The Messenger and The Crisis during World War I and The Red Scare, 1917-21

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

Evan P. Barton
June 2011

© 2011 Evan P. Barton. All Rights Reserved.
This thesis titled
The Messenger and The Crisis during World War I and the Red Scare, 1917-21

by

EVAN P. BARTON

has been approved for
the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism
and the Scripps College of Communication by

__________________________________________

Patrick Washburn
Professor of Journalism

__________________________________________

Gregory J. Shepherd
Dean, Scripps College of Communication
Abstract

BARTON, EVAN P., M.S., June 2011, Journalism

The Messenger and The Crisis during World War I and the Red Scare, 1917-21

Director of Thesis: Patrick Washburn

_The Messenger_ was a socialist African-American magazine which began during the World War I era and ran through the 1920s. _The Crisis_, which began in 1910, was the magazine of the NAACP. This study is a history of both magazines during World War I and the Red Scare, focusing on similarities and differences within the content, and the perspective of the U.S. government. Both magazines supported racial uplift, yet while _The Messenger_ advocated class consciousness and critiqued capitalism, _The Crisis’_ editorials focused on more ideological and legal arguments against racism; on the whole, _The Crisis_ was more of a general interest magazine for the black community, with current events, literature, and educational content supplementing the editorials. _The Messenger_ contained much of the same, though with a more marked socialist perspective. Although _The Messenger_ was more overtly political, on several occasions _The Crisis_ supported socialist economic principles as an ideal.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Patrick Washburn

Professor of Journalism
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Prof. Patrick Washburn, who read and helped shape this study over multiple drafts. I would also like to thank Prof. Aimee Edmondson and Prof. Mike Sweeney, who both helped me to conceptualize this project and served on my thesis defense committee. Finally, I would like to thank my parents, who have always been very supportive.
Table of Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................................. iii
Acknowledgments .............................................................................................................. iv
Chapter 1: Introduction ....................................................................................................... 1
Chapter 2: Background ..................................................................................................... 12
Chapter 3: The Crisis and The Messenger during World War I ........................................ 26
Chapter 4: The Crisis, The Messenger, and the First Red Scare ..................................... 61
Chapter 5: Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 96
Bibliography ................................................................................................................... 110
Chapter 1: Introduction

When the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917, federal officials began speculating about the level of patriotism in African-American communities. On the whole, the black press supported the war, hoping it would help advance the black community’s aspirations for civil rights and equality. The black community, however, was more ambivalent.

African-Americans were not the only Americans ambivalent about World War I, but the U.S. government was particularly worried about the black community’s vulnerability to German propaganda. Following U.S. entry into the war, government agents began alleging that German patriots were moving through African-American communities on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, promising them equal rights after the war in return for their support of the Central Powers. New York Age columnist and African-American poet James Weldon Johnson said this pro-German paranoia most likely stemmed from a “guilty conscience” among whites, who occasionally felt the injustice of racial discrimination, although they were little disposed to change the status quo. Historian Theodore Kornweibel suggested that many African-Americans felt apathetic about the war, even though they were not pro-German in a strict sense. He quoted African-Americans making statements that World War I was “their war,” referring to white Americans. Other statements suggested that many black people had no

---

2 Ibid., 3.
3 Ibid, 8-9.
personal qualms against the Germans, and therefore no large stake in the war. The black press, on the whole, supported the war effort, although the form of this support ranged from assertions that German propaganda efforts were pointless because of how blacks were “almost blindly loyal to „Old Glory,‟” to more opportunistic assertions that the war would bring about “our betterment” once it was over.

The editorials of Crisis editor W.E.B. Du Bois suggested that he agreed with the latter. In a 1917 column, he wrote that African-Americans would benefit from America entering the war whether they were allowed to fight in it or not. He suggested that even if blacks were not allowed to fight, they would be able to take jobs in the North, and if they were allowed to fight, then they might earn honor in battle, and return to America trained in combat.

Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and he became the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. Although he was subject to race prejudice as a child, his background differed in many ways from the majority of African-Americans, having been raised in the North and descended from a family of free blacks who had lived in Western Massachusetts since the 1700s. He founded The Crisis in 1910 as the official publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP aimed for social change during the early 1900s although the organization did not advocate restructuring society altogether. Historian David Levering Lewis wrote, “Du Bois and the

---

5 Ibid.
6 “We Should Worry,” The Crisis, June 1917, 61-62.
NAACP were civil rights militants, not social revolutionaries – defenders of the Constitution, not exponents of class war – and like the association he sometimes unpredictably represented, the editor occasionally could appear exceedingly sensitive, if not squeamish, about charges of espousing political subversion and social unrest.”

The NAACP was an integrationist organization, advocating for ending racial prejudice and race crimes while respecting American economic and political institutions and hoping to work within these institutions to create social change.

A. Philip Randolph, editor of the rival periodical *The Messenger*, had a very different background from Du Bois, and a more radical political orientation during the World War I era and early 1920s. He was born on April 15, 1889, and grew up in Jacksonville, Florida, the son of an AME preacher who also trained as a tailor during the Reconstruction period. Although his parents often struggled financially, they valued education and instilled a sense of racial pride in him. As a small child, for example, he watched his father leave the house one night to protect a family in danger of being lynched. He began attending Cookman Institute in 1903, the same year Du Bois’ *The Souls of Black Folk* was published. Unsatisfied with the lack of job options in Jacksonville, and influenced by Du Bois and his philosophy of racial uplift through liberal education, he left for Harlem in 1911, at the age of 22. In Harlem, he began working as a laborer and taking classes at night. During this time, he was exposed to the

---

10 Ibid., 4.
economic theories of Karl Marx, and by the time he began editing *The Messenger* in November 1917, he was acquainted with both black and white radicals in New York.\(^\text{12}\) His editorial opinions showed a shift in allegiances from his old idol, Du Bois, to his newer socialist ideals. In fact, during the initial months of American entry into World War I, both he and his co-editor, Chandler Owen, wrote several columns critiquing the old-guard of African-American leadership, and they included Du Bois in their criticism. Arguing in favor of the “New Crowd Negro,” their critique of Du Bois and other middle-aged African-American leaders only continued during the “Red Scare” period.

Among the popular black presses, *The Messenger* was unique in its oppositional stance towards World War I. Both Randolph and his business partner Chandler Owen were conscientious objectors, sceptical of the government’s aim to help make the world safe for democracy while injustice and inequality reigned in black America.\(^\text{13}\) Unlike the *Crisis*, which argued that blacks needed to “Close Ranks” because the war might advance the social and economic integrationist efforts of black Americans, *The Messenger* suggested that the United States should not expect African-Americans to go to war for democracy in Europe when black Americans were not given equal rights in the United States.\(^\text{14}\) The magazine also expressed concerns about war profiteering and the high toll that the war had taken on human lives.\(^\text{15}\)

---


The Messenger may have been more in line with black opinion than the majority of the black press and the mainstream black leaders of the time. Kornweibel quoted George Schuyler, a newspaper columnist and NAACP executive who began his career at The Messenger, in suggesting that many black people were of two minds about the war, publicly expressing patriotism but privately expressing their grievances toward the status quo in America. Kornweibel suggested that many African-Americans were not as disturbed as their white counterparts by the idea of a German invasion of the South because of the harsh discrimination that most black people lived under in the region. Kornweibel’s assertion that many African-Americans considered World War I a white man’s war seems likely given the times, and especially when considering Randolph’s opinion that nine out of every ten black people did not believe a white man could be trusted. An analysis of both these periodicals, within the context of the World War I era and the concerns faced by African-Americans of this period, showed how these publications differed in their presentation of the war to the American public, as well as how both Randolph and Du Bois drew from their intellectual and professional background in order to make arguments for the changes they hoped would lead to greater freedom and stability for African-Americans.

By comparing the coverage of both the Crisis and The Messenger during World War I and the Red Scare period, this study contextualized both magazines within the history of African-American reformist thought. It also suggested that while there have always been a plethora of opinions concerning how African-Americans should usher progress into their communities, there were consistent themes and concerns that arose.

among black intellectuals of the era, regardless of ideology. The call for immediate change in the racial status-quo was a recurrent strand in the rhetoric of both these magazines. Likewise, both magazines made topics and ideas concerning the future of the African-American community central to their editorial commentary. The cultural sections of *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* both emphasized the connection between African-Americans and the African Diaspora, with articles describing black people from the Caribbean and Africa. Both magazines alluded to the colonial condition of countries in Africa and Asia, although *The Messenger* made it a point to emphasize the role colonized countries played in providing the resources to manufacture goods in the mother country.

Although *The Messenger*’s overt socialist ideology was its starkest contrast with the *Crisis*, even here there were some similarities between the magazines. During the early years of *The Crisis*, the board of the NAACP consisted of several of the leading socialists of the time, and though Du Bois’ politics were famously inconsistent, he sometimes suggested that African-Americans not only needed more civil rights, but also more access to America’s land and capital.\(^\text{17}\)

While The World War I era was notable in the history of the African-American press because of how it advocated war enthusiasm as part of the ongoing effort to increase civil rights, the first Red Scare period – which began after the war and ended with the expiration of the Sedition Act in March 1921 – was a period of tense relations between the black press and the state.\(^\text{18}\) Beginning in the winter of 1919, the Department of Justice began an active campaign to subdue political unrest. The focus of this

\(^{17}\) “The Oath of the Negro Voter,” *The Crisis*, November 1917, 8.

campaign was to quell what it viewed as the pro-Bolshevik, anti-American aims of the labor movement, although the African-American press was not spared from its critical eye. The rumors that German agents had influenced the African-American community during World War I led to a general fear that African-Americans were especially susceptible to foreign agitators.\textsuperscript{19} Coupled with this fear was the not-unfounded conviction that African-Americans were unhappy with the racial status quo and wanted more social and economic freedoms. During this period of unrest and agitation, \textit{The Messenger} became even more outspoken in its criticism of the racial norm, leading Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer to declare the magazine “by long odds the most dangerous of all Negro publications.”\textsuperscript{20}

Another benefit to studying these periodicals during both World War I and the Red Scare that followed it was the ability to compare the rhetoric of the two periods, given the fact that the changes \textit{The Crisis} and other African-American publications stated as goals following the war did not occur in spite of black patriotism and participation in the war effort. Race riots swept through the United States in 1919 as the nation’s cities gradually grew to include more African-Americans in their population. The black press on the whole was more combative as a response to the race riots rocking through the country. Some of the more strident editorials in \textit{The Crisis} were printed during the First

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 66-67.
Red Scare, ultimately attracting the attention of Attorney General Palmer. After the war ended, *The Messenger* began publishing more regularly, and the magazine began taking more confrontational stances against the old vanguard of African-American leadership. In one editorial, for instance, Randolph suggested that Du Bois failed to take a scientific approach in addressing the problems of the African-American community. In a December 1919 editorial, the magazine continued its ongoing critique of Du Bois by attacking his ability as a social theorist.

Though Du Bois was an early influence on Randolph, by World War I era Randolph was well versed in Marxist theory and socialist thought, and these theories formed the intellectual basis through which Randolph wrote his articles. Marxism emphasized the complete redistribution of economic capital, suggesting that this would lead to the end of economic class hierarchies and all related cultural systems of inequality (including racism). Despite this background, Randolph and Owen were not pure Marxists; their recommendations for social change were more significantly influenced by Ward’s comparatively more grounded sociological framework. *The Messenger* editors advocated the unionism of African-American workers, and the inclusion of African-Americans into existing unions of white workers. Du Bois, on the other hand, had received a more classical education at Fisk and Harvard universities, and had a background in social science research. Early in his career, he used the methodological tools of sociology in order to publish research on African-Americans such as in his

---

pivotal work *The Philadelphia Negro*.25 His motivations for completing these studies were not solely based in scientific inquiry, however. Similar to the religious-based efforts of racial uplift that were also popular at the time, Du Bois hoped to improve the lot of African-Americans as a people.26 After leaving academia in 1910 to become editor of *The Crisis*, his persona became more that of a journalist advocating his ideals than that of a strictly academic sociologist. His purpose was always focused on racial uplift, however, and throughout his long career he tried several different methods aimed toward achieving that goal.

During the early part of the 20th century, magazine publishing had a natural appeal to reform-minded intellectuals like Randolph and Du Bois. The muckraking journalism of *McClure’s, Cosmopolitan*, and other periodicals of the era set the standard for exposing corporate corruption and advocating social change on a national scale. Ida Tarbell’s exposé of Standard Oil, Ray Stannard Baker’s “Right to Work,” and Lincoln Steffens’ “Shame of the Cities” all contributed to the perception that magazines were not only a leading vehicle of popular culture, but also served an agenda-setting function in the nation’s political discourse.27 Magazines such as *McClure’s* sought large, national audiences, although many periodicals of the era, such as *The Progressive* and *Mother Earth*, appealed to niche segments of the population interested in radical politics and social reform. The *Young Socialists’ Magazine* was a periodical affiliated with the

---

26 Ibid.
Socialist Party, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen published *The Fireman’s Magazine*. The latter magazine was edited during the 1890s by Eugene Debs, who was a prominent labor leader and a peer of Randolph’s in during this era.28

The World War I era was a time when the tension between old grievances and new possibilities was becoming a more prominent factor in African-Americans’ daily lives and hopes for the future. New opportunities were opening up for African-Americans, who were migrating in large numbers to the North in search of factory jobs. Given the hope for the future of many African-Americans, the community was ambivalent about whether it should appear more patriotic (with the hope of gaining better jobs and more economic stability) or focus instead on the argument that African-Americans deserve equal civil rights as white Americans. *The Messenger* employed a socialist critique of the war and suggested that it was meant to benefit the holders of capital.29 African-Americans, they suggested, should focus on achieving economic security, and on a larger scale, support the end of “derelict capitalism.”30

This study was focused on *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* during World War I and the First Red Scare. Comparing the content of these magazines during this time period showed how two magazines edited by African-Americans and written with their interests in mind could nevertheless have presented very different ideas regarding how African-Americans would improve their station. This study also showed that the differences between Randolph and Du Bois were not as striking as the editorials they wrote

---

sometimes implied. Both men valued education in the skilled trades as well as in the liberal arts. They advocated not only civil rights, but also greater opportunity and access to American wealth for all African-Americans. Articles in both magazines alluded to the transnational connections between colonialism and oppressed peoples, and as mentioned above, they also contained information about black people in other parts of the Diaspora. Together, *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* exemplified the range of ideas concerning progress in the black community during the turbulent years that preceded the 1920s.
Despite W.E.B Du Bois and A. Philip Randolph’s determination to work toward gaining more freedom for African-Americans, the United States during World War I was, in large part, a very hostile place for the black community. In 1895, the Supreme Court’s *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision legalized segregation laws in the South, leading to segregation in all areas of public life.\(^1\) The *Plessy* case concerned a Louisiana law that required trains to designate separate accommodations for black and white patrons, and the Supreme Court’s ruling that separate accommodations are legal led to further segregation of restaurants, clothing stores, bathrooms, schools, and other public institutions in the South.\(^2\)

In addition to this legal segregation of public facilities, African-Americans also faced impediments to economic progress from the white-dominated society and the socioeconomic establishment of the time. The most striking examples of outright race-hatred stemmed from organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), and the lynching of those African-Americans who broke social mores. Still, more subtle forms of exclusion placed barriers on many African-Americans’ ability to gain economic independence. The sharecropping system, for example, often kept share-croppers in debt to the owners of the land. Unable to accrue wealth, many African-Americans were not able to move up the economic ladder and achieve the American dream. Also, because white-Americans dominated the economic institutions of the time, and gave preference to whites (whether American or recent immigrant) and those who were in their social

\(^1\) *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (S.C. 1896).
networks, black Americans found it especially difficult to secure employment outside of
domestic or agricultural work, which were the traditional jobs for African-Americans of
the time.

Legal, social, and economic segregation restricted the freedom of even the most
successful African-Americans to become full participants in the social and political
aspects of American life. In the South, unfair voting tests and social pressure from
southern whites barred most black Americans from being able to register for a political
party or vote in elections. Because African-Americans were normally excluded from
white social circles, they did not have the same privileged access to information about
economic opportunities. Without this equivalency in access, they were often unable to
find the same of job opportunities, or to progress as fast as their white counterparts.
Without a political voice, they could not elect officials who would act on behalf of their
particular interests.

Despite all these setbacks, the era spanning from 1915 into the 1920s was a time
of opportunity and hope for many African-Americans.\(^3\) Due to the onset of World War 1
in Europe in 1914, the tide of European immigration had curbed substantially, opening up
opportunities for African-Americans in the North. Thousands of black people left the
South during this period, looking for new opportunities and to enter a money economy
for the first time. Many of the articles in both *The Crisis* and *The Messenger* consider the
reasons for this migration, and the impact it might have on the future of black America.
Randolph, who had been an elevator operator before becoming editor of *The Messenger,*

was interested in unionizing the black labor force, and in helping them to gain skills that would be required in order to have a steady income and economic stability. Save for the International Workers of the World (IWW), however, the unions were largely closed to black membership.

