African-Americans and American Foreign Policy

"Voices in the Wilderness: The Role and Influences of African-American Citizens in the Development and Formation of Foreign Policy 1919-1944"

by

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Abstract

This paper will demonstrate that African-Americans did articulate their concerns regarding American policy formation, to become more than voices in the wilderness. African-Americans mobilized and demanded that their issues be reflected in American foreign policy decisions. Blacks understood global issues and created linkages with people of color throughout the world to gain insight and allies in the struggle for equal rights. Whether the influence came from civic organizations, religious institutions or charismatic leaders, the African-American voice has not been silent in articulating their views on how foreign policy should be created. African–Americans also made recommendations and participated in the formation of foreign policy to shape domestic policy regarding civil and human rights. For African-Americans, foreign and domestic policy was inextricably linked. This paper cannot fully illustrate all of the contributions of the African-American community in foreign policy from 1920-1944, but it will highlight some significant milestones in organizing, outreach, and influence during this time period. Part One will consist of how African-Americans spoke collectively through various political organizations and collaborated with the Japanese to address issues of racial equality at the Peace Conference held Versailles, France after World War I. The focus of Part Two will be the rise of the Black media and how it influenced African-Americans in the collective struggle to influence foreign policy regarding the colonial influence of Great Britain in India.

The historical investigation of African-Americans' role and influence in foreign affairs from 1935-1944 is an attempt to resolve the widely held belief in certain academic circles that until the latter part of the twentieth-century African-Americans did not engage in a collective effort to shape American foreign policy. This essay will discuss how African-Americans articulated their concerns regarding American foreign policy formation and how they become more than voices in the wilderness. African-Americans mobilized and demanded that their issues be reflected in American foreign policy decisions. Blacks understood global issues and created linkages with people of color throughout the world to gain insight and allies in the struggle for equal rights.

African-Americans had a deep and abiding interest in world affairs because they identified with the dehumanizing system of colonialism that was practiced throughout the world with their own experience in living in a segregated society. Many experts on United States Foreign Policy have underestimated, if not disregarded, the influence of African-Americans regarding American foreign policy and how it changed the landscape of social, political and economic equity for oppressed people throughout the world. Whether the influence came from civic organizations, religious institutions or charismatic leaders, African-American voices have not been silent in articulating their views on how foreign policy should be created. African–Americans also recommended and participated in the formation of foreign policy to shape domestic policy regarding civil and human rights. For African-Americans, foreign and domestic policies were inextricably linked.

Dr. Brenda Gayle Plummer is a professor, historian and author at the University of Wisconsin, has written extensity on the subjects of race, international relations and civil rights. In her book entitled "Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960", Dr. Gayle writes that since 1970 organizations like Trans-Africa have made inroads with regard to influencing American foreign policy pertaining to South Africa. However, Dr. Plummer concludes that if organizations like Trans-Africa, led by Randal Robinson, have been successful in influencing American foreign policy through divestment of its assets from the South African Apartheid regime, then that success is due to the contributions of African-Americans who paved the way.

"In recent years, a few commentators have drawn attention to substantive change in the quality, direction and persistence of the Afro-American efforts to address international issues. Such organizations as Trans-Africa and the Joint Center for Political Studies, in association with the initiatives of certain black politicians, appeared to be novel attempts to institutionalize a Black American policy voice. Research and writing on this foreign affairs interest remained largely casual and did not explore the rich past that underlay these seemingly new departures." [1]
If organizations like Trans-Africa succeeded in their efforts to mobilize African-American to change foreign policy in the 1970's then it is only because they stood on the shoulders of members of the African-American community who made valuable contributions to American foreign policy, prior to the Trans-Africa movement.

This paper cannot fully illustrate all of the contributions of the African-American community in foreign policy from 1919-1944, but it will highlight some significant milestones in organizing, outreach and influence during this time period. This paper will place emphasis on how race has played a significant role in the formation of American foreign policy and how the African-American perspective may have appeared to be silent because no proactive polices were implemented toward Africa until the latter part twentieth-century.

Part One will consist of how African-Americans spoke collectively through various political organizations and collaborated with the Japanese to address issues of racial equality at the Peace Conference held at Versailles, France after World War I. The focus of Chapter Two will be the rise of the Black media and its influence on African-American civic and religious organizations in the collective struggle to influence foreign policy regarding the colonial influence of Great Britain in India.

