W. E. B. Du Bois on Asia

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Crossing the World Color Line

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Introduction

_Crossing the World Color Line_

The Russo-Japanese war has marked an epoch. The magic of the word "white" is already broken, and the Color Line in civilization has been crossed in modern times as it was in the great past. The awakening of the yellow races is certain. That the awakening of the brown and black races will follow in time, no unprejudiced student of history can doubt.


We have been compelled to admit Asia into the picture of future political and democratic power. We can no longer regard Europe as the sole center of the world. The development of human beings in the future is going to depend largely upon what happens in Asia.


_Hail, dark brethren
Of mine,
Hail and farewell!
I die,
As you are born again,
Bursting with new life._

—W. E. B. Du Bois, "I Sing to China," 1939

W. E. B. Du Bois's lifelong interest in Asia and the vast body of writing he produced on it are both the least understood and the most neglected aspects of his storied intellectual career. From 1903, when he famously pronounced, in _Souls of Black Folk_, "The problem of the
Lenin, and disclosing his increasing application of historical materialism, the essay encourages American Negroes to respond by turning to Asia: "We can learn about China and India and the vast realm of Indonesia rescued from Holland. . . . We can realize by reading, if not in class-room, how socialism is expanding over the modern world." Significantly, the essay was written and delivered as a speech given by Du Bois at the second anniversary of the Bandung Conference held in Harlem on April 30, 1957. The essay attempts to apply the lessons of Bandung, and the wider struggles of anticolonialism, to African Americans, and to place African American historical struggles in the context of what has become known to us now as the "Bandung Era."

**Notes**

**Publication History for Part I**


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**India**

To most Indians, the problem of American Negroes—of twelve million people swallowed in a great nation, as compared with the more than three hundred millions of India—may seem unimportant. It would be very easy for intelligent Indians to succumb to the widespread propaganda that these Negroes have neither the brains nor ability to take a decisive part in the modern world. On the other hand, American Negroes have long considered that their destiny lay with the American people; that their object was to become full American citizens and eventually lose themselves in the nation by continued intermingling of blood. But there are many things that have happened and are happening in the modern world to show that both these lines of thought are erroneous. The American Negroes belong to a group which went through the fire of American slavery and is now a part of the vast American industrial organization; nevertheless, it exists as representative of two hundred or more million Negroes in Africa, the West Indies and South America. In many respects, although not in all, this group may be regarded as the leading intelligentsia of the black race and no matter what its destiny in America, its problems will never be settled until the problem of the relation of the white and colored races is settled throughout the world.

India has also had temptation to stand apart from the darker peoples and seek her affinities among whites. She has long wished to regard herself as "Aryan" rather than "colored" and to think of herself as much nearer physically and spiritually to Germany and England than to Africa, China or the South Seas. And yet the history of the
modern world shows the futility of this thought. European exploitation desires the black slave, the Chinese coolie and the Indian laborer for the same ends and the same purposes, and calls them all "niggers."

If India has her castes, American Negroes have in their own internal color lines the plain shadow of a caste system. For American Negroes have a large infiltration of white blood and the tendency to measure worth by the degree of this mulatto strain.

The problem of the Negroes thus remains a part of the worldwide clash of color. So, too, the problem of the Indians can never be simply a problem of autonomy in the British commonwealth of nations. They must always stand as representatives of the colored races—of the yellow and black peoples as well as the brown—of the majority of mankind, and together with the Negroes they must face the insistent problem of the assumption of the white peoples of Europe that they have a right to dominate the world and especially so to organize it politically and industrially as to make most men their slaves and servants.

This attitude on the part of the white world has doubtless softened since the [First] World War. Nevertheless, the present desperate attempt of Italy in Ethiopia and the real reasons back of the unexpected opposition on the part of the League of Nations, show that the ideals of the white world have not yet essentially changed. If now the colored peoples—Negroes, Indians, Chinese and Japanese—are going successfully to oppose these assumptions of white Europe, they have got to be sure of their own attitude toward their laboring masses. Otherwise they will substitute for the exploitation of colored by white races, an exploitation of colored races by colored men. If, however, they can follow the newer ideals which look upon human labor as the only real and final repository of political power, and conceive that the freeing of the human spirit and real liberty of life will only come when industrial exploitation has ceased and the struggle to live is not confined to a mad fight for food, clothes and shelter; then and only then, can the union of the darker races bring a new and beautiful world, not simply for themselves, but for all men.

Asia in Africa

The connection between Asia and Africa has always been close. There was probably actual land connection in prehistoric times, and the black race appears in both continents in the earliest records, making it doubtful which continent is the point of origin. Certainly the Negroid people of Asia have played a leading part in her history. The blacks of Melanesia have scoured the seas, and Charles Tauber makes them inventors of one of the world's first written languages; thus "this greatest of all human inventions was made by aborigines whose descendants today rank among the lowest, the proto-Australians."

The ethnic history of India would seem to be first a prehistoric substratum of Negrillos or black dwarfs; then the pre-Dravidians, a taller, larger type of Negro; then the Dravidians, Negroes with some mixture of Mongolid and later of Caucasoid stocks. The Dravidian Negroes laid the bases of Indian culture thousands of years before the Christian era. On these descended through Afghanistan an Asiatic or Eastern European element, usually called Aryan.

The Rig Veda, ancient sacred hymns of India, tells of the fierce struggles between these whites and blacks for the mastery of India. It sings of Aryan deities who rushed furiously into battle against the black foe. The hymns praise Indra, the white deity, for having killed fifty thousand blacks, "piercing the citadel of the enemy" and forcing the blacks to run out in distress, leaving all their food and belongings. The blacks under their renowned leader Krishna, that is, "The Black," fought back with valor. The whites long held the conquered blacks in caste servitude, but eventually the color line disappeared.
The American Negro and the Darker World

From the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, the Africans imported to America regarded themselves as temporary settlers destined to return eventually to Africa. Their increasing revolts against the slave system which culminated in the eighteenth century, showed a feeling of close kinship to the motherland and even well into the nineteenth century they called their organizations “African,” as witness the “African Unions” of New York and Newport, and The African Churches of Philadelphia and New York. In the West Indies and South America there was even closer indication of feelings of kinship with Africa and the East.

The planters’ excuse for slavery was advertised as conversion of Africa to Christianity; but soon American slavery appeared based on the huge profits of the “sugar empire” and the “cotton kingdom.” As plans were laid for the expansion of the slave system, the slaves themselves sought freedom by increasing revolt which culminated in the eighteenth century. In Haiti they won autonomy; in the United States they fled from the states in the south to the free states in the north and to Canada. Here the Free Negroes helped form the Abolition Movement, and when that seemed to be failing, the Negroes began to plan for migration to Africa, Haiti and South America.

Civil war and emancipation intervened and American Negroes looked forward to becoming free and equal citizens here with no thought of return to Africa or of kinship with the world’s darker peoples. However, the rise of the Negro was hindered by disenfranchisement, lynching, and caste legislation. There was some recurrence of the “Back To Africa” idea and increased sympathy for darker folk who suffered the same sort of caste restrictions as American Negroes.

This brought curious dichotomy. In our effort to be recognized as Americans, we American Negroes naturally strove to think American and adopt American folkways. We began to despise all yellow, brown and black peoples. We especially withdrew from all remembrance of kinship with Africa and denied with the white world that Africa ever had a history or indigenous culture. We did not want to be called “Africans” or Negroes and especially not “Negresses.” We tried to invent new names for our group. We began to call yellow people “chinks” and “coolies”; and dark whites “dagoes.” This was natural under our peculiar situation. But it made us more easily neglect or lose sight of the peculiar change in the world which was linking us with the colored peoples of the world not simply because of the essentially unimportant fact of skin color, but because of the immensely important fact of economic condition.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Europe had begun to expand its trade and to import raw materials to be transformed into consumer goods. Machines and methods for manufacture of goods increased tremendously.

When the revolt of the slaves, especially in Haiti, and the moral revolt in England and America, led to the emancipation of slaves, the merchants who had invested in slave labor began to change the form of their investment; they seized colonies in Asia and Africa and instead of exporting native labor used the land and labor on the spot and exported raw materials to Europe for consumption or further manufacture. Immense amounts of wealth for capital were seized by Europeans in India and China, in South America and elsewhere; and thus colonial imperialism arose to dominate the world. Most of the exploited peoples were colored, yellow, brown, and black. A scientific theory arose and was widely accepted which taught that the white people were superior to the colored and had a right to rule the world and use all land and labor for the benefit and comfort of Europeans.
While the emancipation of slaves in America involved great losses for European investors, the simultaneous seizure of wealth in Asia and the new control of colonial labor enabled new rich employers in Europe and North America to accumulate vast sums of capital in private hands and to start the factory system. This method of conducting industry used new inventions and sources of power so as to drive laborers off the land, herd them in factories and reduce them to semi-slavery in Europe, by a wage contract.

This brought the labor movement. In the more advanced European countries labor and its friends fought for more political power, public school education, higher wages and better conditions. These things they gradually secured by union organization and strikes. On the other hand, in Eastern Europe there was little education and wages remained very low. Political power rested in the hands of an aristocracy which became rich through encouraging and protecting western investment. This semi-colonial status of labor was even worse in South and Central America and in the West Indies, while in most of Asia and Africa the condition of colonial labor approached slavery.

