelligence, while the other ascribed the differences to environmental influences, low socioeconomic standards, poor schools, discrimination.”<sup>188</sup> Henry H. Goddard was the scientist who introduced intelligence testing in the U.S. in the early twentieth century. Many people, citizens as well as educators, firmly believed in Goddard's theories: that our IQ tells us how smart we are, does not change throughout our life and is totally inherited.<sup>189</sup>

### **Black colleges: the Industrial vs. the Classical Liberal Education**

*“All forms of labor were honorable and all forms of idleness a disgrace.”*<sup>190</sup>

Booker T. Washington in *Up from Slavery*, 1901.

After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, Brigadier General Samuel Armstrong wanted to establish a school on the Wood Farm, Virginia, in order to provide the former slaves some kind of education. “On April 1, 1868, Armstrong opened Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute with a simple declared purpose:” to teach them respect for labor, “to replace stupid drudgery with skilled hands, and in this way to build up an industrial system for the sake not only of self-support and intelligent labor, but also for the sake of character.”<sup>191</sup> Hampton Institute emphasized its program in trades and industry. Students were able to pay the tuition by working on campus. “Nevertheless, some white southerners regarded the Hampton curriculum as a way to keep blacks in what was called their ‘place’ and to supply a pool of useful servants.”<sup>192</sup> By 1872, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was very popular and attracted students from all over the country.<sup>193</sup> That year, Booker T. Washington had to walk for days to reach Hampton. In order to be admitted he had to dust the class rooms. “The sweeping of that room was my college examination, and never did any youth pass an examination for entrance into Harvard or Yale that gave him more genuine satisfaction.”<sup>194</sup> He started teaching at Hampton in 1879.<sup>195</sup> In an 1917 article named “Hampton,” Du Bois recognized that Hampton was “the best center of trade-teaching for Negroes in the United States” but accused the institution of making it impossible for “most promising and brilliant

<sup>188</sup> Corcos, *The Myth of Human Races*, 1997. 116.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.* 113.

<sup>190</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 1901. 32.

<sup>191</sup> “History,” *Hampton University*. <<http://www.hamptonu.edu/about/history.cfm>> May 5, 2013.

<sup>192</sup> Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals*, 2003. 44-45.

<sup>193</sup> “History,” *Hampton University*, *op. cit.*

<sup>194</sup> Washington, *op. cit.*, 25

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* 35.

students to receive college training or higher technical and professional training,” saying “that the Negro does not need college training.” By only focusing on “technical training and high school work,” Hampton's attitude, according to Du Bois, was “illiberal and seemingly selfish” toward other black schools. Du Bois ended up this article recommending that “it should be the work of Hampton not simply to train but to sift and to send to colleges or other schools those fitted for work higher or different from that offered by her curriculum.”<sup>196</sup>

“At only 25 years old, at the request of General Armstrong, Washington helped found Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881,”<sup>197</sup> giving Washington the nickname of the Tuskegee Machine. In his chapter entitled “A Harder Task Than Making Bricks Without Straw,” Washington emphasized on “agricultural and domestic work” but also on the importance of having his students erect their own buildings.<sup>198</sup> Professor Raymond Walter wrote that Washington “had intimated that he disliked Negro colleges.”<sup>199</sup> Booker T. Washington's demand for African Americans to give up higher education and focus on “industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South” encouraged Du Bois to accuse Washington's request of being responsible of “the steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro”<sup>200</sup> that Fisk University was victim of.

Mr. Washington thus faces the triple paradox of his career: . . . He advocates common-school and industrial training, and depreciates institutions of higher learning; but neither the Negro common-schools, nor Tuskegee itself, could remain open a day were it not for teachers trained in Negro colleges, or trained by their graduates.<sup>201</sup>

It was on August 22, 1867 in Nashville, Tennessee that Fisk University opened its doors to all persons, regardless of race. Among its students were W. E B. Du Bois—who joined in 1888, other prestigious alumni included Booker T. Washington's wife and daughters.<sup>202</sup> Its curriculum is grounded in the liberal arts and its faculty “emphasizes the discovery and advancement of knowledge through research in the natural and social sciences, business and the humanities.”<sup>203</sup> In 1912, Du Bois dedicated an article in *The Crisis* named “Fisk University” in which he gave an apogee of the college stating that Fisk had the merit of having good results with almost no aid or donations from the Board of Education contrary to Tuskegee Institute. In this article Du Bois called for African Americans to rally and donate in order to improve Fisk University's conditions.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Du Bois, “Hampton,” *The Crisis*, November 1917. 10-12.

<sup>197</sup> “History,” *Hampton University*, *op. cit.*

<sup>198</sup> Washington, *op. cit.*, 71.

<sup>199</sup> Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, 2003. 56.

<sup>200</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 30-31.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> “History of Fisk.” *Fisk University*. <<http://www.fisk.edu/AboutFisk/HistoryOfFisk.aspx>> May 5, 2013.

<sup>203</sup> “Our Mission & Values,” *Fisk University*. <<http://www.fisk.edu/AboutFisk/OurMissionAndValues.aspx>> May 5, 2013.

<sup>204</sup> Du Bois, “Fisk University,” *The Crisis*, April 1912. 245.

## W. E. B. Du Bois, the intellectual

*"We can support our own universities. We must do it."*<sup>205</sup>

W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Crisis*, July 1918.

In the chapter "Of the Wings of Atlanta" of *The Souls of Black Folk* Du Bois explained to his readers the importance and goal of higher education:

The function of the university is not simply to teach bread-winning, or to furnish teachers for the public schools, or to be a centre of polite society; it is, above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and the growing knowledge of life, an adjustment which forms the secret of civilization.<sup>206</sup>

Dr. Du Bois was deeply convinced that the South needed knowledge and culture. Black colleges, according to Du Bois, were aimed to develop men and help them to solve racial problems. He said that southern modern workingmen "must first have the common school to teach them to read, write, and cipher; and they must have higher schools to teach teachers for the common schools."<sup>207</sup>

Every July, Du Bois dedicated an Education edition in *The Crisis* in which he published a series of articles on education and pictures of graduate college students. In the March 1916 issue Du Bois published three articles about education and knowledge in his editorial: "The Negro College," "Public Schools," and "The Negro Library." In "The Negro College," Du Bois accused the Board of Education of not being willing to build or financially support black colleges but on the contrary drown these institutions:

The General Education Board has again shown by its appropriations that it does not believe in the higher education of Negroes, and that it does not propose to support their institutions to any great extent. . . . For the most part, while encouraging the training of talent among whites, North and South, it gives simply sops for common school and industrial training to the black South. . . . What the General Education Board ought to do is to give an endowment of half a million to Fisk, Atlanta and Howard, and thus show to the world that America is not afraid of trained Negro brains.<sup>208</sup>

In "Public Schools" Du Bois kept encouraging the building of public schools saying that they will "break social line" and explained that the South opposed them because they "opposed democracy" and did not know "how to treat human beings."<sup>209</sup> Du Bois ended his March 1916 editorial with an article entitled "The Negro Library" in which he informed his readers that the

<sup>205</sup> Du Bois, "Awake, Put on Thy Strength, O Zion," *The Crisis*, July 1918. 114.

<sup>206</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 52-53.

<sup>207</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*, 59.

<sup>208</sup> Du Bois, "The Negro College," *The Crisis*, May 1916. 29.

<sup>209</sup> Du Bois, "Public Schools," *The Crisis*, May 1916. 32.

Negro Library had been opened in London and that African American authors sent few books to start furnishing the library. Du Bois encouraged his talented authors writing for *The Crisis* to do the same and asked “all such persons to send books.”<sup>210</sup> In “Our Graduates,” Du Bois wrote that he was reassured to see that there was a “steady increase in the size of the little companies of colored men and women who are acquiring the higher training in the leading universities of this country.”<sup>211</sup> It was in this article that W. E. B. Du Bois first mentioned the terms: “men of exceptional ability,” echoing to his 1903 work, *The Talented Tenth*.

*The Crisis* was a magazine that published many poems written by Langston Hughes, short stories and essays on black culture, which made the magazine enter in and launch the Harlem Renaissance period that was about to start in the United States. Over time Du Bois became more elitist and chose to focus more on these “exceptional men.” A considerable amount of editorials between 1915 and 1918 were dedicated to higher education. By writing about this special elite Du Bois wanted to encourage the mass of African American population to do the same. In 1903, Du Bois published his work, *The Talented Tenth*. The concept was clear: teach the best and brightest African Americans and they will improve all black Americans' conditions:

Men of America . . . The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and the Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.<sup>212</sup>

It was evident that the Talented Tenth concept was based on William Du Bois's own experience. Writing for *The Crisis* was for him a way to train and free these lost souls black Americans were at that time. He was convinced that it was “the educated and intelligent of the Negro people that have led and elevated the mass.”<sup>213</sup> In “Our policy” Du Bois emphasized that the role of the editor, that is himself, was to educate the reader: “Now, the editor may to a vast extent educate the Reader, he may inform and lead him; he may even to some extent debauch, force and cajole him. . . . remember that this is not a mere magazine—it is a magazine with a purpose.”<sup>214</sup> He encouraged his readers to buy books for the first time in the issue of September 1915. Among them were *The Souls of Black Folk* and *The Negro* and he continued to publish the sales of books each month. Du Bois's goal of teaching the mass was achieved when he received a letter from a black reader, Francis J. Grimké, saying that his brother and himself read “every day, after lunch, some standard work” including his book, *The Negro*. Congratulating him on his work, the reader wrote: “You have done a splendid work in the preparation of this volume and have rendered a most

<sup>210</sup> Du Bois, “The Negro Library,” *The Crisis*, May 1916. 32.

<sup>211</sup> Du Bois, “Our Graduates,” *The Crisis*, July 1916. 135.

<sup>212</sup> Du Bois, *The Talented Tenth*, 1903.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> Du Bois, “Our Policy,” *The Crisis*, January 1916. 134-135.

important service to the race.” The reader kept praising the editor on his intellectual skills as a writer and his devotion to help his race:

You have brought to light so many things of interest in the history of the race and have discussed the whole subject so intelligently and broadly that even the enemies of the race will be compelled to take notice and to revise their judgment in regard to the Negro.<sup>215</sup>

“I insist that the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters, it is to make carpenters men,” said Du Bois. “Education must not simply teach work--it must teach Life.”<sup>216</sup> Mary Church Terrell was seen, in Du Bois's eyes, as a Talented Tenth. She earned her MA at Oberlin College and spoke at the International Congress of Women in Berlin in three languages: English, French and German. Devoted to the N.A.A.C.P. and writing essays for *The Crisis*, Miss Terrell was also part of Booker T. Washington's black elite, the Four Hundred.<sup>217</sup>

After the Atlanta Exposition in September 1895, Mr. Washington had become “a figure of national reputation and the acknowledged leader of Negroes in America.”<sup>218</sup> Washington's status of black leader was confirmed when President Roosevelt invited him to have dinner at the White House in 1901.<sup>219</sup> With the creation of the N.A.A.C.P., especially after 1913; his political power was decreasing progressively.<sup>220</sup> As previously stated William Du Bois had not always been against Washington's program and ideas. After the Atlanta Exposition, Du Bois wrote to Booker T. Washington, congratulating him for his speech. During the 1890s both men agreed on franchise restrictions based on education and property and self-help: “the Negro's progress was to be played by the Negro himself; the race's future recognition lay within its own hands.”<sup>221</sup> Between 1901 and 1903, Du Bois became more aware of disfranchisement and discrimination and it was in an article entitled “Self-Help” that Du Bois told black citizens not to count on the nation to help them in the education sector:

Negro universities and schools of higher training have got to be supported by Negroes or, for the most part, they will not be supported at all. If we black folk want college training for our children, we have got to furnish it out of our own pockets.<sup>222</sup>

November 1915 was a turning point for America and African Americans. At the age of fifty nine years old, Booker T. Washington passed away. It was a month later that W. E. B. Du Bois paid tribute to the Tuskegee Machine, giving him the merit of having encouraged African Americans to

<sup>215</sup> Du Bois, “The Negro,” *The Crisis*, June 1916. 83.

<sup>216</sup> Du Bois, *The Talented Tenth*, 1903.

<sup>217</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 422.

<sup>218</sup> Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880-1915*, 1966. 101.

<sup>219</sup> Wolters, *Du Bois and His Rivals*, 2003. 53.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 105, 196.

<sup>222</sup> Du Bois, “Self-Help,” *The Crisis*, July 1918. 113-114.

focus their attention to “the pressing necessity of economic development,” “technical education” and his effort to “pave the way for an understanding between the white and darker races.” William Du Bois recognized in this article that Booker T. Washington “was the greatest Negro leader since Frederick Douglass, and the most distinguished man, white or black, who has come out of the South since the Civil War.” He also thanked him for “his establishment of Tuskegee and spreading of industrial education.” After all the praising Du Bois focused on the committed “mistakes” of Mr. Washington:

On the other hand there can be no doubt of Mr. Washington's mistakes and short comings : he never adequately grasped the growing bond of politics and industry; he did not understand the deeper foundations of human training and his basis of better understanding between white and black was founded on caste. . . . we must lay on the soul of this man, a heavy responsibility for the consummation of Negro disfranchisement, the decline of the Negro college and public school and the firmer establishment of color caste in this land.<sup>223</sup>

Du Bois concluded this article without resentment, saying that “what is done is done. . . . Gravely and with bowed head let us receive what this great figure gave of good, silently rejecting all else.” After Washington's death, W. E. B. Du Bois was now the preeminent black figure of the United States/the nation.

## **II – First World War and “The Color Line” at the front**

Adopting a militant and critical tone in his writings for *The Crisis* from 1918, Du Bois became more radical, which led the N.A.A.C.P. to react and suppress the “Editorial.” In an article entitled “The Slaughter of the Innocents,” Du Bois accused discrimination to be the cause of hundreds death of black babies before the age of one and tried to convince African American parents that “the time is come not to excuse but to combat with our own available weapons this murder.”<sup>224</sup>

War in Europe that opposed France, Great Britain and their allies to Germany was threatening the United States to go join the war. When World War I started in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed “neutrality” stating that the United States of America could be “impartial in thought as well as in action” and will not take part in this war.<sup>225</sup> After Germany attacked a civilian boat which led to the deaths of several American people, Wilson could not remain in the state of neutrality. “We will not choose the path of submission and suffer the most

<sup>223</sup> Du Bois, “Booker T. Washington,” *The Crisis*, December 1915. 82. See the appendix p.78.

<sup>224</sup> Du Bois, “The Slaughter of the Innocents,” *The Crisis*, October 1918. 267.

<sup>225</sup> Wilson, *U.S. Declaration of Neutrality*, August 19, 1914. <<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/usneutrality.htm>> May 15, 2013.

sacred rights of our Nation and our people to be ignored or violated,” said Wilson. “Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved.”<sup>226</sup> On April 2, 1917 President Wilson asked Congress to declare war against Germany proclaiming that “The world must be made safe for democracy.” In order to show their loyalty to their country, African American men enrolled to war to fight next to their white compatriots. “If this is our country, then this is our war,” said W. E. B Du Bois. “We must fight it with every ounce of blood and treasure.”<sup>227</sup> Fighting in Europe for democracy was the opportunity for African Americans to fight for democracy at home. The N.A.A.C.P. wrote:

We owe it to them—we owe it to ourselves—that, while they are giving their lives abroad to make the world safe for democracy, we should do our part to make this country safe for their kindred at home, or, to quote a better phrase, we should “make America safe for Americans.”<sup>228</sup>

White leaders and officers were not enthusiastic about black men fighting in the same ranks, thinking they were not witty enough to make important decisions at the front. It was after the United States entered the war in 1917 that mental tests were used in the country to find out “which men would be the most effective in particular categories, especially as officers.”<sup>229</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois published in the 1920 July issue of *The Crisis* “Race Intelligence” in which he denounced the methods that the U.S. Army were using in the I.Q. tests. During World War I, U.S. soldiers were asked to pass tests in order to go to war: one designed for literate soldiers, another for illiterate soldiers. Du Bois explained that “for these tests were chosen 4730 Negroes from Louisiana and Mississippi and 28,052 white recruits from Illinois.”<sup>230</sup> Du Bois asked his readers: “The result? Do you need to ask?” As Southern states were known to discriminate against the black civilization, especially Mississippi, and have poorer educational conditions than Northern states it was evident that the scores were going to be higher for the white soldiers.

M. R. Trabue, Director, Bureau of Educational Service, Columbia University, assures us that the intelligence of the average southern Negro is equal to that of a 9-year-old white boy and that we should arrange our educational program to make 'waiters, porters, scavengers, and the like' of most Negroes!<sup>231</sup>

Du Bois concluded this article asking: “Is it conceivable that a great university should employ a man whose 'science' consists of such utter rot?” In 1921, Dr. Robert Yerkes maintained that his tests had proved “the intellectual inferiority of the negro” and that “Quite apart from educational status,

<sup>226</sup> Wilson, *U.S. Declaration of War with Germany*, April 2, 1917.

<sup>227</sup> Du Bois quoted in Hine, *op. cit.*, 430.

<sup>228</sup> N.A.A.C.P. quoted in “A Ringing Call To Duty,” *The Crisis*, November 1918, 9.

<sup>229</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 366-367.

<sup>230</sup> Du Bois, “Race Intelligence,” *The Crisis*, July 1920. 119.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

which is totally unsatisfactory, the Negro soldier is of relatively low grade intelligence.”<sup>232</sup>

### **Discrimination of black leaders and officers in the army**

“Gave us Negro officers for Negro troops.”

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Crisis*, June 1917.

In an article of *The Crisis* named “The S.A.T.C.” Du Bois informed the readers that the Director of the Students' Army Training Corps, R. M. Hughes, had declared in September 1918 that it was “contrary to army regulations for white and colored to be housed in the same barracks.”<sup>233</sup> Following this declaration, black students could not attend the same training classes of whites anymore. In March 1916, a year before the United States entered the war, Du Bois published an article dedicated to a black leader named Young. Charles D. Young showed his loyalty and devotion to the United States in serving in Cuba, the Philippines, Haiti, and Mexico.<sup>234</sup> He graduated in 1889 from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point where he was victim of insults by his white companions who were trying “to drive him out of the institution.”<sup>235</sup> Young never gave up and his determination led him to be eligible to command troops for World War I; but the discontent of white soldiers led the army to place him on inactive service justifying he had high blood pressure.<sup>236</sup> By the end of the war he was sent to Liberia to train troops where he accomplished “the most valuable services.”<sup>237</sup>

In an article named “Hope” Du Bois had the pleasure to inform his readers that John Hopes, a colored graduate from Brown and president of Morehouse College, was sent to France to visit all the soldiers at the front. Happy to see that the government took black people's complains into account and chose a black man to check their conditions, Du Bois ended up this article with a good note: “Let the good work go on.”<sup>238</sup> Of the 367,710 black men who served in World War I, only 50,000 went into combat while the others were assigned to labor battalions.<sup>239</sup> African Americans were separated from the white troops, had the lower ranks and could not even lead black troops which remained under white control. Those who were enrolled in the navy were only cleaners,

<sup>232</sup> Yerkes, quoted in *Race, Class, IQ and Economic Success*, University of Rhode Island. 1.