African Americans' Influence on American Foreign Policy After World War I

The Pan-African Association was an organization that emerged from the Pan-African Conference that was held in London in 1900. The purpose of this conference was to address the spread of colonialism abroad and segregation African-Americans faced at home. The association originally called for British colonies to end its exploitative labor practices and racial discrimination in Africa. Members of the conference appealed to Queen Victoria and the Colonial Office to end the practice, but their petitions for human rights were ignored. Although the object of the conference was not achieved, the Pan-Africa Association continued its message by changing its tactics to influence American foreign policy. After World War I, the Association saw the opportunity to organize and develop a new strategy to demand political and economic rights.

After World War I, the Association renewed the opportunity for people of color to place their agenda before an international body. The war had fractured the great empires of Europe and called into question the legitimacy of colonial rule. The once great empires of Germany, Austria, Hungry, Russia and Turkey could no longer control diverse nationalities that now demanded political freedom. Delegates from African countries made similar appeals for freedom, while African-Americans began discussing what the postwar settlement would mean in terms of racial equity in the United States. Following Germany's surrender on November 11, 1918, the allied governments decided to hold a peace conference in Versailles France. Groups from all over the world interested in shaping the proceedings were planning to attend and African-American organizations were determined to play a vital role in addressing an international body regarding their concerns. Prominent African-American leaders who supported the Pan-African movement, such as Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois lead the call for African people throughout the Diaspora to become involved in international affairs by joining or creating organizations to address universal issues. "Both Garvey and Du Bois were keenly aware that the destiny of African peoples were intractably linked to global events." [2]

The National Race Congress selected civil rights activist Reverend William H. Jernagin as their envoy, and the International League of Darker People elected Madam C.J. Walker, Marcus Garvey and Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Sr., as delegates to attend the conference in France. "The National Race Congress elected civil rights advocate Rev. William H. Jernigan its representative to the peace conference.

The International League of Darker Peoples emerged. The league was born on January 2, 1919 at the Hudson River Estate of black businesswoman C.J. Walker. Principals included Walker, Marcus Garvey, socialist A. Philip Randolph, and Harlem community leader Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Sr. Its primary purpose was to help the plethora of black groups make coherent demands at Versailles" [3]

The focus of the African-Americans attending the peace conference was to help Black groups speak with one voice regarding their demands at Versailles. The goal of the African-American delegation was to raise the issues of discrimination and human rights before an international body. African-Americans who wanted to attend felt they had a stake in the peace process because of the direct participation of African-Americans solders in combat with colonial troops during the war. The interaction between blacks and whites on the battlefield forever altered perceptions of race relations for many black soldiers, who would no longer accept separate and unequal treatment in America. African-Americans wanted to use the experiences of the Black soldiers to improve race relations at home and abroad.

Du Bois saw the opportunity to bring before an international body the plight and pain of African-Americans and their brothers and sisters on the Continent. Du Bois viewed the conference as a platform where African-American and African delegates could express their views on world peace by incorporating language into the treaty that protected the sovereign rights of indigenousness peoples who lived under racial segregation and colonial rule. On November 27, 1918 Du Bois wrote President Wilson regarding his views on racial segregation and to petition the United States government to include African-Americans as official delegates at the Versailles conference. The objective of Du Bois was to establish a dialog with Wilson regarding the image of America being tarnished because of racial segregation. Du Bois hoped to persuade the President to extend an invitation to African-Americans to join the United States delegation and create an international document that would include language to remove racial segregation at home and address ties to countries who imposed colonial rule abroad.

> The International Peace Conference that is to decide whether or not peoples shall have the right to dispose of themselves will find in its midst delegates from a nation which champions the principal of the consent of the governed and government by representation. That nation is our own, includes in itself more than twelve million souls whose consent to be governed is never asked. They have no member in the legislatures of states where they are in the majority, and not a single representative in the national Congress." [4]

However, Woodrow Wilson did not want any agitation at the Versailles conference. Wilson felt that the African-Americans would derail the peace process by airing America's "dirty laundry" of black soldiers being lynched, racial injustice and the political influence of the Ku Klux Klan to an international assembly. Wilson wanted to create a League of Nations to avoid future global conflicts and did not want America's image to be tarnished.

