

**Left Out in the Cold: The Arrest of W.E.B. Du Bois  
and the Reaction of the African American Community to  
the Red Scare**

by

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## Abstract

This thesis is a study of the 1951 arrest of W.E.B. Du Bois. The arrest was a product of Cold War culture that had enveloped the United States following World War Two. Du Bois was charged with acting as an undeclared foreign agent which, in the Cold War era, implied complicity with the Soviet Union. Du Bois had established the Peace Information Center to distribute the Stockholm Peace Appeal that asked that both the Soviet Union and the United States agree not to use nuclear weapons in any first strike. The charges of disloyalty brought a variety of reactions from the African American community that illustrate the impact of Cold War culture. This thesis will argue that the African American community had by 1951, adopted Cold War cultural norms. Furthermore, African Americans, rather than being passive in the creation and dissemination of Cold War culture, were active participants in its extensive reach. The reaction of the African American press to the arrest demonstrates that the African American media, through its editorial commentary, provided guidance to the African American community on how to best respond to the Cold War.

Cold War culture was expressed through a redefinition of Americanism. In other words, what it meant to be a patriotic American became attenuated in the Cold War era. Du Bois and those who supported him believed in a broader version of Americanism that had at one time been acceptable, but following the end of the Cold War was stigmatised as un-American. Consequently, while claiming to be loyal Americans, Du Bois and his allies were seen as undermining the security and prosperity of the state. Through an analysis of the African American press and Du Bois's correspondence, this thesis demonstrates how W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the foremost intellectuals and leaders of his era, came to be left out in the Cold.

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## Introduction

Since emancipation African Americans' political aspirations for racial justice in the United States have focused on achieving full and equal citizenship. From the Great Depression to World War Two the African American community worked to achieve equal rights in a broad multiracial coalition that often included Communists and other members of the American left. However, in the Cold War political repression that soon followed the end of World War Two, any association with communism was used as an excuse to attack those on the left. The majority of the African American community willingly accepted the marginalization of the left as a means to achieve their historic aspirations. However, this willingness to sign off on the new ideological regime was not universal and members of both the white and African American community refused to forgo their loyalty to a different vision of their country, one that worked towards social and economic justice. W.E.B. Du Bois became a central figure in that refusal by speaking out in support of those victimised by the Cold War and by championing causes that challenged Cold War norms. In 1951, Du Bois, one of the most revered leaders of the African American community for nearly half a century, was arrested on charges of

working as an undeclared foreign agent. Du Bois and his supporters fought back against the charges by mounting a national campaign and in doing so confronted the pervasiveness of Cold War Americanism.

This thesis will argue that the vast majority of the African American community adopted and supported a definition of Americanism defined by the Cold War position of the American government. This version of Americanism emphasized capitalism and anti-communism and was in direct opposition to an earlier version that had advocated international peace and economic equality. The earlier version of Americanism had been widely supported by the leadership of the African American community and continued to be supported by Du Bois. His arrest evoked a strong response in the African American community and engendered a discussion of the Cold War and of Du Bois in the pages of the African American press. By studying the response of the African American press and Du Bois's correspondence, I will endeavour to demonstrate the ways in which African American attitudes were both reflective and supportive of the new Cold War cultural norms reified during this period.

The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States arose following the end of World War Two. Together Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States formed the victorious Grand Alliance that during the war had defeated the Axis of Germany, Italy and Japan. However, even as the war was ending the Soviet Union and the United States were moving towards confrontation. In 1946, Joseph Stalin made a speech whose major message, according to Walter LaFeber, was that "war was inevitable as long as capitalism existed."<sup>1</sup> Many in the United States government understood this message not

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<sup>1</sup> Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1990* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), 39.



as an ideological stand but as an immediate threat to their security. The United States and Britain also contributed to the denouement of Soviet-West relations. In a soon to be a (in)famous speech, Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, characterized the Soviet Union and its allies as living behind an “Iron Curtain.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Soviets operated under a paranoid nationalism that was misunderstood by Americans, as aggressive internationalism. Soviet actions were interpreted through the experience of Nazi plans for world domination.<sup>3</sup> The Truman administration’s priority was to protect capitalism from another Great Depression that the nation had only escaped from with the advent of World War Two. The administration pursued a massive spending plan to protect Western Europe from economic collapse and the threat of communism. Simultaneously, the administration pushed to increase military spending so that the United States could assume the mantle as pre-eminent imperial power from the quickly fading British Empire. Thus, the Truman administration had by the end of 1946 convinced the majority of Americans that the Soviet Union was an “ideological enemy with no legitimate fears or grievances.”<sup>4</sup> This national consensus meant that the administration could do as it wished internationally as long as it maintained a tough stance towards the Soviet Union. This was a radical change in the self-perception of the United States. Historically, it had seen itself as removed from the corrupting and tainted intricacies and politics of the rest of the world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 46.

<sup>3</sup> Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, “Red Fascism: the Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American image of Totalitarianism, 1930’s-1950s,” *The American Historical Review* 75, (Fall 1970): 1046-1064.

<sup>4</sup> Melvin P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 140.

<sup>5</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, “‘Foreign Affairs’ after World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics,” *Diplomatic History* 18 ,(Winter 1994): 59-70.

In hindsight, the move towards militarism and conflict seems inevitable due to political and economic forces. However, following the end of World War Two, a large constituency in the United States, and indeed the world, hoped that a new form of international relations would become the norm. World War Two was believed to mark the beginning of the end for colonialism and, with the creation of the United Nations, many believed that a new era of peace and prosperity could arise out of the carnage of war. However, following a short period in which those possibilities seemed to be coming to fruition with the signing of the International Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Cold War machinations of both the Soviet Union and the United States ground the United Nations' business to a halt by turning it into another battleground in the Cold War.<sup>6</sup> With the failure of the United Nations and the move towards a bipolar world, those committed to making the world a better place were forced to choose either to side with the new Americanism or to stay true to their pre-Cold War ideals.

In the postwar United States Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party led hopes for maintaining world peace and avoiding another World War. Wallace had been vice-president under Roosevelt and secretary of Agriculture and Commerce under Truman. He had hoped for a continuation of peaceful relations with the Soviet Union and an expansion of the New Deal policies enacted under Roosevelt's administration. Henry Wallace disagreed with the administration's tone towards the Soviet Union and wanted the government to be more accommodating to Soviet interests in their sphere of influence. Wallace delivered a speech at Madison Square Garden on 12 September, 1946

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<sup>6</sup> Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights, Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 205-240.

where he made his views public by attacking British imperialism and the Republican Party. In response, Truman fired Wallace.<sup>7</sup> Instead of being silenced by his firing, Wallace ran as a third party presidential nominee for the Progressive Party. However, the Wallace campaign of 1948 was a political failure. Wallace, because of his association with the Communist Party, --he refused to disassociate himself from anyone who would provide support--was never able to establish himself as a viable political candidate.<sup>8</sup> The Wallace campaign's open connection to communists had other lasting effects. According to Robbie Lieberman, linking the peace movement to communism, "laid the groundwork for the association of all grassroots peace activism with communist subversion in the years to come."<sup>9</sup> This connection also provided the foundation for the charges against Du Bois. The failure of Wallace's campaign and the linking of peace activism with communism were the result of the dominance of Cold War culture.

Cold War culture was the product of a political effort described trenchantly by George Lipsitz as "an emerging liberal totalitarianism,"<sup>10</sup> created and enforced by the State. It became a political axiom that communism was a threat to the United States and that the United States was in a military, moral, and political war with communism.<sup>11</sup> The threat of the Soviet Union against the United States became a trope to explain away the inability of capitalism to provide freedom to all peoples and to silence opponents of Cold War Americanism, by stigmatizing anyone who critiqued the government or capitalism as

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<sup>7</sup> Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 138-139.

<sup>8</sup> Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 273.

<sup>9</sup> Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 53 (italics in original).

<sup>10</sup> George Lipsitz, *Class and Culture in Cold War America "A Rainbow at Midnight"* (New York: Praeger, 1981), 143.

<sup>11</sup> Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The US Crusade against the Soviet Union, 1945-1956* (London: Manchester University Press, 1999), 4, 43.

supporters of communism.<sup>12</sup> Cold War culture, created and supported by the government, was an example of what William H. Sewell defines as “authoritative cultural action.” This type of sustained governmental effort when “launched from centers of power,” according to Sewell, “has the effect of turning what otherwise might be a babble of cultural voices into a semiotically and politically ordered field of differences.” The results of such actions, and indeed the consequences of Cold War culture, are that they “create a map of ‘culture’ and its variants, one that tells people where they and their practices fit in the official scheme of things.”<sup>13</sup> The threat of an impending world conflict, exacerbated by the Korean War, expedited the “authoritative culture” of the Cold War, so that in the few short years following the end of the Second World War, Cold War culture came to dominate the political and social discourse of the United States.<sup>14</sup>

The Cold War culture of the late 1940s and early 1950s forced most American organisations interested in social change to modify their positions in order to remain politically viable. This process involved adherence to American foreign policy and

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<sup>12</sup> Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 36.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Sewell, Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture” in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* eds. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): 56.

<sup>14</sup> Cold War culture has been an area of wide historiographic interest in the last decade. A few examples include, Lipsitz, *Class and Culture*; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991); Tome Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Lucas, *Freedom’s War*; Christian G. Appy, ed. *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2000). See also review essays by, Robert Griffith, “The Cultural Turn in Cold War Studies,” *Reviews in American History* 29, (Winter 2001): 150-157 and Tony Shaw, “The Politics of Cold War Culture,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, (Summer 2001): 59-76. However, claims of a hegemonic Cold War culture are problematic because they often ignore the many areas of resistance and tension that existed in postwar America. See, Peter Filene, “Cold War Culture” Doesn’t Say it All” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, eds. (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 2001). Nevertheless, these articles emphasize minority opinions as opposed to the dominant Cold War cultural norms. While it is important to recognize resistance, overemphasis on exceptions tends to obscure how powerful and dominant Cold War culture was.

rejection of communism and any affiliation with other organisations or individuals that might be tainted with communism. The American government's Cold War doctrine forced organizations to choose between support or rejection of the new American foreign policy. Consequently, by the late 1940s, organisations that had previously supported international co-operation and peaceful co-existence with the Soviet Union had to either change their positions or accept political marginalization. W. E. B. Du Bois was affiliated with two social movements that were forced to address and respond to the new Cold War environment: the peace movement and the African American freedom struggle. In both cases, the majority of the leadership followed the new political regime of the Cold War, while a minority in each movement retained allegiance to an earlier vision of social change and activism that included a critique of the United States government. The peace movement was especially hurt because its very message was antithetical to the militarism of the government. Many former supporters of pacifism and opponents of the Truman Doctrine were convinced of the necessity of a strong militaristic response to the Soviet Union by the actions of Soviet forces in Europe.<sup>15</sup> Internationalists in the United States who had supported the creation of the United Nations and movements for international peace, "adapted to the exigencies of a Cold War, [by] identifying peace with military and economic power of the noncommunist industrialized world and particularly the United States."<sup>16</sup> This large defection, along with the conflation of communism and peace activism in general, led to a long period of decline for the peace movement.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream*, 39-40.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Chatfield, *The American Peace Movement: Ideals and Activism* (New York: Twayne, 1992), 99.

<sup>17</sup> Another example of the choices that social movements had to make was the American women's organisations that made compromises with the Cold War by adopting some aspects of Cold War cultural norms. Some critiqued the excesses of the Red Scare domestically while adopting a strong commitment to anticommunism abroad. However, most women's organisations simply adopted the Cold War ideology

An additional obstacle that the American peace movement faced was the use of peace as a propaganda tool by the Soviet Union. The United States entered the Cold War with a massive military advantage over the Soviet Union. American territory had been relatively unharmed by the war, leaving its industrial base untouched, and it alone had the technology to create nuclear weapons. In response, the Soviet Union looked to foster and support an international peace movement that would emphasise an anti-nuclear message. The Soviet Union hoped that a peace movement would help prevent an American attack and especially American use of nuclear weapons.<sup>18</sup> The most successful manifestation of this strategy was the Stockholm Peace Appeal. It came about as a response to Truman's declaration that the United States planned to pursue the creation of a hydrogen bomb, a weapon with far more destructive potential than any existing nuclear weapons. The appeal was written at a meeting of the Partisans of Peace, a Soviet-controlled peace organisation. Its language was clear and the intention of the petition, as well as the entire Soviet Peace movement, was, according to Stalin, "of drawing the popular masses into the struggle to preserve peace and avert a new world war. It does not, therefore, seek to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism."<sup>19</sup> The American response to Soviet support of the anti-nuclear campaign was to denounce anyone supporting similar positions as being Soviet puppets. The Stockholm peace appeal's message of peace and

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without reservation. Helen Laville, *Cold War women: The International Activities of American Women's Organisations* (London: Manchester University Press, 2002), 109-118.

<sup>18</sup> Other reasons why the Soviet Union wanted a peace movement under its control included recruiting Soviet sympathisers in Western countries and taking control of the peace movement away from non-Communists, which would eliminate any criticism of Soviet Actions. Laurence S. Wittner, *Volume One The Struggle Against The Bomb--One World or None: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement Through 1953* Stanford Nuclear Age Series (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 181-182.

<sup>19</sup> Wittner, *Volume One The Struggle Against The Bomb*, 183.

opposition to nuclear war received enormous international support.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the dogmatic refusal of the communist-led peace movement to even discuss any Soviet violations left it marginalized within the larger western peace movement. It was Du Bois's passionate advocacy of the Stockholm Peace Appeal that would bring him into conflict with the American government.

Du Bois's arrest provides evidence of a change in the definition of Americanism that was fundamental to Cold War culture. According to Gary Gerstle, Americanism was a political process that began with World War One and required any group in the country to "couch their programs in the language of Americanism" if it wanted to be politically relevant.<sup>21</sup> Americanism refers to a belief in the unique qualities of the United States, a patriotic loyalty to American ideals that are grounded in the founding documents of the nation, specifically the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. These documents, according to Americanism, provided a base from which a unique form of democracy and freedom could arise. Consequently, Americanism "can be best understood as a political language, a set of words, phrases, and concepts that individuals used--either by choice or necessity--to articulate their political beliefs and press their political demands."<sup>22</sup> The American government had always wanted to control the definition of Americanism but it was not until the postwar period that the government was able to effectively impose its own definition on the public, effectively muting other historic versions of Americanism. During the Great Depression a version of Americanism grew out of the political left that challenged capitalism and those in power to improve

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<sup>20</sup> Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream*, 88, 96-97.

<sup>21</sup> Gary Gerstle, *Working-class Americanism The politics of labor in a textile city, 1914-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 8.

<sup>22</sup> Gerstle, *Working-class Americanism*, 8.

American society. This vision of Americanism was inspired by the participation of the Communist Party that had achieved “an unprecedented respectability” through its participation in the Popular Front, when it worked with other left wing groups to bring about social change.<sup>23</sup> The Popular Front established a strong set of cultural norms that defined Americanism as opposition to an unjust government and support for “social and economic radicalism.”<sup>24</sup> This movement for change portrayed itself as fundamentally American and as an expression of the true revolutionary spirit of the American Founders.

Throughout the Great Depression, Du Bois, the African American community, communists, and conservatives had relied on the language of Americanism. The dilemma that Du Bois and his allies faced in the postwar period was a government supported by an industrial security complex with unprecedented power and resources that attempted to make Americanism reflect its own political and economic priorities. The demands of Cold War Americanism changed the ways in which citizenship was deemed legitimate. Citizenship was no longer believed to be the result of birth or application. True citizenship depended on an ideological commitment to the American State and Cold War American norms. “Large majorities of Jews, Catholics, blacks, and other minorities would benefit from the shift,” Gary Gerstle argues, “for, as long as they agreed to stay away from communism and ideas associated with it, they found their opportunities for inclusion in American society enhanced.”<sup>25</sup> This change in the meaning of American citizenship and loyalty was important to the American government in gaining support for

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<sup>23</sup> Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: Norton Books, 1998), 212.

<sup>24</sup> Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, 212.

<sup>25</sup> Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 247.



new cultural norms that reified a bipolar world in which the United States presented itself as fighting the Soviet Union for the causes of freedom and democracy.

The African American community, notwithstanding the racist society in which it existed, remained loyal to the United States during the early Cold War. The Cold War, framed as an imperative struggle for the survival of the United States, engendered a reaction of loyalty and patriotism from the African American community. African Americans chose loyalty to the United States and the new Cold War norms due to a combination of intimidation, prudence, and patriotism. The postwar-Red Scare, the most visible and brutish form of Cold War culture, evoked resistance and resentment throughout the country but did not necessarily undermine “common sense” understandings regarding the Cold War -namely, the threat of the Soviet Union and the need to stop communism. Furthermore, the Red Scare tended to be used by opponents of racial equality to label anyone as a communist who advocated for change. African Americans who worked with whites to improve racial relations were automatically suspect to government security agencies, such as the FBI, which tended to view any white who advocated for racial equality as potentially being a communist or having communist sympathies.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, although the majority of the African American community remained critical of the excesses of the Cold War, particularly the Red Scare, it did not attack the underlying logic of Cold War confrontation.<sup>27</sup>

African Americans’ response to the Cold War was largely a result of the strategies that the African American community had adopted to improve their position within the

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<sup>26</sup> Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*(New York: Simon and Shuster, 1988), 209-210.

<sup>27</sup> For example, in 1948 the red-baiting of a multiracial union effectively, “eroded support among blacks,” Robert Korstad, Nelson Lichenstein, “Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 75, 3 (December, 1988), 804.

racist society in which they lived. Most African Americans were not interested in revolution but rather in making the system work for them equitably. Prior to the Cold War the most dramatic expression of African American dissent was the March on Washington that was threatened by A. Philip Randolph during World War Two,<sup>28</sup> and resulted in Roosevelt issuing Executive Order 8802, “that prohibited discrimination in the defense industries and agencies of the federal government.”<sup>29</sup> Following the end of the war, many African Americans began to reap the rewards of living in an economic super power when programs such as the G.I. Bill allowed them to own their own homes and to receive a formal education. The growing economic prosperity of many African Americans, and the incremental easing of racial barriers, amplified their belief in “the primacy of the individual nation-state as the only genuine champion and guarantor of civil rights.”<sup>30</sup>

While the African American community had a somewhat different response to the Cold War from the rest of the country because of their experience as a racially discriminated against minority, their response was simply a variation on the theme of Cold War anti-communism. The community could not help but perceive the gap in the rhetoric of the American government internationally and the reality for African Americans domestically. Indeed, Brenda Plummer argues that the efforts of the government to convince the African American community to support the Cold War are

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<sup>28</sup> Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black American, 1925-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 156. See also, Azza Salama Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights in the United States, 1941-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 41-45.

<sup>29</sup> Bates, *Pullman Porters*, 148.

<sup>30</sup> Brenda Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996) , 210; Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 275, 280-284.

an indication that African Americans were resistant.<sup>31</sup> While it is true that the government tailored some publicity to be directed specifically towards the community, it was part of an overall effort throughout the nation to reinforce Cold War norms.<sup>32</sup> One of the strongest arguments made by the government to garner support for the Cold War was the material benefits that many Americans were receiving or expected to receive due to the strength of capitalism,<sup>33</sup> benefits that the African American community did not enjoy to the same extent. However, the new economic opportunities that the African American community had experienced as a result of the Second World War had already accelerated the integration of the community into political efforts to gain full citizenship.<sup>34</sup> Large segments of the African American community not only adapted to the new Cold War reality, but also reinforced and reified the new cultural norms to pursue their own agendas, which were a reflection of their personal political beliefs and aspirations. Most African Americans' primary goal was full citizenship and political participation and they believed that integration would lead to the realization of their goals. As the Du Bois case illustrates, the aspiration for full citizenship made African Americans particularly vulnerable to the Cold War cultural climate by limiting its ability to critique the actions of a government that they looked to as an advocate. Most African Americans who defended Du Bois did so because they believed that not defending him, and allowing so prominent a member of their community to be humiliated, would damage their aspirations for acceptance in American society.

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<sup>31</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 198-199.

<sup>32</sup> Richard M. Fried, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming! Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: Norton & Company, 1998), 270-272.

<sup>34</sup> Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 253-264.

In claiming to advocate for freedom internationally, the United States was forced to confront and acknowledge the lack of freedom many Americans experienced domestically. The United States rhetorically framed its aggressive international and military expansion as an effort to bring freedom to the world's population, even if this meant living under a dictator or the removal of an unsuitable democratically elected government. The need to confront racism domestically was also the result of Americans believing their own propaganda. As Gary Gerstle points out, "the Cold War, while generating an undercurrent of fear and uncertainty. . . . kept nationalist consciousness razor-sharp and, if anything, intensified popular devotion to principles of freedom and democracy."<sup>35</sup> However, the definition of "freedom and democracy" lay with the government which operated from the premise that the enforcement of existing laws or changing laws that did not properly reflect the American way of life, would be enough to solve any problem. This meant that for African American organisations to be taken seriously by the government they had to present their case as inherently American and their solutions as following the norms of Cold War Americanism.<sup>36</sup> This was not a problem for the majority of the African American leadership, but for Du Bois the current government's version of Americanism was not authentic and was not one that he was willing to follow.

The transcendence of Cold War Americanism in the African American community was illustrated by the weakness of any popular movements that stressed Black separatism.<sup>37</sup> The Cold War, with its combination of enforced acculturation and

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<sup>35</sup> Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 277.

<sup>36</sup> Plummer *Rising Wind*, 199-200.

<sup>37</sup> White E. Frances, *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 117-150. George M. Fredrickson *Black*

economic integration silenced anti-Americanist rhetoric, thereby muting voices that once had been very influential in the African American community. The disappearance of Black separatist nationalism as a viable political and philosophical option in the African American community during the early 1950s is revealing. The apparent success of the integrationist methods adopted by the NAACP and later the Southern Christian Leadership Conference made it seem “as if the call for a radical Black Nationalism had been permanently muted.”<sup>38</sup> Consequently, Du Bois and his defenders depended on an appeal to patriotism and loyalty, --that is, Americanism--rhetorical terrain that had come to be dominated by their enemies.