Randolph became interested in forming unions of black workers shortly after moving to New York in 1911. Having found it difficult to find work in anything other than manual labor, he began working odd jobs as a porter, a waiter, and as mentioned above, an elevator operator. At night, he took classes at the City College of New York, and also began getting more involved with socialists and political radicals of the time. At one point, he even tried to organize an Elevator and Switchboard Operators Union in order to fight what he perceived as oppressive working conditions.⁴

The turn of the century era and the decades leading up to the 1920s was a time when Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the fathers of communist theory, were being studied in universities as a serious critique of capitalism and the exploitation of working people. By associating himself with black socialists like Hubert Harrison, as well as white radicals like Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Eugene Debs (and by giving up his ambitions to become a Shakespearean actor, due to his parents disapproval), Randolph became part of the subset of black leaders who felt that addressing economic inequality directly was necessary in order for African-Americans to progress in America.⁵

*The Messenger* functioned as a forum for Randolph and Owen to espouse their views on racial uplift and come out against many of the older generation of African-

---

⁵ Ibid, 8-9.
American leaders. The magazine officially began in November of 1917, although an earlier phase of the publication was put out in August of that year, where they stated their mission statement:

Our aim is to appeal to reason, to lift our pens above the cringing demagogy of the times, and above the cheap peanut politics of the old reactionary Negro leaders. Patriotism has no appeal to us; justice has. Party has no weight with us; principle has. Loyalty is meaningless; it depends on what one is loyal to. Prayer is not one of our remedies; it depends on what one is praying for. We consider prayer as nothing more than a fervent wish; consequently the merit and worth of a prayer depend upon what the fervent wish is.⁶

This mission statement showed how Randolph and Owen used socialist rhetoric in order to address the economic concerns of the African-American community. The dominant socialist movement in America generally avoided addressing the “Negro Problem” directly, equating it with America’s more widespread social inequality, and suggesting that black Americans would have to wait for the communist revolution – when all workers would become equal – in order to gain equality.⁷ “We have nothing special to offer the Negro,” Eugene Debs admitted.⁸

A cornerstone of socialist thought was its emphasis on the transnational similarities between the “workers” of every country. In a 1911 issue of The Young Socialists’ Magazine, for instance, Socialist Party activist Ralph Korngold expounded on the “fatherlandless” position of all workers under capitalism in an essay titled

---

⁷ Pfeffer, A. Philip Randolph, 10.
⁸ Eugene Debs, “The Negro and the Class Struggle,” International Socialist Review, 4, no. 5, (Nov. 1903), 257-260. Debs was not apathetic about racial inequality in America; he saw it as a systemic element of the capitalist system. He wrote: “We have simply to open the eyes of as many Negroes as we can and bring them into the Socialist movement to do battle for emancipation from wage slavery, and when the working class have triumphed in the class struggle and stand forth economic as well as political free men, the race problem will forever disappear.”
“Patriotism.” The essay summarized the key tenant of Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*, that the workers had been disinherited by the global class of capitalists. Given this perspective, it was easy for socialists like Debs to de-emphasize race in their efforts to gain more rights for American workers. During this time, however, the American labor movement was segregated and black workers were excluded from membership in most unions. Randolph and Owen wanted to bring black workers into the fold of the larger American labor movement. They shared Debs’ worker consciousness, although they also possessed race consciousness. Their editorials suggested that although they were interested in socialist politics and ideology, their primary goal was to improve the economic conditions of African-American people by applying socialist theoretical principles to the community.

Randolph and Owen both saw themselves as representatives of the “New Crowd Negro.” Informed by a socialist critique of capitalism and government, the New Crowd Negro was part of the international “New Crowd,” and juxtaposed against the “Old Crowd.” This Old Crowd consisted primarily of capitalists and aristocratic regimes that had accrued wealth by taking advantage of the working-class. Randolph suggested that the Old Crowd Negroes were basically false leaders; figureheads working under whites from the Old Crowd. The New Crowd Negroes, however, were aligned with radical politics in America and abroad. They advocated a shorter work week, labor unions, and better wages for workers. Rather than appeal to white leaders, the New Crowd Negro

---

looked toward the people for his legitimacy. He also appealed to a more scientific view of the world than his predecessors in the Old Crowd. According to Randolph, the New Crowd Negro was no fan of World War I either. He wrote, “The New Crowd sees that the war came, that the Negro fought, bled and died; that the war has ended, and he is not free.”

Progressive thought was at the core of The Messenger’s ideology, and soon after its inaugural launch it began touting itself as the “Only Radical Negro Magazine in America.” As part of its strategy to codify a new direction for African-Americans, the magazine began a trend of antagonism toward the black leaders and intellectuals from the older generation of “The Talented Tenth.” By 1919 the magazine began honing its critical gaze on Du Bois in particular, who, as a published sociologist and founding editor of The Crisis, was the leading black intellectual of the period. Rather than focus on the need for racial uplift in a general sense, as was common among the black leadership of the time, The Messenger advocated remedies to America’s race problem that were based upon sociological theory. One of the magazine’s strengths was its emphasis on the need

---

14 The Messenger, Cover, July 1918, 1.
15 See Chandler Owen, “The Failure of Negro Leaders,” The Messenger, January 1918, 23-24; W.E.B Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth,” The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of Today, (Miami: Mnemosyne Publications, 1969). This collection was originally published by Booker T. Washington in 1903. Du Bois explains his talented tenth theory in this essay, although he also discussed this theory in The Souls of Black Folk. This term refers to approximately 10 percent of the black population who were doctors, lawyers, intellectuals, business owners, and otherwise members of the professional or intellectual elite. Du Bois believed that this segment of the population would be able to uplift the masses.
17 Chandler Owen, “The Failure of Negro Leaders,” The Messenger, 23-24. In this essay, Owen alluded to the underlying causes of social ills such as lynching, suggesting that these problems must be addressed in order to end lynching. He implied that the labor movement was part of the solution.
for greater economic security in the African-American community, and not just civil rights.

Although Randolph espoused powerful anti-capitalist rhetoric in his editorials in *The Messenger*, the publication had a practical dimension even in its early days. Randolph was inspired by Marxist thought and employed it as a foundation for his analysis of the relationship between black workers and white capitalists. Though Randolph may have wanted to expedite the global revolution against capitalism, he was not willing to wait for revolution in order to begin seeing changes in the economically disadvantaged status-quo of most African-Americans. For this reason, Randolph advocated both African-American unions, and integrating African-Americans into white-only unions. He argued that forcing African-Americans to break labor strikes was damaging to the labor movement. By keeping black and white workers fighting with each other, Randolph suggested, members of the capitalist class were able to keep more of the profits of labor for themselves.\footnote{“Reasons Why White and Black Workers Should Combine in Labor Unions,” *The Messenger*, January 1918, 14.}

The sociological theory of *The Messenger* was distinctly marked by Lester Frank Ward, who Owen had studied while in college.\footnote{Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 26.} Though Ward was not a Marxist, he was adamantly opposed to the laissez-faire economic principles that dominated American sociology during the late 1800s. He also argued that social problems like poverty could be ameliorated through government and greater societal intervention. The scientific method was also an important aspect of his work.
The Crisis, reflecting the concerns of the middle-class and many black leaders, focused much of its editorial content on condemning social and economic discrimination and praising black college graduates and others who had acquired impressive titles and accomplishments. The magazine condemned lynching and other violence against blacks, and pushed for eventual social integration. The Messenger, while also concerned with violence and discrimination against black Americans, was more specifically focused on organizing black workers and ultimately aimed toward creating a different society. In a 1919 editorial critiquing The Crisis, for example, The Messenger also deconstructs notions of loyalty and patriotism, writing:

Liberty and justice have advanced in the world in proportion as people have been traitorous to their tyrants and oppressors. George Washington was a traitor – to British tyranny. Wendell Philips, William Lloyd Garrison, Lovejoy and Lincoln were traitors – to the slave autocracy of the United States. . . The 200,000 Negroes who fought on the Union side to free themselves and their brothers from chattel slavery – were traitors to the slaveholders. It was treason beyond doubt for any slave to attempt his emancipation.20

The mainstream black press, including The Crisis, did not make such radical claims in its efforts advocating the black freedom struggle. Yet this argument for reevaluating notions of treason and noncompliance with American institutions reflected similar ideas of noncooperation that emerged during the civil rights era, when the strictures of Jim Crow segregation finally began to break down, and African-Americans in the South were able to vote and gain more social and economic mobility. The seeds of what became the 1960s Civil Rights Movement were planted in earlier eras.

By the decade leading up to the 1920s, Du Bois had already had a distinguished career as a university professor and sociologist. By 1910 he had published over a dozen

studies on African-Americans, in addition to his seminal book *The Souls of Black Folk*. The content of *The Crisis*, however, was not exclusively educational, being both a news and leisure magazine.\(^1\) The editorial section served as a monthly meditation on current events, while “Men of the Month” commented on those members of the race – usually male though often female – who had achieved a prominent status within the black community. Other sections were composed of lists signifying social progress, and still other sections featured poetry and short stories by contemporary African-American writers and students. In fact, both *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* contained a mix of editorials, informative features, poetry, short stories, the occasional play, and reviews of the arts.

Due to Randolph’s and Du Bois’ fame within the context of African-American history, scholars from a wide range of fields have written about the major accomplishments of their lives. In 2003, Reiland Rabaka discussed Du Bois’ sense of the importance of Africana education – particularly for African-Americans.\(^2\) In the article, he suggested that educating African-Americans about the African continent and its Diaspora became a guiding aspect of Du Bois’ educational philosophy. *The Crisis*, he suggested, was an early part of Du Bois’ campaign for Africana education. In 1994, Sociologist Charles Lemert pondered the reasons why Du Bois’ writings have not been taken seriously by sociologists, especially his *Souls of Black Folk* and the early studies such as *The Philadelphia Negro*, which he wrote while working in sociology at the

---

University of Pennsylvania. Employing Du Bois’ theory of the veil between races, Lemert argued that most American sociologists failed to value Du Bois’ contributions to the field because they couldn’t see across the color line well enough to assess his writings.\textsuperscript{23}

Several studies have analyzed \textit{The Messenger} and \textit{The Crisis} within the context of other early 20\textsuperscript{th} century periodicals aimed at the African-American community. In Michael Fultz’s 1995 article “The Morning Cometh,” he discussed the educational topics and concerns of both magazines, along with seven other black periodicals from the era.\textsuperscript{24} John Brown Childs discussed the role of both Du Bois’ writings and those of \textit{The Messenger} in developing the consciousness of the black intellectual elite – be it the “talented tenth” or the “New Crowd Negro.”\textsuperscript{25} Richard Digby-Junger discussed radicalism in four black periodicals during the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century: \textit{The Guardian, The Crisis, The Messenger,} and \textit{The Negro World}. His article situated these four magazines within the history of American radicalism.\textsuperscript{26}

In 1958, sociologist and black history specialist Elliott Rudwick published an article chronicling the history of \textit{The Crisis} under Du Bois.\textsuperscript{27} The article spanned the history of the magazine from its beginnings in 1910 until Du Bois’ resignation in 1934.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{24} Michael Fultz, „“The Morning Cometh”: African-American Periodicals, Education and the Black Middle Class, 1900-1930,” \textit{The Journal of Negro History,} 80, no. 3 (1995), 97-112. \\
\textsuperscript{25} John Brown Childs, “Afro-American Intellectuals and the People’s Culture,” (1984), 69-90. \\
\textsuperscript{26} Richard Digby-Junger, “The Guardian, \textit{The Crisis, The Messenger,} and Negro World: The Early-20\textsuperscript{th} Century Black Radical Press,” \textit{The Howard Journal of Communications,} (1998): 263-282. Although the Justice Department may have labeled the \textit{The Crisis} as radical, along with any other publication challenging the status-quo, the \textit{The Crisis} would not likely have chosen that appellation. \\
\end{flushright}
Much of the article was concerned with his intellectual activities (such as Pan-Africanism), but it also discussed key controversies occurring during his run as *Crisis* editor, such as the hullabaloo arising after the publication of the “Close Ranks” editorial in the July 1918 issue of *The Crisis*.

Controversy over Du Bois’ “Close Ranks,” editorial and the connection between the editorial and his candidacy for a high-ranking wartime position in the military has also been covered at great length by academics. Even during the World War I era, the “Close Ranks” editorial soon became infamous for its suggestion that African-Americans should ease up on the struggle for racial equality while the battle for global equality occurred in Europe. After the magazine published the editorial, the black press began writing about his candidacy for a captain-level intelligence officer in the military. A *Chicago Defender* article from the era reported that members of the NAACP met in Washington to demand that Du Bois either continue as editor of the magazine or take a position in the military, though he could not continue in both roles.  

Both the Du Bois biographer David Levering Louis and the African-American history scholar Mark Ellis challenged Du Bois’ explanation that the military offered him the appointment only after he had written the editorial. Ellis in particular argued that the military must have bribed Du Bois, because Du Bois compromised his anti-accommodation position on racial uplift by writing the “Close Ranks” editorial. In “The Damnable Dilemma,” however, William Jordan countered Mark Ellis’ claim that Du Bois compromised his beliefs in

---

order to receive a captaincy in the military. Ellis’ argument rested heavily on the incongruity of the “Close Ranks” editorial and the stance against Booker T Washington-style accommodationism that he codified in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Jordan argues, however, that Du Bois was not unambiguously anti-accommodationism, and that several inconsistencies existed within Du Bois’ ideas on racial uplift.31

Labor historian Theodore Kornweibel published a general history of *The Messenger* titled *No Crystal Stair: Black Life and The Messenger, 1917-1928*. The book is a general history of *The Messenger* from its inception until its final issue in 1928, it also provides historical context and information about the black press in general. No comparable work has been done on *The Crisis* magazine during this era, other than the plethora of scholarly articles and biographies that have mentioned the magazine in the context of Du Bois and his contributions to African-American studies. This period is a fervent time for both magazines. *The Crisis*, which was more financially successful than *The Messenger*, peaked at 100,000 in circulation by 1919.32 Also during this period, *The Messenger* had its second-class mailing permit temporarily revoked and Randolph was arrested and taken in for questioning by the Bureau of Investigations.33

In *No Crystal Stair*, Kornweibel suggested that the older generation of African-American leaders during the World War I era were not able to devise a strategy for African-Americans to resist the oppressive traditions of the time. In his analysis of *The Messenger*, he agreed with the magazine’s premise and suggested that African-

---

31 Jordan, ““The Damnable Dilemma,”” 1563.
33 Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 87.
Americans needed to get on a stronger economic footing before demanding equal civil rights in society. His history of the magazine showed that *The Messenger* was more than just a medium for information or a record discrimination and injustice against African-Americans; the magazine was meant to be a forum for ideas that could lead to social change. *No Crystal Stair* provided important background information to this study because it showed that while most black leaders of that time advocated greater civil rights in the North and gradually easing racial stratification in the South, *The Messenger* advocated immediate structural changes to society at large.

In addition to *No Crystal Stair*, Kornweibel also wrote *Seeing Red*, which discussed black militancy during World War I and through 1925. In *Seeing Red*, Kornweibel researched not only the federal government’s investigations of *The Messenger*, but also its files on black publications and radical groups of the era. He argued that the World War I era is the beginning of modern America’s system of political intelligence.34 Furthermore, Kornweibel used government documents to reveal that the Bureau of Investigation not only monitored the activities of African-American political groups (including the NAACP) and leaders such as Marcus Garvey, but he also showed that the federal body continued its investigations into black political organizations after being ordered to stop in 1924. Government surveillance of African-Americans during World War II, the second Red Scare, and the Civil Rights Movement has a precedent in the anti-radical intelligence activities during the World War I era and the early 1920s.

In addition to Kornweibel’s works, several other authors contributed background information to this study. Du Bois’ *Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* provided Du Bois’ opinions about his accomplishments during the World War I era and the first Red Scare, along with several complimentary facts about his life before, during, and after his *Crisis* editorship. David Levering Lewis’ Du Bois biography offered critical insight into Du Bois’ life and achievements. Paula Pfeffer’s autobiography of Randolph primarily focused on his role in organizing the Pullman Porters, as well as his civil rights leadership in the 1940s. The beginning of the book, however, discussed both his early life and the socialist influences of *The Messenger*.35

This study compared and contrasted the history of both *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* during the war and postwar years, ending with the end of the first Red Scare in March, 1921. It also positioned the magazines within the era and discussed how Randolph’s and Du Bois’ intellectual backgrounds and trends in the history of African-American leadership informed the magazines they edited. Both men were committed to ending racial segregation in the United States, though their differing intellectual backgrounds affected their methods for achieving this end. Du Bois’ sociological background was primarily in the vein of researching social groups and publishing his findings. He studied African-Americans in Philadelphia, for example, and published his findings in *The Philadelphia Negro*. Similarly, he explored the nature of African-American consciousness, and published these explorations in *The Souls of Black Folk*. This approach influenced his journalistic method as editor of *The Crisis*, which was basically to raise awareness of the injustices against African-Americans of the era, and

call for the mitigation or end to these injustices. Randolph, on the other hand, was applying sociological theory to the African-American population, re-classifying the racial group as a subset of the international class of workers. Du Bois associated with several white socialists and was familiar with the Socialist Party, although he was by no means a staunch advocate of the philosophy.

Although both Randolph and Du Bois were representative of the political of the intellectual movements of their time, the two men also represented streams of thought in the black community regarding methods of elevating the community’s station in American society. As Levering-Lewis stated above, Du Bois was no social revolutionary during this era. His advocacy of the Constitution is evidence of an underlying belief that the rights enjoyed by white Americans should be given to blacks as well. Randolph and Owen, on the other hand, viewed America’s racial hierarchy as part of the international system of exploitation of the working class, and in the earlier issues of the magazine they both hoped for the eventual overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialist governance.³⁶ Both men advocated more freedoms and more opportunities for African-Americans, although their ideologies for reaching this end-goal set them apart, with Du Bois being more moderate, and Randolph more revolutionary.

Whereas other works have given a broad history of The Messenger and The Crisis while under the guardianship of their inaugural editors, this study focused on the content of these magazines over the relatively short span of years between 1917 and 1921. War, race riots, and fear of radicalism all gripped the country over this time period. This study.

was unique in that it is a comparative history of both magazines during World War I and the first Red Scare, drawing attention to the parallels in subject-matter between the two magazines. No other study has provided a detailed account of the content of both *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* during World War I and the first Red Scare. This history was focused primarily on the content of both magazines, while also providing analysis about the historical context of the articles and how they are exemplary of the authors’ ideology concerning progress for the African-American community.