"Faced with the prospect of having African Americans at Versailles who were not only interested in Africa but also critical of the way in which the Wilson administration has treated black soldieries as well as black civilians at home, officials on Washington decided to withhold the passports of African Americans planning to go to France or otherwise make it difficult for them to get there" [5]

W.E.B Du Bois was one of the few Blacks who were allowed to leave the country and attend the conference as a reporter for the NAACP monthly magazine, *The Crisis*. At the conference Du Boise met with members of the Pan-African Association and other African-American delegates (who were allowed to leave). Black delegates agreed to work together and demand a provision in the treaty to protect native languages and territories from economic exploitation under colonial rule. The provision would include language, which focused on self-determination and the establishment of inalienable rights for people of color living under colonial rule. The language called for:

- Self-determination for all colonies in which African peoples predominated
- Equal rights with Europeans for Africans in education, work, and travel
- An end to discrimination and segregation of African people where they can live side-by-side with other races
- Restoration of lands seized from Africans in South Africa
- The eviction from Africa of all those who interfered with or violated African customs
- Equal representation of blacks in any scheme of world government
- Turning over of captured German colonies in Africa to the natives with educated Western and Eastern Negroes as leaders" [6]

Pan-Africanists at the 1919 conference knew they had an up-hill battle to persuade the great powers to bring democracy to Africa. Many nations would not endorse broad and sweeping reforms because it would jeopardize their interests. Pressing the matter from an African point of view would have also weakened efforts by Japan to get the equality principle accepted without overt reference to race. The radicals within the African-American delegation did not agree with this tactic but the moderates felt that the Japanese approach to the subject of race would be accepted. The radicals compromised and agreed to cooperate with the Japanese regarding the question of racial equity. African-Americans saw that Japanese advocacy for equality had broader implications and the language was not as threatening to European holdings in Africa or the Pacific Rim. In January 1919, Madam C.J. Walker initiated a meeting between the International League of Darker Peoples and the Japanese publisher S. Kuroiwa. The League of Darker Peoples wanted Japanese assistance in placing the issue of racial equality before the peace conference in Versailles.

Count Nobuaki Makino, head of the Japanese delegation, presented the proposal for racial equality before the League of Nations and asked the League to adopt an equity clause in the Versailles Treaty. "The United States and Britain opposed to the measure, but when the resolution came to a vote it was passed by a majority. Woodrow Wilson, presiding, then declared that only unanimity could make the principle binding and refused to recognize it. In so doing, he blatantly departed from past parliamentary practices. Pan- Africanists also failed to dent the hard surface of colonialism in Africa and racial discrimination elsewhere" [7]

The United States and its Western allies primary objective was to punish Germany by allowing countries such as France and England to seek reparations and created a military alliance to deter future acts of German aggression. Wilson did not see Africans as voting members of the conference and the only remnant of language adopted by the Pan-Africanist and the Japanese delegation to address the issue of human and sovereign rights of indigenous people living under colonial rule "called for an absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based on the principal that the interest of the population must have equal weight with equal claims in government." [8] Nations would form an agreement to create guarantees of political independence and maintain territorial integrity; however the language did not guarantee political representation or repatriation of land that had been acquired under colonial occupation. It was no more than window dressing to give an appearance of semi-inclusion but it was very clear that the Western nations led by the United States did not want to address the issues of colonialism or racial segregation because of the economic gains for out weighed the cost of human suffering and degradation.

Although the Pan-African Association did not influence the great powers of the western world to bring democracy to Africa at the Versailles peace conference, it provided a venue for African-Americans to convey their opinions regarding the formation of foreign policy and to meet other people of color who sympathized with their struggle. The "New Negro" (a term coined by W.E. B Du Bois) would make his voice heard and play a vital role in directing foreign affairs regarding racial equality in the decades to come.

Du Bois used the NAACP monthly magazine *"The Crisis"* as a platform to address human rights violations abroad and in the United States to address the separate, unequal treatment and lack of political representation as a global practice. Although he supported the war and the use of African-American troops; the War Department began to document editorials in the Crisis particularly any criticism against President Wilson. "The War Department kept a detailed file of Crisis editorials dating to 1916. The file included material that might have come from any black weekly: criticisms of Wilson administration polices; denunciations of lynching; please for equal treatment of blacks during the war; a comparison of Wilson's eloquent denunciation of German atrocities with his silence on lynching of African-Americans in the South." [8]

The goal of the Pan-Africanists was to address an international body regarding racial segregation and the lack of civil rights at home and abroad. Africans throughout the Diaspora were forced to live under the oppressive regimes of colonialism and Jim Crow by countries that were the shining bacons of democracy. The collaboration between Africans, African-Americans and Japanese delegates embodied the collective struggle for freedom and equality among people of color through out the world.

Despite the fact the Pan-Africanists did not convince the United States and Britain to acknowledge and insert language to honor the basic human rights of all people in the peace treaty African-Americans did establish themselves as a voice to be reckoned with in the decades to follow. African-Americans would make their voices heard through their newspapers, which inspired many civic and religious organizations to demand an equal voice in formation of American foreign policy.

