

African Americans, the fight for human rights, and the United Nations

Since the conception of the United States, racial injustice has been a staple of the country's culture due to its many years of enslaving people of color and multiple other forms of racism embedded in all of the parts of its society. In the 1940's specifically African Americans were very unequal in society, constantly finding themselves disadvantaged economically due to white men coming home from World War II and taking their jobs back and due to lots of job discrimination. African Americans were also disadvantaged educationally because of school segregation and the fact that the African American schools were often underfunded compared to the white schools. They were also disadvantaged within the realm of justice in the United States criminal system through not being given fair trials and constantly facing disadvantages before the law. There has been a fight from African Americans for a long time to obtain the same rights that non minorities have in the United States. While it was not until the 1960's that they won for themselves, with the help of white allies, the right to vote all over the country and integrated with whites in public facilities in the Southern United States under law, they had a good fight going for them in the 1940's with the creation of the United Nations. This research will explore how the African American community attempted to use the United Nations as a way to get racial justice for a community so long disadvantaged within the United States, specifically how did African Americans attempt to use the United Nations to try and convict the United States of human rights abuses when the institution was first formed and how successful were they at this endeavor?

The beginning of African Americans struggle to try to get human rights in the United States was at the San Francisco conference in 1945 to charter the United Nations where the NAACP had been sent as one of the organizations to represent the United States along with 41

other national organizations to delegate the charter of the United Nations. The NAACP was able to send only two delegates to the conference because that is all that the state department would allow them to send. The delegates that they chose to send were W.E.B DuBois and Walter White. The reason that so many organizations were sent to the conference in the first place was so that the United States could get the United Nations charter passed through the senate where the League of Nations had failed two decades earlier. This move was also made so that the United States would look good to other nations of the world, in sending so many delegations to the United Nations conference the United States made it seem like they were much more cohesive and cooperative with one another than they actually were. This was a political move as a way to try to show unity on the United State's part and as a way to try to fight off Soviet attacks of having a divided country. The main problem with getting the United Nation's charter passed in the senate was that the United States delegation had to appeal to Southern senators who had immense power. This due to the fact that they were not beholden to African American constituents because of poll taxes, white primaries, and their extremely racist views. Therefore anything even insinuating that there should be racial justice or equality was not discussed by the United State's delegation to San Fransisco.ⁱ

A key player who was at the San Fransisco conference and who was one of the delegates on behalf of the United States was Eleanor Roosevelt, she was also a board member of the NAACP. Due to the fact that Roosevelt was on the board of the NAACP it seemed as though she would be very sympathetic to the causes of African Americans to gain rights at home and to gain rights for colonies abroad. Although this turned out not to be the case and Roosevelt refused to even attend a petition that White was presenting to the United Nations about the discrimination against African Americans in the United States. Roosevelt's stated reason for not attending was

that “As an individual I should like to be present, but as a member of the delegation I feel that I should no seem to be lining myself up in any particular way on any subject”.ⁱⁱ This was clearly a way of appealing to the senators who she and others feared would decline the United Nations charter but is still disappointing nonetheless. In a way Roosevelt not visiting the petition on discrimination against African Americans can be juxtaposed to the actions that the United States government chose not to take in giving African Americans rights. Eleanor Roosevelt had so much power to do something for African Americans with the position that she held not only at the conception of the United Nations at the San Francisco conference, but also later on when she would serve as the United State’s delegate to the United Nations general assembly although she did not do so.ⁱⁱⁱ In doing this she let down millions of African Americans and instead chose to be complacent on the issue so that way she would not have to deal with any of the Southern senator’s blocking the charter in the senate.

Black newspapers wrote about what was going on at the conference in San Francisco, many saw it as a new outlet to vent their frustrations on racial injustice. In three 1945 editorials to the Chicago defender, African Americans discuss how they were looking to the United Nations to be a way of attaining decolonization for all of the colonies who would actually like to be independent and who struggled under the colonial system. Two of the editorials written by Lochard and Badger look to other countries as being their route to getting a new policy of decolonization through the United Nations including China and Liberia. Although not looking with hopeful eyes towards the United States, Lochard claimed that “America is interested in the military fortification of bases already conquered in the Pacific and such other outposts she may be able to obtain by grant or concessions...”.^{iv} It was understood that the United States would not give up their military base claims and as such European countries would not give up their