Juxtaposing the content of these magazines also provided further insight into the similarities and differences between the intellectual backgrounds of the two editors. Whereas *No Crystal Stair* often pitted Randolph and Owen against Du Bois, this study not only noted the differences between the editors, it called attention to the many similarities between them regarding their ideals for black progress. Both editors saw parallels between colonial oppression abroad and subjugation of African-Americans, and drawing these parallels encouraged a more global black identity. Du Bois was not as radical in his political ideology, although both he and Randolph believed that the labor movement could benefit the African-American community, and that a larger proportion of the population should hold a greater share of the nation’s wealth.
Chapter 3: The Crisis and The Messenger during World War I

Although the United States declared war on Germany in early April of 1917, The Crisis made no mention of the event in the May issue’s editorial section. A month before the enactment of the Selective Service Act, the war had not yet impacted the everyday lives of Americans to the extent that it would in the upcoming months. The “Horizon” section, which consisted of recurring topic heads such as “Social Progress” and “Crime,” did feature a “War” section that month, however, listing several details about African-Americans from around the country who were enlisting in the army, and others who were forming “patriotic leagues” in order to encourage black participation and enthusiasm for the war.\(^1\) This was evidence that there was an effort on the part of the black leadership to show that African-Americans were supporting the war, an effort that The Crisis actively participated in. It excerpted a passage from a letter written to President Woodrow Wilson by the principal of the Tuskegee Institute, which said, “[The] nation can count absolutely on the loyalty of the mass of Negroes to our country and its people, North and South; and as in previous wars, you will find the Negro people rallying almost to a man to our flag.”\(^2\)

The Editorial section spoke out specifically against allegations concerning the pervasiveness of German propaganda and German spies among the country’s African-American communities. Although The Crisis was the official publication of the NAACP, the editorials were written and edited by W.E.B. Du Bois, and they expressed his opinions on a wide-range of current events.\(^3\) From the magazine’s beginnings, he decided

---

\(^1\) “War” The Crisis, May 1917, 37.
\(^2\) Ibid.
to make his personal opinions those of the magazine, rather than try to conceptualize and express the opinions of the NAACP. He suggested that the allegations were coming from the “Bourbon South” and were another tactic of the South to make the country think African-Americans were a threat to national security. “The Negro is far more loyal to this country and its ideals than the white Southern American,” he wrote. “He never has been a disloyal rebel. He never fought for slavery in a land of Liberty. . . . No temptation to trust German race-hatred has ever been offered and if offered would not for a moment be considered. Back of the German mask is the grinning skeleton of the Southern slave driver.”

These reports of German propaganda and espionage spread throughout the nation in the days preceding America’s declaration of war, causing agitation in much of the country over the threat of disloyalty by African-Americans. Despite Du Bois’ hope that these allegations would be disregarded as fantastical creations of the racist South, the rumors were taken seriously by the United States government; even after Armistice Day, which occurred on November 11, 1918, a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings where a captain of the Army Intelligence Service presented testimony concerning activities to subvert the loyalty of African-American citizens. The

---

4 W.E.B. Du Bois. *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 166. Even in the early days of the organization, the NAACP had board members with a variety of political and ideological beliefs. Both Mary White Ovington and William English Walling were Socialists, and Moorfield Story, the first president of the organization, was a Democrat. At the same time, the leadership of the NAACP was largely white, although it needed to reflect the interests of the African-American community.

5 “Loyalty” *The Crisis*, May 1917, 8.

6 Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 4-6.
captain gave no specific information concerning the newspapers that received this information, or the leaders who were influenced by it, during the hearings.\(^7\)

By June, *The Crisis* was publishing more information about the African-American soldiers in Europe as well as those who were preparing to ship out and the civilians who were supporting the troops through parades and other gestures of consent for the war. Du Bois’ editorial in this issue connected black America to Africa and other regions that were colonized by European powers at the time. He suggested that the consent of the governed was a necessary precondition to a “permanent peace,” and despite the lack of equality in America, World War I was a war with the aim of creating a more just future.\(^8\)

After having laid out the relative merits of the Allied powers, he wrote, “We, therefore, earnestly urge our colored fellow citizens to join heartily in this fight for eventual world liberty . . . despite our deep sympathy with the reasonable and deep-seated feeling of revolt among Negroes at the persistent insult and discrimination to which they are subject and will be subject even when they do their patriotic duty.”\(^9\) Du Bois concluded the editorial by suggesting that America belonged to African-Americans more than it did the “lynchers,” and he then listed several conditions of African-American life that needed to change immediately: including the end of Jim Crow segregation on trains and in public facilities, equal access to the military, the right of both sexes to vote, and an end to lynching.\(^10\) Despite the unusually long span of his life – from 1868 until 1963 – it

---

\(^7\) Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 8.


\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid, 60.
was not until his final years during the 1950s and 1960s that the United States
government required African-Americans be given many of these rights.

Other editorials focused on the need for black officers and the history of African-
American participation in American wars. The War section of the magazine mentioned
several patriotic mass meetings, recruitment of black college students for an officers
reserve camp, and the meeting of African-American patriotic leagues.

The cover of the July issue featured African-American soldiers on the battlefield,
but by August, *The Crisis* renewed its focus on deploping the breach of civil rights among
African-Americans. The race riots in East St. Louis during July 1917 attracted the
attention of the nation, and even some foreign nationals visiting the United States. *The
Crisis*, in its August 1917 issue, printed an editorial by “An Asiatic Gentleman” who
questioned the manliness and civility of a nation where armed men maim and kill
unarmed men, and young women beat up the old. One-hundred twenty-five African-
Americans died during these riots, which were instigated by the influx of southern blacks
moving into the city and looking for manufacturing and labor jobs. World War I
brought about an increase in demand for industrial workers needed to fuel war industries,
and since many industrial workers were overseas fighting the war and the United States
had halted European immigration, African-Americans were able to fill the gaps in labor.
The three thousand-plus white rioters burned down much of East St. Louis, which was a
segregated enclave where African-Americans were required to live at that time.

---

Thousands of blacks who lived in East St. Louis were left homeless as a result of these riots.\textsuperscript{15}

The September issue saw a continuation of concern over mob violence, which by then had broken out in Waco, Texas; Houston, Texas; and Memphis, Tennessee. Du Bois made a convincing argument that America could not fight to make the world safe for democracy when such egregious acts of violence were perpetuated – oftentimes without punishment – against its own citizens. In “Awake America” he wrote, “Let us enter this war for Liberty with clean hands. . . . The New Freedom cannot survive if it means Waco, Memphis and East St. Louis. We cannot lynch 2,867 untried black men and women in thirty-one years and pose successfully as leaders of civilization.”\textsuperscript{16} The editorials condemning the riots were bolstered by the inclusion of a letter written to the Central Trades and Labor Union, complaining about the encroachment of African-American populations into East St. Louis along with pictures of the city on fire. The October issue featured more laments on the fallout of the race riots. The perceived disinterest or neglect of President Wilson was a constant theme throughout the editorials and other articles discussing the riots.

By November 1917, \textit{The Messenger} published its first official issue as a magazine. One of the major differences between the two magazines was that while \textit{The Crisis} sought to recommend the strengths of the African-American character and community, while simultaneously lamenting the treatment of the race, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen often drew from sociological rhetoric and theory in order

\textsuperscript{15} “The War,” \textit{The Crisis}, August 1917, 175.
\textsuperscript{16} “Awake America,” \textit{The Crisis}, September 1917, 216.
to justify frustration and disorderly conduct among African-Americans. “Negro troops are just human,” Randolph wrote in his article responding to the rioting of African-American soldiers in Houston. “Provocations with them have a limit. The facts have not been sifted but every one acquainted with conditions in this country knows that they have restrained themselves well under the taunts, insults and abuses so unsparingly heaped upon them.”17 The Messenger was not completely devoid of race pride, although even when it suggested that African-Americans were exceptional, it checked this sentiment by undercutting the idea that a group of people could be, any better or worse than any other group. Randolph closed the article, for example, by writing:

> The Negro is probably the best and most loyal soldier in the United States. He does his duty in a fine, manly, courageous way. But the Government has failed too often to do its duty by the Negro soldier. Do not expect the supernatural from the Negro soldier. He has feelings, race pride and ambitions like other men. If you prick him, he bleeds. If you tickle him, he laughs. In a few words, the Negro soldier is just Human.18

By insisting on the equitability of all people, Randolph suggested that African-Americans needed access to economic opportunities in order to advance as a race.

Since November was an election month, many articles in this issue of The Messenger dealt with elections and democratic processes. As a magazine supported by Socialist Party advertising, there was a special emphasis on socialism as well as the potential for African-Americans to be elected into office. An advertisement on page five of the magazine urged readers to elect the socialist lawyer Morris Hillquit as mayor of New York.

17“‘The Rioting of Negro Soldiers,’” The Messenger, November 1917, 6.
18 Ibid. Randolph was The Messenger’s primary editor, so I often cite him as the author of the editorials.
In addition to publishing editorials and other articles advocating socialist ideals, *The Messenger* also ran feature stories of general interest to the black community, along with poetry and short stories. Similar to *The Crisis*, which mixed politically-oriented news content with literature and features about the black community, *The Messenger* also supplemented its editorials and politically-charged articles with culture and leisure content. The November issue, for example, featured a short story about Haiti during the American occupation in 1915. The fictional story was supplemented by pictures of Port-au-Prince, a “progressive” Haitian family, and Haitian women washing in a stream.\(^\text{19}\) The issue also featured an article about the history of social work and charity both given to and done by African-Americans.\(^\text{20}\) It encouraged them to do more social work outside the framework of religion. Likewise, a black poet, Walter Everette Hawkins, published several verses in this issue bemoaning the emphasis on heaven in religion. The poem suggested that religion should focus on this world and its contemporary needs.\(^\text{21}\) Despite the inclusion of poetry and other narrative forms, however, the overall tone of *The Messenger* remained politically oriented.\(^\text{22}\) Near the end of the November issue, for example, the manifesto, “The New Patriotism,” listed several ideals concerning patriotic sentiment in America.\(^\text{23}\) This new patriotism condemned lynching, was color-blind, embraced tolerance, and disdained the kind of nationalistic zeal that led people to


\(^{22}\) Furthermore, the themes of many of the poems reflected the overall emphasis of the magazine, decrying lynching, disparaging inequality, and lamenting the emphasis on religion in the black community.

disparage citizens of foreign countries rather than corrupt policies and wars sponsored by their governments.

Subsequent issues of *The Messenger* continued to include literary works and culture-themed articles in addition to political content. The second issue featured a two-page spread of a Hawkins poem, “The Voice in the Wilderness,” surrounding it with a picture displaying exploitation of the war due to war profiteering, lynchings here in America, and the dead and wounded of the war.\(^{24}\) The poem decried the oppression and ill-treatment of African-Americans and called attention to the contradiction that African-Americans were called to serve the United States, which depicted itself as a land of liberty, while oppressing a subset of its population. The next issue of the magazine featured an article by Randolph discussing the history of armed conflict in Europe, a story about beauty standards in the African-American community, and a poem depicting the terror of being burned alive by a lynch mob.\(^{25}\)

During this time *The Crisis* was the more recognized of the two periodicals for African-American literary output and featured several poems by famous writers and intellectuals.\(^{26}\) Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Otto Leland Bohanan, Georgia Douglass Johnson, and other African-American writers published their work in the magazine. Many of these writers were well-established African-American writers of this particular time period, and others would go on to have famous careers during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. The poetry of the early issues of *The Messenger* was oftentimes more strident than that of


The Crisis, although both magazines dealt with themes relevant to the black community. Rather than reflect the modernist style of writing that contemporary readers associate with turn-of-the-century literature in America and Europe, the poetry in both The Messenger and The Crisis, on the whole, was much more similar to the florid style characteristic of the popular poetry from the nineteenth century. The Crisis also featured informational articles about black people from outside of the U.S., such as South Africa and Cape Verde.27

The politically-themed content of The Messenger’s November issue emphasized not only the importance of women’s suffrage but the significance of the government gaining the consent of the governed. In “Women Suffrage and the Negro,” the magazine argued that women participated in society just as men did, and should have the same rights. It suggested that the vote was not only a right that would benefit black women but also black men.28 In the epistolary-style article, “People’s Council Invites Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph to Present Problem of Negroes at Convention,” The Messenger expanded on the concept that the governed should consent to who governs them. The article suggested the potential for war and violence in Africa and other places was because of the exploitation of these regions by European powers, and the fight between the European powers in World War I was due to the scramble for territory and the control of the capital produced by stripping resources from African and Asia. “So long as African territory is the object of unstinted avarice, greed and robbery,” the article stated, “while its people with dark skins are considered as objects of exploitation . . . just so long will

the conditions smoulder and brew which needs must be prolific in the production of war.’” Referring specifically to World War I and its causes, it said that one of the main sticking points in the war was the cheap labor and rich lands of the world’s darker peoples. The article also stated that while Africa was rich in gold, coal, copper, rubber, cocoa oil, dates and diamonds, India produced a plethora of cotton and foodstuffs. “Not only is great wealth and natural resources to be had in these countries,” it said. “These countries have an abundant supply of labor. These are the tools of the capitalist – underdeveloped resources and underdeveloped people – cheap lands and cheap labor.”

*The Crisis’* November issue also contained several passages urging readers to vote responsibly. Du Bois was particularly concerned about people selling their votes. In his argument for female suffrage, for example, he suggested this would have a positive impact for the black freedom struggle because it would be harder for southern whites to physically beat black women away from the polls and still appear civil. He also suggested that while a poor black laborer might be bribed into selling his vote, “you cannot bribe Negro women.” In the issue’s editorial, “The Oath of The Negro Voter,” one of the first promises it said the voter must take was to swear he would “accept no price for my priceless Vote, save alone just laws, honestly dealt, without regard to color, wealth or strength.”

The oath also seemed to have a connection to socialist thought. It stated, “I will make the second object of my voting the division of the Social Income on the principle

---

30 Ibid.
that he who does not work, be he rich or poor, may not eat; and that Land and Capital ought to belong to the Many and not to the Few.”³³ This statement could have easily been written in The Messenger. The part stating that those who did not work should not eat is was indictment of the capital class that could live in leisure off the interest of their accumulated wealth while the majority of people of this time period had to work six-days a week in order to earn a living.³⁴ The latter part of this statement referred directly to the redistribution of land and capital, which was a major tenant of Marxism and the socialist ideology that Randolph and Owen adhered to in The Messenger.

The Messenger’s second issue in January 1918 congratulated women on achieving the vote in New York while also touting itself as the only periodical published by African-American New Yorkers to have supported female suffrage.³⁵ Another notable article from this issue was about free speech. During this time period, periodicals published by radicals and socialists were in danger of having their second-class mailing permits revoked if an article was deemed too radical or against the interests of the U.S. government. This permit allowed periodicals to send publications to readers at a more affordable price than the first-class mailing permit that the average person used to mail letters and larger packages.

The repression of free speech during wartime has been an ongoing issue in American discourse.³⁶ Patriotism is often conflated with supporting the war effort, and

---

³³ Ibid.
³⁵ “Women Suffrage and The Messenger,” The Messenger, January 1918, 7. Note that The Crisis, while edited by Du Bois, was published by the NAACP.
those who criticize the war effort are labeled unpatriotic. Randolph suggested that while speech that advocated acting out against the law by avoiding the draft might be reasonably banned, speech that did not advocate lawlessness should be allowed. He wrote: “We must discuss right or wrong, the advisability or inadvisability of carrying on the war at all and the desire or indesire [sic] for peace.”

Free speech, he suggested, included the right to criticize government actions and recommend alternatives to traditional political parties or entrenched, government-sanctioned institutions.

Concerning war, he implied people should be free to discuss a variety of opinions about its purpose and execution, and this discussion helped unearth the people’s will, ensuring that the way the war was carried out was in the best interest of the people of the nation. In addition to these sentiments, Randolph expressed concern over war profiteering and the danger this imposed. Ultimately, he suggested that there was more danger in restraining speech than there was in letting people and publications use speech freely. “Peoples have been subjugated by the denial of free speech, but no peoples have ever been subjugated by an excess of free speech.”

The precedent for curbing free speech during wartime was reaffirmed during this era in the Schenck v. United States (1919) case, and in the Debs v. United States trial that followed it. In Schenck v. United States, Schenck was convicted under the Espionage Act for circulating 15,000 leaflets to military recruits and draftees, urging them not to serve. Schenck was the general secretary of the Socialist Party, and the tracts he circulated suggested that the draft was a form of involuntary servitude, rendering it unconstitutional.

---

38 Ibid, 10.  
under the Thirteenth Amendment. The conviction was upheld by the Supreme Court, and in response to Schenck’s argument that his free speech rights had been abridged, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. wrote the opinion of the unanimous court. Rejecting Schenck’s argument, he stated, “When a nation is at war many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured so long as men fight, and that no Court could regard them as protected by any constitutional right.”

This case is also famous for establishing the “clear and present danger” test, which lasted until 1969. This case established a barrier on free speech when that speech was deemed as an inhibition to the national interest. Holmes wrote: “[The] character of every act depends upon the circumstances in which it is done. The question in every case is whether the words are used in such circumstances as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.”

Soon after the Schenck decision, the high court upheld the conviction of Eugene Debs under the Espionage Act. Debs was arrested in Canton, Ohio, after he gave an anti-war speech telling draftees that “you need to know that you are fit for something better than slavery and cannon fodder.” The federal government’s argument in this case was similar to that of Schenck case, the only difference being that the Debs case concerned spoken speech, as opposed to written speech. Debs argued that he was entitled to free speech.

40 Ibid., 52.
41 Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969). This case established a new test for incitement, that which causes “imminent lawless” action may be prevented.
42 249 U.S., at 52.
speech under the First Amendment, and the government stated that Debs had intended to arouse mutiny by preventing the drafting of soldiers into the army. The Supreme Court examined several of the statements Debs made during his speech, and found that Debs had intended to obstruct the draft and the Army’s recruitment efforts in the war.\footnote{Ibid.} In arriving at this decision, the Court cited Deb’s praise of those imprisoned for obstructing the draft. The arrest and conviction of Schenck and Debs showed that socialists and political radicals were viewed unfavorably by both the Supreme Court and the U.S. government. Both Randolph and Owen had to be mindful of government action against their speeches and editorials in *The Messenger*.

This issue of *The Messenger* also came out more ardently against the vanguard of African-American leaders. Owen’s “The Failure of the Negro Leaders” charged Du Bois particularly with being out of touch with the African-American community, making them both a discredit to black people and “the laughing stock among whites.”\footnote{Chandler Owen, “The Failure of Negro Leaders,” *The Messenger*, January 1918, 23.} He said that this old class of African-American leadership did not understand how to achieve the greater freedom for the black race. Owen’s opinion on World War I’s potential benefit to African-Americans was in total opposition to Du Bois and other African-American leaders’ hope that black people would rally their support for the war as part of the step toward civil rights. He wrote:

> Again, we hear Prof. Wm. Pickens, Du Bois and Kelly Miller talking in superlative sureness of how the Negroes’ participation in this war will remove race prejudice. Since when has the subject race come out of a war with its rights and privileges accorded for such participation? Leaving out the question of color entirely where is the history to support this spurious promise? Did not the Negro fight in the Revolutionary War with Crispus Attucks dying first (which is not
important nor material), and come out to be a miserable chattel slave in this country for nearly one hundred years after? Did not the Negro only incidentally secure freedom from physical slavery in the Civil War, only to have peonage fastened upon him almost immediately thereafter, becoming the victim of Ku Klux Klanism, oppression and unspeakable cruelty which were directly perpetuated by the South and condoned by the North. . . . The same story must be told of Ireland. She has always helped England in her wars, but she has remained under the feet of the English oppressor for the last eight hundred years.\footnote{Ibid.}

In this article, Owen stressed the importance of unionizing the African-American labor force as the means of breaking down the tension between races that led to lynching and mob violence in areas where blacks and whites competed for jobs. Unions were still relatively new, and because they tended to polarize white employers, unions were far from receiving the unambiguous support of black leaders and others in the black community who relied on white patronage to sponsor historically black colleges, hire African-Americans as laborers, and promote greater civil rights for black people.