<sup>233</sup> <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/ecn/starkey/ECN386%20-Race,Gender,%20Class/raceclassiq.pdf> May 12, 2013

<sup>234</sup> R. M. Hughes quoted in “The S. A. T. C.,” *The Crisis*, November 1918. 7.

<sup>235</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 430.

<sup>236</sup> Du Bois, “Young,” *The Crisis*, March 1916. 242.

<sup>237</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 115.

<sup>238</sup> Liberian government quoted in “Young,” *The Crisis*, March 1916. 242.

<sup>239</sup> Du Bois, “Hope,” *The Crisis*, October 1918. 268.

<sup>240</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 114.



waiters, cooks or stokers.<sup>240</sup> As black men were denied preparation for combat, once they were called to fight the results were poor which gave another excuse to white leaders to complain about the efficiency of black soldiers. Neglected and mistreated, African American soldiers spent cold days in horrible conditions. Du Bois, revolted, published in May 1919 a black soldier's letter in *The Crisis* magazine:

The conditions are simply awful: mud everywhere, leaky tents and barracks and lack of sufficient and proper toilets. The men are worked quite hard, some at night and others in the day, rain or shine. As a consequence there are quite a number of sick men in our organization. Since our arrival here, the roads have been improved quite a bit (due to the work of the 92nd div.) and you do not have to wade in ankle deep mud.<sup>241</sup>

### **The giving up of the “special grievances”**

“Close Rank” was the most controversial article that Du Bois wrote for *The Crisis* if not his career. Published in July 1918, Du Bois told his readers that he supported America's involvement in World War I and encouraged them to do the same. The writer, Lee D. Baker said in his book entitled *From Savage to Negro* that Du Bois would have had pressure from the N.A.A.C.P. to support the war but it could also have been a mark of gratitude toward Wilson “who broke his long silence on lynching and also began to commission Negro officers on a regular basis.”<sup>242</sup> Yet it was his insistence to put aside racial complaints for the duration of the war that shocked the black community.

We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy.<sup>243</sup>

Accusations were made saying that Du Bois would have written “Close Ranks” to have a commission as a captain in the Military Intelligence Bureau, which he denied.<sup>244</sup> Following this article, radical writers compared Du Bois's position to the conciliatory positions of Booker T. Washington,<sup>245</sup> which pushed “many of his most loyal followers to abandon him.”<sup>246</sup> Monroe Trotter, a friend from the Niagara Movement, said that Du Bois had “finally weakened,

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<sup>240</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 430.

<sup>241</sup> Du Bois, “Documents of the War,” *The Crisis*, May 1919. 20.

<sup>242</sup> Baker, *From Savage to Negro. Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*, 1998. 136.

<sup>243</sup> Du Bois, “Close Rank.” *The Crisis*, July 1918. 111. See the appendix p.79.

<sup>244</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 120-121.

<sup>245</sup> Huggings, “Harlem Renaissance” quoted in Baker, *From Savage to Negro. Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*, 1998. 136.

<sup>246</sup> “W. E. B. Du Bois | A Timeline.” *UMass Amherst Libraries*. <<http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/duboistimeline/>> May 12, 2013.

compromised, deserted the fight, and betrayed the cause of his race.”<sup>247</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois would go back on his words in 1930, saying that he should have not supported the intervention in the war.<sup>248</sup> Afraid that the readers would become reluctant of being member of the N.A.A.C.P. because of Du Bois's demand to give up the fight against discrimination in the United States, the N.A.A.C.P. wanted to make it clear that it was Du Bois's opinions not theirs. It was in November 1918 that the organization suppressed the “Editorial” and replaced it with another section called “Opinion of W. E. B. Du Bois.” From this date, William Du Bois was not the representative figure of the N.A.A.C.P. anymore.

### **May 1919, the controversial month of W. E. B. Du Bois**

No segregation or discrimination existed between the French and African American soldiers who were given helmets, weapons and food. Fighting alongside the French, the 369<sup>th</sup>, 371<sup>th</sup>, and the 372<sup>nd</sup> Regiments fought bravely in the front and were never defeated or giving up a comrade. Recognizing their courage and talents in combat the French asked for more African American soldiers to fight with them. The triumph of the 369<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the battles in Argonne Forest led French authorities to award them of France's highest military medal: the Croix de Guerre.<sup>249</sup> In “Soldiers” Du Bois published a letter from the Mayor of a French village revealing to Americans than black soldiers were recognized as equals over in Europe:

From the very day of its arrival, your regiment by its behavior and its military appearance, excited the admiration of us all. Of the sojourn of yourself and your colored soldiers amongst us, we will keep the best memory and remember your regiment as a picked one. From the beginning a real brotherhood was established between your soldiers and our people who are glad to welcome the gallant Allies of our France. Having learned to know them, the whole population holds them in great esteem and we all join in saying the best of them. I hope that the white troops replacing your regiment will give us equal satisfaction, but whatever their attitude may be, they cannot surpass your 349<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery.<sup>250</sup>

In May 1919 Du Bois decided to focus *The Crisis*'s content on African American soldiers. In addition to the “Opinion of W. E. B. Du Bois,” Du Bois wrote an additional article entitled “Documents of the War.” When Du Bois visited the black troops in France and collected information concerning black soldiers in France, he emphasized on the importance to remind the readers that it was “American and not French opinion.” Once the French Ministry learned about the documents they ordered “the copies to be collected and burned” but it was too late and Du Bois published them in *The Crisis*. In March 1951 Du Bois recalled this famous 1919 May number in his

<sup>247</sup> Trotter quoted in Hine, *op. cit.*, 432.

<sup>248</sup> Du Bois quoted in Hine, *op. cit.*, 432.

<sup>249</sup> Seaberg, *The Negro in American History*, 1968. 54.

<sup>250</sup> Du Bois, “Soldiers,” *The Crisis*, November 1918. 8.

essay named *Editing The Crisis*:

I was in the office of Blaise Diagne, a black Senegalese, French Under-Secretary of State of Colonies. Diagne did not like white Americans. "Did you see," he stormed, "what the American Mission told the French about the way Negroes should be treated?" Then he showed me the official document. I read it and sat very still. Then I said, as carelessly as possible, "Would it be possible to obtain a copy of this?" "Take that," said Diagne.

Having the precious document, the problem was what to do with it. . . . I handed [a friend] the document sealed, neglecting to say what dynamite was in it. The CRISIS office and NAACP officials read it and dropped it until I returned. I published it in May, 1919. The Post Office promptly held the CRISIS up in the mails. But it proved too hot for them; if the Government held it that would be acknowledging its authorship. They let it go. We sold 100,000 copies!<sup>251</sup>

In the documents white Americans warned the French that black soldiers were dangerous and should not fight next to them. Yet the French still wanted to treat black soldiers as their equals as long as they were doing a good job at the front. Learning this indulgence from the French, American leaders took it as an insult and disrespect of their American values. They were afraid that the contact to the French would encourage the Negro to ask for more recognition, social equality and respect in America. Following these complains, the French were asked not to be too close to black soldiers, so they would not hurt America's feelings and pride.<sup>252</sup> A request was written by the white Commanding Officer of the 372<sup>nd</sup> Infantry to get rid of all black officers because of their lack of initiatives and their negligence of "the welfare of their men." "Mutual confidence" could not be achieved between the two races.<sup>253</sup>

In the article named "History" Du Bois announced to his readers that *The Crisis* would publish three volumes of a "complete history of the Negro in war."<sup>254</sup> When Du Bois heard some critics respond "the Negro officer is a failure," it was imperative for the editor of *The Crisis* to prove the opposite and "fix in history the status of our Negro troops." Full of indignation, Du Bois published a month later "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man in the Great War," a 26-page essay in which he revealed everything about the mistreatment of black men at the front as well as their successful achievements.

After having received the Croix de Guerre and being treated as equals by the French, W. E. B. Du Bois was hoping that it would influence the United States to give the same treatment and recognition to their African Americans citizens. Yet once the war was over black soldiers went back to the United States on segregated boats. At their arrival newspapers such as the *Milwaukee Sentinel* published the lines: "Those two colored regiments fought well, and it calls for special recognition.

<sup>251</sup> Du Bois, "Editing The Crisis," March 1951 quoted in *The Crisis Reader*. xxix-xxx.

<sup>252</sup> Linard quoted in "Documents of the War," *The Crisis*, May 1919. 16-17.

<sup>253</sup> Du Bois, "Documents of the War," *The Crisis*, May 1919. 18-20.

<sup>254</sup> Du Bois, "History," *The Crisis*, May 1919. 11-13.

Is there no way of getting a cargo of watermelons over there?"<sup>255</sup> Seeing that black soldiers were still victim of racism made Du Bois realize that being loyal was not going to give African Americans recognition. Back in *The Crisis* office, Du Bois wrote "Returning Soldiers" in which he let his readers know about his disillusionment concerning the treatment given to the black soldiers after their return from the front. "We are returning from war!" said Du Bois, fighting for democracy but African Americans were coming back to: "lynching, disfranchisement, caste, brutality and devilish insult." Du Bois was devastated to see that America did not learn from this war and showed his rage for his country in writing these lines:

This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land.  
It *lynches*.  
It *disfranchises* its own citizens.  
It encourages *ignorance*.  
It *steals* from us.  
It *insults* us.  
This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which we fought! . . . But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that war is over.<sup>256</sup>

The claiming of the special grievances could start again. In a last call of despair, Du Bois called his readers to fight in a war that he judged fair: the war for democracy, against racism in the United States:

We return.  
We return from fighting.  
We return fighting.  
Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.<sup>257</sup>

The early 1920s became the time when scientific racism achieved an important level.<sup>258</sup> After the war started in Europe and the release of *The Birth of a Nation*, Colonel William Joseph Simmons judged that 1915 was time "for the Klan to ride again" in order to "fulfill a new mission for humanity's good." To protect the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant civilization from other races and defend pure Americanism and White Supremacy. He believed that only white men should be in control of the country not other races. The Klan increased its members during the war but became more and more influential during the postwar period with 500,000 to 700,000 members.<sup>259</sup> In 1916 Madison Grant, an American lawyer, wrote *The Passing of the Great Race*, warning white Americans of the threat of inferior people such as blacks and immigrants. Madison Grant "was

<sup>255</sup> *Milwaukee Sentinel* quoted in Hine, *op. cit.*, 432.

<sup>256</sup> Du Bois, "Returning Soldiers," *The Crisis*, May 1919. 14. See the appendix pp.80-81.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> Hine, *The African American Odyssey*, 2010. 458.

<sup>259</sup> Cook, *Ku Klux Klan Secrets Exposed*, 1922. 25-26.

certainly one of the most powerful racists this country has produced,” said Gossett in *Race*.<sup>260</sup> As *The Birth of a Nation*, *The Passing of the Great Race* was very successful and had enthusiastic reviews from American newspapers.

The growing discrimination, hatred and lynchings among the black community pushed them to leave the South and move to the North. More opportunities were offered to black people with the development of new industrial jobs.<sup>261</sup> The Great Migration started in 1916 but achieved important numbers in 1918. Half a million of African Americans left the South between 1917 and 1918 and 3,000,000 left between 1916 and 1930.<sup>262</sup> The 1920s racism and disillusionment of the after-war led African American from the North to join black nationalism and the racial pride movement that Marcus Garvey was advocating whereas others were planning to hold Congresses to improve conditions of all black people from African descent.

### **III – Dr. Du Bois and Pan-Africanism in response to the 1920s racism**

#### **The opening of the first Pan-African Congress**

W. E. B. Du Bois's reason to go to Paris was not only to investigate on the treatment of African American soldiers in Europe but to open a Pan-African Congress. On his way back from Paris, Du Bois wrote for *The Crisis* an article named “My Mission,” in which he revealed his travel to France. Only the U.S. government and the N.A.A.C.P knew about Du Bois's mission in Europe when most Americans thought that he had deserted and given up his people. “I went to Paris because today the destinies of mankind center there,” said Du Bois. Thirty-two nations, people, races and associations were in Paris. “And yet some American Negroes actually asked WHY I went to help represent the Negro world in Africa and America and the Islands of the Sea.”<sup>263</sup> Arrived in Paris Du Bois urged to the American Peace Commission and asked frankly: “I want to call a Pan-African Congress.” As the answer was negative, Du Bois turned to the six colored deputies of the French Parliament. Hearing the request, the French prime minister, George Clémenceau, gave his permission. The resolutions of the Congress stated:

Wherever persons of African descent are civilized and able to meet the tests of surrounding culture, they shall be accorded the same rights as their fellow citizens; they shall not be denied on account of race or color a voice in their own Government, justice before the courts and economic and social equality according to ability and desert.

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<sup>260</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 353-354.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.* 339.

<sup>262</sup> Seaberg, *op. cit.*, 45.

<sup>263</sup> Du Bois, “My Mission,” *The Crisis*, May 1919. 7.

Whenever it is proven that African natives are not receiving just treatment at the hands of any State or that any State deliberately excludes its civilized citizens or subjects of Negro descent from its body politic and cultural, it shall be the duty of the League of Nations to bring the matter to the attention of the civilized world.<sup>264</sup>

With this first Congress W. E. B. Du Bois was known as the theoretician and founder of Pan-Africanism. The Pan-African Congress became “an important symbol,” raising new consciousness among people and restored William Du Bois's reputation after the controversy of “Close Rank.”<sup>265</sup>

### **The founding father of Pan-Africanism**

At its beginning, Pan-Africanism was only an event of solidarity among people of black decent but in 1900 Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian lawyer, organized a conference at Westminster Hall, London, to protest against European imperialism. According to Du Bois, the word 'Pan-Africanism' would have found its roots during this meeting. Yet, nobody could forget that it was Du Bois who used Williams's Pan-African policies and expanded them from 1919 to 1945.<sup>266</sup>

After 1919, the Pan-African Congress was organized “as a permanent body” under the presidency of Blaise Diagne and Du Bois as secretary.<sup>267</sup> The N.A.A.C.P. had financed the first Congress, which hosted “57 delegates from 15 countries where over 85,000,000 Negroes and persons of African descent dwell;”<sup>268</sup> and “underwrote the call for the second,” said Du Bois. The editor wanted to encourage African Americans to be closer to their African origins. He announced in his “Opinion of W. E. B. Du Bois” that a second Pan-African Conference would be held on September 1921 under the lead of Blaise Diagne and invited “all Negro organizations interested in the peoples of African descent” to participate.<sup>269</sup> Associations as the N.A.A.C.P., the African Political Organization and the Native Congress of South Africa will attend this event.

At first this action will probably include a demand for political rights, for economic freedom—especially in relation to the land—for the abolition of slavery, peonage and caste, and for freer access to education.<sup>270</sup>

130 delegates from Africa and the United States attended the Second Congress in 1921. Following this event, Du Bois published his “Declaration to the World” in which he asked white people to give equal rights to black people. Two other Congresses took place in London in 1923 and

<sup>264</sup> Du Bois, “My Mission,” *The Crisis*, May 1919. 8.

<sup>265</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 126.

<sup>266</sup> Padmore, *Panafricanisme ou communisme ?*, 1961. 129-130.

<sup>267</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>268</sup> Du Bois, “Pan-Africa,” *The Crisis*, March 1921. 198.

<sup>269</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*, 101.

<sup>270</sup> Du Bois, “Pan-Africa,” *The Crisis*, March 1921. 199.

New York in 1927 with 208 delegates.<sup>271</sup> Pan-Africanism was launched.

Born in a plantation of Virginia, Robert R. Moton was also victim of discrimination but made his way to Hampton Institute where he met Booker T. Washington. In 1915, after Washington's death, Moton became the principal of Tuskegee Institute.<sup>272</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois had invited him to be a member of the Niagara Movement in 1905. The two men were close friends but they became even closer with their travel to Paris in 1919. Moton was a black man who adopted a more conciliatory relationship with the whites contrary to Du Bois who reproached him not to protest against injustice but being too silent. Yet it never prevented the two men from staying good friends as it never prevented Du Bois to criticize Moton bitterly when the two had different opinions.<sup>273</sup> Du Bois suspected Moton of “surrendering our rights and compromising with our enemies. The editorial pages of *The Crisis* attacked him without mercy.”<sup>274</sup>

Once they arrived in Paris and learned about the mistreatment of black soldiers, the two men reacted differently. Du Bois, revolted, led an investigation to publish the story of black soldiers into *The Crisis* whereas Moton tried quietly to persuade white officers that rumors about black soldiers were unfounded and wrong. Moton did not encourage black soldiers to expect too much upon their return to America<sup>275</sup> as president Wilson asked him to say. In an article entitled “Robert R. Moton,” Du Bois accused the man of having “rushed around as fast as possible,” taking “no time to investigate or inquire” black troops' conditions, refusing to “speak for the black world” at the Peace Conference in Paris but “rushed to catch his boat in order to be present at the Tuskegee Conference.” He also accused Moton of having never “return[ed] to Paris or to the Pan-African Congress, which he said he favored and promised to support.”<sup>276</sup> Du Bois ended this article testifying his disappointment of Moton: “No one questions the personal integrity of Robert Russa Moton or his kindly disposition, but no one, friend or foe, can look these facts in the face and not feel bitter disappointment.”<sup>277</sup> Following this article, Moton wrote a letter to Du Bois, expressing his disappointment of not having talked to him before publishing the article in *The Crisis*. A scholar named Matthews said that Du Bois was “a petty, self-serving, uncharitable, and disloyal man, wholly unsuited for race leadership.”<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Decraene, *Le Panafricanisme*, 1976. 23-24.

<sup>272</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 132-134.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-132.

<sup>274</sup> Du Bois, “Moton of Hampton and Tuskegee,” 1940 quoted in Wolters, *op. cit.*, 132.

<sup>275</sup> Wolters, *op. cit.*, 131-136.

<sup>276</sup> Du Bois, “Robert R. Moton,” *The Crisis*, May 1919. 9-10.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>278</sup> Du Bois, “My Mission,” *The Crisis*, May 1919. 8.

