The Line that Belts the World:
Transnationality, the Colour Line, and Race During the Great War

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ABSTRACT

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The First World War was a period of significant social upheaval, as political, economic, and social conditions were placed under extreme stresses. W. E. B. Du Bois viewed this period as not just a conflict between nations, rather it was a life and death struggle for the future of the "darker races of the world." Accordingly, Du Bois believed that African American participation in the Great War would be instrumental in attaining not only their own rights, but the rights of all "darker races." However, it was an accident of timing, necessitated by the need for wartime labour and fighting men—on both sides of the Atlantic—that brought thousands of black Africans and African Americans to France. Thus, the war would place hundreds of thousands of black men into a heavily racialized context. This thesis proposes to track the racial artifacts that African Americans experienced as the Great War took them from the "brutal" race regime of the United States, to its "benevolent" counterpart in France, and back again. As such, it seeks to understand how this conflict shaped the articulation of race within a transnational context. In addition, a secondary goal of this comparative exploration of "brutal" American and "benevolent" French racisms, is to qualify the reputation of France as a bastion of racial equality.

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Introduction

As I sat at my desk poring over months of collected research, I had an existential crisis. *Black Shame: African Soldiers in Europe, 1914-1922* by Dick van Galen Last lay in front of me, shouting my exact research subject at me. I was at a loss. I had chosen to explore the racially motivated protests undertaken by the post-war German government, known as the Black Shame. This seemed like a novel way to express my developing interest in race relations, without abandoning my background in European history. The topic of the Black Shame had largely been a tertiary one in English scholarship, usually used to develop wider concepts of future European—particularly German—racist behaviour. My intention was to explore the relationship this campaign had with the French and the nearly 750,000 black African soldiers stationed in both France and French-occupied Germany during the First World War. Pushing through my dread, I read van Galen Last's book. He explored the implications of having thousands of armed African soldiers deployed on European soil. The Black Shame had its origins in nineteenth-century "racist concepts and visions of dread but came to a head during the occupation. The indignation over the deployment of blacks took on a global scope and surprised the French."[1] It was this point that the use of the term "global struck me; I could pursue a transnational history of race.

Reading further, the concept of the colonial encounter in Europe revealed itself to be the main focus for van Galen Last's work. Black Africans represented racialized sexual transgressions, which threatened to upset the status quo of white prestige by challenging the respectability of women. In both France and Germany, women were seen as pillars of their nation's culture.[2] (Fig. 1) However, I was still curious about the global aspect and the role that the United States played. It is true, van Galen Last does pursue the implications for the Black

[1] Dick van Galen Last, *Black Shame: African Soldiers in Europe, 1914-1922* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 3.

[2] In Germany, women were typically seen as guardians of traditional German culture. Recruitment posters often mobilized such rhetoric. For example, in a piece by Lucian Bernhard, Germany is represented as a mother and child with the caption reading, "Subscribe to the Ninth! It concerns everything we love." For more on what women meant to German national identity, see Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); France also placed great significance on women as symbols of the nation itself. Marianne is a national symbol of France and a personification of the French Republican ideals of liberty and reason. For more on Marianne and her feminine associations with French identity, see Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Shame within the US, but only so far as to qualify his primary focus; which is the extended drama of Franco-German Revanchism. His lack of focus on the American context leaves other subjects ripe for potential exploration. Of the four-million US military personnel deployed to France in 1917, nearly 380,000 were African American. This thrust over a quarter of a million men into a highly racialized context, as American and French ideas of race did not always see eye-to-eye. It was an accident of timing, necessitated by the need for wartime labour and fighting men—on both sides of the Atlantic—that brought thousands of black Africans and African Americans to France. This encounter in France would significantly influence how African American soldiers thought of themselves, what they expected in return for their service, and how they articulated those feelings.

This encounter between differing race regimes speaks to the words of W. E. B. Du Bois. In a 1900 address to the American Negro Academy, Du Bois outlined how some have considered the race question as "a purely national and local affair." However, a global perspective reveals that "the color line belts the world."[3] This is quite apt, as Du Bois was articulating a transnational framework in which the issue of race could be understood in the twentieth century. The line that he speaks of is the problem that "darker peoples" were facing at the turn of the century: the divide between criticism and the ideal. Criticism, as Du Bois argued, speaks to the negative, racialized outlook towards the "darker races" of the world. It labels these peoples as inferior through doubt of their capabilities. The ideal centres around the positive attitudes in the discourses surrounding people of colour. It speaks to the potential these darker peoples have for uplift and a recognition of their humanity. Or put more simply, "the still persistent thrust for a broader and deeper humanity, the still powerful doubt as to what the Negro can and will do."[4] This understanding of the colour line can be allegorically applied to the transnational exchange that France and the United States underwent during the First World War.[5]

The United States brutalized African Americans both under the yoke of Jim Crow in the South and systemic racism in the North. This brutalization could be viewed through the lens of Du Bois` notion of "criticism." Similarly, France—at least the perception of it—can be understood

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[3] W. E. B Du Bois, "The Present Outlook for the Dark Races of Mankind," in *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays*, ed. Nahum Dimitri Chandler (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013),111-12, ProQuest ebrary.

[4] Ibid, 117.

[5] While the concept of "the colour line" certainly could be interpreted as referring to segregation of the races. However, when Du Bois first used the phrase himself at the First Pan-African Conference in 1900 (and later in his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*), he was referring to the colour line as discursive tool; being the divide between the "ideal" and the "criticism." This thesis will employ both meanings.

as representing the ideal, and the potential for its black African subjects to actualize their full potential. Although this allegorization is simplistic—and certainly needs qualification—its significance as a point of departure will prove extremely useful for teasing out the significance of the First World War as a time of flux in the way that nations understood, created, and articulated the idea of race.

Being black in America at the turn of the twentieth century was dangerous. The brutality of Jim Crow was in full swing in the South, while an unofficial regime of socio-economic exclusion reigned in the North. The 1910s were a period of great flux in the demographic makeup of the US, seeing more than 200,000 African Americans migrating north to escape segregation and crushing economic conditions.[6] As war broke out in Europe, the US war economy ramped up in anticipation of the country joining the conflict. Northern recruiters began to entice African American labour to migrate northward; even prominent black newspapers, such as the *Chicago Defender* played a role. By 1919, nearly one million black Americans had settled into northern cities.[7] Such an influx of people upset the status quo. Blacks competed for jobs and attempted to move into white neighbourhoods. The Southern "problem" had come North and, as Tyler Stovall describes, came to play an "increasingly central role in the nation's consciousness."[8]

This Southern "problem" was one of race. Tensions surrounding the competitions for both work and living space manifested themselves as acts of racialized violence, the most extreme of which were race riots—or as David Krugler labels them, "anti-black collective violence," as much of the violence was perpetrated by white actors.[9] To be sure, mass racial violence was not a unique phenomenon in the pre-war United States. For instance, in 1898 between 60 and 300 African Americans were killed in Wilmington, North Carolina, after 2000 white men revolted against a Black Fusionist government (radical Populist and reactionary

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[6] James N. Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: An Historical Overview," in *African American Urban History: The Dynamics of Race, Class and Gender Since World War II*, eds. Joe W. Trotter Jr. and Kenneth L. Kusmer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) 22.
[7] Ethan Michaeli, *The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America: From the Age of The Pullman Porters to The Age Of Obama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016).
[8] Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), xiv.
[9] Krugler qualifies the term race riot as being synonymous for "anti-black collective violence." This certainly is a more accurate term, as much of the violence is perpetrated by white mobs, and race riot suggests equal responsibility. Nonetheless, as Krugler uses both terms interchangeably, and for the purposes of both variety of prose and to represent the language of the period, I will as well. David Krugler, *1919, The Year of Racial Violence: How African Americans Fought Back* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 11.

Republican).[10] Or when a mob of 5,000 whites rioted through Springfield, Illinois for two days in 1908; 9 black men were killed as a result, and nearly $150,000 of damage was done.[11] Even during the early stages of America's entry into the War, East St. Louis suffered an incidence of anti-black collective violence, killing at least 40 African Americans.[12] While acts of self-defense were certainly not unheard of, many of these victims offered little to no resistance.[13] However, the post-war context for mass racial violence had a different tone.

As the war ended, many African American veterans were demobilized and returned home to the US. These returning soldiers put serious stresses on the already fragile racial tensions in the American North. The war experience in France not only changed the way African Americans perceived themselves and their position in America's brutal race regime, but also cultivated a belief in fighting for one's rights, citizenship, and personhood. By late 1918 and throughout most of 1919, tensions spilled over into several instances of anti-black collective violence. This violence culminated in what came to be known as the Red Summer, in which more than 940 people died. What differentiated these riots from pre-war iterations, was that there were more instances of black resistance—especially in Chicago and Washington, D.C. What had happened between America's entry into the First World War, and the Allied victory in the summer of 1918 to cause such an increase in mass racial violence and black resistance? Although the factors are myriad, from shifting economic conditions to mass flows of civilians and decommissioned soldiers returning from Europe, a return to Du Bois' idea of a "color line [that] belts the world" is required.