This passage also exemplified the controversial tone that Randolph and Owen sometimes took in order to express their views. Both Du Bois and \textit{The Messenger} editors were thinking of the long-term interests of the African-American community. Du Bois’ opinions, however, were influenced by the integrationist efforts of the NAACP and the Talented Tenth, which viewed this war as an opportunity to prove African-Americans were patriotic citizens that deserved full citizenship rights. Du Bois’ support for the war was also influenced by its global significance; this war involved not only European nations but, due to colonialism, large regions of Asia and Africa. His autobiography suggested that he was willing to try several methods as part of an ongoing strategy to gain equal rights for African-Americans. On the other hand, Owen’s criticism of Du Bois’ and
other black leaders’ hopes drew attention to the extravagant expectations concerning the benefits that the war would bring about for African-Americans that he and other black leaders implied would come to fruition. The article also gave Owen a chance to discuss how socialist principles applied to the African-American condition. In order for African-Americans to dismantle discrimination and race prejudice in the American system, however, they could not object to all facets of that system; some people would have to participate in the dominant institutions of the time, corrupt though they might be. While it was true that African-Americans had participated in every American war since the Revolutionary War, and were not always justly rewarded for it, supporting one’s country during wartime certainly could not harm the case for black freedom. Although Randolph and Owen, however, were focused on their goal of getting African-Americans to become more integrated in the larger movement for workers rights; they believed that expediting the worker revolution would bring down racism along with the ruling class of capitalists.

Randolph Historian Paula Pfeffer suggested that just as Du Bois found Booker T. Washington’s policy of focusing on learning technical skills and accepting the status quo a conservative philosophy and preferred liberal arts education and fighting for civil rights, Randolph and Owen found Du Bois and his comrade’s views on racial uplift similarly retrograde. They demanded a new black leadership that was not only interested in liberal arts, but modern social science and Socialist Party principle. Pfeffer added: “They also supported the Socialist position that World War I was brought about to benefit the capitalist class and, therefore, was of little concern to the workers. Unwilling to fight
abroad for a democracy that did not seem to embrace blacks . . . Randolph and Owen were also not willing to stand by while blacks were subject to physical abuse.\textsuperscript{47}

Randolph and Owen believed that unionizing workers was a step toward the end of capitalism, and since they saw racism as a product of the capitalist exploitation of the workers, they felt overthrowing capitalism would overthrow racial prejudice. “When no profits are to be made from race friction,” Randolph wrote in a 1919 article about race riots, “no one will longer be interested in stirring up race prejudice.”\textsuperscript{48} Although race prejudice likely had its roots in systems of economic advantage and disadvantage, the contemporary status of race relations during World War I was such that white workers would have rather excluded blacks than unionize with them, and black workers were suspicious of both socialism and unionism, seeing them as white-man institutions.\textsuperscript{49} Randolph and Owen had an uphill battle ahead of them.

Du Bois’ interest in Marxism and socialist thought surged after the Russian Revolution in 1917, although he was by no means a strict adherent to socialist thought. While he was aware of communism, socialism, and Marxism during World War I, he had not studied these fields as part of his formal education, and he was less knowledgeable about them than Randolph and Owen.\textsuperscript{50} Du Bois gave his views on the role of unions for African-Americans in the March 1918 issue of \textit{The Crisis}. His primary interests at the time, both in his personal beliefs and as a member of the NAACP, were in the realm of civil rights; he hoped that gaining these rights and being led by strong black leaders of the

\textsuperscript{49} Pfeffer, \textit{A. Philip Randolph}, 10.
Talented Tenth would help bring about greater opportunities for African-Americans.\(^5^1\)

Regarding unions and African-Americans, his article on the subject suggested that while the power of the workers uniting and using collective bargaining was an attractive concept, the unions of that time did not generally accept black people into their membership roles, and black people should therefore focus on securing employment, rather than unionizing with white laborers who did not want to admit them into their organizations. Compared to the idealistic fervor of Randolph and Owen, his position on this topic appeared rather pragmatic. He wrote:

> Personally, I have come to this decision reluctantly and in the past have written and spoken little of the closed door of opportunity, shut impudently in the faces of black men by organized white workingmen. I realize that by heredity and century-long lack of opportunity one cannot expect in the laborer that larger sense of justice and duty which we ought to demand of the privileged classes. I have, therefore, inveighed against color discrimination by employers and by the rich and well-to-do, knowing at the same time in silence that it is practically impossible for any colored man or woman to become a boiler maker or book binder, an electrical worker or glass maker, a worker in jewelry or leather, a machinist or metal polisher, a paper maker or piano builder, a plumber or a potter, a printer or a pressman, a telegrapher or a railway trackman, an electrotyper or stove mounter \([sic]\), a textile worker or tile layer, a trunk maker, upholsterer, carpenter, locomotive engineer, switchman, stone cutter, baker, blacksmith, boot and shoemaker, tailor, or any of a dozen other important well-paid employments, without encountering the open determination and unscrupulous opposition of the whole united labor movement of America. That further than this, if he should want to become a painter, mason, carpenter, plasterer, brickmaster or fireman he would be subject to humiliating discriminations by his fellow Union workers and be deprived of their own Union laws.\(^5^2\)

Thus, Du Bois was not against unionism, although he did not see interracial unions as a viable option for African-Americans. Their access to opportunities beyond their

---

\(^5^1\) Ibid., 150-151.
traditional roles was extremely limited. Regarding methods for increasing African-American access to employment opportunities there were no perfect strategies.

In his autobiography, Du Bois described the development of his philosophy about labor and unions, as well as how his position on these issues info led to the controversy between him and Booker T. Washington. Washington was the first president of the Tuskegee Institute, beginning in 1881 and serving in the position until his death in 1915. He believed that African-Americans needed practical training in agriculture and other trades in order to succeed in the economy. While Du Bois did not disagree with the need for African-Americans to gain more prominence in industry and the skilled trades, he also thought that there should be a “Talented Tenth,” which was trained in liberal arts and could have a cultural foundation necessary to become leaders in the black community. “These two theories of Negro progress were not absolutely contradictory,” he wrote. “Neither I nor Booker Washington understood the nature of capitalistic exploitation of labor, and the necessity of a direct attack on the principle of exploitation as the beginning of labor uplift.” He recognized that it was important for African-Americans to gain a foothold in both the trades and in industry, however, and he wanted to see them leading the way for others in the community to be successful in their chosen occupations, rather than always rely on white employers’ inclination toward giving jobs to black laborers.

Following the January issue of The Messenger, the magazine did not publish again until July 1918. It helped Randolph and Owen achieve a relatively prominent position in New York socialist circles and raised awareness of them within New York’s

---

54 Ibid., 150.
55 Ibid.
African-American community as well. One drawback to the production of the magazine, however, was the precarious situation of their second-class mailing permit. The two men had to be careful not to put anything in the magazine that could be construed as pro-German, or too anti-American. During 1917 they wrote a pamphlet, *The Truth About Lynching*, with Randolph citing up the causes of lynching – namely capitalism – and Owen suggesting methods for preventing lynching. Both Randolph and Owen began touring the country, and in the spring of 1918 they began a cross-country lecture tour, taking along their *Messenger* magazines and pamphlets.\(^{56}\)

The July issue featured several articles emphasizing the appeal of socialist thought and politics to African-Americans, covering topics such as the potential benefits of interracial labor unions, radicalism in black politics, the Socialist Party’s appeal to African-Americans, and the future of African-Americans in American politics. *The Messenger*, on the whole was much more overtly political than *The Crisis*, which shied away from the specificities of party politics. Due to the historical significance of the Republican party as the party of Lincoln, most African-American voters supported the party in the early 1900s.\(^{57}\) In light of the growing disillusionment with the party, however, *The Messenger*’s editors were hoping to encourage African-American voters to support the Socialist Party by emphasizing its commitment to “working people.”\(^{58}\)

This issue of the magazine was imbued with the sense that working people, regardless of race or ethnicity, needed to work together to achieve their common interests.

and bring about a more equitable society. In an article speculating about the effect of African-American women on politics, Randolph warned them not to make the same mistake as African-American men by holding their allegiance to the Republican Party. “For 50 years the Negro men have voted the Republican ticket,” the article stated, “and to-day, though there are 12,100,000 Negroes in the country, they have not a single representative in Congress.”59 In addition to this lack of political representation, the article noted that African-Americans were still lynched, disfranchised, “jimcrowned,” and segregated in the South. The article did not single out the Republican Party in its criticism, however; it emphasized that both the Republican and the Democratic parties were less likely to address the concerns of African-Americans than the Socialist Party.60 It said that 99 percent of African-Americans are working people, and that their interests, like that of all working people, were in acquiring good food, clothes, and housing. “[The] Republican and Democratic parties will not secure these things for them,” the article stated, “because they are supported by forces which profit from cheap labor, high rent and high cost of living.”61

Many of these articles also were highly optimistic about the worldwide spread of the socialist principles of economy and governance. In the articles, Randolph stressed the need for African-Americans to form coalitions with all working people. “The world is passing through stages of social revolution more rapidly than anyone had dreamed,” one

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid. Many of the statements made in this issue of the magazine mirror the contemporary rhetoric surrounding the American party system. Regarding the Republican Party in particular, Randolph wrote in “The Passing of the Republican Party” on page 8 that “The Republican party [sic] represents the few. The great masses, the many, are not represented by that party–no not even remotely.” He echoed this sentiment in the next article, on the same page, which stated, “[The] Republican party is the party of plutocracy, of wealth, of monopoly, of trusts, of big business.”
Another said that because almost all African-Americans were working people, their interests would not be met by the party of big business and their employers; instead of giving their votes to supporting the interests of the owners of capital, the article suggested that they should belong to the workers’ party. The magazine also dedicated an article specifically to the issue of interracial labor unions. It employed a Marxist analysis of class history, arguing that the working-class had historically been oppressed by the class of owners, regardless of race. It also suggested that if unions began admitting more African-Americans, they could strengthen their position during strikes. “[It] is apparent that every Negro worker or non-union man is a potential scab upon white union men and black union men,” it stated. “When colored workers, as scabs, accept the wages against which white workers strike, they . . . have definitely improved their conditions. That is the only reason . . . why non-union men scab upon white union men.” The article went on to state that all people who were part of industrialized labor needed to organize in order to achieve their collective aims because if the employer class keeps white and black workers fighting among each other, then that class would continue to profit at the expense of the working-class. In addition to this discussion about interracial conflict among members of the working-class, this issue of the magazine also noted that there had been some success in the unionization of African-American workers: the United Brotherhood of Elevator and Switchboard Operators, which Randolph had initiated before starting The Messenger, was able to join the American Federation of

---

65 Ibid.
Labor (AFL). The union consisted mostly of African-Americans living in New York, and _The Messenger_’s editors seemed very pleased in the article that they had proven wrong those African-American leaders who suggested that the AFL would not accept African-Americans as union members.

Despite the large amount of socialist rhetoric and the criticism of American political and economic institutions in this issue of _The Messenger_, it was the article “Pro-Germanism among Negroes” that caused the Post Office to revoke the magazine’s second-class mailing permit. The article called into question the idea that African-Americans were pro-German, and suggested that, if anything, many expressed anti-American sentiments occasionally because of their disapproval of the lack of concern from the government regarding lynching. After the publication of the July issue, Randolph and Owen began touring the country, passing out magazines and pamphlets. While speaking in Cleveland they were arrested, although the charges were soon dropped because the judge thought that two “boys” could not have written such articulate, impassioned editorials advocating socialism. They moved on to their next speaking engagement, although because Owen was unmarried and had not filed for an exemption as a conscientious objector, he was sent to the Army’s Camp Upton in September 1918. With him officially sidelined, _The Messenger_ did not begin publishing regularly until March 1919, four months after the war had ended.

During this same period, _The Crisis_ continued publishing much of the same material about black progress and current events while also expanding upon its position

---

68 Kornweibel, _No Crystal Stair_, 4, 33.
that supporting World War I ultimately aided the goal of black progress. While the various reasons for African-Americans to lend their support to the war were laid out in the issues both preceding and following American entry, the later issues sometimes conflated the battle against the enemy in Europe with the battle against racial oppression in the United States, but drawing a connection between the two was ambiguous at best. The June 1918 edition of the magazine, for example, was titled “The Soldier Issue” and featured an editorial by retired African-American Colonel Charles Young, who suggested that a German victory would lead to the re-enslavement of black people in America.69 The article evoked the patriotic spirit of the era by suggesting that German forces were the antithesis of freedom. Young extended this logic, however, through his suggestion that African-Americans in particular would return to slavery unless the Allied forces achieved victory. To support this claim, he alluded to the Cameroons, where the Germans instituted forced labor policies in order to get the native tribes to work the plantations that they had set up to produce cash crops.70 The specifics of Germany’s attempt to dominate the tribes in the Cameroons for its pecuniary advantage, however, were not included in this article. While the realization of America’s worst fears – an Allied defeat and a German occupation of American land – would have certainly led to marked changes in the lifestyle of most Americans, the Germans’ treatment of native Cameroonians who were not used to plantation labor, and unwilling to work on them did not automatically extend to African-Americans in the plantation economy in the South. The retired colonel

69 “A Comrade to Comrades,” The Crisis, June 1918, 59.
drew on fears about returning to slavery in order to encourage patriotism and vigor in the battle against German forces without adequately relating these two concepts.

Du Bois’ “The Black Soldier” editorial in the same issue had a more clear connection to current events and politics, although it also merged the sense of progress abroad with that of progress for black people in the United States. He wrote that the position of those people, who had been exploited by European colonization, would never be the same. Concerning Africa, he wrote that it would soon be a place “for the Africans, and not merely for business exploitation.” Given the global context of World War I, his suggestion that the war would result in greater freedom for “the world’s darker peoples” was an optimistic projection and an expression of his hope that by the end of the war the status quo for people in the European territories, which formed much of the interest for having a war, would be changed for the better. How an Allied victory could have benefited the native people of Africa and South Asia, as this article implied, was not clear. Still, this sentiment was grounded in the global context of the war; Du Bois’ assertion that the war also would bring about marked changes in the lives of African-Americans, however, was even less concrete. These passages evoked a sense of pan-Africanism, implying that what would benefit “the world’s darker peoples” outside the United States, also would benefit black people within the United States without explicitly drawing a parallel between European exploitation of Africans and white American exploitation of black Americans. The unequivocal patriotism of these articles, however,

---

72 Ibid, 60. He seemed to allude to independence, or at least greater autonomy, for European colonies in Africa and South Asia.
73 Ibid.
reflected the overall patriotism of the times. The black press on the whole had endorsed the war and encouraged black America to be as patriotic as possible for the betterment of the race. A year after American entry into the war, the many utilitarian arguments in favor of the war had given way to a more general sense of optimism. Supporting the war supported humanity, these articles suggested, and that included black people in America. The specifics concerning how the lives of African-Americans would be improved by the war, however, were lost in the patriotic fervor.

The July 1918 issue of *The Crisis* saw the extension of this patriotic philosophy of racial uplift with Du Bois’ infamous “Close Ranks” editorial. It was relatively short compared to many of his editorials, although the line stating that African-Americans should, while the war lasted “forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy” received widespread censure in the black press and became the most controversial statement of his career.74 The black press, in many instances, was much more vociferous in its support of the war than *The Crisis*; Du Bois was rather ambivalent about African-American participation in the war in the months leading up to American entry.75 With “Close Ranks,” however, he clearly went further with his advocacy of the war than many in the black press – or the black community, on the whole – by suggesting that African-Americans should, however briefly, put the broader American interests over

---

74 See “Close Ranks,” *The Crisis*, July 1918, 111; Mark Ellis, “‘Closing Ranks’ and ‘Seeking Honors’: W.E.B. Du Bois in World War I,” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992), 96. Ellis suggests that the censure of the editorial in the black press, combined with the accusation that Du Bois’ support for the war stemmed from his desire to receive a captaincy in the military intelligence branch, tainted his opinion of the war in future decades. On page 96 he wrote, “Partly because of ‘Close Ranks,’ Du Bois was to recall World War I with a mixture of shame and bitterness for the next forty years.”

75 Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 74.
their specific racial interests and focus their energies completely on achieving an Allied victory. An article in the Chicago Defender chronicled the censuring of The Crisis editor at an NAACP meeting following the release of the July 1918 Crisis. “If he continues as editor of the Crisis,” the article stated, “he must continue the heretofore policy of that publication respecting the rights of the race. The entire N.A.A.C.P. organization is greatly stirred over what many members claim was an abandoning of the Race by Dr. Du Bois.” Other articles in the black press mocked his “shameful” editorial for implying that African-Americans should stop speaking out against lynching and disenfranchisement, and some suggested more plainly that they could not see any merit in his proposal, which allegedly asked them to “celebrate and make immortal our induction into slavery.”

As chroniclers of injustice, the black press understandably disagreed with the proclamation that African-Americans should stop belaboring the issue of racial inequality and focus more on supporting the war effort and the more general interests of the United States. One of the chief reasons that these publications existed was because of the need to call attention to crimes committed against African-Americans as well as to push for ongoing progress in the realm of civil rights. To stop talking about race would be, in effect, to stop doing their job. The outcry of the NAACP members mentioned in the Chicago Defender article, however, suggested that the black press, as voices of the

---

76 Ellis, “„Closing Ranks‘ and „Seeking Honors,“” 96. Ellis stated that contemporary historians noted the “mauling” Du Bois received in the black press.
78 Ibid.
African-American community, expressed the sense that no matter what the African-American community’s obligations were to the nation on the whole, African-American disenfranchisement in the South, the lack of civil rights and opportunities for economic progress, in addition to lynchings and the city riots, were problems too pervasive to even temporarily forget.