colonies so there was no way the United States would ever speak out against the issue at the United Nations. One writer named Durham discusses how DuBois and White were trying to get amendments passed such as the equality of all races and the abolition of the colonial system. Durham goes on to quote Dr. Mary Bethune who is the president of the National Council of Negro Women who claims that “The Negro in America has an unprecedented opportunity in the San Francisco parley on world security to lift his sights to encompass a world view of the problems of peace and to think in unison with the representatives of forty six nations... This opportunity challenges the negro not only to broaden his personal view point but to establish on a firmer basis the elevation of his own status in America”.^v This was a hopeful statement to make because of the fact that with this new international stage African Americans would be able to easier compare their lives to those facing plights elsewhere in the world. This would create a new awareness among African Americans of the struggles of people of color going on around the world and would also help them to see how in some other countries people of color had it much better than they did in the United States.

Another black newspaper discussing the United Nations charter, The New York Age, has a column written that states that “Throughout the entire text of the charter there is evidence of the fact that there is concern for human rights and non discrimination... If the signatories to the charter abide by its provisions of nations of good will then a new day will come in the world”.^{vi} This goes to show that African Americans looked to the United Nations with hope, they honestly thought that they could use this organization to bring about change for minorities. They also thought that they would be able to finally gain their own rights at home, that is why the author claims that it will be a new day this expression makes the whole statement that they make sound so hopeful. African Americans were also clearly beginning to not only fight for their own rights

at home but also understanding the larger international struggle of people of color around the world which is why the author goes on to state that it will be a new day around the world, this new found internationalism among African Americans and many other peoples of the world helped everyone to understand that there are many people in plight and that they should all stand up for one another against these plights. This also all connects back to the idea that Marry Bethune hit on about African Americans being able to understand their own status and the status of others around the world.

At the conference, DuBois fought adamantly against European colonial claims all over the world. He felt very strongly that African American's struggle was directly linked with the struggles of colonized peoples since they were treated just as poorly as blacks were in the United States. The barrier that DuBois faced in attempting to get countries like Britain and France to relinquish their colonial claims lied in the reluctance of the United States, like with most of the other issues that DuBois attempted to raise at the conference. The Western powers had absolutely no intentions of giving up any of their colonial claims and pushed back against people like DuBois and other delegations from places like India because of the fact that it would cost them so much economically. The United States nonetheless would not touch the issue of colonies at the conference because of the fact that it wanted to keep its holdings in the Pacific and in Central America, therefore it struck a deal with the European powers that if their delegation did not press on the issue of colonies then European delegations would not discuss the issue of the United States territorial claims abroad.^{vii} The United States was essentially willing to compromise any sort of integrity it hoped to have at the United Nations conference in favor of making having strategic military bases all over the world that would allow it to dominate not only militarily but also economically.

The best that DuBois and White would end up getting at the San Francisco conference would be an amendment that claimed there would be no discrimination based on race, language, religion, or sex. The only problem being the fact that there was another amendment adopted into the charter which stated that “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state”.^{viii} Essentially meaning that the amendment DuBois and White ended up getting was completely negated and ended up being more symbolic than anything else.^{ix} While racial injustice was still rampant in America, the United Nations at first seemed like it could be a beacon of hope for African Americans to finally gain access to the rights that they so long fought for. An institution based on the principles of human rights including rights that would not allow discrimination or persecution of minority groups. The only problem would be that while it was a hopeful cause at first the United Nations would go on to let the African American community down over and over again due to it needing to appeal to the Southern bloc and other nations such as the Soviet Union that treated the minorities in their countries poorly. While the United Nations did let African Americans down with this no intervention clause African Americans would still continue the fight in the United Nations to try and get their rights in the United States.