Thereupon arose the doctrine of socialism which demanded that the results of the manufacture of goods and the giving of services go to the labor involved and not mainly to the capitalists. This doctrine was in essence as old as human labor. Primitive labor got all the results of what it did or made. Many early societies like the first Christians and tribes in Africa lived as communal groups, sharing all results of work in common.

Slavery intervened, so that some workers were owned by others; then came aristocracy where a few took the results of the work of the many and the nation became the abode of a rich idle and privileged class who were served by the mass of laborers. Protest against this and the doctrine that income should in some degree become the measure of effort became an increasing demand from the ancient world through the mediaeval world and was studied and scientifically stated by Karl Marx in the first half of the nineteenth century. He proposed that capital belong to the state and that workers run the state. Capitalists vehemently opposed this but were compelled partially to meet the demands of labor by raising wages. In the capitalist nations this raise was more than compensated for by increased profits due to exploitation in colonial and semi-colonial lands. Also, the spread of Democratic control was counterbalanced by hiring white labor to war on colonial labor, and using public taxation for war rather than social purposes.

From the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 to the first world war there was continuous struggle led by white troops armed with the most ingenious weapons to keep colonial peoples from revolt, and most of the peoples of the world in subjection to Western Europe.

This was the situation at the beginning of the twentieth century. British, French, and American capitalists owned the colonies, with the richest natural resources and the best controlled and lowest paid labor. By 1900, they were reaching out for other colonies elsewhere: other nations with fewer or no colonies, led by Germany, demanded a reallocation of colonial wealth. This brought on the First World War.

But, it brought more than this; the assault of Germany and her allies was so fierce that Britain and France had to ask help from their colored colonies. They needed black manpower and without it France would have been overthrown by Germany in the first few months of war. Britain needed food and materials from Asia, Africa, and the West Indies. The United States needed American Negroes who formed an inner labor colony as laborers and stevedores. This meant an increase of wages and rights for colonial peoples. In the United States, it brought the first recognition since 1876 of the equal citizenship of Negroes.

The workers of Eastern Europe, South and Central America were not as badly off as the American serf and Chinese and Indian coolies, but they were sunk in poverty, disease, and ignorance. They were oppressed by their own rich classes working hand in glove with white
western investors. When war came they starved and died. The situation became so desperate that Russians and Hungarians refused to fight. Their rulers sought compromise by trying to replace imperial rule with Western European democracy. But the Russian leaders, students of Karl Marx and led by Lenin, demanded a socialist state.

The western world united to forestall this experiment. It said that no socialist state could succeed, but lest it should and lower the profits of capitalists, the effort must be stopped by force of arms. Sixteen capitalist nations, including Britain, France, Germany, the United States, and Japan, invaded Russia and fought for ten years by every means, civilized and uncivilized, to overthrow the plans of the Soviet Union. However, the worldwide collapse of capitalism in 1930, made this attack fail and the world witnessed the founding of the first socialist state.

Then came a new and even more unexpected diversion. The depression which was the partial collapse of capitalism, was so bad in Germany, Spain, and Italy that those states fell into the hands of two dictators, Hitler and Mussolini. Backed by capitalists, they seized power and demanded control not only of the colonial world then dominated by Britain, France, and North America, but domination of the whole world. The west tried to compromise, and offered practically everything demanded, but Hitler’s greed and German ambition grew by what they fed upon. They were so convinced of their superior power over the west that Hitler started a Second World War; like the first aimed at control by part of the white race over resources, land, and labor of the rest of the world, he began a wild career. He killed six million Jews, accusing them of being the main cause of the depression and of being an inferior race. He conquered France, and chased the British off the continent. They huddled on their own small island to make a last stand. But, here Hitler paused. He had a new vision. If instead of wasting his power on a desperate England he turned east and seized the semi-colonial lands of the Soviet Union and the Balkan states, then from this central heartland he could win Asia and Africa and after that turn back to deliver the coup de grâce to Britain and America. Hitler thereupon scrapped his treaty with the Soviets, which they, spurned by the west, had been forced to accept; and to the relief of Britain and the United States, Hitler turned to conquer Russia. Englishmen and Americans said with Truman, “Let them kill as many of each other as possible.” So, although Hitler’s rear was exposed, the western powers held off attack for a year and when they did attack went to the defense of their African colonies and not to aid the Soviet Union. The west was sure that the Soviets would fall in six weeks and thus rid the world of socialism and Nazis at one stroke.

The result was astonishing. The Soviet Union, almost unaided, conquered Hitler, saved the Baltic states and the Balkans. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin faced a world in which the Soviet Union, Britain, France and the United States must go forward toward a world in which socialism would grow; not perhaps as complete communistic states like the Soviet Union, but in states like the United States and England where social progress under the New Deal and Labor government would advance together along paths leading to the same ultimate goal.

This co-operation American business repudiated when it invented the atom bomb. After Roosevelt died, our capitalists determined to drive communism from the world and push socialism back. This crusade failed. India became independent and adopted modified socialism; China conquered the stool-pigeons whom we paid to stop her revolution and became a communist state. The Soviet Union, instead of failing as we predicted, became one of the foremost nations of the earth, with the best educational system and freedom from church domination and second only to this nation in industry. Also the Soviet Union took a legal stand against the color line and stood ready to oppose colonialism. We tried to re-conquer China during the war in Korea and to help France retain Indo-China. But again we failed. Meantime we formed the greatest military machine on earth and
spent and are still spending more money preparing for war than ever any other nation on earth at any time has spent.

The excuse for our action is that communism is a criminal conspiracy of evil-minded men and that private capitalism is so superior to socialism that we should use every effort to stop its advance. Here we rest today and to sharpen our aim and concentrate our strength, we starve our schools, lessen social service in medicine and housing, curtail our freedom of speech, limit our pursuit of learning, and are no longer free to think or discuss.

Where now does that leave American Negroes? We cannot teach the peoples of Africa or Asia because so many of them are either communitistic or progressing toward socialism, while we do not know what socialism is and can study it only with difficulty or danger. After the First World War we Negroes were in advance of many colored peoples. We started in two ways to lead Africans. In the West Indies, Garvey tried to have Negroes share in western exploitation of Africa. White industry stopped him before he could begin. In the United States Negro churches carried on missionary effort and a few Negroes in 1918 tried to get in touch with Africa so as to share thoughts and plans. Four Pan-African Congresses were held in 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1925, which American, African, and West Indian Negroes attended, and a few persons from Asia and South America. They made a series of general demands for political rights and education. The movement met much opposition. However, it encouraged similar congresses which still exist in all parts of Africa and it was the inspiration back of the mandates commission of the League of Nations and the trusteeship council of the United Nations.

After a lapse of twenty years, a fifth Pan-African Congress was held in England in 1945. It was attended by Negro labor leaders from all parts of Africa and from the West Indies and one from the United States. Especially prominent were the delegates from Kenya and from Ghana, the first independent black dominion of the British Commonwealth. The resolutions adopted here had a clear socialist trend, and further Pan-African Congresses were envisioned to be held in Africa.

Whither now do we go? We American Negroes can no longer lead the colored peoples of the world because they far better than we understand what is happening in the world today. But we can try to catch up with them. We can learn about China and India and the vast realm of Indonesia rescued from Holland. We can know of the new ferment in East, West, and South Africa. We can realize by reading, if not in classrooms, how socialism is expanding over the modern world and penetrating the colored world. So far as Africa is concerned we can realize that socialism is part of their past history and will without a shade of doubt play a large part in their future.

Here in our country, we can think, work and vote for the welfare state openly and frankly; for social medicine, publicly supported housing, state ownership of public power and public facilities; curbing the power of private capital and great monopolies and stand ready to meet and cooperate with world socialism as it grows among white and black.
The Clash of Colour

The great difficulty of bringing about understanding, sympathy and co-operation between the Negroes of America and the peoples of India lies in the almost utter lack of knowledge which these two groups of people have of each other.

First of all, the Negroes, taught in American schools and reading books and articles by American writers, have almost no conception of the history of India. It practically has no place in our curriculum and references to that great past which every Indian knows bring no intelligent comprehension on the part of the Negroes in America.

On the other hand, the knowledge which educated Indians have of the American Negro is chiefly confined to the conventional story spread by most white American and English writers: ignorant black savages were enslaved and made to do physical labour which was the only thing they could do. They were finally emancipated by a benevolent government and given every aid to rise and develop. Much of this aid was mistaken, as, for instance, the bestowing of the right to vote, and proved a hindrance rather than a help. To-day these Negroes are contented labourers occupying that lower sphere for which they are especially adapted.

This false knowledge and lack of knowledge in the two groups are now emphasized by the modern methods of gathering and distributing news. To the editors of the great news agencies, Indians and Negroes are not news. They distribute, therefore, and emphasize only such things as are bizarre and uncommon: lynchings and mobs in the Southern States of the United States, dialect and funny stories; and from India, stories of religious frenzy, fights between Hindus and Mohammedans, the deeds of masters of magic and the wealth of Indian princes.

To this is added deliberate and purposeful propaganda, so that from American newspapers Negroes get no idea of the great struggle for freedom and self-government which has been going on in India, or of that deep philosophy of the meaning and end of human life which characterizes the Indian nation. They only hear of what England has done to develop India and to keep the peace.

On the other hand, few Indians know of Negroes able to do more than read and write, of the Negro literature that has been growing and expanding for seventy-five years, and of the leaders who have done their part, not only in the development of black men, but in the development of white America.