Historians have debated the factors that influenced Du Bois’ “Close Ranks” editorial, which many see as a departure from his typical stance against accommodating racial segregation. His stance in “Close Ranks,” however, was not a prolonged accommodation of unjust and discriminatory practices but rather a part of the overall strategy for ending racial segregation and achieving racial uplift. Despite the shock of the black press and the larger black community, Du Bois’ editorial was in sync with the articles in previous issues that endorsed a patriotic mindset and encouraged African-Americans to support the war, whether on the battlefront or at home. The black press, on the whole, was optimistic about the increase in opportunities that would result from African-American involvement in the war. The June editorials in particular showed how the magazine had ceased to rely on utilitarian arguments about how the war would allow the African-Americans still in the country to take industrial jobs or how it would prove that African-Americans were just as valiant on the battlefield as white soldiers. The articles in the soldiers issue reflected the national sentiment that Americans were fighting for democracy and suggested that an Allied victory would be a victory for Africans and

81 Kornweibel, No Crystal Stair, 11-14.
Asians, which would be a victory for African-Americans, too. Given the emotional vigor of these sentiments that, in hindsight, seem like unsupported (though optimistic) hopes, Du Bois’ suggestion that African-Americans should put aside their “special grievances” was simply an extension of the sentimental patriotism and impassioned editorial style of the previous months.

Given Du Bois’ personal history and intellectual interests, it should not come as a surprise that he might occasional place what he perceived as global interests ahead of the African-American freedom struggle. Although the social and material conditions of “the Negro” were Du Bois’ main scholarly interests and the focus of his work at the NAACP, he also was a man of the world. Under his editorial leadership at The Crisis, the magazine regularly featured articles about black people in the Caribbean and Africa. He also had completed graduate work in Germany and traveled throughout Europe during his time there.\(^{82}\) Although he did not always draw a clear connection between the status of black people in America and that of “the darker races” in Africa and India, he clearly felt connected to the plight of oppressed people all around the world. With such a global eye, His famous editorial was fitting with his disposition and the context in which he wrote it. He was urging African-Americans to think of themselves as members of a larger group than the black community in America and rise up to join the global battle for a freer world. This sentiment, while understandable, did not take into account the severe oppression that was a daily part of life for most African-Americans of that era. Many black people were simply unable to forget their special grievances, and they did not look kindly on his efforts to silence their concerns.

Despite the good intentions that this editorial likely sprung from, *The Crisis* magazine was officially the magazine of the NAACP, and not Du Bois’ personal venue for delivering his views. By the September edition of the magazine, The NAACP began trying to spin the story back in its favor with the editorial “Our Special Grievances.” It reaffirmed the organization’s ongoing commitment to advocating for civil rights while suggesting that some people were interpreting the editorial in the wrong manner. It stated: “[The ,Close Ranks’ editorial] does not say that these grievances are *not* grievances, or that the temporary setting aside of wrongs makes them right. But it *does* say, and The Crisis repeats the word, that any man or race that seeks to turn his country’s tragic predicament into his own personal gain is fatally cheating himself.”

The article went on to suggest that the editorial was published under the oversight of the NAACP’s directors and that the 31 leading African-American publications had known about the editorial and assented to it before its release. Regardless of the amount of oversight on Du Bois’ editorials, the NAACP used this issue of the magazine to reaffirm to its members its ongoing commitment to civil rights. Du Bois would regret the editorial that so stridently called into question his abilities as an African-American leader, and the NAACP certainly wanted to favorably set the record straight. The editorial was not without some benefits, however; circulation, by the end of the war was at 100,000, twice as much as two years before.

---

83 “Our Special Grievances,” *The Crisis*, September 1918, 216.
84 Ibid.
85 Ellis, ,“Closing Ranks’ and ,Seeking Honors,”’ 96.
86 Du Bois, 165.
The September issue also saw a return to its more practical style of editorial writing with its “The Reward” article. It sought to counter the claim that African-Americans, who had participated in every American war, should not hope that this war would bring about their civil rights when no other war had achieved that aim. By juxtaposing examples of African-American participation in wars with progress for the race, the article made a case for the progressive improvement of circumstances for the black population of America. Following African-American participation in the wars, the article said, a number of achievements benefiting African-Americans have come about, including the end of slavery in the North, the enfranchisement of northern blacks, and the emancipation of slavery. Although many might doubt the degree of causality implied between African-American participation in American wars and more rights for black people, this article exemplified a turn from the sentimental rhetoric of patriotism, to more utilitarian, analytical arguments supporting both the war and the ongoing struggle against racial discrimination. “The Reward” further supported its case by listing examples of increased opportunities for African-Americans that had come about during World War I. These included not only black recognition in the draft but the admission of African-American nurses to the Red Cross and the abolition of the color line in railway wages. World War I ended only two months later, although in the months that followed government agencies would closely watch The Crisis and The Messenger during what became known as the Red Scare.

87 “The Reward,” The Crisis, September 1918, 217.
88 Ibid.
In spite of the economic instability and threats to personal safety that characterized African-American, this was also a time when the African-American community felt there was a large potential for progress in the upcoming years. With World War I curtailing European immigration, and with many laborers going off to war, war industries needed workers to engage in the most mechanized war the world had ever seen. During the war years, many African-Americans were able for the first time to get a foot into the money-economy of the North. Both *The Crisis* and *The Messenger* reflected this atmosphere of renewed hope in black America, while continuing to push for an end to lynching and Jim Crow segregation. Although the magazines disagreed on the methods for achieving economic equality – *The Messenger* advocated a socialist approach – *The Crisis’* November 1917 editorial on voting suggested that both Randolph and Du Bois believed implicitly in the equality of man and the principal of equal access to land and capital, although Du Bois was the more pragmatic of the two. He had sympathies with the socialists’ principle of equality, although he was by no means a hard adherent of socialist philosophy; he was willing to try several different methods in order to advance the African-American struggle for equality. *The Crisis* was more of a general interest magazine, while *The Messenger* was more theoretical and abstract. Du Bois’ liberal-arts background had given him an appreciation for strong character and moral ascendency, and he sought to both portray the African-American community in a positive light, and encourage the community to better themselves through education. His goal was to win more civil rights for African-Americans, and he felt that civic participation would ultimately help achieve that goal. *The Crisis’* pragmatic approach about racial uplift,
however, allowed it to become susceptible to World War I propaganda, and it began advocating the war without critically analyzing how it might benefit the African-American community. *The Messenger’s* Marxist analysis of war, which was noted by Pfeffer, precluded it from becoming romanced by pro-war propaganda, but it also kept them from considering how supporting one’s nation during wartime could be beneficial to the long-term goal of achieving racial equality. Despite these differences, the principle of the equality of all people was a consistent theme in both magazines. Both Randolph and Du Bois decried racial injustice and used their magazines as a forum for sharing their opinions about racial inequality discrimination during the World War I era. Both magazines condemned lynchings and race riots, and urged the president to speak out against these crimes. At the same time, they were optimistic about the future, and urged African-Americans to take advantage of the new opportunities that were becoming available to them. Regardless of the oppressive conditions that were a part of daily life for most African-Americans, limiting their access to capital and their ability to rise within the economic system, both *The Crisis* and *The Messenger* depicted the black community’s future prospects as relatively bright. But *The Messenger’s* editors believed that a revolution would have to occur before equality could become a reality.
Chapter 4: The Crisis, The Messenger, and the First Red Scare, November 1918 – March 1921

After the end of World War I in November 1918, *The Crisis*’ Christmas issue called attention to the new peace, though escalating anti-radical sentiment throughout the government would keep much of the black press wary of censorship in the months following the war. ¹ World War I was the beginning of the expansion in the nation’s intelligence systems with several different arms of government coalescing to provide intelligence on radicalism in the United States. The Justice Department and its relatively new Bureau of Investigation worked in consort with intelligence branches of the army and the navy, informant-bureaucrats in the Post Office and State departments, and even civilian auxiliary volunteers in the American Protective League (APL), to pursue organizations deemed politically suspicious.²

Despite some challenges to coordinating information-sharing between the different agencies at the beginning, by the summer of 1917 they were able to coordinate their information and build the foundation of America’s modern political intelligence framework.³ The Sedition Act of 1918, along with the Trading-with-the-Enemy Act, allowed the federal government to punish any appearance of disloyalty, censor the press, and punish any speech deemed as having the potential to harm the country’s war efforts. The Alien Act, passed only weeks before the armistice, expedited the deportation process

---

³ Ibid., 4.
for those considered having “un-American” political beliefs.\(^4\) Though these measures were meant as protections of a wartime government, President Woodrow Wilson allowed the prosecution of radicals – both groups and individuals ranging from those unsatisfied with the status-quo to active communists, socialists, and anarchists – throughout most of his term, which ended in 1921.

Though the black press was not at the center of the anti-Red hysteria, the African-American community was still a large concern for the super-patriotic sectors of the federal government. The government was primarily concerned with bolshevism, which was the term for the Marxist labor party that led the October Revolution in Russia. Within the American context, the term helped signify the idea that a foreign ideology (and perhaps even foreign agents) was causing commotion and stirring up discontent with the status-quo. Though the majority of African-Americans would not have identified specifically with any of these political movements, select groups and individuals in the black community were involved with a broad range of socialist activities, bringing them under the eye of a suspicious government. As the country on the whole became more wary of radicalism in its various forms, both federal officials and the general population began to suspect that African-Americans were rejecting their position in the country’s racial hierarchy and were involved in any number of subversive activities.\(^5\)

While the government began to publish anti-Bolshevik propaganda and more Americans began fearing radicalism from all sectors of society, labor and other radical

\(^4\) Ibid., 4-5.
groups began increasing their level of activity during the winter and spring of 1919. Thousands of shipyard workers in Seattle went on strike in late January 1919, demanding higher wages after agreeing to wage restrictions during the war. The mainstream press largely came out against the strike, with one paper referring to it as “an acid test of American citizenship.” Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson declared the strike a Bolshevik action and threatened that the National Guard would operate the city’s power if the workers did not return to work. By February 10, most of the strikers returned to their jobs. In light of Mayor Hanson’s apparent success in defeating Bolshevism in Seattle, he became a national hero and subsequently resigned to become a lecturer on law and order. A restless spirit had taken over the nation, however, and during late April, only days before International Workers’ Day (May 1, also known as May Day), anarchists sent mail bombs to the homes of thirty-eight prominent government officials and industrialists.

While anti-radical sentiment spread throughout the nation and labor activists, anarchists, and “Wobblies” organized protests, strikes, and other anti-establishment activities, African-Americans across the country were beginning to reject the old folkways restricting their ambition and movement within society. During the war, many black soldiers travelled outside of their home regions for the first time, and they returned more travelled, proud of their accomplishments during the war, and expecting greater job opportunities and respect from American society. Instead, the country was torn by race

---

8 “Seattle General Strike.”
9 Ibid.
11 “Wobblies” refers to members of the International Workers of the World (IWW). The union was one of the few that accepted black workers in the early 20th century.
riots by mid-1919, and black men who dared wear their uniforms in public risked the
danger of lynching.\textsuperscript{12}

The black community was agitated, and this was reflected in their newspapers and magazines. Due to the paucity of coverage on the black community in the mainstream press, African-Americans were forced to read the black press in order to find out news about their community.\textsuperscript{13} The wealth of information in the newspapers led to them becoming the most influential element in the black community.\textsuperscript{14} J. Edgar Hoover, who during the summer of 1919 became the twenty-four-year-old head of the newly created Bureau of Investigations’ General Intelligence Division (GID), perceived a serious threat in the black press. Though he is more recognized in this era for his role investigating radical groups and identifying their members during the Palmer Raids, he also was familiar with the black press and believed \textit{The Crisis} and \textit{The Messenger} were responsible for inciting members of the black community to riot and commit other outrages.\textsuperscript{15}

In response to the race riots breaking out in cities all over the country, the black press encouraged African-Americans to defend themselves if provoked while also emphasizing moderation. The black press, along with religious leaders in the black community, also urged African-Americans to be mindful of the line between self-defense and blind lawlessness and retaliation against the white race.\textsuperscript{16} The black periodicals,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Kornweibel, \textit{No Crystal Stair}, 67-68.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Patrick Washburn, \textit{The African American Newspaper: Voice of Freedom}, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 123.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 116.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Kornweibel, \textit{No Crystal Stair}, 68-69.
\end{itemize}
however, were much more militant in their disparagement of the status-quo. The
_Messenger_, according to Hoover, was the most dangerous of the black periodicals. _The
Crisis_ was also noteworthy, however, considering its militant rhetoric and its circulation
of 100,000. The postwar months saw almost a complete reversal in tone when
compared to the patriotic, tone of the “Close Ranks” editorial in 1918. Both the Military
Intelligence Division (MID) and the Bureau of Investigations believed that W.E.B. Du
Bois and the NAACP were allied to radical movements, and the MID was particularly
concerned during the postwar months that _The Crisis_ was radicalizing black troops.
Instead of blaming segregation in the army for increasing African-American impatience
with the war, the MID alleged that Du Bois’ editorials demanding full rights was the
cause of the impatience with the war.

The Justice Department wanted to take legal action against outspoken black
publications such as _The Crisis_ and _The Messenger_, although a U.S. attorney advised
them that even _The Messenger_’s outspoken rhetoric was not illegal. Hoover then made a
bid to change the law. As part of the Justice Department’s attempt to censure African-
American periodicals, he issued a report in the fall of 1919 to Congress claiming a link
existed between the African-American community and communism. The report stated
that African-American leaders were identifying with “radical” organizations such as the
IWW and the “Bolsheviks,” the doctrine of the Soviet Union. “The Negro is „seeing
red,‟” it stated, “and it is the prime objective of the leading publications to induce a like

---

19 Washburn, _The African American Newspaper_, 117.
quality of vision upon the part of their readers.” Government agents kept a close eye on both Du Bois and A. Philip Randolph, and Hoover put considerable effort into pushing for a peacetime sedition law that would have been strong enough to censure the publications. In “Seeing Red,” Theodore Kornweibel suggested that although the government was also critical of the black newspapers, the rhetoric in the papers was perceived as less dangerous in comparison with magazines. He wrote:

Black newspapers suffered less severe pressure than the monthly magazines during the Red Scare. While weekly “race papers” argued for the rights and privileges that were due African Americans, they were business ventures and not primarily vehicles for protest. Without advertising and subscriptions their precarious financial situation would become hopeless. Economic survival demanded editorial positions in the mainstream. None of the papers’ publishers embraced Bolshevism or socialism because they themselves were capitalists and businessmen. But as black businessmen they did not shy away from criticizing the government and white society for mistreating African Americans. So the newspapers’ “sin” was their alleged cultivation of “race hatred.” But in fact they hated only white racism, not white people. And none of the weeklies, with the exception of Garvey’s Negro World, was a nationalistic publication. The newspapers simply carried on a venerable journalistic tradition, harking back to Frederick Douglass’s North Star, by providing a predominantly black readership with a mixture of racial news, racial defense, and racial advocacy.

Although The Messenger was an obvious federal target because of its embrace of Bolshevism and advocacy of full equality (including between economic classes), The Crisis was also critiqued because it promoted both legal and social equality. The government, at the time, was afraid that a Russian-style revolution really was sweeping the globe, and would soon land on American shores. The end of the war and the spread of Marxism in Eastern Europe had inspired many activists groups in America to mobilize

---

23 Ibid., 53.
under the banner of socialism. At the same time, the black community was continuing its migration northward, and black soldiers were returning from the war expecting more opportunities and more respect from both black and white Americans. At the same time, this created tension between the establishment and disestablishment groups with labor unions and socialist groups coming into conflict with both the federal government and the companies that employed them. These radical changes in American society caused the government to go on high alert, monitoring and hoping to dismantle a host of groups deemed un-American, including those organizations that published material traditionally protected by the First Amendment.

When compared to the “Red Summer” of 1919, January of the same year was relatively tame. The beginnings of future controversy, however, were evident in the January issue of *The Crisis*. “The Peace Conference” editorial pointed out that Du Bois sailed to Paris in December in order to take part in the Pan-African Congress. 24 His official aim during the conference was to represent *The Crisis* and the NAACP, while also collecting information for a history on African-American soldiers during the war. In this last function, however, he was primarily attempting to investigate claims of army discrimination against black soldiers in France. 25 The “Jim Crow” editorial discussed self-segregation in the black community, arguing that this is directly linked to inferiority in exposure and opportunity. The editorial then sought a middle-ground, suggesting that the advocates of racial solidarity were not necessarily Jim Crow haters of white people,

and the advocates of integration and the benefits it would bring black people were not necessarily ashamed of their race.26

“After the War” alluded to radical and labor groups that forecast what America would be like after the war. It stated that the Social Democratic League of America had a comprehensive plan to reshape the American landscape, making it more democratic and giving more power to working people, although it did not mention that people would not be discriminated against based on race.27 Another article discussed the future of Africa, imagining a Pan-African state where a modern education system was built upon the local customs and religions of the people of the region. Also, the larger governing body would not interfere with largely self-governing family and tribal networks.28

The February issue of the magazine featured letters by Du Bois about his observations while traveling to Paris and an editorial about the history of colonialism in Africa.29 The “lust” for Africa, according to this issue, began as early as the Battle of Ceuta, which took place in 1415 in present-day Morocco. The scramble for Africa, however, began in 1884 with the establishment of the Congo Free State by Belgium, leading Africa into the hands of Europe by the end of the nineteenth century. The article “Reconstruction and Africa” questioned the assumption that African colonies needed Europe to govern them, lest they go back to a backwards, pre-European status.30 The editorial suggested that a country was not necessarily backward, just because it was

---

27 “After the War” The Crisis, January 1919, 114.
30 “Reconstruction and Africa,” The Crisis February 1919, 165-166.
different from countries in Western Europe. Furthermore, it said that the horrors of white masters were far worse than any native atrocities. Europe, Du Bois said, was more interested in a “field for exploitation,” than it is in a “field for the spread of European civilization.” Another article assured readers that the recent uptick in Pan-Africanism was not part of a plan to uproot African-Americans from American soil. In an article by socialist and NAACP board member Mary White Ovington, “Reconstruction and the Negro,” Ovington wrote that it was not only France that needed to undergo reconstruction but also African-Americans. Reconstruction for African-Americans, however, would involve higher literacy, better access to educational opportunities, equal job opportunities with whites, and universal suffrage. “Africa and World Democracy” discussed the current division of Africa into several territories dominated by Europeans and suggested that it must eventually be returned to native Africans. The article also provided a map showing which European powers dominated which regions.