## W. E. B. Du Bois versus Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A.

*When it comes to Mr. Garvey's industrial and commercial enterprises there is more ground for doubt and misgiving than in the matter of his character.*<sup>279</sup>

W. E. .B. Du Bois in *The Crisis*, January 1921.

While Du Bois was developing Pan-Africanism without violence, another man gave another vision of how black people should act, Marcus Garvey. Born in Jamaica in 1885, Garvey's goal was to achieve a total emancipation of the colonized black people. After World War I Garvey launched a popular black movement in Harlem to collect money and created the Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) in 1914 in order to unite all black people in one country and promote racial pride.<sup>280</sup> In 1921, Du Bois quoted the U.N.I.A.'s goals in an article named "Marcus Garvey:"

"To establish a Universal Confraternity among the race"; "to promote the spirit of race pride and love"; "to administer to and assist the needy"; "to strengthen the imperialism of independent African States"; "to conduct a world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse."<sup>281</sup>

Marcus Garvey recommended all black people to return to their motherland, Africa which gave birth to the creation of the steamship company, the Black Star Line in 1919.<sup>282</sup> Du Bois's opinion on Garvey between 1920 and 1921 was very moderate. In the 1920 article entitled "Marcus Garvey" Du Bois introduced Garvey and the U.N.I.A. to his readers saying that he was "an honest and sincere man with a tremendous vision, great dynamic force, stubborn determination" and also "an extraordinary leader of men. Thousands of people believe in him. He is able to stir them with singular eloquence and the general run of his thought is of a high plane."<sup>283</sup> Yet he quickly questioned the feasibility of Garvey's philosophy and goals: "Is it an honest, sincere movement? Are its industrial and commercial projects business like and effective? Are its general objects plausible and capable of being carried out?"<sup>284</sup> Du Bois was against investing in the Black Star Line, saying that Garvey was using fraudulent methods:

He has been charged with dishonesty and graft. . . . He is dictatorial, domineering, sordinately (sic) vain and very suspicious. He cannot get on with his fellow-workers. He has had endless law suits. . . . The great difficulty with him is that he has absolutely no business sense, no flair for real organization and his general objects are so shot through with bombast and exaggeration that it is difficult to pin them down for careful examination.<sup>285</sup>

<sup>279</sup> Du Bois, "Marcus Garvey," *The Crisis*, January 1921. 112.

<sup>280</sup> Weinstein, Gatell, *The Segregation Era, 1863-1954: a Modern Reader*, 1970. 146-147.

<sup>281</sup> The U.N.I.A. quoted in Du Bois, "Marcus Garvey," *The Crisis*, December 1920. 58.

<sup>282</sup> Hine, *The African American Odyssey*, 2010. 458.

<sup>283</sup> Du Bois, "Marcus Garvey," *The Crisis*, December 1920. 60. See the appendix pp.82-83.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*



In the “Marcus Garvey” article of January 1921, W. E. B. Du Bois went straight to the point concerning his doubts about Marcus Garvey's organization, the U.N.I.A. and the Black Star Line, predicting its bankruptcy: Garvey's “financial methods are so essentially unsound that unless he speedily revises them the investors will certainly get no dividends and worse may happen.”<sup>286</sup>

Garvey is a sincere, hardworking idealist; he is also a stubborn, domineering leader of the mass; he has worthy industrial and commercial schemes but he is an inexperienced business man. His dreams of Negro industry, commerce and the ultimate freedom of Africa are feasible; but his methods are bombastic, wasteful, illogical and ineffective and almost illegal.<sup>287</sup>

Marcus Garvey also founded his own Church, the African Orthodox Church. He truly believed that blacks and whites had two different destinies and encouraged black people to be self-sufficient. While white racism was affecting black Americans, Marcus Garvey was the image of black racism toward whites and mulattoes. Yet Marcus Garvey remained very popular among the black population even after his arrest.<sup>288</sup> Arrested in 1922 for fraud, Marcus Garvey was condemned to five years of prison at the great satisfaction of Du Bois who did not hesitate to write an article entitled “The Black Star Line” about Garvey's arrest, exposing his dishonest business practices.<sup>289</sup>

During the 1920s Du Bois was becoming more and more committed in his “Opinion.” After Booker T. Washington's death he found in Marcus Garvey another opponent. Marcus Garvey, who focused on the masses, rejected the notion of the Talented Tenth and mocked the N.A.A.C.P. He considered Du Bois as an enemy of the black race, “a lazy, dependent mulatto” whereas Du Bois described Garvey as “a little fat black man, ugly but with intelligent eyes and big head,”<sup>290</sup> who was “the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and the world. . . . either a lunatic or a traitor.”<sup>291</sup> Du Bois wrote for *The Crisis* the article “A Lunatic and A Traitor” to convince Americans of the danger that Marcus Garvey represented for America. He also revealed in this article that following his first article on Garvey, he received threats from the man and his followers. Du Bois added that one of his friends advised him not to publish this article for fear of being assassinated, but Du Bois still published it and condemned anybody who supported or defended Garvey.

During the same year of the creation of the Pan-African Congress, the Ku Klux Klan was becoming stronger; murders and lynchings were increasing in the United States.<sup>292</sup> In 1919 twenty-

<sup>286</sup> Du Bois, “Marcus Garvey,” *The Crisis*, January 1921. 113.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>288</sup> Decraene, *op. cit.*, 16, 18.

<sup>289</sup> Du Bois, “The Black Star Line,” *The Crisis*, September 1922. 210-214.

<sup>290</sup> Garvey and Du Bois quoted in Hine, *op. cit.*, 459.

<sup>291</sup> Du Bois, “A Lunatic and A Traitor,” *The Crisis*, May 1924. 8.

<sup>292</sup> Du Bois, *Dust of Dawn* rephrased in Padmore, *Panafricanisme ou communisme ?* 1961. 137.

five race riots occurred in the states of Nebraska, Illinois, Arkansas, Maryland, Tennessee, South Carolina and Texas where hundreds of people were killed and thousands injured.<sup>293</sup> The N.A.A.C.P. increased its membership from 9,000 in 1916 to 90,000 in 1920 and Weldon Johnson, president of the organization, hired in 1918 Walter White as an assistant who would be Du Bois's next nemesis in the 1930s.<sup>294</sup>

By focusing on black soldiers and Pan-Africanism all over the world, Du Bois was putting aside the Negro American problem for a time. Du Bois was giving up the mass population of African Americans that he was defending in the first years of *The Crisis* and decided to focus more on the elite, soldiers and all black populations of the world. The N.A.A.C.P. recalled to Du Bois not to forget that the main issue was to improve African Americans' conditions and fight for the social equality and equal rights at home. Yet Du Bois still received many letters from his fans praising him for his articles of *The Crisis*. Robert C. Barnes wrote in support of the May issue of 1919 concerning the conditions of black soldiers and Du Bois' article "Return Soldiers" referring it as "the most complete expression of the mental attitude of the Negro as he stands before the Oate (sic) of Democracy for which he willingly made the supreme sacrifice."<sup>295</sup> Most readers were angry at Du Bois concerning the "Close Ranks" episode and wrote him protests. Other readers such as Joseph O. Glenn asked Du Bois to write another article in which he could "show to the world that you have not lost faith in the idea that our cause is the cause of democracy itself."<sup>296</sup> "Close Rank" led some black Americans to turn to Marcus Garvey. Du Bois had a divided audience concerning his article on Garvey. While some were praising Du Bois for his criticism of the Jamaican man,<sup>297</sup> others questioned the negative vision he had against him.<sup>298</sup> After the controversies of the 1920s the reputation of Du Bois was tarnished and would not improve with time but he still remained the editor of *The Crisis*.

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<sup>293</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 433.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 455.

<sup>295</sup> Barnes, Robert C.. *Letter from Robert C. Barnes to W. E. B. Du Bois*, May 16, 1919.

<sup>296</sup> Glenn, Joseph O.. *Letter from Joseph O. Glenn to the Crisis*, July 25, 1918.

<sup>297</sup> *Letter from unidentified correspondent to W. E. B. Du Bois*, December 19, 1920.

<sup>298</sup> *Letter from unidentified correspondent to W. E. B. Du Bois*, January 16, 1921.

## **PART 3**

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### **Editing *The Crisis* 1924-1934**

**From a social approach to a more economic one  
during the Interwar Era**

### **PART THREE – Du Bois's writings from 1925 to 1934: From a social approach to a more economic one during the Interwar Era**

By neglecting the common African Americans who were the majority of the black population, Du Bois was losing his popularity, especially in the N.A.A.C.P. But his fierce opinions did not stop here. The 1930s were the beginning of the end of Du Bois's career for *The Crisis*. The focus of this last part will shift to the controversial years that had heavy repercussions on his status as editor. Disappointed by the slowness of the protest movement for Black liberation and the increasing Depression, Du Bois turned to the Soviet Union adopting socialist and Marxist values. Challenging the Black Church, Du Bois's vision of segregation changed drastically questioning himself asking if segregation was inseparable from discrimination. Was it possible to abolish discrimination by accepting segregation?

#### **I – Du Bois's fight against the “Negro Church”**

##### **Introduction to the Black Church**

The Church has been the most important institution for the black community since the early days of slavery. Some said that they would have never survived white supremacy without the Church.<sup>299</sup> As one of the rare institutions to be free of white supervision, the Church was an escape for black people from their oppressive condition that white people imposed on them. In a chapter entitled “Of the Faith of the Fathers,” W. E. B Du Bois stated that “in the South, at least, practically every American Negro is a church member.”<sup>300</sup> In 1846 the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E. Church) had 296 congregations with 17,375 members in the United States and Canada. A majority of the black congregations were attending white churches, as black ministers and preachers were excluded to hold services, and had to sit in a separate section designed for colored people.<sup>301</sup> During Reconstruction, African Americans struggled in raising money to buy land and erect their own churches. The structures were wretched and shabby cabins, crudely floored, and poorly furnished with broken benches.<sup>302</sup> Yet despite the dreadful conditions of the institution, African Americans found compassion, comfort and charity in the Church. There, people were free to express themselves. They could sing spiritual songs testifying their suffering from white supremacy.<sup>303</sup> To Du Bois, three elements characterized the religion of black people: “the Preacher,

<sup>299</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 388.

<sup>300</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 118.

<sup>301</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 181-182, 225.

<sup>302</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 1998. 378.

<sup>303</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 304-306.

the Music, and the Frenzy.”<sup>304</sup>

The Music of Negro religion is that plaintive rhythmic melody, with its touching minor cadences, which, despite caricature and defilement, still remains the most original and beautiful expression of human life and longing yet born on American soil. Sprung from the African forests, where its counterpart can still be heard, it was adapted, changed, and intensified by the tragic soul-life of the slave, until, under the stress of law and whip, it became the one true expression of a people's sorrow, despair, and hope.<sup>305</sup>

During the sermons of black preachers, many parishioners abandoned themselves in excessive emotions, punctuating every sentences with an “Amen.” The ecstasy and laughing were ceding to shouting and crying once the preachers were talking about the harsh conditions of black people. During services mourners were shrieking, “sometimes violently throwing back themselves back on the benches, and some tearing off their clothes.”<sup>306</sup>

Finally the Frenzy of “Shouting,” when the Spirit of the Lord passed by, . . . varied in expression from the silent rapt countenance or the low murmur and moan to the mad abandon of physical fervor,—the stamping, shrieking, and shouting, the rushing to and fro and wild waving of arms, the weeping and laughing, the vision and the trance. . . . And so firm a hold did it have on the Negro, that many generations firmly believed that without this visible manifestation of the God there could be no true communion with the Invisible.<sup>307</sup>

Black churches were rare in the Deep South but once slavery was abolished African Americans started opening more churches with black ministers talking passionately with their heart. As black Americans did not have access to education, black preachers were often unlettered but it did not affect the content of their sermons, for they were the most powerful and meaningful messages toward black people. Of the black community, black preachers were the most powerful and influential member. Uneducated but excessively emotional, black preachers offered spiritual and moral guidance.<sup>308</sup>

The main theme of sermons was about the miserable condition of black people, ending with a appeal to God. They lack of education did not stifle their faith and love for God as they understood and related to Christ's devotion and suffering for his people. Black preachers judged that the most important duty was to prepare the people for the after-world, a place of redemption. Saving souls were their duty.<sup>309</sup> Du Bois knew that the southern African American readers of *The Crisis* “tended to have the strongest traditional allegiance to African American church leadership.”<sup>310</sup> He recognized previously Churches' efforts at conserving and promoting morals, “helping family life,”

<sup>304</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 116.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>306</sup> Litwack, *op. cit.*, 385.

<sup>307</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*, 116.

<sup>308</sup> Hine, *The African-American Odyssey*, 2010. 304-306.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>310</sup> Johnson, *W.E.B. Du Bois : toward agnosticism, 1868-1934*, 2008. 106.

and giving “the colored man his best business training.”<sup>311</sup> Yet many articles of the magazine were designed to offer reform programs of black Churches and its leaders.<sup>312</sup> In *The Souls of Black Folks*, Du Bois gave another vision of the preacher, describing him as a more educated man.

The Preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a “boss,” an intriguer, an idealist,—all these he is, and ever, too, the centre of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number. The combination of a certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness, of tact with consummate ability, gave him his preeminence, and helps him maintain it.<sup>313</sup>

Black leaders such as Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois wanted to reform the Church. They deplored unqualified preachers and the excesses of their sermons. Excessive emotionalism did not please Washington and Ida B. Wells who claimed that the role of the preacher was to uplift the present condition of black people instead of talking only about the after-life. The Church needed to revise its priority and focus more on the actual problems and injustices that the Negro were victims of.<sup>314</sup> Some black preachers opposed to encourage their parishioners to ask for more equality for fear of whites' repercussions but keep reminding them of remaining submissive to whites' authorities. In an 1912 article entitled “The Negro Church,” Du Bois wanted to get rid of “the noisy and unclean leaders of the thoughtless mob” and the Church, replacing them by “clean,” educated and thoughtful “apostles of service and sacrifice.” Qualified the leaders of the Church of “ill-trained,” “dishonest,” and “immoral” men spending money on their edifice, Du Bois claimed that the black Church was crying for “righteousness” and “reasonable men,” focusing on the real problem of the Negro. He thought that “men of scholarship” and “men of affairs” would suggest a more efficient program and would inspire the black congregation.<sup>315</sup>

To-day the church is still inveighing against dancing and theatre going, still blaming educated people for objecting to silly and empty sermons, boasting and noise, still building churches when people need homes and schools, and persisting in crucifying critics rather than realizing the handwriting on the wall.<sup>316</sup>

Members of the N.A.A.C.P. who were also members of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church were not happy with Du Bois's criticisms. Alexander Walters, a bishop of the A.M.E Zion Church and a member of the organization protested against Du Bois, saying that *The Crisis* should not express “such damaging remarks about African American religion and its churches.”<sup>317</sup> The N.A.A.C.P. of Baltimore also complained about the article stating that it led the association to

<sup>311</sup> Du Bois, “The Negro Church,” *The Crisis*, May 1912. 24.

<sup>312</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, 109.

<sup>313</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 116.

<sup>314</sup> Litwack, *op. cit.*, 386.

<sup>315</sup> Du Bois, “The Negro Church,” *The Crisis*, May 1912. 24. See the appendix pp.84-85.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

<sup>317</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, 112.

Court.<sup>318</sup> Du Bois's criticisms of the Church and its leaders already appeared in his 1897 essay "The Conservation of Races" and his 1903 essay "The Talented Tenth" in which he accuses African American preachers of being "ignorant and often immoral" men but admitted that it was a difficult problem to solve.<sup>319</sup>

Also used as schools, where people could meet new friends, the Negro church was a place where African Americans could find social activities.

The Negro church of to-day is the social centre of Negro life in the United States, and the most characteristic expression of African character. . . . This building is the central clubhouse of a community of a thousand or more Negroes. Various organizations meet here. . . . Entertainments, suppers, and lectures are held beside the five or six regular weekly religious services. Considerable sums of money are collected and expended here, employment is found for the idle. . . . and charity distributed.<sup>320</sup>

When Du Bois became editor of *The Crisis*, he did not publish many articles concerning religion or the Church. During each holiday season: Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving were punctuated with an article or a spiritual short story using religious language and imagery to reflect the conditions of African Americans concerning discrimination, particularly in political rights. Du Bois knew that he struck a chord with his readers, the religious southerners.<sup>321</sup> Phillip Luke Sinitiere, a visiting Assistant Professor of Sam Houston State University, said that "Christmas, for Du Bois, was not an occasion to reflect on the wonder of the Incarnation as a theological concept, but on its manifestation in the world, what he called "a divine idea—a veritable Son of God."<sup>322</sup>

During this time slavery abolitionist speakers such as Frederick Douglass were delivering speeches against racial oppression in churches. After the liberation of slaves, people still organized meetings and delivered speeches against Jim Crow laws and its racial discrimination, trying to find a way for equal rights.<sup>323</sup> Thus, black ministers had to choose between accommodation and protest. Some ministers did not want to challenge white supremacy and forbade their members to talk about it during services whereas others openly opposed white supremacy and encouraged black people to stand up for their rights and campaigned against lynching, racial segregation and discrimination. One of them was Bishop Henry Turner who, during his service, declared that the U.S. Constitution

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<sup>318</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, 113.

<sup>319</sup> Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," *The Negro Problem*, 1903 at *Teaching American History*.  
<<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-talented-tenth/>> February 2, 2013.

<sup>320</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903. 117

<sup>321</sup> Sinitiere, "Commemorating W.E.B. Du Bois and *The Crisis*." *The Readex Report*, November 2010 at  
<<http://www.readex.com/readex-report/commemorating-web-du-bois-and-crisis-reflections-religion-and-american-history>> 30 May 2013. W.E.B. Du Bois, *A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century*, [1968] 2007. 162-175.

<sup>322</sup> Sinitiere, "Commemorating W.E.B. Du Bois and *The Crisis*." *The Readex Report*, November 2010.