To all this must be added the almost insuperable bars of religious difference. Negroes have long been enmeshed in a veil of sectarian Christianity which regards all peoples as “Heathen” who are not Christian, and all Christians as suspect who are not Protestants, and no Protestant as a candidate for Heaven unless he believes in the Trinity and the “Plan of Salvation.”

The Indian, also, finds it difficult to conceive of intelligent men who have no real knowledge of either Buddha or Mohammed, and no religious philosophy that forms a part of their real life.

Much of this lack of knowledge and misapprehension might be avoided if Indians and Negroes had a chance to meet and know each other; but they are at opposite ends of the earth and, so far as American Negroes are concerned, deliberate and other difficulties are put in the way of their meeting. It is difficult for an American Negro to get the English Government to issue his passport for a visit to India and if the issue is obtained, usually it is under pledge to limit his words and activities. The accommodations offered by steamships often involve racial discrimination, while the cost of such trips is of course prohibitive to the mass of Indians and Negroes.
On the other hand, a number of Indians visit America; but unless they are as wise and catholic as my friend, the late Lajpat Rai, they are apt to see little and know less of the twelve million Negroes in America. First of all, they meet a peculiar variation of the Colour Line. An Indian may be dark in colour, but if he dons his turban and travels in the South, he does not have to be subjected to the separate-car laws and other discriminations against Negroes in that part of the country where the mass of Negroes live. This public recognition of the fact that he is not a Negro may, and often does, flatter his vanity so that he rather rejoices that in this country at least he is not as other dark men are, but is classified with the Whites.

This, however, applies primarily to the Indian with money enough to travel and live in comfort. If he should try for employment or for citizenship or any economic status, he would find the tables quite turned, and that, while an African Negro can become a citizen of the United States, an Indian of the highest caste cannot.

All this is of course but the foolishness and illogic of race discrimination and most intelligent Indians would only need to be reminded of it to insist upon opportunity to see and know American Negroes. This was certainly the case of Rabindranath Tagore and many other prominent Indians who have visited America.

Indian visitors must, of course, remember that they will have to make some special effort to see the Negro world. It is a world largely apart and organized; in its churches, industry and amusement, largely separate from the white world. It is not easily penetrated by strangers except in lines of commercialized entertainment. The Harlem cabarets do not, for instance, represent Negro life, but are simply commercialized investments of white men with Negro music and entertainment.

On the other hand, for visitors who wish to know Negroes and try to carry out their wish, no great difficulties are encountered. The Negro churches always welcome visitors, and Negro organizations are glad to give them opportunity to speak and to ask questions, and even Negro homes are open to sympathetic strangers.

In the North, such intercourse is easy and normal. In the South, it is more difficult; and in the South some eight million of the twelve million of the American Negroes live. But even there, through the universities and colleges and the private and public schools, through churches and homes, necessary contacts may be made.

The percentage of visitors between these groups must always be small, but a vast amount of work can be done through literature and especially literature directed toward the masses of these two peoples. The best effort in this line is Lajpat Rai's United States; he seeks not simply to write a conventional history of white America for the information of coloured India, but gives a quarter of his space and intelligent interpretation to the Negro problem in the United States. He could do this because, during his enforced exile from his native land, he gained wide acquaintance with American Negroes and travelled over much of the United States. It is unfortunate that American Negroes have not made a similar study of India to orientate the thought of the people concerning the problems of that land.

There are in the United States one hundred or more weekly newspapers circulating among Negroes, of which eight or ten have considerable circulation. It would be an excellent thing if contributions from India, explaining the history and problems of the land, should appear in these papers; and on the other hand, the press of India ought to welcome a number of Negro contributors with explanations of their situation here.

Despite the difficulties, there must be greater conscious effort to get these groups into sympathetic understanding. Indians appeared in the four or five Pan-African Congresses which were held and which were of course only tentative efforts toward a greater ideal. In the future, congresses including Indians and Negroes ought to meet periodically, not necessarily for action, but for understanding, and especially for emphasizing the fact that these people have common aims.

It is this fact, or the failure to recognize it, which causes the lack of knowledge and understanding between these groups. To most
Indians, the problem of American Negroes—of twelve million people swallowed in a great nation, as compared with the more than three-hundred millions of India—may seem unimportant. It would be very easy for intelligent Indians to succumb to the widespread propaganda that these Negroes have neither the brains nor ability to take a decisive part in the modern world. On the other hand, American Negroes have long considered that their destiny lay with the American people; that their object was to become full American citizens and eventually lose themselves in the nation by continued intermingling of blood. But there are many things that have happened and are happening in the modern world to show that both these lines of thought are erroneous. The American Negroes belong to a group which went through the fire of American slavery and is now a part of the vast American industrial organization; nevertheless it exists as representative of two hundred or more million Negroes in Africa, the West Indies and South America. In many respects, although not in all, this group may be regarded as the leading intelligentsia of the black race and no matter what its destiny in America, its problems will never be settled until the problem of the relation of the white and coloured races is settled throughout the world.

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Satyagraha is the path of truth at all costs. If you are not prepared to follow this path, please leave me alone. You can pronounce me worthless and I shall not resent it. Truth and Ahimsa are the essence of Satyagraha, and Charkha is their symbol. Without full faith in truth, non-violence and the Charkha, you cannot be my soldiers. If you do not believe in this you can leave me alone and find your own methods.

PART III

World War II and the Anticolonial Turn

Du Bois’s analysis of World War II as a race war, a war of imperial rivalry and colonial subjection, became sharper, angrier, and deeper as the war moved on. So, too, deepened his conviction that events in Asia were central to the alignment and direction of the postwar world. This section opens with two essays written and published in 1942 and 1944, respectively, which demonstrate this movement in Du Bois’s thought. In 1942, Du Bois again used his “A Chronicle of Race Relations” column in Phylon to survey a range of perspectives on the war bound together by a common thread: criticism of jingoistic nationalism and the consolidation of western wealth and power. Du Bois cited a host of “mainstream” sources, Vice-President Henry Wallace, Pearl S. Buck, Australian Sir Bertram S. B. Stevens, Fortune magazine, and the New York Times to muster a case that the war was being used to isolate Asia, especially Russia and China, while deepening the economic and political crisis in India. As he had in 1937, Du Bois continued to perceive Japanese imperialism as a nexus or crossroads of competing and debilitating political contradictions. “The threat of Japan lies over India and is
regarded in two ways:” he wrote. “The Indians say that they cannot organize Indian opposition to Japan if England insists on white supremacy in India; the English say that Japan is so threatening that they cannot give up their grip on India.” The essay sees no relief to this impasse in the arrogant indifference of western imperial leadership; it describes the “problem” of the world color line as urgent but unsolvable.

Two years later, Du Bois advanced a more concretized analysis and proposed resolution to the problem of war. In 1944, Du Bois spoke on the topic “Prospect of a World Without Racial Conflict.” It made plain a global theory of white supremacy as the driving force of the war’s disaster: “The supertragedy of this war is the treatment of the Jews in Germany” he wrote. “There has been nothing comparable to this in modern history. Yet its technique and its reasoning have been based upon a race philosophy similar to that which has dominated both Great Britain and the United States in relation to colored people.” Significantly, Du Bois zeroed in on Asia, not Eastern Europe, Africa or Germany, as the central site of the world struggle for racial equality. “The greatest and most dangerous race problem today is the problem of relations between Asia and Europe: the question is to how far ‘East is East and West is West’ and of how long they are going to retain the relation of master and serf.” The essay used colonial India as the baseline for assessing the possibilities and necessities of a radical transformation in what Du Bois called “modern colonial imperialism.” Indeed India was perceived as a kind of tipping point for successful challenge to racial supremacy and capitalist inequalities in the postwar period. Du Bois described this challenge in terms indicative of the increasingly materialist cast of his thought: “(1) defense against aggression; (2) full employment after the war; (3) eventual fair distribution of both raw materials and manufactured goods; (4) abolition of poverty; and (5) health.” Du Bois was in 1944 beginning to outline a social and political program that he refused to name but which would occupy much of his more nuanced writing on the world color line for the remaining nineteen years of his life.

The remaining selections in this section suggest some of the Asian sources to which Du Bois turned in the development of this program. The first is a brief book review of a biography of Jawaharlal Nehru. Next to Gandhi, Nehru drew more praise from Du Bois than almost any anticolonial leader. He was fascinated by Nehru’s commitment to democratic principles, what he calls in the essay “government by the consent of the people and for the integrity of the individual.” Du Bois also saw “astonishing resemblances” between English colonialism and the “Negro problem” in America, specifically the violence, the stress upon religious submission, the inner difficulties within the Indian race and the way in which these difficulties have been played upon to the advantage of the English.” Du Bois held Nehru in similar esteem to Sun Yat-sen as visionary nationalists dedicated to building the necessary political apparatus to effect autonomous rule. Finally, Nehru’s tolerance for socialism and Communism and his efforts to recast it within India’s home rule strategies can be seen as a model of Du Bois’s similar efforts in application to black America.