African-Americans' Influence on Foreign Policy During World War II

George Schuyler was a conservative African-American journalist who refused to be bound by stereotypical notions of what the concerns of African-Americans should be. Schuyler once wrote, "I think the whole world is my compass and anything I think is interesting, I will discuss it."[9] Schuyler's philosophy became the rallying cry and inspiration for countless African-American journalists who began to cover world events for the Negro press, referred to hereafter as the Black Press. Stories from around the world appeared in Black press that awakened the consciousness of many African-Americans to the international linkages of oppression. Although the culture and language were different, the stories of disenfranchisement were the same and long before the Great Migration, (which precipitated an increase in the circulation of African-American newspapers): the Black Press engaged its readers in public debate on issues of foreign policy and condemned the United States for its inhumane treatment of Americans of African decent.

The Black Press pulled back the veil of racial discourse in America and exposed it in all its brutal forms for the world to see. The image that United States wanted the world to see was a shinning beacon of democracy; however racial segregation served as a grim reminder that America had two-faces. Dialog in the Black Press, such as the Chicago Defender addressed racism at home and how African-American troops were treated abroad. When Robert S. Abbott founded the Defender in 1905, it was not well known as its counterparts such as the Crisis. Abbott wanted to increase circulation by creating sensational headlines and articles that would capture the attention of the African-American community.

Abbot hired J. Hockley Smiley in 1910 to create a new image for *The Defender*. By the time World War I started the Defender had a plethora of news stories to choose from and began to document stories of unfair treatment of African-American troops. Perhaps the most revolutionary act by *The Defender* was its denouncement of the War and refusal to encourage African-American males to enlist in the military. "The Defender was to become the most militant black paper during the war. Its attack upon discrimination against black troops was relentless. Abbott was unable to accept segregation even as a temporary necessity and refused to support Dubois's efforts to encourage blacks to volunteer for the segregated officers' camp." [10] Although Abbott and Du Bois disagreed on African-American males volunteering to fight in the war, they did agree on the need to address the issue of racial segregation.

During World War I, Du Bois used the NAACP monthly magazine *"The Crisis"* as a platform to address human rights violations abroad and in the United States to address the separate, unequal treatment and lack of political representation as a global practice. Although Du Boise supported the war and the use of African-American troops; The War department began to document editorials in the Crisis particularly any criticism against President Wilson. Despite investigations conducted by the United States government into the alleged Un-American activities in African-American newspapers, the Black Press refused to remain silent regarding the mistreatment of African-American troops abroad and acts of domestic terrorism against the black community at home. World War I became the vehicle for the Black Press to address initialized racism by changing American domestic and foreign policy. The Black Press voiced the growing disenchantment among the African-American community with democracy. The issues raised in the Black Press resonated the frustration and concerns of their people.

> The Negro is willing today to take up arms and defend the American President and defend the American flag; he stands ready to uphold the aims of the President; he stands ready to defend his country…against the cruel and unjust oppression. His mother, sister, brother and children are being burned at the stake and yet the American flag is his emblem and which he stands ready to defend." [11]

The concerns and commitment for change also reached the hallowed halls of power via the medium of print. The Black Press energized countless numbers of African-Americans to collective action to change racial equality and played pivotal role in framing policy recommendations. The stories and editorials in the Black Press that called for racial equity and the growing unrest among in the American-American community with federal governments' indifference to their concerns did not go unnoticed.

In the summer of 1918 black editors were invited to Washington D.C., by George Creel chairman of the Federal Wartime Propaganda Agency. Creel wanted black editors to stop printing articles on racial equality and encourage their readers to support for the war effort. "The conference would modify the bitter tone of the newspapers while at the same time stimulating Negro moral." [12]

The thirty-three editors accepted the governments' invitation to attend the conference. Their goal was to petition the United States government to address the issue of racial segregation and provide aid to African countries.

During the conference, the editors conveyed to the chief of staff, that African-Americans were loyal and patriotic citizens who were realizing disenfranchisement because of racial segregation. "The leaders of the race are immensely loyal, but feel keenly their inability to carry the great mass of their race with them in active support of the war unless certain grievances receive immediate attention." [13] The editors sent a *Bill of Particulars*, which included suggestions to increase morale among the African-American Population. The Bill consisted of recommendations and demands that were submitted to government officials in Washington. The list of demands contained the following items.