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Placing the African American response to Du Bois’s arrest and trial firmly within the national context of the United States bucks the historiographic trend that for the last twenty years has worked to undermine the importance of the nation-state as a unit of historical study. Diaspora and borderland studies have correctly identified the transient nature of populations and ideas. In African American history this rethinking of the African and African American experience was inspired by the work of Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic*. Gilroy described a Black Atlantic that provided “a privileged standpoint from which certain useful and critical perceptions about the modern world become more

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*Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 279; This is also demonstrated by a reading of Augustina Herod and Charles C. Herod’s *Afro-American Nationalism: An Annotated Bibliography of Militant Separatist and Nationalist Literature*. In it they collected articles, books and pamphlets dealing with any form of black nationalism and from 1945 to 1965. They have only one citation between 1948 and 1956 and only four before 1962. Augustina Herod and Charles C. Herod, *Afro-American Nationalism: An Annotated Bibliography of Militant Separatist and Nationalist Literature* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 99-219.

<sup>38</sup> John T. McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African-American Political Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 127.

likely.”<sup>39</sup> However, the case of Du Bois’s arrest and the reaction of the African American press and much of the support that Du Bois received reflects a critical perception of the United States far more grounded in the national context of the United States than any diasporic identity.<sup>40</sup> In other words, overemphasis on diasporic identities underrates the importance of national identities.

This thesis began as an effort to demonstrate the validity of Gilroy’s theoretical model in understanding the African American community’s response to Du Bois’s arrest. Instead, the sources spoke of a deep commitment to the United States and a lack of interest in non-American news and issues. In an effort to understand the language of patriotism and loyalty that repeated itself in both the newspapers and Du Bois’s correspondence, I turned to studies that emphasized the elasticity and mutability of language in American history. Two works greatly influenced my approach to Americanism, Gerstle’s *Working-class Americanism*<sup>41</sup> and Eric Foner’s *The Story of American Freedom*.<sup>42</sup> Gerstle’s monograph traced the development of labour unions in one town in New England and the ways in which Americanism became transformed in the postwar era. Eric Foner’s opus traced the political evolution of the meaning of freedom in American history. Both historians demonstrated the ways in which the meaning and power of language can change in different historical moments. Du Bois

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 111.

<sup>40</sup> This supports the comments made by Sandra Gunning in her trenchant assessment of Gilroy’s work that the “recent privileging of diaspora identification....threatens to elide the real impact of color, status, region, and gendered experience within the context of black diaspora...” Sandra Gunning “Nancy Prince and the Politics of Mobility, Home and Diasporic (Mis)Identification” *American Quarterly* 53, (March 2001): 33; For another critique of Gilroy’s displacement of national identity see George Elliot Clarke, “Must All Blackness be American: Locating Canada in Borden’s ‘Tightrope Time,’ or Nationalizing Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic*” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 28, (Summer 1996): 56-72.

<sup>41</sup> Gerstle, *Working-class Americanism*.

<sup>42</sup> Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*.

believed that the debate regarding America's future was still up for grabs. However, his arrest and the reaction of the African American community suggests otherwise.

I have also been influenced by the historiography that links the Cold War to the emergent Civil Rights Movement. This literature began with Mary Dudziak's widely cited article that argued that the Truman administration adopted Civil Rights measures because of the pressures of international opinion heightened by the rhetoric of the Cold War.<sup>43</sup> Dudziak argued that the Cold War created opportunities for the African American community to use the rhetoric of the United States government's defense of freedom to achieve its own political victories.

Dudziak's argument not only linked the international context to domestic change, it also opposed an earlier perspective that emphasised the negative consequences of the Cold War for the African American community. In separate works, Gerald Horne and Manning Marable argued that the Cold War irrevocably damaged the African American community.<sup>44</sup> Horne and Marable were particularly angered by the actions of those in the African American community who sided with the Truman administration in waging the Cold War. Rather than seeing the pragmatic benefits of this choice as Dudziak did, Marable and Horne believed that those who adopted and worked within the Cold War norms "contradicted the historic and contemporary interests of African Americans."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Mary Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," *Stanford Law Review* 41 (November 1988): 61-120. Also see Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Layton, *Politics and Civil Rights*. In a far less cited example of the same argument see Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics of Racial Discrimination* (Westview Press, 1988), 201.

<sup>44</sup> Gerald Horne, *Black & Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (New York: State University of New York press, 1986); Manning Marable, *Race Reform, and Rebellion: the Second Reconstruction in Black American, 1945-1990*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London: University Press of Mississippi, 1991).

<sup>45</sup> Gerald Horne, "Who Lost the Cold War? Africans and African Americans," *Diplomatic History* 20, no.4 (Fall 1996), 617.

Both Horne and Marable assumed that the victories won by those who adopted Cold War Americanism would have been won regardless of African American acquiescence to Cold War Americanism. Dudziak, Marable, and Horne all perceived the attack on W.E.B. Du Bois and others, such as Paul Robeson, as a direct response to Cold War Americanism. What differentiated Horne and Marable from Dudziak was their argument that the repudiation of Du Bois and Robeson did nothing positive for the community. All three ignored any reasons, apart from the possibility of strategic benefit, why African Americans might choose to support the Cold War. They ignored the capacity of African Americans to support or resist the Cold War according to their own beliefs and an independent weighing of the evidence.

While acknowledging Dudziak's argument that the Cold War provided some opportunities for the African American elite, Penny Von Eschen's monograph *Race Against Empire*, focused on a broad anti-colonial African American left that flourished in the United States from before to World War Two until 1947, when it was destroyed by the onset of the Cold War and the Red Scare.<sup>46</sup> Von Eschen studied the ways in which anti-colonialism brought together African Americans, international social movements, and the left in the United States. Her study argued that the Cold War effectively shattered a pre-war alliance that saw many African Americans articulate their frustration with American racism in solidarity with an international left. Von Eschen's definitive delineation between the immediate postwar period and the Cold War was particularly useful for understanding the different context that confronted Du Bois in the immediate postwar period in contrast to the time of his trial.

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<sup>46</sup> Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).



Brenda Plummer, in her exhaustive study *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960*,<sup>47</sup> provided the most comprehensive overview of African American responses to the Cold War. Plummer also saw the Cold War as having a profound effect on the African American community's attempts to combat racism. Plummer was particularly helpful in demonstrating the similarities and differences between African American and white experiences of the Cold War.<sup>48</sup> However, Plummer overemphasised the oppositional nature of African Americans by only looking at African American opinions of certain U.S. government policies or actions, such as the war in Korea, without appreciating the broader impact of Cold War culture on African American views of foreign and domestic policies.<sup>49</sup> Plummer cited African American commitment to domestic civil rights rather than international human rights as the underlying reason that the majority of the community sided with Cold War norms.<sup>50</sup> For Plummer, strategic necessities to achieve the longstanding goal of citizenship provided a near complete explanation for the actions of the majority of the African American elite. What was lacking in this utilitarian narrative was an explanation as to why the assumptions of Cold War Americanism became so prevalent. While some adopted Cold War rhetoric for purely tactical reasons,<sup>51</sup> it seems impossible that this was the case for all of those in the African American community who used the language of Cold War Americanism. What is

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<sup>47</sup> Brenda Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 167-216.

<sup>49</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 204-208. In contrast Manning Marable suggests that the African American community was becoming more right wing in the postwar period, though he is not clear as to why this occurs outside of poor strategy by the African American middle class. Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion*, 24-28.

<sup>50</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 210.

<sup>51</sup> Von Eschen makes a convincing case that Walter White, president of the NAACP, made a purely strategic choice to link the NAACP to the Truman administration and consequently Cold War Americanism in order to further civil rights and protect the organization from red-baiting. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 109.

more likely is that many African Americans weighed the evidence and chose to side with the U.S. administration because they believed it was in their interest but also, considering the weight of official and unofficial cultural pressure bearing down on them, because it had become the easier choice to make. Furthermore, the power of Cold War culture made many of the assumptions upon which Cold War Americanism depended, such as the threat of communism, appear axiomatic.

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The dominant interpretation of Du Bois's behaviour and actions in the postwar period was established by two biographies written while he was still alive. Though written a year apart their interpretations are so similar that they can be discussed as if they were the same text. Francis L. Broderick, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis*<sup>52</sup> and Elliot M. Rudwick's *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership*<sup>53</sup> provided an interpretation that remains the standard view of Du Bois's later years.<sup>54</sup> Both chastised Du Bois for his involvement with communism and the peace movement, arguing that his participation in both acted to the detriment of his legacy and the African American community. These earlier works reflect a Cold War judgement on the suitability of Du Bois's pro-communist views. Elliot Rudwick argued that Du Bois, "having cut himself off from the N.A.A.C.P. and having trod the course of the far left, he no longer has any direct influence in the field of contemporary American race

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<sup>52</sup> Francis L. Broderick, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959).

<sup>53</sup> Elliot M. Rudwick, *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960).

<sup>54</sup> A recent version of the Broderick-Rudwick thesis can be found in Raymond Wolters, *Du Bois and his Rivals* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 3.

relations.”<sup>55</sup> This perception remained the dominant historical interpretation until challenged by the works of Gerald Horne and Manning Marable.<sup>56</sup>

Gerald Horne, one of Du Bois’s most prominent biographers, has written more on the African American left in the postwar era than any other historian.<sup>57</sup> Horne went to great effort to demonstrate that Du Bois was still an influential and important figure in the later years of his life. However, he did not demonstrate that the many accolades and honours Du Bois received at this time reflected any broad African American agreement with his political beliefs. Although Du Bois retained a devoted following among left wing groups, most African Americans did not listen to his message. While Horne was correct in illustrating that Du Bois was not physically isolated, Du Bois remained politically isolated. Horne also suggested that the African American community rallied to defend an attack on a prominent member. However, conflating “circling the wagon around the besieged”<sup>58</sup> with support of Du Bois’s political positions was a serious error.

Manning Marable also attempted to counter the Broderick-Rudwick thesis, though his work was concerned with demonstrating that Du Bois was dedicated to democratic change. Marable also argued that Du Bois’s defense was a success although he was clearer than Horne in discussing the difference between the alacrity with which the

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<sup>55</sup> Rudwick *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 290.

<sup>56</sup> Horne, *Black & Red*; Manning Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986); Of course Du Bois’s allies on the left provided an alternative to this thesis far earlier. See for example, John Henrik Clarke, et al., eds. *Black Titan: W. E. B. DuBois; an Anthology by the Editors of Freedomways*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

<sup>57</sup> Besides Horne’s *Black & Red*, he has produced a number of works on the era. See, Gerald Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994); *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946-1956* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987); *Race woman: the lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York university Press, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> Horne, *Black & Red*, 258.

international community responded versus the tepid national response.<sup>59</sup> There does not appear to be fundamental disagreement among different biographers regarding various reactions to the case. The difference lies in the authors' interpretations of these reactions. Horne, Marable and indeed Du Bois suggested that the impressive international support and coalition of progressives and peace groups in the United States represented a broad and significant response. Broderick and Rudwick offered a different focus, suggesting that the lack of domestic support indicated how isolated Du Bois was from the rest of the country, including the African American community.

David Levering Lewis's two volume Pulitzer Prize winning biography is the standard biography of Du Bois's life.<sup>60</sup> Lewis diverged from Marable and Horne in perceiving a level of frustration and bitterness in Du Bois's experiences that Marable and Horne argued reflected his ideological evolution to a pre-ordained communism.<sup>61</sup> Yet Lewis did not support the Broderick-Rudwick thesis that Du Bois was politically isolated or had abandoned the African American community by associating with the Communist Party.<sup>62</sup> He left little doubt that Du Bois's peace activism and support of socialism were not antithetical to his continued support of African American aspirations for justice.<sup>63</sup> Lewis offered a cornucopia of evidence that detailed the ways in which the Cold War and the behaviour of the African American elite and middle class drove Du Bois to seek solutions elsewhere. Lewis offered a balanced view that combines elements of Broderick, Rudwick, Horne, and Marable. However, Lewis, like the diplomatic historians studying

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<sup>59</sup> Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 182-186.

<sup>60</sup> David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993); David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000).

<sup>61</sup> Horne, *Black & Red*, 289-311; Marable, *W. E.B. Du Bois*, ix.

<sup>62</sup> Du Bois did join the Communist Party in 1960, but before either Rudwick or Broderick's biographies had been written.

<sup>63</sup> Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century*, 543.

African American responses to the Cold War, did not provide an ample enough explanation for the actions of the majority within the African American community and their adoption of Cold War Americanism. Instead, Lewis recited the standard explanation that combined state repression and strategic response.<sup>64</sup>

Adolph Reed, Jr.'s dense but illuminating work, *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line*, provides a model for a more sophisticated understanding of African American history.<sup>65</sup> In addressing two weaknesses in African American historiography, Reed contributed to a better understanding of the African American response to the Cold War. He successfully resisted the temptation to create an American norm that was in opposition to African Americans. Reed argued that "reifying the idea of a normative consensus exclusive of blacks fuels the tendency to conceptualize black thinking narrowly as a set of debates over strategies for reacting to the alien consensus."<sup>66</sup> According to Reed, the consequence of doing this was to make African Americans non-participants "in an evolving national grammar of political debate" and led to the "disposition to ignore the historical specificity and contextuality of black political discourse."<sup>67</sup> By arguing that the African American response to the Cold War was simply strategic, the historiography has placed African Americans outside of the Cold War culture. Thus African American history of this period has been reduced to "a debate over alternative styles of response to white agendas."<sup>68</sup> By incorporating an understanding of Cold War culture and the agency of African Americans in creating and

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<sup>64</sup> Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century*, 538, 556.

<sup>65</sup> Adolph L. Reed Jr., *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>66</sup> Reed, *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought*, 6-7.

<sup>67</sup> Reed, *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought*, 6.

<sup>68</sup> Reed, *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought*, 8.

sustaining Cold War Americanism, a fuller understanding of African American reaction to the Cold War is possible. Indeed, this thesis seeks to do just that.

Chapter One addresses the initial reaction of the African American press and Du Bois's friends and supporters to his arrest, demonstrating the adherence of the African American community to the new Cold War cultural norms. This adherence resulted in African American's attacking the arrest of Du Bois without questioning the underlying logic of the Cold War Americanism that allowed his arrest to occur. Chapter One also reviews the responses of the African American press and the letters that Du Bois received in support of his case.

Chapter Two follows Du Bois on two national tours as he and his wife, Shirley Graham-Du Bois, worked to counter Cold War Americanism and elicit public support for his position. Chapter Two also reveals the sources of Du Bois's defense and the effectiveness of the Cold War in marginalizing the New Deal version of Americanism.

Chapter Three analyses the reaction of the African American press and Du Bois's allies to his acquittal and demonstrates the profound split between Du Bois's close allies, the African American press, and a majority of the African American community. Chapter Three also explores the consequences and limitations of Du Bois's alliances and how his victory was negated by Cold War culture.

Du Bois's efforts to resist and reverse the rise of Cold War Americanism forced him to confront the limits of acceptable dissent within the discourse of Americanism. Broderick and Rudwick's assertion that Du Bois had abandoned the African American struggle for communism ignored Du Bois's own thinking on the matter. For Du Bois, the African American community was best served by adopting an international approach that

focused on bringing about a socialist future. When Du Bois was arrested he looked to the African American community as his natural constituency because of their shared race and because he saw his peace activism as inexorably linked to his historic activism for African American rights. The majority of African Americans accepted and worked within the norms of Cold War Americanism and although Du Bois attempted to pierce the veil of Cold War culture, he could not convince enough of his fellow African Americans that the path of peace was the same path that would lead them to their freedom.

## Chapter One

### **The Arrest: African Americans and Cold War Culture**

*I want progress... I want freedom for my people. And because I know and you know that we cannot have these things, and at the same time fight, destroy and kill all around the world in order to make huge profit for big business; for that reason, I take my stand beside the millions in every nation and continent and cry Peace-No More War!*

W.E.B. Du Bois<sup>1</sup>

On February 16, 1951 W. E. B. Du Bois was led into the District of Columbia federal courtroom to be arraigned on the charge of acting as an agent of a foreign country without registering with the U.S. government. Before entering the courtroom Du Bois was fingerprinted, handcuffed, and had his pockets checked for weapons. As the handcuffs were placed on his wrists his fiancée, Shirley Graham, screamed hysterically at the sight of the 83-year-old in shackles. Perry Howard, one of Du Bois's lawyers, yelled at the constable to remove the handcuffs. Startled by the loud outburst the constable did not move. Then seeing the small crowd of angry onlookers, he removed the manacles, perhaps calculating that those demanding the removal were more dangerous than an



unfettered elderly scholar. Du Bois's brief court appearance went on without further drama, yet the tone had been set; if the government planned to prosecute this man it would do so in the face of a determined opposition.

It was Du Bois's role as chairman of The Peace Information Center that had attracted the Justice Department's attention. Established in the United States in 1950 by Du Bois and several associates, The Peace Information Center advocated for peaceful co-existence with the Soviet Union and worked against the threat of nuclear war. The focus of the Center's anti-nuclear program was the Stockholm Appeal, an international effort that claimed 200,000,000 signatories worldwide. The Center's support of the Stockholm Appeal created national controversy when Dean Acheson, Secretary of State for President Truman, attacked the Center and the Appeal in the national press. Claiming that the Appeal was communist propaganda, Acheson warned Americans "not [to] be fooled by the so-called 'world peace appeal' or 'Stockholm resolution' .... It should be recognized for what it is - a propaganda trick in the spurious 'peace offensive' of the Soviet Union."<sup>2</sup> Du Bois responded to Acheson's attack with a long list of internationally prominent signators. One of his statements would later become the basis for his legal defense: "We are a group of Americans, who upon reading this Peace Appeal, regarded it as a true, fair statement of what ourselves and many countless other Americans believed."<sup>3</sup> Du Bois also lashed out at the "standard reaction to call anything 'communist' and therefore

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<sup>1</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "I Take My Stand," *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1920-1963*, with a tribute by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Pathway, 1970), 249.

<sup>2</sup> "Acheson Derides Soviet 'Peace' Bids: Returns 'War Criminal' Charge on Korea, sends Warning on Possible Balkan Blow," *The New York Times*, 13 July 1950, 1.

<sup>3</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois with Comment by Shirley Graham, *In Battle for Peace: The Story of my 83<sup>rd</sup> Birthday* (New York: Masses & Mainstream, 1952), 39-40; "Dr. Du Bois Calls on Acheson to Promise U.S. Will 'Never Be First to Use Bomb,'" *New York Times*, 14 July 1951, 1.

subversive and unpatriotic, which anybody for any reason dislikes.”<sup>4</sup> By rejecting the assertion that their signatures were unpatriotic Du Bois was resisting what had become one of the standard tenets of Cold War culture: disagreement with government policy was tantamount to disloyalty.

By analyzing the initial reaction of the black community to Du Bois’s arrest I will argue that most African American’s had by 1951 imbibed the cultural norms of the Cold War. It might be tempting to see the opposition to Du Bois’s arrest as an indicator of resistance to Cold War culture and even as a significant indication that African Americans saw the Cold War in a fundamentally different way than their fellow non-black citizens. However, while the evidence points to anger over the affront to the African American community, it does not indicate any substantial opposition to the rhetoric of nationalism and patriotism that so marked Cold War Americanism. African Americans responded to Du Bois’s arrest in a variety of ways, including anger at the government, sadness for how far Du Bois had fallen, and by withholding any judgment on the case until becoming better informed. Missing almost entirely from those defending Du Bois was any critique of nationalism in general, the United States in particular, or any suggestion that perhaps the State did not deserve the loyalty of African Americans. This placed the opinions of the community within the norms of the ascending Cold War Americanism that made all dissent appear disloyal.

With the emphasis placed by the American government on an apparent life and death struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States, the most damning charge that could be laid against a citizen was that of disloyalty to the nation. Consequently

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<sup>4</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 39.

when Du Bois was charged with acting as an undeclared foreign agent, it was the rhetoric of loyalty and nationalism that became prevalent in his defense. Those defending him in the African American community did so because of the legacy of his leadership in the community, but not because of any general critique of the Cold War. The lack of African American resistance to the Cold War culture underpinning Du Bois's arrest contradicts the view, expressed by Brenda Plummer, that "Afro-Americans widely perceived a connection between Cold War repression and delayed progress on civil rights."<sup>5</sup> To suggest that African Americans were suspicious of Cold War rhetoric undermines the impact of a Cold War culture that often transcended race. The reaction to the arrest and trial of Du Bois indicates that race could temporarily supercede Cold War pressure to conform, but not to such a degree that the cultural norms of Cold War Americanism were left behind or truly challenged. Consequently, the only resistance to Cold War norms of American patriotism and loyalty were found outside the country and in the activities of a few politically marginalized peace activists and union locals.<sup>6</sup>

While I argue that the use of patriotism to defend Du Bois reveals the extent to which Cold War culture provided the context for the response to Du Bois's arrest, I do not wish to suggest that by claiming to be loyal to the United States all of his defenders were indicating their support of the Cold War or support of the current American administration. Indeed, Du Bois's own claims to patriotism were founded on an earlier

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<sup>5</sup> Brenda Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 197. My work also runs counter to the work that Plummer cites, Mark Solomon, "Black Critics of Colonialism and the Cold War," Thomas G. Patterson, ed. *Cold War Critics: Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971): 205-239. Though an outstanding summary of his topic and remarkably clear, Solomon's article slips into racial essentialism even more than Plummer's excellent work.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Two for a broader discussion of the nature of the resistance to the arrest and the Cold War norms that did arise.

version of Americanism that, by the late 1940s, was politically untenable. Born in the New Deal era, this vision of Americanism emphasized social justice and political freedom as a basis for patriotism.<sup>7</sup> However, Cold War culture had attenuated the ideological meaning of Americanism.<sup>8</sup> The post war “red scare” that gripped the country was the most visible enforcement of Cold War cultural norms. One of the primary goals of the Red Scare was to roll back the economic and social reforms of the New Deal. Opponents of the New Deal used the threat of communism to suggest that all those associated with the goals of the New Deal were un-American because, for them any critique of capitalism and its inevitable inequalities were communist and suspect. Only communist dupes or enemies of the nation, according to the anti-communist rhetoric, would critique any aspect of the country and thereby provide the Soviet Union with ammunition for its propaganda. Du Bois summed up the dilemma by listing the beliefs that one was required to “publicly and repeatedly” proclaim: “He hates Russia. He opposes Socialism and communism... He is ready to fight the Soviet Union, China and any other country, or all countries together. He believes in the use of the atom bomb or any other weapons of mass destruction, and regards anyone opposed as a traitor.”<sup>9</sup> While acknowledging these limitations, Du Bois refused to fall in line with the new ideological regime. This was not true, however, of most of those African Americans expressing support and sympathy for Du Bois. Du Bois’s position was more analogous to the expressions of support that he received from international supporters.