<sup>323</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 181-182, 225.

was “a dirty rag, a cheat, a libel, and ought to be spit upon by every Negro in the land.”<sup>324</sup> White people saw the black Church and its leaders as a threat. Consequently black churches were destroyed and burnt by the alarmed and revolted white population who intimidated, assaulted, and murdered black ministers. The reason for this violence was 'religiously' justified by some white churchmen who proclaimed that the Negro needed to know that his mission was to “serve the white race or die.”<sup>325</sup>

### **The debate of the Church and Religion**

Du Bois did not publish an apology in *The Crisis* concerning his article “The Negro Church” and never retracted himself on the subject. Instead, he returned to the attack with the two controversial articles entitled “Darrow” (June 1928) and “Religion of the Negro” (June 1931) in which he defended the famous agnostic lawyer Clarence Darrow, who claimed that religion was not reasonable, against the African American clergyman, Bishop Robert E. Jones. Du Bois showed previously his support in writing his praise on the lawyer:

Here is the man whose voice has been raised for righteousness in the face of flattery, money and fame. He has dared to use his unique genius to defend the rights of poor white labor and disfranchised Negroes. If religion and Christianity mean anything, they mean deeds and not the mere words and yet the black ministers of Washington are apparently more interested in the mouthing of creeds and the orthodoxy of men's beliefs than in the Christianity and unselfishness of their deeds. There is not a Negro church in the United States that ought not to throw wide its doors to Clarence Darrow and beg him to come in. He will criticize those churches and they ought to be criticized. He says frankly and openly what their own members say, namely: They are spending too much money for church edifices and not enough for the social uplift which Christianity stands for if it stands for anything.<sup>326</sup>

As racial discrimination was still inflicted upon black people, some came to doubt about the efficiency of prayers, asking questions such as: “You do so much for God, why doesn't He do something for you?”<sup>327</sup> The scholar Brian L. Johnson qualified Du Bois as an agnostic man, that is to say a person who does not believe in either the existence or the nonexistence of God. Did supporting Clarence Darrow make Du Bois an agnostic man? In June 1931, Du Bois invited the lawyer to write an article for *The Crisis* entitled “Religion of the Negro” in which the power of religion and the Church were questioned.

Every observer of the Negro knows that he spends too much of his meager income on the church. While tens of thousands are standing in bread lines, the contributions to extravagant churches go on. It is not easy for an outsider to see how any luxury or extravagance is

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<sup>324</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 388-389.

<sup>325</sup> Litwack, *op. cit.*, 390.

<sup>326</sup> Du Bois, “Darrow,” *The Crisis*, June 1928. 23 quoted in Johnson, 113-114.

<sup>327</sup> Litwack, *op. cit.*, 401.



needed for the worship of God. . . . Before he robs himself to increase the extravagance of the church, he should ask the simple question: What has his God and the church done for him?<sup>328</sup>

“The effects of this debate were far more disastrous than the 1912 episode,”<sup>329</sup> said Johnson. Following these articles, black newspapers reacted violently toward Du Bois and showed their disappointment toward him and the N.A.A.C.P. who forced Du Bois to cease such criticisms of the black Church and its leaders “until his final years as editor.”<sup>330</sup> Du Bois's eviction of the post of editor for *The Crisis* started to be mentioned in the office of the organization. The N.A.A.C.P.'s fear of losing their members was founded. Some readers did not accept Du Bois's criticisms of religion in *The Crisis*. In April 1931, J.J. Mulholland from New York wrote: “Remove my name from your mailing list. I am still interested in the movement but not in the atheism of Du Bois. This continual flaunting of his atheism has made THE CRISIS a menace to a Christian home, black or white.”<sup>331</sup> It was between February 1927 and January 1930 that the section “Opinion of W. E. B. Du Bois” was suppressed and replaced by “Postscript by W. E. B. Du Bois” situated in the last pages of the magazine.<sup>332</sup> The N.A.A.C.P. tried somehow to restrict Du Bois's writings concerning the Church, yet Du Bois was still the editor of the magazine and still had the power to chose the content of his articles and those who were invited to write for the magazine.

In the October 1933 article entitled “The Church and Religion” Du Bois kept writing about the Church, giving his conception of morality and ethics. He took this opportunity of writing this article to remind his readers not to confuse religion and the church. “Religion was the expression of the human quest for a deeper understanding of life,”<sup>333</sup> while the church was only an institution that had recourse to distrustful methods.

Critics of religion and of the church must distinguish rather carefully between the two. Religion is a theory of the ultimate constitution of the world, more particularly in its moral aspects, and as applied to questions of individual right and wrong. The church, on the other hand, is the organization which writes down and from time to time rewrites the exact religious belief which is prevalent and which carries out celebrations and methods of worship, particularly collects and spends money for its own organization and for certain religious and ethical objects.<sup>334</sup>

Challenging the Church was not the only controversy that Du Bois had to face during the 1930s. His last years as editor of *The Crisis* were also marked by his criticisms of the capitalist

<sup>328</sup> Clarence Darrow, “Religion of the Negro,” *The Crisis*, June 1931. 180 quoted in Johnson. 113.

<sup>329</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, 113.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>331</sup> Mulholland's letter in “Our Readers Say,” *The Crisis*, April 1931 in Sinitiere, “Commemorating W.E.B. Du Bois and *The Crisis*,” *The Readex Report*, 2010.

<sup>332</sup> The date of the first publication of “Postscript by W. E. B. Du Bois” is unknown as the issues of *The Crisis* between these two dates are missing.

<sup>333</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois <<http://www.webdubois.org/wdb-sources.html#TheCrisis>> May 29, 2013.

<sup>334</sup> Du Bois, “The Church and Religion,” *The Crisis*, October 1933. 236.

system of the United States which, for Du Bois, was increasing poverty among the African American community. The interwar period was very hard to go through for African Americans. The Ku Klux Klan had more power than ever before in the South but also in the North and those who fled the South could not escape the ravages and terror of the Klan and the race riots that were persisting between 1924 and 1934.

## **II. On the road to Marxism and Socialism**

### **The Great Depression and the victory of Democrats**

The Interwar period was marked by the Harlem Renaissance and its black artists from Harlem who were expressing their feeling of oppression and sorrow through their poems, short stories, essays and songs. For some black artists, the Harlem Renaissance was the opportunity to put an end to the race problem whereas others knew it would not last for a long time as Langston Hughes said in his autobiography.<sup>335</sup> Hughes was right: the Harlem Renaissance was dying with the coming Great Depression. Moving to the North in order to find better opportunities was not going to last neither with the passing of laws “forbidding factories and other places of business to employ Negroes to work alongside whites” in states such as South Carolina and the financial crisis of 1929.<sup>336</sup>

The crash of 1929, which occurred on October 29 in the Wall Street financial district, plunged America in the deepest abyss that she will ever know and hit black citizens the hardest. Banks and factories were closing progressively leaving urban and rural Americans unemployed. “The last to be hired, the first to be fired” was the adage of the 1930s, representative of the chronic instability that the working sector had to face. In January 1930, 3,216,000 Americans were unemployed, increasing its number to 13,689,000 in March 1933.<sup>337</sup> More than sixty-five per cent of black people were unemployed in Atlanta, Georgia in 1935, eighty per cent for Norfolk, Virginia.<sup>338</sup> Black southerners were forced to leave their land with the decrease of cotton prices which dropped from eighteen cents to six cents a pound in 1933.<sup>339</sup> African Americans were out of money, living under the threat of starvation and the government had to reduce or suppress heat and hot water, which lowered the morale and health of the population at times committing suicide.<sup>340</sup>

<sup>335</sup> Hughes, *The Big Sea, an Autobiography*, 1963 quoted in Seaberg, *op. cit.*, 68-69.

<sup>336</sup> Gossett, *op. cit.*, 277.

<sup>337</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 480.

<sup>338</sup> John Hope Franklin quoted in Seaberg, *op. cit.*, 66.

<sup>339</sup> The South was still dependent of the cotton industry in the 1930s. Hine, *op. cit.*, 481.

<sup>340</sup> The Urban League magazine, *Opportunity*, February 1931 quoted in Seaberg, *op. cit.*, 69-71.

Everybody was applying for welfare, but not everybody could benefit from the aid. Americans found themselves in so much debt and loans that some had to sell their house and lived in crowded tenements with common bathing facilities while others became homeless.<sup>341</sup>

The N.A.A.C.P., under the lead of Walter White as secretary, kept fighting against discrimination and succeeded in promoting the political status to black men such as Oscar DePriest who became the first black man to serve in Congress.<sup>342</sup> The election of 1932 was a radical change in the life of black people who had lost faith in the Republican Party and decided to vote for the Democratic candidate, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who is still recognized for some scholars as “the most attractive President, for Negro citizens, since the Civil War.”<sup>343</sup> Yet the person who committed herself toward the race problem more than FDR was his wife Eleanor who often played the role of mediator between the president and the complaints of black people, including the N.A.A.C.P. She recognized what Du Bois was hoping for at the return of black soldiers, their loyalty and devotion to their country and was the one to pressure the president to pass the anti-lynching bill of 1935. The Roosevelts were very popular among African Americans and committed more than any the previous Democratic and Republican Presidents to the Negro problem.

Roosevelt came to power when the country was in a state of panic; he was aware of “the dark realities of the moment”<sup>344</sup> and wanted to put America back on its feet with a series of reforms called the New Deal.<sup>345</sup> In order to cure the sick economy, Roosevelt claimed that “Our greatest primary task is to put people to work,”<sup>346</sup> to “demand for organization, administration, and management [and] invoked a larger democracy.”<sup>347</sup> Intellectuals such as Du Bois argued that Roosevelt's policy built more walls of segregation and reinforced the persisting racism even if it did grant more political power to African Americans.

Although the New Deal was aimed to help white and black Americans, Democratic local governments in addition to the lack of black representatives in politics assisted whites first.<sup>348</sup> Even before FDR's reforms local governments—under Herbert Hoover's presidency—were unable to provide relief for black people during the crisis. “It is foolish to deny the imperfections and shortcomings of the New Deal. The trend has always been toward a kind of government which has meaning for the people. The New Deal could not perform miracles. It could not overturn entrenched

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<sup>341</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 482.

<sup>342</sup> Seaberg, *op. cit.*, 66.

<sup>343</sup> Weinstein, *op. cit.*, 219.

<sup>344</sup> Roosevelt, *First Inaugural Address*, March 4, 1933 <<http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres49.html>> May 23, 2013.

<sup>345</sup> The first New Deal was from 1933 to 1934. The second one was from 1935 to 1938.

<sup>346</sup> Roosevelt, *op. cit.*

<sup>347</sup> Hofstadter, *The Age of reform : from Bryan to F.D.R.*, 1955. 302.

<sup>348</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 490.

prejudices,” said Roy Wilkins, assistant secretary of the N.A.A.C.P.<sup>349</sup>

During his first term as president, “FDR had captured the admiration and affection of the Negro people and, with that, their votes.”<sup>350</sup> Roosevelt's administration was giving more importance to the voice of African Americans thanks to the First Lady who committed herself to the appointment of black people in the government. In 1933, Roosevelt appointed black individuals such as Mary McLeod Bethune, William H. Hastie, Robert Weaver and Ira De A. Reid in his administration to work on African American cases. Under the lead of Mary McLeod Bethune, they were known as the Roosevelt's “black cabinet,” also called the “New Deal race specialists.”<sup>351</sup> Not only did the government give more opportunities to black people in politics but it also stressed its program on improving black education, a thing that never happened before. Black colleges received funds and an increase of employment in sectors such as architects and lawyers were finally available to black people. Agencies such as the Federal Employment Relief Administration (FERA) tried to help African Americans to find new jobs whereas the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) was designed to financially help farmers to produce less, suppressing the excess of livestock.

Many other programs were designed to uplift the economy but the government realized that it was more difficult to actuate.<sup>352</sup> The first New Deal which had been criticized by Du Bois did not mainly focus its reforms on equal benefits contrary to the second one. Jobs went first to white men, the climate of distrust toward business practices of the 1920s was still persisting at that time<sup>353</sup> and housing projects were still in majority segregated: “One-eighth of the federal housing projects planned before the end of 1935 were in mixed neighborhoods. Approximately one-half of them were in Negro slum areas.”<sup>354</sup>

### **Marxism and Socialism, the solution for the Depression and its racial discrimination?**

As the Great Depression worsened, many adopted radical criticisms of American capitalism such as the Socialists and the Communists who gave their support to African Americans concerning unemployment and job discrimination from white labor. During the 1930s Du Bois drastically moved to the left, proclaiming socialist ideas as the ultimate solution to the race problem of African Americans in a Marxist tone of voice.

<sup>349</sup> Wilkins, “The Roosevelt Record,” *The Crisis*, November 1940. 343.

<sup>350</sup> Weinstein, *op. cit.*, 220.

<sup>351</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 491.

<sup>352</sup> Weinstein, *op. cit.*, 221.

<sup>353</sup> Hofstadter, *The Age of reform : from Bryan to F.D.R.*, 1955. 312.

<sup>354</sup> Weinstein, *op. cit.*, 224.

Capitalism is an economic system in which private property and businesses produce and sell goods in order to increase their capital, make profits, and thus expand their industries.<sup>355</sup> The major figure who contested capitalism was the German philosopher, historian, and economist, Karl Marx (1818-1883). He defined capitalism as a system of production that brings certain social classes to power like the bourgeoisie and poverty for others. According to him, capitalism caused the exploitation of men by men as the working classes did not benefit from the profits. This was the beginning of the political, economic and social ideology named Marxism which was mainly an analysis of capitalism by Marx and Engels. Karl Marx said that society was based on the history of *class struggle*, a political and economic conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (the working class) because of their different economic interests. Exploited and oppressed by the bourgeoisie who owned the capital of industries, the proletarians, according to Marx, needed to be conscious of the different conditions between social classes and revolt themselves to overthrow the bourgeoisie and capitalism, which he called *class struggle*.<sup>356</sup>

Du Bois recognized in Marx's ideas “a living and insistent truth,” that the conflict between exploiter and exploited was real and alive in the United States. Du Bois pointed out that black Americans were “living in a capitalist democracy founded on white supremacy.”<sup>357</sup> Opposed to capitalism, Du Bois accused it of increasing racism and of being responsible for “poverty, crime, delinquency, and indigence.”<sup>358</sup>

When materials have been paid for and the wear and tear and machinery replaced, and wages paid, there remains a surplus value. This surplus value arises from labor and is the difference between what is actually paid laborers for their wages and the market value of the commodities which the laborers produce. It represents, therefore, exploitation of the laborer, and this exploitation, inherent in the capitalistic system of production, is the cause of poverty, of industrial crises, and eventually of social revolution.<sup>359</sup>

Black radical intellectuals became more attracted to Marxism during the twentieth century. Du Bois's first trip to the Soviet Union in 1926 made him come back to the United States as an ardent admirer of the goals of Marxism and the social and economic progress in the Soviet Union.<sup>360</sup> In “Karl and the Negro,” Du Bois defined Karl Marx as “the greatest figure in the science of modern industry” who “knew something about American Negroes” and “sympathized with their problem.”<sup>361</sup> Du Bois's Marxist language and thought began to appear in his 1915 work entitled *The Negro*, in which he accused white capital of employing “race differences as a rationalization of

<sup>355</sup> Kerignard, *100 fiches d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, “Le Capitalisme,” 2009. 206.

<sup>356</sup> Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 2007. 120-122.

<sup>357</sup> Lewis, W. E. B. *Du Bois, 1919-1963: The Fight for Equality and the American Century*, 2001. 307.

<sup>358</sup> Du Bois, “Marxism and the Negro Problem,” *The Crisis*, May 1933. 103-104, 118.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>360</sup> Library Umass <<http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/duboistimeline/>> May 25, 2013.

<sup>361</sup> Du Bois, “Karl Marx and the Negro,” *The Crisis*, March 1933. 55.

exploitation, segregation, and subordination.”<sup>362</sup> Marx's ideology to uplift the working class inspired Du Bois to do the same with the black community. In “Marxism and the Negro Problem”<sup>363</sup> the notions of *class struggle* and exploitation were introduced in *The Crisis* by Du Bois who quoted the work of Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*.

That consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; That the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class – the proletariat – cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class – the bourgeoisie – without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction, and class struggles.<sup>364</sup>

The final goal of *class struggle*, for Marx, was to establish a classless society based on common ownership by way of socialism to then become a communist society.<sup>365</sup>

Socialism had been defined to transform the social and economic conditions engendered by industrial capitalism and to provide a more human economic system.<sup>366</sup> It wanted to eradicate the harsh and inhuman conditions in which the working class was working by reforming private property with collectivism. Proclaiming a classless society, the Socialists fought for equal distribution of wealth and for the improvement of wages and working conditions. They also laid the responsibility of unemployment on capitalism and offered to resolve it by promoting trade unions.<sup>367</sup> Believing in the power of community and not individualism, they rejected self-interest but advocated solidarity. Instead of encouraging capitalist competition, the Socialists thought that co-operation (working together) would lead workers to achieve mutual benefits.<sup>368</sup> For the Marxists, socialism was a transition between the abolition of capitalism and achievement of communism whereas for those who were not Marxists, socialism was aimed to reform the economic system and achieve social justice.<sup>369</sup>

Many variations of socialism exist, they all have the will to abolish private property and gain social justice. Two groups can be defined: the Revolutionary Socialists with the Marxists and the Communists versus the Reformists with the Social Democrats. The Marxists advocated a complete abolition of capitalism—a system focused on sales and profit—and encouraged class struggle. The Communists were even more extreme for they wanted to overthrow capitalism, private property and

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<sup>362</sup> Meier, *op. cit.*, 204.

<sup>363</sup> Du Bois, “Marxism and the Negro Problem,” *The Crisis*, May 1933. 103-104, 118. See the appendix pp.86-88.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>365</sup> Heywood, *op. cit.*, 120-123.

<sup>366</sup> Kerignard, *100 fiches d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, “Le Capitalisme,” 2009. 206.

<sup>367</sup> Heywood, *op. cit.*, 100.

<sup>368</sup> Calvez, *Socialismes et marxismes*, 1998. 106.

<sup>369</sup> Heywood, *op. cit.*, 120-123.

the State (and they often referred to Lenin.) They both promoted a classless society based on “a common ownership of wealth” whereas the Social Democrats wanted to keep the role of the State, reform and “humanize” capitalism.<sup>370</sup>

In the early years of *The Crisis*, Du Bois noticed the economic discrimination inflicted on African Americans which influenced him to write in support of the Socialists and asking for the participation of black Americans in their movement. The new theme that was appearing in the pages of *The Crisis* during the end of the 1920s was Du Bois's interest in socialism and the labor movement. In his “Postscript” of July 1929, Du Bois accused the American Federation of Labor “of excluding Negroes from local union” and published a request from the N.A.A.C.P. for the integration of black Americans into unions<sup>371</sup>

We [the N.A.A.C.P.] propose that this Commission undertake:

1. To find out the exact attitude and practice of national labor bodies and local unions toward Negroes and of Negro labor toward union.
2. To organize systematic propaganda against racial discrimination on the basis of these facts at the labor meetings, in local assemblies and in local unions.<sup>372</sup>

Du Bois seemed to give more importance to the actions of black workers and to interracial working class solidarity as a solution to discrimination than to the Talented Tenth's concept that he was advocating during the 1920s.<sup>373</sup> In the 1930 article named “Our Economic Peril,” Du Bois encouraged black people to participate and invest in consumers' co-operation in order to achieve economic and social gain and reject private profit.<sup>374</sup> In the same tone he wrote the articles “Our Economic Future” (May 1928), “Business as Public Service” (November 1929), and “The Right to Vote” (April 1933), in which he promoted economic independence with co-operative enterprises in the interests of workers' rights.<sup>375</sup>

During the 1930s the Communist Party encouraged black Americans to establish their own industries and to work independently from other groups. Yet the N.A.A.C.P. was not favorable to working with the Communists. The 1931 case, the Scottsboro Boys—where nine boys were wrongly accused of rape in Alabama—increased the tensions between the N.A.A.C.P. and the Communists.<sup>376</sup> The popularity of the Party, who took the defense of the black suspects, was rising among the black community and forced Du Bois and the N.A.A.C.P. to let the Party be in charge of

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<sup>370</sup> Heywood, *op. cit.*, 99, 121.