That essay is followed by perhaps Du Bois’s most complete essay on the history of Indian liberation struggle. “The Frencing of India” first appeared in the October 1947 Crisis, mere months after the country gained independence. It is a kind of primer for Crisis readers of the events leading up to August 15. It is a sweeping review of Indian history, religion, and ethnic sects, on one hand, and the country’s relationship to neighbors, allies, and political foes. The twin problems facing the country, in Du Bois’s view, are Hindu-Muslim strife and the legacy of colonial imperialism. It is ultimately a hopeful essay, reminiscent of the almost utopian desire Marx and Engels felt when they perceived the possibility of Asian liberation from capital in the mid nineteenth century. Likewise, the essay is yet another example of Du Bois measuring the fate of European capitalism
by events in Asia. Indeed prior to the decolonization movements of the 1950s in Africa, Du Bois had virtually no examples, outside of Russia, about which he remained ambivalent, of where a colored people's revolution—led by colored people—might succeed. "The Freeing of India" urges the colored world to use India as her example.

India's successful revolution also culminated in his own mind Du Bois's long and impassioned devotion to the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. More than any African or African American leader, it is Gandhi who qualifies as Du Bois's most passionately admired statesman and activist of the twentieth century. Du Bois, who avoided "great men" readings of history, wrote at least a dozen essays all or in part on Gandhi's work. Next to Lenin, who he often praised with one hand of anti-Communist suspicion behind his back, and Mao, who mystified him, Gandhi was the most accessible prototype of an effective race rebel. There is also a bit of hero identification for Du Bois in Gandhi; the two were born nineteen months apart; Gandhi's work in South Africa was the first evidence Du Bois said he gained of "the tragedy of that awful land." In this relatively brief essay, Du Bois enumerates how Gandhi's nonviolent tactics became, and should continue to become, a useful weapon for black American civil rights struggle. The essay was published in 1937 after Martin Luther King, Jr., had already publicly adopted nonviolence as his southern strategy for change. Du Bois and King's shared admiration for Gandhi has not been sufficiently marked. Nor have their fairly different uses of Gandhi's thought. For King, nonviolence was famously the strategy underlying the Birmingham bus boycotts and most of the major protests of his public life. Gandhi was first and foremost for King a strategist and tactician. For Du Bois, Gandhi was an intellectual compass to colonialism and his opposition to nuclear testing and South African apartheid. Indeed as we will see in the final section of this book, Du Bois clung to Gandhi throughout his life as a symbolic avatar of transnational cooperation, peace, harmony, and moral example. This essay ends with Du Bois's blunt assessment that black American civil rights struggle will not achieve its own freedom dreams until an American Gandhi is born. Interestingly, Martin Luther King's living example was for Du Bois necessary but not yet sufficient to realizing freedom within and without U.S. borders.

The section concludes appropriately with a prescient essay synthesizing Du Bois's analysis and aspirations for the postwar period. "Colonialism, Democracy, and Peace after the War" was written at the invitation of the Haitian government for presentation at a scholarly conference in Haiti in the summer of 1944. The essay begins by defining the "colonial" as inclusive of black Americans in the U.S. The essay then surveys the extant states of colonialism around the globe and notes its cornerstone: white domination of nonwhite. "What now can be done about this," writes Du Bois, in a perhaps conscious echo of Lenin, "in this day of crisis, when with the end of a horrible and disgraceful war in sight, we contemplate Peace and Democracy? What has Democracy to do with Colonies and what has skin-color to do with Peace?" The essay forecasts Du Bois's preeminent concerns in the postwar period, namely aligning a politics of international solidarity across Asia and Africa with the struggles of black Americans in the U.S.

Publication History for Part III


A Chronicle of Race Relations [II]

The Wavering Ideals of War

The declared objects of the present World War have changed in essential particulars since the last issue of Phylon. It looked then as though this might become openly and declaredly a war for racial and cultural equality. Certain statements since then, tend to support this point of view. The greatest single pronouncement was that by Vice-President Henry A. Wallace, May 8, 1942, in which he said with great frankness:

This is a fight between a slave world and a free world. Just as the United States in 1862 could not remain half slave and half free, so in 1942 the world must make its decision for a complete victory one way or the other.

The people are on the march toward even fuller freedom than the most fortunate peoples of the earth have hitherto enjoyed.

Some have spoken of the "American Century." I say that the century on which we are entering—the century which will come out of this war—can be and must be the century of the common man. Perhaps it will be America's opportunity to suggest the freedoms and duties by which the common man must live. Everywhere the common man must learn to build his own industries with his own hands in a practical fashion. Everywhere the common man must learn to increase his productivity so that he and his children can eventually pay to the world community all that they have received. No nation will have the God-given right to exploit other nations. Older nations will have the privilege to help younger nations get started on the path to industrialization but there must be neither military nor economic imperialism.
To this Pearl Buck's collected essays called *American Unity and Asia* add in her letter to colored Americans.

If democracy did not win, the white people would have to make themselves into a great standing army, highly trained, constantly prepared to keep the colored peoples subdued, and there could be no greater slavery than that necessity. It is possible, in this grave moment, that in such a place as Australia there might be white people made slaves by their conquerors, just as white people now are slaves in certain countries and no less slaves because their rulers are other white men. The issue today is not one of race, colored or white. It is freedom.

Even some Australian leaders seem to see light. Sir Bertram S. B. Stevens said at Sidney, July 19:

The defeat of Japan is essential if the East is to work harmoniously and amicably with the rest of the world, but the defeat of Japan will not mean a return in the East to the old quiescent subservience. Europeans and Americans will have to regard the Chinese, Indians, Malays and Javanese as friends of equal status. The days of colonial wars and of making profits by teaching Asians the wonders of Western civilization are gone forever.

Mr. Justice Frankfurter of the Supreme Court, speaking at the College of the City of New York, said that we had for a while regarded this war as a war of clashing imperialisms.

Now we see it for what it is—not at all as a war to save either the old British Empire or the new British Commonwealth of Nations. It is a war to save civilization itself from submergence.

On the other hand the imperial tradition will not down. The re-publication of Mackinder's *Democratic Ideals and Reality* emphasizes that there is one continent, the Eastern Hemisphere.

That hemisphere contains fourteen-sixteenths of the human race; England, Japan and the Asiatic islands contain one-sixteenth, with the American island (or islands) covering another sixteenth.

Within this continent lies the heartland and

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
Who rules the World-Island commands the World.

*Fortune*, the American rich man's magazine, lays down an elaborate plan detailing just how Japan is to be captured, garrisoned and held. All this relapse to imperialism brings the question of future police power. *World Federation* now says:

A voluntary world "police force" might be better than chaos, provided such force were established and left standing (as in the founding of our United States) without any specific authority to coerce a state. But most writers on international "police force" call for definite provisions authorizing the "police force" to "crack down" on a delinquent state. Such a provision is simply making a Civil War inevitable by putting down in black and white exactly how it shall start.

Former Ambassador Grew who helped on the present war by his remarks "straight from the horse's mouth," which the Japanese must have regarded as adding to a series of national insults, now emphasizes Japanese power.

We are up against a powerful fighting machine, a people whose morale cannot and will not be broken even by successive defeats, who will certainly not be broken by economic hardships, a people who individually and collectively will gladly sacrifice their lives for their Emperor and their nation, and who can be brought to earth only by physical defeat, by being ejected physically from the areas which they have temporarily conquered or by the progressive attrition of their naval power and merchant marine which will finally result in cutting off their homeland from all connection with and access to those outlying areas—by complete defeat in battle.

There is no mention of any attempt to meet whatever justice there is in Japanese demands. The correspondents of the *New York Times* have published fantastic stories of Japan's dreams of world conquest:
but the real difficulty is emphasized by Professor Kennedy of Yale. Asserting that Japan's policy could not be described as seeking the subjugation of the other people of Asia, he said:

That is only a by-product, and fundamentally it means aligning the yellow race against the white.

The full significance can only be appreciated if you know the intense resentment that has been built up, not only in Japan, but also in China, by a half century of domineering whites.

Colonel Blimp, the British cartoon creation of the war, says

Gad, sir, Japan is right. Keeping the white man out of the black man's country is the yellow man's burden.

A Negro American soldier adds to this idea when, according to Horace R. Cayton in the Nation, he reports a young black recruit as saying

Just carve on my tombstone, "Here lies a black man killed fighting a yellow man for the protection of a white man."

One element in the war which annoys both Great Britain and America, is that Russia is not fighting Japan, nor is Japan fighting Russia. American newspapers have been filled with the idea that Japan might attack Russia; but Victor A. Yakhontoff says in the New Republic that this is but wishful thinking and that the neutrality pact between Tokyo and Moscow shows every likelihood of remaining in force.

The Russians might even consider it as a part payment for all they had done for us and for the rest of the United Nations by killing more Germans and destroying more of their tanks, airplanes and other war machines than all the other allies, to paraphrase the words of President Roosevelt.

This brings the tragic position of Russia to the fore. There is widely current belief that Russia is not receiving fair consideration from the United Nations. The public believed that Russia had been promised a second front this year. It seems clear that Churchill's widely advertised visit to Stalin was to tell him frankly that no such help could be expected in 1942. Periodicals like the New Republic question the wisdom of this disappointing decision. Bruce Bliven writes

If in the autumn of 1942, Britain and America are not able to fight one-fifth of Germany's army, how do they expect to fight five-fifths of it—as they may be forced to do—in 1943?

Under the dominant leadership of Churchill neither Russia nor China is a real colleague in the United Nations and this brings us to the tragedy of India.

India

The main cause of the worsening in war ideals in the last few months, is the present situation in India. One cannot be reminded too often that, as Louis Fischer says in the Nation, "the poverty and stagnation of India are the background against which the present situation must be seen. . . . India is a miserably poor, hungry, retarded country. Most Indians are half-starved and three-fourths naked."