The March 1919 issue of *The Crisis* featured Du Bois’ history of African-Americans during the war, “The Black Man in the Revolution of 1914-1918.” The article suggested that while the soldiers’ relations with the French army and people were amiable, anti-black prejudice was rampant in the American army, particularly against black officers. Although racial experts associated with the MID called the article’s

---

31 Ibid., 165.
accusations concerning the mistreatment of black officers into question, official army
documents corroborated the story.  

During the same month, *The Messenger* resumed publication. The first of the
editorials was a rambling commentary on the government’s deportation of alleged
agitators, and other editorials discussed prohibition, the forty-four hour work week, and
the refusal of passports to many African-Americans who had hoped to attend the Pan-

The issue began on a rather bitter note. In “Negro Passports Refused” article,
Randolph stated that Du Bois was among the African-Americans given a passport,
although he was “not wanted,” at the congress. He argued that the government was only
giving passports to “good niggers” that aped what the government said. Although this
argument may have had some validity – public figures that were too controversial, of
course, would have been less likely to receive a passport during the era – suggesting that
Du Bois was not wanted when he was instrumental in organizing the Congress was
unreasonable. From a contemporary perspective, one of the more shocking aspects of the
article was the State Department’s open racism; it admitted to denying passports to
“Negroes” in general. Randolph, who had also been intending to fly off to Paris, was one
of the black Americans refused the right to leave the country. Who was *The Messenger*
referring to when it wrote that no one wanted Du Bois? *The Crisis* certainly wanted Du

---

Press, 1986), 123-124. Randolph had been working closely at the time with Marcus Garvey, who was then
a recent immigrant from Jamaica. Randolph was to accompany Garvey as a representative of the UNIA in
Paris during the Pan-African Congress and the Versailles Peace Conference. This was before *The
Messenger* began its critique of Garvey and the UNIA.
Bois to represent them at the congress, and Du Bois also was charged with telling the
story of the black soldier through his “The Black Man and The Revolution of 1914-1818”
article.

An article on the soldiers returning from war also struck a bitter, though truthful
note, suggesting that life would not improve significantly for the returning soldiers.
“Wages are lower,” Randolph wrote, “[and] the cost of living is practically the same as
when wages were higher. Unemployment is rife. Lynching still goes merrily on.”\textsuperscript{39} Not
only were job prospects bleak for returning black soldiers, but much of American society
was unwilling to adjust their notions about the racial hierarchy and the appropriate
behavior for African-Americans. Despite the uniform, they were still black, and risked
being lynched for wearing it.

In the same issue, Randolph wrote an educational article in which he argued that
capitalism was the cause of lynching, and socialism was the cure. He said lynchings
helped widen the gap between races, and that by separating white farmers from black
farmers, the capitalists were able to keep them from achieving economic security.
Socialism, he noted, would bring workers of both races together, giving them a stronger
position from which to bargain for jobs.\textsuperscript{40} Chandler Owen expanded on some of the ideas
on the “returning soldier” in his article, “What Will Be the Real Status of the Negro after
the War?”\textsuperscript{41} He suggested that not only were black soldiers’ economic prospects dim, but
civil rights were not advancing and revolution was spreading slowly in the black church.

\textsuperscript{39} “Returning Soldiers,” \textit{The Messenger}, March 1919, 5-6.
\textsuperscript{40} A. Philip Randolph, “Lynching: Capitalism Its Cause; Socialism Its Cure,” \textit{The Messenger}, March 1919,
9-12.
\textsuperscript{41} Chandler Owen, “What Will Be the Real Status of the Negro after The War?” \textit{The Messenger}, March
1919, 13-17.
Though it is not clear from the article whether Owen thought a significant amount of soldiers were looking forward to global revolution (which would include a revolution in the black church), Owen predicted that the returning black soldiers would have dim prospects in the postwar American environment.

On another note, this issue of the magazine provided a fresh analysis of Du Bois, whose educational background and political beliefs were discussed in the “Who’s Who” section. It stated that while Du Bois was highly educated, his education occurred at a time when political science was less en vogue than it was both during the war and afterwards. The article noted that Du Bois tended to interpret economic movements from a personal point of view rather than a collective one, which it suggested was another flaw resulting from a lack of training in political science and theory. The article noted, however, that while he had many scientific shortcomings, he was still fearless and a transition-figure between Washington and the new Negroes.

In the April issue of The Crisis Du Bois, who was just returning from Europe and the Pan-African Congress, devoted an entire editorial to encouraging African-Americans to learn French. The issues surrounding communication at the congress were clearly still on his mind, although he devoted a much larger space in the magazine to an article on the congress itself. The goals laid out during the congress were progressive and idealistic – many of them have not come to pass today, much less in the years following the postwar era. One goal was that natives should have control of their resources, to the extent that the resources should not be exhausted by foreign interests. Another goal stated that children should be able to receive education in their native tongues at public expense. Although

---

these were preeminent issues almost 100 years ago, Language policy and the allocation of natural resources have continued to be important issues on the continent, into the twenty-first century.

In the May issue of *The Crisis*, Du Bois published his famous “Returning Soldiers” editorial, along with several of other pieces on current events with significant, long-lasting consequences. *The Crisis*’ “Returning Soldiers” editorial took on a much more inspirational tone than the cool rationalism of *The Messenger*’s of the same title. Du Bois’ “Returning Soldiers” piece employed a lyrical style, emphasizing the accomplishments of the soldiers, while also stressing the necessity of continuing the freedom struggle in America. “This country of ours,” he stated, “despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land. It lynches. And lynching is barbarism of a degree of contemptible nastiness unparalleled in human history. Yet for fifty years we have lynched two Negroes a week and we have kept this up right through the war.” The editorial continued to list America’s wrongdoings against its African-American citizens, including disfranchisement, encouraging ignorance, and even stealing from them. The ending has since become famous. Du Bois wrote: “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting.”

“Returning Soldiers” was sharp enough in its tone to catch the attention of the New York postmaster, who alerted the postal solicitor and withheld all 100,000 copies of the magazine until a decision was made on whether to release the magazine. Such invasive intrusion on the freedom of the press would not normally have been legal,

---

except for a provision of the wartime Espionage Act that was still in effect. This provision allowed the postmaster to deny mailing privileges to publications encouraging treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to any law. In response to the Post Office’s hold on the magazine, the NAACP mobilized its members to object, flooding the postmaster general’s office with telegrams. At the same time, the Translation Bureau notified the MID about the magazine, although the military found no grounds to lawfully bar its circulation, and the Post Office released the periodical the same month.

Other editorials in the May issue of The Crisis encouraged a sense of the importance of justice and democracy. In “League of Nations” Du Bois supported the organization on the grounds that a global group of nations would help curb the tide of race hatred in America. Alluding to race discrimination in both American and South Africa, he suggested that international cooperation with nations of people of color would have a corrosive effect on racism within both the United States and South Africa. By November, however, Du Bois was less optimistic, as it had become clear that imperial nations like England would possess the preponderance of power in the league. Also in the May 1919 issue of The Crisis, the “History” editorial tried to correct the notion that African-American officers were unfit to lead, which was a rumor circulating among “influential persons,” Du Bois extended his effort to take record of the experience of black soldiers through an article titled “An Essay Toward A History of the Black Man in the Great War.” The article detailed some of the discrimination faced by black soldiers,

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 57-58.
49 “History,” The Crisis, may 1919, 10-12.
who many of whom, Du Bois emphasized, were led by southern white officers. It also discussed resistance within the military “oligarchy” to African-American officers, suggesting that, once these officers were admitted, forces within the military power structure attempted to discredit them and usurp their influence through a variety of tactics: not giving black officers instructions in order to claim they were unfitted for work, refusing to salute black officers, failing to supply black troops with proper equipment, and using the court-martial and efficiency boards for trivial offenses.\(^5^0\)

The June issue also discussed its position on a prominent labor union; the opinion it took in the April issue having sparked debate. In an article about the IWW, a reader refuted a statement in *The Crisis*’ implying that there were no black members of the IWW. He stated that, along with IWW leaders like William “Big Bill” Haywood, Ben Fletcher, an African-American defendant and member of the organization, would also have to serve jail-time and should be given recognition for his sacrifice to the cause of the workers.\(^5^1\) The trial took place due to government raids administered under the Espionage Act, which allowed the Justice department to arrest over 100 members of the organization and try them for draft evasion and related war crimes. In his letter the reader suggested that *The Crisis* should support the writer, given the importance of the worker movement to workers, who, more than any other segment of the American population, were mostly composed of workers.\(^5^2\) *The Crisis* equivocated on its level of support of the organization. It suggested that, on the one hand, the IWW was a good organization and

---


\(^5^1\) “I.W.W.” *The Crisis*, June 1919, 60.

\(^5^2\) Ibid.
representative of the social changes sweeping the nation, while on the other hand, *The Crisis* did not agree with the IWW’s position on the war.53

*The Messenger’s* May-June issue contained editorials about the war, along with others about the economy and one advocating the breakup of the American Federation of Labor, which did not generally allow black workers to join its member organizations.54 It also noted that Japan had demanded a race equality clause during the Peace Conference.55 The magazine also discussed race prejudice in Europe. Both *The Crisis* and *The Messenger*, in fact, contributed to the perception that white Europeans were less race-biased than white Americans. In “How Germans Treated Negro Soldiers,” it noted that the soldiers Randolph and Owen had spoken with generally claimed that white Germans were the least race-biased of the European soldiers. Although their informal survey of the soldiers’ opinions was not very scientific, the article also criticized histories such as Du Bois’ as merely rhetoric meant to show the “Negro gallantry [sic].”56

The issue’s article “The Peace Treaty,” however, was in many ways prophetic, predicting the future conflicts that would occur due to what the editors thought were vindictive concessions forced upon Germany and its people. Randolph wrote: “The treaty about to be imposed upon the German people will stun the democratic sense of liberals and radicals in all countries. Huge indemnities and territorial concessions, without

53 Ibid.
55 “Japan and the Race Issue,” *The Messenger*, May-June 1919, 6-7. Japan proposed that race equality be a clause in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Although the clause received a majority vote in its favor, Pres. Wilson suggested that, due to strong opposition to the clause (mainly from Australia, a British dominion), it would need a unanimous vote, thus overturning the proposal.
historical or other legitimate justifications, will lay the foundations for future wars, for
the flooding of the world in another orgy of blood and death.”

As part of a cultural interlude, The Messenger poet W.A. Domingo contributed a
feature article titled “What are We, Negroes or Colored People?” In the article he
discussed the history of both terms in America and suggested that while “colored” in the
United States referred to anyone of African-descent, in the West Indies the term is more
often associated with mixed-race people. Colored can also refer to people who are not of
African descent, like residents of India. As leaders of the Civil Rights Movement would
do in the 1950s and 1960s, Domingo decided to drop colored – a term that he said had an
unpleasant origin – and stick with Negro. This issue also featured Randolph’s
codification of the New Crowd Negro.

In the July issue, The Messenger revived its campaign against The Crisis with one
of the longest editorials it had ever written, titled, “The Crisis of The Crisis.” In it, The
Messenger criticized Du Bois for conflating the IWW with pro-Germanism, stating that
these were two very different things. Germans, furthermore, had more rights in America
than native-born African-Americans, being able to travel unhindered throughout the
United States. The Messenger also took issue with the idea that African-Americans are
not traitorous. He suggested that when a people are enslaved and oppressed, treason is a
virtue. Slaves seeking emancipation during the antebellum era were treasonous, he
implied, although they remained true to their desire for freedom. Likewise, the Russians
people were treasonous to the czar. “The Negro will never gain his just rights until the

great masses, 12 million strong,” he wrote, “become thoroughly permeated, saturated and shot through with treason to the institutions of Jim-Crowism, lynching, race discrimination, segregation, disfranchisement, and to every instrument which maintains, perpetuates and fosters these pernicious institutions.”

The editorial also reiterated the IWW principles surrounding labor unionism and suggested that the “Huns of Mississippi” were more dangerous than the “Huns of Alsace.” “The Hun” was a recurrent symbol in this issue, with “The Hun in America” editorial suggesting that America is not really democratic when it comes to African-Americans, and that the American Huns had made the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution “mere scraps of paper.” July was the height of the “Red Summer,” and *The Messenger* took up the issue of mob violence and lynching with its article, “Lynching[ ] A Domestic Question.” The article suggested that the issue, contrary to popular belief, was an international question, related to the repression of freedom for the Irish and the Jewish pogroms. Other articles advocated freedom for India, encouraged African-Americans to take note of the history and current events in Mexico, and suggested that African-Americans should join the IWW. It also called out the A. F. of L for opposing African-American entry into the organization, while also admitting that the

---

60 Ibid.
62 “Lynching a Domestic Question,” *The Messenger,* July 1919, 7. For some reason there is no colon after “Lynching” in the title, so I have added one in brackets to avoid confusion. Also, *The Messenger*’s editorial titles were written in all-caps, although I have generally followed the Chicago Style’s rules on capitalization. I left the “A” capitalized, however, because it follows the colon that I added in (again, for clarity’s sake).
organization was largely negligent towards women and unskilled workers.\textsuperscript{64} Given the high level of anti-government sentiment in this issue of the magazine, it too was held by the Post Office only two months after \textit{The Crisis} had endured the same fate.\textsuperscript{65} As mentioned above, the Justice Department wanted to prosecute the publications, although it could not do so under the legal code of the time. Having no legal grounds to hold it, however, the issue was released and by August, \textit{The Messenger} had good news to report: the American Federation of Labor would be organizing African-American laborers. It also claimed over 30,000 readers, mostly black, and suggested that in addition to organizing efforts of African-American labor groups such as the National Brotherhood Association, which had threatened to pull its members if discrimination in the unions did not abate, \textit{The Messenger} and its relentless campaigning on behalf of black workers was having a positive effect.\textsuperscript{66}

In the aftermath of the Red Summer, \textit{The Crisis} declared the plight of the worker would be central, naming the September issue of the magazine its labor issue. In “The Negro and the Labor Union,” the magazine argued that labor unions were ultimately beneficial for African-Americans.\textsuperscript{67} The article mentioned a memorandum the organization co-authored with the Tuskegee Institute, requesting – apparently on behalf of all black Americans – that they include men and women, skilled and unskilled workers, and abide by the principles of racial equality. George E. Hayes, wrote an article demonstrating how black labor was beneficial to America in general. Du Bois’ editorials

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{64} Negro Workers: The A. F. of L. or the I. W. W.,” \textit{The Messenger}, July 1919, 14-15.
\item\textsuperscript{65} “The Messenger and the Post Office,” \textit{The Messenger}, August 1919, 7.
\item\textsuperscript{66} “The Negro and the American Federation of Labor,” \textit{The Messenger}, August 1919, 10-11/
\item\textsuperscript{67} “The Negro and the Labor Union,” \textit{The Crisis}, September 1919, 239-241.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
warned against mob violence, suggesting that although self-defense was warranted, African-Americans should not descend into mob violence themselves. Despite his warnings against mob violence, however, he cast self-defense in a positive light, writing: “When the murderer comes, he shall not longer strike us in the back. When the armed lynchers gather, we too must gather armed. When the mob moves, we propose to meet it with bricks and clubs and guns.”\(^\text{68}\) He also wrote lyrically about the need for laborers to get more of the fruit of their labors.\(^\text{69}\)

September 1919 was another big month for *The Messenger* in which it further critiqued Du Bois in due to the need to correct fallacious statements that had made it into the magazine. “There is no personal feeling which we hold toward either [Du Bois or *The Crisis*], but in as much as *The Crisis* has the second largest circulation of any Negro publication in the world, we cannot allow the flagrant and erroneous presentation which frequently slips into *The Crisis* Magazine to pass unchallenged.”\(^\text{70}\) Randolph’s and Owen’s main contention with the magazine was that it had encouraged voters to vote for the best man, as opposed to the best party. *The Messenger* and *The Crisis*’ different positions on party politics, however, connote key ideological differences in the magazines. *The Crisis*, as the periodical edited by the member of the Talented Tenth, represented black interest regarding anti-discrimination, and also sought to educate the black community, but was generally more cautious than *The Messenger* regarding the types of actions African-Americans should take. Under the leadership of Du Bois, who

was an advocate of the humanities, *The Crisis* attempted to project a general ideology that would be conducive to the aims of the black freedom struggle – particularly that of increasing civil rights. *The Messenger*, on the other hand, had specific socioeconomic solutions that often stemmed from their Marxist analysis of the American economy and culture. Much of *The Messenger*’s rhetoric is devoted to explaining social issues in economic terms. In the September issue’s article “Negro Leaders Compromise as Usual,” for example, Randolph explained the economic reasons behind why African-Americans received the right to vote during the Reconstruction era, writing:

> The white man has not given us any freedom, neither the northern nor the southern man. What we have gotten we have taken, and such concessions as have been granted were granted merely because they were beneficial to him. The right to vote was granted to the Negro in the South during the Reconstruction days because a group of hypocritical, reactionary and plutocratic Republicans wanted to keep in power in order that they might control the granting of franchises, the selling of privileges to railroads, the stealing of coal lands, plundering the public domain and, above all, because they would have the power to lay and collect taxes on everybody while exempting themselves. They found the Negroes to be efficient tools in helping them maintain this power.”

This editorial demonstrated Randolph’s tendency to describe the history of race prejudice from an economic perspective. Later in the editorial, he implied that the labor movement, with its drive to increase wages and decrease work hours, would ultimately benefit the status-quo of American workers, regardless of skin color. Randolph applied the logic of socialism to the issue of inequality – as he did throughout *The Messenger* – and he suggested that labor unions would disrupt the stratification between the workers and the capitalists.