DuBois would go on to write a petition to get the United Nations to decry the United States of its racial discrimination and human rights violations against African Americans. DuBois petitioned the United Nations in a document called *An Appeal to the World* in which he claimed that the United States was violating the human rights laid out in the charter of the United Nations. DuBois starts off by stating that “There were in the United States of America, 1940, 12,865,518 native-born citizens, something less than a tenth of the nation, who form a largely segregated caste, with restricted legal rights, and many illegal disabilities”.^x A very powerful

statement to start the document off with but not an inaccurate one, African Americans had very difficult lives in the United States because of racism and oppression and the world needed to see that. DuBois backs up his opening statement with cited examples such as a very small percentage of African Americans being able to vote in the South, claiming that “while in the deep South, where the negro forms a large proportion of the population, men are sent to congress by 22,000 votes; and in South Carolina by 4,000.”^{xi} This clearly illustrates the fact that African Americans were not given the right to vote and that white Southern politicians had the power to enact any sort of legislation that they wanted to because of the fact that African Americans could not vote them out. DuBois also goes on to cite the use of housing covenants used to discriminate against where African Americans could live, and discrimination in the hiring process against African Americans.^{xii} DuBois tackles a lot of issues in his *Appeal to the World* but some of the most important ones are those involving the United State’s government’s complacency in blatant discrimination and making no attempts what so ever towards racial progress. DuBois cites many statistics but one of the best sections is where he discusses supreme court cases which all essentially uphold discriminatory policies against African Americans and make it so that the federal government has no way of stepping in in situations of discrimination.

DuBois discusses how the supreme court has upheld racist laws all over the United States, beginning by taking a look at housing covenants, claiming that in the supreme court case *Corrigan v. Buckley* it was made so that independent owners of houses had the right to discriminate and therefore while housing covenants were illegal to be mandated by law. At the time that DuBois wrote this petition, African Americans were still not able to live in many areas because of racist independent owners who could legally discriminate against African American and other minority groups. DuBois also discusses the right to an education in which he points to

Cumming v. Board of Education which upheld school segregation and points to the fact that African Americans are often times discriminated against from getting a higher education. Stating the specific example of Kentucky in which “the Kentucky state legislature passed an act prohibiting any corporation or individual from maintaining an educational institute for both races”.^{xiii} While this is certainly outrageous what is even worse is that the supreme court went on to uphold the constitutionality of this law when it was challenged, showing the United States government not doing anything about the persecution and discrimination of minorities. The poll tax is discussed next in which DuBois looks at the supreme court case Breedlove v. Suttles which upheld the poll tax laws in the South claiming that having to pay to vote was not a discouragement, even though it disproportionately affected African Americans. The supreme court claimed that “Payment as a prerequisite is not required for the purpose of denying or abridging the privilege of voting”^{xiv} even though the poll taxes disenfranchised plenty of poor people in Southern regions. This made it so that African Americans were mostly unable to vote in elections and therefore the same white Southern Democrats were elected each and every election cycle because African Americans did not have any way to politically dissent. DuBois then goes on to discuss discrimination in the use of public facilities in which he cites the famous supreme court case Plessy v Ferguson which upheld the separate but equal law even though in reality African American’s were given accommodations to facilities that were much worse than those given to whites.^{xv} All of this was shown to nations of the world which may have not otherwise have known how bad the plight of the African American was during this time period and all connects to the broader theme of the *Appeal to the World* that is showcasing the injustices faced. This clearly shows that the United States is not practicing almost any of the provisions that were put into the charter of the United Nations, all of these policies and the United State’s

refusal to do anything to stop them shows that the country is very clearly ok with discrimination and sees no problem even though the charter specifically states that states are not allowed to do so.

In all of the cases DuBois discusses in this section, there is a very common theme and that is that the United States' government is not only complacent in racial injustice, but is also actively fighting any sort of progress that African Americans are trying to make towards getting the legal rights that they deserved. This due to the fact that the federal government constantly refused to intervene in laws made by state and local municipalities that often times trampled the rights of African Americans because they were afraid that if they did step on the Southern state's toes in those kinds of situations then they would lose the next election. Even seats that were supposed to be unaffiliated with political parties and unbiased such as those on the supreme court would not trample the South's racist and discriminatory practices. Politically this was a real issue for Harry Truman who relied on a lot of Southern racists to vote for him and since it was the beginning of the end of the new deal coalition that had begun under Roosevelt there was even more pressure upon him to appeal to everyone that he could for his final election. The Democratic party and more specifically Harry Truman essentially decided to make empty promises to African Americans when it was time for him to be up for election. African Americans wanted rights and Harry Truman claimed he would give them those rights but in the end would not make very much progress under his terms as president in the advancement of their rights.^{xvi} Harry Truman simply used African Americans for the voting bloc that they presented and nothing more which is why they had to go to the United Nations in the first place to tackle these issues. The United States was again clearly in violation of human rights as discussed in the

charter of the United Nations and therefore DuBois' claims make a lot of sense, his argument has very damning evidence against the United States' violations of the United Nation's charter.