As Nehru insists in his article in the New York Times

However this war may develop, whatever the end may be, no matter what the peace is going to be, it is certain that the Western World can no longer dominate over Asia. If this is not realized and if the attempt is made to continue the old relationship in any form, this means the end of peace and another disastrous conflict.

The difficulty is that England not only refuses to be held responsible to any serious degree for present social conditions in India but insists that the chief difficulties lie with the Indians themselves and that her
broad and adequate promises of eventual Indian independence have been foolishly rejected. On the other hand, the president of the Indian National Congress declared that Cripps did not keep his word.

You told me then that there would be a national government which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King of England vis-a-vis his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office (headed by Leopold S. Amery in London) you told me that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter, and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions' Office.

No sooner had the English power in India heard of this offer than they forced its change and practical annulment. The final offer left the viceroy supreme, the Indians with no real voice in the present government and the future status to depend entirely upon England after the war.

It goes without saying that the Indians do not trust the word of Englishmen. This explains not only the Indian situation but the Irish complication. No amount of protestation on the part of the English can today convince Eire that it can expect honest treatment from England. It is not an answer to this when the English declare that the Indians are already represented in Indian government; that nine of the thirteen members of the Viceroy's Council are Indians. The Indians answer that the Viceroy can veto any action of his Council and that the nine Indians nominated to membership are stooges.

A dispatch to the New York Times says

Last Sunday evening in the native section of Old Delhi, some of these sympathizers organized a procession in which the Viceroy was represented by an Indian in tattered clothes and the Indian members of his Council by as many donkeys, with their names on placards, just so that there would be no misunderstanding. It represented one expression of popular feeling.

The gap between those Indians who serve the government and those who are fighting for independence is just as unbridgeable at present as the gap between the British and the Indians.

It is this situation of unbelief and lack of faith that points out the dangers of the present situation. Herbert L. Matthews writes to the New York Times saying

It must always be stressed that mutual distrust is one of the roots of India's troubles and that while Americans take for granted that the British are perfectly sincere and, anyway, could not escape fulfilling their promises even if they wanted to, a great many Indians do not believe them.

There is in this devil's broth the tremendous advantage of having the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi. Despite the slurs of Churchill and the contempt of many Americans, here is one of the world's great men. Lord Linlithgow, Viceroy of India, himself has said "Gandhi is the biggest thing in India." Yet it was Gandhi who moved toward a final break with England. He did it clearly and openly and wrote this resolution for the Indian Congress

Whereas the British War Cabinet proposals by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the All-India Congress Committee has come to the following conclusions:

The committee is of the opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defense. There is the eternal conflict between Indian and British interest. It follows that their notions of defense would also differ.

The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues, and is the reason why national defense is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quartet is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan.

The Congress, at the motion of Nehru, modified the statement concerning Japan so that the resolution finally said "A free India would
know how to defend herself in event of any aggressor attacking her.” The words make little difference, for what rankles in the Indian’s mind is that they are at war today with Japan by declaration of England with absolutely no consultation with the Indians.

The movement of Gandhi and the Congress was in a sense forced by Indian public opinion. Gandhi said,

I know full well that the British will have to give us our freedom when we have made sufficient sacrifices and proven our strength. We must remove the hatred for the British from our hearts. At least in my heart there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact, I am a greater friend of the British now than I ever was.

The reason for this is that at this moment they are in distress. My friendship demands that I must make them aware of their mistakes. As I am not in the position in which they find themselves, I am able to point their mistakes out to them.

I know they are on the brink of the ditch, and are about to fall into it. Therefore, even if they want to cut off my hands, my friendship demands that I should try to pull them out of that ditch. This is my claim, at which many people may laugh, but all the same, I say this is true.

Evidence of this is widespread. A journalist speaking to Louis Fischer at the Bombay Journalist Association said “for us Indians there is no difference between British fascism and Japanese or German fascism.”

The threat of Japan lies over India and is regarded in two ways: the Indians say that they cannot organize Indian opposition to Japan if England insists on white supremacy in India; the English say that Japan is so threatening that they cannot give up their grip on India. The reaction of the English to Gandhi’s non-violent revolt has been peculiar. In the first place it must be remembered that the violence is not on Gandhi’s program. Indeed he has often threatened to starve himself to death if violence was the result of his program of non-cooperation. Not violence but non-cooperation is the Gandhi program. But the English make no distinction. Henry Judd declares in Labor Action that seven hundred and twenty-one Indians have been killed and one thousand two hundred and nineteen wounded. The English largely approve this. Churchill’s speech was cynical and reactionary to the last degree and simply carries out his long program of opposition to Indian autonomy. Public whipping is permitted and miscellaneous spraying of civilian population by machine guns from airplanes was applauded in Parliament.

More than this we do not know. It is reported that U. S. saw, the Burmese Prime Minister and leader, who dared ask Churchill face to face last year for autonomy, is dead after his arrest by the British. The strike of fifty thousand workers at the Tata Munitions Works was not reported in the press for a month and American newspaper men have been bitter at the refusal to allow them to tell the truth.

The greatest result of the break and the most indefensible is the imprisonment of Gandhi, Nehru and other leaders. These men have already spent a large part of their lives in British jails and it is the most contradictory result of the war that men of high character and education who have made their career the fight for democracy, should be imprisoned by the country which is supposed to represent democracy at its highest.

The argument that India cannot be allowed freedom until she settles her internal difficulties is astonishing when it comes from Europeans. That there will be innumerable and serious internal problems which a free India will have to settle; that they may even lead to civil war is quite possible; but that Europe or any European nation should be allowed to settle India’s problems for her or to say when India shall be allowed to begin her own settlement, is an inadmissible conclusion.

The reaction of the Indian situation in the United States has been on the whole gratifying. A few influential Americans, to be sure, have stood back of the English attitude and have maintained that America has no interest in this internal problem of the British Empire but the New Republic says:

From the assumption that India is England’s private affair, we have gone ahead, under the false sense of unity, to assume that loyalty to the United
Nations means loyalty to England, and loyalty to England in the India question means loyalty to the English Tories, and loyalty to the English Tories means loyalty to Amery. Consequently, the whole American press has interpreted unity of the United Nations as the duty to follow the Cripps-Amereite version of the Indian situation, and accepts even such gratuitous and basically false propaganda as the smear on Gandhi as "an appeaser," which both Cripps and Amery know is false. This attitude of accepting wartime lies in the heat of controversy is unworthy of Americans, for the Indians are fighting for what Americans achieved in their Revolutionary War—freedom from England.

Mrs. John Gunther writes bitterly

The biggest and barest case of aggression in the world today is the English aggression in India.

This is the precedent for all other aggressions that have since followed. And until it is wiped out, it will remain the moral and physical excuse for all other aggressions which continue to follow in its rutted trail...

What Britain is doing to India is not only political immorality, it is political lunacy. Not all the perfumes of Araby, nor the most complicated apologies of the subllest Ministries of Information can cover up that blot.

This war must be fought with planes, guns, and ships, but first of all it must be fought with clean hands.

Robert R. Reynolds, chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives breaks his record of being wrong on most questions by saying

If we are fighting for the right of people to maintain the government they desire, we can convince the people of the world of our seriousness and good faith only by requiring our ally, Britain, to grant immediate independence to the 370,000,000 people of India.

Oswald Garrison Villard says in the Times

What we are witnessing in India is just one more clash between right and expediency, but this war has produced no more piteous tragedy and none more dangerous. It really seems as if democracy were to be slain by the blunders and folly of those who feel themselves to be its most devoted defenders...

From the very beginning of the war in Asia there has been the greatest danger that this struggle would degenerate into a war of the colored races against the white. Hence England should have used every opportunity to head off what was plainly inevitable unless a way out could be found through mediation or wise counsel. But the Viceroy refused to confer with Gandhi after the Congress had voted its resolution, and the arrests followed, evidently in the belief that prompt and vigorous action and the use of unlimited force would nip the uprising in the bud.

Aida Pierce McCormick writes a circular letter from Arizona

Does England do to India the horrible things that Germany and Japan have done to captive countries?

No. She is much more humane. But if she now imprisons the intellectual and spiritual leaders of India; if she puts all of the Congress of India in prison and uses the lash on the common man who follows Gandhi, it will be hard for simple people, whether British or American, to remember how much worse the Nazis and Japanese are. It will confuse us. The dangers are a cynical disbelief in all the propaganda of freedom among our own people; also a deeper cynicism and despair among all our allies who are not white.

Many bodies and individuals have petitioned President Roosevelt but so far he has maintained silence except in commending the anniversary of the Atlantic Charter. Evidently Churchill knew what he was talking about when he said this Charter did not apply to India. The Madras Hindu says

Churchill has broken his own record by packing into a few hundred words more venom and more mischievous half truths than he treated the House of Commons to during the India bill debate in 1935. So far as India is concerned he is as dangerously irresponsible, as arrogantly contemptuous, as purblind as ever.
Nehru

One of the most significant books of the war is the autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru. The book is significant not simply because, with great temperance and command of English, it tells the moving history of a life; but because both that life and the writing of the book are symbolic of the paradox and contradiction of the present world situation. Here is a man of Indian birth and Harrow and Cambridge education, who not only is writing his life in a British jail but has spent a large portion of his working days in such jails; and whose fault in the eyes of authority is exactly the object for which that same authority is fighting a world war, namely democracy; the firm determination of Nehru to achieve the autonomy and independence from the British Empire of the three hundred fifty million of India. As a peaceful, cultured and persistent advocate of this end he has not only been repeatedly imprisoned but lies in prison at this moment; has been beaten by the police on the street and seen friends killed and his mother beaten and sitting in her own blood; and must dedicate this volume to his wife, “Kamala Who Is No More,” and who was driven to premature death by the struggle through which she and her husband had to pass. As the publisher says in his foreword, “Nehru is today the great democrat of the world. Not Churchill, not Roosevelt, not Chiang Kai-shek, in a sense not even Gandhi, stand as firm as Nehru does for government by the consent of the people and for the integrity of the individual.”