<sup>371</sup> Du Bois, “The American Federation of Labor and the Negro,” *The Crisis*, July 1929 published in Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader*, 1995. 536.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 537.

<sup>373</sup> Meier, *op. cit.*, 203, 204.

<sup>374</sup> Du Bois, “Our Economic Peril,” *The Crisis*, March 1930. 101.

<sup>375</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, 121-122.

<sup>376</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 500.

the case. When eight of the nine black boys had been sentenced to death, the Communist Party appealed to the Court for a second trial which ended up with the release the accused.<sup>377</sup> Du Bois was impressed by all the efforts of the Communists to defend the boys but accused them in an article entitled “The Negro and Communism” of tarnishing the image of the N.A.A.C.P. during the Scottsboro case, presenting themselves as the only solution to African Americans' problems. Even though the N.A.A.C.P. worked some court cases with the Communists they tried not to be associated with them. For the Association and Du Bois, the Communists were unable to understand the extent of racism in the United States.<sup>378</sup>

### **The economic emancipation of the black labor**

In his last years as editor, Du Bois became more and more disillusioned with the protest movement among African Americans and his increasing radicalism to the left influenced a vast majority of black intellectuals to give up on him.<sup>379</sup> Tensions were increasing within the N.A.A.C.P. concerning *The Crisis's* publications. In January 1934, Du Bois published the editorial that led to his downfall as editor of the magazine. Criticizing the overemphasis on integration, he advocated economic nationalism, or a separate black economy.<sup>380</sup> As long as discrimination persisted Du Bois did not find any solution than encourage self-determination and the development of an independent black economy in the hope that it would “break the force of race prejudice” and solve the economic situation that black Americans had to face caused by the Depression.<sup>381</sup>

It is class-conscious working man uniting together who will eventually emancipate labor throughout the world. It is the race-conscious black men are cooperating together in his own institutions and movements who will eventually emancipate the colored race, and the great step ahead today is for the American Negro to accomplish his economic emancipation through voluntary determined cooperative effort.<sup>382</sup>

In another article entitled “Subsistence Homestead,” Du Bois encouraged African Americans to grow their own food.<sup>383</sup> His enthusiasm to build economic independence, in other words, economic segregation was interpreted for some as a favorable attitude toward segregation in all its aspect. Although Du Bois's advocacy of “voluntary segregation” as an economic strategy for African American workers and farmers led to criticism of black intellectuals. Du Bois did not retract his article and kept promoting a separatist economy for the rest of his tenure. To criticism Du Bois

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<sup>377</sup> Weinstein, *op. cit.*, 227.

<sup>378</sup> Du Bois, “The Negro and Communism,” *The Crisis*, September 1931 published in Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader*, 1995. 585-586.

<sup>379</sup> Seaberg, *op. cit.*, 22.

<sup>380</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 485.

<sup>381</sup> Du Bois quoted in Meier, *op. cit.*, 201.

<sup>382</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation,” *The Crisis*, January 1934. 20. See the appendix p.89.

<sup>383</sup> Du Bois, “Subsistence Homestead,” *The Crisis*, March 1934. 85.



would respond: “I am talking about conditions in 1934 and not in 1910. I do not care what I said in 1910 or 1810 or in B.C 700.”<sup>384</sup> The increasing segregation and discrimination of African Americans despite their devotion to their country seemed to have disheartened Du Bois and his fierce advocacy of integration. For the editor of *The Crisis*, the last solution to the economic crisis was to rescue themselves independently from white Americans.

### **III – Fighting segregation with “voluntary segregation”**

#### ***Jim Crow between the wars***

The Great Depression had driven African Americans into deeper poverty, brought an increase in lynchings, and *Jim Crow* laws expanded between the interwar period in transportation, services, and industry. In 1929 the city of Jacksonville, Florida passed laws to establish *Jim Crow* taxis which encouraged the city of Birmingham, Alabama to do the same in 1930.<sup>385</sup> Train, buses, taxis, air transportation including waiting rooms and toilets were now segregated.

The Great Depression began to debilitate the N.A.A.C.P. and *The Crisis* and caused tensions within the organization, especially between Du Bois and Walter White who had just been nominated as secretary of the organization. Financial problems caused by the Depression were threatening the suppression of posts in *The Crisis* and Du Bois was in the hot seat. His advocacy of economic segregation got stuck in Walter White's throat who asked Du Bois to go back on his words.<sup>386</sup> Du Bois settled accounts with the new leader of the N.A.A.C.P. in the “Postscript” of April 1934: “In the first place, Walter White is white. He has more more white companions and friends than colored.”<sup>387</sup> For Du Bois, Walter White was not competent enough to be in charge of the N.A.A.C.P.

*“I fight Segregation with Segregation, and I do not consider this compromise.*

*I consider it common sense.”*

W. E. B. Du Bois, “Segregation” in *The Crisis*, May 1934.

<sup>384</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation in the North.” *The Crisis*, April 1934. 115.

<sup>385</sup> Seaberg, *op. cit.*, 76.

<sup>386</sup> Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois, 1919-1963: The Fight for Equality and the American Century*, 2001. 336-337.

<sup>387</sup> Du Bois, *op. cit.*

## The question of segregation as being necessary

Since the founding of *The Crisis*, Du Bois had always written strong denunciations of racial segregation and discrimination, always springing the civil rights flagship. But over the years, seeing that the majority of white Americans were still not ready to abolish *Jim Crow* laws, Du Bois became tired of fighting for integration. In January 1934, Du Bois published his most controversial article of his whole career entitled “Segregation” in which he advocated voluntary segregation, abandoning all what he had been fighting for so many years.

The thinking colored people of the United States must stop being stampeded by the word segregation. . . . The experience in the United States has been that usually when there is racial segregation, there is also racial discrimination.

But the two things do not necessarily go together, and there should never be an opposition to segregation pure and simple unless that segregation does involve discrimination.<sup>388</sup>

What is important to understand is that Du Bois did not encourage black Americans to establish segregation but as they could not change whites' mentality on segregation, they should work more on the improvement of the unequal conditions that white authorities imposed to them. Praising self-organization that he judged “inevitable in 1934,”<sup>389</sup> Du Bois explained that his goal was to make the “separate-but-equal” decision from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) possible. He claimed that African Americans should not object to segregated housing as long as the facilities and surroundings were as equal as those of whites. Du Bois's new fight was clear: yes for racial segregation, no for racial discrimination. “The objection is not against the color of the pupils' or teachers' skin, but against the discrimination.”<sup>390</sup> “The same way in schools, there is no objection to schools attended by colored pupils and taught by colored teachers.”<sup>391</sup> Du Bois finally saw some good in the inevitable segregation, proclaiming that it was also an occasion for the black people to develop self-respect and racial pride. In the same tone, the article “Separation and Self-Respect” described the Negro school as “the best possible school” that was “effectively taught by well-trained” black teachers.<sup>392</sup> For Du Bois, self-respect could not be achieved by African Americans without going through segregation and making the best of it.

Following the inflammatory revelation, Du Bois continued to publish a series of articles concerning segregation. In the April 1934 issue of *The Crisis*, Du Bois wrote five articles about the necessity of segregation in the face of American racism and encouraged African Americans to work together and support each other. He remembered that in 1910, colored men could be received in the

<sup>388</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation,” *The Crisis*, January 1934. 20. See the appendix p.89.

<sup>389</sup> Du Bois, “History of Segregation Philosophy,” *The Crisis*, March 1934. 86.

<sup>390</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation,” *The Crisis*, January 1934. 20.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>392</sup> Du Bois, “Separation and Self-Respect,” *The Crisis*, March 1934. 85.

best hotels in the North but that in 1934 there was “not a single Northern city, except New York, where a Negro can be a guest at a first-class hotel.”<sup>393</sup> “The only thing that we not only can, but must do, is voluntarily and insistently to organize our economic and social power, no matter how much segregation it involves.”<sup>394</sup> Du Bois tried to convince black Americans that there was nothing they could do to persuade white Americans to accept them and should now focus on their own situation to improve their economic status to increase their health and stop being “economic slaves”<sup>395</sup> asking for integration. For Du Bois, segregation was not only necessary, but inevitable at that time:

Assuming for the moment that the group into which you demand admission does not want you, what are you going to do about it? Can you demand that they want you? Can you make them by law or public opinion admit you when they are supreme over this same public opinion and make these laws? Manifestly, you cannot. . . . there is in the United States today no sign that this objection to the social and even civic recognition of persons of Negro blood is going to occur during the life of persons now living. . . . If you do not wish to associate with me, I am more than willing to associate with myself. Indeed, I seem it a privilege to work with and for Negroes, only asking that my hands be not tied nor my feet bobbled.<sup>396</sup>

Du Bois gave the same advice to his readers in May 1934 with the article entitled “Segregation.” He also explained that his advocacy of segregation was not aimed to increase segregation but in the hope of destroying it one day. “It seems to me you used to fight Segregation, and that now you are ready to compromise,” said a young woman to Du Bois. Using the woman's discontentment to respond to the readers who has been disappointed by the January issue, Du Bois responded that he was still fighting segregation “with reason, with facts, and with agitation.”<sup>397</sup> It was with the word “compromise” that Du Bois had difficulties to accept, a term which had always been associated to Booker T. Washington. “I fight Segregation with Segregation, and I do not consider this compromise. I consider it common sense.” He admitted that he was requesting less desegregation, “but not wanting less.”<sup>398</sup>

### **Du Bois's last reform in *The Crisis***

The scholar, Brian Johnson, referred to Du Bois's last “Postscript” for *The Crisis* as “similar to Washingtonian philosophy.”<sup>399</sup> In an article entitled “The Anti-Segregation Campaign,” Du Bois suggested that “it was better to accept segregation with one's integrity intact rather than losing one's

<sup>393</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation in the North.” *The Crisis*, April 1934. 115.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> Du Bois, “Objects and Segregation.” *The Crisis*, April 1934. 116.

<sup>396</sup> Du Bois, “No Segregation.” *The Crisis*, April 1934. 116.

<sup>397</sup> Du Bois, “Segregation.” *The Crisis*, May 1934. 147.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>399</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, 125.

integrity.”<sup>400</sup> He admitted that his program concerning education and culture when he started editing *The Crisis* in 1910 was hard to achieve when white people were still opposed to the integration of African Americans into their society. He realized that black Americans were doomed to live in *Jim Crow* conditions and should renounce integration for now but should focus on their own industry.

We [the N.A.A.C.P.] stop training ability. We lose our manners. We swallow our pride, and beg for things. We agitate and get angry. And with all that, we face the blank fact: Negroes are not wanted; neither as scholars nor as business men; neither as clerks nor as artisans; neither as artists nor as writers. What can we do about it? We cannot use force. We cannot enforce law, even if we get it on the statute book. So long as overwhelming public opinion sanctions and justifies and defends color segregation, we are helpless, and without remedy. We are segregated.<sup>401</sup>

This article adopted a Washingtonian view of segregation in a way that Du Bois, as Booker T. Washington, encouraged the Negro to work independently from the white population to improve their economic condition and that one day their true value will be recognized.<sup>402</sup>

Finally, in the article entitled “Protest,” Du Bois explained that fighting segregation was not as easy as people may think. People could not “protest and wail and protest again” and hope that “the walls of segregation fall down” because people would not maintain this method indefinitely. After having fought against segregation for twenty-four years with *The Crisis*, Du Bois still encouraged his readers to protest against discrimination but should, at the same time, continue to work “to prepare methods and institutions which will supply those things and those opportunities which we lack because of segregation,” advocating racial pride among African Americans.<sup>403</sup>

People who were still faithful to Du Bois, specifically farmers, praised the editor for encouraging them to control and supervise their own communities, for it had “good effect” in their projects.<sup>404</sup> Many readers sent critical letters to *The Crisis* against the N.A.A.C.P. for reacting harshly toward Du Bois concerning his articles on segregation. A great amount of readers agreed with Du Bois and supported *The Crisis* for “its liberal policy” and “its thought provoking ideas,” claiming that “our greatest fight is to conquer ourselves.”<sup>405</sup> Yet having a member advocating segregation was inconceivable for the N.A.A.C.P. even more that it was one of its founder and editor of its official magazine. Du Bois's last articles and advocacy of segregation was the last straw for many leaders of the N.A.A.C.P. who were tired of fighting with Du Bois and his radical, independent editorials.<sup>406</sup> Walter White specified that the eviction of Du Bois was more a question

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<sup>400</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, 125.

<sup>401</sup> Du Bois, “The Anti-Segregation Campaign,” *The Crisis*, June 1934. 182. See the appendix p.90.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> Du Bois, “Protest,” *The Crisis*, June 1934. 183.

<sup>404</sup> Archer, Samuel Howard. *Letter from S. H. Archer to W. E. B. Du Bois*, January 30, 1934.

<sup>405</sup> Paschal, Andrew G., *Letter from Andrew G. Paschal to W. E. B. Du Bois*, June 16, 1934.

<sup>406</sup> Lewis, W. E. B. *Du Bois, 1919-1963: The Fight for Equality and the American Century*, 2001. 336-337.

of finance (as the Depression worsened the income of the organization and magazine's circulation), than a question of freedom of expression. "So far as I know, the question of freedom of expression in *The Crisis* to Dr. Du Bois has never arisen."<sup>407</sup> We can still question the validity of his words but it is true that the magazine was victim of financial problems.

The circulation of *The Crisis* started to decline in 1921 with 30,000 copies a month and reached the number of 10,000 during the Depression when in May 1919 they had reached 100,000 copies.<sup>408</sup> Walter White's admiration for Du Bois for what he has done for the N.A.A.C.P., he said, explained why Du Bois was still editor of *The Crisis* despite all the previous controversies. In a letter written to Harry E. Davis, Du Bois also explained the reasons of his resignation as being the results of financial problem and that he offered the organization to reduce his salary but Joel E. Spingarn, President of the N.A.A.C.P., declined the offer and gave complete control of the magazine to Roy Wilkins.<sup>409</sup> He confirmed his resignation in another letter to the organization signed on June 26, 1934 accusing Walter White of not being the right man to rule the organization and accusing the N.A.A.C.P. of being ineffective in front of the crisis of the Depression. He reproached them of ignoring his proposal "for economic readjustment" but judging it as disloyalty.<sup>410</sup> Thus, W. E. B. Du Bois resigned from *The Crisis* and the N.A.A.C.P.'s leadership on July 1, 1934 and was replaced by Roy Wilkins, assistant secretary of the N.A.A.C.P.

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<sup>407</sup> White, Walter Francis, *Letter from Walter White to G. A. Steward*, February 27, 1934.

<sup>408</sup> "Timeline." *The CRISIS Magazine | A Record of the Darker Races*.  
<<http://www.thecrisismagazine.com/timeline.html>> June 3, 2013.

<sup>409</sup> Du Bois, W. E. B., *Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to Harry E. Davis*, January 16, 1934.

<sup>410</sup> Du Bois, W. E. B., *Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to NAACP Board of Directors*, June 26, 1934. See the appendix pp.91-92.

## Conclusion

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Throughout his long and productive career for *The Crisis*, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois committed himself to the fight for racial democratization. He managed to educate African Americans on the massive expansion of racism in every sphere of the American society, gathering them in the same fight. The passing of *Plessy v. Ferguson*'s decision urged him to counterattack the separate-but-unequal treatment toward black America and pushed him to demonstrate that African Americans were capable of improvement with equal justice. The racial events that occurred during World War I influenced him to show his devotion to his country and to promote Pan-Africanism to his race no matter which country was concerned. But the 1929 Depression and the inevitable downfall of black economic which developed the rise of racial discrimination broke all Du Bois's hopes and idealism concerning integration. During the first phase of *The Crisis* but also before, Du Bois was convinced that only protest would lead to the overthrow of racial segregation and discrimination. He then decided to influence his readers to become intellectuals to put an end to the black burden, finally admitting that segregation could have good sides for it developed racial solidarity and racial pride. His weapons used to kill *Jim Crow* changed over time but agitation remained one of them in the hope that one day racial discrimination would disappear from America.

In W. E. B. Du Bois thus we find a militant and social activist with an ardent will to devote himself to the battle for egalitarianism, that is to say equality before the law, the basics principle of democracy. Du Bois's writings for *The Crisis* demonstrated the extent of his talent as a writer, able to mix sociology, history, cultural criticism, and political strategy which propelled him to the status of philosopher and African American leader.<sup>411</sup> Renowned as the black intellectual by excellence, Du Bois was a prestigious scholar who was constantly studying, a poet who spoke with great eloquence and lyricism. Also sociologist and social critic, the man from Massachusetts was always searching and expounding oppressive conditions of racism in the United States and the world with a remarkable rhetoric. Raised by a single mother who pushed her son to have the best education possible and surrounded by talented women in *The Crisis* office, Du Bois was a sincere proponent of women rights, fighting for parity of sex. A Marxist-inspired man with a program to establish a co-operative economy made Du Bois an economic historian who accused capitalism of being a

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<sup>411</sup> Geary, « Les Intellectuels américains et l'idéal démocratique », *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, 108 | 2009, 61-94.

partisan of racism. On the one hand he was an passionate agitator for equal rights which made him denounce segregation and call for integration and democracy. On the other hand his advocacy of racial pride and racial solidarity in the world with the organization of Pan-African Congresses made him realize that segregation could be a way to rebound with their African identity. The last feature that I will use to characterize Du Bois is his avant-gardism in protesting and challenging every injustice in an era where white people terrorized black people and women could not have a voice. His asking for democracy at home, in Europe and throughout the world really occurred during World War II where black Americans were fighting for the Double V—the victory of democracy abroad and at home. His fierce advocacy came too soon to the United States which led some people of his race to abandon him for fear of white repercussions.