Du Bois believed that the colour line was the division in opinion between the ideal of what darker people could do, and the biological racism that critiqued that potential. For Du Bois, the way for the "darker races" of the world—especially African Americans—to transcend this colour line, was to "continually and repeatedly show that we are capable of taking hold of every opportunity offered."[14] The onset of World War I became just such an opportunity. "The world

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[10] Richard L. Watson Jr., Lindsey Butler and Alan Watson, "Furnifold Simmons and the Politics of White Supremacy," in *Race, Class and Politics in Southern History: Essays in Honor of Robert F. Durden,* eds. Jeffrey Crow et al. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1989).
[11] Roberta Senechal de la Roche, *In Lincoln's Shadow: The Springfield, Illinois, Race Riot of 1908* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 10.
[12] The actual death toll of African Americans in East St. Louis is in dispute, with estimates ranging from 40 to 250. Du Bois and Martha Gruening, "The Massacre of East St. Louis: An Investigation by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," in *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* (hereafter, *The Crisis*) 14, no. 5 (September 1917), 219, The Crisis Archive.
[13] "Mob Begins During After Negroes are Taken from Jail by Ruse: Woman Leads Rioters Who Wreck Big Restaurant; Nominee Chafin Protects Negro and Then is Stoned," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 15, 1908, www.newspapers.com.
[14] Du Bois, "The Present Outlook for the Dark Races of the Mankind," 117.

must be made safe for democracy," lauded President Woodrow Wilson as he challenged the United States Congress to enter the war against the German Empire.[15] This became an opportunity for African Americans to repurpose such rhetoric to pursue the restoration of voting rights in the South, an end to lynching, and the cessation of racial segregation; essentially it was a call for democracy to be made safe at home. Du Bois, however, had a more nuanced view of this opportunity:

> We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills.[16]

Thus the First World War was not only a major cause of demographic shifts within the US, it was also a significant moment in the movement toward racial equality, as other leaders, such as J. E. Spingarn of the NAACP urged black Americans to become fully engaged in the war effort.[17] While this encouraging of African Americans to fight against Germany speaks to countering the "critique" of American racism, Du Bois' perception of France also evokes his desire to associate black racial uplift with France's seemingly "ideal" policy of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.

In the eyes of Du Bois, France was the model colour-blind society.[18] France represented the ideal of a society that lacked racial prejudice—a universalist *république une et indivisible*. Indeed, many memoirs of African American veterans reflected this vision of an enlightened France.[19] However, the perception was just that, a perception—one shared by Du Bois and his contemporaries, as well as some scholars of French History, whose works will be discussed in more detail below. Certainly, an African American coming from the segregated South to France surely experienced a relative improvement where basic human dignity was concerned. He was

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[15] Woodrow Wilson, *President Wilson's Declaration of War Message to Congress, April 2, 1917*; Records of the United States Senate; Record Group 46; National Archives. https://www.ourdocuments.gov
[16] Du Bois, "Close Ranks," *The Crisis* 16, no. 3 (July 1918), 111, The Crisis Archive.
[17] Bernard C. Nalty and Morris J. MacGregor, *Blacks in the Military: Essential Documents* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1981), 73; J. E. Spingarn used his connections to the US military to advocate for the creation of a training camp for African Americans in Des Moines, Iowa. This camp would produce nearly 1,000 black American officers were commissioned. "President Spingarn Dies," *The Crisis* 46, no. 9 (September 1939), 269. Books.google.ca
[18] Du Bois, "The Black Man in The Revolution of 1914-1918," in *The Crisis* 17, no. 5, (March 1919), The Crisis Archive; Du Bois, "Opinion of W. E. B. Du Bois," in *The Crisis* 18. no. 1, May 1919, The Crisis Archive; Du Bois, "Documents of the War," in *The Crisis* 18. no. 1, May 1919, The Crisis Archive.
[19] Emmett J. Scott, *Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War* (Chicago, Homewood Press, 1919); Charles H. Williams, *Sidelights on Negro Soldiers* (Boston: B. J. Brimmer, 1923).

able to freely enjoy mingling with white French people in public, use public transportation, be treated equally under the law, etc. Yet, France during the early stages of the twentieth century was not a colour-blind society.

The Third Republic had a long tradition of racial ambivalence when it came to its interactions with its colonial subjects. This is evident in the ways in which Republican ideals of universal equality were rationalized with imperial aspirations. The French approach to their subjects was to "treat them as French citizens each time it was a question of obligations and duties, and to treat them as subjects each time it was a question of rights or privileges."[20] For example, as black African soldiers (*tirailleurs*) were mobilized in France in 1916, they were portrayed as childlike to the French population, in order to assuage public fears of their classically understood "savagery."[21] Clearly there was a separation between what African Americans perceived France as and what it was in reality. Both the United States and France demonstrated different forms of racism, what I label as "Brutal" and "Benevolent" racisms. But how can these categories allow us to better understand the experiences of African Americans during the Great War? Perhaps a discussion of the concepts of race and racism will prove to be instructive.

It is of the utmost importance that we clarify what we mean when we speak of race, racism, or acts of racial violence. The key to understanding which beliefs or behaviours are to be considered racist, is to recognize that beliefs and behaviours are unstable. George Fredrickson asserts that racism is founded upon two components: difference and power. As such, it is based on the idea that a "Them" is created, which is different from "Us" in permanent ways. This sense of difference then provides justification for using modes of power to treat this "Other" in ways that would be regarded as inhumane if applied to one's own group.[22] The fluidity of meaning when it comes to the idea of race helps clarify the dichotomy between France and the US. It explains how both societies can be considered racist, even though a black man could be lynched in the US for looking at a woman the wrong way, while he could be invited into the home of a white family in France. Thus, the discursive tool of separating American "brutal" racism from French "benevolent" racism is essential for understanding race during the period. However, the manner in which this "brutality" or "benevolence" is expressed is also important to understand.

The expression of race can be understood in two manners: the way in which it is

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[20] Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997), 145.
[21] Alphonse Séché, *Les noirs: d'après des documents officiels* (Payot: Paris, 1919), 26-35.
[22] George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 9.

constructed, and the manner in which it is articulated. As discussed, the creation of a group whose differences become constitutive of a relationship between themselves vis-à-vis another group is a process of racial construction. Thus, the passage of laws, restriction of movement, and allocation of resources that perpetuated Jim Crow in America and imperialism in France is a manner in which racial difference is fabricated. The articulation of race, on the other hand, is the process by which this constructed racism is disseminated, consumed, and reproduced; a racial artifact if you will. Therefore, the lynching of an "American Negro" accused of raping a white woman, or the pidgin French taught to black African soldiers who were thought too inherently childlike to understand proper French are both racial artifacts that perpetuated the contemporary state of racial construction.

In 1917, 36 black men were lynched in the United States. By 1918, this number nearly doubled to 60. Many of the murdered were soldiers on leave.[23] These murders were in response to perceived transgressions against the colour line, which were intolerable in a society experiencing an existential threat to "whiteness." However, in France, another predominantly white nation, black soldiers told a different story. Arthur Little relates how grateful the French were for the sacrifices black Americans made for France:

> France had wept over them—wept the tears of gratitude and love. France had sung and danced and cried to their music. France had given its first war medal for an American private to one of their number. France had given them the collective citation of flying the Croix de Guerre streamers at the peak of its colors. France had kissed these colored soldiers—kissed them with reverence and in honor, first upon the right cheek and then upon the left.[24]

How could two nations—both with similar, though unique apparatuses to establish and maintain the colour line—have such differing contexts for African American men? These articulations of racial artifacts have spatial and temporal implications for the people suffering under racist regimes, and the First World War, as we have seen, caused major societal shifts. As such, this thesis proposes to track the racial artifacts that African Americans experienced as the Great War took them from the "brutal" race regime of the United States, to its "benevolent" counterpart in France, and back again. Accordingly, it seeks to understand how this conflict shaped the articulations of race within a transnational context. In addition, a secondary goal of this comparative exploration of "brutal" American and "benevolent" French racisms is to qualify the

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[23] Jennifer Keene, "Protest and Disability: A New Look at the African American Soldiers During the First World War," in *Warfare and Belligerence: Perspectives in First World War* Studies, ed. Pierre Purseigle (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 220.
[24] Arthur Little, *From Harlem to the Rhine: The Story of New York's Colored Volunteers* (New York, Haskell, 1974), 350.

reputation of France as a bastion of racial equality.