1. National legislation on lynching
2. Colored Red Cross nurses
3. Colored able seaman
4. Colored volunteer soldiers to extend of their volunteering
5. Colored physicians for colored troops
6. Training of larger number of colored officers
7. Unlimited promotion of colored officers according to proven efficiency
8. An attempt to equalize among black and white troops
9. Systematic getting and dissemination of new of Negro troops at home and abroad
10. Systematic attempt to correct ridiculous misrepresentations of the Negro and omissions of his achievement in the white press
11. The consideration of a Government loan to the Negro Republic of Liberia [14]

The editors viewed the conference has a vehicle to address concerns within the African-American community. They felt that the *Bill of Particulars* was well received that it would result in a continued dialog for change and racial equality. Thus, the editors continued to petition the government and President Wilson in particular to publicly denounce lynching. On July 26th, Wilson issued a long anticipated statement from the president. In his statement Wilson denounced the lynching of American troops by German soldiers that compared lynching to lawlessness. "Wilson followed black editors' practice of comparing lynching to lawlessness in Germany and depicting it's as a threat to the honor of the Nation and a contradiction of the principals America was fighting for in Europe." [15]

Hope surged within the Black Press that the United States would end racial segregation in the military and address the heinous crime of lynching after Wilson's' public statements regarding the atrocities American troops suffered at the hands of their German captures. However hopeful the Black Press remained after Wilson's address, it did not equate to reversing centuries of disenfranchisement. Wilson never supported nor initiated legislation to abolish lynching, "and by in the following year the number of lynchings would rise dramatically, making it the worst year for lynchings since 1908" [16] Undaunted by Wilson's lack of sincerity to call for anti-lynching legislation, the Black Press continued to address the issue of racial violence.

The writers and editors of the Black Press understood the social, political and most of all the psychological impact that lynching and segregation had on the African-American community. The Black Press chronicled the lack of opportunity for African-Americans to advance in the military and at home that fueled the continued unrest within the community. "The black press did not create this wave of unrest, as government officials through but rather interpreted and placed it in the context of the loyal actions of African-Americans." [17]

The Black Press continued to use its pages to chronicle achievements and frustration of the African-American community after World War I. *The Philadelphia Tribune, The Afro-American, Norfolk Journal and Guide, the Amsterdam News* and the *Pittsburgh Courier* were among many Black newspapers that called for an end to segregation on the battlefield and at home. The black press was relentless in its criticism of the United States' domestic policy of turning a blind eye to racial segregation and racial violence.

Robert L. Vann, founder and editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier* "saw the black man as a more loyal American than the immigrants who had arrived in America much more recently than the blacks"[13.] Vann used the *Pittsburgh Courier* to campaign for social change in Pittsburgh and throughout the United States. Vann hired talented African-American journalist from around the country to work for the *Courier* to increase circulation and address domestic and national issues. The *Courier* contracted with journalist such as George Schuyler to write columns for the paper. Schuyler was sent to the South by Vann in 1925 to capture the thoughts and issues of African-American experience.

> "Schuyler visited every city or town with more than five thousand blacks in Kentucky, Tenseness, Arkansas, Texas, Okalahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. Out of the trip came a series on Aframerica Today, socioeconomic studies of the more than two thousand cities and towns in the South heavily populated by blacks. Schuyler described their racial situations, the prominent black citizens, businesses, schools, and churches often with biting satiric touch for which he was becoming known to Courier readers. [18]

Vann used writers like Schuyler to call for economic reform, access to health care, eliminating housing discrimination, and chronicled the escalation of hate crimes against African-Americans, particularly in the South. "The Negro submits to lynchings, burnings and oppressions—and says nothing; he is a loyal American citizen"[19]. The *Courier* chronicled the escalation of African-American lynching throughout the United States and linked the issue to international oppression of African-American troops abroad. The *Courier* also highlighted feature stories by historical writers, such as Joel A. Rogers. In 1927 Vann sent Rodgers to Europe and Africa to chronicle historical and world issues, such as how Egyptian civilization, influenced Roman culture and Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.

The *Courier* petitioned the League of Nations and world powers such as the United States, Great Britain, Russia and Japan to end the conflict and acknowledge Haile Selassie as the emperor of Ethiopia. By 1934 despite numerous attempts to influence foreign policy to intervene on Ethiopia's behalf, the League of Nations ignored the pleas from the *Courier*. Vann decided to use the *Courier* as a public platform to rally support to aid Selassie and defend Ethiopia against the Italians. The *Courier* began to rally American blacks to the Ethiopian conflict and raised $400 in medical supplies. Vann used the newspaper to depict the war as a European plot to expand white supremacy at the expense of Ethiopia. "The Courier portrayed the conflict as a conspiracy on the part of the major European powers to advance their own interest at the expense of Ethiopia and the black man. White imperialism was seen by the Courier as the real enemy for presenting a united front against black people." [20]