*The Crisis* was both, Du Bois's own statement and the N.A.A.C.P.'s official organ. Despite all the controversy, it was not easy for the N.A.A.C.P. to remove Du Bois from his position of editor. Du Bois was always determined not to submit to others' will but on the contrary remained attached to his personal convictions. With *The Crisis* Du Bois had a profound impact upon black intellectual development and gave the opportunity to black artists to be read and known by the American and worldwide society. He was a great example for the next intellectuals and black leaders, influencing them in using media in the struggle for Black liberation.<sup>412</sup> Although Du Bois's first editorial stated that everybody would be concerned by his writings, not everybody could read and identify himself in Du Bois's works because of the Talented Tenth's concept. However “starting with only an idea and practically no capital, Du Bois developed one of the most influential journals of opinion in the nation's history.”<sup>413</sup> Not to forget that at that time most black Americans were afraid to fiercely fight for integration as he did, Du Bois's hopes and labor came to an outcome when in 1954, twenty years after Du Bois's article on segregation, the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial segregation unconstitutional. Du Bois in joy and surprise said: “I have seen the impossible happen.”<sup>414</sup> Ten years later the passing of Civil Rights Act of 1964 finally banned racial segregation and racial discrimination in all public places and accommodations, also forbidding racial discrimination by employers and labor unions.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> “The Crisis.” *The CRISIS Magazine*. Nov 1970 <<http://www.thecrisismagazine.com/history.html>> June 5, 2013.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>414</sup> Zamir, *The Cambridge Companion to W. E. B. Du Bois*, 2008. Chronology, xix.

<sup>415</sup> Hine, *op. cit.*, 593.

## **APPENDIX**

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**W. E. B. Du Bois's writings in *The Crisis* 1910-1934**



## EDITORIAL

### RACES.

IF THOSE Americans who have long since said the last word concerning the races of men and their proper relations will read the papers laid before the First Universal Races Congress, they will realize that America is fifty years behind the scientific world in its racial philosophy.

Before the publication of this epoch-making volume, *THE CRISIS* would not dare to express the statements which are contained therein. The leading scientists of the world have come forward in this book and laid down in categorical terms a series of propositions which may be summarized as follows:

1. (a) It is not legitimate to argue from differences in physical characteristics to differences in mental characteristics. (b) The mental characteristics differentiating a particular people or race are not (1) unchangeable, or (2) modifiable only through long ages of environmental pressure; but (3) marked improvements in mass education, in public sentiment, and in environment generally, may, apart from intermarriage—as the history of many a country proves—materially transform mental characteristics in a generation or two.
2. The civilization of a people or race at any particular moment of time offers no index to its innate or inherited capacities. In this respect it is of great importance to recognize that in the light of universal history civilizations are meteoric in nature, bursting out of relative obscurity only to plunge back into it.
3. (a) One ought to combat the irreconcilable contention prevalent among the various groups of mankind that *their* customs, *their* civilization, and *their* physique are superior to those of other groups. (b) In explanation of existing differences it would be pertinent to refer to the special needs arising from peculiar geographical and economic conditions and to related divergencies in national history; and, in explanation of the attitude of superiority assumed, it should be shown that intimacy leads to a love of our own customs, and unfamiliarity, among precipitate reasoners, to dislike and contempt for others' customs.
4. (a) Divergencies in economic, hygienic, moral and educational standards are potent causes in keeping peoples apart who commercially or otherwise come in contact with each other, just as they keep classes apart. (b) These differences, like social differences generally, are in substance almost certainly due to passing social conditions, and not to inborn characteristics; and the aim should therefore be, as in social differences generally, to remove these differences rather than to accentuate them by regarding them as fixed.
5. (a) The deepest cause of misunderstandings between peoples is perhaps the tacit assumption that the present characteristics of a people are the expression of permanent qualities. (b) If this is so, anthropologists, sociologists and scientific thinkers as a class could powerfully assist the movement for a juster appreciation of peoples by persistently pointing out in their lectures and in their works the fundamental fallacy involved in taking a static instead of a dynamic, a momentary instead of a historic, a fixed instead of a comparative, point of view of peoples; (c) and such dynamic teaching could be conveniently introduced into schools, more especially in the geography and history lessons, also into colleges for the training of teachers, diplomats, Colonial administrators, preachers and missionaries.
6. (a) The belief in racial or national superiority is largely due, as is



suggested above, to unenlightened psychological repulsion and underestimation of the dynamic or environmental factors. (b) Since, therefore, there is no fair proof of some races being substantially superior to others in inborn capacity, our moral standard, or the manner of treating others—seeing how under favorable circumstances one people after another rises to fame, and how members of all human groups pass through universities with equal success—should remain the same whatever people we are dealing with.

7. (a) So far at least as intellectual and moral aptitudes are concerned, we ought to speak of civilizations where we now speak of races. (b) Indeed, even the physical characteristics, excluding the skin color of a people, are to no small extent the direct result of the physical and social environment under which it is living at any moment, and hence these characteristics differ measurably both in the history and in the different social strata of one and the same people; and (c) these physical characteristics are furthermore too indefinite and elusive to serve as a basis for any rigid classification or division of human groups, more especially as there has been much interbreeding among all peoples and because race characteristics are even said to distinguish every country and almost every province.

8. (a) The most fruitful cause of race crossing is ill-will—as illustrated by war, conquest, slavery, exploitation and persecution—for where there exists mutual respect the differences in differing traditions, etc., make it almost an invariable rule that intermarriage is avoided—as is shown by any two nations friendly to each other; (b) but intermarriage, we find—contrary to popular tenets—improves the vitality and capacity of a people, and cannot, therefore, be objectionable in itself. (c) The chief drawback to intermarriage between peoples is the same as the drawback to intermarriage between different social classes—i. e., the different traditions of the partners in marriage. (d)

Those who dread intermarriage should, therefore, reflect both that there is no such thing as purity of race, and that the rate of crossing decreases with the increase of interracial and international amity.

9. (a) Each people might study with advantage the customs and civilizations of other races or peoples, including those it thinks the lowest ones, for the definite purpose of improving its own customs and civilization, since the lowliest civilizations even have much to teach. (b) Dignified and unostentatious conduct and deferential respect for the customs of others, provided these are not morally objectionable to an unprejudiced mind, should be recommended to all who come in passing or permanent contact with members of human groups that are unfamiliar to them.

These are a fair summary of the conclusions of writers who are among the best-known names in modern science. In the next number of *THE CRISIS* we shall give some of their views at length.

#### LYNCHING.

THE mob spirit in America is far from dead. Time and time again the disappearance of lynching has been confidently announced. Still this species of murder and lawlessness flourishes blithely. Its sickening details in the last few weeks have been as bad as could be imagined. The cause of this is obvious: a disrespect for law and a growing cheapness of human life. Why should America lose respect for law? Because for years some of its best brains have been striving both in the profession of law and on the bench to show how worthless legislation is and helpless to accomplish its ends. To cite an instance: The Constitution of the United States, the highest law of the land, says that citizens of the United States cannot be disfranchised on account of race or color. Yet every schoolboy knows that Negro Americans are disfranchised in large areas of the South for no other reason than race and color. This is but one instance of our laughing at law.

### AGITATION.

Some good friends of the cause we represent fear agitation. They say: "Do not agitate—do not make a noise; *work*." They add, "Agitation is destructive or at best negative—what is wanted is positive constructive work."

Such honest critics mistake the function of agitation. A toothache is agitation. Is a toothache a good thing? No. Is it therefore useless? No. It is supremely useful, for it tells the body of decay, dyspepsia and death. Without it the body would suffer unknowingly. It would think: All is well, when lo! danger lurks.

The same is true of the Social Body. Agitation is a necessary evil to tell of the ills of the Suffering. Without it many a nation has been lulled to false security and preened itself with virtues it did not possess.

The function of this Association is to tell this nation the crying evil of race prejudice. It is a hard duty but a necessary one—a divine one. It is Pain; Pain is not good but Pain is necessary. Pain does not aggravate disease—Disease causes Pain. Agitation does not mean Aggravation—Aggravation calls for Agitation in order that Remedy may be found.

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON



THE death of Mr. Washington marks an epoch in the history of America. He was the greatest Negro leader since Frederick Douglass, and the most distinguished man, white or black, who has come out of the South since the Civil War. His fame was international and his influence far-reaching. Of the good that he accomplished there can be no doubt: he directed the attention of the Negro race in America to the pressing necessity of economic development; he emphasized technical education and he did much to pave the way for an understanding between the white and darker races.

On the other hand there can be no doubt of Mr. Washington's mistakes and short comings: he never adequately grasped the growing bond of politics and industry; he did not understand the deeper foundations of human training and his basis of better understanding between white and black was founded on caste.

We may then generously and with deep earnestness lay on the grave of Booker T. Washington testimony of our thankfulness for his undoubted help in the accumulation of Negro land and prop-

erty, his establishment of Tuskegee and spreading of industrial education and his compelling of the white south to at least think of the Negro as a possible man.

On the other hand, in stern justice, we must lay on the soul of this man, a heavy responsibility for the consummation of Negro disfranchisement, the decline of the Negro college and public school and the firmer establishment of color caste in this land.

What is done is done. This is no fit time for recrimination or complaint. Gravely and with bowed head let us receive what this great figure gave of good, silently rejecting all else. Firmly and unfalteringly let the Negro race in America, in bleeding Hayti and throughout the world close ranks and march steadily on, determined as never before to work and save

and endure, but never to swerve from their great goal: the right to vote, the right to know, and the right to stand as men among men throughout the world.

It is rumored that Mr. Washington's successor at Tuskegee will be Robert Russa Moton, Commandant of Cadets at Hampton. If this proves true Major Moton will enter on his new duties with the sympathy and good will of his many friends both black and white.



# THE CRISIS

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## Editorial

### CLOSE RANKS.

**T**HIS is the crisis of the world. For all the long years to come men will point to the year 1918 as the great Day of Decision, the day when the world decided whether it would submit to military despotism and an endless armed peace—if peace it could be called—or whether they would put down the menace of German militarism and inaugurate the United States of the World.

We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills.

### WAR SAVING STAMPS.

**A**CORRESPONDENT writes us: "Has there been put in operation any effective machinery for bringing our twelve million colored citizens, especially those living in the Southern States, into this great national movement for Thrift and Economy, represented by the War Savings Stamp movement? This movement is to have a profound effect on the char-

acter of the American people; millions of prodigal, shiftless Americans are going to learn their first lessons in Thrift and Economy through buying Thrift Stamps and War Savings Stamps. It is obvious that our colored citizens should share to the full the benefits as well as the responsibilities of the movement.

"It is a voluntary effort. Thousands of voluntary committees are working to inculcate the lessons of Thrift and inspire voluntary purchase of stamps."

We are glad to say that such a movement has been begun. Various organizations are taking hold and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will use its more than 30,000 members in 108 branches to push this splendid movement.

Remember, June twenty-eighth is National War Savings Day!

### THE COMMON SCHOOL.

**M**UCH mist and misunderstanding has been consciously and unconsciously put in the colored public mind by recent discussions of the schools. We colored people must, however, keep one thing clearly before us: the first four years of a child's life, no matter what his race or condition, must be devoted by every modern country which wishes to survive and grow to a very simple program of study: (1) The child must learn to read so as to be able easily to understand what men have writ-



OPINION

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of the U. S. Army in France has a better record.

What was the real animus back of this wholesale accusation? It was the fact that many Americans would rather have lost the war than to see a black soldier talking to a white woman. For instance, the Mayor of Bar-sur-Aube issued this Order, on June 26, 1918:

*According to orders given by American Military authorities, it is strongly recommended that no French women receive visits from colored soldiers or talk with them on the streets.*

On the other hand, what is the official American opinion of Negro troops?

General Pershing in his address to the Ninety-second Division at Le Mans, France, January 29, 1919, said:

*"The Ninety-second Division has, without a doubt, been a success in its work at the front, and I desire to compliment the officers and men upon the discipline and morale which has existed in this command during its stay in France."*

Brigadier-General Hay, 184th Brigade, Ninety-second Division, said:

*"I have been with colored troops for twenty-five years, and I have never seen a better soldier."*

Captain Willis, Supply Officer, 365th Infantry, said:

*"The troops of the Ninety-second Division are the best disciplined and best saluting soldiers I have seen in France."*

Brigadier-General Sherburne said:

*"The Brigade Commander wishes to record in General Orders the entire satisfaction it has given him to have commanded the first brigade of Negro Artillery ever organized. This satisfaction is due to the excellent record the men have made."*

Allen J. Greer, Colonel, General Staff, signs this order of General Ballou:

*"Five months ago today the Ninety-second Division landed in France.*

*"After seven weeks of training it took over a Sector in the Front Line and since that time some portion of the Division has been practically continuously under fire.*

*"It participated in the last battle of the War with creditable success, continually pressing the attack against highly organized defensive works. It advanced successfully on the first day of the battle, attaining its objectives and capturing prisoners. This in the face of determined opposition by an alert enemy and against rifle, machine guns and artillery fire. The issue of the second day's battle was rendered indecisive by the order to cease firing at eleven a. m., when the Armistice became effective."*

A report from the officer in charge of Leave Area, November 6, 1918, says:

*"Nothing but the highest praise can be given the colored soldier for the manner in which he conducted himself while in France. He conducted himself in a gentlemanly manner in every sector in which the Division operated, and won for himself the love and commendation of the French people."*

RETURNING SOLDIERS

**W**E are returning from war! THE CRISIS and tens of thousands of black men were drafted into a great struggle. For bleeding France and what she means and has meant and will mean to us and humanity and against the threat of German race arrogance, we fought gladly and to the last drop of blood; for America and her highest ideals, we fought in far-off hope; for the dominant southern oligarchy entrenched in Washington, we fought in bitter resignation. For the America that represents and gloats in lynching, disfranchisement, caste, brutality and devilish insult—



for this, in the hateful upturning and mixing of things, we were forced by vindictive fate to fight, also.

But today we return! We return from the slavery of uniform which the world's madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land.

*It lynches.*

And lynching is barbarism of a degree of contemptible nastiness unparalleled in human history. Yet for fifty years we have lynched two Negroes a week, and we have kept this up right through the war.

*It disfranchises its own citizens.*

Disfranchisement is the deliberate theft and robbery of the only protection of poor against rich and black against white. The land that disfranchises its citizens and calls itself a democracy lies and knows it lies.

*It encourages ignorance.*

It has never really tried to educate the Negro. A dominant minority does not want Negroes educated. It wants servants, dogs, whores and monkeys. And when this land allows a reactionary group by its stolen political power to force as many black folk into these categories as it possibly can, it cries in contemptible hypocrisy: "They threaten us with degeneracy; they cannot be educated."

*It steals from us.*

It organizes industry to cheat us. It cheats us out of our land; it cheats us out of our labor. It confiscates

our savings. It reduces our wages. It raises our rent. It steals our profit. It taxes us without representation. It keeps us consistently and universally poor, and then feeds us on charity and derides our poverty.

*It insults us.*

It has organized a nation-wide and latterly a world-wide propaganda of deliberate and continuous insult and defamation of black blood wherever found. It decrees that it shall not be possible in travel nor residence, work nor play, education nor instruction for a black man to exist without tacit or open acknowledgment of his inferiority to the dirtiest white dog. And it looks upon any attempt to question or even discuss this dogma as arrogance, unwarranted assumption and treason.

This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which we fought! But it is *our* fatherland. It was right for us to fight. The faults of *our* country are *our* faults. Under similar circumstances, we would fight again. But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land.

*We return.*

*We return from fighting.*

*We return fighting.*

Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.

## PREJUDICE



GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON



THESE fell miasmic rings of mist, with  
ghoulish menace bound,  
Their noose-horizons tightening my little  
world around,  
They still the throbbing will to sing, to  
dance, to speed away,

And fling the soul insurgent back into its  
shell of clay:  
Beneath these crusted silences a seething  
Etna lies,  
The fire of whose furnaces may sleep—but  
never dies!



problem in two leading Christiania papers.

On the return there were several social functions of such importance that the Southerners were compelled to endure in silence the presence of the colored delegates. For instance, all the delegates were entertained by the King and Queen of Norway. All the Southerners were present. Lady Aberdeen, president of the Council, entertained the delegates and alternates at breakfast. Mrs. Riley was placed opposite Dr. Waring and did not leave the table. At Hadow House, Aberdeen, Scotland, on the way back, Lady Aberdeen entertained the whole American

party. At her request Mrs. Talbert sat at her right and the representative of the Jewish women, Mrs. Nathan Harris, at her left. All the Southerners were present. Mrs. Riley sat at the right of Lord Aberdeen and Mrs. Merriman, conductor of the party, on the left. They were entertained at Edinburgh, Scotland, by the Common Council. All were present.

And so the eventful journey ended with the colored women quietly and with dignity standing at their guns and the southern white women furious at the "social equality!"

## MARCUS GARVEY



W. E. B. DU BOIS



MARCUS GARVEY was born at St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, about 1885. He was educated at the public school and then for a short time attended the Church of England Grammar School, although he was a Roman Catholic by religion. On leaving school he learned the printing trade and followed it for many years. In Costa Rica he was associated with Marclan Taylor in publishing the *Bluefield's Messenger*. Later he was on the staff of *La Nacion*. He then returned to Jamaica and worked as a printer, being foreman of the printing department of P. Benjamin's Manufacturing Company of Kingston. Later he visited Europe and spent some time in England and France and while abroad conceived his scheme of organizing the Negro Improvement Society. This society was launched August 1, 1914, in Jamaica, with these general objects among others:

"To establish a Universal Confraternity among the race"; "to promote the spirit of race pride and love"; "to administer to and assist the needy"; "to strengthen the imperialism of independent African States"; "to conduct a world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse".

His first practical object was to be the establishment of a farm school. Meetings were held and the Roman Catholic Bishop, the Mayor of Kingston, and many others addressed them. Nevertheless the project did not succeed and Mr. Garvey was soon in financial difficulties. He therefore practically abandoned the Jamaica field and came to the United States. In the United States his movement for many years lan-

guished until at last with the increased migration from the West Indies during the war he succeeded in establishing a strong nucleus in the Harlem district of New York City.

His program now enlarged and changed somewhat in emphasis. He began especially to emphasize the commercial development of the Negroes and as an islander familiar with the necessities of ship traffic he planned the "Black Star Line". The public for a long time regarded this as simply a scheme of exploitation, when they were startled by hearing that Garvey had bought a ship. This boat was a former coasting vessel, 32 years old, but it was put into commission with a black crew and a black captain and was announced as the first of a fleet of vessels which would trade between the colored peoples of America, the West Indies and Africa. With this beginning, the popularity and reputation of Mr. Garvey and his association increased quickly.