To pursue these goals, it is important to establish an historical context for how these two nations could arrive at such differing racial atmospheres. Concerning the American context, Chapter One discusses the ongoing threat to the black male body—originally challenged by people like Ida B. Wells—continued well into the twentieth century and into the Interwar period. I will analyze the historical context that led to the practice of lynching black men—with particular emphasis on the military, as well as the challenges the Great War posed to American constructs of "blackness" and manhood. Chapter Two explores the French context and how the meeting of contradictory colonial policy and subconscious ideas surrounding the idea of colonial denizens created a complex cultural landscape. I hope to tease out the relationships and contradictions that occurred in a society that was at once Negrophilic and Negrophobic. Chapter Three examines the unique processes of artifact creation as the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) attempts to maintain the colour line in France. And finally, Chapter Four will look at the experiences of African Americans directly and how these men coped with and resisted oppression in both France and the United States.

As will become clear in the pages that follow, my project breaks new ground. Existing scholarship does indeed engage with both the African American experience in France during the war, as well as the influence that conflict had on the post-war mentalities of black and white Americans on the Homefront. However, it is the expression and emphasis of these elements that this project hopes to nuance. The very nature of argumentation leads to certain elements of historical processes to be under emphasized. For example, van Galen Last does explore the implications that the French experience had on African Americans returning to the US, but this was always in service of his main focus, which was the Black Shame in a transnational context. It is my intention to pursue the articulation of race, between and within both France and the US, in a transnational context. This study centres the United States by using the American context as the pivot point for an exploration of the tensions and paradoxes that surround African American military service. By doing so, it will become clear that the socio-political upheaval of the First World War acted as an impetus for the creation of new racial artifacts in both the United States and France.

When analyzing the manner in which race in the military was articulated during the turn of the 20th century, scholars have taken many approaches. For instance, Joe Lunn, Nicole Zehfuss, and Richard Fogarty all examine the relationship that African soldiers—particularly the *tirailleurs sénégalais*—had in relation to the French metropole. Lunn's earlier scholarship is

heavily focused on the oral history of the tirailleurs' military experiences.[25] These studies explored the manner in which the military service in France affected African soldiers in a personal context. However, later in his career—and more relevant to this study—his focus shifted towards the French perception of these black soldiers. Lunn examines how French preconceptions of racially determined traits of military effectiveness, mentality, and physical demeanor informed the tactical usage of *tirailleurs sénégalais*.[26] However, these perceptions changed as white French and black African soldiers began to interact over time. Racial artifacts such as policy towards African troop deployments, controls on interactions between black soldiers and white citizens, and the public image of African soldiers, are explored to describe a shift in French attitudes towards African soldiers. From an attitude of an aggressive "*sale nègre*" to one of a "*bon soldat*" who was viewed as a noble defender of The Republic, even if they were still perceived as grown children.[27]

In a similar vein, both Nicole Zehfuss and Richard Fogarty examine the racial exchange between colonial soldiers and both the French military and public. Zehfuss takes a bottom-up approach by examining two books written by French officer Léon Gaillet. Her literary analysis tracks Gaillet's journey from viewing Africans as "savages" to "loyal children," however his view remained firmly affixed to the generally negative colonial stereotypes espoused by the French during the period.[28] Fogarty takes on a wider perspective as his book examines the implications of not just black African colonial soldiers serving in France, but also North African and Asian colonial soldiers. Similar to Lunn and Zehfuss, Fogarty examines how official military documents, public records, and letters from soldiers—who were lucky enough to be literate—to gain a perspective on the racial landscape for colonial soldiers in France.[29] More specifically, Fogarty asks how France received the reputation of a colour-blind society, while at the same time demonstrating clear signs of racial prejudice. Tensions over the relations between colonial soldiers and the white French military and civilians—particularly French women—demonstrated

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[25] Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1999); Joe Lunn, "Kande Kamara Speaks: An Oral History of the West African Experience in France, 1914-1918," in *Africa and the First World War*, ed. Melvin E. Page (London: Macmillan Press, 1987).
[26] Joe Lunn, "`Les Races guerrières': Racial Preconceptions in the French Military about West Africans during the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 4 (October 1999), JSTOR.
[27] This article focuses on the change in French perceptions of French West African Soldiers due to the close contact of military service. Joe H. Lunn, "'Bons soldats' and 'sales nègres': French Perceptions of West African Soldiers during the First World War," *French Colonial History* 1 (2002), ProjectMUSE.
[28] Nicole M. Zehfuss, "From Stereotypes to Individual: World War I Experiences with Tirailleurs sénégalais," in *French Colonial History* 6 (2005).
[29] Richard Standish Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

anxieties surrounding the effects these relations would have on the stability of colonial rule. The official efforts to control or even prevent contact between colonial soldiers and whites highlighted the conflict between exclusionary and inclusionary ideologies.[30]

Lunn, Zehfuss, and Fogarty all speak of the influence that the colonial mentality had on the manner in which the French engaged with its colonial soldiers. Elizabeth Ezra labels this mentality as the "colonial unconscious."[31] The understanding refers to the set of ambivalent, primarily unconscious beliefs, representations, images and assumptions concerning race and the colonial "Other" that pervaded interwar French society. The Inter-War period is particularly relevant for the study of colonial imagery and its understandings of race as the visibility and popularity of the empire—which Raoul Girardet coined as "*l'idee coloniale*"—peaked in metropolitan France at this time.[32] The black African soldiers of which these authors speak occupied a liminal space in French society, one in which their interaction with white French people was highly circumscribed and informed by this "colonial unconscious."

This mentality could be understood through the lens of Ann Laura Stoler's scholarship concerning the colonial context of the Dutch East Indies. Stoler approaches the concepts of the "colonizer" and "colonized" as being maintained and reinforced through sexual control. Such controls were exercised through specific gender-based sexual constraints which both delineated systems of power but also defined the personal and public bounds of race relations.[33] She asserts that, "no subject is discussed more than sex in colonial literature and no subject more invoked to foster the racist stereotypes of European society."[34] This heavy emphasis on the categorization of racial groups, delineation of gender roles, and controls on sexual activity is highly reflected in Ezra's "colonial unconscious." The discourse surrounding France's *mission civilisatrice*—Association versus Assimilation—was embedded in this unconscious mentality. Association meaning that the culture and political autonomy of a country under colonial rule was to be recognized, while Assimilation was precluded by the "combined imposition and denial of distinctions."[35] The discourse surrounding France and its colonies reify and reinforce distinctions between the colonizer and the colonized, while at the same time denying any distinctions among the varying subjects of the empire. This gap between rhetoric and reality—Association

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[30] Ibid., 272.
[31] Elizabeth Ezra, *The Colonial Unconscious: Race and Culture in Interwar France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).
[32] Ibid., 9.
[33] Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender and Morality in the Making of Race," in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and Imperial Power* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2002), 42.
[34] Ibid., 43.
[35] Ezra, *The Colonial Unconscious*, 7.

and Assimilation—is usually significant, which Ezra refers to as ambivalence.

Ezra's vision of ambivalence takes its cues from the work of Homi Bhabha, who sees the concept as a split in the identity of the colonized. This split creates a space in which a hybrid cultural identity is created—between the colonizer's culture and that of the indigenous population.[36] This idea of ambivalence is a major feature of Ezra's piece, as her cultural analysis focuses on cultural products that do not necessarily portray life in the colonies, but instead those that "play on the exotic."[37] In addition, Fogarty speaks of the ambivalent nature in which the French military split its *tirailleurs* between *évolués* and *indigènes*.[38] As Fogarty explains, "commitment to the ideals of universalism and egalitarianism pushed French officials to include *troupes indigènes* in both national defense and the national community, while racism pulled these same officers back from measures that would make the full integration of colonial subjects into national life a reality."[39] The scholarship surrounding France's *mission civilisatrice* is well aware of the implications that ambivalent policy choices had upon colonized peoples. However, Alice Conklin moves past these implications, and attempts to explain how such an institutional cognitive dissonance could have developed.

Conklin seeks to understand how the French understood their colonial subjects and the colonial enterprise itself, as well as how the French approach differed from other nations colonial perspectives—particularly those of Germany and the United States. She portrays the French colonial administrations as a manifestation of ideals originating during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution which came to fruition during the Third Republic. Conklin uses official documents of the colonial administrative apparatus to examine official state rhetoric and decision-making processes in French West Africa. As Conklin paraphrases the words of Senegalese Chamber of Deputies representative, François Carpot, she agrees that "France's entire approach to governing Africans . . . was to treat them as French citizens each time it was a question of obligations and duties, and to treat them as subjects each time it was a question of

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[36] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 107.
[37] Ezra, *The Colonial Unconscious*, see pages 97-128 for a discussion of films featuring Josephine Baker, who was a popular African American actress in France during the *L'entre-deux-guerres*; see pages 129-144 for an analysis of Paul Morand's written work in which he often discusses the "almost imperceptible differences" between the metropole and colony. One such title is *Black Magic*, where Morand records his travels to Sub-Saharan Africa and his encounters with its people.
[38] In Senegal—then part of the French colony, French West Africa—the population was split into two groups. The *indigènes* were the local indigenous population and viewed as colonial subject. The *évolués* were colonial peoples who were born in one of the Four Communes of Senegal (Dakar, Gorée, Saint-Louis, and Rufisque). These people were educated in French schools and learned the French language, as such, they were labeled as and afford limited privileges under a qualified French citizenship. For instance, black Africans from the Four Communes could vote for members of the National Assembly.
[39] Fogarty, *Race and War in France*, 12.

rights or privileges."[40] In espousing the ideals of a *mission civilisatrice*, the Ministry of Colonies obfuscated—often to themselves—the various contradictions between the rights assured by republican democracy and the violation of those rights that is inherent in the forcible acquisition of territory. This is closely related to the ideas of categorization outlined by Stoler. Just how gender, sexual, and racial categorization were used in the Dutch East Indies, the French colonial apparatus used these categories ambivalently to balance the contradiction between the "rights of man" and the colonial enterprise.