DuBois also decries the United Nations itself for having stated in its charter that member states should not discriminate against people meanwhile the Soviet Union and the United States, two of the largest member states, were constantly discriminating against people essentially violating the rules that they themselves came up with. DuBois makes a very powerful statement in saying that "But the desire of the Jews, in particular, have incorporated a clause in favor of religious equality would have made it difficult to exclude a clause, proposed by the Japanese in favor of racial equality." essentially making the claim that the only reason there was no religious equality clause was because people were scared it would lead to a racial equality clause.^{xvii} While DuBois makes a lot of compelling arguments in his appeal to the world discussing the mistreatment of the African American community by the United State's government over the years, what is extremely unfortunate is that this document would end up getting buried in United Nations bureaucracy because a United States diplomat saw it and claimed that the United States should not be exposed as being hypocritical to other nations as the world. Eleanor Roosevelt was also outraged by the appeal claiming that it gave the Soviet Union the ability to attack the United States for the injustices it committed. Roosevelt even felt so angered by the fact that DuBois and White attempted to go behind her back to get the petition through the United Nations that she threatened to resign from her position on the board of the NAACP to which White begged her to stay, stating "[U]nder no circumstances would we want you to resign from the board. Your name means a great deal to us".^{xviii}

The African American community struggled so much to get any sort of human rights legislation because of people like Eleanor Roosevelt who appeared as though they would be

friendly to the cause but then when the time came and they were actually needed they would turn their backs on the community. When one of the board members of the NAACP threatens to resign because of the fact that racial injustices in the United States were being decried one must really question who was friend or foe. Although White was just as bad in the situation, begging Eleanor Roosevelt to stay on the board was a bad decision, she clearly did not want to support African American human rights if it meant giving the Soviets any sort of way of attacking the United States. On top of that White would go on to tell the state department after the debacle that the NAACP would never try to push for African American's human rights before the United Nations again.^{xix} White went to the United Nations with the cause of progressing African American's rights in the United States and in only two short years after the charter was enacted called a quits all in the name of patriotism to the United States and to keep Eleanor Roosevelt on the board of the NAACP.

Later on in 1951 a group called the civil rights congress would write a petition to the United Nations called *We Charge Genocide*, the organization was formed in 1946 and was much further left than the NAACP.^{xx} The document attempted to use the convention on genocide which had recently been passed by the United Nations but had not been passed in the United States senate meaning that it lacked any jurisdiction in the United States. In this petition they detailed the ways in which the United States had been violating the genocide conventions, similarly to the *Appeal to the World*, but this petition does not delve into the legalese aspect as much and instead offers very specific and often times gruesome examples of the United States being involved in activity related to genocide. The document starts right off at the beginning discussing "new acts of genocide" in which it details many instances of police brutality against African Americans such as an incident in which "forty police officers killed an unarmed 21-year-

old Negro youth. allegedly being sought for questioning in a robbery. He died in a hail of police bullets while seeking to draw fire away from his family and neighbors”.^{xxi} This is a clear violation of human rights, why was the 21 year old not just arrested and taken into custody? The sad truth is that if he was white then he more than likely would have been but because of the color of his skin he was not. The document also discusses the fact that the police have, in many situations, been just as detrimental to the murder of African Americans than lynching itself had been, stating that “Once the classic method of lynching was the rope. Now it is the police man’s bullet”.^{xxii}

The police were used as a very useful system of oppression against African Americans in the South and even in the North because most of the time they sided with the white plaintiff in any matter. An example of this can be found in a case in which “A Florida Sheriff, Willis V. McCall, killed Samuel Shepherd and wounded Walter Lee Irvin, 23-year-old negro prisoners whose he was driving to a re-trial which would have proven convulsively their innocence of a false ‘rape’ charge”.^{xxiii} This was just another example of the atrocities that police committed against African Americans all over the country and goes to show that if you were African American anywhere that you could easily be killed for a crime that you did not commit. Another exceptional example of this is a case in which “Roland T. Price, 20-year old war veteran was shot and killed in Rochester, New York, by six patrolmen who fired twenty-five bullets into his body”.^{xxiv} This goes to show that not even African American veterans who fought for freedom in Europe were able to have even the most decent human right of not being shot an excessive amount of times upon dying. No African American was safe from police brutality in any part of the United States no matter their social status or what they had done for their country and that is

just another reason that this was such a widespread problem and why it was taken to the United Nations.