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the history and character of the New Deal era see Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Gary Gerstle, *Working-class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5-15, 285-189.

<sup>9</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 9.

International response to the arrest was swift and virulent in its denunciation of the American government. Originating largely in communist nations or in the Soviet Peace camp, international criticism characterized the arrest in stark Cold War terms.<sup>10</sup> International anger, though vituperative in its attacks on the U.S. government, perceived Du Bois as essentially American, indeed as more American than his domestic persecutors. Left-wing supporters of Du Bois inside and outside of the United States suggested that the American administration and those fighting against communism and the Peace Movement were a minority, while Du Bois represented a silent majority. Supporters refuted any notion of Du Bois's disloyalty to the United States, and reversed standard Cold War assumptions by equating resistance and peace activism with true American patriotism. Italian Gino Bardi's letter for a birthday testimonial dinner in honour of Du Bois, declared "all honest Italian democrats value highly Dr. Du Bois's full hearted dedication to the cause of world peace and his contribution to the struggle of the Negro people to win human rights." Hinting at the actions and propaganda of the current American administration, Bardi wrote "when we think of the real America we see this great country in terms of the moral stature of public figures like Dr. Du Bois."<sup>11</sup> J.D. Bernal, professor of Physics at Birk Beck College in England and president of the World Federation of Scientific Workers (based in London), paid tribute to Du Bois in a letter for his birthday testimonial: "Dr. Du Bois has done much in these difficult years through his

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<sup>10</sup> Henryk Malinowski the Secretary of the Polish Peace Defenders Committee to W.E.B. Du Bois, 21 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1978), Reel 67, #00373; The Central Council of Trade Unions Prague to W.E.B. Du Bois, 15 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00303; Prof. Dr. J. Mukarovsky Rector of Charles University to W.E.B. Du Bois, 16 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00308; Nikolai Tikhonov to W.E.B. Du Bois 21 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00535.

<sup>11</sup> Gino Bardi to W.E.B. Du Bois, 16 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00199.

speeches, writings and, most of all, by his example, to show to all the world that the great tradition of American citizenship is still a living and inspiring reality.”<sup>12</sup>

These letters did not refrain from criticizing the behavior of the American government in Du Bois’s arrest. Jiri Hronek, Secretary General of the International Organization of Journalists, called Du Bois “one of the greatest living Americans of our time.” Hronek expressed his organization’s support of Du Bois’s fight against the persecution by “authorities of your country because of your fight for peace.”<sup>13</sup> Those writing in support of Du Bois from outside the United States viewed his arrest as a direct result of the Cold War coupled with Du Bois’s peace activism; few made a causal connection between his arrest and his activism on behalf of African Americans. The few who mentioned Du Bois’s past struggles for racial justice did so as a prelude to his current work for peace. “Greetings to you,” wrote a representative of the Union of Czechoslovak writers, “gallant fighter for the rights of the Negro people and one of the main representatives of the fight for peace.”<sup>14</sup> In Western Europe, prominent left-wing activists and intellectuals such as Albert Einstein offered Du Bois their support. In the U.S., Leonard Bernstein wrote to Du Bois that “peace means a lot to us though. When I say us, I mean the people. You mean a lot to us too, not only as a fearless defender of peace but also as a great American. Your indictment means the suppression of the

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<sup>12</sup> Professor J. D. Bernal to W.E.B. Du Bois 19 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* Reel 66, #00223.

<sup>13</sup> Jiri Hronek secretary general of the International Organisation of Journalists to W.E.B. Du Bois, n.d, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00905; see also Telegram from the Very Reverend C. W. Chandler, Dean of Hamilton New Zealand to W.E.B. Du Bois, 23 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00306.

<sup>14</sup> The Union of Czechoslovak Writers Prague to W.E.B. Du Bois, 20 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00633. One exception was the letter from Bruno Frei, an editor for *Der Abend*. Who characterized Du Bois’s peace as a result of Du Bois’s understanding “the close connection between” his earlier struggles and his work for peace. Bruno Frei to W.E.B. Du Bois, n.d, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00667.

freedom of all of us.”<sup>15</sup> The overwhelming international defense was in marked contrast to the guarded African American response to the arrest of one of its greatest living leaders and intellectuals.

To support my argument, in addition to the letters and correspondence found in Du Bois papers, I will study the reaction of four African American newspapers to the arrest: *The New York Amsterdam News*, *The Chicago Defender*, *The Baltimore Afro-American* and *The Pittsburgh Courier*. All of these newspapers came to Du Bois’s defense, though with different levels of enthusiasm and with different feelings regarding his innocence. These newspapers do not provide a complete picture of a community as diverse and complex as the African American one. However, the black press had historically been the venue by which the African American community expressed its aspirations for improving the community’s position within the United States. As such, it was uniquely positioned as a source to explore the inner dialogue of the community. The African American press was directed towards and written for the exclusive use of the community. The press had reached its apex of independence and importance for the African American community during World War Two as it provided an independent point of view for the African American community.<sup>16</sup> I do not wish to suggest that the African American community was monolithic and that all black people reacted to the

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<sup>15</sup> Leonard Bernstein to W.E.B. Du Bois, 23 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00227.

<sup>16</sup> Though a work that does justice to the history and importance of the African American press is still waiting for its author, several competent books have been published addressing some components of the African Americana press. See Amistead S. Pride, and Clint C. Wilson II, *A History of the Black Press* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1997); Charles A. Simmons, *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage During National Crisis, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965* (London: McFarland & Company, 1998); Ronald E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990); Patrick S. Washburn, *A Question of Sedition: The Federal Governments Investigation of the Black Press during World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Cold War in the same way or manner. Rather I am suggesting that a large majority of the African American community, like the large majority of the white community, accepted the cultural norms of Cold War Americanism, albeit through the prism of race.

At the beginning of 1951 Du Bois had finished an unsuccessful, though personally satisfying, run for the U.S. Senate. He was aware of the Justice Department's concerns with the Peace Information Center and disbanded the organization in October 1950 in order to remove the threat of any legal action. He planned to marry Shirley Graham after the February dinner being organized to publicly celebrate and honour his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday.<sup>17</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, the chair and organizer of Du Bois's birthday celebration, received many responses to the invitations to participate. Frazier's position as chair and organizer reflected Du Bois's longstanding position as part of an African American academic tradition dedicated to improving the race. Frazier was the preeminent African American sociologist of his era and was deeply indebted to the work of Du Bois, who had been the first African American sociologist and one of the first academics to take seriously the study of African American society and culture. Du Bois's esteemed position within the African American community was expressed in a letter from J. Finley Wilson, the Grand Exalted Ruler of the I.B.P.O.E.W. (Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World) who sent birthday greetings to Du Bois. Explaining that due to poor health he would be unable to attend the honorary dinner, Wilson stated that "[I]n honoring Dr. Du Bois you are honoring yourselves. He is the race's greatest scholar and has been a champion of human rights for a half century and

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<sup>17</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 43-51.



had always been in the forefront when the battle was the hottest.”<sup>18</sup> When describing Du Bois’s importance and stature many of his African American admirers believed his appeal transcended his race. Charlotte A. Bass, the publisher and editor of *The California Eagle*, offered a typical response.<sup>19</sup> Bass accepted an invitation to be a sponsor for Du Bois’s testimonial dinner and described Du Bois as one “who stands for Good for all peoples.”<sup>20</sup> However, as the arrest and trial would demonstrate, Du Bois was no longer seen by many in his community to be as relevant as he once had been.

Following Du Bois’s arrest, Elk leader Wilson expressed his ongoing confidence, saying that, “I believe Dr. Du Bois is loyal and patriotic and I am willing to join with the number of his friends in expressing the same.”<sup>21</sup> However, this sentiment from someone who had originally agreed to participate in Du Bois’s birthday celebration was not universal. Several high profile African Americans rescinded their original agreement to attend after Du Bois’s arrest. Of all those reversing their position, Charlotte Hawking Brown was the only one who stated explicitly that she would like to attend except for the threat of recrimination. Brown was a well-known African American educator who had been targeted by the Red Scare.<sup>22</sup> After her initial acceptance, Brown wrote that she could not participate because a trustee of her school threatened to resign if she attended. Brown sent a telegram to the organizing committee: “Cannot risk school interest so near the end of my fiftieth year.” Brown elaborated, stating that there was a “great fear of communist

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<sup>18</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois to Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, 27 January 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00790.

<sup>19</sup> Charlotte Bass would later suffer the consequences of the Red Scare when her passport was withheld by the State Department. Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> Charlotte A. Bass to W.E.B. Du Bois, 29 January 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00205.

<sup>21</sup> W.E. B. Du Bois to Dr. John S. Brown, 2 May 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* Reel 67, #00793.

<sup>22</sup> Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 196.

influence. Sorry.”<sup>23</sup> Brown was the only one to explain her actions as the others simply withdrew. Brown’s inability to attend demonstrates one of the ways in which Cold War norms were enforced.

The withdrawal of sponsors was not the only result of Du Bois’s arrest. When word of the indictment reached the press, the Essex House Hotel cancelled the reservations for a hall five days before the testimonial dinner. This heralded the beginning of an unexpected period of hardship for Du Bois. With the help of Shirley Graham and the committee he reorganized the birthday dinner which became, according to Du Bois, “a fight for civil rights” filled with guests and supporters “willing to face even the United States government in my defense and for the preservation of American freedom.”<sup>24</sup> However, while Du Bois’s celebration continued the gap between him and other African American leaders remained. Mary McLeod Bethune, one of Du Bois’s allies during the New Deal era, was unable to attend the dinner due to a previous engagement. In her letter to the organizing committee she described Du Bois as “our great scholar and forthright fighter for democracy and freedom” and hoped that “many years will still be granted him to hold high the torch of free men in the world of peace and brotherhood.”<sup>25</sup> However, Bethune had made her peace with the new Cold War regime in an editorial in the *Chicago Defender* entitled “The Only Real Answer to communism is Opportunities Offered the Masses.” In it she pointed out the flaws of the government’s policy of responding to communist critiques of domestic racism by parading prominent African Americans to speak overseas in favour of American policies

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<sup>23</sup> Charlotte Hawkins Brown to W.E.B. Du Bois, 21 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00263.

<sup>24</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 64.

and race relations.<sup>26</sup> Instead, she argued that the government should implement integration in order to build up the morale of African Americans. “The morale of a people,” according to Bethune, was important because it was “its first-line of defense” against dangers such as communism or disloyalty. Bethune made her case based on an opposition to communism. She wrote, “our resistance to attempted leadership by those who have become bewildered by the stress against their freedom should not blind us to the reasons for their bewilderment.” She explained that those who might be tempted by communism were only “confusing it...with the food of freedom”<sup>27</sup> While being sympathetic to the reasons behind communism’s appeal, Bethune was clear in her rejection of communism as a legitimate option for the African American community. Whether this response was purely politically driven or a reflection of deeply held beliefs is impossible to tell, but it seems most likely that it was a combination of both. In this way, Bethune, like many of Du Bois’s former allies had adapted to the times, a change that Du Bois refused to make.<sup>28</sup>

E. Franklin Frazier released a statement to the press on behalf of the organizing committee in response to Du Bois’s indictment. It stated that because “Dr. Du Bois’s integrity and honesty have never been questioned during his long life of devoted service

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<sup>25</sup> Mary McLeod Bethune to Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, 6 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00229.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.47-79; Lisa E. Davenport, “Jazz and the Cold War: Black Culture as an Instrument of American Foreign Policy” in *Crossing Boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora*, Darlene Clark Hine and Jacqueline McLeod, eds. *Blacks in the Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999): 282-315.

<sup>27</sup> Mary McLeod Bethune, “The Only Real Answer to Communism is Opportunities Offered the Masses,” *Chicago Defender*, 27 January 1951, 6.

<sup>28</sup> This is not to say that she was sympathetic to communism before the Cold War only that she did not frame her opposition to racism in anticommunist terms.

in the interest of freedom and equality for the Negro,”<sup>29</sup> the dinner would not be cancelled. Nevertheless, Frazier felt it necessary to deny any suggestion that Du Bois might have been associated with a un-American organization and informed the public that the committee had been assured by Du Bois that “he was associated with an American organization supported by American funds.”<sup>30</sup> This rhetorical pattern was repeated regularly by supporters who referred to Du Bois’s historic activism on behalf of African Americans and argued that this activism made any suggestion of disloyalty impossible.

At the testimonial dinner, letters arrived from across the nation and from around the world. They wished Du Bois a happy birthday and expressed support for his fight with the Justice Department. Letters from well-wishers within the United States reflected a general anger at the suggestion that Du Bois was dishonest and anything but a loyal, patriotic citizen. Du Bois’s lifetime activism for the African American community gave him a pedigree that made his verbal assurances more powerful than an indictment from the federal government. For example, William Pickens wrote that “no intelligent person who has known Du Bois for 40 years or more can ever believe without the most direct and utmost proof, that he could ever be a traitor or a willful law-breaker of his country, -- of our country.”<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, the letters that poured into the organizing committee reflected anger at Du Bois’s arrest, but few provided a general critique of the United States’ Cold War policies. No one suggested that the Soviet Union was in any way a

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<sup>29</sup> Press Release from E. Franklyn Frazier, 15 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00541.

<sup>30</sup> Press Release from E. Franklyn Frazier, 15 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00541.

<sup>31</sup> Letter to Organizing committee of the reception in Honor of Du Bois, 20 September 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00372.

friend to the American people let alone the African American population. One result of Du Bois's indictment was general anger at the damage done to the honour and pride of the African American community, but the community did not, in most cases, transgress the accepted norms of Cold War culture.

The arrest evoked two broad responses from African Americans. The most common one did not attack Cold War cultural norms. Most refuted the charges themselves without critiquing underlying Cold War cultural norms. The less popular choice was to utilize a broad critique of United States foreign policy, and American postwar behavior towards the Soviet Union. Individuals who espoused a general critique of the Cold War policies of the United States government were almost all from outside the country or were members of the peace movement, the Progressive Party, or a few union locals. Participation by these groups in the defense of Du Bois would become more active during the trial. The patterns of responses indicate that unless an individual already took a critical position vis-à-vis the American government there was not an automatic critical position to the Cold War based on racial identity towards the Cold War. Indeed, most African American respondents supported Cold War ideology implicitly.

African Americans did not often express their anger at the arrest by rejecting the United States. Instead, they reiterated their loyalty to the United States. The Chicago Council of Negro Organizations, in a letter to Howard McGrath, Attorney General of the United States, asked him to use his "influence in seeing this distinguished gentleman . . . acquitted of this unjust charge". The Council's letter began with identifying Du Bois as "one of the most brilliant Negro leaders [who] is known everywhere in the United States and abroad." The Council quoted a statement made by Du Bois when he edited *The Crisis*

(the newspaper of the NAACP). According to the Council, Du Bois wrote that *The Crisis* stood “for the highest ideals of American democracy” and that the magazine would be “the organ of no clique or party”. In the letter the council insisted that these statements reflected Du Bois’s continuing commitment to anti-communism. The Council continued by writing “Negroes feel that there is a concentrated effort to name as subversive any militant Negro who does not conform to the old more favored positions.” The Council’s letter also cited the actions of the governments in South Carolina, Alabama and Mississippi as greater examples of subversion towards the ideals of the United States than any action of Du Bois.<sup>32</sup> This response supported Du Bois’s assertion that the case was meant to be a warning to African American leaders, yet the Council remained within the Cold War cultural norms by asserting that Du Bois was certainly not communist. By defending Du Bois against the charge of communism, the Council was implicitly agreeing with the Cold War norm that made being a communist worthy of censure.

Du Bois believed that African American newspapers took a position of leadership in his defense.<sup>33</sup> Coverage of his arrest and trial by the African American press was fair, balanced and supportive, especially in comparison to the coverage found in the white press, such as *The New York Times*. The *Times*’ reporting of the arrest did not specify Du Bois in the headline and consistently put the word peace in quotation marks. The initial *Times* article, instead of focusing on Du Bois, reported the arrest of all of the Peace Information Center defendants equally. This article linked the defunct organization through its forwarding number to a building in which other groups with some peripheral connections to supposed communist organizations were also located. Though having no

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<sup>32</sup> The Chicago Council of Negro Organizations to the Attorney General of the United States, Howard McGrath, 20 April 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00310

obvious connection to the charges, the *Times* published this “revelation” following Du Bois’s rebuttal of the charges. The *New York Times* described Du Bois as a “Negro Anthropologist and educator” and as being “deeply shocked” by the charges.<sup>34</sup> In its February 17 issue, *The New York Times* reported that “The Peace Information Center of New York and four of its officers pleaded innocent today to charges of violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act.” The paper identified all of the defendants, and described W.E.B. Du Bois as an “educator and onetime Minister to Liberia.” The *Times*’ coverage was short, filling a third of a column, and detailing the charges handed down by the jury. “The Jury said it [The Peace Information Center] was the publicity agent for the Committee of the World Congress of the Defenders of Peace, set up by the Cominform to back the ‘Stockholm peace appeal.’” The article mentioned Du Bois’s response to the charges stating that, “Mr. Du Bois told the court the Center was no longer in existence.”<sup>35</sup> *The New York Times* paid scant attention to the protests lodged in defense of Du Bois; a series of small one paragraph stories related only a few of the protests and organizations launched in his defense.<sup>36</sup> *The New York Times*’ antiseptic and hostile coverage was in stark contrast to the passionate reporting found in the African American press.

The indictment was the lead story of the day in most every African American paper. The *Baltimore Afro-American* printed “U.S. Indicts Dr. Du Bois” in bold letters across its front page with the byline, “Peace Center Branded ‘Red’ by Uncle Sam.”<sup>37</sup> The

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<sup>33</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 74-76.

<sup>34</sup> “5 of ‘Peace’ Group Indicted: All Sponsors of Stockholm Plea,” *New York Times*, 2 February 1951, 1-2.

<sup>35</sup> “Peace Information Center Defendant’s Plead innocent,” *New York Times*, 17 February 1951, 30.

<sup>36</sup> “Protest Du Bois Indictment,” *New York Times*, 13 February 1951, p.39; “Rally Back Dr. DuBois”: 500 Protest His Indictment Under Foreign Agents Act” *New York Times*, 22 February 1951, 37; “Du Bois Defenders to Meet,” *New York Times*, 25 February 1951, 31.

<sup>37</sup> “U.S. Indicts Dr. Du Bois,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 17 February 1951, 1.

*Chicago Defender* had a similar headline with a byline stating, “noted scholar denies charges.”<sup>38</sup> Both papers quoted from Du Bois’s statement in response to the arrest, in which he referred to the Peace Center as “entirely American”.<sup>39</sup> The *Afro-American* made its position clear on its editorial page on February 24, 1951. Under the headline of “The Case of Dr. Du Bois” the paper described Du Bois’s arrest as “shocking” and argued that it demonstrated “to what alarming and absurd lengths [the] hysteria ridden Department of Justice will go.” The editorial defended Du Bois by citing his record of scholarship and activism attacking “racial prejudice and segregation” and cited his likely bitterness over the slow progress of race relations in the nation. “It is indeed a shameful period in American history” the editorial concluded “when the government feels it necessary to imprison a patriotic and loyal citizen like Dr. DuBois simply because he boldly speaks out for world peace and human brotherhood.”<sup>40</sup>

African American newspapers reacted to the indictment within the twin discourses of race and the Cold War. While acknowledging the “intellectual leadership” of several of the editors of the newspapers, Du Bois later reflected that the African American press was supportive because “editors...sensed the reaction of the Negro masses who buy the newspapers.”<sup>41</sup> While this seems possible, the newspapers were still consciously anti-communist in their coverage of the case and other concurrent events.<sup>42</sup> Though concerned with the possibility of being labeled “red” they clearly placed their emphasis on the fact that Du Bois was black. Similarly, letters to the editor and letters

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<sup>38</sup> “Indict Du Bois,” *Chicago Defender*, 17 February 1951, 1.

<sup>39</sup> “U.S. Indicts Dr. Du Bois,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 17 February 1951, p.2 “Indict Du Bois” *Chicago Defender*, 17 February 1951, 2.

<sup>40</sup> “The Case of Dr. Du Bois,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 24 February 1951, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 74.



sent to Du Bois suggest that his commitment to the cause of Negro rights trumped any suggestions of disloyalty or any lack of patriotism. In a letter to the *Afro-American*, Louis E. Gregory, after expressing his hope that Du Bois maintained his earlier opposition to communism, added that “no matter what the quirks of senility may be, his passionate love for his people and his genius for expression over many years have given us a name which should not be sullied.”<sup>43</sup> Clearly, if Du Bois through some fault of senility, had become a communist he should still be honoured for his contribution to the African American community.

The concern that Du Bois might indeed be “red” due to a quirk of age was also expressed by an editorial in the *Chicago Defender*. An editorial entitled “The Strange Case of Dr. Du Bois” the article began with a reference to the broader issue of the Red Scare: “Never in American History has the issue of the loyalty of individual citizens presented such a complex of problems to the government as it does today.” The problem, however, according to the paper, was “the tactics and strategy of an enemy that seeks to use ideas as weapons and is trying to take advantage of our freedoms to advance our own ends.” The editorial argued that the arrest of Du Bois was one such example and though the editorial claimed it did not believe that “this case can or should be tried in the press” it stated that “it is a supreme tragedy that he [Du Bois] should become embroiled in activities that have been exposed as subversive in the twilight of his years.”<sup>44</sup> However, while this editorial represented the official position of the paper, the multiple positions within the African American community were made clear on the same page. The

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<sup>42</sup> Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 118-119.

<sup>43</sup> “Du Bois No Red,” *Baltimore Afro American*, 24 February 1951, 4.