The plight of Ethiopians fighting against racism was an issue African-Americans understood all to well. The topic not only appealed to American blacks but it served as a source of pride to many who were fighting for equality at home. Vann sent Rodgers to Ethiopia to capture the war first hand. Rodgers covered the war in all of its graphic detail. In his reports, Rodgers likened the Ethiopian warriors to freedom fighters, "Bravely advancing into the barrels of the Italian's death-dealing machine guns, the fierce Danakilla tribesman courageously charges upon the Italian advance parties. Undaunted by the withering spray of delay gunfire which mowed down scores, these border warriors of a nation proud of her independence attacked again and again."[21]

In 1936, Rodgers interviewed Haile Selassie. Rodgers was the first journalist to be granted an interview with the emperor. During the course of the interview Selassie, spoke with great affection about African-American support and the bond that was forged from this alliance with his kinsman in America. "The devotion of the Afro-Americans to our cause has touched me and my people profoundly. "In Ethiopia the colored Americans will find their place." [22]

Newspapers such as the Courier, the Defender and the Crisis brought the international plight of African's fighting for freedom throughout the world. The Black Press also encouraged African-Americans to fight for freedom at home by migrating to the north where there was more opportunity. Between the World War I and World War II, the Black Press encouraged African-Americans to who lived in the Jim-Crow South to move to large northern urban cities in large numbers. The socialization process of African-Americans in the north took place within a de-facto form of segregation, which was similar to the restrictive racial environment of the south.

What was different about the north was the significant role African-American institutions played in shaping the public opinion within the African-American community. Key institutions, such as the Black Press, civic and spiritual organizations, promoted political independence and provided a view of events outside the United States.

The growing number of African-Americans migrating into the urban cities largely freed the Black press from white patronage. African-American newspapers could now editorialize freely and reflect the views of their readers. The Black press covered many world issues that would help shape public opinion regarding foreign policy. Access to information was the critical ingredient in developing interest in world affairs and Black newspapers began to send their reporters outside of the United States to obtain stories. "Between 1930 and 1935 there were 211 separate Black newspapers being published in the United States. The total circulation of reporting papers was 1,206.787 and the number of Black families who subscribed to or purchased Black newspapers was 2,803.756."[23]

An increase in circulation meant the African-American media outlets such as, the Associated Negro Press could expand services to subscribing papers and began to employ stringers who reported from France, Hawaii, and Soviet Union. The National Negro Publishers Association later established a second news agency that relayed information (including but not limited to) about black entertainers in Paris and the occupation of Ethiopia by the Germans. Black newspapers covered news stories across the globe and ushered in a new era of communication that would lead to cooperative efforts that would influence American foreign policy.

By the late the 1930's stories linking the colonial occupation of India to racial segregation began to appear in the Black press. One such article was an account of a clergyman's trip to India. The story chronicled how indigenous people of India lived under the occupation of British colonialism. The story galvanized activists who were members of urban organizations, particularly African-American missionary associations. The YMCA-Colored Division was among the first organizations to address the international question of peace. Interest by African-American civic and religious groups demonstrated that the foreign policy interests of African-Americans extended beyond W.E.B Du Bois and the Talented Tenth (the brightest of the Negro race that would guide the Negro masses away from the contamination and death of the race). Many YMCA activities gravitated toward the peace movement and one such activist was John Dillingham, the director of Emergency Peace Campaign (Negro Section). Dillingham traveled throughout southern states in 1937 and addressed seventy-two meetings held by black and white churches. Dillingham talked about the growing interest in the peace movement. He felt that "blacks were undergoing an awakening of interest in peace issues"[24.] Dillingham devoted his life to encouraging African-Americans to play an active role in American foreign policy.

Dillingham also advocated active participation of African-American organizations to form linkages with other movements around the world. The global linkages would aid in the credibility of African-Americans to shape and influence foreign and domestic policy.
Dillingham inspired the African-Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church to advocate on behalf of the peace movement. The AME Church convinced the Ministerial and Bishop's Council to pass a resolution condemning war. In addition the AME Church and other Christian organizations rigorously pursued the philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience taught by Mahatma Gandhi as a protest tactic in the struggle for equal rights in America. A significant increase in peace activism occurred within the Black church between the 1930 and 1940. African-American churches had long been exposed to world affairs because of missionary work but now, through networking with various organizations throughout the world for the peace movement, the churches' influence in foreign affairs would take on new meaning.