---

In addition to labor, lynching was also a key issue during the Red Summer. One anti-lynching tactic they recommended was organizing groups before a lynching, and fighting back against lynch mobs if necessary. In August, their editorial “How to Stop Lynching,” emphasized both physical force and economic force as important factors needed to prevent lynching.\(^7^2\) In September the magazine featured a cartoon juxtaposing the “New Crowd Negro,” who fought off the white lynch mobs, to the “Old Crowd” Negroes, Negro leaders advising the masses to turn the other cheek – to their detriment.\(^7^3\) The cartoon featured Du Bois among the Old Crowd Negroes ridiculed for their message of inaction. The September issue of *The Crisis*, however, had also praised the black anti-lynching rioters, although it contained comparatively little about the causes and remedies of rioting, and its enthusiasm for the African-Americans fighting back against lynching was checked by concern that the self-defense would lead to lawless violence incited by African-Americans.\(^7^4\)

By October the “Red Summer” had passed, along with much of the fiery rhetoric that resulted from it, although *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* continued stressing their ideals, and the government continued its attempt to suppress them through its efforts to legalize a peacetime sedition law. The next issue of *The Messenger* extended the topic of race prejudice into a related area – race equality. The editorial began by stating that both black and white races are equal in mind and body, although it veered into a more critical

\(^7^2\) “How to Stop Lynching,” *The Messenger*, August 1919, 8-10.
\(^7^4\) “Let Us Reason Together,” *The Crisis*, September 1919, 231. Du Bois was attempting to shape the narrative around anti-lynch mobs so that it stressed African-American compliance with the law, despite much persecution. By discouraging unlawful action, Du Bois helped build the case for why black Americans deserved civil rights.
area by suggesting that black and white Americans were equally pitiful in many cases. “Unbounded applause in meetings is a mark of mediocre mind – not inate [sic] mind, but low mental equipment,” Randolph wrote. “Both white and colored people in the United States have low mental equipment. Attend any meeting where large groups are present – whether they be white or black – and you will hear them cheer almost every utterance of the speakers. Again, both Negroes and whites are too addicted to fun.”

The issue’s criticism of American cultural mores extended even to spirituality with the article “The Failure of the Negro Church.” Despite the caustic title, the article was actually less derisive of the Church than previous ones. It criticized the black church for becoming a business, and then suggested that the ministry needed better education in the social and natural sciences. Randolph also advocated churches become a more open forum for not only prayer and spirituality, but also for the discussion of problems concerning as labor, health, government. The New Negro, Randolph said, demanded a new ministry and a new church; the new church would have to reflect the New Negro’s radical disposition, serving as a center of his social, economic, and political hopes and strivings.

Both Du Bois and Randolph were of one mind regarding the “Plumb Plan,” which was a plan to give public ownership to the railways. In The Crisis’ November issue Du Bois said, “The underlying principle of permitting the workingmen to share in the

---

76 “The Failure of the Negro Church,” The Messenger, October 1919, 4. In many ways, this editorial represents a turning point for the magazine. By the mid-twenties, The Messenger was less strictly tied to Bolshevik ideology, and took an active position against “Negro Communists” (Kornweibel, No Crystal Stair, 195-196). An editorial in the March 1920 edition even praised “some Negro ministers” (“Some Negro Ministers,” The Messenger, March 1920, 3).
conduct of industry is absolutely correct.” He then indicted the class differences between workers and owners, writing, “The monarchic business institution that, belongs’ to one man or group and refuses to allow those who do the work to have any decisive voice or influence in the conduct of the business is doomed.” The Messenger had stated a similar opinion in its October issue, praising the plan, though reminding “Labor” to remain vigilant. Although the plan ultimately failed in Congress, these editorials show that, occasionally, The Messenger and The Crisis were of one mind.

December of 1919 saw, in addition to a lengthy case study of Dutch Guiana as an example of colonialist capitalism, another lengthy editorial discussing how Du Bois had failed as a theorist. The article discussed Du Bois’ largely rhetorical fight against lynching and other crimes against the black community, and how he did not understand the need for revolution. The Messenger editors, according to Kornweibel, viewed Du Bois’ “humanitarian-reformism” as hardly socialistic or radical, and they considered him ignorant of the “right-of-revolution,” recognized by oppressed people worldwide.

The “Radicals” editorial in the December 1919 issue of The Crisis shed light on the magazine’s position on radicalism and radical black publications. The magazine expressed its disapproval of the efforts of southern congressmen and the attorney general to suppress radical sentiment in publications, writing: “Some Negro journals are already hastening to cover, by asserting their loyalty and disowning the new radicals. This is dangerous business. The Crisis holds no brief for the Messenger, the Negro World, and

---

other periodicals, but they have a right to speak.” Although *The Crisis* clearly did not want to be associated with the radical magazines, it also did not want to seem too conciliatory to the reactionary elements of the government.

The winter of 1920 saw a continued mix of current events and advocacy of different methods to improve the lives of African-Americans. The January issue of *The Crisis* and the March issue of *The Messenger* both advocated for African-Americans to come to the North. Du Bois blamed southerners who had moved north for being largely responsible for the unrest in the North, while Randolph simply admitted that the North was not perfect, though leaving would create labor demands in the South, ultimately giving southern black laborers more advantages. A complimentary article in January’s *The Crisis* detailed some of the effects of black migration out of the South and painted the North as brimming with opportunities for steady work for African-Americans.

An article in “The Looking Glass” department of January’s *The Crisis* noted a statement by the Mississippi governor responding to a *Chicago Herald and Examiner*’s inquiry about whether Mississippi could take any of the African-Americans who had swelled the city’s black population. “Your telegram asking how many Negroes Mississippi can absorb, received,” Governor Theodore G. Bilbo stated. “In reply I desire to state that we have all the room in the world for what we know as „n-i-g-g-e-r-s,” but none whatever for „colored ladies and gentlemen.’ If these Negroes have been

---


contaminated with northern social and political dreams of equality, we cannot use them.”

The governor reiterated his willingness to take those who he viewed as the more favorable type of African-Americans, however, stating, “The Negro who understands his proper relation to the white man in this country will be gladly received by the people of Mississippi, as we are very much in need of labor.” 83 The article also noted that several southern papers were highly unfavorable toward the Mississippi governor, based on charges of corruption and more general “depravity,” though his Democratic successor, Lee Russell, would likely win the governor’s seat because the former had criticized “the mob spirit.” 84

The issue also noted Du Bois’ displeasure with the distribution of labor in the South. In the “Our South” editorial, he explored white Southern consciousness through a story about a shipyard community in Wilmington, North Carolina during the war. According to the story, white members of the community were being honored at a public meeting, and one orator stated the black community was a liability to the town. A northern general then stated that without that “liability” there would have been no shipyard. Du Bois wrote:

The fundamental error of the white South thus shown is seen in the assumption that ALL property is WHITE property; that they benevolently “give” Negroes work; that they let them walk THEIR streets and “pay for” their schools. In economic thought the South is 100 years behind the civilized world. In what civilized land today can a ruling aristocracy demy a mass of eight million laborers an absolute right to education, to public institutions, and even to a voice in the use and distribution of “private” property? 85

83 “The Governors of Mississippi,” The Crisis, January 1920, 141.
84 Ibid. The “mob spirit in the State” signified the popularity of lynching. Russell won the governorship in the election that November, though he was not nearly so polemical a figure as Bilbo.
The “Race Pride” editorial echoed *The Messenger’s* editorial on racial equality, noting more positively that not only were members of every race learning that the theories of “backward” people are not true, but increasing numbers were calling for “Africa for Africans” and the like.  

The February issue of the magazine countered the more optimistic discussion of race pride with a discussion of African-American criminals. “We are not for a moment denying the existence of a criminal class among Negroes, who are guilty of deeds of violence. Every race in the world has such groups. No human efforts have yet been able wholly to rid society of crime.”  

He stated that African-Americans as a group should not be judged solely by the deeds of the criminal class. He also suggested that communities should share in the guilt of the criminals if they had not been educated, adequately housed and fed, and received opportunities for work and fair wages.

In the April issue of *The Crisis*, the magazine discussed corruption in Republican primaries in the deep South, war and American occupation of Haiti, and the magazine’s sponsorship of black writers. Although both *The Crisis* and *The Messenger* published various types of literature, *The Crisis* was by far the more literary publication of the two. Publishing short stories and poetry was part of the magazine’s mission to showcase talent and educate the public; in *The Messenger*, although the literature was often political, it was more peripheral to the arguments in the editorials and the educational articles.  

The “Negro Writers,” editorial stated that, despite the rejection of a poem from the then-

---

88 Ibid, 173
89 “Negro Writers,” *The Crisis*, April 1920, 298-299.
budding writer Claude McKay, the magazine was committed to young poets and called for a “renaissance of American Negro literature.”

In March 1920, *The Messenger* announced the formation of a black-led organization that would work toward the liberation of the black race, and the April-May issue confirmed that a new black liberation group had formed. Titled the “Friends of Negro Freedom,” (FNF) the organization was international in scope with the goal of fomenting more economic and social freedom in the United States and in other nations within the African Diaspora. Randolph and Owen planned for the organization to be comparable in structure to the NAACP, though black-led and more radical in its orientation: an NAACP for the New Crowd Negroes. Membership in the organization included a wide range of African-American radicals on the East Coast and in Chicago, along with several members of the NAACP who thought that organization was moving too slowly on behalf of the African-Americans. Despite the structural parallels to the NAACP, Randolph did not mean for the organization to be against it. He rather hoped that the FNF could pick up where the NAACP left off, hampered as it was with white leadership.

---

90 Ibid., 299. Note that the Harlem Renaissance was known only as the “New Negro Movement” at the time, thanks in part to the title an essay anthology compiled by Alain Locke.
92 Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 257-258. Kornweibel goes more in-depth into the radicals and NAACP who joined the group. W.A. Domingo, for example, was a contributing editor for *The Messenger* and a black Communist. He eventually left both the magazine and the FNF, and joined the more radical African Blood Brotherhood (Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 143-144, 150, 257).
93 “The Call for a New Organization,” *The Messenger*, March 1920, 12-13; “The Friends of Negro Freedom,” *The Messenger*, April-May 1920, 3-5; Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 256-258. Also, in the March issue of *The Crisis* – the same month that *The Messenger* announced the need for a new, more radical, black-led and international organization – the periodical printed a report on what the NAACP had done on behalf of the black community, with the largely white board featured at the top of the article. Although the accomplishments listed mentioned legal victories against segregation on the local and state
The April-May issue also contained a short article on anti-labor sentiment in the country and its connection to the will of capitalism. “The suppression of free speech, a free press and free assemblage is deliberately done with a view to prevent labor from receiving knowledge, calculated to awaken it. Capital . . . knows it cannot continue to rob labor when labor awakens.” Given the Justice Department’s desire to prosecute radical publications such as The Crisis and The Messenger, the editors were concerned with the threat of censorship.

In April 1920, Attorney General Palmer predicted a wave of anarchist activity on May 1, 1920, echoing the events that initiated the Red Summer of 1919. But May 1 came and went without incident. Although public support for the first Red Scare’s policies waned after the government’s predictions of further violence failed to come into fruition, the Justice Department continued to track radical African-American publications, as well as the black press. The May 1920 issue of The Crisis called attention to the concerns many African-American members of the NAACP had regarding the leadership of the organization. In the “White Coworker” editorial, Du Bois noted the criticism that the majority of the organization’s board members were white by stating that the NAACP did not believe in discrimination against either race. After listing the limited achievements of the organization, the article stated, “[We] admit frankly and freely that we have not yet settled the Negro problem. . . . But we did not expect to unravel the tangle of 300 years in level, the pace of success was clearly too slow for many African-Americans. As Kornweibel noted on page 256 of No Crystal Stair, many blacks felt that white-led civil rights organizations slowed down the rate of progress and watered down more militant programs.

94 “When Labor is Awakened,” The Messenger, April-May 1920, 3.
Compared with the summer of 1919, 1920 saw a greater emphasis on literature and education and much less political-charged rhetoric in *The Crisis*. Du Bois was likely worried about the charge implicit in the formation of the FNF that the NAACP was not able to bring change to the African-American community. “[The NAACP’s] methods are peaceful, legal, reasonable. If America is not prepared to solve this social problem by such methods what else does she propose?” he wrote. He ended the editorial by suggesting that white Americans should become more involved in helping solve the race problem.97

The August issue of *The Messenger* raised several issues concerning racism in the United States and abroad. “Black French Troops in Germany,” pointed out the hypocrisy of the epithets hurled at black Senegalese troops in Germany, who had allegedly raped German women. The editorial noted that soldiers in general were wont to rape, as white soldiers from Germany and America had done in Africa and Haiti respectively. Other editorials discussed “Lily-Whiteism” in southern politics and the suppression of black radicalism in the South.98

With the presidential elections nearing, the September 1920 issue of *The Crisis* was notable for its return of interest in presidential politics. *The Crisis* stated that only the Farmer-Labor and Socialist parties favored the African-American cause, yet Du Bois implied that blacks should focus on the congressional races and split the vote between the major parties, since neither Socialist nor Labor parties could win the presidency. *The*
*Messenger* sharply criticized this position in its November issue. The November’s *The Messenger* was also politically-oriented, showcasing its main editor, Randolph, who had been nominated for the comptroller position by the Socialist Party in New York State. Randolph received more than 200,000 votes, which was almost as many as Eugene Debs, who had run for the presidency under the Socialist ticket, though not enough to win the position.

October 1920’s *The Messenger* mentioned that the magazine would discuss the Marcus Garvey movement, and whether his movement was a viable option for black people. By the time the editors had taken notice of the organization in their magazine, however, Garvey’s UNIA was already the largest and most powerful black-led organization in the country. In the article, *The Messenger* criticized Garveyism for its “Negro First” ideology. Since African-Americans were a minority group, it argued, this philosophy was impractical. An all-black party would have limited political power in the United States since it would only attract members of the race. The article also stated that, even if a black party were able to capture the government, this alone would not necessarily lead to improvement for the majority of black people. Citing the examples of Haiti and Liberia, the article suggested that the Negro First doctrine was by no means a panacea for problems faced by African-Americans across the Diaspora.

---

100 Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 224.
102 Kornweibel, *No Crystal Chair*, 135.
103 “The Garvey Movement: A Promise or a Menace,” *The Messenger*
After 1920 the Red Scare declined dramatically. Following the Red Summer, Hoover attempted to link African-Americans with communism by writing the lengthy report “Radicalism and Sedition among Negroes as Reflected in Their Publications.” The Justice department wanted to prosecute against *The Messenger* and *The Crisis*, although the content of the publications was not illegal; though provocative, it was still protected by the First Amendment. Given this legal situation, Hoover and Palmer’s next move was to try to change the law. In November 1919 Palmer sent the report to the Senate, and he sent another report in June 1920. Following May Day 1920, however, the Red Scare was already beginning to seem like an unsupported hysteria to the public, and Congress opted not to add any new clauses to the Espionage Act. By March 3, 1921, the Sedition Act expired, and since Hoover and Palmer’s effort to secure a peacetime sedition bill had failed, and public support had waned, the government had fewer resources to track radical black activity, and none to stop the publication of *The Crisis* or *The Messenger*.

Other events that would define these periodicals would be the Harlem Renaissance of the mid-to-late 1920s, and *The Messenger*’s infamous “Garvey Must Go” campaign, which began in earnest in 1922. Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican-born leader of the UNIA during the 1920s, was criticized by *The Messenger* editors in part for his political agenda, and partly because his organization threatened Randolph’s aspirations

---

108 Kornweibel, *No Crystal Stair*, 94-96; Kornweibel, “Seeing Red,” 36-37, 57, 61, 144. “The Sedition Act” was actually a set of amendments to the Espionage Act, and it was these amendments that expired March, 1921. The Espionage Act is still in effect.
for race leadership. The UNIA had a large amount of support from among the black masses, the black “proletarians” that Randolph hoped to attract to the FNF. Despite the business acumen of the UNIA, Randolph did not think its program made economic sense for African-Americans. He aimed for greater cooperation between races, benefiting both by making demands on the capital-class for higher wages and better working conditions. Like Du Bois, Randolph thought about the international connections between the people of the African Diaspora, although he was American and felt his home was in the United States. Garvey Must Go soon became the agenda-setting platform of the FNF, and although the organization was successful in spurring the government’s interest in Garvey, the FNF ultimately declined after November 1923.  

*The Messenger* was a much less radical magazine by the mid-twenties, and for a short period it went so far as to become a venue for profiling black businessmen before the magazine turned its attention to the Pullman Porters in 1925. As early as 1920, however, *The Messenger* had become less radical than it had been from its beginnings in 1917 until the period of the Red Summer in 1919. Following a schism in the Socialist Party in 1919, which led to the creation of a more radical Communist Party, the magazine continued supporting the Socialist Party through displaying its advertisements, and through the participation of its editors in the 1920 elections. By this point in time, the party had ceased to advocate for Bolshevik-style revolution in America, and hoped to promote more class-consciousness among workers. Also during this period, *The Messenger* mitigated some of its hostility toward religion. It’s “Some Negro Ministers”

---

110 Ibid., 185, 260. *The Messenger* stopped mentioning it after this date.
111 Ibid., 169.
112 Ibid., 223.
editorial praised those ministers who embraced more scientific ideals (in their opinion) concerning racial uplift.\textsuperscript{113} The Crisis was also marked by a decline in radical sentiment after the fiery editorials of the Red Summer. During the winter of 1921 it featured editorials about another Pan-African congress, a lament of the reduced black membership of Congress, and a condemnation of Wilson, who he thought had thwarted the United States’ chances for entering the League of Nations because he had been too stubborn in dictating the terms of entry.\textsuperscript{114}

While The Messenger grew slightly more conservative in the months preceding the formation of the FNF, The Crisis was marked by dramatic shifts in tone over the course of the Red Scare period. Neither magazine was isolated from the effects of the Red Summer, however, with both magazines showing an increase in the number of articles about lynching, organizing against rioters and mob violence, and race discrimination in general. The Messenger advocated both physical and economic force when fighting the lynch mobs, while The Crisis continued its campaign against lynchings, praising those who fought in the lynch mobs while also arguing that the line between self-defense and anti-white violence should not be crossed.\textsuperscript{115} Considering the “Close Ranks” editorial, Du Bois’ shift in tone between 1918 and 1919 was prolific. In

\textsuperscript{113} “Some Negro Ministers,” The Messenger, March 1920, 3.
\textsuperscript{114} “Pan-Africa,” The Crisis, January 1921, 101; “Reduced Representation in Congress,” The Crisis, February 1921, 149-150; The League of Nations,” The Crisis, March 1921, 199-200. Wilson was a strong advocate of the League of Nations, although U.S. politics hindered his efforts at winning U.S. support of the organization. Du Bois wrote, “Because of the idiotic way in which the stubbornness of Woodrow Wilson and the political fortunes of the Republicans became involved, the United States was not represented [in the League of Nations]. But despite its tumult and shouting this nation must join and join on the terms which the World lays down. The idea that we single-handed can dictate terms to the World or stay out of the World, is an idea born of the folly of fools.”
“Returning Soldiers,” Du Bois was basically advocating the opposite of “Close Ranks.” Despite these changes of opinion, he was steady in his commitment to writing about African-Americans and civil rights. Unlike Randolph, however, Du Bois had a number of beliefs, though no theoretical framework comparable to Marxism. Although his editorials often resonated on a more personal level than *The Messenger’s*, his lack of a standard analytical system made him less able, at times, to see the big picture, as his theory on racism in the North indicated. Despite these differences, however, both Randolph and Du Bois had the same goal of race equality and more equitable access to capital and land resources. Du Bois, however, was less sure of how this goal could be achieved.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

A clear assumption of both *The Crisis* and *The Messenger* was that these magazines were not simply vehicles of information and entertainment. Both publications – one the journalistic arm of the NAACP, the other deemed the only radical black publication in the United States by the Justice Department – aimed to usher in change for the African-American community. Though *The Messenger* was vocal in its criticism of *The Crisis*, both magazines drew their authority from a trend in black intellectual thought that preceded the “Talented Tenth” philosophy. In “The Trope of a New Negro,” African-American studies professor Henry Louis Gates noted that as far back as the nineteenth century, Frederick Douglass took pleasure in his designation as “the representative colored man of the United States.”¹ Douglass, of course, was not average for an African-American of the nineteenth century; he represented an ideal. He could speak for the black community, and other black Americans, could strive to emulate his example.