<sup>44</sup> “The Strange Case of Dr. Du Bois,” *Chicago Defender*, 3 March 1951, 6.

“National Grapevine Column” stated that “[S]ome legalists here are quietly disturbed that communist hysteria which has warped minds of judges and jury members will be a tough barrier in the forthcoming trial of Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois no matter how heavily innocence leans on his side.”<sup>45</sup> Additionally, on the same page, a political cartoon showed Du Bois sitting at a table with the headline “The Crisis” hanging over his head, a collection of his works on his desk, and the words “Passion for Justice” written in the background.<sup>46</sup> In response to this editorial, Dorothy Winston wrote a letter criticizing the content of the editorial and suggesting that the paper had earlier fired Du Bois because of his criticism of the “existent shortcomings of the Negro Press.”<sup>47</sup> Her criticism reflected a general dissatisfaction with the editorial position of the paper.<sup>48</sup> Du Bois himself cited the “Strange Case of Dr. Du Bois” editorial as an exception to the overall positive coverage in the newspapers.<sup>49</sup>

The *Chicago Defender's* editorial attitude towards the arrest can be explained by its editorial position regarding the Cold War and the threat of communism expressed in an editorial at the beginning of 1951. The editorial stressed the importance of international events in every person's life and the stress of the current tension in the world. However, the editorial assured its readers that “we are confident that we shall undergo every test of our essential character with courage and a firm, unyielding faith in the democratic principles that undergird our republic.” Not only was the United States a source of strength, the paper admonished its readership that “we can best meet the test of

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<sup>45</sup> “National Grapevine: Random Notes,” *Chicago Defender*, 3 March 1951, 6.

<sup>46</sup> “‘The Crisis’ Editorial Cartoon,” *Chicago Defender*, 3 March 1951, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Dorothy Winston, “A Brickbat,” *Chicago Defender*, 17 March 1951, 6.

<sup>48</sup> For a criticism of the lack of willingness of the paper to continue the struggle against “Racial Injustice,” see also R. L. Freeman, “Don't Stop Fighting,” *Chicago Defender*, 17 March 1951, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 74.

these crucial times by making certain that our own personal obligations and responsibilities as good citizens are carried out.” Good citizenship then was the key to helping the United States win the struggle against the communist menace. Foreshadowing the case against Du Bois, the editorial stressed that “while we work for peace, we must also prepare for war.” The editorial ended with a call to all citizens to be loyal and to work for the nation. It concluded, “every American, regardless of color, creed and race, must become an asset and not a liability to the nation in this hour.”<sup>50</sup> The editorial explicitly linked the responsibilities of the African American community to the foreign policy of the U.S. government.

On February 16, 1951, Du Bois entered the District court in Washington, D.C. to be arraigned on the charges against him and his associates. His entry into court was deeply traumatic not only for him and his fiancée but also for the newspaper reporters covering the trial. A sense of outrage spilled out of the pages of the *Baltimore Afro-American* as it described the proceedings. Identifying Du Bois as “internationally known as one of America’s elder statesmen,” the article detailed the action of the arraignment. “The man who has spent a lifetime fighting for civil rights and is the most distinguished writer of this generation,” the paper began, “was treated like a common criminal when Judge Letts, obviously hostile, refused pleas of his defense counsel to allow Dr. DuBois to remain in technical custody while posting \$1,000 bond.” This led the paper to further describe the indignities heaped upon Du Bois: “Dr. DuBois was trotted into the U.S. Marshal’s office like the rest of the accused persons who normally appear at the Friday

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<sup>50</sup> “The New Year,” *Chicago Defender*, 6 January 1951, 6.

arraignment hearings.”<sup>51</sup> This reporting reflected a general anger felt by African American newspapers, and those writing letters in support of Du Bois, that Du Bois was not assigned the status that they felt he deserved due to his service to the American, African American and international community. This anger had to do with Du Bois’s legacy and historic role in the African American community and had little or nothing to do with support of Du Bois’s current political activity.

The *Pittsburgh Courier* did not publish an editorial on the arrest but several of its columnists commented on the case. Marjorie McKenzie, in her regular column titled “Pursuit of Democracy,” wrote that the African American community must “rally around Du Bois to save our skins.” However, she suggested that Du Bois was no longer a leading intellectual figure because of “his recent departures from his earlier ideas.” She posited that the reason for the arrest was to quiet the protests of African Americans. These protests, she argued, making an allusion to the Cold War, had been “heard more loudly around the world than at home.” Finally, she warned the community that if it did not defend Du Bois “it will be dangerous for a Negro to belong to anything but a church.”<sup>52</sup> Hence, she believed that Du Bois’s arrest was an attack on African Americans, to help quell the international attention to domestic racism as a result of the Cold War. McKenzie’s column was a call to defend Du Bois because of the need to maintain international pressure to bring about change. It did not suggest that the current battles that Du Bois was fighting were in fact worthy of defense or support.

In his own column, Percival L. Prattis, the editor of the *Courier*, also suggested that the attack on Du Bois was meant to suppress the African American leadership and

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<sup>51</sup> “Not Guilty- DuBois : Famed Scholar Treated like Common Felon,” *Baltimore Afro American*, 24 February 1951, 1-2.

was “evidence of the terror used to victimize us.” For Prattis, Du Bois’s arrest was the result of a “‘terror’ loose on the land....” Prattis warned the readers that this was only the first arrest and that “there will be others.” His editorial railed against the hypocrisy of the U.S. government: “[N]ow a government which has found itself unable to protect the rights of an entire people against criminal intrusion of a prejudiced majority finds the means to HANDCUFF the man that has fought most insistently for those rights” [emphasis in original]. Clearly angry at the effect of the Red Scare and the priorities of the U.S. government, Prattis provided advice to the U.S. government in its struggle with the Soviet Union: “If the United States can find a way to win the friendship of the colored peoples of the world, there need be no fear of Russia or communism.” “But,” he cautioned, adopting a popular strategy among the African American leadership, “the United States cannot win that friendship without demonstrating that she is friendly and fair to the colored peoples within her borders.”<sup>53</sup>

Prattis was the most vocal of Du Bois’s supporters in the African American press but he too worked within many of the norms of Cold War culture. In his column, Prattis stated that “[I]f Dr. Du Bois is guilty of working for a foreign power (for Russia) even for peace he is guilty of an indiscretion which I cannot condone. But,” he reassured his readers, “Dr. Du Bois is no criminal. He is no traitor to his country.” Prattis ended his column by lashing out at the “Uncle Toms” who might not stand up for Du Bois. He declared that “for the sake of our common country and ourselves, this is the time to part company with all those within and without the race, who would sell our manhood cheaply.” Prattis’ anger at the arrest carried on into his later columns. The next week

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<sup>52</sup> Marjorie McKenzie, “Pursuit of Democracy,” *Pittsburgh Courier* 24 February 1951, 6.

Prattis penned another column attacking the arrest and was the only columnist or writer in any of the newspapers covered here to attack the law under which Du Bois was charged. However, while providing perspicacious coverage of the case, Prattis still argued that “we [the African American community] must join our white fellow countrymen in combating communism.” Nevertheless, he warned in the case of Du Bois, “we mustn’t turn on those we know have fought the good fight.”<sup>54</sup>

Prattis’s forthright defense of Du Bois evoked a powerful response from the *Pittsburgh Courier* readership. The *Courier* was inundated with letters in support of his position. The volume of letters was so high that the paper expanded the usual space allocated for letters to the editor.<sup>55</sup> They stressed Prattis’s courage in writing his column and compared him and Du Bois favorably to other contemporary African American leaders who were described in one letter as guilty of “craven cowardice.”<sup>56</sup> Clearly Prattis’s attack of silent Uncle Toms hit a mark with the readership since letter after letter stressed how Prattis had “stepped into the leadership of the Negroes fight for Human Rights.”<sup>57</sup> One suggested that Prattis was “a great and courageous leader, and not the kind that is afraid.”<sup>58</sup> These letters suggested a general dissatisfaction with the current state of African American leadership, but none refer to the peace movement or to the Cold War. Du Bois’s arrest and Prattis’s columns appear to have provided a forum for anger over the leadership, or lack thereof, of the African American community, but not an

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<sup>53</sup> Percival L. Prattis, “The Horizon: Handcuffs on Dr. Du Bois is Evidence of ‘The Terror’ Used to Victimize Us,” *Pittsburgh Courier* 3 March 1951, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Percival L. Prattis, “The Horizon: Handcuffs on Dr. Du Bois is Evidence of ‘The Terror’ Used to Victimize Us,” *Pittsburgh Courier* 3 March 1951, 6. [emphasis in original]

<sup>55</sup> “Prattis’ Column on Dr. Du Bois Prompts Many Courier Readers to Pen Letters,” *Pittsburgh Courier* 24 March 1951, 11.

<sup>56</sup> Otis W. Meriwether, “To the Editor,” 24 March 1951, *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11.

<sup>57</sup> Joseph M. Carter, “Letter to the Editor,” 24 March 1951, *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> G. M. Logan, “To the Editor,” 24 March 1951, *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11.

opportunity for discussion of Du Bois's position regarding the Soviet Union or U.S. foreign policy.<sup>59</sup> Another letter asked "why are our leaders silent when now is the time to speak?" and continued by suggesting that the lack of leadership was particularly needed now to "arouse our people of this impending danger."<sup>60</sup>

The danger was "the terror" of the Red Scare described by Prattis in his column. "Though terror is growing in America, with particular danger to the struggle of the Negro for first class citizenship," Edward Peeks wrote in praise of the column, "there is hope for the better as long as men like Mr. Prattis speaks out."<sup>61</sup> Peeks's suggestion that the Red Scare concerned African Americans in particular, was also argued by another letter that saw the Red Scare as "a threat to all fighters for the simple and just human rights of our people."<sup>62</sup> These responses appear to undermine the argument suggested above that African Americans responded to Du Bois's arrest within the cultural norms of the Cold War. However, even these letters, which were so critical of the Red Scare, formed their complaints within a national perspective. The demands of these writers were for the Red Scare to end, the prosecution of Du Bois to stop, and for full civil rights to be implemented. Indeed, no one suggested that Du Bois's potential affiliation with communism was positive. In other words, the writers' anger was related to the arrest of Du Bois, a leader who fought for the rights of the African American community, and not to Du Bois's principles regarding the Cold War and peace for which he was willing to go

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<sup>59</sup> The only exception to this was a long letter written by Jose Garcia from New York City. In his letter he stressed "the determination of the capitalists of the white world to continue their domination of the colored peoples and exploit them and their lands for the benefit of a handful of wealthy men." Jose Garcia, "Letter to the Editor," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 March 1951, 11.

<sup>60</sup> G. M. Logan, "To the Editor," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 March 1951, 11.

<sup>61</sup> Edward Peeks, "To the Editor," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 March 1951, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Charles A. Stevenson, "To the Editor," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 March 1951, 11.

to jail for,. It is for this reason that most African Americans saw his arrest “as an attack upon the Negro people”<sup>63</sup> but not as an attack on the peace movement or communism.

The *Courier* also published a regular column by George S. Schuyler, a well-known African American conservative. Schuyler argued that Du Bois was guilty of being a communist. He cited a litany of evidence, largely accurate, of Du Bois’s affiliations with different organizations that Schuyler described as communist fronts. He attacked the Stockholm Peace Petition, whose purpose he stated “is to divide the remaining free world on the issue of preparing against Soviet aggression, which has already enslaved hundreds of millions of people since 1945.”<sup>64</sup> Schuyler’s attack, though ideologically myopic, was one of the few to address the reasons and the issues for which Du Bois was arrested. His columns also elicited letters in response, though not nearly as many as the Prattis column.<sup>65</sup> One letter argued that Du Bois was being “used by the Reds” and accused the columnists who defended Du Bois of “doing their part to destroy the democratic system.”<sup>66</sup> Schuyler’s column, along with the few letters supporting it, suggest that conservative African Americans believed that Du Bois was beyond the pale because of his communist affiliations. But they also suggest that they were perhaps fighting a losing battle as the African American community appeared to be sympathetic to Du Bois as a person, if for no other reason than his historic legacy of fighting for African American rights and the threat that the Red Scare represented to the Civil Rights movement.

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<sup>63</sup> Leo Patterson, “Letter to the Editor,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 March 1951, 11.

<sup>64</sup> George S. Schuyler, “Views and Reviews: Du Bois Knew What he was Doing Despite His Yells,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 March 1951, 6.

<sup>65</sup> This observation is based purely on published letters. It may well be that the number and content of the unpublished letters to the Editor might reveal a different result.

<sup>66</sup> Fred Lafitte, “Defenders of Dr. DuBois Help Destroy Democracy” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 April 1951, 11; See also “He Hates the ‘Commies’ Who Praise Dr. Du Bois,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 April 1951, 11.



The letters to the *Pittsburgh Courier* suggest that there existed within the African American community deep-seated anger over the weakness of the current leadership and anger over the Red Scare that now threatened one of their most important and revered leaders. Du Bois and his associates, indicted and awaiting trial, hoped that by countering the government's charges vigorously and publicly they would tap that unreleased anger and use it to further their cause. Defeating the charges would keep Du Bois out of jail for the remaining years of his life and might provide Du Bois with a stage from which he could convince the African American community that peace, resisting the Cold War, and achieving economic equality and full civil rights for African Americans were unequivocally intertwined. However, apart from the left-wing Civil Rights Congress, which praised Du Bois for his "gallant fight for Negro rights and peace,"<sup>67</sup> few African American organizations stood ready to support him. As a result, Du Bois turned to the constituency that had offered him their unqualified support.

The Progressive Party had received broad support among African Americans prior to the 1948 presidential election.<sup>68</sup> Du Bois worked for the party in the late 1940s and was expelled from the NAACP partly for his political support of the Progressives in the 1948 presidential campaign. Subsequently, Du Bois ran for New York City's Senate as a candidate for the American Labor Party, a local branch of the Progressive Party. William H. Miller, on behalf of the Progressive Party of Illinois, wrote to Du Bois on his birthday, thanking him for his "amazing contributions to the American scene without which the progressive movement . . . would have been much poorer." Miller wrote to Du Bois that

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<sup>67</sup> Denver branch of the Civil Rights Congress to W.E.B. Du Bois, 23 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00336.

<sup>68</sup> Gerald Horne, *Black & Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany, New York: State University Press, 1986), 137.

you have been “singled out for prosecution because you represent and embody our aspirations.... In a sense your indictment is a tribute to your leadership.”<sup>69</sup> The members of the Progressive Party of Pennsylvania expressed their birthday wishes to Du Bois, saying that “[W]e hail you as one of the America’s outstanding leaders and scholars and support you in your heroic fight against your unjust indictment.”<sup>70</sup> The Progressive Party’s support of Du Bois was based on a perception of Du Bois as being like them: patriotic Americans who fundamentally disagreed with the current government’s political agenda. The Progressive Party’s support would become instrumental in the organization of any mass movement in defense of Du Bois. It would be the Progressive Party, a small cadre of African Americans including Shirley Graham, and the others who had been arrested who would work to free Du Bois. As they prepared their defense, Du Bois would continue to occupy center stage as he resisted any temptation to wilt in the face of the Cold War onslaught.

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<sup>69</sup> William H. Miller of the Progressive Party of Illinois to W.E.B. Du Bois, 22 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00397.

<sup>70</sup> Zalmon Garfield of the Pennsylvania Progressive Party to W.E.B. Du Bois, 19 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00407.

## Chapter Two

### **Pilgrimages for Peace: Resisting Cold War Americanism**

*I regard this case as a great opportunity to vindicate the right of free speech and advocacy of peace. On this line I want the case fought and under no circumstances will I curry favor or ask leniency if that involves declaring that I have ever acted as an agent for any foreign person, organization or government. I would prefer to rot to death in jail than utter that lie. I have refused too many offers to sell out in America to be bribed in my old age.*

W.E.B. Du Bois<sup>1</sup>

W.E.B. Du Bois believed that his arrest and that of his associates at the Peace Information Center was part of a larger government attempt to silence Cold War critics. In an effort to counter the government's efforts Du Bois set out to publicise the case and try to win support in the nation and specifically in the African American community. However, these efforts were hampered by the new Cold War cultural norms. These norms attenuated the definition of Americanism and identified those who critiqued the foreign policy of the United States and its struggle with communism as unpatriotic. Few people

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<sup>1</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois to Judge James A. Cobb, 10 April 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1978), Reel 66, #00349. Cobb was a lawyer advising him, especially in the courts of the District of Columbia.

in the white community were sympathetic to his claims apart from a small, dedicated cadre of left wing activists associated with the Progressive Party. Du Bois found a more sympathetic reception in the African American community, but was still stymied by Cold War culture. The African American community's leadership had, by and large, acquiesced to the Cold War by accepting the new American foreign policy in exchange for promises of improved domestic civil rights. Consequently, when Du Bois and Shirley Graham-Du Bois set out on two national tours in order to engender support, specifically in the African American community, they met with limited success. Indeed, Du Bois's hope that his tour might help build a popular challenge to the Cold War definition of Americanism by expanding the international peace movement to include a large segment of the African American community proved unfulfilled.

Immediately following the arrests, the most pressing concern facing Du Bois was the possibility of a fast trial without much public attention that he believed would result in a guilty verdict. Du Bois hoped that postponing the trial would allow for "a very strong defense" and allow for the defense to "get sympathy not only from the United States but from the world."<sup>2</sup> When Judge Alexander Holzoff postponed the trial until October 2, Du Bois saw the postponement as "a great victory" because he believed that the government lawyers "were trying to rush us."<sup>3</sup> Du Bois's legal victory in gaining a postponement of the trial allowed him a degree of hope that he might not be tried and jailed without sufficient opportunity to defend himself. The postponement also provided a hint of how weak the government's case was, when the judge "described the indictments as 'on the

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<sup>2</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois to Mr. Abrahams, 22 May 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #0002.

<sup>3</sup> "Defense Gets Time, Du Bois Trial Oct.2," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 19 May 1951; W.E.B. Du Bois to Mr. Eugene Davidson, 11 May 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00456.

borderline of sufficiency at best.”<sup>4</sup> Having achieved the needed legal respite, Du Bois and his co-defendants prepared to reach out to the public to apply pressure on the American government to end the case.

Du Bois’s racial identity and his work for the community were not enough to automatically garner support from the African American community. Instead, the burden of proof fell on Du Bois to prove his innocence. Du Bois’s arguments did elicit some support from the grassroots of the African American community, as well as continued support from marginalized peace activists and the Progressive Party in the white community. Du Bois remarked that “the response of Negroes in general was at first slow and not united, but it gradually gained momentum.”<sup>5</sup> To counter both the unfavourable press coverage that Du Bois believed he would receive and a lack of support from mainstream African American organizations, he and Shirley Graham-Du Bois set out on two national tours, which he would later call “pilgrimages for peace.”<sup>6</sup> The reaction of the African American press and other groups that came to Du Bois’s defense illustrate how far he was from new political norms of the African American community and American Cold War culture. The segments of the African American population that came to Du Bois’s defense provided a glimpse of the anger and impatience that existed in the African American community; anger and impatience that soon would burst into the public sphere in the form of the civil rights movement. However, as frustrated and angry as the African American community was, it had not given up on the United States and

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<sup>4</sup> “Judge Not Impressed By Charges Against Dr. Du Bois,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 5 May 1951, 1, 4.

<sup>5</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, W.E.B. Du Bois with Comment by Shirley Graham, *In Battle for Peace: The Story of my 83<sup>rd</sup> Birthday* (New York: Masses & Mainstream, 1952), 74.

<sup>6</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 87.

accepted many of the norms of Cold War Americanism that had so ensnared Du Bois and his associates.<sup>7</sup>

The Cold War had attenuated the options available for African Americans' civil rights aspirations, but did not stop the African American community's activism. Instead, the African American community altered the scope of its criticism and by doing so sped up acceptance of its remaining civil rights demands.<sup>8</sup> Demands that remained acceptable to the government in the Cold War context were those that stressed patriotism and loyalty, thus making African American goals synonymous with the foreign policy agenda of the United States. Unacceptable demands were those that attempted to attain economic equality and offered or supported foreign policy alternatives to Cold War norms.<sup>9</sup> The United States government, believing itself to be in a state of war with the Soviet Union, would not allow for criticism of its domestic policies to be heard internationally. Additionally, the image of American democracy that the United States was projecting around the world, that of a peaceful, democratic, multiracial, and materially prosperous nation, reflected the aspirations of the rising middle class of the African American community. Du Bois and his associates' failure to mobilize a broad coalition of forces in opposition to his arrest demonstrates how completely the African American community accepted the Cold War strategy of only demanding civil rights.

Cold War culture was so successfully inculcated by the early 1950s that Du Bois and those around him believed they would have to campaign personally to rally the

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<sup>7</sup> My assessment is far more pessimistic than Gerald Horne's. However, my work focuses more on the domestic front where as Horne, to his credit, applies a more international perspective. See Gerald Horne, *Black & Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).

<sup>8</sup> Philip A. Klinker with Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 231-232.

African American community to their cause. Du Bois's firm belief that he would have to tour the country in order for his message to receive support reflects his own acknowledgement that the African American community would not automatically come to his defense. Nevertheless, Du Bois's decision indicated that he still saw African Americans as his natural constituency, one that would, he believed, provide him with support once it was informed of the truth. Du Bois still saw his most important role as that of a leader of the African American community. Du Bois had dedicated his entire life to improving and uplifting the community and had been honoured by the community for his service. He could not believe that now, in his time of greatest need, he would be left behind by those whom he had spent his entire life defending. However, the formal leadership of the African American community did not come to his defense. Indeed, Du Bois's trial brought together a network of organisations and individuals who were, for the most part, remnants of an earlier alliance that had been decimated by the failed Wallace campaign of 1948. The majority of his support among the African American community came from the working class.