What is so interesting about *We Charge Genocide* is that in one section they admit that they do not have complete evidence to try the United States for crimes of genocide, but they then state that they hope that the United Nations will look into more of it for them so that they can try to get justice. Although they do also go on to clarify that the reason their evidence is incomplete is due to the fact that often times white newspapers did not cover the deaths and abuses of African Americans and therefore there would not be much evidence anywhere but in black newspapers which would actually report on such incidents.^{xxv} It is shameful that white newspapers would not at the very least cover African American's deaths even though they were some of the sensationalists that were behind some of the reasons that they were discriminated against and killed to begin with.

We Charge Genocide then goes on to discuss many more human rights violations, typically involving angered white mobs who would go on manhunts for African Americans accused of touching white women, moving to white neighborhoods, not being admitted into white hospitals, and many other forms of racist behavior that led to the direct or indirect death of African Americans. One example of this is a case in which "Mr. And Ms. O'Day Short and their two little girls were burned to death two days before Christmas, 1945, in a fire of incendiary origin set by persons who did not want them to move into a 'white neighborhood' in Fontana, California".^{xxvi} Even children were not safe from the white wrath in the United States, also the fact that African American's lives were valued so little that they would be burned alive just for moving into what was considered a 'white neighborhood' directly follows the idea that there was genocide being committed against African Americans, segregated should not exist in a nation

that fought against Jewish ghettos in Germany. Another case took place in North Carolina in which “Matthew Aver, 24, student at North Carolina A&T college died after an auto accident... when he was refused admittance into Duke Hospital at Durham”.^{xxvii} The fact that a young man died simply because a hospital would not admit him because of the color of his skin goes to show how poorly African Americans were treated in the United States. This also serves as another shining example of how the United States government was doing absolutely nothing about cases like this while at the same time being apart of the United Nations which had ratified the conventions on genocide specifically to prevent these types of instances from happening.

The document also discusses white Southern leaders who are inciting genocide, citing the likes of James Byrnes in which it is stated that “[James Byrnes] former Secretary of the State of the United States, called on the state legislature to abandon the public system because the US Supreme court may uphold the right of Negro students to so-called ‘equal’ yet segregated school facilities”.^{xxviii} Byrnes also stated that South Carolina would find a way to keep its white primaries, the petition claims that this inflammatory language is what encourages organizations like the KKK to come out and commit violence against African Americans during voting season. The petition then goes on to claim that Strom Thurmond and a former governor of Alabama, Frank Dixon, actually had a conspiracy to commit genocide, citing a section of the state’s rights movement handbook which claims that “If these negroes voted and elected their kind of officials, which would happen if they voted, there would not be a business or industry operating in the county 12 months after they took over- unless violence was resorted to for the protection of business and industry and farming”^{xxix}. The fact that the United States would allow people who speak like this to be elected officials anywhere in the country is clearly a violation of the

genocide convention which does not allow for violence against certain groups of people whether it is based on race, ethnicity, religion or anything else.^{xxx}

Next is a section on the KKK and how terrible of an organization it is. The petition cites a reverend who tells the KKK to kill African Americans, though in much more offensive and derogatory language, and also cites other speeches given by prominent leaders in the racist Southern community. One of the prominent leaders named Homer Loomis Jr. claimed that the organization should kill African Americans and Jewish people.^{xxxi} This was a good tactic on the part of the civil rights congress, the imagery that they use to describe each of these tragic manifestations of racism in America is beautifully orchestrated, stating “Central in the conspiracy to commit genocide against the Negro people of the United States is the government of the United States. It is self-evident, as we have said, that without the negative or positive sanction of the federal government, the persistent, constant, widespread, institutionalized commission of the crime of genocide would be impossible”.^{xxxii} Every single section that they discuss with relating to the aforementioned examples starts off by stating that what is being done is genocide by definition and how all of these things are clearly intertwined and linked together to form the perfect system of oppression against African Americans. This due to the fact that the politicians inhibit the KKK who then do not get punished for the crimes that they commit because even the police officers themselves do not act properly in situations of violence against African Americans.