The aim of representing this ideal African-American informed the editorial decisions of both editors. Implicit in the idea of a representative African-American was the fact that there could only be one at a time. During World War I and the post-war years, W.E.B. Du Bois was the representative. As editor of the most widely circulated magazine aimed toward black Americans, Du Bois in many ways had stepped into the place that had been preceded by Douglass and Booker T. Washington. Not only black intellectuals and other upwardly mobile blacks perceived him this way, however; the War Department’s request that he act as an intelligence officer and expert on the black

---

community was evidence that this trope of the “representative colored man” carried significant weight with the government and the larger white-American culture as well.

*The Messenger*, of course, posed no significant threat to *The Crisis*’ viability as a magazine, although *The Messenger*’s comparative marginality did not stop A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen from challenging Du Bois and the older generation of black leaders on their methods for achieving greater freedom for African-Americans. One of the chief differences between them was that Du Bois was more of a humanist with a liberal arts background while Randolph and Owen were social science theorists applying socialist theory to the African-American community. Although both Randolph and Du Bois were operating in didactic modes in order to communicate their message of racial uplift, Du Bois’ methods were more race conscious and less tied to any particular political ideology. He wrote persuasively and with passion, and the editorials and other articles in *The Crisis* tended to impart his opinions and suggest topics readers should consider. Randolph’s *The Messenger* relied on the power of the workers for its legitimacy, although the method of socialism it represented still required an intellectual class to both educate the masses on their class identity and tell them the best way to act as members of their economic class. These were both top-down methods of race-improvement, although *The Messenger* was more explicit about what working-class blacks needed to do in order to improve their station. *The Messenger* always advocated interracial unions, for example, at a time when it was far from clear that unionism was a good option for unskilled African-American workers. Economic issues such as these seemed much less clear cut in Du Bois’ mind. Work was clearly important, as well as the
loosening of discrimination so that African-American workers could have a fair shot, although he was more flexible regarding the strategies to employ more black workers. He implied in “The Black Man and the Labor Union” that unionism sounded like a good idea in theory, although it was only in 1919 that *The Crisis* unambiguously supported unionism for African-Americans.\(^2\)

On the whole, *The Crisis* was less concerned than *The Messenger* about the revolutionary ideals of its readers. Du Bois was tirelessly committed to the cause of black freedom, although he was not a man with all of the answers. The editorials expressed his opinions about major current events, as well as social problems facing the black community, and they occasionally recommended methods for ameliorating the sting of racial prejudice in America. As *The Messenger* noted in “Du Bois and *The Crisis,*” Du Bois’ methods for racial uplift were hardly scientific, even though his analyses were sound.\(^3\) In a January 1920 editorial, for instance, he suggested that black Americans should just move to the North.\(^4\) Of course, many would move north, although this could not be a cure-all for the entire African-American community. Despite these feeble attempts at a quick-fix to America’s racial problems, *The Crisis*’ strength was in its analyses on contemporary racial problems coupled with its informative articles about topics ranging from black soldiers in Europe to the major problems facing the African Diaspora. The magazine was also able to raise awareness about legal cases where the rights of black citizens were clearly being breached. This, in turn, helped the branches of the NAACP mobilize behind black defendants. Still, the magazine was more of a vehicle

---


for protest than an active change agent. As Elliott Rudwick noted in “Du Bois and His Role as Crisis Editor”: “Du Bois was overly-impressed by words.”⁵ Clearly a man who wrote as prolifically as Du Bois believed that words could carry strong power behind them. The sociologist Charles Lemert commented more positively on Du Bois’ writings as part of his overall goals obtaining civil rights. He said: “Du Bois’s writings would rank no higher than second on the list of what mattered in his life's work (a concept with special meaning for him). Surely, the more significant was his central role in ten decades of the history of the American Negro.”⁶

Given Du Bois’ commitment to writing, he likely realized that over the course of history, compelling narratives could be influential even if they did not lead to immediate effects. Both The Crisis and The Messenger encouraged communities to come together in order to prevent lynching, and The Crisis, with its civil rights focus, hoped that President Wilson would introduce legislation to end lynching and Jim Crow segregation. Du Bois’ literary and impassioned editorials highlighted Wilson’s complete disregard of the racial segregation. Though African-Americans had too little political clout to seriously impede the president’s political interests, his apathy toward their repeated demands cast his presidency in a negative light. Randolph and Owen were also passionate and articulate, though their editorials carried less literary weight than Du Bois’. Their shrewd analyses and arguments provided a platform for speaking tours and Randolph’s eventual organizing of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the mid-1920s, yet their

“Returning Soldiers” article had none of the rhetorical flair of Du Bois’, where he ended by writing: “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting.” The Crisis helped capture the spirit of resistance without dictating exactly how African-Americans should resist.

The “Returning Soldiers” editorial was a clear reversal of the uncritical patriotism advocated by “Close Ranks.” Many historians have debated whether Du Bois knew that he was being considered for a captaincy in the Military Intelligence Division before he wrote the “Close Ranks” editorial. Given his global perspective, and the pro-black, anti-accommodationist positions he took in The Crisis editorials and his other works, it is unlikely that he wrote the “Close Ranks” editorial solely with the aim of achieving a military rank. Although there is no doubt that Du Bois was ambitious, he was also principled. Still, Du Bois was willing to try several different methods in order to bring about racial uplift, and during World War I, going to war was one of those aims. His increasing level of patriotism certainly endeared him to the military, however.

Du Bois’ strategy for social change during the war and post-war years was primarily that of racial uplift and protest. Through The Crisis, he informed readers about contemporary events and gave his opinion on the war and on national and international politics. He waged an ideological battle, using his craft as a writer to point out wrongs, encourage black education, and occasionally inspire the African-American community in the ongoing struggle against racism. Both The Crisis and The Messenger were being

---

published in an age when socialist principles were gaining prestige, although, as has been seen from the socialist movements that have occurred all around the world since the 1920s and 1930s, socialist principles alone – at least, within the confines of a particular nation-state – have not alleviated all racial or ethnic prejudices within those nations. Through *The Crisis*, Du Bois was able to write essays and articles that reflected a black worldview on current events and echoed the black American sense of frustration with the status-quo.

Randolph and Owen clearly wanted to have an impact on the black community and black thought through publishing *The Messenger*, although some of the opinions they formed in the magazine would have been sharply out of favor with the vast majority of African-Americans at that time. Many of the editorials in the magazine, for example, took a page almost directly out of Marx in their derision of the Church. As a magazine claiming to speak on behalf of the people, Randolph’s and Owen’s disdain for religion – which was pronounced up until 1920 – was another example of how African-American leaders of that time did not always feel the need to embody the values of African-American culture in order to represent blacks. ⁹ Even Du Bois, who was no stalwart advocate of organized religion, only went so far as to lambast the prejudiced policies of the Catholic Church. ¹⁰ As African-Americans from the South, both Randolph and Owen would have understood the central role the church played in the lives of the majority of African-Americans at the time. More than just a religious institution, it provided moral support for the black community, served a social role, and also aided the education of

---

children. Although critiquing some aspects of religious culture in the black community would have been understandable, their wholesale disparagement of the institution would have made it unlikely that they would have ever been able to reach the community as a whole.

In “Afro-American Intellectuals and the People’s Culture,” John Brown Childs suggested that African-American leaders during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were ambivalent toward some common elements of black culture because of their position as middlemen, acting on behalf of black society to win more privileges from the dominating white society. Although Randolph hoped to lead a popular movement of workers, it was still his job, as part of the New Crowd or the Talented Tenth, to pull up other African-Americans out of oppression. “[Many] of the very attributes which the white racists ascribed to blacks – were seen as real problems by black leaders themselves,” Childs wrote. “The problem thus became one of both overturning the external constraints of racial oppression, and of removing from the heart of the black population those cancerous elements which hindered development.”

After the first Red Scare, Randolph shifted the focus of the magazine away from Bolshevik-style communism and focused more on unionism and black business. During World War I and the Red Scare, however, he often seemed to apply Marxist theory directly to the African-American community without considering African-American culture and how

---

these theories could possibly mesh with the ideologies prevalent within the black communities of the United States.\textsuperscript{12}

Also, although this study did not consider issues released during the Harlem Renaissance era, Randolph clearly preferred classical music and literature to popular and folk music coming from the black community. Notwithstanding his radical political orientation, he considered education and success in the arts as primarily stemming from the European tradition.\textsuperscript{13} Although this preference was likely unconscious, it is significant to note that, despite his identification with the economic needs of the black workers, he did not think highly of popular black culture, and this likely hindered his appeal to the majority of African-Americans.

Despite the differences between Randolph, Du Bois and the magazines they edited, both they and their magazines shared many things other than being influenced by similar veins of black intellectual thought. Both The Crisis and The Messenger reflected the atmosphere of renewed hope in black America. Both were committed to raising awareness and bringing about the end of lynching and Jim Crow segregation. The magazines differed, however, in their perspectives on how to achieve equality. The Messenger editorials occasionally reflected the socialist rhetoric predicting eminent revolution over the capitalist class and advocated for African-Americans to unite as a worker-race, joining with workers of other races whenever possible. The Messenger disdained the more conciliatory methods of Du Bois and the black bourgeoisie because

these groups did not have a clear system, in their view, for improving the lot of black workers. As mentioned above, Du Bois was certainly concerned about the status of the worker although the NAACP and its magazine were primarily focused on civil rights, specifically the enfranchisement of African-Americans in the South, the end of segregated public facilities and the end of lynching. In hindsight, both magazines were too optimistic about the virility of their approaches. No revolution in America ever overturned capitalism and racism in one coup, and African-Americans did not receive the rights that they had hoped for by the end of the war.

*The Crisis*’ more pragmatic approach, however, made it more susceptible to propaganda and the will of the segregated military, and the magazine began advocating the war without considering the likely ramifications of black participation. *The Messenger*’s Marxist analysis of war precluded it from becoming romanced by pro-war propaganda, although it also kept the magazine from considering how a variety of positions and opinions – even supporting one’s nation during wartime – might augment the long-term goal of racial equality. *The Messenger* shed light on the systemic economic barriers faced by black Americans, relating their condition to the international exploitation of workers by the capitalist-class.

The tone of the magazines differed primarily because of the differences in the respective editors’ intellectual approaches. Du Bois’ humanism and literary sensibilities influenced his philosophy on voting, leading him to suggest that people should vote more for the party than the man. His method of uplift was more ideological and educational. *The Crisis* was a magazine that African-Americans could read to learn about both current
events related to African-Americans and the African Diaspora. Like its editor, it was more oriented around the liberal arts than social science theories. *The Messenger* editors, however, had studied and trained extensively in the social sciences and advocated supporting party politics as a way to help procure a more radical racial program in the United States.

*The Messenger’s* economic analysis of race relations allowed the magazine to consider the trans-regional aspects of racism between the North and the South, and how it fit into trends of global exploitation. *The Crisis*’ more subjective, human-oriented approach sometimes evoked an insufficient sense of the causes of racial bigotry – Du Bois’ declaration that Southern racists were responsible for racism in the North exemplified the limitations of his approach. In spite of these limitations, Du Bois also recognized the more structural aspects of racism and inequality. Other editorials and articles in *The Crisis* called attention to “oligarchy” in the League of Nations and the colonial powers exploiting Africa.

Both *The Messenger* and *The Crisis* were venues for not only political thought, they also were forums for poetry, short stories, photography and cartoons. Although the importance of African-American artists would increase during the Harlem Renaissance, many of the early twentieth century’s famous African-American writers gained exposure through *The Crisis* and *The Messenger*. Claude McKay published “If We Must Die,” in *The Messenger* during this era, and he was also mentioned in *The Crisis*. Older poets,

such as Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Georgia Douglass Johnson, and James Weldon Johnson had published several poems in *The Crisis*.

Another key similarity between the magazines was the emphasis on transnational awareness, specifically relating to the African Diaspora. *The Messenger*, for example, occasionally contained features on cultural aspects of the black community. One considered the beauty culture that was prevalent among black Americans, and another considered the history of the terms “colored” and “Negro” in the United States and the Caribbean. It showed, for example, that while “colored” had a general, non-white meaning everywhere the term was used, it referred specifically to people of racially-mixed heritage in the Caribbean, while referring to anyone who was African-American in the United States.\(^\text{16}\) Other articles in *The Messenger* discussed American occupation in Haiti and the ties between capitalism and colonialism in Dutch Guiana. Likewise, Haiti was often mentioned by Du Bois in *The Crisis*, along with Liberia and other countries on the African continent. In fact, in Du Bois’ article on the Pan-African Congress he established several goals for African education and eventual liberation. In his editorials, he even attempted to connect white supremacy in America to colonialism in Africa and Asia. *The Messenger* also waxed long on the transnational connections between all oppressed people under the global capitalism of the day. In socialism, race was secondary to class, so *The Messenger*’s emphasis was more class-based. Colonial exploitation in Africa, for example, was quickly compared to colonial exploitation in India or even Ireland. *The Crisis* also alluded to Asia in its global analyses.

\(^{16}\) W.A. Domingo, “What are We, Negroes or Colored People?” *The Messenger*, May-June 1919, 23-24.
One of the clearest examples of *The Messenger*’s commitment to the issues affecting black people internationally was its Friends of Negro Freedom (FNF). Although the organization was meant to be something of a competitor with the NAACP, Randolph imagined it being global in its scope; he thought that the problems of black people in Haiti were not separate from the problems of black people in America, Jamaica, or Africa. In both magazines it was clear that African-Americans were part of a global black Diaspora spreading across the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the African continent. Although *The Crisis* was more overtly Pan-African than *The Messenger*, both magazines stressed the transnational connections between African people and the exploitation of people across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Though these magazines were targeted at race-conscious Americans, diligent readers would have left them with a more global perspective.

Although Du Bois did not consider himself a socialist, he often seemed to take socialist positions on key issues. In the November 1918 election, for example, he suggested that land and capital should belong to the many and not the few; this sentiment was echoed in issues throughout the period studied. In an article on crime, he suggested that criminals commit crime for a variety of reasons, including the lack of opportunities for adequate labor. One of his goals outlined during the Pan African Congress was that Africans retain control of their resources, so that they are not plundered by foreign powers – the power of international capitalism. Although Randolph and Du Bois differed in their methods, their publications were of one mind regarding the necessity for equality.

---

for all African-Americans, and the transnational connections between the people of the African Diaspora.

Although it is no longer legal to bar African-Americans from movies or restaurants, or to segregate against them in trains or keep them out of the voting booth, complete social and economic equality has not yet manifested in the United States. Comparing *The Messenger* and *The Crisis*’ understanding of progress for African-Americans during World War I and the Red Scare provided insight on two currents of black thought, which both proceeded and followed this era, concerning what the best methods are for improving the station of African-Americans. One current suggested that radical methods were needed in order to change the system, while another suggested that working within the system would bring about the best results for the black community. During this period, Du Bois advocated working within the government, whereas Randolph initially supported Bolshevik-style class revolution. Both of their ideologies shifted with time, however, with Randolph positioning himself to the right of the radical Communist Party and concentrating on labor, and Du Bois eventually endorsing communism. Still, these two strains of thought continued and were present in the speeches and organizing efforts of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. Deciding on the most appropriate methods for African-American progress has continued to plague the black community.

---

The World War I era and the first Red Scare were times of transition and development in America. African-Americans were moving North in large numbers for the first time in American history and in response to this shift in demographics, race riots were breaking out all over the country. At the same time, the government was developing the beginnings of its inter-agency intelligence network, with an eye on Bolsheviks and radical African-Americans. Although *The Crisis* and *The Messenger* differed in their position on the war, there were a number of similarities between the two publications. They both embodied a trend in black intellectual thought in which an educated elite represented African-Americans to white America and exemplified what other African-Americans should strive to be. They also published black art and discussed cultural topics pertaining to black America. Randolph was a much more vociferous advocate of unions than Du Bois, although *The Crisis* also suggested that unionism was good for African-Americans. Both magazines connected the African-American community to the much larger African Diaspora and tied oppression within the United States to transnational oppression throughout the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Du Bois was more oriented around personal agency, whereas Randolph’s orientation was focused on honing the will of people with common interest in order to effect collective change. Both men, however, used their publications to express outrage at the country’s systemic discrimination against African-Americans, and supported progressive reforms that encouraged more socioeconomic access and equality.
Bibliography

Books:


Articles:


[www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USACowen.htm](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USACowen.htm) (3 March 2011).

[http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAThe_Crisis.htm](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAThe_Crisis.htm) (3 March 2011).


“Hours of Work in U.S. History.” *Economic History Association* 
[http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/whapes.work.hours.us](http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/whapes.work.hours.us) (3 March 2011).