Nehru was born in 1889 at Allahabad on the Ganges, in north central India. Sheltered as he was by well-to-do parents of the Brahmin caste, he nevertheless early sensed the shadow of the color veil. He knew that when an Englishman killed an Indian he was almost invariably acquitted by the jury; that on railway trains Europeans had reserved compartments while the Indians were crowded in their compartments like cattle. Benches and chairs were reserved for whites in public parks and when an Indian bested an Englishman the child was proud and glad. Yet he did not grow up to hate the English. On the whole, as he came to know them and was educated by English tutors and from the age of fifteen spent seven years in English schools, he conceived much admiration for the English. Yet he was also critical. With a predilection for a soft and easy existence and attracted a while by the gay life of London’s West End, nevertheless he sympathized with the Boers in the Boer War and with the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War and when in 1912, he returned to India for good, it was not indeed as a radical or a revolutionist but certainly as a friendly critic of England in India and as one who really know very little about the masses of the Indian people.

Then began his real education. He was swept into the unrest and protest then growing in India. He began to become acquainted with the crushing poverty of the masses, to meet them, to talk with them and live with them. He met Gandhi as early as 1916 and they became life long friends. He eventually joined the All India Congress movement, became a non-cooperator, helped in the boycott of the visiting Prince of Wales and refused to buy foreign cloth. He saw how his fellow Indians in the civil service became stool pigeons for the British. Especially he realized how Britain was crushing out freedom of thought and initiative: “It is estimated that above three hundred thousand persons have gone to prison at various times during the past fourteen years; and there can be no doubt that, politics apart, these three hundred thousand included some of the most dynamic and idealistic, the most socially minded and selfless people in India.”

From a dilettante he became an earnest advocate of democracy for the masses. He began to believe in socialism and even in communism
minus its violence. He played a larger and larger part in the wide Indian revolt; he joined the trades unions and so prominent did he become that it was proposed soon after the war began that he be made Premier of India "in fact if not in name" and the New Statesman of London added, "If we dare give India liberty we shall win the leadership of all free peoples. If we must meet a rebel India with coercion, will anyone in Europe or America mistake us for the champions of democracy?"

I must not deprive the reader of his own pleasure in following the struggles and disappointments of this extraordinary man, and especially of realizing the sweetness and balance of his temper. Few books of 450 pages have held me so enthralled. In comparison with the Negro problem in America one sees in Nehru's career astonishing resemblances: the violence, the stress upon religious submission, the inner difficulties within the Indian race and the way in which these difficulties have been played upon to the advantage of the English. The rather mysterious figure of Gandhi rises and take shape in this volume. Nehru loves Gandhi but does not fully agree with him, criticizes him sharply at various times but always defers to him and cooperates. From time to time during his fight to free India, Nehru visits Europe. He takes part in the Congress of Brussels which defends minorities. He visits Germany, Russia and Italy and then comes back to realize the insult of the Rowlett bills and the horrible massacre at Amritsar. One rises from the reading of this book with a feeling that the so-called race problems of the modern world are essentially one: primarily they are matters of economic exploitation, of racial arrogance and the utter failure to recognize in people of different color, appearance and ways of life, the essential humanity of all mankind.

The Freeing of India

The fifteenth of August deserves to be remembered as the greatest historical date of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is saying a great deal, when we remember that in the nineteenth century, Napoleon was overthrown, democracy established in England, Negro slaves emancipated in the United States, the German Empire founded, the partition of Africa determined upon, the Russian Revolution carried through, and two world wars fought. Nevertheless, it is true that the fifteenth of August marks an event of even greater significance than any of these; for on that date four hundred million colored folk of Asia were loosed from the domination of the white people of Europe.

It was not a gift nor act of grace. It was forced from the British Empire by the determination of the Indians themselves. Moreover, it was accomplished, not by blood and war, but by peace and grim determination. But for the action of one selfish man, M. A. Jinnah, originally encouraged by the English, there would have been practically no bloodshed in this vast revolution. Even as it is, the number of people killed in India by religious fanaticism during this emancipation is as nothing compared with the millions who fell in the American Civil War, in the Napoleonic Wars, and in two World Wars of Europe and America.

Indian Panorama

What is India? It is 1,500 thousand square miles of territory, with four hundred millions of people. They are mixed descendants of
Negroes and Negroids; Mongolians, Western Asiatics, and Eastern Europeans. They vary in color from black to white, and they are divided religiously into one hundred and fifty million Hindus, ninety million Mohammedans, thirteen million Sikhs, Jains and Christians, and many millions of smaller groups. They speak some two hundred and twenty-two languages and dialects.

The Indians are wretchedly poor. Lajpat Rai says: "The people of India are the poorest on earth. If there existed such poverty in any other country in Europe or America, the Government would have been turned out of office."

Sir William Hunter, one of the most candid writers and a distinguished historian of India, Director-General of Indian statistics for many years, declared that 40 million of the people of India were seldom or never able to satisfy their hunger. It has been calculated that the average Indian family receives not more than twenty-five dollars a year. They are at least 75 percent illiterate and despite sixteen universities mostly of recent growth there are only fifteen million children in school. All this has been represented as taking place despite the philanthropy of Europe, and especially of England. This is of course a gross misinterpretation of history; it stems from the literary propaganda of which Rudyard Kipling was the especial example, which has led people for decades to picture India a great and backward country led by powerful, honest and semi-royal whites, and represented by a few gorgeously caparisoned Princes with millions of dollars in jewels and income.

Early Indian Education

Rev. F. E. Keay, writing on Ancient Indian Education, 1918, says that in the past Indian education was not inferior to the education of Europe, before the Revival of Learning. Not only did the Brahman educators develop a system of education which survived the crumbling of empires and the changes of society, but they also through all these thousands of years, kept aglow the torch of higher learning, and numbered amongst them many great thinkers who have left their mark not only upon the learning of India, but upon the intellectual life of the world.

When Buddhism came, it organized and developed a system of education. The Buddhist system was very much like the Brahmanical system from which it borrowed largely. Some of the Buddhist universities were of enormous size. Their high standards of learning attracted many scholars from China, some of whom have left on record description of these seats of learning. Buddhist education was by no means theological education. The study of medicine received special attention at the Buddhist universities. The Buddhist seats of learning did not shut their doors on any caste or creed. The high caste, the low caste, the Buddhist, the would-be Buddhist, the non-Buddhist, were all welcome. The contribution of Buddhist monks to elementary mass education was also considerable. Because of its Buddhist monasteries, practically every male adult in Burma was literate when the British set foot there.

The history of India is a story of change and tragedy. Three or four thousand years before Christ, a black people established civilization in the valley of the Ganges and other centers. Upon them descended invaders: Mongolians, from the east; Indo-Europeans from the west; and finally the great Mohammedan incursion in the sixteenth century and later. A fine and striking primitive civilization arose in India upon the black Dravidian foundation; it had a philosophy, a social organization, a splendid art.

In India was born, five centuries before Christ, one of the greatest of the world's religious leaders, usually depicted as black and crisply-haired, Gautama Buddha. He preached a religion of sacrifice and spiritual development. His religion spread over half the world. From 264 to 227 B.C. arose the great Emperor Asoka whose wheel is pictured on the new flag of Indian. He began a golden age which lasted a thousand years. After this era, when Indian civilization was one of
the greatest in the world, with the Buddhist religion in the lead, there came a series of invasions; the Mongolian horde under Timur from the east; the Mohammedans from the west; invasions all foreshadowed by the incursion of Alexander the Great 327 B.C.

In 1526, the great Moguls were reigning and the fame of their wealth and extravagance turned the attention of Europe toward India. From 1556 to 1605 reigned the great Emperor Ak-Bar and the Mohammedan empire glowed and died under his successors during the seventeenth century. By that time the attention of Europe was definitely turned toward India as a source of wealth, and in waves came the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and finally the British. By the battle of Plassey in 1757 the English became masters of the fate of India. A great English writer Howitt tells of what the Dutch did in India:

To secure dominion they compelled the princes of Ternate and Tidore to consent to the rooting up of all the clove and nutmeg trees in the island not entirely under the jealous safeguard of Dutch keeping. For this they utterly exterminated the inhabitants of Banda, because they would not submit passively to their yoke. Their lands were divided amongst the white people, who got slaves from other islands to cultivate them. For this Malacca was besieged, its territory ravaged, and its navigation interrupted by pirates; Negapatan was twice attacked; Cochin was engaged in resisting the kings of Calicut and Travancor, and Ceylon and Java were made scenes of perpetual disturbances. These notorious dissensions have been followed by as odious oppressions, which have been practised at Japan, China, Cambodia, Arrácan on the banks of the Ganges, at Achen, Coromandel, Surat, in Persia, at Bassora, Mocha, and other places. For this they encouraged and established in Celebes a system of kidnapping the inhabitants for slaves which converted that island into a perfect hell.