Both African and African American soldiers would be affected by this ambivalent "colonial unconscious." On the one hand, this ambivalent policy from the French state would ensure a controllable distance between the colonizer and the colonized. On the other, the grey areas that are inherent in such an ambivalent system create spaces of agency in which black soldiers could participate—though certainly in a qualified manner—in French society.

In *Black Shame*, van Galen Last examines how the presence of Black African soldiers in Europe led to an escalation of racial discourse in both Europe and the United States. Van Galen Last opens his piece with the question: "Why did France, as the only European nation, decide to bring black soldiers to Europe to fight for the motherland…?"[41] Here, we return to the matter of the nature of argumentation. While van Galen Last does indeed touch upon how the manner in which the experience in France affected the racial discourse in the US, it was very brief and was used to reinforce his own underlying thesis of Franco-German *Revanchism* via the medium of racial relations.[42] Indeed, he concludes that the uproar caused in both the US and Great Britain by the return black soldiers was used as a tool by German nationalists to "play the race card" against France when it came to French colonial soldiers occupying the Rhineland.[43] When van Galen Last articulates that it was only France that brought black soldiers to Europe, his wording obscures a more complex process. While it is true, France was the only nation to bring black *colonial* soldiers, we can see that both Britain and the US utilized their own black *citizens* as soldiers. Whether or not these semantics were intentional or not, they seem to serve to deemphasize the use of non-French black soldiers for the purpose of elevating the role of black French colonials. This thesis will serve to re-centre the war-time experience of African American soldiers.

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[40] Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 145.
[41] Van Galen Last, *Black Shame*, 3.
[42] Ibid., 95-115, In Chapter Five, entitled "The Road Back," van Galen Last engages with the effects returning black soldiers had in their respective countries of Britain and the United States. This is a brief chapter—twenty pages out of a two hundred plus page manuscript—with the African American case being limited to five of those pages.
[43] Ibid., 115.

Another area that van Galen Last uses to explore European racial discourse is the manner in which black soldiers were treated. “In contrast to the British,” speaking to the treatment of colonial soldiers by the French, “and especially to the American units, abuse and humiliation were the exception. Among the French, at least within France, there was generally a greater willingness to treat black soldiers as equals. Compared with life in the colonies, in the army the *tirailleurs sénégalais* encountered a relatively egalitarian society.”[44] This understanding is in line with my discursive framework of “Benevolent” vs. “Brutal” racisms. However, the manner in which van Galen Last engages with a perceived French benevolence is often unqualified, leaving the reader to believe that France was indeed a fully “egalitarian society.” By placing more emphasis on African American soldiers—who are largely outside of the purview of van Galen Last—one may gain a better, and more qualified understanding of French “benevolence.”

How do the ideas of an ambivalent French policy and “colonial unconscious” inform a deeper understanding of the African American experience in France? These two conceptions of engaging with the “Other” in France share a lot of similarities with American racial perceptions. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds’ transnational scholarship may prove useful in understanding these racial dynamics. Their study revolves around the view of “whiteness” as a “transnational form of racial identification.”[45] Lake and Reynolds argue, in line with Du Bois ideas of “whiteness,” that as the colonized world fell into revolt at the turn of the 20th century, the concept of “whiteness was born in the apprehension of imminent loss.”[46] Under this particular understanding of race, apprehensions about a threat to “whiteness” had a transnational scope. Therefore, the ambivalent French policy intended to keep its colonial subjects at arms-length, could be understood in a similar manner as American efforts to segregate its African Americans under Jim Crow. This framework of apprehensive “whiteness” serves as a useful tool to help tease out the differences and similarities between “French Benevolent” and “American Brutal” Racisms.

Krugler’s work in *1919, The Year of Racial Violence: How African Americans Fought Back* deals with anti-black collective violence, which has its origin in white apprehension. He examines how black Americans challenged the racial norms of the United States which culminated in a series of bloody acts of anti-black collective violence in many major US cities. Krugler’s focus is threefold, he examines how African Americans physically mobilized in armed

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[44] Ibid., 73-4.
[45] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men’s Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.
[46] Ibid., 2.

self-defense forces against white mobs; how black people battled for truth in the media; and finally, the pursuit for legal justice. The phenomenon of black self-defense is what concerns us the most as it speaks to the direct implications of white anxieties. White mobs were formed to "to drive blacks from industrial jobs or white neighborhoods; to punish blacks for their wartime prosperity; *to 'protect' white women against the alleged depredations of black men*."[47] The most salient feature of this perceived threat to "whiteness," was the existential threat that the "dark races" of the world posed for white women. As such, many of the acts of anti-black collective violence began as a reaction to transgressions against the colour line that separated black men from white women.[48]

The threat of the black male against that of the white female body is a common theme in the historiography of American masculinity.[49] Between 1880 and 1920 urban middle-class American men were undergoing a crisis of masculinity. The nature of work began to change; large-scale consumer culture was exploding; the advent of corporations was underway; and socio-political power of immigrants, middle-class women, and working-class men was steadily on the rise. This was a period where white middle-class Americans desperately tried to claim, retain, or assert forms of masculine vitality and virility. Gender historians tracked the shift from a Victorian ideal of manliness, which focused on the reverence for women and emotion self-restraint, to a more primeval form of masculinity that emphasized violence and sexual aggression.[50]

The scholarship of Gail Bederman situates itself in this transitional space. In a manner reminiscent to Michel Foucault, Bederman pursues how the idea of manhood was used to subvert power relations and authority—in this case, White Supremacy. For instance, she argues that Ida B. Wells, who made her name as *the* anti-lynching activist during late nineteenth

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[47] Emphasis is my own. Krugler, *1919, The Year of Racial Violence*, 4.

[48] Knoxville, Tennessee and Omaha, Nebraska mobs stormed a courthouse in an attempt to lynch a group of black men that were accused of transgressions against white women. Washington, DC saw violence after a collection of rape reports. And rioting occurred in Longview, Texas and Charleston, South Carolina after black people attempt to defy Jim Crow; for more on extrajudicial violence and lynchings against African Americans see Michael James Pfeifer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874-1947* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

[49] Joe Dubbert, "Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis," in *The American Man*, Pleck and Pleck, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980); Peter Filene, *Him, Her, Self: Sex Roles in Modern America*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1986); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution: Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

[50] George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985).

century, “convinced nervous whites that lynching imperiled American manhood.”[51] She builds her argument by representing the middle-class man as defining his strength through the mastery of those who are weaker than himself: his wife, his children, his employees. Bederman develops these gender roles—"separate spheres” of sexual difference—as being instrumental to the manner in which “civilization” was expressed; an “everything in its place” understanding of the world.[52] The figure of the “savage”—being non-white—was viewed as “uncivilized” and sexually fluid, as such, these people fell outside what was considered normal and became socially deviant. Bederman argues that Wells recognized that anxieties over white manliness came to be projected upon the black body. This is the mentality of Wells’ critique in *Southern Horrors*. Channeling the work of Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Bederman captures the essence of Wells’ view of white loss. As Hall argues, “by constructing black men as ‘natural’ rapists and by resolutely and bravely avenging the (alleged) rape of pure white womanhood, Southern white men constructed themselves as ideal men: ‘patriarchs, avengers, righteous protectors.’”[53]

Just as Stoler argues, processes of categorization—between colonized and colonizer, “blackness” and “whiteness”—were secured through sexual control. The implications of these processes of categorization is the essence of this study. As the ambivalent colonial policy of the French government met the cultural “colonial unconscious” exhibited by the general French public, an interstitial space is created. In the same way, when African Americans moving from a “Brutal” American Racism are introduced to a “Benevolent” form of racism in France, a similar space is created. It is within this space that racial artifacts can be found. In both France and the US, the military’s need for black labor and soldiers created opportunities for black people to experience a modicum of equality—if ultimately fleeting. Simultaneously, this need of black men intensified white anxieties which lead to backlash manifesting itself as anti-black collective violence in the US and new articulations of paternalism in France. Regardless of whether it was van Galen Last’s intention or not to de-emphasize the experience of African Americans and their associated racial artifacts, an exhaustive analysis of an entire historical process is never the goal. By re-centering the focus on what the French experience meant for African Americans, this study hopes to understand the manner in which the First World War shaped the articulation of racial artifacts in both France and the United States.