The main problem with *We Charge Genocide* is not the content of the petition itself but instead lies in the fact that the United States would not pass the conventions on genocide until 1988. At the time this petition was released in 1951, while the United Nations itself had adopted the conventions on genocide, the United State’s senate was vehemently debating over it with

people like leading senator John Bricker claiming that the passage of the genocide convention would lead to the trial of United States citizens in the international court. Bricker also claimed that the convention would allow the United Nations to intervene in the United State's government's policies. Bricker became associated with the amendment that he attempted to pass to the constitution which would make it so that any international law that was debated would have to be passed by 2/3rds of the senate, the executive branch, the house of representatives, and after all of that each individual state legislature would have to pass the law that was passed. The part about the state legislatures is clearly a nod to the fact that white segregationists' did not want the United Nations human rights law to interfere in their own, so under the Bricker amendment they would be safe as long as their state legislatures would not pass the law. Eisenhower would end up having to fight tooth and nail to make sure that the Bricker amendment did not get passed, it would only end up failing by one vote made by a drunk West Virginian democratic senator^{xxxiii}, this clearly shows that Republicans and Southern Democrats were willing to come together to protect the institution of racism in the United States whether it was in the South or in the North under the guise of states rights versus internationalism.

While the United Nations could have investigated the United States for genocide over this petition it more than likely would not have had any affect legally just because of the fact that it had not passed the conventions on genocide, and therefore was not bound by law to follow it in the first place. This is of course a prophetic statement, the petition would go on to fail because none of the other major member states would tackle the United States' race abuses other than the Soviet Union who constantly called the United States out for its human rights abuses but became closely associated with just putting out propaganda and therefore was not taken seriously. The petition also failed because of the fact that many decried it as being written by communists

because of the fact that it showcased the racial horrors in the United States, although the statement may have not been far from true because of the fact that the civil rights congress was actually closely tied to the communist party in the United States. It is also stated that the petition itself was written simply for the communist party to accrue funding so that way it could bail some of its top leaders out of jail and also attempt to boost its membership.^{xxxiv}

We Charge Genocide also found even more opposition from none other than the NAACP itself. Walter White read the petition and stated “a gross and subversive conspiracy [by] prominent American Communists”.^{xxxv} White went even further in making sure that the petition would not be taken seriously by other nations by getting African American leaders Channing Tobias and Edith Sampson to refute the claims that were made in the petition essentially pitting African Americans against one another so that way the United States would not have to take any flak from the Soviet Union.^{xxxvi} Channing Tobias would go on to directly dismiss the murder of Samuel Shepherd and Walter Lee Irvin, the two young men killed for the false rape accusation by the Florida sheriff who served as the first of many examples of brutal murder included in *We Charge Genocide*.^{xxxvii} Walter White and the United States got exactly what they wanted out of these African Americans, they essentially just used them to sugarcoat or dismiss everything bad that happened to African Americans in the United States. A state department official even went as far as to claim that Channing Tobias was “an outstanding colored man” who would be of great help countering Soviet propaganda on race relations.^{xxxviii} An example of how extreme some of the more extreme claims against the *We Charge Petition* were can be found in a statement made by Edith Sampson. She claimed that “[There were] benefits of slavery [such as] never hav[ing] to worry about unemployment... food, clothing, and shelter”. Sampson even claimed that the KKK had disappeared and that African Americans were all wealthy. The lies that she made to the

Scandinavians at this particular speech were so bad that a Swedish woman approached White afterwards and told him to set the record straight, stating that the Sampson was “brazenly denying” the mistreatment of African Americans in the United States.^{xxxix} The NAACP would time and time again turn its back on the African American community as a way to save the United State’s face because of White’s leadership and this ended up being very detrimental to the cause of getting any sort of progress for human rights in the United States. An organization that was founded to represent and attempt to help African Americans would let patriotism and anti communist sentiment get in the way of doing what would have been best for the people that it represented.