English Repression

The record of the English was worse and longer:

The power, the wealth, and the patronage brought home to them by the very violation of their own wishes and maxims were of such an overwhelming and seducing nature that it was in vain to resist them. Nay, in such colours does the modern philosophy of conquest and diplomacy disguise the worst transactions between one state and another, that is it not for plain men very readily to penetrate to the naked enormity beneath.

But if there was ever one system more Machiavellian—more appropriate of the shew of justice where the basest injustice was attempted—more cold, more cruel, haughty, and unrelenting than another—it is the system by which the government of different states of India has been wrested from the hands of their respective princes and collected into the grasp of British power.

The condition of India before the Europeans came was favorable. The historian Feroz Shah (A.D. 1351–1394) expatiates on the happy state of the peasant, the goodness of their houses and furniture, and the general use of gold and silver ornaments by their women.

“The general state of the country must no doubt have been flourishing. Nicolo de Conti, who traveled about 1420 A.D., speaks highly of what he saw in Guzerat, and found the banks of the Ganges covered with towns amidst beautiful gardens and orchards, and passed four famous cities before he reached Maaraazia, which he describes as a powerful city filled with gold, silver and precious stones. His accounts are corroborated by those of Barbora and Bartema, who traveled in the early part of the sixteenth century.

“Abdurrazaz, an ambassador from the grandson of Tamerlane, visited the South of India in 1442, and concurs with other observers in giving the impression of a prosperous country. The kingdom of Kandeish was at this time in a high state of prosperity under its own Kings; the numerous stone embankments by which the streams were rendered applicable to irrigation are equal to anything in India as works of industry and ability.”

Baber speaks of Hindustan “as a rich and noble country and expresses his astonishment at the swarming population and the innumerable workmen of every kind and description.” Political subjection to Europe followed in the nineteenth century.
Lajpat Rai, the great Indian martyr said:

Political subjection is the punishment of social evils and national crimes, but once imposed, it adds to their volume and intensity. It effectively checks any rejuvenation or reconstruction. It accentuates social evils and weaknesses. It leads to poverty in all its hideous forms, mental, moral and physical. If ever an awakening comes, it is delayed, or checked and crushed by all the forces of law and diplomacy, and of cunning and fraud. It is a part of the Imperial game to paint the subject people in the blackest colours, and to slander and libel them more shamelessly. The object is to produce and perpetuate the slave mentality of the subject people, and to obtain the moral sanction of the rest of the world for usurping the rights, properties, and liberties of other peoples. This is the genesis of the philosophy of the white man's burden. This is the mentality which stimulates the Empire-builder. This is the material with which the "steel frames" are forged to keep the subject peoples in hand and to prevent them from doing any harm to themselves, by aspiring to and working for their freedom. That is how Britain made her Empire in India.

Howitt says:

The first step in the English friendship with the native princes has generally been to assist them against their neighbours with troops, or to locate troops with them to protect them from aggression. For these services such enormous recompense was stipulated for, that the unwary princes, entrapped by their fears of their native foes rather than of their pretended friends, soon found that they were utterly unable to discharge them. Dreadful exactions were made of the subjects, but in vain. Whole provinces, or the revenues of them were soon obliged to be made over to their grasping friends but they did not suffice for their demands. In order to pay them their debts or their interest, the princes were obliged to borrow large sums at an extravagant rate. Theses sums were eagerly advanced by the English in their private and individual capacities, and securities again taken on lands or revenues. At every step the unhappy princes became more and more embarrassed, and as embarrassment increased, the claims of the company became proportionally pressing. In the technical phraseology of money-lenders the screw was then turned, till there was no longer any enduring it.

Indian Revolts

From the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, bloody revolt and oppression was the history of this land. Revolts took place in 1758, 1775, 1782, 1790, 1805, 1814, 1817, 1823, 1837, 1844, 1850 culminating in the great mutiny of 1852. The stench of Indian misgovernment, graft, and theft at last made the British Crown take over the government from the celebrated East India Company. In 1858, India became a part of the British Empire, and in 1877 Victoria was made "Empress of India" by the great Jewish prime minister, Disraeli.

This did not stop, rather it began the inner struggle of India for freedom. Governors changed and became more liberal and cried to strive for better conditions in India; but the whole object of the British in India was still to make profit through private investment. And when the government interfered with investment, it simply meant that well-intentioned reform did not go through. The land became monopolized by money-lenders; industry became subservient to English trade; Indian art and artisanship was driven out of the market; the peasants and laborers became poorer and poorer and the whole country more and more ignorant. In spite of all the boasting of empire, England with her imperial might lay upon India like a blight.

The First World War brought matters to a crisis. Beginning in 1917 Great Britain tried to give India a constitution and rights, but arranged them on her own terms without allowing the Indians any voice in drawing up the new constitution. The great result of this effort was Mohandas Gandhi, the man who began his fight for freedom in South Africa in behalf of both Indians and Negroes; and who now in India began his celebrated strife for peaceful rebellion, non-cooperation and self-rule in 1920.

The great Indian Congress was organized, one of the most successful voluntary organizations of peoples without rights that the world has ever seen. It stuck together in spite of differences in religion and aim and raised the cry of home rule in 1923. The British replied with
elaborate shadow-boxing and propaganda. They called conferences in London, shot down protesters in India, and jailed the leaders, so that of the people now leading India there is not a single one who has not spent months and years in jail for demanding what they now have won in political and social freedom.

Finally because of the political results and economic complications of the Second World War, Great Britain had to let go; instead of India being in debt to Great Britain, Great Britain was hopelessly in debt to India, because of the raw materials which she had to draw from her during the war. The attitude of the Indian people was such that Great Britain did not dare compulsion. Some elements had even openly fought beside the Japanese. There was and is today wide interest in Russia and in Communism.

Divided India

Various gestures were made, the first brought by Cripps was rejected by the Indians; then the renegade Jinnah, a rich land-holder raised and pressed the religious question and succeeded in temporarily dividing India on the basis of Hinduism and Mohammedanism. Out of that, among the poor and ignorant, rose fanatical fighting among neighbors who had lived in peace for centuries. But the great Indian leaders were not to be diverted or misled. They decided wisely to accept freedom, even though it meant for the present a divided India. This division into Pakistan and the Union of India cannot stand, because Pakistan is an agricultural country, divided by the great triangle of India; unless then it can find support in Europe, which it cannot for long, it must depend upon India for industry which means that economic pressure will compel it to be one with the great subcontinent. So too the princely states will resist but succumb.

It is true that all will not go well with India. It is a difficult—a herculean task which this new nation undertakes. First of all, there are social problems; the education of a country which is vastly ignorant and needs all sort of education; there is the health problem among a people decimated by tropical disease, mal-nutrition and lack of clothing and shelter.

There is above all the problem of poverty; there is going to be increasingly a fierce struggle between the great Indian capitalists representing the tuition and the capital of Europe, and the mass of workers who have been ground down to the last degree of poverty and ill-health.

All of that drama of the rights of labor, which has been fought out in Europe and America, must be begun and struggled through in India. Then of course there is the problem of religion; age-old beliefs and superstitions, exacerbated by the Jinnah political program of throwing two great religions into difficult and bitter political competition. Nothing but an India-wide crusade against religious dogma will win here in the end. It must and will be undertaken.

Finally there is the whole problem of political power: the overall power of the state, the division of powers among the provinces; the question of votes and elections, and the various law-making bodies; all this portends for India a terrible and long struggle. But there is in this new land, certain great advantages. They have a spiritual faith; a belief in the inner value of the human being as different from and transcending the matter of wealth and material things. Indian philosophy and religion has influenced the world in this respect in the past; it will in the future. It may become dominant even over Europe, which measures everything in terms of profit.

American Negroes, particularly, have every reason to hail the new and free India. It is a freedom and autonomy of colored folk; it ends the day in a whole continent, when the white man by reason of the color of his skin, can lord it over colored people; when he can bring his segregation and his cheap habits of superiority, as shown by exclusive clubs, "jim-crow" cars and salaams and the other paraphernalia of disgraceful human degradation. The sun of the colored man has arisen in Asia as it will yet rise in Africa and America and the West Indies.
Mohandas Gandhi was born nineteen months after my birth. As a school-boy in a small town in the north-eastern part of the United States, I knew little of Asia and the schools taught less. The one tenuous link which bound me to India was skin colour. That was important in America and even in my town, although little was said about it. But I was conscious of being the only brown face in my school and although my dark family had lived in this valley for two hundred years or more, I was early cognizant of a status different from that of my white school-mates.

As I grew up there seemed to be no future for me in the place of my birth, and at seventeen I went South, where formerly coloured people had been slaves, so that I could be trained to work among them. There at Fisk University I first became aware of a world of coloured folk and I learned not only of the condition of American Negroes but began to read of China and India; and to make Africa the special object of my study. I published my first book in 1896 while Gandhi was in South Africa, and my subject was the African slave trade. We did not at the time have much direct news from Africa in the American newspapers, but I did have several black students from South Africa and began to sense the tragedy of that awful land. It was not until after the First World War that I came to realize Gandhi’s work for Africa and the world.

I was torn by the problem of peace. As a youth I was certain that freedom for the coloured peoples of the earth would come on by war; by doing to white Europe and America what they had done to black Africa and coloured Asia. This seemed the natural conclusion from the fairy tales called history on which I had been nourished. Then in the last decades of the nineteenth century, as I came to manhood, I caught the vision of world peace and signed the pledge never to take part in war.