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[51] Gail Bederman, “Civilization, the Decline of Middle-Class Manliness, and Ida B. Wells’s Anti-Lynching Campaign (1892-94),” in *Gender and American History Since 1890*, ed. Barbara Melosh (London: Routledge, 1994), 208.
[52] Ibid., 209-10.
[53] Ibid., 218; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “‘The Mind that Burns in Each Body:’ Women, Rape, and Racial Violence,” in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 238-49.

Finally, I would like to briefly touch upon my sources. Van Galen Last attempts to represent the experiences of African soldiers themselves through the use of second-hand accounts. This is because many of the African soldiers serving in France were illiterate. I, on the other hand, will be pursuing the experiences of African American soldiers, many of whom were literate. As such, my main source base will include letters written by black American soldiers; newspaper columns from black-owned presses such as *The Crisis* and the *Baltimore Afro-American*; as well as correspondences between Du Bois and a myriad of figures—general public, professional colleagues, and the French military and government leadership. Many of these sources come from the W. E. B. Du Bois Papers Archive. This is a collection of material—either personally collected by, or on the behalf of Du Bois—for an unfinished book entitled *The Black Man and the Wounded World*. In addition, I will be using a series of French language sources, including: magazines, official documents, novels, and biographies.

The Du Bois Papers Archive materials are particularly salient as they share a sort of natural dialog. Most of the documents under scrutiny are pieces that were collected at the behest of Du Bois for his book. Thus, teasing out the connections between these pieces can not only help understand what Du Bois' intentions may have been by collecting these documents, but also understand the shared racial landscape that all these documents were written in. Viewing this source base as a whole through the lens of both American "brutal" and French "Benevolent" racisms, we will get insight in not only the relativistic nature of racism, but what differing articulations of race meant for black Americans.

A Note on Language

Before I begin the main body of my thesis, it is important to take a moment to explain the language that is sometimes found in its pages. I have used, and will continue to use sensitive terminology (blacks, negro, nigger, whites, etc.). My intention is not to offend or provoke, but rather to address head on the ideas and values of the period under study. I can only do so if I reproduce texts and images from that era in an historically accurate manner, even though I know some readers may find them offensive.

Part One

The State of Racism in France and the US

The Crisis says, first your country, then your Rights!
- W. E. B. Du Bois, “Our Special Grievances”

Chapter One

Du Bois, the Search for Manhood, and “Brutal Racism” in America

The subjugation of the black body has a long history in the United States, stretching all the way back to 1619, when a Dutch slave ship brought 20 African slaves to the then British Colony of Virginia.[54] Through the years, the subjugation of black people took on many permutations; from generalized chattel slavery, to sharecropping during Reconstruction, and morphing into widespread extrajudicial mob violence—or lynching—during the Jim Crow era. “After the [Civil] War,” stressed Du Bois, “when murder and mob violence was the recognized method of re-enslaving blacks, it was discovered that it was only necessary to add a charge of rape to justify before the North and Europe any treatment of Negroes.”[55] As is clear to scholars like Bederman, it was clear to Du Bois, fears surrounding miscegenation were almost universally extolled each time a black man was lynched—whether an actual rape occurred or not. Rape was simply a tool of white supremacy to secure its authority through the maintaining the colour line.

Ida B. Wells performed significant grassroots activism in an attempt to dispel the myth of blacks as rapists. Miscegenation laws were in full force in the South. White American men were able to cross the colour line as they saw fit, however it was “death to the colored man who yields to the force and advances of a similar attraction in white women.”[56] Scholars like Lloyd Kramer argued that gender relations in Europe and the United States often adhere to a binary framework, which he called “gendered national duty.” Men were dynamic and participated in the public sphere, while women embodied motherhood, the home and the “deep, unchanging, natural force of the nation.”[57] Thus, miscegenation of the races became a threat, and it was the role of the man—under the redefinition of masculinity norms—to protect women from said threat. Conversely, Wells problematizes such an understanding by dismantling the idea of racial superiority and presents it as just another tool of racialized control.

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[54] Alden T. Vaughan, "The Origins Debate: Slavery and Racism in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 3 (July 1989): 312. JSTOR.
[55] Du Bois, “Rape,” in *The Crisis* 18, no. 1 (May 1919), 12. The Crisis Archive.
[56] Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in all Its Phases.* New York: The New York Age Print, 1892, in *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, ed. Jacqueline Jones Royster (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), 53-4.
[57] Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 107.

Wells recognized that the anxieties stemming from a "whiteness" under threat from a perceived "imminent loss" had been projected upon the black male body. Concerning the increase in the lynchings during the close of the nineteenth century, Wells concluded that the "mob spirit has grown with the increasing intelligence of the Afro-American."[58] As black Americans converted the protections afforded to them by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments into limited forms of economic and socio-political power, they began to push against an already fragile sense of white manliness. Feeling threatened, white Americans began to whip up racial tensions.

While Wells' activism revolved around civilian life, white anxieties could also be felt in the United States military as well. African American military service was paradoxical and full of racial tensions. For example, arming slaves during the early eighteenth century was a large concern for many colonies. However, lack of manpower and concerns of conflicts against both Aboriginals and European armies led to ad hoc allowances of black military service.[59] The manpower crisis of the Civil War intensified these tensions. Commanders—such as Maj. Gen. John C. Frémont and Col. Robert Gould Shaw—advocated for and served with black soldiers a few months before the Emancipation Proclamation increased the rate of recruitment of free blacks and liberated slaves into the Union army. By the end conflict, nearly 200,000 black men had served, mostly in combat roles.[60] In this case, military service was part of the process of eliminating slavery in America. However, wartime contributions did not lead to widespread acceptance of African Americans in either the military or civil spheres. For example, in 1863 resentment directed at newly freed slaves who were competing for jobs contributed to the hostilities caused by the draft, which ultimately led to the New York City Draft riots.[61]

In a similar manner that the Great Migration exacerbated white anxieties during the Interwar period, the break out of the Spanish-American War in 1898 led to a surge of black volunteers. This surge coincided with widespread adoption of discriminatory legislation—Jim Crow Laws—throughout the United States.[62] Thus the military context reflected the civilian context, insofar as racial anxieties were concerned. Black and white soldiers served in racially segregated units. In addition, there were fears in the US, particularly in the South, around arming African Americans. As such, African Americans were limited to non-combat units.

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[58] Wells, *Southern Horrors*, 61-2.
[59] For more on specific incidences of African American military service throughout the Thirteen Colonies see Nalty, *Blacks in the Military*, 3-7
[60] Ibid., 20.
[61] Leslie M. Harris*, In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626–1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 279–88.
[62] Ibid., 43.

However, this policy would be loosened around the time of the First World War, though nearly 80% of the 380,000 black American soldiers serving in the US military in 1917 were still placed into non-combat service.[63]

A few months after the United States entered the war in April of 1917, the Acting Chief of Staff, General Tasker H. Bliss, would propose the creation of the 92nd Infantry Division, which was to be the first African American combat division. It was activated in October of 1917, and constituted of 29,563 men.[64] Shortly after, in December of 1917, the 93rd Infantry Division was activated. This division was made of National Guard troops and draftees and because the division lacked supporting elements—such as artillery—it was integrated into the French armed forces.[65] Both the 92nd and the 93rd were segregated combat divisions. Though in the case of the 93rd, such segregation was limited to separation between black and white Americans, as the division served alongside white French *poilus*.[66] It is important to recognize the attempts of the United States military to maintain the colour line established in civilian sector. The goal was to defeat the Kaiser, not to upset the American way of life.[67]

Regardless of the efforts made by the military to keep black soldiers segregated, the very concept of black men serving en masse in the military—and armed no less—was still too much to bear for many white Americans. In the years following the surge of black volunteers during the Spanish-American War, there was an upsurge in racism, which lead to attacks on black troops by white civilian mobs.[68] For instance, in 1906, the Brownsville incident saw citizens plant evidence against black soldiers, leading to the dismissal of 167 black infantrymen.[69] Again, the military context echoed that of the civilian, as racial tensions continued

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[63] Jennifer D. Keene. “French and American Racial Stereotypes during the First World War,” in *National Stereotypes in Perspective: Americans in France, Frenchmen in America*, ed. William L. Chew, III (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 268.
[64] Memorandum, Maj. Gen, Tasker H. Bliss, acting chief of staff, for Sec. of War Newton D. Baker, 3 September 1917, in Nalty, *Blacks in the Military*, 79; John B. Wilson, *Armies, Corps, Divisions, and Separate Brigades* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Military History, 1999), 545.
[65] The 93rd was the home of the famous 394 Infantry Regiment, also known as the Harlem Hellfighters. Nalty, *Blacks in the Military*, 79.
[66] A *poilu* is a colloquial French term for infantry soldiers, particularly those that served in World War I.
[67] However, as will be pursued in the next chapter, steps would be taken by the US military to attempt to circumscribe the contact African American soldiers would have with white French people.
[68] Nativist sentiments had been developing since the 1890s as mass immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe put pressure on already struggling middle-class. Thus, as the Great Migration of black people from the South was underway, the threat to “whiteness” became palpable, thus leading to cases of racial violence. For general information see Bederman, “Civilization, the Decline of Middle-Class Manliness,” 211-12, or James Pula, “American Immigration Policy and the Dillingham Commission," in *Polish American Studies* 37, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 5–31. JSTOR; concerning specific anti-black collective violence directed at soldiers, see Christopher C. Lovett, “A Public Burning: Race, Sex, and the Lynching of Fred Alexander,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 33, no.2 (Summer 2010): 97-103.
[69] Nalty, *Blacks in the Military*, 44.