An interesting example of some of the overwhelmingly anti communist sentiment in some of the African American community can be found in The Pittsburg Courier. The author, Majorie McKenzie states that “There is no denying that the Russian threat and the opposition of the democratic and communist ideologies must be faced, and action has to be taken”.^{xl} This is another good example of the African American community being divided among themselves over whether communism was right or wrong and really highlights the fact that there was no general consensus especially when people like DuBois signed *We Charge Genocide* which was a communist organization’s petition. McKenzie also states that “The nations that are darker or smaller, or both, and which lie beyond the magic Atlantic circle also must deal with Russia and the conflict of ideas. They will resent being told openly that they can do it only by the grace of the West and under its surveillance”.^{xli} She seems to take a hard stance against communism in the beginning while at the same time acknowledging that developing countries will be susceptible to communism if the West continues to treat them as colonies and as less than actual countries. McKenzie’s article is so interesting because it contains the juxtaposition between

people like DuBois and Channing Tobias, on the one hand it is anti communism like Tobias yet on the other still contains anti colonialist attitudes. This goes along with the much broader theme of the time period in which communism was being fought against by much of the left so that it could try to remain a reputable political ideology.

White Southerner's were very adamant about not allowing African Americans human rights which led to fierce debates within the senate over every piece of human rights legislation that would be proposed in it. An example of this hyper Southern racism in the post war can be found in Senator Eastland's statement in which he claims that "White Southerners were fighting [in World War II]... to maintain white supremacy and control of our election machinery".^{xlii} Southern Democrats like Eastland had control of sixty percent of senate and house committees and would essentially be the deciding factors in any legislation regarding human rights policies. While this statistic is surely intimidating, African Americans still attempted to fight back and use the United Nations to try to get the United States legally tried for its many human rights violations.

Another example of a white Southerner with overwhelming influence into whether human rights would be brought to the United States or not can be found in Senator Tom Connally from Texas who was the chair of the Foreign Relations Committee and one of the delegates from the United States to the San Fransisco conference. Connally claimed that not all races had the right to an education.^{xliii} African Americans were clearly dealing with a very adamant force in this situation, white Southerners were so intertwined into their racist ways that they would not give any ground to the African Americans which made their fight for human rights all that much harder. Because of people like Connally who was able to wield massive influence because of the position that he was in, much of the United Nations charter that would

go on to get passed would be watered down, Connally himself claimed that if there was anything in the charter about the right to education it would never get through the foreign relations committee.^{xliv} Southern Dixiecrats like Connally were the reason that the no intervention in domestic affairs clause was included and unfortunately for African Americans the odds worked in the Dixiecrats favor because of all the power that they had within the senate and because they were not beholden to their African American constituents due to things like poll taxes.

African Americans fought very hard to try to get their rights in the United States through the new outlet that was the United Nations but it let them down just as the Truman administration, the NAACP, the charter to the United Nations, and the petition *we charge genocide* would. The United Nations had so much promise to bring rights to those who had for so long been disenfranchised in the world promising things like no discrimination based on race, language, religion, or sex but in the end would never be able to enforce any of those policies and most of the time would still allow countries to go on committing human rights violations. Just as Woodrow Wilson's self determination would only apply to Eastern Europe so too did the United Nations promise of rights only apply to specific areas that were not the United States or other major countries that refused to take action on their mistreatment of minorities. While African Americans did their best to attempt to attain human rights in the United States they were unsuccessful because of the ways in which the United States was able to block any of the petitions or other types of legislation that they put forward. African Americans would not gain civil rights in the United States until the 1960's and even then they were still discriminated against in other forms into the modern day in which the United Nations still has not done much to act on attempting to help African Americans get the rights that they deserve and need.