The plight of Indians living under British colonialism came to the attention of White and Blacks Americans who were aware of foreign affairs. The activities of Mahatma Gandhi captured the attention of African-Americans as a result of Indian Nationalists defending Ethiopia in October 3, 1935 when Italian troops invaded the independent African nation. African-Americans had viewed the invasion of Ethiopia by an Italian fascist government as an act of imperialism and white supremacy. The Italo-Ethiopian War was the first great demonstration of African-Americans participating in foreign policy in large numbers. Although the massive efforts to influence the State department to condemn Italy's aggression did not succeed, African-Americans had found an ally in India. The non-violent advocacy embraced by India connected Gandhi and his followers to the American liberal and civil rights network. In turn, American peace and civil rights organizations publicly endorsed Indian freedom.

African-American politicians and intellectuals had warmer relationships with Indians because there was no race-specific agenda. This made it easier for Indians to work among blacks and collaborate on political ventures. A joint collaboration was formed between African-American and Indian scholars to publish articles on race relations in Indian journals, which could be used as a teaching tool and document collective experiences. African-Americans who were studying in India during this period began to be expelled by the British because of their support of the Gandhi movement. As a result of African-American solidarity, India became one of the most vocal international critics of Jim Crow.

In 1940 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, one of the first women politicians in India visited, Harlem by invitation of an African-American YMCA organizer by the name of Channing Tobias. During her visit, Chattopadhyay also traveled to Michigan and parts of the south to talk about British colonialism. As she traveled from state to state, Chattopadhyay noticed the visible differences between white and black accommodations, particularly the "White Only" signs in the railroad cars. The signs reminded Chattopadhyay that Indians and African-Americans were bound together by a caste system based on race, circumstances of birth and exclusion.

While the relationship between African-Americans and Indians improved, American diplomatic relations with India remained static until Pearl Harbor. Indians resented the racial bias that was perpetrated by whites towards blacks in America and did not trust the motives of the United States. America had also formed an allegiance with the British to defeat Hitler, which further eroded diplomatic relations with India. "Churchill wished to exclude colonial subjects from the right to self-determination as specified in the Atlantic Charter. Insofar as President Roosevelt relied on the pro-British Summer Wells (chief advisor to Roosevelt on foreign affairs) as his connection to the State Department, Indian nationalists found themselves stymied during the 1940's." [25]

African-Americans and Indian Independence advocates initiated dialogues with the State Department to appeal to the U.S. Government to act as mediator between India and Britain. In May of that same year, NAACP Secretary Walter White sent Roosevelt a memorandum that warned of the dire consequence of the collapse of Rangoon and the closing of the Burma Road. The British could not deliver supplies to the Chinese nationalists and if the Japanese succeeded in surrounding China and conquering India it would tip the balance of power and the allies could lose the war. "White wanted to demonstrate the strategic necessity of solving the Anglo-Indian conflict. He discussed U.S. race relations with Lord Edward Wood Halifax, British ambassador to the United States, before communicating with Roosevelt. Halifax had taken the initiative, approaching White with questions about Afro-American opinion." [26]

White told Halifax that people of color would more easily trust the allies if Roosevelt publicly declared his opposition to racism. White presented a plan to Halifax to send a bi-racial U.S. Commission to India. The objective was to obtain freedom for India through diplomatic channels by having Roosevelt take a stand against racism. White discussed his proposals with Summer Wells in June of 1942 and repeated his suggestion for a bi-racial delegation to visit India. In addition, White also proposed that Roosevelt hold a conference of Pacific leaders about India. It was reported that although FDR thought White's proposal was sound, he wanted to defer action until Gandhi's accusations of US and British imperialism were forgotten. "Wells reported that Roosevelt was (in White's words) enthusiastic about his proposal but wanted to defer action until the effect of Gandhi's recent accusation that Washington colluded in British imperialism had blown over"[27]. Although FDR did send a representative to India to document life under the colonial system, no declaration against racism was ever produced.

Indians and African-Americans began to bitterly attack the United States regarding allied racial policies. Gandhi drew striking parallels between British colonialism in Africa and segregation in the United States. In 1944 the Council on African Affairs held a rally in support of India that drew four thousand people to protest American and British reluctance to end racism. When Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, it spurred action from African-American supporters for India's independence to request that Congress do the same thing for Indians. Representative Emmanuel Celler and Claire Booth Luce introduced a bill in Congress to repeal Indian immigration but failed get the bill out of committee because of opposition from southern Dixiecrats.

Roosevelt made a decision not to intervene in India's quest for independence because of his support for the British during the war. Roosevelt did not want to raise the race question at home because he did not want to lose support of the southern democrats and, as a result he lost the opportunity to form a diplomatic relationship India.

Following FDR's death Truman pushed an Indian immigration bill through Congress after declaring that the British had no objections.