Those who had achieved a measure of success in the United States, who had succeeded in "uplifting" themselves no longer saw the United States government's attack on a prominent African American as necessarily wrong.<sup>10</sup> The African American community experienced a general increase in prosperity with the advent of the Second World War. Though always suffering under the yoke of racism, the African American community had begun an unprecedented economic and social rise that created an entirely

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<sup>9</sup> Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 61-76.

new middle class that now firmly attached itself to the values and aspirations of white middle class Americans. This breaking down of geographic and economic barriers to members of the African American community began to exacerbate the class divisions within the community. Consequently, this new middle class did not see the benefit to major economic reform and instead emphasized the need to break down any remaining legal and political barriers that were preventing them from achieving full citizenship.<sup>11</sup> Du Bois lamented this new African American middle class, attacking them as having “become American in their acceptance of exploitation as defensible, and in their imitation of American ‘conspicuous expenditure.’”<sup>12</sup> This group, already powerful and growing all the time, would not participate in Du Bois’s defense and played an important role in working to strengthen the Cold War definition of Americanism, rather than working against it as did Du Bois.

White support for Du Bois came from two sources. One was from the remnants of the Progressive alliance that had coalesced around the Wallace presidential campaign with which Du Bois had been involved through his peace activism and in his campaign for the Senate in 1948. The second source of support was an international network of admirers largely associated with the Soviet peace movement. Domestic support from the white community proved vital in the organisation of Du Bois’s defense. Local unions and Progressive Party affiliates helped organise meetings throughout the country to hear Du Bois or Graham-Du Bois during their two national tours. International organisations, the

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<sup>10</sup> The best study of the effort of the community to “uplift” itself is Kevin K. Gaines’s *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 188-190.

<sup>12</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 76.



peace movement, and the Progressive Party participated in an active letter writing campaign directed at the President and the Attorney General.

Du Bois and his associates organised a nationwide campaign to publicise the court case. The publicity campaign initiated by Du Bois and his supporters allowed them to create contact with the public without having to rely on the foremost African American organisation of protest, the NAACP. Walter White, president of the NAACP, was personally hostile to Du Bois and let it be known that he knew Du Bois to be guilty. Although the NAACP's executive board issued only a modest resolution saying they thought it unfortunate that the government had arrested Du Bois, at its Annual Conference the general membership passed a strongly worded resolution in his defense. The resolution stated the membership's opposition to "methods by any Governmental instrumentality to silence spokesmen for full equality for Negroes and reaffirm its determination to continue to fight for such citizenship rights for all Americans."<sup>13</sup> However, while opposing the government's action, the NAACP failed to provide any institutional support, and neglected to make mention of Du Bois's peace activism in its resolution. Furthermore, the NAACP's local branches, with one exception, did not provide support for Du Bois during his national tours. The lack of institutional support from the African American community meant that Du Bois's defense relied on remnants of the radical left.

The NAACP's reaction was particularly tepid in comparison to the reaction of peace organisations based in communist countries who sent messages of support to Du Bois and characterized his arrest in stark Cold War terms. Du Bois received support from

the All-China Students Federation who argued that Du Bois's arrest was a result of the US government's pursuit of war "in the interests of the monopolists-capitalists." Consequences of the US government's policies "deprived people of their freedom, persecutes the peace fighters and intensifies the racial discrimination among peoples."<sup>14</sup> A telegram from the Albanian committee for the Defense of Peace<sup>15</sup> described Du Bois as a "prestigious militant on the side of peace"<sup>16</sup> and described the arrest as coming from the "supporters of imperial wars."<sup>17</sup> Du Bois agreed with the communist interpretation of his arrest and the communist interpretation of the current American administration. In response to a letter of support from the World Federation of Scientific Workers,<sup>18</sup> Du Bois's wrote that "we are going through, in the United States, the most extraordinary hysteria that I have ever witnessed in a civilized modern country." However, Du Bois remained somewhat hopeful while simultaneously acknowledging that the enemy was still in charge of the country: "There are some signs that we may in the near future recover something of our sanity, but there is a long road yet to go. A truce in Korea marks perhaps the beginnings of recovery, but we are now completely under a fascist domination of Big Business and will be for a long time yet."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Resolution Passed at Annual Conference Held at Atlanta, Georgia of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, June 26 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1951" *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00011.

<sup>14</sup> All-China Students Federation to the National Committee to Defend Mr. Du Bois and his Associates, 28 May 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00024.

<sup>15</sup> le comite Albanais pour le defense de la paix (Unless otherwise noted all translations done by author)

<sup>16</sup> prestigieux militant des partisans de la paix

<sup>17</sup> *partisans de guerre imperialistes*, Telegram from Le Comite Albanais pour le defense de la paix, July 28, 1951 *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00366.

<sup>18</sup> Professor J. D. Bernal to W.E.B Du Bois, 22 May 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00224.

<sup>19</sup> W.E.B Du Bois to Professor J. D. Bernal, 9 July 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00225.

The campaign used three newly formed groups whose function was to elicit support from people inside and outside the country. Within the country, the organisation of Du Bois's defense was divided into two committees, The Friends of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, and The National Committee to Defend Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Associates in the Peace Information Center. The Friends of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois focused on Du Bois as an individual whose historic accomplishments and contributions made him worthy of defense. It was formed "to appeal to persons who have not been identified with radical movements but who are united in the belief that Dr. Du Bois has been guilty of no crime and is being persecuted chiefly by persons who have long resented his unswerving defense of the American Negro."<sup>20</sup> However, this organisation was largely a failure as more moderate members of the African American community, as well as the American peace movement, did not respond with alacrity to these appeals for support.<sup>21</sup>

The most effective vehicle for acquiring support and nation-wide attention was the National Committee to Defend Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Associates in the Peace Information Center. It focused on the need to allow those advocating for peace to be free of legal harassment.<sup>22</sup> This organisation placed Du Bois's arrest in the context of the Red Scare, became the principal organiser of Du Bois's defense and had members with the highest public profiles. Paul Robeson was co-chair along with Elmer Benson, a former Progressive governor of Minnesota.<sup>23</sup> Both of the organisations formed to defend Du Bois in the United States depended on the rhetoric of Americanism. The National

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<sup>20</sup> John S Brown to Attorney Earl B. Dickerson, 23 April 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel, 66, #00264.

<sup>21</sup> One attempt by Du Bois to get moderate African America leaders to sign a statement saying they supported his right to speak, even if they didn't support his political positions, failed to get enough responses and had to be abandoned.

<sup>22</sup> Abbot Simon to W.E.B. Du Bois, 10 March 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00086.

Committee to Defend Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Associates in the Peace Information Center sent out a fundraising letter penned by Paul Robeson. In the letter he described Du Bois as a “famous scholar, writer, historian and teacher” and as someone “the world knows...as a spokesperson for peace... as a champion of the Negro people and all oppressed peoples.” Of all the defendants Robeson declared that “they believed that Americans want peace.” Continuing, he asked rhetorically, “could they have performed a more noble task for their fellow Americans?”<sup>24</sup> In response to the letter put out by The National Committee to Defend Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and Associates in the Peace Information Center, one respondent called Du Bois “that great American” and wrote “I for one feel deeply grateful for the chance to associate myself with that great Negro leader and scholar and his friends who have sought to save what is truly great in America.”<sup>25</sup>

Du Bois and the group that coalesced around him organised a tour of the country to raise public awareness of the case, state his innocence, and raise funds for the defense. Most of the tour was organised under the auspices of the Progressive Party, which stated that the purpose of the tour was to allow Du Bois to “tell his audiences why he and his associates in the former Peace Information Center were acting as Americans for America.”<sup>26</sup> The tour began in June in the Midwest and moved West. In Chicago Du Bois was well received by the African American community at a large dinner reception that honoured him as well as two other peace advocates, Professor Philip Morrison of Cornell

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<sup>23</sup> Horne, *Black & Red*, 162.

<sup>24</sup> “The National Committee to Defend Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and associates in the Peace Information Center,” Pamphlet, 25 June 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00275.

<sup>25</sup> B. Burke to The National Committee to Defend Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and associates in the Peace Information Center, 26 June 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00281.

<sup>26</sup> “Progressive Party Press Release,” n.d., *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00380.

University and Robert Mors Lovett. A seven-hundred-plus-audience of both African Americans and whites came to the dinner. The press also attended but as Shirley Graham remarked, while “the press was there (for free dinners)...not a word of the affair appeared in any Chicago newspaper,”<sup>27</sup> including the *Chicago Defender*. Du Bois and Shirley Graham also spoke to an appreciative audience at an African American Church in Chicago. En route to Gary, Indiana, Du Bois ran into trouble. The municipal hall in Gary had been reserved for the speech but at the last minute the reservation was cancelled and a story in the local white paper announced that the event would not take place.

Undeterred by this unexpected news, Du Bois and Graham continued to Gary where they gave a speech to a large audience at a skating rink. Afterwards, the local African American newspaper commented on the event and criticised “the recent attempt to ‘hush’ Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois from speaking in Gary.” The article also reassured its readership that “frankly we do not believe [Du Bois] is a communist.”<sup>28</sup> After the speech, Du Bois and Graham were told by local African American union members not to stay in Gary overnight for safety reasons and they returned to Chicago.

Upon their arrival in Chicago, Du Bois and Graham were frustrated by the degree to which Cold War norms in the African American community impeded their ability to raise defense funds. In Chicago, a reception for Du Bois was held at which the upper crust of the African American community pledged \$1100 dollars in support of the defense campaign. However, in the end the campaign collected less than \$450 dollars, due in part, Du Bois believed, to “fear of reprisal” for supporting the case. Next, in

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<sup>27</sup> Shirley Graham, *His Day is Marching On: A Memoir of W. E. B. Du Bois* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1971), 156.

Minnesota, Du Bois believed he was received well because of a “strong Progressive group.”<sup>29</sup> In St. Paul, Shirley Graham’s mother and family, who were prominent members of the African American community, helped to organize a large mass meeting in Minnesota, which Shirley Graham surmised was “probably the largest interracial meeting held in this community up to that time.”<sup>30</sup> Of great importance to both of the Du Bois was that their tour was introducing crowds, “not only [to] the Peace Information Center but the world peace movement.”<sup>31</sup> Du Bois also received the support of Fisk University alumni who passed a resolution stating that “we reaffirm our faith and confidence in him and in his integrity and loyalty to the principles and ideals of this Alma Mater.” Du Bois was deeply moved by the resolution and later commented that “this was the first [African American organization] which expressed ‘faith and confidence’ in my ‘integrity and loyalty.’” Du Bois perceived that many of the resolutions being passed in his defense were emphasising his historic role without commenting on his “loyalty” or on the issues that had made him a target of malicious prosecution.<sup>32</sup> Du Bois then left the Midwest and headed for the West Coast.

His visit to Seattle illustrates Du Bois’s limited ability to pierce the veil of Cold War Americanism and support his vision of Americanism. In Seattle, although he was well received by the Progressive Party and local trade unions, no members of the African American community came to hear him speak. Du Bois reflected that the lack of African

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<sup>28</sup> “Let’s Always Hear What The Other Man Has To Say,” *Gary American*, 8 June 1951 reprinted by the National Committee to Defend Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois & Associates in the Peace Information Center, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00066.

<sup>29</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 98.

<sup>30</sup> Shirley Graham, *His Day is Marching On: A Memoir of W. E. B. Du Bois* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1971), 158.

<sup>31</sup> Graham, *His Day is Marching On*, 158.

<sup>32</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 99.

American support was due to the small African American population,<sup>33</sup> but this seems unlikely, since there was, in fact, a growing African American community of over 15 000. A better explanation might lie in the relative affluence of the African American community and its recent success in gaining civil rights. Indeed, Seattle was uniquely positioned to continue to provide excellent jobs for African Americans in the booming aerospace industry, so much so that the *Chicago Defender* suggested to its readers to move west to this city.<sup>34</sup> Of course, systematic racism still existed, but the African American community had strong NAACP and Urban League chapters that at this time appeared to be sufficient in bringing about change.<sup>35</sup> The lack of support from this community suggests that for the most part the support that Du Bois received was from the portion of the African American community that did not join the African American elite in subscribing to the strategy of acquiescence to, and support of, Cold War norms.

Following Seattle, Du Bois travelled to Portland, Oregon, where his experiences further revealed the weakness of African American support and his dependence on the Progressive Party. Furthermore, it revealed the ways in which Cold War Americanism was often enforced with physical intimidation.<sup>36</sup> In Portland, members of the African American community who had helped organise and support Du Bois's visit withdrew their participation. Pressure came most visibly from the local American Legion, one of

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<sup>33</sup> Graham, *His Day is Marching On*, 159.

<sup>34</sup> Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 175.

<sup>35</sup> For broader discussion of the civil rights struggles of the African American community in Seattle see, Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, 159-189. For a perspective in another urban center see, Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*.

<sup>36</sup> One of the most well known examples of the use of physical intimidation and violence to suppress Cold War dissent was the 1949 Peekskill riot. In Peekskill, New York a collection of right wing thugs attacked a peaceful labour concert being held by Paul Robeson. Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare: Memories of the American Inquisition* (New York: Avon Books, 1995), 75-80; Martin Bauml Duberman *Paul Robeson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 350-375.

the most reactionary organisations in the United States at that time, with local chapters of the NAACP and the Urban League refusing to become involved. Ministers who originally had lent their names to the event also withdrew their support without explanation. Du Bois's speech would not have gone forward without the intervention of local Progressives. When the African American families that had offered their homes to Du Bois and his entourage stated that they were unable to have them stay in their homes, it was white progressives who offered their homes as alternatives. Du Bois's speech in front of a crowd of 700 was surrounded by hostile members of the American Legion.<sup>37</sup> The National Committee's dependence on the work of the Progressives and left wing labour unions continued during his travels in California.

In California, Du Bois continued to need the support of Progressives and labour groups. Organised labour did not support Du Bois on a national basis, and instead it was local branches and international unions that sent letters of support. This lack of national support reflected the acquiescence of the labour movement's national leadership to the Cold War, while the support of the locals reflected the continued existence of a radical labour opposition to Cold War Americanism. Du Bois was supported by these union locals because of his work for the African American community, and for the "cause of peace, freedom and the dignity of mankind."<sup>38</sup> The local unions made the same connection between work for peace, the African American community, and anti-colonialism, as did Du Bois.<sup>39</sup> However, unions also expressed support for Du Bois using

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<sup>37</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 100.

<sup>38</sup> Sterling Neal Secretary-Treasurer of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) District Council No. 7 to Alice Citron, 4 June 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00646.

<sup>39</sup> Isadore Rubin Acting Secretary for the Teachers Union, Local 555, UPW, to Howard MaGrath, 25 June 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00568.



the rhetoric of nationalism and patriotism by citing Du Bois's record as a "great American."<sup>40</sup> Trade unions organised trips to San Francisco and Oakland and the Progressive Party organised a trip to Los Angeles. In San Francisco, Du Bois found support with African American union members but had no contact with the middle and upper classes of the community. The composition of the audiences at the meetings in California was split equally between African Americans and whites. In Los Angeles, Du Bois was received by his largest crowd including a full spectrum of the African American community and by a large number of Progressives and union leaders.<sup>41</sup>

Following California Du Bois travelled to Cleveland for a meeting with other Progressive Party and union members.<sup>42</sup> In the end, a trip intended to reach a broad spectrum of the African American community did not succeed in reaching individuals beyond those already committed to Du Bois and his anti-Cold War positions. African Americans came to support the man they understood to be one of their greatest leaders under attack without necessarily supporting Du Bois's views of the Cold War. Du Bois failed to create a new constituency for himself or for the Peace Movement, which he believed was in peril. The majority of his audience were white Progressives and union members. Du Bois felt justifiably proud of the interracial alliance that came together in his defense, but on a trip designed to reach the whole African American community, overwhelming support was found among white progressives and not blacks, suggesting that African Americans were not hearing or accepting his message.

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<sup>40</sup> General Council of Local 600, UAW-CIO "Resolution on W.E.B. Du Bois," 9 September 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00643.

<sup>41</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 101.

<sup>42</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 102.

Du Bois's arrest and the closing of the Peace Information Center was not enough to stop him from continuing the work that he felt was the only way of avoiding a third world war and nuclear holocaust. The American Peace Crusade was established by the Peace Information Center as a temporary organisation to deal with the apparent crises and threat of world war.<sup>43</sup> The Crusade was established to continue the work of the Peace Information Center, following its decision to close down in wake of the indictments, and planned several events in 1951 with the stated goal of working for peace and fighting racism. The American Peace Crusade, of which Du Bois was an initiator, believed that a peace movement aimed at the American public was vital because of the American government's involvement in Korea which had "the most immediate danger of involvement in atomic war."<sup>44</sup> Considering the reason for its creation and the prominent role that Du Bois played in it, it is no surprise that Du Bois's trial played a significant role in the Crusade's publicity. According to the American Peace Crusade, in the case against Du Bois, "what was at stake was the very right to work for peace – peace itself is on trial."<sup>45</sup> The focus of the Crusade was international peace, but was imbedded within Americanism, albeit an Americanism that was different from the Cold War version. Thus the peace movement was limited by its reliance on nationalism to make its message heard. However, by using nationalism as a justification for its program, the peace movement was following the methods of its opponents by claiming that national interest alone made their position worthy.

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<sup>43</sup> Initiating Committee American Peace Crusade, 20 January 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00068.

<sup>44</sup> The Initiating Committee of the American Peace Crusade, 2 February 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00072.

<sup>45</sup> Organization memo, p.2, the American Peace Crusade, n.d., though before June 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #000136.

The Peace Crusade planned to lead a March 1<sup>st</sup> pilgrimage for peace to Washington to exert pressure on the U.S. government to withdraw from the Korean War and negotiate with the Soviet Union.<sup>46</sup> The Crusade's message was not that the United States should abandon capitalism or that it should increase its social spending but that "the co-existence of many social systems is possible and necessary."<sup>47</sup> The organisers of the march also took pains to frame their arguments in language that they hoped would shield them from attack by claiming that the pilgrimage was "profoundly patriotic."<sup>48</sup> The March on Washington was followed by a People's Congress and Exposition for Peace in Chicago that ran from June 29 to July 1, 1952. The American Peace Crusade's "Chicago Plan" made reference to the Red Scare, arguing that with the end of hostilities between the Soviet Union and the United States, peace would be possible. "Then," the Chicago Plan claimed, "we will have not witch-hunts, not discrimination, not second-class citizenship for Negroes, but the expanding heritage of freedom and equality." This emphasis on the unique qualities of the United States continued: "It is the American tradition that all citizens have the right to think, speak, associate and worship as they please. This right belongs to all nations."<sup>49</sup> The Crusade advocated an alternative Americanism and like Du Bois targeted African Americans to further its cause.

In a pamphlet written by the Crusade advertising the Congress to the African American population, the connections between Jim Crow and American imperialism were made clear. The pamphlet began with a reminder of the "valiant Negro citizens- the

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<sup>46</sup> The Initiating Committee American Peace Crusade to W.E.B. Du Bois, 7 February 1951. *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00073.

<sup>47</sup> Abbot Simon to Du Bois, Petition form for the Peace Information Center, 13 January 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00064.

<sup>48</sup> Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 102,

shock troops and labor battalions of a Jim Crow army- are among the legions of dead and wounded Americans and Koreans. Hundreds have been court-martialed to death and imprisonment by General Jim Crow.” In continuing its critique of Jim Crow, the pamphlet stated that “at home the hand of Jim is Crow is raised against every Negro.” The connections between domestic racism and the American war in Korea were made clear, as was the threat of such wars to any possible hope for African Americans domestically: “The sword wielded by General Jim Crow cannot bring freedom to anyone- colored or white- here or abroad.” Continuing on this theme the pamphlet stated that, “men in high office tell us that American blood and bayonets will bring liberty to Korea and Asia, but here at home they fill the courtrooms and prisons and death-houses with an endless procession of Negro men, women and children on whose freedom and lives they trample.” To support the charge the pamphlet cited a litany of cases including the Martinsville Seven, the Trenton Six, the suppression of Paul Robeson “the great voice of liberty,” and “the great American statesman and leader of his people, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, [who] is arrested and faces imprisonment after half a century of fighting for peace and freedom.”<sup>50</sup> While bitterly attacking the U.S. government’s actions in Korea, the pamphlet cited Du Bois’s greatness as being his identity as a “great American statesman.” Being American was still special; the actions of the government were the problem.

Following his trip to Cleveland, Du Bois spoke at the American Peace Crusade’s People’s Congress and Exposition for Peace in Chicago. The Chicago Congress was meant to bring pressure on the American government to withdraw from Korea and seek

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<sup>49</sup> The Chicago Plan of the American Peace Crusade, 1 July 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00101.

<sup>50</sup> “A Call for Peace and Freedom” American People’s Congress and Exposition for Peace, Chicago, 29 June- 1 July 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00075-00076.

peace with the Soviet Union. In describing the participants, actress Gale Sondergaard stated that "We are the men and women of peace from all these United States....We are Americans."<sup>51</sup> Du Bois's speech was so stridently critical of the government and "big business" that he was "sure the government gave up all hope that I would succumb to fear and sink to acquiescence and silence."<sup>52</sup> Though the speech was virulent in its denunciation of corporate power, Du Bois's demands would have sounded reasonable and patriotic only ten years earlier, before the advent of the Cold War. The way to "preserve the ideals of a democratic America," Du Bois told the audience of over 15, 000, was not to adopt communism or even "the socialism of Britain...but...in some way to some degree restore the New Deal, and inaugurate the welfare state." Not implementing this basic minimum would lead to the dire consequences of "military fascism which will kill all dreams of Democracy... or of peace instead of war."<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately for Du Bois, his "determination to think and speak freely on the economic foundation of the wars and frustration of the twentieth century" continued to illustrate how his agenda differed with that of the African American mainstream and elite.<sup>54</sup>

Following the Peace Congress in Chicago, Du Bois returned to New York City where he and Shirley Graham-Du Bois moved into a new home. However, the financial pressures of the court case necessitated a second fundraising trip, although, due to Du Bois's fatigue, this second trip was shorter. They first travelled to Milwaukee where he and Shirley stayed with a wealthy white Bahai couple who were fans of Graham-Du Bois's books. Du Bois spoke to a meeting of 700 hundred at the most prominent African

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<sup>51</sup> Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream*, 102.

<sup>52</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 102.

<sup>53</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 103.

<sup>54</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 102.