into 1917 during the US entry into World War I. A letter written to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker from President Woodrow Wilson encapsulates the sentiments surrounding race during the war. Wilson speaks of Officer Albert B. Dockery, a white first lieutenant of the 10th US Cavalry who wrote to the president in protest. Wilson writes that Dockery is a "southerner and finds it not only distasteful but practically impossible to serve under a colored commander."[70] This protest was in response to serving under Lt. Col. Charles A. Young. President Wilson requested that the Secretary of War transfer 1st Lt. Dockery as he is "afraid from what I have learned that there may be some serious and perhaps tragical insubordination on Lieutenant Dockery's part if he is left under Colonel Young."[71]

When it came to Lake and Reynolds' idea of a "crisis of whiteness," the US military was just as anxious as civil society. The revolts against black soldiers and the protest against Lt. Col. Young—supported and personally articulated by the President himself—demonstrates how much of a threat black equality signified for the status quo in America. It also speaks to the mutability of blackness. The military was able to look past the idea of allowing blacks into the military when it served the state. Indeed, they were even willing to arm—though few—these black soldiers. However, integration was never an option, so segregation reigned. Even in the case of Lt. Col. Young and 1st Lt. Dockery—which was a special case of non-combat command—a unique form of mutability was exhibited.[72]

Returning to the segregation occurring in civil society, it is important to understand the nature of violence that was being meted against black people and how they reacted to it. This understanding is essential if we are to grasp the manner in which the First World War shaped the articulation of racial artifacts. In the summer of 1917, a white mob in East St. Louis destroyed $400,000 worth of property—belonging to both black and white people, drove 6,000 African Americans from their homes, and killed 200 black people by shooting, burning, or hanging.[73] In September of the same year, Du Bois and Martha Gruening published an article in *The Crisis* of the event which became known as The Massacre of East St. Louis.[74] As a piece of

[70] Ibid., 77; Letter, Pres. Woodrow Wilson to Sec. of War Newton D. Baker, 25 June 1917, in Nalty, *Blacks in the Military*, 77.
[71] Ibid.
[72] While it was true that the United States military was an officially segregated organization, some exceptions occurred. In the case of 1st Lt. Dockery, he served under commander Lt. Col. Young in a non-combat role, performing basic training—among other preparatory duties, as the US prepared for deployment in Europe.
[73] Du Bois & Gruening, "The Massacre of East St. Louis," 219.
[74] Martha Gruening served as the Assistant Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) between 1911-1914. In addition, she was a prominent activist for racial equality and journalist.

investigative journalism, Du Bois and Gruening attempted to look at both the causes of, and sentiments—or the racial artifacts—surrounding the massacre. The war in Europe led to the deportation of many foreign workers, because East St. Louis was a major industrial and manufacturing center, a significant influx of black labour came up from the South to fill the gap. White workers began to strike at major packing plants, and more Southern black workers filled those gaps as well.[75] As the strike ended, many black workers remained employed while many white men were left without work.[76]

Du Bois a Gruening believe that this created fertile ground in which to foment an act of anti-black collective violence, as they believed the Secretary of the Central Trades and Labor Union, Edward F. Mason did. In an open letter to the delegates of the union that was reproduced in *The Crisis* article, Mason writes,

> The immigration of the Southern Negro into our city for the past eight months has reached the point where drastic action must be taken if we intend to work and live peaceably in this community.
>
> Since this influx of undesirable negroes has started no less than ten thousand have come into this locality.
>
> These men are being used to the detriment of our white citizens by some of the capitalists and a few of the real estate owners.
>
> On next Monday evening the entire body of delegates to the Central Trades and Labor Unions will call upon the Mayor and City Council and demand that they take some action to retard this growing menace and also devise a way to get rid of a certain portion of those who are already here.
>
> This is not a protest against the negro who has been a long resident of East St. Louis, and is a law-abiding citizen…[77]

The language of this letter is certainly loaded. Mason's use of phrases such as "drastic action," "undesirable negroes," "detriment of our white citizens," "growing menace," and "take some action," all were intended—as I agree with Du Bois and Gruening—to lean on pre-existing racial prejudices to help cultivate the otherness of the African American worker. Even the subtle use of the phrase "immigration of the Southern Negro" helps to reinforce such othering. The Mason letter is a racial artifact in that it articulates the racial construct of white anxiety of "imminent loss."

The pogrom that occurred in East St. Louis grew out of the meeting called by Mason. Citing local newspapers and their own interviews of both victims and perpetrators, Du Bois and

[75] 4,500 men went on strike from the packing plants of Amour & Co., Morris & Co., and Swift & Co.
[76] Du Bois & Gruening, "The Massacre of East St. Louis," 220.
[77] Ibid., 221.

Gruening provide a detailed account of the atrocities that occurred on the night of July 2.[78] The mob was described as predatory and “on the hunt,” travelling in small groups with a reported “horribly cool deliberateness and a spirit of fun about it.”[79] The article proceeds with a multitude of lynch accounts. Each one demonstrating indiscriminate violence as the mob shouts at random, “get a nigger!” became a slogan; “get another!” as the crowd swept across the city.[80] Clearly, this would have been a terrifying experience—for both black men and women. One report has a woman begging for mercy: “Please, please, I ain’t done nothing,” only to be silenced by a blow across the face with a broomstick.[81]

These events must have been terrifying experiences for the African American men and women who were being hunted in the streets by white mobs. Indeed, a certain sense of helplessness is reflected in the article. In an interview with a sixty-five-year-old woman who was searching the ruin of her home that was burned down: "What are we to do? We can't live South and they don't want us North. Where are we to go?"[82] This sense of helpless is reinforced by evidence. For instance, the National Guard was deployed to quell the violence, however they would usually only tacitly protect black people from violence, and would—in all reported cases—allow white perpetrators go without being detained.[83] When challenging the self-ascribed heroism of the Military Board of Inquiry—the body in charge of investigating the massacre—Gruening asked “why, in the case of so much heroism, were so many Negroes killed and only eight white men?”[84]

This disparity in the death tolls between white and black victims is indicative of the state of pre-war racial artifacts. The particular racial artifact is a seeming lack of resistance—at least a widespread or organized resistance—against collective violence. What is important to recognize is that something changed in the articulation of those racial artifacts during African Americans’ intervening war experience. It is this change, from a state of little resistance to one of regular—sometimes organized—resistance that will be explored in the following pages. However, to grasp such a change in articulation, the pre-war rhetoric surrounding the position of black people in America must be understood.

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[78] The newspapers cited in the article were: the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *St. Louis Republic*, the *St. Louis Star*, and the *Boston Journal*.
[79] Du Bois & Gruening, “The Massacre of East St. Louis,” 221.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., 222.
[82] Ibid., 238.
[83] Ibid., 222-36.
[84] Ibid., 228.

The post-massacre sentiments of the people in East St. Louis could be encapsulated in what Du Bois and Gruening call a “sort of composite statement of the best citizens, editors, and liberty-bond buyers of East St. Louis and its surroundings.”[85] The statement reads: "Well, you see too many niggers have been coming in here. When niggers come up North they get insolent. You see they vote here and one doesn't like that. And one doesn't like their riding in the cars next to white women—and, well what are you going to do when a buck nigger pushes you off the sidewalk?"[86] This quote reflects the common anxieties facing the white middle-class: apprehensions surrounding a large influx of people, black people challenging the hierarchy of race, and fears of miscegenation. However, the common thread throughout the statement is an assault on the idea African American dignity. More specifically, it questions the very nature of black manhood. All the themes of the statement—freedom of movement, assembly, association, etc.—are all privileges afforded to white people and protected by both legal and de facto racial hierarchies. As African Americans attempt to seek a modicum of dignity, they are met with white domination, which is designed to keep them without. The First World War became a theatre in which African American men could prove that they were indeed men and to capture the dignity of personhood in which that entailed.

Du Bois supported the US entry into the war. It was viewed as another step on the path towards full civil rights and human dignity. This support took on three, interconnected expressions. The first was that the war represented a dual purpose: to fight the specter of German tyranny—particularly the racial abuses of Germany in South West Africa— and to counter discrimination on the American home front. German abuses were understood as the mirror of Southern brutality. “Bad as it is,” writes Du Bois concerning the war in Europe, “slavery is worse; German dominion is worse; the rape of Belgium and France is worse.”[87] As Du Bois lauded in his editorial, “Close Ranks,” the rise of German power meant “death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom and democracy.”[88] For Du Bois, “race questions” in the United States—and around the world—became “belted” together by imperial processes.