In addition to the *Yarmouth* he is said to have purchased two small boats, the *Shady-side*, a small excursion steamer which made daily excursions up the Hudson, and a yacht which was designed to cruise among the West Indies and collect cargo in some central spot for the *Yarmouth*. He had first announced the Black Star Line as a Five Million Dollar corporation, but in February, 1920, he announced that it was going to be a Ten Million Dollar corporation with shares selling at Five Dollars. To this he added in a few months the Negro Factories Corporation capitalized at One Million Dollars with two hundred thousand one dollar



shares, and finally he announced the subscription of Five Million Dollars to free Liberia and Haiti from debt.

Early in 1920 he called a convention of Negroes to meet in New York City from the 1st to the 31st of August, "to outline a constructive plan and program for the uplifting of the Negroes and the redemption of Africa". He also took title to three apartment houses to be used as offices and purchased the foundation of an unfinished Baptist church which he covered over and used for meetings, calling it "Liberty Hall". In August, 1920, his convention met with representatives from various parts of the United States, several of the West India Islands and the Canal Zone and a few from Africa. The convention carried out its plan of a month's meetings and culminated with a mass meeting which filled Madison Square Garden. Finally the convention adopted a "Declaration of Independence" with 66 articles, a universal anthem and colors,—red, black and green—and elected Mr. Garvey as "His Excellency, the Provisional President of Africa", together with a number of various other leaders from the various parts of the Negro world. This in brief is the history of the Garvey movement.

The question comes (1) Is it an honest, sincere movement? (2) Are its industrial and commercial projects business like and effective? (3) Are its general objects plausible and capable of being carried out?

The central and dynamic force of the movement is Garvey. He has with singular success capitalized and made vocal the great and long suffering grievances and spirit of protest among the West Indian peasantry. Hitherto the black peasantry of the West Indies has been almost leaderless. Its natural leaders, both mulatto and black, have crossed the color line and practically obliterated social distinction, and to some extent economic distinction, between them and the white English world on the Islands. This has left a peasantry with only the rudiments of education and with almost no economic chances, grovelling at the bottom. Their distress and needs gave Garvey his vision.

It is a little difficult to characterize the man Garvey. He has been charged with dishonesty and graft, but he seems to me essentially an honest and sincere man with a tremendous vision, great dynamic force, stubborn determination and unselfish desire to serve; but also he has very serious de-

fects of temperament and training: he is dictatorial, domineering, "ordinately vain and very suspicious. He cannot get on with his fellow-workers. His entourage has continually changed.<sup>1</sup> He has had endless law suits and some cases of fisticuffs with his subordinates and has even divorced the young wife whom he married with great fanfare of trumpets about a year ago. All these things militate against him and his reputation. Nevertheless I have not found the slightest proof that his objects were not sincere or that he was consciously diverting money to his own uses. The great difficulty with him is that he has absolutely no business sense, no *flair* for real organization and his general objects are so shot through with bombast and exaggeration that it is difficult to pin them down for careful examination.

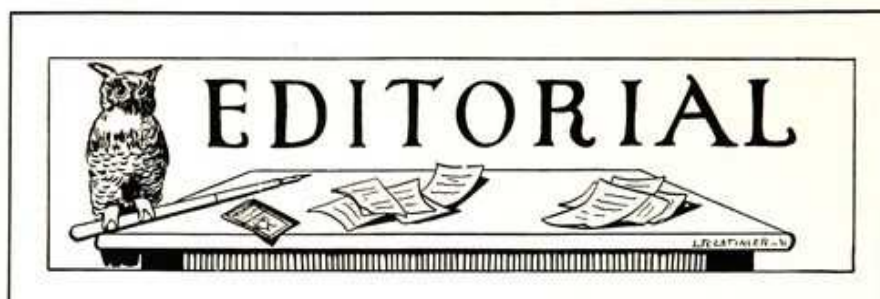
On the other hand, Garvey is an extraordinary leader of men. Thousands of people believe in him. He is able to stir them with singular eloquence and the general run of his thought is of a high plane. He has become to thousands of people a sort of religion. He allows and encourages all sorts of personal adulation, even printing in his paper the addresses of some of the delegates who hailed him as "His Majesty". He dons on state occasion, a costume consisting of an academic cap and gown flounced in red and green!

Of Garvey's curious credulity and suspicious one example will suffice: In March, 1919, he held a large mass meeting at Palace Casino which was presided over by Chandler Owen and addressed by himself and Phillip Randolph. Here he collected \$204 in contributions on the plea that while in France, W. E. B. DuBois had interfered with the work of his "High Commissioner" by "defeating" his articles in the French press and "repudiating" his statements as to lynching and injustice in America! The truth was that Mr. DuBois never saw or heard of his "High Commissioner", never denied his nor anyone's statements of the wretched American conditions, did everything possible to arouse rather than quiet the French press and would have been delighted to welcome and co-operate with any colored fellow-worker.

<sup>1</sup> Of the 15 names of his fellow officers in 1914 not a single one appears in 1918; of the 18 names of officers published in 1918 only 6 survive in 1919; among the small list of principal officers published in 1920 I do not find a single name mentioned in 1919.

(To be concluded in January)





#### THE NEGRO CHURCH.

**I**T happens that during this month, in the North, West and South, there are meeting the ruling Methodist ecclesiastical bodies representing a membership of 1,175,000 colored Americans. Later, in midsummer, the Baptist conventions, which represent 2,300,000 members, will meet. These three and a half millions of people represent the great middle class of colored Americans. The lowest class of outcasts have never been reached; the highest class of the educated and thoughtful are being gradually lost. The great middle mass remains, and in 35,000 churches holding \$57,000,000 worth of property they form a peculiar organized government of men. Under some fifty powerful leaders and thirty thousand salaried local preachers they raise and expend over seven millions of dollars a year.

Before such an organization one must bow with respect. It has accomplished much. It has instilled and conserved morals, it has helped family life, it has taught and developed ability and given the colored man his best business training. It has planted in every city and town of the Union, with few exceptions, meeting places for colored folk which vary from shelters to luxurious and beautiful edifices.

Notwithstanding this, all is not well with the colored church. First, its fifty leaders are in too many cases not the men they should be. This is not peculiar

to the Negro church, but it is true to a larger degree than is healthful. We can point to pure-minded, efficient, unselfish prelates like the late Bishop Paine, the present Bishop Lee and J. W. White. We have men of scholarship and standing like Bishop J. Albert Johnson, and we have efficient men of affairs like John F. Hurst, M. C. B. Mason and R. H. Boyd.

The trouble is, however, this: there are too few such men. The paths and the higher places are choked with pretentious ill-trained men and in far too many cases with men dishonest and otherwise immoral. Such men make the way of upright and businesslike candidates for power extremely difficult. They put an undue premium upon finesse and personal influence.

Having thus a partially tainted leadership, small wonder that the \$30,000 colored ministers fall as a mass far below expectations. There are among them hustling business men, eloquent talkers, suave companions and hale fellows, but only here and there does one meet men like Henry L. Phillips of Philadelphia—burning spiritual guides of a troubled, panting people, utterly self-forgetful, utterly devoted to a great ideal of righteousness.

Yet this is precisely the type for which the church—the white church as well as the black church—is crying. This is the only type which will hold thoughtful, reasonable men to membership with this organization. To-day the tendencies are not this way. To-day the church is



still inveighing against dancing and theatregoing, still blaming educated people for objecting to silly and empty sermons, boasting and noise, still building churches when people need homes and schools, and persisting in crucifying critics rather than realizing the handwriting on the wall.

Let us trust that these great churches in conference, remembering the leaders of the past and conscious of all that the church has done well, will set their faces to these deeds:

1. Electing as bishops and leaders only men of honesty, probity and efficiency and rejecting the noisy and unclean leaders of the thoughtless mob.

2. Weeding out the ministry so as to increase the clean apostles of service and sacrifice.

3. Initiating positive programs of education and social uplift and discouraging extravagant building and mere ostentation.

4. Bending every effort to make the Negro church a place where colored men and women of education and energy can work for the best things regardless of their belief or disbelief in unimportant dogmas and ancient and outworn creeds.

#### THE CONFERENCE AT CHICAGO.

**I**T looks as though the Fourth Annual Conference of this association at Chicago would be the greatest of any yet held. This is as it should be. At last the colored people of the land and their friends are going to have a free annual forum where they can speak like men, confer, and plan movements looking toward eventual emancipation from the galling slavery of the present.

Several times this has been attempted. Beginning in Philadelphia in 1830, there were a series of conferences up until about 1836, in which colored people and friends like William Lloyd Garrison discussed their ills. Then there was a lull until the conventions of 1847 at Troy,

of 1852 at Rochester and 1856 at Chatham, Ontario. These were stirring meetings, where Frederick Douglass, John Brown and the great leaders of the day discussed emigration and revolt.

After the war came a series of meetings North and South, at Syracuse, at Nashville and at Washington. Then the mists of reconstruction discouragement bowed the millions down until 1890, when the Afro-American Council was born. This was a worthy organization, but after a struggle of fifteen years it was done to death in Chicago by a shameful conspiracy engineered by black men who were paid to make their fellows stop protesting. There were feeble attempts at resuscitation at St. Paul and Louisville, but the real revivification came when the Niagara Movement, a small group of determined men, met at Niagara in 1905 and voiced a stinging protest which is still echoing in the land. In vain was the movement slandered and misrepresented. It had to be listened to and it had large influence in the call for the Negro Conference in New York in 1909. Out of that conference grew the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

To-day we meet a fourth time. We meet to protest, but not simply to protest. We can point to deeds done, to plans carefully laid, to widespread co-operation and to *THE CRISIS*. We can point, too, to the word of Phillips:

*The proper time to maintain one's rights is when they are denied; the proper persons to maintain them are those to whom they are denied.*

#### EDUCATION.

**T**HE fifteenth annual Conference for Education in the South was held in Nashville on April 3, 4 and 5. As usual, the colored people were not represented, save on the opening night, when, *mirabile dictu*, a delegation from

# Marxism and The Negro Problem

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

KARL MARX was a Jew born at Treves, Germany, in March, 1818. He came of an educated family and studied at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin, planning first to become a lawyer, and then to teach philosophy. But his ideas were too radical for the government. He turned to journalism, and finally gave his life to economic reform, dying in London in 1883, after having lived in Germany, Belgium, France, and, for the last thirty-five years of his life, in England. He published in 1867, the first volume of his monumental work, "Capital."

There are certain books in the world which every searcher for truth must know: the Bible, the Critique of Pure Reason, the Origin of Species, and Karl Marx' "Capital."

Yet until the Russian Revolution, Karl Marx was little known in America. He was treated condescendingly in the universities, and regarded even by the intelligent public as a radical agitator whose curious and inconvenient theories it was easy to refute. Today, at last, we all know better, and we see in Karl Marx a colossal genius of infinite sacrifice and monumental industry, and with a mind of extraordinary logical keenness and grasp. We may disagree with many of the great books of truth that I have named, and with "Capital," but they can never be ignored.

At a recent dinner to Einstein, another great Jew, the story was told of a professor who was criticized as having "no sense of humor" because he tried to explain the Theory of Relativity in a few simple words. Something of the same criticism must be attached to anyone who attempts similarly to indicate the relation of Marxian philosophy and the American Negro problem. And yet, with all modesty, I am essaying the task knowing that it will be but tentative and subject to much criticism, both on my own part and that of other abler students.

The task which Karl Marx set himself was to study and interpret the organization of industry in the modern world. One of Marx's earlier works, "The Communist Manifesto," issued in 1848, on the eve of the series of democratic revolutions in Europe, laid down this fundamental proposition.

"That in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that

epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind . . . has been a history of class struggles, contest between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which, now-a-days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class (the bourgeoisie) without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class-distinction and class-struggles."

All will notice in this manifesto, phrases which have been used so much lately and so carelessly that they have almost lost their meaning. But behind them still is living and insistent truth. The class struggle of exploiter and exploited is a reality. The capitalist still to-day owns machines, materials, and wages with which to buy labor. The laborer even in America owns little more than his ability to work. A wage contract takes place between these two and the resultant manufactured commodity or service is the property of the capitalist.

Here Marx begins his scientific analysis based on a mastery of practically all economic theory before his time and on an extraordinary, thoroughgoing personal knowledge of industrial conditions over all Europe and many other parts of the world.

His final conclusions were never all properly published. He lived only to finish the first volume of his "Capital," and the other two volumes were completed from his papers and notes by his friend Engels. The result is an unfinished work, extraordinarily difficult to read and understand and one which the master himself would have been first to criticize as not properly representing his mature and finished thought.

Nevertheless, that first volume, together with the fairly evident meaning of the others, lay down a logical line of thought. The gist of that philosophy is that the value of products regularly exchanged in the open market depends upon the labor necessary to produce them; that capital consists of machines, materials and wages paid for labor; that out of the finished product, when materials have been paid for and the wear and tear and machinery replaced, and wages paid, there remains a surplus value. This surplus value arises from labor and is the difference between what is actually paid laborers for their wages and the market

value of the commodities which the laborers produce. It represents, therefore, exploitation of the laborer, and this exploitation, inherent in the capitalistic system of production, is the cause of poverty, of industrial crises, and eventually of social revolution.

This social revolution, whether we regard it as voluntary revolt or the inevitable working of a vast cosmic law of social evolution, will be the last manifestation of the class struggle, and will come by inevitable change induced by the very nature of the conditions under which present production is carried on. It will come by the action of the great majority of men who compose the wage-earning proletariat, and it will result in common ownership of all capital, the disappearance of capitalistic exploitation, and the division of the products and services of industry according to human needs, and not according to the will of the owners of capital.

It goes without saying that every step of this reasoning and every presentation of supporting facts have been bitterly assailed. The labor theory of value has been denied; the theory of surplus value refuted; and inevitability of revolution scoffed at; while industrial crises—at least until this present one—have been defended as unusual exceptions proving the rule of modern industrial efficiency.

But with the Russian experiment and the World Depression most thoughtful men today are beginning to admit:

That the continued recurrence of industrial crises and wars based largely on economic rivalry, with persistent poverty, unemployment, disease and crime, are forcing the world to contemplate the possibilities of fundamental change in our economic methods; and that means thorough-going change, whether it be violent, as in France or Russia, or peaceful, as seems just as possible, and just as true to the Marxian formula, if it is fundamental change; in any case, Revolution seems bound to come.

Perhaps nothing illustrates this better than recent actions in the United States: our re-examination of the whole concept of Property; our banking moratorium; the extraordinary new agriculture bill; the plans to attack unemployment, and similar measures. Labor rather than gambling is the sure foundation of value and whatever we call it—exploitation, theft or business acumen—there is something radically wrong with an industrial system that turns out simultaneously paupers and millionaires and



sets a world starving because it has too much food.

What now has all this to do with the Negro problem? First of all, it is manifest that the mass of Negroes in the United States belong distinctly to the working proletariat. Of every thousand working Negroes less than a hundred and fifty belong to any class that could possibly be considered bourgeois. And even this more educated and prosperous class has but small connection with the exploiters of wage and labor. Nevertheless, this black proletariat is not a part of the white proletariat. Black and white work together in many cases, and influence each other's rates of wages. They have similar complaints against capitalists, save that the grievances of the Negro worker are more fundamental and indefensible, ranging as they do, since the day of Karl Marx, from chattel slavery, to the worst paid, sweated, mobbed and cheated labor in any civilized land.

And while Negro labor in America suffers because of the fundamental inequities of the whole capitalistic system, the lowest and most fatal degree of its suffering comes not from the capitalists but from fellow white laborers. It is white labor that deprives the Negro of his right to vote, denies him education, denies him affiliation with trade unions, expels him from decent houses and neighborhoods, and heaps upon him the public insults of open color discrimination.

It is no sufficient answer to say that capital encourages this oppression and uses it for its own ends. This may have excused the ignorant and superstitious Russian peasants in the past and some of the poor whites of the South today. But the bulk of American white labor is neither ignorant nor fanatical. It knows exactly what it is doing and it means to do it. William Green and Mathew Woll of the A. F. of L. have no excuse of illiteracy or religion to veil their deliberate intention to keep Negroes and Mexicans and other elements of common labor, in a lower proletariat as subservient to their interests as theirs are to the interests of capital.

This large development of a petty bourgeoisie within the American laboring class is a post-Marxian phenomenon and the result of the tremendous and world wide development of capitalism in the 20th Century. The market of capitalistic production has gained an effective world-wide organization. Industrial technique and mass production have brought possibilities in the production of goods and services which out-run even this wide market. A new class of technical engineers and managers has arisen forming a working class aristocracy between the older proletariat and the absentee owners of capital. The real owners of capital are small as well as

large investors—workers who have deposits in savings banks and small holdings in stocks and bonds; families buying homes and purchasing commodities on installment; as well as the large and rich investors.

Of course, the individual laborer gets but an infinitesimal part of his income from such investments. On the other hand, such investments, in the aggregate, largely increase available capital for the exploiters, and they give investing laborers the capitalistic ideology. Between workers and owners of capital stand today the bankers and financiers who distribute capital and direct the engineers.

Thus the engineers and the saving better-paid workers, form a new petty bourgeois class, whose interests are bound up with those of the capitalists and antagonistic to those of common labor. On the other hand, common labor in America and white Europe far from being motivated by any vision of revolt against capitalism, has been blinded by the American vision of the possibility of layer after layer of the workers escaping into the wealthy class and becoming managers and employers of labor.

Thus in America we have seen a wild and ruthless scramble of labor groups over each other in order to climb to wealth on the backs of black labor and foreign immigrants. The Irish climbed on the Negroes. The Germans scrambled over the Negroes and emulated the Irish. The Scandinavians fought forward next to the Germans and the Italians and "Bohunks" are crowding up, leaving Negroes still at the bottom chained to helplessness, first by slavery, then by disfranchisement and always by the Color Bar.

The second influence on white labor both in America and Europe has been the fact that the extension of the world market by imperial expanding industry has established a world-wide new proletariat of colored workers, toiling under the worst conditions of 19th century capitalism, herded as slaves and serfs and furnishing by the lowest paid wage in modern history a mass of raw material for industry. With this largess the capitalists have consolidated their economic power, nullified universal suffrage and bribed the white workers by high wages, visions of wealth and the opportunity to drive "niggers." Soldiers and sailors from the white workers are used to keep "darkies" in their "places" and white foremen and engineers have been established as irresponsible satraps in China and India, Africa and the West Indies, backed by the organized and centralized ownership of machines, raw materials, finished commodities and land monopoly over the whole world.

How now does the philosophy of Karl Marx apply today to colored labor? First of all colored labor has no common ground with white labor. No soviet

of technocrats would do more than exploit colored labor in order to raise the status of whites. No revolt of a white proletariat could be started if its object was to make black workers their economic, political and social equals. It is for this reason that American socialism for fifty years has been dumb on the Negro problem, and the communists cannot even get a respectful hearing in America unless they begin by expelling Negroes.