With the First World War came my first knowledge of Gandhi. I came to know Lajpat Rai and Madame Naidu. John Haynes Holmes was one of my co-workers in the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, and he was a friend and admirer of Gandhi. Indeed the “Coloured People” referred to in our name was not originally confined to America. I remember the discussion we had on inviting Gandhi to visit America and how we were forced to conclude that this land was not civilized enough to receive a coloured man as an honoured guest.

In 1929, as the Depression loomed, I asked Gandhi for a message to American Negroes, which I published in the Crisis. He said: “Let not the 12 million Negroes be ashamed of the fact that they are the grandchildren of slaves. There is dishonour in being slave-owner, but let us not think of honour or dishonour in connection with the past. Let us realize that the future is with those who would be pure, truthful and loving. For as the old wise men have said: Truth ever is, untruth never was. Love alone binds and truth and love accrue only to the truly humble.”

This was written on May day, 1929. Through what phantasmagoria of hurt and evil the world has passed since then! We American Negroes have reeled and staggered from side to side and forward and back. In the First World War, we joined with America capital to keep Germany and Italy from sharing the spoils of colonial Imperialism. In the Depression we sank beneath the burden of poverty, ignorance and disease due to discrimination, unemployment and crime. In the Second World War, we again joined Western capital against Fascism and failed to realize how the Soviet Union sacrificed her blood and savings to save the world.
But we did realize how out of war began to arise a new coloured world free from the control of Europe and America. We began too to realize the role of Gandhi and to evaluate his work as a guide for the black people of the United States. As an integral part of this country, as workers, consumers and co-creators of its culture, we could not look forward to physical separation except as a change of masters. But what of Gandhi's program of peace and non-violence? Only in the last year have American Negroes begun to see the possibility of this program being applied to the Negro problems in the United States.

Personally I was long puzzled. After the World Depression, I sensed a recurring contradiction. I saw Gandhi's non-violence gain freedom for India, only to be followed by violence in all the world. I realized that the vaunted "hundred years of peace," from Waterloo to the Battle of the Marne, was not peace at all but war, of Europe and North America on Africa and Asia, with only troubled bits of peace between the colonial conquerors. I saw Britain, France, Belgium and North America trying to continue to force the world to serve them by monopoly of land, technique and machines, backed by physical force which has now culminated in the use of atomic power. Only the possession of this power by the Soviet Union prevents the restoration of colonial imperialism of the West over Asia and Africa, under the leadership of men like Dulles and Eden. Perhaps in this extraordinary impasse the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi may have a chance to prevail in the world. Recent events in the former slave territory of the United States throw a curious light on this possibility.

In Montgomery, Alabama, the former capital of the Confederate States which fought for years to make America a slave nation, the black workers last year refused any longer to use the public busses on which their seats had long been segregated from those of the white passengers, paying the same fare. In addition to separation, there was abuse and insult by the white conductors. This custom had continued for seventy-five years. Then last year a coloured seamstress got tired of insult and refused to give her seat to a white man. Black workers led by young, educated ministers began a strike which stopped the discrimination, aroused the state and the nation and presented an unbending front of non-violence to the murderous mob which hitherto has ruled the South. The occurrence was extraordinary. It was not based on any first-hand knowledge of Gandhi and his work. Their leaders like Martin Luther King knew of non-resistance in India; many of the educated teachers, business and professional men had heard of Gandhi. But the rise and spread of this movement was due to the truth of its underlying principles and not to direct teaching or propaganda. In this aspect it is a most interesting proof of the truth of the Gandhian philosophy.

The American Negro is not yet free. He is still discriminated against, oppressed and exploited. The recent court decisions in his favour are excellent but are as yet only partially enforced. It may well be that the enforcement of these laws and real human equality and brotherhood in the United States will come only under leadership of another Gandhi.
Will the Great Gandhi Live Again?

The greatest philosopher of our era pointed out the inherent contradictions in many of our universal beliefs; and he sought eventual reconciliation of these paradoxes. We realize this today. Our newly inaugurated President asks the largest expenditure for war in history made by a nation, and proclaims this as a step toward peace! We have larger endowments devoted to peace activity than any other nation on earth, and less activity for abolishing war.

As I look back on my own attitude toward war during the last seventy years, I see repeated contradiction. In my youth, nourished as I was on fairy tales, including some called History, I quite naturally regarded war as a necessary step toward progress. I believed that if my people ever gained freedom and equality, it would be by killing white people.

Then, as a young man in the great affluence of the late nineteenth century, I came to believe in peace. No more war. I signed the current pledge never to take part in war. Yet during the First World War, “the war to stop war,” I was swept into the national maelstrom.

After the depression I sensed recurring contradictions. I saw Gandhi’s non-violence gain freedom for India, only to be followed by violence in all the world; I realized that the hundred years of peace from Waterloo to 1914 was not peace at all, but war of Europe on Africa and Asia, with troubled peace only between the colonial conquerors. I saw Britain, France, and America trying to continue to force the world to serve them by using their monopoly of land, technique, and machinery, backed by gunpowder, and then threatening atomic power.

Then Montgomery in Alabama tried to show the world the synthesis of this antithesis. And not the white Montgomery of the Slave Power; not even the black Montgomery of the Negro professional men, merchants, and teachers; but the black workers: the scrubbets and cleaners; the porters and seamstresses. They turned to a struggle not for great principles and noble truths, but just asked to be let alone after a tiring day’s work; to be free of petty insult after hard and humble toil. These folk, led by a man who had read Hegel, knew of Karl Marx, and had followed Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, preached: “Not by Might, not by Power, but by My Spirit,” saith the Lord. Did this doctrine and practice of non-violence bring solution of the race problem in Alabama? It did not. Black workers, many if not all, are still walking to work, and it is possible any day that their leader will be killed by hoodlums perfectly well known to the white police and the city administration, egged on by white councils of war, while most white people of the city say nothing and do nothing.

All over the lower South this situation prevails. Despite law, in the face of drooling religion and sanctimonious prayer, while the nation dances and yells and prepares to fight for peace and freedom, there is race war, jails full of the innocent, and ten times more money spent for mass murder than for education of children. Where are we, then, and whither are we going? What is the synthesis of this paradox of eternal and world-wide war and the coming of the Prince of Peace?

It lies, I think, not in the method but in the people concerned. Among normal human beings, with the education customary today in most civilized nations, non-violence is the answer to the temptation to force. When threat is met by fist; when blow follows blow, violence becomes customary. But no normal human being of trained intelligence is going to fight the man who will not fight back. In such cases, peace begins and grows just because it is. But suppose they are wild beasts or wild men? To yield to the rush of the tiger is death, nothing less. The wildness of beasts is nature; but the wildness of
men is neglect and, often, our personal neglect. This is the reason beneath our present paradox of peace and war.

For now near a century this nation has trained the South in lies, hate, and murder. We are emphasizing today that when Robert E. Lee swore to serve the nation and then broke his word to serve his clan, his social class, and his private property—that this made him a hero; that although he did not believe in human slavery, he fought four long years, with consummate skill, over thousands of dead bodies, to make it legal for the South to continue to hold four million black folk as chattel bondsmen—that this makes him a great American and candidate for the Hall of Fame.

We have for eighty years as a nation widely refused to regard the killing of a Negro in the South as murder, or the violation of a black girl as rape. We have let white folk steal millions of black folks' hard-earned wages, and openly defended this as natural for a "superior" race. As a result of this, we have today in the South millions of persons who are pathological cases. They cannot be reasoned with in matters of race. They are not normal and cannot be treated as normal. They are ignorant and their schools are poor because they cannot afford a double school system and would rather themselves remain ignorant than let Negroes learn.

Remedy for this abnormal situation would be education for all children and education all together, so as to let them grow up knowing each other as human. Precisely this path these abnormal regions refuse to follow. Here, then, is no possible synthesis. So long as a people insults, murders and hates by hereditary teaching, non-violence can bring no peace. It will bring migration until that fails, and then attempts at bloody revenge. It will spread war and murder. Can we then by effort make the average white person in states like South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana normal, intelligent human beings?

If we can, we solve our antithesis; great Gandhi lives again. If we cannot civilize the South, or will not even try, we continue in contradiction and riddle.

Our Visit to China

I am an American in the sense that I was born in the United States where my forebears have lived for two centuries. We have worked and voted there, paid taxes and served in the armed forces. We have made some contribution to American culture. On the other hand, I am in the fifth generation, an African. In the eighteenth century, a Dutch trader seized my great-great grandfather on the coast of West Africa, transported him to New Amsterdam which is now the state of New York, and sold him as a slave. He gained his freedom by fighting in the American Revolution to free America from Great Britain. The great-great-granddaughter of this Tom Burghardt married the great-grandson of a French Huguenot, who had migrated to America in the seventeenth century and some of whose descendants had gone to the West Indies to avoid fighting England. One of these had a mulatto concubine and his grandson married my mother. I am their son, hence my French name. My wife Shirley Graham was also born in America, of African and Scotch-Irish decent; and her grandfather was a Cheyenne Indian. Few persons have better right to call themselves American.

Nevertheless our people for three hundred years have had to struggle for recognition as American citizens, because most of our folk were in slavery or worked as low-paid serfs for exploiting whites. Many whites joined us in our struggle, and thus our people have gained important victories in our fight for equality in the last two centuries. This battle still goes on and must be continued until Negroes are recognized as equal to other American citizens.