American church in the city, even though the minister, once he realised the size of the crowd, expressed reservations about possible demonstrations.<sup>55</sup> While Du Bois was well received in Milwaukee by the African American community, he met organised resistance in Detroit from the NAACP. In Detroit, the NAACP had recently purged members that were deemed too left leaning and had consequently shattered the organised left in the African American community.<sup>56</sup>

The Detroit NAACP refused to sponsor Du Bois's visit and, in an attempt to divert attention away from his visit, invited national board member Judge Hubert Delany to speak on the same night. However, much to Du Bois's delight, Judge Delany was a firm supporter of Du Bois and Delany's speech in Detroit was critical of those in the NAACP who did not support Du Bois. While the African American reaction in Detroit was mixed, Du Bois's sponsors worried that members of the white community might attack Du Bois. In Detroit, Du Bois "felt the shadow of terror" when he had bodyguards assigned to him. Shirley Graham also commented that she "could sense the hatred in the air." Although his visit in Detroit had been overshadowed by the threat of violence and infighting within the African American community, Du Bois spoke to an audience of 500. Du Bois received his best reception in Denver, where he was greeted by an interracial coalition including, for the first time in any of his trips, the local NAACP chapter. This second trip ended with a return to Chicago for a meeting organised by the American Peace Crusade and attended exclusively by union members. This trip demonstrated that the first tour had been partially successful in attracting attention to the case, if not in creating a mass movement of support. While both trips succeeded in

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<sup>55</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 104; Shirley Graham, *His Day is Marching On: A Memoir of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1971), 164-165.

reaching an audience that might have not rallied to the cause without Du Bois's personal appearances, they did not succeed in creating a new constituency for the peace movement or in expanding the anti-Cold War forces in the country. Instead, Du Bois's succeeded in reinvigorating his small constituency within the white community but not in convincing a sizeable portion of the African American community that his arrest justified turning against the Cold War norms of the era.

Du Bois's overwhelming dependence on the support of Progressives and the peace movement helps explain the lack of support in the African American community. Du Bois's association with the radical left was both a symptom and a cause of his split with mainstream members of the African American community. Ironically, the most important role that Du Bois's white support provided him was helping to organise his tours, the primary target of which tours was the African American community. However, while Progressives and Du Bois saw future progress as dependent on a reorganising of international relations and economic justice, by the late 1940s the African American community's efforts to bring about change were focused on a domestic agenda of political inclusion.

While benefiting from the organisational structure and energy of the remnants of the Progressive Party, Du Bois was also assisted by the support of the international forces that defended him. Presenting himself as an international figure was an important aspect of the publicity with which he and his associates drummed up support. Du Bois obviously felt proud of the stature of some of the individuals expressing outrage at his arrest. In his published recollections of the arrest, Du Bois added an appendix in which the telegrams

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<sup>56</sup> Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 171-173.

and letters of international supporters were reprinted.<sup>57</sup> Du Bois and his supporters felt that the international support he garnered was an indictment of not only the case but also of the American government's current policies. A pamphlet that publicised a meeting held on June 8, 1951, in support of Du Bois, suggested that Einstein might be the next one arrested. In its description of Du Bois, the pamphlet mentioned his age and international stature stating that, "there is no country on earth where his name is not known and respected."<sup>58</sup> Du Bois looked to the international community for help in a battle he was convinced he could not win without its support.<sup>59</sup>

The initial reaction of the African American community to Du Bois's arrest reflected the ubiquitous nature of Cold War culture in the early 1950s. However, the position of African Americans in the United States, as a racist hierarchical society that subjected African Americans to violence and terror in the South and economic violence in the North, necessitated a different response to the Cold War than that of the white majority. While ethnic differences that had once marked the political and social structure of the country were subsumed within the undefined marker of "white," African Americans remained firmly implanted as "other" to the American norm.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, Cold War claims by the U.S. government to be fighting for freedom against tyranny were interpreted and understood differently by African Americans. This does not mean that the

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<sup>57</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 186-190.

<sup>58</sup> Pamphlet, "Who is Next" 1951. *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00056.

<sup>59</sup> Du Bois to Issabel Blume, 17 October 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00236.

As the trial date approached Du Bois wrote to Isabelle Blume in Brussels asking her to attempt to exert pressure on the Belgian government or raise the issue in the House of Deputies. Du Bois looked to international support because he believed that "*la jugement, dans un mommet comee cellela restera pas avec la lois mais avec le peuple. Ainsi il nous faut de la publicite pour que la verite- que cette cause est vraiment un effort de silencer les aimies de la paix-apparaitre.*" (The courts decision in an era such as this rests not with the law but with the public. Therefore, we need publicity so that the truth-that this case is really about an effort to silence the supporters of peace-can be heard.)



African American community rejected the norms of Cold War Americanism that insisted that democracy, specifically American democracy, was a superior political system to that of any other, or that communism was a threat to the United States and the African American community. Instead, the African American community called the American government to task for failing to live up to the rhetoric of the Cold War propaganda being produced by the U.S. government. Furthermore, the community reminded the government that failure to act to improve the state of race relations in the nation served the interests of its enemy, the Soviet Union. One of the vehicles through which the African American community expressed its support of the Cold War and its concurrent demand that the United States live up to its international pledges was the African American press.

The community used the same argument to critique the excesses of the Red Scare. Never critiquing the goal of defeating communism, African American newspapers suggested that over zealous attacks on civil liberties helped the cause of communism and hurt America's reputation around the world. The strategy of African American newspapers reflected a general African American understanding of the paradox that their position created for the American government. African Americans were less likely to follow Cold War norms unless a case was made that civil rights improvements were more likely to follow by their adoption of the Cold War rhetoric. African Americans were willing to work with the prevailing norms if it were politically expedient. The amount of time that individuals within the community were willing to wait, and the amount of faith that change would come at all, formed the basis for political divisions within the

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<sup>60</sup> Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 236-247.

community. Nevertheless, the depth of loyalty to the United States and its promise of a better future was demonstrated by the example of Robert Williams, who after a decade of racial oppression and violent resistance to racism in the United States declared after the *Brown vs. Board* decision in 1954, “at last I felt that I was part of America and that I belonged. That was what I had wanted, even as a child.”<sup>61</sup> Clearly, even someone who had suffered and witnessed some of the worst of American race relations had not yet given up on the promise of the American creed.

The coverage of Du Bois’s trial by the African American press and their coverage of the Red Scare indicates how far Du Bois was from the African American mainstream. African American newspapers remained the main conduit for the African American community to express its dissatisfaction with its position within the United States. In the United States, especially in government organisations like the FBI, demands for racial equality were perceived as proof of support for communism.<sup>62</sup> The African American newspapers’ response to this equation was to attempt to disconnect this conflation by stressing their anticommunist credentials and their loyalty to American foreign policy. Adoption of Cold War norms did not mean that African American newspapers abdicated their historic role of demanding fair treatment for the African American community, only that the demands for an end to the institutional and cultural racism that the African American community faced would be framed by the Cold War. “A favorite tactic for African-American spokespersons during the years immediately after World War II,” according to Michael L. Krenn, “was to point out the inescapable contradictions between the Truman administration’s public rhetoric. ... while at home millions of African-

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<sup>61</sup> Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 73.

Americans suffered the indignities heaped upon them by official and unofficial acts of segregation and bias.”<sup>63</sup> The African American press attempted to establish a political position that can be summed up as loyalty to the United States and its struggle with communism. Yet, the papers also expressed worry that the failure of the American government to satisfy the needs of the African American community played into the hands of the communists in two ways: first, by creating exasperated African Americans who would in desperation become communists and second, by providing the Soviet Union with ammunition in its propaganda battle with the United States. Finally, the papers also expressed concerns with the excesses of the Red Scare. The concern was that the Red Scare might have the same impact as that of American racism, namely, providing fodder for Soviet propaganda and driving otherwise loyal citizens into the arms of the communists.

The African American press did express concern for what it saw as the attacks on civil rights initiated by the Red Scare. In an editorial, the *Chicago Defender* reacted with alarm that “a character like Senator Joseph McCarthy can win great power and influence throughout the country with nothing more than half-truths.”<sup>64</sup> African American newspapers showed special interest when the Red Scare impacted on African Americans. A Supreme Court decision that allowed for the continued arrest of communist leaders came under attack by Earl Brown in his regular column in the *Amsterdam News*. Brown argued that the Supreme Court’s inability to protect the right of free speech resulted from its fear that it might “be considered pro-communist by some blabber-mouth demagogue

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<sup>62</sup> Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Micheal L. Krenn, *Black Diplomacy: African Americans and the State Department 1945-1969* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 14.

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or native fascist.” The danger, according to Brown, was that these rulings in fact strengthened the hands of communists. Brown dismissed communist claims because “their objective is never really to improve the lot of the Negro, but only to further their own ulterior and anti-democratic aims.” He warned his readers that not fighting for freedom was to surrender to “both the communists and to the native fascists....and for the communists to attack democracy and all it stands for.”<sup>65</sup> Brown directly tied the need for progress in race relations to America’s struggle with the Soviet Union. Brown stated that “the future of the country may depend as much upon the decision of the court concerning segregated public schools in South Carolina as it does upon what American soldiers are doing in Korea.”<sup>66</sup> Brown clearly believed that the future of the country was at stake in the Korean War and accepted the logic of military confrontation with the communist world. His caveat was that race relations needed to be addressed as well.

This strategy was also evident in the repeated examples found in the pages of the African American press of prominent African Americans expressing their opposition to communism. While perhaps heartfelt, these declarations were also defensive in nature. By publicly stating their opposition to communism and their loyalty to the United States, African Americans were protecting themselves against being labelled “red.”<sup>67</sup> However, there was some concern that attacking communism might have negative consequences for the African American community. Earl Brown expressed anger at the NAACP’s decision not to become involved in civil rights cases if communists were involved. While critical

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<sup>64</sup> “The Crisis of Confidence,” *The Chicago Defender*, 27 November 1951, 6. The case was also reported in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, 20 November 1951, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Earl Brown, “Democracy’s Enemies,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 23 June 1951, 8.

<sup>66</sup> Earl Brown, “No Double Standard,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 7 July 1951, 6.

<sup>67</sup> “‘I Am No Communist’ Walls Tells Churchmen,” *The Chicago Defender*, 5 May 1951, 3; “Bishop Denies Tie with ‘Red’ Group,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 28 May 1951, 1; “Masons Deplore

of the behaviour of the NAACP, his language revealed his position regarding communists. He referred to non-communists as “sound, responsible citizens” and ended his column with a plea that “unless sound and responsible organizations are willing to stand up and battle for civil rights, regardless of attempts by the Reds to muscle in for any other reason, civil rights will be in a sad way.”<sup>68</sup> Two letters to the editor expressed specific concern that attacks on the Peace Movement should concern the African American community. One letter, written in defense of a high school teacher attacked for supporting a peaceful solution to the Korean War, stated that “never was it more vital for us to speak up against this repression of civil rights.”<sup>69</sup> Another letter complained that the Chicago Peace Conference was covered as “red” while other peace movements originating from churches were not subject to the same criticism. The writer did not understand how one peace meeting could be considered either “red” while another was not.<sup>70</sup> Both letter writers were uncomfortable with the American Cold War association of the peace movement with communism.

The arrest of several highly placed African American members of the Communist Party was covered by almost all of the African American papers.<sup>71</sup> Though the coverage was not critical of the arrests, it did provide an opportunity for a discussion of the relationship between communists and the African American community. In an editorial on the arrests of the African American communists and the arrest of Du Bois, the

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Communism, Lash Out at Bigotry: Warn White World Stop Exploitation,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 26 May 1951, 7.

<sup>68</sup> Earl Brown, “Stand Up And Fight,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 28 July 1951, 6.

<sup>69</sup> B. Freeman, “Duty To Speak Up For Civil Rights Of All,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 21 July 1951, 6.

<sup>70</sup> A True Seeker For Peace, “He Can’t See Difference in Two Peace Meetings,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 21 July 1951, 6.

<sup>71</sup> “Three Negro Leaders Held in Red Round-Up” *Amsterdam News*, 23 June 1951, 1; “3 Tan Red Leaders Among 21 Indicted,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 30 June 1951, 3.

*Baltimore Afro-American* suggested that African Americans become communists because “they were from the cradle deprived of their social and economic rights.”<sup>72</sup> The potential appeal of communism for African Americans was a constant concern of the African American press. *The Amsterdam News* reported on its front page in a bold headline that “Communists Woo Harlem.”<sup>73</sup> The article continued with a full page including a series of photos presumably of prominent communists, that included several who recently had been arrested for being members of the Communist Party, as well as W.E.B. Du Bois. Apart from the names of the individual in the photos, there was no caption explaining their presence on the page in relation to the story. Du Bois himself was never mentioned in the article but his photo’s inclusion illustrated an assumption on the part of the paper that Du Bois was a part of the communist brain trust that was working to convert Harlem or that he was perhaps a convert of the communist recruitment campaign.<sup>74</sup> The overall message was clear; communists were targeting Harlem and the readership had to be vigilant in resisting it.

The African American press repeatedly argued that the United States needed to settle domestic race tensions in order to wage more effectively the struggle against communism. Earl Brown, in the *Amsterdam News* was typical when he argued that “the success of this fight [civil rights] is the only real escape from both communism and native fascism.”<sup>75</sup> African American newspapers and others argued that bettering social conditions at home was an important weapon against communism. Jacob S. Potofsky, in a

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<sup>72</sup> “Creating Communists,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 7 July 1951, 4.

<sup>73</sup> Ray Welles. “Communists Woo Harlem: Open Big Drive In Local Area,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 29 September 1951, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Ray Welles. “Communists Woo Harlem: Open Big Drive In Local Area,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 29 September 1951, 17.

<sup>75</sup> Earl Brown, “Stand Up And Fight,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 28 July 1951, 6.

guest column, made a similar argument on behalf of organised labour, writing “improving the standard of living is the only sure weapon for fighting off communist and fascist aggression.”<sup>76</sup> African American newspapers consistently reported international responses to American racism. A *Baltimore Afro-American* editorial cartoon showed the NAACP and World Events working together to crush in a large vice “bigotry, segregation, racial prejudice and hatred.”<sup>77</sup> African American newspapers hoped that their efforts coupled with international pressure would effect change. This relationship was also expressed by coverage of foreign reactions to American racism.<sup>78</sup>

The African American press expressed interest in developments in the African diaspora, but following what Penny Von Eschen terms “the collapse of a transnational black press”<sup>79</sup> this coverage operated from a distinctly American perspective. African American newspapers reflected an interest in the activities of Africans when they connected with those of the United States. The *Amsterdam News* and the *Baltimore Afro-American* followed the activities of Ethiopian soldiers sent to fight in the Korean War. The *Amsterdam News* reported that the Ethiopian unit was “the first Ethiopian combat unit to fight outside of Africa in 1300 years.”<sup>80</sup> The *Baltimore Afro-American* reported that Emperor Haile Selassie was sending troops to “fight not only for Ethiopia, but for collective security and peace in the world.”<sup>81</sup> While interest in the African nation was a reflection of their shared African heritage, the focus of the articles was on the co-

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<sup>76</sup> Jacob S. Potofsky, “Free Trade Unions,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 28 July 1951, 6.

<sup>77</sup> “Keep Putting on the Pressure,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 30 June 1951, 4.

<sup>78</sup> “Dark Egyptian Finds No Dixie Democracy,” *Baltimore Afro-American* 14 July 1951, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 118-121.

<sup>80</sup> “Ethiopia Sends 1<sup>st</sup> Army Unit,” *Amsterdam News*, 12 May 1951, 1.

<sup>81</sup> “To Battle for World Peace: Ethiopia Sends 1<sup>st</sup> Troops to Korean War,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 28 April 1951, 5.

operation of the Ethiopian troops in an American operation and in Ethiopia's support of American foreign policy.

The African American press's attitude towards the African diaspora and other peoples of colour was vastly different from Du Bois's vision. Du Bois received an invitation to attend an All India Cultural Conference for Peace by the All India Peace Council, stating that Du Bois's presence would be "valuable ....to the Indian peace Movement and to our cultural movement as a whole." Du Bois responded that due to his court case he would be unable to attend stating that "I deeply regret my inability to accept." Not only did he wish to visit India but he revealed that "it has long been my dream to help unite the people of Asia and the Negroes of the United States in such common thought and effort."<sup>82</sup> This vision of an international movement, outside of the national interests of the U.S. government was not expressed in the letters sent to the government in Du Bois's support.

A brief review of the letters sent to the federal government expressing anger over the arrest of Du Bois consistently illustrates the ways in which Americanism framed the defense of Du Bois. Letters from concerned citizens across the country flooded into the office of President Truman and Attorney General J. Howard McGrath. Though not representing any particular constituency, these letters expressed the anger of citizens not affiliated with any formal organisation or political party. As such, they provide a window through which to explore the feelings of citizens not normally heard from in formal political discourses. The letters expressed outrage at the arrest and insisted that Du Bois

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<sup>82</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois to Mr. Krisman Chandar general secretary of the All India Peace Council, August 28, 1951; W.E.B. Du Bois to Mr. Krisman Chandar, 11 October 1951 *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00025.



was “a great patriotic American.”<sup>83</sup> Letter writers saw the arrest as a great blow to the efforts of the United States in its propaganda efforts overseas, one letter suggesting that the arrest served no purpose except to “feed the propaganda fires of the Kremlin.”<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the letter writers were offended at the notion that advocating peace and opposing nuclear weapons could be considered “un-American.”<sup>85</sup> Vital to all those who wrote to the government was a reiteration that Du Bois was a loyal citizen who did not threaten the national interest. In a letter to President Truman, Hans Blumenfeld, Chief Division of Planning Analysis, Philadelphia City of Planning Commission, complained about Du Bois’s arrest. Critiquing the President for claiming to believe in free speech while attacking Du Bois, he stated that, “You know as well as I do that this charge is wholly false; the whole life of Dr. Du Bois is testimony to his devotion to the American people.” He further attacked the President for having “subjected this venerable, 83 year old scholar to the indignity of handcuffing and fingerprinting. These proceedings are a disgrace to our country.”<sup>86</sup>

Following two national tours and the efforts of international organisations and domestic allies, Du Bois faced the trial with some trepidation. While he felt great satisfaction in the support he received domestically and internationally, Du Bois remained convinced that the government’s determination to silence Cold War critiques might overcome not only his innocence, but the broad international support he had

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<sup>83</sup> Mrs. Edith Lee Geiger to Harry S. Truman, September 24, 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00684; See also “Dr. Du Bois is a...first class citizen of the United States of America.” Geo W. Powell to J. Howard McGrath, September 21, 1951. *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00375.

<sup>84</sup> Laurence A. Hauts to Harry S. Truman, September 29, 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00757.

<sup>85</sup> Frances Leber to Howard J. McGrath, 15 September 1951. *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #01034.

<sup>86</sup> Hans Blumenfeld to President Harry S. Truman, 22 October 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00238.

received and what he saw as strong domestic support. Du Bois also understood that while he received messages of support from individuals across the country, the Cold War had effectively limited his support base, leaving him isolated on many of the issues about which he felt so passionate. A victory in court might prove that the tide had turned against the Cold War, while a defeat might prove that his country was continuing its slide into fascism.

## Chapter Three

### **The Acquittal: Cold War Americanism Triumphant?**

*Thus the peace movement epitomizes in itself the world uplift today and of this American Negroes must become increasingly aware if they do not want to fall behind progress and hold back the march of mankind.*

W.E.B. Du Bois<sup>1</sup>

The denouement of Du Bois's case came quickly and unexpectedly. On November 20, 1951, Du Bois, his associates and their team of lawyers entered the courtroom of Judge McGuire expecting the continuation of what would be a long trial even though Du Bois and his legal team had been unimpressed with the case presented by the government. The trial had lasted only six days but already deficiencies in the government's case had been exposed. However, to Du Bois and his allies' surprise the judge proceeded to accept the motion to dismiss presented by Du Bois's lead lawyer, Vito Macantonio. The courtroom erupted into cheers and Du Bois repeated "I am indeed happy"<sup>2</sup> to the gathered African American press. The outcome of the trial was a surprise

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<sup>1</sup> "On the Future of the American Negro," *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1920-1963*, with a tribute by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Pathway, 1970), 277.

<sup>2</sup> "Du Bois in Tears After Acquittal," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 December 1951, 1.

to Du Bois.<sup>3</sup> He and his associates had prepared for a long legal fight and assumed that the government's case would become stronger. Du Bois was particularly concerned that the Cold War atmosphere might lead to a guilty verdict regardless of the evidence. The acquittal surprised Du Bois and left him to ponder the significance of the outcome. Whatever the responses, the rhetoric of Americanism would be ubiquitous.

The government's case had centred on the testimony of John Rogge, a former peace activist who had approached Du Bois with the need for the creation of the Peace Information Center.<sup>4</sup> Rogge had at one time been a rising star in the Progressive Party and had been pegged as a possible presidential nominee. Now he was the star witness for the government against those he had worked with to found the Peace Information Center. However, his testimony failed to provide the crucial link between the Center and a foreign power. Rogge claimed that the Soviet Union was the one giving orders to the Center, while the government was explicit in stating that it was not the Soviet Union but the World Peace Council that was the foreign principal involved. This contradiction came out in court and left the government with no evidence of guilt on the part of Du Bois and his associates. The government had probably hoped that the case would not go to trial and that Du Bois would accept a deal to avoid prison. Du Bois later claimed that his lawyers were offered a deal in exchange for pleading no contest, with the government promising to not pursue any punishment of Du Bois and his co-accused.<sup>5</sup> Du Bois refused and in the process exposed the weakness of the government's evidence and won the case.

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<sup>3</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois to Mr. & Mrs. Abbels, 30 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00001.

<sup>4</sup> O. John Rogge to W.E.B. Du Bois, 24 February 1950, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois, Volume III, Selections, 1944-1963* ed. Herbert Aptheker, (University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), 180.

<sup>5</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois with Comment by Shirley Graham, *In Battle for Peace: The Story of my 83<sup>rd</sup> Birthday* (New York: Masses & Mainstream, 1952), 89.