On the other hand, within the Negro groups, in the United States, in West Africa, in South America and in the West Indies, petty bourgeois groups are being evolved. In South America and the West Indies such groups drain off skill and intelligence into the white group, and leave the black labor poor, ignorant and leaderless save for an occasional demagog.

In West Africa, a Negro bourgeoisie is developing with invested capital and employment of natives and is only kept from the conventional capitalistic development by the opposition and enmity of white capital, and the white managers and engineers who represent it locally and who display bitter prejudice and tyranny; and by white European labor which furnishes armies and navies and Empire "preference." African black labor and black capital are therefore driven to seek alliance and common ground.

In the United States also a petty bourgeoisie is being developed, consisting of clergymen, teachers, farm owners, professional men and retail business men. The position of this class, however, is peculiar: they are not the chief or even large investors in Negro labor and therefore exploit it only here and there; and they bear the brunt of color prejudice because they express in word and work the aspirations of all black folk for emancipation. The revolt of any black proletariat could not, therefore, be logically directed against this class, nor could this class join either white capital, white engineers or white workers to strengthen the color bar.

Under these circumstances, what shall we say of the Marxian philosophy and of its relation to the American Negro? We can only say, as it seems to me, that the Marxian philosophy is a true diagnosis of the situation in Europe in the middle of the 19th Century despite some of its logical difficulties. But it must be modified in the United States of America and especially so far as the Negro group is concerned. The Negro is exploited to a degree that means poverty, crime, delinquency and indigence. And that exploitation comes not from a black capitalistic class but from the white capitalists and equally from the white proletariat. His only defense is such internal organization as will  
(Will you please turn to page 118)

*The Crisis*

Éléments sous droits d'auteur



## MARXISM

(Continued from page 104)

protect him from both parties, and such practical economic insight as will prevent inside the race group any large development of capitalistic exploitation.

Meantime, comes the Great Depression. It levels all in mighty catastrophe. The fantastic industrial structure of America is threatened with ruin. The trade unions of skilled labor are double-tongued and helpless. Unskilled and common white labor is too frightened at Negro competition to attempt united action. It only begs a dole. The reformist program of Socialism meets no response from the white proletariat because it offers no escape to wealth and no effective bar to black labor, and a mud-sill of black labor is essential to white labor's standard of living. The shrill cry of a few communists is not even listened to, because and solely because it seeks to break down barriers between black and white. There is not at present the slightest indication that a Marxian revolution based on a united class-conscious proletariat is anywhere on the American far horizon. Rather race antagonism and labor group rivalry is still undisturbed by world catastrophe. In the hearts of black laborers alone, therefore, lie those ideals of democracy in politics and industry which may in time make the workers of the world effective dictators of civilization.

## NEGRO BOYS

(Continued from page 107)

a hardening and becoming common of the best in him, his latent intelligence never developed, and the loss of even the desire to work,—an habitual bum, if not a criminal.

Add to these two boys the thousands of other homeless Negro boys wandering about the country today, who will also be the prey of vicious old men and women; who will also suffer years of mal-nutrition, and lack even the rudiments of an education,—and there exists a situation that makes the future of the Negroes in America grow steadily darker.

When one thinks that these boys will be among the last to be gathered up when the campaign is started to round up these wandering children and realizes the poverty of their own race and inability to help them, it is indisputably evident that a large number of our youth soon will have returned to the position Negro Youth occupied when freed from slavery—illiterate in mind, diseased in body, destitute, homeless.

Do I see hovering over these boys "Our Lady of Sighs?" I think so. Let us hope that by her side soon does not stand "Our Lady of Despair."

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## VIRGIN ISLANDS

(Continued from page 108)

the coal-ship to sell all sorts of merchandise, beads and fruits to the sailors, was a reminder of the folk cry heard in the early morning hours as the soft trade-winds wafted up the calls from the terraces below to the private tiered gardens above. From the women fish venders, who went from door to door carrying on their head large baskets of "gouton," a fish of perfectly blue skin which looks like halibut, the cry was heard:

"Ice fish for breakfast—Ice fish  
Good for stew!"

Here "breakfast" is the name of the second meal of the day, served at the luncheon hour, so the cry explains that the fish has been protected from the heat of the tropical sun which would make it edible for the mid-day "breakfast." At the fish market the fishermen call out their

"Hi Fo' Dinner"—"King Fish! 5 cents a Junk!"

Close upon the heels of the fish vender, comes the banana man—  
"Bananas—Ba-nan-as!"

It was noticeable that the Danish West Indies street-cries were much shorter and less musical than those of Porto Rico.

Of greater musical and ethnological interest were the dance rhythms. A yard-boy, "Dargan" irresponsible and shiftless yet loyal and faithful to our host by whom he was employed, liked nothing better than to dance and to lie in the hot sun. He preferred to do his spontaneous dancing unobserved and un-noticed. However he was persuaded to dance the "Bamboula" for us.

Morning breaks and at noon, Dargan dances unheeding the hot mid-day sun that beats down relentlessly between the pagoda top to the tiered gardens below. The sun sets. Casting wavering shadows to the tune of the clattering of wind-swept leaves of the "Woman's Tongue" tree, the moonlight dances upon the castles of Bluebeard and Blackbeard. The ghosts of the fourteen wives of Teach, the pirate, peep from un-fortressed windows but see only the mirage of snow-covered mountains—the red-roofed dream houses on the hill-tops of St. Thomas bathed in white moonlight. With the passing of the dawn, the imaginary mass of mountains and ravines become a tropical village of sun-lit houses nestled in gardens of cactus hedges and bourganvillea with a riot of cultivated roses. It is a fitting background for the wildflowers of folk song that burst forth in revocation and prophecy from the throats of humble, dusky singers.

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The Crisis

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### "Segregation"

The thinking colored people of the United States must stop being stampeded by the word segregation. The opposition to racial segregation is not or should not be any distaste or unwillingness of colored people to work with each other, to co-operate with each other, to live with each other. The opposition to segregation is an opposition to discrimination. The experience in the United States has been that usually when there is racial segregation, there is also racial discrimination.

But the two things do not necessarily go together, and there should never be an opposition to segregation pure and simple unless that segregation does involve discrimination. Not only is there no objection to colored people living beside colored people if the surroundings and treatment involve no discrimination, if streets are well lighted, if there is water, sewerage and police protection, and if anybody of any color who wishes, can live in that neighborhood. The same way in schools, there is no objection to schools attended by colored pupils and taught by colored teachers. On the contrary, colored pupils can by our own contention be as fine human beings as any other sort of children, and we certainly know that there are no teachers better than trained colored teachers. But if the existence of such a school is made reason and cause for giving it worse housing, poorer facilities, poorer equipment and poorer teachers, then we do object, and the objection is not against the color of the pupils' or teachers' skins, but against the discrimination.

In the recent endeavor of the United States government to redistribute capital so that some of the disadvantaged groups may get a chance for development, the American Negro should voluntarily and insistently demand his share. Groups of communities and farms inhabited by colored folk should be voluntarily formed. In no case should there be any discrimination against white and blacks. But, at the same time, colored people should come forward, should organize and conduct enterprises, and their only insistence should be that the same provisions be made for the success of their

enterprise that is being made for the success of any other enterprises. It must be remembered that in the last quarter of a century, the advance of the colored people has been mainly in the lines where they themselves working by and for themselves, have accomplished the greatest advance.

There is no doubt that numbers of white people, perhaps the majority of Americans, stand ready to take the most distinct advantage of voluntary segregation and cooperation among colored people. Just as soon as they get a group of black folk segregated, they use it as a point of attack and discrimination. Our counter attack should be, therefore, against this discrimination; against the refusal of the South to spend the same amount of money on the black child as on the white child for its education; against the inability of black groups to use public capital; against the monopoly of credit by white groups. But never in the world should our fight be against association with ourselves because by that very token we give up the whole argument that we are worth associating with.

Doubtless, and in the long run, the greatest human development is going to take place under experiences of widest individual contact. Nevertheless, today such individual contact is made difficult and almost impossible by petty prejudice, deliberate and almost criminal propaganda and various survivals from prehistoric heathenism. It is impossible, therefore, to wait for the millennium of free and normal intercourse before we unite, to cooperate among themselves in groups of like-minded people and in groups of people suffering from the same disadvantages and the same hatreds.

It is the class-conscious working man uniting together who will eventually emancipate labor throughout the world. It is the race-conscious black man cooperating together in his own institutions and movements who will eventually emancipate the colored race, and the great step ahead today is for the American Negro to accomplish his economic emancipation through voluntary determined cooperative effort.



# Postscript

by W. E. B. Du Bois

## COUNSELS OF DESPAIR

MANY persons have interpreted my reassertion of our current attitude toward segregation as a counsel of despair. We can't win, therefore, give up and accept the inevitable. Never, and nonsense. Our business in this world is to fight and fight again, and never to yield. But after all, one must fight with his brains, if he has any. He gathers strength to fight. He gathers knowledge, and he raises children who are proud to fight and who know what they are fighting about. And above all, they learn that what they are fighting for is the opportunity and the chance to know and associate with black folk. They are not fighting to escape themselves. They are fighting to say to the world: the opportunity of knowing Negroes is worth so much to us and is so appreciated, that we want you to know them too.

Negroes are not extraordinary human beings. They are just like other human beings, with all their foibles and ignorance and mistakes. But they are human beings, and human nature is always worth knowing, and withal, splendid in its manifestations. Therefore, we are fighting to keep open the avenues of human contact; but in the meantime, we are taking every advantage of what opportunities of contact are already open to us, and among those opportunities which are open, and which are splendid and inspiring, is the opportunity of Negroes to work together in the twentieth century for the uplift and development of the Negro race. It is no counsel of despair to emphasize and hail the opportunity for such work.

## THE ANTI- SEGREGATION CAMPAIGN

THE assumptions of the anti-segregation campaign have been all wrong. This is not our fault, but it is our misfortune. When I went to Atlanta University to teach in 1897, and to study the Negro problem, I said, confidently, that the basic problem is our racial ignorance and lack of culture. That once Negroes know civilization, and whites know Negroes, then the problem is solved. This proposition is still true, but the solution is much further away than my youth dreamed. Negroes are still ignorant, but the disconcerting thing is that white people on the whole are just as much opposed to Negroes of education and culture, as to any other kind, and perhaps more so. Not all whites, to be sure, but the overwhelming majority.

Our main method, then, falls flat. We stop training ability. We lose our manners. We swallow our pride, and beg for things. We agitate and get angry. And with all that, we face the blank fact: Negroes are not wanted; neither as scholars nor as business men; neither as clerks nor as artisans; neither as artists nor as writers. What can we do about it? We cannot use force. We cannot enforce law, even if we get it on the statute books. So long as overwhelming public opinion sanctions and justifies and defends color segregation, we are helpless, and without remedy. We are segregated. We are cast back upon ourselves, to an Island Within; "To your tents, Oh Israel!"

Surely then, in this period of frustration and disappointment, we must turn from negation to affirmation, from the ever-lasting "No" to the ever-lasting "Yes". Instead of sitting, sapped of all initiative and independence; instead of drowning our originality in imitation of mediocre white folks; instead of being afraid of ourselves and cultivating the art of skulking to escape the Color Line; we have got to renounce a program that always involves humiliating self-stultifying scrambling to crawl somewhere where we are not wanted; where we crouch panting like a whipped dog. We have got to stop this and learn that on such a program they cannot build manhood. No, by God, stand erect in a mud-puddle and tell the white world to go to hell, rather than lick boots in a parlor.

Affirm, as you have a right to affirm, that the Negro race is one of the great human races, inferior to none in its accomplishment and in its ability. Different, it is true, and for most of the difference, let us reverently thank God. And this race, with its vantage grounds in modern days, can go forward of its own will, of its own power, and its own initiative. It is led by twelve million American Negroes of average modern intelligence; three or four million educated African Negroes are their full equals, and several million Negroes in the West Indies and South America. This body of at least twenty-five million modern men are not called upon to commit suicide because somebody doesn't like their complexion or their hair. It is their opportunity and their day to stand up and make themselves heard and felt in the modern world.

Indeed, there is nothing else we can do. If you have passed your resolution, "No segregation, Never and Nowhere," what are you going to do about it? Let me tell you what you are going to do. You are going back to continue to make your living in a Jim-Crow school; you are going to dwell in a segregated section of the city; you are going to pastor a Jim-Crow Church; you are going to occupy political office because of Jim-Crow political organizations that stand back of you and force you into office. All these things and a thousand others you are going to do because you have got to.

If you are going to do this, why not say so? What are you afraid of? Do you believe in the Negro race or do you not? If you do not, naturally, you are justified in keeping still. But if you do believe in the extraordinary accomplishment of the Negro church and the Negro college, the Negro school and the Negro newspaper, then say so and say so plainly, not only for the sake of those who have given their lives to make these things worthwhile, but for those young people whom you are teaching, by that negative attitude, that there is nothing that they can do, nobody that they can emulate, and no field worthwhile working in. Think of what Negro art and literature has yet to accomplish if it can only be free and untrammelled by the necessity of pleasing white folks! Think of the splendid moral appeal that you can make to a million children tomorrow, if once you can get them to see the possibilities of the American Negro today and now, whether he is segregated or not, or in spite of all possible segregation.

*Illustration sous droits d'auteur*



(For release July 1, 1934)

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY  
June 26, 1934

TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

In deference to your desire to postpone action on my resignation of June 11, I have allowed my nominal connection with THE CRISIS to extend to July 1, and have meantime entered into communication with the Chairman of the Board, and with your Committee of Reconciliation.

13-32-33  
I appreciate the good will and genuine desire to bridge an awkward break which your action indicated, and yet it is clear to me, and I think to the majority of the Board that under the circumstances my resignation must stand. I owe it, however, to the Board and to the public to make clear at this time the deeper reasons for my action, lest the apparent causes of my resignation seem inadequate.

Many friends have truthfully asserted that the segregation argument was not the main reason for my wishing to leave this organization. It was an occasion and an important occasion, but it could have been adjusted. In fact, no matter what the Board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People says, its action toward segregation has got to approximate, in the future as in the past, the pattern which it followed in the case of the separate camp for Negro officers during the World War and in the case of the Tuskegee Veterans' Hospital. In both instances, we protested vigorously and to the limit of our ability the segregation policy. Then, when we had failed and knew we had failed, we bent every effort toward making the colored camp at Des Moines the best officers' camp possible, and the Tuskegee Hospital, with its Negro personnel, one of the most efficient in the land. This is shown by the 8th and 14th Annual Reports of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The only thing, therefore, that remains for us is to decide whether we are openly to recognize this procedure as inevitable, or be silent about it and still pursue it. Under these circumstances, the argument must be more or less academic, but there is no essential reason that those who see different sides of this same shield should not be able to agree to live together in the same house.

The whole matter assumed, however, a serious aspect when the Board peremptorily forbade all criticism of the officers and policies in THE CRISIS. I had planned to continue constructive criticism of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in THE CRISIS because I firmly believe that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People faces the most gruelling of tests which come to an old organization: founded in a day when a negative program of protest was imperative and effective, it succeeded so well that the program seemed perfect and unlimited. Suddenly, by World War and chaos, we are called to formulate a positive program of construction and inspiration. We have been thus far unable to comply.

Today this organization, which has been great and effective for nearly a quarter of a century, finds itself in a time of crisis and change, without a program, without effective organization, without executive officers, who have either the ability or disposition to guide the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the right direction.

13-32-34

These are harsh and arresting charges. I make them deliberately, and after long thought, earnest effort, and with infinite writhing of spirit. To the very best of my ability, and every ounce of my strength, I have since the beginning of the Great Depression, tried to work inside the organization for its realignment and readjustment to new duties. I have been almost absolutely unsuccessful. My program for economic readjustment has been totally ignored. My demand for a change in personnel has been considered as mere petty jealousy, and my protest against our mistakes and blunders has been looked upon as disloyalty to the organization.

So long as I sit by silently consenting, I share responsibility. If I criticize within, my words fall on deaf ears. If I criticize openly, I seem to be washing dirty linen in public. There is but one recourse, complete and final withdrawal, not because all is hopeless nor because there are no signs of realization of the possibilities of reform and of the imperative demand for men and vision, but because evidently I personally can do nothing more.

I leave behind me in the organization many who have long thought with me, and yet hesitated at action; many persons of large ideals who see no agents at hand to realize them, and who fear that the dearth of ability and will to sacrifice within this organization, indicates a similar lack within the whole race. I know that both sets of friends are wrong, and while I desert them with deep reluctance, it is distinctly in the hope that the fact of my going may arouse to action and bring a great and gifted race to the rescue, with a rebirth of that fine idealism and devotion that founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Under those circumstances, there is but one thing for me to do, and that is to make the supreme sacrifice of taking myself absolutely and unequivocally out of the picture, so that hereafter the leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, without the distraction of personalities and accumulated animosities, can give their whole thought and attention to the rescuing of the greatest organization for the emancipation of Negroes that America has ever had.

I am, therefore, insisting upon my resignation, and on July 1st, whether the Board of Directors acts or does not act, I automatically cease to have any connection whatsoever in any shape or form with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I do not, however, cease to wish it well, to follow it with personal and palpitating interest, and to applaud it when it is able to rescue itself from its present impossible position and reorganize itself according to the demands of the present crisis.

Very respectfully yours,  
(Signed) W. E. B. Du Bois.

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## **Mots clés**

Ségrégation

Intégration

Jim Crow

W.E.B. Du Bois

Marcus Garvey

Booker T. Washington

Première Guerre Mondiale

Panafricanisme

Grande Dépression

Afro-américain

## **Résumé**

Ce mémoire est centré sur le militant afro-américain, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois et ses éditoriaux pour *The Crisis* de 1910 jusqu'à 1934. En quoi les écrits de Du Bois est le miroir contestataire de la ségrégation, soit un phénomène multiforme qui opère dans les différentes sphères de la société américaine et qui évolue avec le temps ? Comment Du Bois passe-t-il d'un refus pur et simple de la ségrégation raciale et de la discrimination raciale à une vision plus concessionnaire et réservée de l'intégration ?

**Key words**

Segregation

Integration

Jim Crow

W.E.B. Du Bois

Marcus Garvey

Booker T. Washington

World War One

Pan Africanism

Great Depression

African American

**Summary**

This research paper will be paying particular attention to W.E.B. Du Bois's writings for *The Crisis* magazine from 1910, date of its creation to 1934, date of his resignation as editor. How Du Bois's work in *The Crisis* reflected the rebellious views on segregation, either a multiform phenomenon that extended itself in all the spheres of the American society and that changed with time? How Du Bois went from a diehard refusal of racial segregation and racial discrimination to a more reserved vision of integration?



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