Although India would not obtain her freedom until 1947, the collaboration between Indians and African-Americans would forever link the colonialist government of England to policies of segregation in the United States. African-Americans knew that a colonial imperialist government was no different than racial segregation and by working collectively with India they could speak with one voice to influence foreign policy. Just as FDR invited the King and Queen of England to America in 1939 to raise support and American sympathy, African-Americans hosted delegates and scholars from India to gain support and open diplomatic channels to end segregation. Diplomatic channels between Walter White and Lord Halifax in 1942 produced some glimmer of hope to find a solution to racial segregation in India.

In 1944 Halifax submitted a diplomatic report entitled, *Political Review of the United States for the Second Quarter*, in which he noted the linkage between anti-colonialism sentiment and Black dissent. Halifax saw colonialism and American segregation being at odds with British foreign policy. "He felt the first signs of their reawakening in the anti-colonial campaigns of the Negro Council for African Affairs, in the undertones of Henry Wallace's philosophy in the *Daily Worker* criticism of our policies in India, and in the evidences of quite widespread latent suspension of our imperialistic role, past, present and future in the Pacific." [28]

By 1944 the Allies predicted that the war would soon end and African-Americans seized the opportunity to demand the right to vote without being charged a poll tax, passing of an anti-lynching law and the end of Unites States support of colonialist regimes abroad. Major African-American organizations banned together to support a document created by the Negro Labor Committee that was sent to the President and State Department calling for equal rights, desegregation of the military, appointment of African-Americans to the State Department and a non-racial foreign policy that would make China an allied partner. It is estimated that the combined number of members from sponsoring organizations totaled 6,500.00, who supported the document.

Foreign issues resonated with African-Americans because they served as a metaphor for aspects of the Black experience that mainstream America largely ignored. Although United States policy makers refused to end racial segregation, in 1944 it was quite clear that America could no longer turn a deaf ear to racism as a component of colonialism throughout the world. In February of 1944, Ernest Johnson of the National Negro Publishers Association would become first African-American to be appointed to the State Department press corps.

During this time period, African-Americans demanded inclusion and representation in the formation of foreign policy. Black organizations used their collective efforts to collaborate to promote peace and oppose colonial oppression. Information about world events found its way onto the pages of Black newspapers that shaped African-American public opinion and gave a voice to the disenfranchised. After World War II that voice would no longer be ignored.

In 1942 the Negro Digest conducted a public opinion poll regarding a peace settlement to end World War II. "According to a contemporary Negro Digest poll of its readers found that the war would not itself bring an end to racial division. It would however assist in the creation of a more equitable order. Afro-Americans desired a global organization that would keep the peace and prevent the next war by making superpower unilateral action both unseemly and inefficient." [29] One question posed to readers of the Negro Digest asked if winning the war overseas would aid in the Negro's fight for democracy at home and over sixty-five percent said "yes".
More than ninety percent of the African-Americans who responded also felt that Blacks should have a seat at the peace table. This was the same objective of the Pan-African Association when the delegation brought its' request before the conference at Versailles in 1919.

Ethnic groups have influenced American foreign policy by using collective knowledge and experiences to shape America's diplomatic and economic relationships with their homeland. Favorable foreign policies equate to effective articulation and influence by the ethnic or racial group within the American political structure and suggest that if an ethnic or racial group is able to influence the formation of foreign policy that is favorable towards their homeland, this group will also influence domestic policy that will assure and enhance the group's standing in the United Sates. This connection to ethnic/racial influence in the formation of foreign and domestic policy cannot be applied to African-Americans because the plight of African-Americans at home collided with the development of America's image as a free and democratic society. This is why the success by African-Americans to influence foreign policy cannot be measured by the same benchmark as the Italian, Irish, Polish or Jewish-Americans. "Jewish-Americans for example, seemed successful at influencing foreign policy making because their group objectives often parallel American foreign policy"[30].

One could make the argument and cite historical events where the United States did not support the position of certain ethnic groups such as Israel because it was not in the best interest of American foreign policy. Examples range from President Eisenhower rejecting the joint Israeli, British and French intervention in Egypt to seize the Suez Canal to President Jimmy Carter selling AWAC plains despite pro-Israeli objections. However, examples of America not developing favorable foreign policy towards countries such as Israel, Italy or Great Britain far outweigh the examples that were just cited.

African-Americans have rarely benefited from a melding of interest with the United States government due to racial inequity. The African-American perspective regarding America foreign policy begins on an uneven playing field because of the nation's interest and struggle over the symbolic legitimacy of American democracy. Although African-Americans began on an uneven playing field, it did not deter their collective efforts to make their voices heard. The examples cited above provide a brief glimpse of the rich and rewarding contributions made by African-Americans in the formation or foreign policy and diplomatic relations.

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