Du Bois understood the victory as a blow against the status quo and a move towards rolling back the reversals that his vision of Americanism had suffered. This view was shared by one of Du Bois's closest associates, Herbert Aptheker. In a letter to Du Bois following the trial, Aptheker wrote enthusiastically that he believed the victory was only the beginning of a series of victories that would push back Cold War Americanism. "I still wake up these days cheering, it is so good to win – and there will be so many more and great victories."<sup>6</sup> In contrast, the African American press saw the acquittal as evidence that the status quo was acceptable and that the system was safe from the extremism espoused by McCarthy and others revving up the rhetoric of anti-communism. Indeed, following months of campaigning that his arrest was a product of his peace activism and that he was fighting against a war supported by the business class, Du Bois would have been hard pressed to find any reference to these issues in the African American press. The African American press never mentioned Du Bois's peace activism. The editorial comment on the case stressed Du Bois's historic activism on behalf of the community and that the acquittal meant that the court system was effective, not once mentioning the issues that Du Bois was willing to risk jail over.

Du Bois's acquittal was front-page news for all of the African American newspapers and inspirational to members of the Progressive Party and members of the Soviet Peace camp. However, Du Bois's importance outside of these two segments of the American population was demonstrated by the coverage of the trial in the *New York Times*. Appearing on page 21, rather than being a front-page headline, the response of the

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Herbert Aptheker to W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00157. Herbert Aptheker (1915-2003) was a close associate of Du Bois during the final decades of his life. When Du Bois left the United States in 1960, Aptheker was made executor of Du Bois's papers. He was also an important historian in his own right, writing and editing dozens of works.

*Times* was far more understated than that of the African American press. The headline did not mention Du Bois but simply stated “the Peace Information Center and 5 acquitted at trial.” The events in the courtroom were described as a loss for the government rather than as a victory for the accused. The article highlighted the government’s case and repeated Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s charges that the Stockholm peace accord was a “propaganda trick.”<sup>7</sup> Only at the end of the article was there any suggestion that the complete lack of evidence and inherent weakness of the government’s case was the cause of the loss.

Whatever his supporters might have hoped for or believed, reaction to the acquittal provides dramatic evidence of the split between the African American press and the marginal left that had formed the base of Du Bois’s support. Du Bois’s victory was understood by his supporters as one that reaffirmed his identity as a loyal American, and his current work as authentically American. Du Bois believed that his victory was a blow against forces in the United States attempting to lead the country to war with the Soviet Union and China: “The great victory which has been won is...not merely a victory for 5 persons and an organisation, but much more a triumph for free speech and the right to defend peace, in a nation which seems to have gone crazy in advocating war.”<sup>8</sup> Du Bois’s vision was shared by the peace organizations that he had worked with and that had supported him throughout the trial.

The peace organizations that had supported Du Bois during the trial also saw the case as a victory for their vision of Americanism. The Illinois Assembly of the American Peace Crusade sent a telegram stating “congratulations on winning a great victory for the

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<sup>7</sup> “Peace Center and 5 Acquitted at Trial,” *New York Times*, 21 November 1951, 21.

American people and the future your courage and wisdom are guiding lights for all of us in the struggle for peace.”<sup>9</sup> The Cleveland Youth Peace Crusade sent a letter congratulating Du Bois on his victory, stating that they “proudly hail the victory of you and your associates over those who would make peace un-American ... We are sure you know that the American youth, Negro and white, will support you and our other leaders who will help us achieve lasting peace.”<sup>10</sup> The Washington State Peace Crusade sent a telegram to Simon Abbott congratulating him on “your acquittal and that of the others in the American Peace Crusade. This verdict is a real victory for the American people and a stunning blow to those who would subvert our institutions.”<sup>11</sup> One letter of congratulations from Thomas Richardson, national Co-Director of the American Peace Crusade, stated that Du Bois was “a symbol to us of the best traditions of our country.”<sup>12</sup> Another telegram from the American Peace Crusade to Du Bois stated that “your violent struggle inspires us with determination.”<sup>13</sup> Opal Brooten, Secretary of the Coeur d’Alene, Idaho chapter of the American Peace Crusade saw the “acquittal of the five officers of the Peace Information Center as a remarkable victory for the growing sentiment for peace.”<sup>14</sup> The Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice, saw Du Bois as “an invigorating example to all that the American tradition of freedom of expression still lives, and still has vitality in

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<sup>8</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois to Thomas Richardson, 30 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #000123.

<sup>9</sup> Illinois Assembly American Peace Crusade to W.E.B. Du Bois, 21 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00142.

<sup>10</sup> The Cleveland Youth Peace Crusade to W.E.B. Du Bois, 22 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00347.

<sup>11</sup> Washington State Peace Crusade, Gile C. Evans and James A. McDaniels to Simon Abbott, 20 November, 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00144.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Richardson Willard Uphaus to W.E.B. Du Bois, 20 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00120.

<sup>13</sup> Washington State Peace Crusade, Gile C. Evans and James A. McDaniels to W.E.B. Du Bois, 20 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00144.

<sup>14</sup> Opal Brooten to the American Peace Crusade Committee, 21 November 1951, Reel 66, #00141.

spite of those who lead us down the path of thought-control to eventual disaster.”<sup>15</sup> By winning the case, Du Bois provided hope to a beleaguered minority that their vision of Americanism was still possible.

The principle organisation that had provided support for Du Bois during the trial was the Progressive Party and it expressed its satisfaction at the turn of events. The different branches of the Party that sent letters and telegrams of congratulations shared Du Bois’s assessment of the acquittal: this was a victory against the enemies of true Americanism. In congratulating Du Bois for the acquittal, Milton Koss, the chairman of the Boro Hall Club of the American Labor Party stated that, “the American people have won a signal victory in the dismissal of the indictment against Dr. Du Bois and his colleagues.”<sup>16</sup> The Kings County American Labor Party described Du Bois’s victory as inspiring and stated that “no other event in this recent period has given such heart to rank and file progressives and their entire leadership.”<sup>17</sup> The Village American Labor Party stated that “this victory means as much to world peace and freedom and gives us renewed courage to fight harder.”<sup>18</sup> The American Labor Party Club in Albany County, New York (the Progressive Party’s New York State branch) congratulated Du Bois on his acquittal, writing that it represented a “tribute to your life long efforts on behalf of the American people”<sup>19</sup> Thus for the Progressives and those that supported their vision of Americanism,

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<sup>15</sup> Pauline Watkins, Corresponding Secretary of the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice to W.E.B. Du Bois, 9 December 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00638.

<sup>16</sup> Milton Koss to W.E.B. Du Bois, 23 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00242.

<sup>17</sup> Leo J. Linder, Chairman of the The Kings County American Labor Party to W.E.B. Du Bois, 23 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00061.

<sup>18</sup> Village American Labor Party to W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00061.

<sup>19</sup> Jeanette Dworkin to W.E.B. Du Bois, Secretary of the American Labor Party Club, Albany New York, 8 December 1952. *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00063.



Du Bois's victory was one for "real Americans"<sup>20</sup> that might allow for America to "soon regain its original greatness"<sup>21</sup> and step away from the militaristic right wing swing that was taking their nation away from them.

Part of the symbolic meaning of the case for Du Bois and his supporters was to assert that the case had brought together a coalition of those representing true Americanism including the Progressive Party, the peace movement and the African American community. This view was best expressed in a resolution passed by the Progressive Party following the acquittal. "This inspiring triumph," the resolution claimed, "resulted from the tremendous fight waged by the Progressive Party, and all the other peace advocates nationally and internationally, the magnificent courage and unity of the Negro people, and the virtually unanimous support of the Negro press in rallying solidly behind Dr. Du Bois."<sup>22</sup> This resolution ignored the fundamental differences between the African American press's reaction and that of the Progressive Party and others in the peace movement. It further essentialises the African American community as a monolithic entity that rose in one voice in opposition to the indictment. The Herculean efforts of the Progressive Party to elicit support from the African American community and its failure to create the very coalition that it now claimed existed, suggested that the acquittal was being used to help reenergize the base of the party. By creating a narrative of unified opposition, the Party was reassuring its supporters that they were not as marginalized as implied by the election results in 1948 and the Party's

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<sup>20</sup> David Barton to W.E.B. Du Bois, 20 December 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00205.

<sup>21</sup> Alice Herz to W.E.B. Du Bois, 20 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00826.

<sup>22</sup> "Resolution on Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and his Colleagues" *Midwest Conference- Progressive Party*, November 24-25, 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00396.

subsequent disappearance from the national scene. This effort also was a move to undermine the Cold War culture that had come to dominate and had effectively negated the meaning of Americanism that the Party stood for. While claiming that the African American press was on-side with the Party, the fundamental reality was the exact opposite. Rather than working to undermine the Cold War, the African American Press was engaged in its own effort to reinforce and expand the new Cold War norms of Cold War Americanism.

The response of the African American press demonstrates that the black community not only supported the Cold War, but in fact helped to strengthen Cold War norms. The African American press saw Du Bois's victory as proof of his innocence of the charges of disloyalty and communism. This response was a continuation of the tone of their coverage throughout the trial. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the most supportive papers, ran the headline "Du Bois in Tears After Acquittal."<sup>23</sup> The *Baltimore Afro-American*, a paper that also had been supportive, ran a similar headline, "Dr. Du Bois Cries When He's Freed."<sup>24</sup> The *Chicago Defender* was more restrained in its headline, saying simply that "Dr. Du Bois Freed, Says He's Happy,"<sup>25</sup> and the *New York Amsterdam News* was the least descriptive in its headline, stating that "Du Bois, Associates Acquitted."<sup>26</sup> Coverage of the acquittal also reflected the different editorial attitudes towards Du Bois and consequently towards the Cold War.

The *Chicago Defender* described the outcome as a "stinging defeat" for the government. However, the article's tone reflected a discomfort with those in the

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<sup>23</sup> "Du Bois in 'Tears After Acquittal,'" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 December 1951, 1.

<sup>24</sup> "Dr. Du Bois 'Cries When He's Freed,'" *Baltimore Afro-American*, 1 December 1951, 1.

<sup>25</sup> "Dr. Du Bois Freed, Says He's Happy," *Chicago Defender*, 1 December 1951, 1.

<sup>26</sup> "Du Bois, Associates Acquitted," *New York Amsterdam News*, 1 December 1951, 1.

courtroom who supported Du Bois, reporting that “several of the persons there were those long identified with organizations now listed by the Justice Department as subversive.”<sup>27</sup> The *Baltimore Afro-American* provided no commentary on the composition of the audience, instead focussing on the reaction of those acquitted and their lawyers. The upbeat tone of the coverage was highlighted by a photo of the defendants around a copy of The *Baltimore Afro-American* reading their “favourite weekly.”<sup>28</sup> Obviously, Du Bois’s name was still good enough to use for reasons of publicity. The *Pittsburgh Courier* was the only paper to have two stories on the acquittal. One detailed the action in the court and another reported on a story from Shirley Graham-Du Bois who was reported to have said that Du Bois was ready to go to jail rather than compromise. “I want you to know,” Shirley was quoted, “that my husband had no fear of going to jail. He told me he would rather go to jail than compromise his beliefs that peace is right and that work for peace is right. I am so proud of my husband” she continued, “because he would not compromise his principle.”<sup>29</sup> Graham-Du Bois’s emphasis on Du Bois’s peace activism and his willingness to go to jail over the principle of peace was not picked up in the editorial coverage in any of the African American newspapers.

The *Pittsburgh Courier* did not publish an official editorial about the acquittal but one of the regular columnists wrote about the dramatic turn of events. Marjorie McKenzie wrote a column that simultaneously attacked those who had abandoned Du Bois while stating “Dr. Du Bois’s trial should strengthen our faith in the process of democracy.” Mackenzie characterised the victory as one that bolstered the political structure of the nation by allowing “freedom for the non-conformists in our society.”

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<sup>27</sup> “Dr. Du Bois Freed, Says He’s Happy,” *Chicago Defender*, 1 December 1951, 2.

<sup>28</sup> “They Found Their Story in the Afro,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 1 December 1951, 21.

McKenzie described Du Bois's ideas as outside the mainstream but insisted that by protecting his right to speak the general right "to speak as we please" was also protected. The fundamental lesson to be gleaned from the entire experience was that "the framework of democracy, is a very secure structure that will house us all comfortably and safely."<sup>30</sup> Thus, Du Bois's arrest and acquittal reinforced the belief in the superiority of the American democratic model. Though uncomfortable with the passage of laws such as the Smith Act, McKenzie was clear in her loyalty to the American model of government and her belief in the inferiority of other systems, especially those espoused by Du Bois and his current associates.

The *Baltimore Afro-American* wrote an editorial in support of the acquittal, calling it "a wise decision." Though the editorial was laudatory of Du Bois's record on behalf of African Americans and called the charges "ridiculous," it also suggested that Du Bois's choice of friends was problematic. Du Bois was defended against the charges of being "an enemy of the United States." "On the contrary," the editorial asserted, "Dr. Du Bois, as much as any other American, by his brilliant writing and incisive speeches helped give new life and meaning to our cherished concepts of equality, liberty and justice." The editorial ended by stating that, "the fact is he [Du Bois] has taken with him people he didn't actually need in his long and illustrious career of fighting to make real the noble pronouncements to which America prescribes in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the United Nations' Charter of Human Rights."<sup>31</sup> This flourish of patriotism and dismissal of Du Bois's current associates perfectly encapsulated the response of the African American press. The newspapers saw the United

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<sup>29</sup> "DuBois Had no Fear, Says Wife," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 December 1951, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Marjorie McKenzie "Pursuit of Democracy" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 December 1951, 6.

States and its founding documents as sources of hope for the African American community and the world. The Red Scare in America, like Du Bois's arrest, was a part of a system that was temporarily broken, but it did not mean the system needed to be replaced. As well, the editorial's hostility to Du Bois's friends suggests that the paper differed with him in his prescription for fixing the system and even saw his friends as dangerous not only to the community but the country at large.

The *Chicago Defender* published an official editorial on the acquittal that saw the decision as "an example of the kind of democratic philosophy which is so strange to the boys in the Kremlin. If Du Bois were a Russian and had been accused of a crime against the state, he would have been in Siberia now." The editorial reiterated its earlier position, expressed at the time of the indictment, that Du Bois's association with communism should be "attributed more to age than intellectual growth."<sup>32</sup> Another regular column, the "National Grapevine" on the editorial page discussed the acquittal. Entitled "Sun in the Sky," the column described the acquittal "as a resounding reaffirmation that the channels of justice shall be kept open in America." The acquittal, according to the "Grapevine," had larger implications for the domestic struggle between communism and the United States. "The decision should serve to frustrate American peddlers of foreign political ideologies who strive to convert the misguided and naïve under first one communist-inspired banner and then the other." The decision also provided some comfort to those concerned with the excesses of the Red Scare. "Judge McGuire's decision comes at a time when many loyal Americans had begun to despair that in our blind anxiety to preserve American democracy we tragically borrow some of the totalitarian practices we

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<sup>31</sup> "A Wise Decision," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 1 December 1951, 4.

<sup>32</sup> "Du Bois Freed," *Chicago Defender*, 1 December 1951, 9.

are trying to wipe out in the world.”<sup>33</sup> The *raison-d’être* of anti-communism and the Cold War was untarnished by the arrest and in fact reinforced by the acquittal. The only concern expressed in the editorials was regarding the excesses of the Red Scare. The *Defender* used the acquittal to reinforce anti-communism, further denigrate Du Bois’s associates, and reassure the reader of the strength and justice of American democracy.

A week later Percival Prattis, in his regular column for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, wrote a stirring column that declared “Du Bois has set an example for those of faint heart.”<sup>34</sup> Prattis stated that Shirley Graham-Du Bois’s disclosure on the day of the acquittal that Du Bois had been prepared to go to jail rather than compromise was “the grandest thing . . . to come out of the Du Bois Trial.”<sup>35</sup> Prattis used Du Bois’s willingness to sacrifice himself for his principles as setting an example for other self-proclaimed leaders of the community. Prattis chastised wealthy members of the African American community who were averse to sacrificing their wealth to better the community. Du Bois on the other hand had, according to Prattis “met the test which any Negro must meet,” by being willing to “. . . sacrifice his freedom and his security for his beliefs.” Prattis mentioned Paul Robeson as another contemporary that met a similar standard of willingness to sacrifice himself. Prattis attacked the current leadership class of the African American community for calling Robeson a communist, which he stated “he distinctly is not.” By defending Robeson from the charge of being a communist, Prattis, Du Bois’s most passionate advocate in the African American press, consciously reinforced the norms of the Cold War. While defending those he believed were being

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<sup>33</sup> “National Grapevine: Sun in the Sky,” *Chicago Defender*, 1 December, 1951, 9.

<sup>34</sup> P.L. Prattis, “The Horizon,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 December 1951, 6.

<sup>35</sup> P.L. Prattis, “The Horizon,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 December 1951, 6.

falsely accused and attacked, Prattis marginalised communism as a legitimate option for the African American community.

Prattis's concern about the silence of the majority of the community's leaders was also expressed by another of Du Bois's loyal supporters, Judge Hubert T. Delany. "It seems to me from the very beginning," Delany wrote Du Bois, "that your indictment was....unusual in that the effect of your indictment tended to silence all champions of minority rights in this country." Having cited the intentions of the prosecution Delany went on to comment that "I am sorry to say that if this was the motive of the government, it was, in far too many respects successful, because our so-called leaders today have...closed their mouths and have become apologists for all of the injustices our government permits against the Negro people of America."<sup>36</sup> Barry Roberts, a professor at Virginia State College, also was distressed by the "fact that it appears from where I stand that many 'big Negroes' took cover and played it safe."<sup>37</sup> Metz T. P. Lochard, the editor of the *Chicago Globe* paper suggested a similar analysis. "I believe the indictment was sought as the easiest means of intimidating all Negroes. The Justice Department, in this regard, has succeeded pretty well."<sup>38</sup> Du Bois agreed with all these arguments; in a letter to Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, Du Bois thanked him for his support during the trial. "Ordinarily," he commented "the stand such as you took was what could be expected of any American and particularly of any educated Negro. It happened, however, that the number of people with guts and ordinary clarity of thought was astonishingly small

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<sup>36</sup> Hubert T. Delany to W.E.B. Du Bois, 27 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00464.

<sup>37</sup> Barry Roberts to W.E.B. Du Bois, 5 December 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00442.

<sup>38</sup> Metz T. P. Lochard to W.E.B. Du Bois, 17 December 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #01069.

among both black and white.”<sup>39</sup> This suggests that rather than having created an opportunity for the community to attack the status quo, Du Bois’s arrest had evoked a deafening silence from the current leadership of the community. The silence in regards to Du Bois’s arrest was reflected in the coverage the acquittal received in a more conservative African American newspaper like the *Amsterdam News*.

The *Amsterdam News* provided no editorial comment on the case. Instead, the paper published an editorial hoping that peace would be pursued by the American negotiators in the Korean conflict. The editorial suggested that the fighting must stop because deaths of Americans brought “tears from all corners of our nation.” In contrast to the tears of Americans, the editorial suggested “it seems as if the killing of communist soldiers means little or nothing to the Reds.”<sup>40</sup> The editorial continued to attack communism while advocating peace in Korea. “It is our hope that in spite of the obstruction and treachery which has characterized the communistic program, that peace will come before Christmas.” The blame was placed on the communists while the intentions of the United States government was presented as altruistic or at the very least neutral. The choice to discuss peace and ignore the trial of Du Bois, who also advocated a peaceful solution in Korea, pointed to the ways in which messages tailored to the Cold War norms could be expressed. If one followed certain rhetorical devices, especially anti-communism, then opinions could be offered that engaged in a critical manner with government policy without these views necessarily being marginalised.

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<sup>39</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois to E. Franklin Frazier, 11 April 1951, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois, Volume III, Selections, 1944-1963*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), 327.

<sup>40</sup> “Peace for Christmas?” *New York Amsterdam News*, 1 December 1951, 16.



In a pre-Christmas editorial the *Chicago Defender* wrote that even with the racial tensions in the country that “we [the newspaper’s editorial staff] still have laws and conscientious officials to enforce them and thousands of persons working to rid our world of race hate.” The laws and officials were also lauded when the editorial stated that “we still have leaders who are not corrupt and selfish and greedy.”<sup>41</sup> The positive items that the editorial commented on were those that related to the entire country and not just to the African American community. The editorial argued that solutions were to be found by looking to the existing leadership and laws. Thus, the editorial was a vote of confidence for the established system and those working within it. It did not support or even acknowledge the position of Du Bois and his allies that the system was moving towards fascism and had to be stopped. The belief that the American system was functioning and would provide all that was needed for the community to achieve its goals was reiterated in an end-of-year editorial published a week later. Entitled “The Progress Report” the editorial defined progress as “advancement toward first-class citizenship for all Americans and fuller realization of the great democratic goals which we all cherish.” The editorial argued that despite some setbacks “a judicious appraisal of 1951 would show considerably more gains than loses, more victories than defeats.”<sup>42</sup> Moreover, unlike Du Bois, who saw malice in the rise of a powerful business class in the affairs of the nation, the editorial cited positively “the growing consciousness of the need for better race relations among businessmen.” Finally, the editorial did not rely solely on examples or evidence but instead used the rhetoric of Americanism to make its point: “Those of us who are in the forefront of the struggle for freedom recognise that there is developing a

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<sup>41</sup> “Still Merry Christmas,” *Chicago Defender*, 22 December 1951, 10.

<sup>42</sup> “The Progress Report,” *Chicago Defender*, 29 December 1951, 10.

new American spirit which is sweeping the debris of racism before it like dead leaves in a high wind.” Considering the fifteen years the community would have to wait before any substantial legislative change occurred in the country, the optimism of the editorial seems tragic. Nevertheless, belief in the strength of the “American spirit” made Du Bois’s cynicism unthinkable. Indeed, if one believed that a new “American spirit” would soon remove racism from the country, appearing to side with an apparent enemy of the country was a betrayal of not only the country but of the hopes and aspirations of the African American community.