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[85] This “composite statement” could be understood as an aggregated curation of a collection of accounts collected by Du Bois and Gruening. Many of the sentiments reflected in this composite statement can be found within this piece, whether it be a direct quote, of the actions of the mob itself. While problematic, this statement is valuable as it reflects the mood of the white populace in a very succinct manner. Ibid., 238.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Du Bois, “The World Last Month,” in *The* Crisis 14, no. 1 (May 1917), 8. The Crisis Archive.

[88] Du Bois, “Close Ranks,” 111.

The real cause of the war, according to Du Bois, was imperial exploitation. “The Balkans are convenient for occasions,” argues Du Bois “but the ownership of materials and men in the darker world is the real prize that is setting the nations of Europe at each other’s throats to-day.”[89] Shortly after the Franco-Prussian War, Great Britain, France, Portugal, and Germany began—or continued to expand into Africa. Thus, through the Scramble for Africa came “a continent where Europe claimed but a tenth of land in 1875, was in twenty-five more years practically absorbed.”[90] Du Bois’ conception of the war was not a mere international conflict, it was a transnational struggle for the liberation of all the “dark races” of the world. Africa represented an important part in realizing that liberation, as Du Bois believed an independent Africa would serve as a model for all societies.[91]

Yet, if all the belligerents are enemies to the “darker races,” which state deserved the support of these exploited peoples? In 1916, Du Bois placed his support with the Allies. While he qualified his support by stating that Allies were not certainly perfect, they had demonstrated the ability to change.[92] The main threat to global equality was the German Empire. Du Bois cited “the record of Germany as a colonizer toward weaker and darker people is the most barbarous of any civilized people and grows far worse instead of better.”[93] Thus, Du Bois connected the struggle against the German Empire to the progress of African Americans—and all the “darker races” of the world. In terms of the global colour line, a strike against the tyranny of the German empire was a strike against racism everywhere.

Du Bois’ second expression of support for the war goes further by attaching the US as a country to the identity of African Americans. He argues that, through the positives and the negatives of the African American experience, “we have reached in this land our highest modern development and nothing, humanly speaking, can prevent us from eventually reaching

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[89] Du Bois, “The African Roots of War,” in *Atlantic Monthly* 115 (May 1915), 711, scua.library.umass.edu/.
[90] Though the Berlin Conference was a major part of the “Scramble for Africa,” Du Bois felt that imperial exploitation of Africa was primarily conducted through proxy wars. Some of the major conflicts that Du Bois cites in “The African Roots of War” is as follows: The Fashoda Incident of 1898 between France and Britain; The Italo-Turkish War, 1911-1912; The Tangier Crisis of 1905 between German, France, and Britain; and The Agadir Crisis of 1911 between Germany and France. Ibid., 708.
[91] Du Bois, “The Future of Africa,” in *The Crisis* 15, no. 5. (January 1918), 114, The Crisis Archive.
[92] Du Bois, “The War and the Color Line,” in The Crisis 9, no. 1 (November 1914), 29, The Crisis Archive.
[93] Du Bois elaborates on German racism with the following statement: “Just as we go to press, the *Berliner Tageblatt* publishes a proclamation by ‘German representatives of Science and Art to the World of Culture’ in which men like Harnack, Bode, Hauptmann, Suderman, Roentgen, Humperdink, Wundt and others, insult hundreds of millions of human beings by openly sneering at "Mongrels and Niggers," Ibid.; An account of the brutality of the Germans in their colony of Damaraland where they executed 30,000 Hereros for the death of one child. Du Bois, “Germany,” in *The Crisis* 11, no. 4 (February 1916), 186, The Crisis Archive.

here the full stature of our manhood."[94] This establishes the belief that the acquisition of equality through the defense of the US, which in turn affords one the dignity to be a full human being—a man. Indeed, the desire transcend the caste that black people had been placed into and achieving manhood is emphasized numerous times. For Du Bois, it was not only about fighting for America, or for the rights of black people; the fight must be "won by our manliness, and not by the threat of the footpad."[95]

Although, not all black Americans shared in the optimism surrounding this perceived opportunity to seize equality. There was a belief that a country who violated African American rights on a daily basis had no right to demand sacrifices from those same people. For example, A. Philip Randolph, the African American editor of the radical magazine, *The Messenger* argued that black Americans should fight to make Georgia safe for themselves, rather than the world safe for democracy.[96] This mentality was in line with the *The Messenger's* unofficial outlook: "Patriotism has no appeal for us; justice has."[97] In addition, the Bureau of Investigation, who monitored African American dissent collected a forceful, anonymously written protest circular.[98] It read,

> Young negro men and boys what have we to fight for in this country? Nothing. Some of our well educated negroes are touring the country urging our young race to be killed up like sheep, for nothing. If we fight in this war time we fight for nothing. Rather than fight I would rather commit self death—
>
> Signed by a Negro Educator.
>
> [P.S.] Stick to your bush and fight not for we will only be a breastwork or shield for the white race. After war we get nothing.[99]

This general sentiment of war skepticism from the African American community was only exacerbated by the "Close Ranks" article and its subsequent controversy.

In June of 1918, Du Bois was enticed by his friend and *Crisis* Chairman, J. E. Spingarn to apply for a captaincy commission in the Military Investigation Bureau (MIB). Du Bois' intention for pursuing this commission was twofold. On the one hand, he would be able to leverage a position of power to be able "to speak to the people for the government and to the government

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[94] Du Bois, "A Philosophy in Time of War," in *The Crisis* 16, no. 4 (August 1918), 164, The Crisis Archive.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 4.
[97] Patrick Scott Washburn, A Question of Sedition: The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press During World War II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 20.
[98] For more on the relationship between US racial anxieties, the war, and American domestic spying apparatus see Mark Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance: African Americans and the United States Government during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.)
[99] Report of Agent W. E. McElveen, 30 April 1917, Records of Military Intelligence Division, General Correspondence Relating to Negro Subversion, in Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*.

on behalf of the people."[100] On the other, the recent Sedition Act of 1918 threatened to penalize publications for any disloyal or abusive language; being on side with the government could assuage such punishments. Consequently, the publication of "Close Ranks" was in part an act to soften rhetoric of *The Crisis*. After the publication of the article, Du Bois would be criticized by many African American leaders. In a letter to Du Bois. Byron Gunner, President of the National Equal Rights League, refused to believe "Close Ranks" came from Du Bois hand. Confused, Gunner expressed his concern: "Now, while the war lasts, is the most opportune time for us to push and push our 'special grievances' to the fore."[101]

Du Bois' stance came to be understood as accommodationist by his critics. However, such critiques may be bit unfair. As David Levering Lewis concedes, the captaincy issue was part of the reason for the shift in attitude that "Close Ranks" signaled. Yet, the threat of the Sedition Act still loomed. Lewis asserts that Du Bois' behavior was not accommodationism, but rather a response to federal law. "Not only did going to jail hold no attraction," argues Lewis, "Du Bois was as much a patriot, according to his own lights, as any citizen."[102] Du Bois's transnational conception of the war was misinterpreted by his contemporary African American critics. "Close Ranks" was less an accommodationist product, and more of an act self-preservation to further the cause of realizing his vision transnational liberation.

In the editorial "Our Special Grievances," Du Bois addressed the critiques levied at himself and *The Crisis* as a whole, which also incidentally articulates the third thrust of the effort to present the war in Europe as a significant opportunity for attaining equality. In addition to the aforementioned criticisms, the current rhetoric surrounding the war was seen as a softening of *The Crisis*' usual hardline approach to racial uplift. Du Bois reassured his readers that the magazine—and the NAACP as a whole—were still committed to pursuing the "full manhood rights of the American Negro."[103] He then reaffirmed the notion of African American identity being attached to the US and extended that idea by attaching a sense a duty to the very nation. Du Bois fervently believed that African Americans are indeed American, therefore, it is "the *first* duty of an American is to win the war and that to this all else is subsidiary. It declares that whatever personal and group grievances interfere with this mighty duty must wait."[104] The fact

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[100] David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 553.
[101] Byron Gunner, Letter from Byron Gunner to W. E. B. Du Bois, July 25, 1918, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, edo.library.umass.edu (hereafter, Du Bois Papers).
[102] Lewis, *A Biography of a Race*, 553.
[103] Du Bois, "Our Special Grievances," in *The Crisis* 16, no. 5 (September 1918), 216, The Crisis Archive.
[104] Emphasis is my own. Ibid.

that this editorial was published in September 1918, the same month in which African American soldiers were involved in major operations in the Meuse, appears to be no mistake.[105] Du Bois' response serves to answer his critics, extended his notion of equality—both locally and globally—through military service, and celebrate the black men who had already volunteered and were fighting at that very moment. This piece was for the man who "'forgot his special grievance' and fought for his country, and to him and for him THE CRISIS speaks."[106]

The prewar context in the United States was one of flux: racially, demographically, and rhetorically. Race, sexuality, and gender relations were major concerns in the unique expression of American "whiteness." "The project of whiteness…," returning to Lake and Reynolds, "[is] at once transnational in its inspiration and identifications but nationalist in its methods and goals."[107] In the US, race, gender, and sexuality came to define "whiteness" and "blackness" under what I have labeled as "Brutal" American Racism. In the specific context of the African American military service, these concepts came to a head to articulate the nature of manhood. A similar context can be observed in France. The influx of large amounts of black African soldiers being deployed into France, echoed the societal anxieties felt in the US during the Great Migration of black people from the South. Questions arose: are these Africans children or are they men? If they are men, what kind of men are they? Bestial, sexually deviant, equals? How exactly did pre-war racial artifacts in France mirror and differ from those found in the US? Understanding those differences and similarities are essential to understanding the significance of when these two race regimes met in France.