In conclusion African Americans did a good job of attempting to fight for their human rights in the United States by trying to use the United Nations to take the United States to the international courts for all of the discrimination and wrong doings it was committing against African Americans. From DuBois and White's first appearance at the conference to create the charter of the United Nations, to DuBois' *Appeal to the World*, to the civil rights congress' *We Charge Genocide* petition, African Americans did their best to use the newly formed United Nations which seemed like it would be helpful to their cause but in the end would just be a realm of Soviet propaganda to decry the United State's of its terrible human rights violations and not much more than that. It would essentially end up boiling down to African Americans being used as a tool during the cold war so that way the United States and Soviet Union could go back and forth at one another about their human rights violations and while both countries committed many human rights violations it was in a lot of ways sad that African Americans worked so hard just to be used as cannon fodder. While African Americans did not get the progress that they wanted to get with the United Nations, it did help them to at least get their word out and speak of the atrocities that were occurring to them at home even though most of the attempts were subverted at the very least some people from other countries saw what the United States was doing and felt as though it was wrong. All in all African Americans did try to use the United Nations as an outlet to get rights not only at home but also abroad for colonies but were unsuccessful because of the fact that the United States was more beholden to its cold war politics and Southern Dixiecrats than it felt it was to African Americans themselves.

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- ⁱⁱ Marry Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2001), 82.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Marry Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2001), 21-24.
- ^{iv} Metz T. O. Lochard, Richard Durham, and John R. Badger, "Delegates Juggle Colonial Question; White, DuBois Ask Equality of Races," *The Chicago Defender*, May 5, 1945. 1, 6.
- ^v Metz T. O. Lochard, Richard Durham, and John R. Badger, "Delegates Juggle Colonial Question; White, DuBois Ask Equality of Races," *The Chicago Defender*, May 5, 1945. 1, 6.
- ^{vi} "United Nations Charter," *New York Age*, July 7, 1945. 6.
- ^{vii} Marika Sherwood, "The United Nations: Caribbean and African-American Attempts to Influence the Founding Conference in San Francisco in 1945," *The Journal of Caribbean History* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): 33.
- ^{viii} Eleanor Roosevelt, et al., "Charter of the United Nations" (United Nations, n.d.). Chapter 1, article 2.
- ^{ix} Carol Anderson, "From Hope to Disillusion: African Americans, the United Nations, and the Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1947," *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 4 (1996): 538.
- ^x W. E. B. DuBois, "An Appeal to the World" (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947). 4.
- ^{xi} W. E. B. DuBois, "An Appeal to the World" (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947). 15.
- ^{xii} W. E. B. DuBois, "An Appeal to the World" (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947). 29.
- ^{xiii} W. E. B. DuBois, "An Appeal to the World" (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947). 61.
- ^{xiv} Quoted in W. E. B. DuBois, "An Appeal to the World" (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947). 63.
- ^{xv} W. E. B. DuBois, "An Appeal to the World" (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947). 59-65.
- ^{xvi} Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes The NAACP and Black Communists in the Early Cold War, 1948 – 1952," in *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 106.
- ^{xvii} W. E. B. DuBois, "An Appeal to the World" (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947). 139-140.
- ^{xviii} Carol Anderson, "A 'Hollow Mockery': African Americans, White Supremacy, and the Development of Human Rights in the United States," in *Bringing Human Rights Home: A History of Human Rights in the United States* (Santa Barbra California: Praegar, 2007): 84-85.
- ^{xix} Carol Anderson, "A Hollow Mockery..." 85.
- ^{xx} Charles H. Martin, "The Civil Rights Congress and Southern Black Defendants," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (Spring 1987). 26.
- ^{xxi} William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). XIV.
- ^{xxii} William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 8.
- ^{xxiii} William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). XIV.
- ^{xxiv} William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 10.
- ^{xxv} William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 9.

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- xxvi William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 12.
- xxvii William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 12.
- xxviii William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). XV.
- xxix William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 16.
- xxx "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (United Nations, 1948). 1.
- xxxi William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 17.
- xxxii William L. Patterson, "We Charge Genocide" (Civil Rights Congress, 1951). 167.
- xxxiii Carol Anderson, "A Hollow Mockery...". 86-89.
- xxxiv Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes...". 95-97.
- xxxv Quoted in Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes...". 98.
- xxxvi Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes...". 98-99.
- xxxvii Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes...". 99.
- xxxviii Quoted in Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes...". 99.
- xxxix Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes...". 103-104.
- xl Marjorie McKenzie, "Pursuit of Democracy," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 10, 1950.
- xli Marjorie McKenzie, "Pursuit of Democracy," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 10, 1950.
- xlii Carol Anderson, "A Hollow Mockery...". 78.
- xliii Carol Anderson, "A Hollow Mockery...". 78-79.
- xliv Carol Anderson, "A Hollow Mockery...". 78-79.