While Du Bois and his allies saw the victory as the beginning of the end of anti-communist hysteria, the newspapers that covered the trial continued to pursue an anti-communist agenda. The position of the African American press was best illustrated in an editorial published in the first week of 1952 in the *Pittsburgh Courier*. The editorial explicitly warned readers to avoid any association with communists. The reason was simple. “If American Negroes are to continue a resolute struggle for their full citizenship rights and protections, with any chance of success,” it began “they must shake themselves loose of anything and everything that handicaps them in that fight.” The greatest handicap, the editorial contended, would be “the taint of communism.” The editorial went on to explain the reasons why communism was so hated in the country. “The American people despise the communists because they believe they would betray America out of loyalty to a foreign ideology.” The paper suggested that limiting the freedom of communists was necessary because “if the communists were successful, these freedoms would be taken away from every American.”<sup>43</sup> A month after Du Bois had been cleared

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<sup>43</sup> “Keep the Door Locked,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 05 January 1952, 6.

of charges, the greatest threat to African Americans was not the Red Scare or the government but the communist threat to American freedom.

The proscriptive nature of the editorials in the African American press betrayed some anxiety that African Americans were vulnerable to “communist entrapment.” The African American press, in its didactic role, provided consistent warnings to its readership that communism was to be avoided. The didactic nature of the editorials suggests that the African American community did not simply respond to the realities of the Cold War but, through the press, helped create Cold War culture and its resulting attenuation of the meaning of Americanism. The reasons for African American participation in the construction of Cold War culture were diverse and the tendency has been to see African American participation as strategic.<sup>44</sup> For example, David Levering Lewis described the situation as one where “the Negro civil rights establishment played out the hand dealt it by the national security state--uncritical patriotism in return for incremental race-relations progress.”<sup>45</sup> However, to ignore the ideological or analytical reasons why individuals might have supported the Cold War assumes an inability on the part of members of the African American community to support something based on their own weighing of the evidence. As well, the press had historically used the rhetoric of Americanism to make the nation respond to the injustice of segregation and racism.<sup>46</sup> This does not mean that one has to agree with the choice of African Americans who supported Cold War Americanism, only to respect that their conclusions might be due to

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<sup>44</sup> Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>45</sup> David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 556.

<sup>46</sup> C. K. Doreski, *Writing America Black: Race Rhetoric in the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.XVIII-XIX, 89-116.

deeply held conviction rather than simply Machiavellian machinations. Consequently, the reaction to Du Bois's refusal to accept many of the aspects of Cold War culture was a combination of strategy and ideological difference. This combination allowed for anger over the arrest of someone so prominent and historically important, but not for any real engagement with the beliefs that Du Bois espoused.

Following the acquittal, the Du Bois story did not remain worthy enough for continued reporting. No letters to the editor concerning the acquittal were published and the final editorial response to the case was in the end of year assessments done by the *Afro-American* and the *New York Amsterdam News*. The *Afro-American* had a special section in which different editors from across the nation could list their top ten stories. Du Bois's trial was a popular choice, after the Cicero riots,<sup>47</sup> and the killing of Harry T. Moore in Florida.<sup>48</sup> Du Bois's case left a mark as a memorable incident, but not one that was to be learned from for the future.<sup>49</sup> The *Amsterdam News*, in its "Summing Up" editorial, saw the arrest and acquittal as evoking "mixed emotions." The editorial did state that though deemed "subversive" by the government, Du Bois had succeeded in "clearing his illustrious name."<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, the African American press remained committed to marginalising the perspective of those who refused to join in and sing the praises of American hegemony.

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<sup>47</sup> On 12 July 1951 riots broke out in Cicero, a Chicago suburb when an African American army veteran Henry Clark and his wife attempted to move into a previously all white neighbourhood. The National Guard had to be called in to hold back the white mob of 8 000. The events made international headlines.

<sup>48</sup> Harry T. Moore was a NAACP official in Florida who, along with his wife, was assassinated by a terrorist bombing on 25 December 1951. The murders have not yet been solved.

<sup>49</sup> "Afro Editors Pick Top News Stories of 1951," *The Baltimore Afro-American*, 19 January 1952, 14.

<sup>50</sup> "Summing Up," *The Amsterdam News*, 29 December 1951, 10.

Given the pressure on Du Bois and others to conform to the new Cold War definition of Americanism, why was Du Bois so resistant to the perspectives of other African American leaders? How did Du Bois, one of the architects of the African American community's response to segregation and institutional racism in America, end up on the outside looking in? Though a full answer to these questions lies outside the scope of this thesis, the evidence does suggest one clear area of difference between Du Bois and the rest of the community's leadership. Du Bois, like the rest of the African American community, evolved and responded to different historical events in different ways. Therefore, what may have seemed appropriate to Du Bois and other community leaders in 1903, was not appropriate in 1935 or indeed in 1951. Indeed, a historiographical debate has raged as to whether Du Bois's "turn to the left" should be construed as a natural evolution arising out of consistent convictions or a result of his despair over the state of race relations in the United States and the world at large.<sup>51</sup> The evidence surveyed here does point to an important difference between Du Bois and other segments of the African American community as expressed in the African American press. The most important division lay in an understanding of the ultimate goal of the African American community's freedom struggle. African American leadership had set its sights on full and equal citizenship through the removal of racial barriers and full civil

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<sup>51</sup> Those that emphasised a radical change in Du Bois include Francis L. Broderick, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959); Elliot M. Rudwick, *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960) and Raymond Wolters *Du Bois and his Rivals* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002). Those that emphasised the continuity in Du Bois's thought include Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986) and Manning Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986). Recently, two works have offered a different and convincing interpretation. These works suggest that Du Bois's opinions evolved but also retained many consistencies in regard to approaches to leadership and world-view. Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: The Fight for Equality* and Adolph L. Reed Jr, *W.E.B.*

and legal rights enforced by the federal government, whereas Du Bois aspired to something greater. Du Bois was critical of the African American community's emphasis on formal citizenship because it removed the international component from his vision for the community's future. Indeed, Du Bois believed that because the African American community had "turned entirely toward achieving citizenship and equality in the United States" it had limited its own sense of identity to that of being an American citizen and nothing else.<sup>52</sup> This fundamental split over the ends that Du Bois and other leaders in the African American community wanted to achieve helps explain their difference over the means each was willing to use.

Du Bois found the reaction of the African American elite instructive for his own analysis of the African American community and its leadership. Du Bois commented that while he had once had faith in the leadership of the "Talented Tenth" this faith had been altered prior to World War Two and had now been destroyed by his experiences as an indicted criminal. He felt that instead of a leadership arising from the educated class of the community, it would now come from the working class. However, Du Bois had not lost faith in the ability of an educated elite to lead the community, but rather surmised that the elite could not provide true leadership "until that time that our higher training is rescued from its sycophantic and cowardly leadership of today, almost wholly dependent as it is on Big Business either in politics or philanthropy."<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the most important

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*Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>52</sup> Marable *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 195.

<sup>53</sup> Du Bois *In Battle for Peace*, 77.

component of any leadership group was that it be “real, unselfish and clear sighted,” qualities that easily described Du Bois himself.<sup>54</sup>

As for the community as a whole Du Bois was equally pessimistic about its current state. Du Bois believed that “American Negroes, freed of their baseless fear of communism, will again begin to turn their attention and aim their activity toward Africa.”<sup>55</sup> This assertion suggests that the African American community was in fact fearful of communism and had, much to Du Bois’s consternation, adopted the Cold War norm of anti-communism. The lack of domestic support and Du Bois’s alienation with the direction that the country was heading drew him ever closer to an international network that he believed represented a better future and was nearer to his version of Americanism, one that worked to achieve economic justice. Du Bois believed that the African American community had, because of its adoption of capitalist values and blind obedience to American imperialism, lost its position of leadership for coloured people around the world. “We American Negroes” Du Bois bitterly commented, “can no longer lead the colored peoples of the world because they far better than we understand what is happening in the world today. But we can try to catch up with them.”<sup>56</sup> This was not a rejection of his historic mission of leading the African American community. It simply meant that Du Bois now believed that the best hope for the community lay in the solutions offered by some form of socialism and the best current model was the one provided by the Soviet Union.

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<sup>54</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 77.

<sup>55</sup> Marable, *W. E. B. Du Bois*, 195.

<sup>56</sup> David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 558.

This positive view of the Soviet Union and communist countries was bolstered by Du Bois's experience during the trial. While Du Bois believed that his victory was a result of pressure from a domestic campaign, he especially cited international pressure as the source for his victory. It did not escape Du Bois's notice that the majority of his support throughout the trial came from Eastern Bloc and other communist countries. Of that support Du Bois commented that, "I am thankful for it; I deeply appreciate it, because it strengthens in my mind my belief that much of what they believe corresponds with my belief and with the belief of all honest people."<sup>57</sup> In a letter to the International Committee for the Defense of W. E. B. Du Bois, Du Bois stated that, "[I] think that the work of your International Committee was decisive in bringing about our acquittal. While the we give the United States Courts all due credit, we are perfectly aware that without this heartbreaking effort we would be in jail."<sup>58</sup> Du Bois did not see the judgement as evidence of a justice system that was impartial or resistant to outside pressure. Instead, he believed that the pressure he was able to bring to bear was so great that the state was forced to not pursue the charges. It had been his resistance and that of his supporters that had made the difference, not the weakness of the government's case or the fairness of the judge. "What turns me cold in all this experience," Du Bois later reflected "is the certainty that thousands of innocent victims are in jail today because they had neither the money, experience nor friends to help them."<sup>59</sup> International supporters were also inspired by his court victory. Duncan Jones, from the British Peace Committee wrote,

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<sup>57</sup> Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 161.

<sup>58</sup> Du Bois to the International Committee for the Defense of W. E. B. Du Bois, 3 December 1951 *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00377.

<sup>59</sup> DU Bois, *In Battle for Peace*, 153.



declaring, “[P]eace lovers throughout the world will acclaim your victory.”<sup>60</sup> The Canadian Peace Congress sent a telegram congratulating Du Bois on the court victory and declared that “your courageous stand and your vindication give further proof to the peace loving peoples of the world that peace will indeed triumph over war.”<sup>61</sup>

Understandably, Du Bois was ecstatic over the outcome of the case. Du Bois and his allies hoped that his court victory would mark a turning point. Instead, it was only a momentary pause in the ideological and political attenuation of Americanism. The Progressive Party saw the campaign to free Du Bois as an opportunity to create a new constituency that would bring together the African American community, the working class, and the peace movement. However, considering the reaction of the African American press, such hopes were clearly illusory. While Du Bois was understandably happy with the outcome of the trial, he overestimated the significance of the victory. Unable to see beyond the nefarious intentions of his opponents, Du Bois mistook a strategic stumble by the government as an indication of his and his allies’ strength and, conversely, government weakness. Du Bois would spend the next decade coming to a fuller realisation of how different his Americanism was from that of both the African American community and the rest of the nation.

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<sup>60</sup> Cable from Duncan Jones British Peace Committee, 21 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00255.

<sup>61</sup> Telegram from James G. Endicott Chairman of the Canadian Peace Congress and Mary Jennison Secretary to W.E.B. Du Bois, 21 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #00292.

## Conclusion

*It is time to cease muting the fact that Dr. Du Bois was a genius and chose to be a communist. Our obsessive anti-communism has led us into too many quagmires to be retained as if it were a model of scientific thinking.*  
Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>1</sup>

African American reaction to Du Bois's arrest demonstrates how a majority in the community could defend one of its most prominent members without making that defense a challenge to Cold War Americanism. The reaction of the African American press to the arrest provides a window into the response of African Americans to the Cold War and demonstrates the ways in which the press participated in creating and diffusing Cold War Americanism. It was partly through this cultural production that the African American community, rather than being a passive sponge of Cold War Americanism, helped define the meaning of Cold War Americanism. This period saw the dominance of a vigorous liberalism that incorporated a fierce anti-communism with a tepid commitment to racial equality, both of which defined Cold War Americanism. To suggest that the anti-racist component of Cold War Americanism came about without the

participation of African Americans seems improbable and insulting to those African Americans who worked so hard to make racial equality an integral component of Americanism. While Cold War Americanism lacked any critique of capitalism or American imperialism, its commitment to racial equality made it an endeavour that African Americans were willing to support and strengthen.

Du Bois and his allies hoped that by making their case personally through two national tours they could create a constituency that would support their alternative version of Americanism, which emphasised international peace and cooperation and democratic control of the economy. The support they received was mixed; supporters in the white community tended to make up the bulk of their audiences and to share their vision of the nation. Within the African American community many of Du Bois's supporters of Du Bois did not share his general critique of the United States or his abhorrence of American foreign policy. Instead, they defended Du Bois while adopting the language of Cold War Americanism. Du Bois looked to the African American community as a natural source of support because of his history of activism and his own strong sense of racial identity. Arrested for peace activism, Du Bois saw his support of peace as an integral part of the same struggle for African American rights that he had fought his entire life. Unfortunately for Du Bois, most of the African American community did not share his views. Instead, they saw the federal government as their greatest agent for advancement and were unwilling to attack a foreign policy that they viewed as incidental to their domestic concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "Honoring Dr. Du Bois," *Black Titan: W. E. B. DuBois; an Anthology by the Editors of Freedomways*, John Henrik Clarke, et al., eds. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 176-183. The original was published in *Freedomways* 8, (Spring 1968), 104-111.

The year-long ordeal of his court battle left Du Bois physically and financially drained. Immediately following the dismissal, Du Bois sought help from the network that had supported him during the trial to defray the costs of the case.<sup>2</sup> Du Bois said that he and Shirley were “thankful to Judge McGuire and the American courts for our vindication, but this vindication did not come cheap.”<sup>3</sup> Du Bois’s physical exhaustion was evident in his reply to a request to attend a rally for his friend William Patterson, who was being tried by the government for his membership in the Communist party.<sup>4</sup> Du Bois replied that, due to the strain of his own trial and public lecturing, his health would not allow him to attend.<sup>5</sup> However, Du Bois would soon return to actively and publicly resisting Cold War Americanism.

The trial left Du Bois scarred and accelerated his split from the country in which he so passionately believed. According to his principle biographer, Du Bois was “deeply wounded” by the lack of support from the African American leadership.<sup>6</sup> However, following a period of recovery, Du Bois returned to being a consistent champion for others who felt the wrath of the Red Scare and to actively and publicly resisting Cold War Americanism. Du Bois’s activism continued but he became increasingly angered at the direction his country was taking. In his 1956 editorial for *The Nation*, “I Won’t Vote”,

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<sup>2</sup> “Dear Friend” from Dr. Albert C. Dieffenbach et al., 28 November 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 67, #00101.

<sup>3</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois to Thomas Richardson November 30, 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Reel 66, #000123.

<sup>4</sup> In his letter of congratulations to Du Bois, William Patterson, president of the Civil Rights Congress, stated that “your victory is the victory of the peace loving people of the world. . . . we will go forward to victory in the struggle for democracy at home.” William L. Patterson to W.E.B. Du Bois, 20 November, 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* Reel 67, #00332.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur McPhaul Executive Secretary to the Civil Rights Congress of Michigan to W.E.B. Du Bois, 29 November, 1951, Reel 67, # 00341; W.E.B Du Bois to Arthur McPhaul, 3 December 1951, *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* Reel 67, #00342.

<sup>6</sup> David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 554.

he argued that “democracy is dead in the United States.”<sup>7</sup> His painful alienation from the domestic and foreign policies of the United States continued throughout the decade. In 1959 he left the country immediately after a legal ruling invalidated legislation that had permitted the State Department to withhold his passport. Du Bois and Graham-Du Bois embarked on a world tour that demonstrated Du Bois’s honoured international position, meeting with leaders of both the Soviet Union and China. Upon his return to the United States Du Bois planned to travel to Africa, and, with the support of the government of Ghana, begin his long-dreamed of *Encyclopaedia Africana*.<sup>8</sup> Du Bois left for Ghana and once there was not allowed to renew his American passport. Not willing to return to the United States because of the threat of once again losing his passport, Du Bois renounced his U.S. citizenship and became a citizen of Ghana.<sup>9</sup> Du Bois lived the last years of his life in Africa. He never returned to the country of his birth, the one for which he had worked for and held out hope for throughout his life.

Nevertheless, Du Bois’s profound patriotism and loyalty to the ideals of the United States were apparent even as he left it and was forced to renounce his citizenship. In his final autobiography, Du Bois railed against the current state of the United States, “it is still a land of magnificent possibilities. It is still the home of noble souls and

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<sup>7</sup>W.E.B. Du Bois, “I Won’t Vote,” *The Nation*, 20 October 1956.

<sup>8</sup> Du Bois had originally conceived of the idea in 1909 and had tried to organize funding and support for it throughout his life.

<sup>9</sup> The details of these events are laid out in Herbert Aptheker’s “On Du Bois’s Move to Africa” *Monthly Review* 45, no.7 (December 1993): 36-40. Aptheker’s version is in contrast to many other versions that suggest that Du Bois left the country out of frustration and despair. This suggestion, as Aptheker argues, was “contrary to the spirit of the man.” Herbert Aptheker, “Some Comments on W.E.B. Du Bois and on Slave Revolts” *Journal of Negro History* 82, (Summer 1997), 353. David Levering Lewis in his recent biography reveals that Du Bois in fact never lost his American citizenship because the government never acted on his renunciation. Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: The Fight for Equality*, 698, n.569.

generous people. But it is selling its birthright. It is betraying its mighty destiny.”<sup>10</sup> The birthrights being sold were the American democratic and judicial systems as laid out in the Constitution. Du Bois believed this betrayal was revealed in what he viewed as the United States’s rampant materialism, greed, and exploitation. Du Bois did not reject the land of his birth but he refused to support what he saw it becoming--a nation possessing and yet choosing to break faith with its unique qualities of democracy, justice, and morality by being seduced by the evils of mammon. While Du Bois and his opponents relied on the rhetoric of Americanism, they ultimately defined and believed in profoundly different visions for the United States.

This thesis has argued that the response to the arrest of Du Bois demonstrates the incorporation and participation of African Americans in the re-definition and consequent attenuation of Americanism. The rise of Cold War Americanism benefited some African Americans and forced the government to pay lip service to the ideas of racial equality. I do not suggest that the Cold War was benign. Of course, the Cold War had many negative consequences for the African American community’s attempts to achieve its goals. Important leaders such as Du Bois and Paul Robeson had their passports held by the State Department and were denied the right to travel outside of the country while others spent years in jail and/or lost their jobs. While Mary Dudziak has argued that the Cold War helped foster challenges to the country’s racial norms,<sup>11</sup> a view that has become “commonplace,”<sup>12</sup> Manning Marable raised the important point that the Cold

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<sup>10</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of its first Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 419.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton university Press, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Brenda Plummer, “Introduction” *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988*, ed. Brenda Plummer (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 3.

War added ten years to the civil rights victories of the 1960s.<sup>13</sup> Marable is correct to argue that many African Americans' demands were not met because of the Cold War, particularly those that insisted on economic equality. Du Bois and his allies' work for economic justice and their subsequent marginalization through intimidation and violence reflects a line that could not be crossed during the Cold War era by any dissidents in American society. Furthermore, the energy that organizations such as the NAACP exerted in rooting out a few suspect communists seems tragically wasteful.

What must be understood is that those attacking communism within the African American community did so for strategic reasons, and also out of a deeply felt loyalty to the "American way of life" which was defined by materialism and capitalism. Communism was not merely a threat to a remote white elite, it threatened African American aspirations for the "good life" that American capitalism seemed to promise them. Considering the current level of poverty and other economically-related challenges in the African American community now, such promises appear not to have been fulfilled. This suggests that the unwillingness of the American State to allow any challenge to the economic basis for its power had profound consequences for much of the African American community. The willingness of the government to silence anyone who challenged capitalism did not end with Du Bois, but was again illustrated by the most important African American leader of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Martin Luther King, Jr.

The civil rights movement was initially an extension of the Americanism embraced by the NAACP and rejected by Du Bois. Not surprisingly, Du Bois did not support the civil rights movement because it lacked an economic component to its

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<sup>13</sup> Manning Marable, *Race Reform, and Rebellion: the Second Reconstruction in Black American, 1945-1990*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 18.

demands.<sup>14</sup> However, Du Bois's model for Americanism reappeared as the movement began to succeed. As the list of civil rights demands began to be fulfilled, many in the movement realised that these victories were pyrrhic without some economic restructuring to reap the reward of newly gained rights. This transformation was perfectly illustrated by the man who came to replace Du Bois as the pre-eminent leader of the African American community, Martin Luther King, Jr. King's initial demands during the Montgomery Bus Boycott were so mild that he was unable to obtain the support of the NAACP until he strengthened them.<sup>15</sup> However, as the movement succeeded in obtaining federal protection for basic civil rights, King expanded his range of issues to include two that for Du Bois had been fundamental: peace and socialism. Significantly, as King's demands for an end to the war in Vietnam coincided with his focus on economic injustice in the United States, he began to be perceived by the government and the white majority as dangerously unpatriotic. His demands moved him into the same political space that Du Bois occupied during and after his trial. Like Du Bois, King situated his arguments within the rhetoric of Americanism, arguing that the nation "needed to live out the true meaning of its creed."<sup>16</sup> However, his definition of Americanism had evolved so that it was no longer compatible with Cold War Americanism. King and Du Bois both found themselves fighting for a definition of Americanism that placed them beyond the pale of what was deemed acceptable criticism of the United States. Consequently, they both lived the final years of their lives in the paradoxical position of honoured pariahs. This

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<sup>14</sup> Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: The Fight for Equality*, 557-558.

<sup>15</sup> Initially the boycotters demands were simply for a fairer seating system that would be less humiliating to African American passengers. See, David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and The Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Random Books, 1986), 52.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have A Dream" in James Melvin Washington ed. *A Testament of Hope: the Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco,



suggests that while the context was different, Eugene D. Genovese's analysis of the Northern states' reaction to the Southern states prior to the American Civil War bears repeating: "We should not forget that our liberal, confident, tolerant, and good-natured bourgeoisie, when for once confronted with a determined and powerful internal foe, forgot its commitment to reason together and reached for its revolver."<sup>17</sup> Neither King nor Du Bois were allowed to create a comparable "determined and powerful internal foe." While King's life was ended by a gun, Du Bois did not have to be silenced in the same manner. Du Bois's life ended in Africa because he was no longer able to lead his people where he believed they needed to go.

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1986), 219. For King's evolution regarding capitalism and socialism see, Eric Dyson, *I May Not Get There With You: the True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 78-100.

<sup>17</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *The World The Slaveholder Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (Hanover, NH; Wesleyan University Press, 1969; reprint, 1988), 234.

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