[105] The 369th Infantry Reg.—known as the Harlem Hellfighters—were instrumental during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive of late September 1918. In recognition for their bravery in combat, 171 officers received medals, while the entire received the Croix de Guerre.
[106] Du Bois, "Our Special Grievances," 217.
[107] Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 4.

Les puissances coloniales ont toujours employé leurs sujets d'outre-mer sans leur en rien les droits qu'elles leur accordaient et les devoirs qu'elles leur imposaient.
- Mangin, *La Force Noire*

Chapter Two

Le Grand Enfant, Negrophilia, and "Benevolent Racism" in France

The racial context into which African American soldiers were placed as they were deployed into France in September 1917 would be a formative experience concerning the shift in their expressions of racial artifacts back in the US. This context was the product of a French colonial legacy with its African possessions that stretched back to the early seventeenth century. As discussed, France's relationship with its colonies was one of ambivalence. Yet, the particular—and uniquely French—manner in which this ambivalence operated needs to be examined. Though not included in the list of nations that Lake and Reynolds examined, the French had their own version of a "born in the apprehension of imminent loss."[108]

France was suffering from a demographic crisis at the turn of the century. Much of its population was rural and the birth rate came alarmingly close to parity with the death rate around the outbreak of the war.[109] Civil society and the government came to place emphasis on the importance of maternity, motherhood, and the home in general.[110] As war with Germany became increasingly likely, ideas of sexuality, masculinity, and warfare became entwined. For example, in a 1917 French study on military courage by Doctors Louis Huot and Paul Voivenel argued that for men, "one loves one's country as one loves a woman, and fights for it as one would fight for a woman. It is a point of sexuality to love one's country."[111] Therefore, just like in the United States, it was the First World War that caused the French notion of masculinity, sexuality—and most importantly—race to intersect.

The pre-war context of race in France was heavily informed by the influx of hundreds of thousands of armed, black African soldiers. As these black soldiers came into France, they came into contact with the ambivalent policy that teased enfranchisement with the one hand and

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[108] The nations these authors discuss are Canada, the United States, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Ibid., 3.
[109] Dumont, Gérard-François, *La population de la France*, Paris, Ellipses, 2000.
[110] For more on the significance of woman and the image of motherhood in France see Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), especially pages 1-10.
[111] Louis Huot and Paul Voivenel, *Le Courage* (Paris: Alcan, 1917), 299. All subsequent translations of French texts are those of the author.

pushed them away with the other; or the “colonial unconscious” gaze that at once exoticized and feared the black body. It was within this milieu that the African Americans found themselves. Such a dynamic led many African Americans—and some scholars—to view France as shining example of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.

To begin, it will be useful to understand how the French viewed their colonial African subjects before the break out of the war. The idea of a “savage” African landscape permeated the romantic European psyche for some time.[112] However, the most visceral manner in which these tropes came into contact were the ethnographical exhibitions—or “Human Zoos”—of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire articulate a shift in the meaning of these “Human Zoos” over a period of 50 to 75 years. Their article describes a shift from the zoological gardens (Pseudo-scientific racism) of the mid nineteenth century, to the colonial exhibitions (popular racism) of the first third of the twentieth century.[113] The zoological garden was very similar to a modern-day zoo. It was a space in which the general populace could make contact with the “exotic worlds” of the colonies. The *Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation* of 1877 in Paris, was a zoo full of exotic animals from Somalia and the Sudan. In addition, 14 Africans—known then as “Nubians”—were displayed as well.[114] The Parisian weekly magazine, *L'Illustration: Journal Universel* published images of these “Nubians” going about their daily tasks (Fig. 2 & 3); with one scene featuring a group of Parisians viewing a man riding a camel enclosed behind a fence. (Fig. 4) This exhibition was very popular, as “the crowds come of their own volition. Each day visitors abounded.”[115]

These gardens demonstrated—as Blanchard et al. argue—a version of pseudo-scientific racism.[116] The contemporary label of “anthropological exhibition” was at best, an exercise in semantics. The real purpose was to reinforce the “othering” of the colony via pseudo-scientific

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[112] For a discussion on how the European imagination “othered” Africans see Tom Meisenhelder, “African Bodies: ‘Othering’ the African in Precolonial Europe,” *Race, Gender, & Class* 10, no. 3 (2003): 100-113. JSTOR.

[113] Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, “From Scientific Racism to Popular and Colonial Racism in France and the West,” *in Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, eds. Pascal Blanchard et al. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 104.

[114] William H. Schneider, “The Ethnographic Exhibitions of the Jardin Zoologique d’Acclimatation,” in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, eds. Pascal Blanchard et al. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 142.

[115] *“Les Nubiens au Jardin d’acclimatation,”* in *L'Illustration: Journal Universel* 70, no. 1797 (August 4, 1877), 70, HathiTrust.

[116] For more on the pseudo-scientific racial rhetoric of the period see Arthur de Gobineau, *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1853).

racism, and to acclimatize the general populace to that fact.[117] These “human zoos” were a racial artifact of the French colonial endeavor. These were visual representations of French Assimilation policy, in which The Republic was given the duty to civilize its colonies. As policy shifted from Assimilation to Association, the manner in which these exhibitions were articulated shifted as well. In the early 1900s, as tension in Europe threatened war, the idea of a closer relationship with the colonies—for purposes of men and materiel—came to be increasingly present in the socio-political discourses. The image of the black African as a “savage” came to be presented as a cooperative and peaceful with its colonizing masters. One of the manifestations of this change was the racial artifact known as the “negro village.”

The concept of the “negro village” fell under the what Blanchard et al. label as the colonial exhibition. These colonial exhibitions differed from the zoological gardens in that they represented a popular racism, rather than a pseudo-scientific version of racism.[118] These “negro villages” would remove the colonized Africans from the cages of the zoological garden, and place them into elaborately reconstructed “villages.” (Fig. 5) While, these Africans were not held in pens, they certainly were on display. Some of these “negro villages” featured themes. For instance, one exhibition in Amiens was entitled, “Village *sénégalais: une naissance au village.*” (Fig. 6) Just how the public was being acclimated to the “Other” at the the jardin zoologique, the colonial exhibition was intended to soften the image of the colonial “savage.” This was an ongoing process that came to be reflected in both public and military spheres.

Van Galen Last compares the race regimes of the British and the US to that of France. “Among the French,” he writes, “at least within France, there was generally a greater willingness to treat black soldiers as equals. Compared with life in the colonies, in the army the *tirailleurs sénégalais* encountered a relatively egalitarian society.”[119] While van Galen Last is not entirely wrong, it is his lack of qualification concerning what he means by “willingness” and “black soldiers” that is misleading. For instance, the aforementioned “Human Zoos” speak to a different racial context, as well as the ambivalent nature of French colonial policy that created two classes of people in French West Africa: *indigènes* and *évolués*. There was a vested interest within the French government to utilize their colonial assets, while at the same time a significant social pressure to keep the colonized at arm's length.

French universalism and egalitarianism put pressure on the state to include these African soldiers in the national community and its defense. However, racism prevented full

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[117] The very name of the 1877 exhibit conveys the intentions of the exercise: Jardin Zoologique *d'Acclimatation*.
[118] Blanchard et al., “From Scientific Racism,” 104, 110-11.
[119] van Galen Last, *The Black Shame*, 73-4.

integration, which stemmed not only from an ambivalent government policy, but also from a public conditioned to fear the African "savage." The French military needed to shift the perception of black people in a manner that was more salient than the processes already underway with the colonial exhibitions. For this reason, black Africans would be placed into the "School of the Nation"—otherwise known as the French army.[120] The idea of the military being a "school" for the French served two purposes. First, the military as a tool to develop an individual's love of nation, male martial values, and a sense of duty was well known in French society. However, the second value of this "school" was the military's capacity for softening the image of the "savage" African in the eyes of the general population.

Even before hostilities began in Europe, the idea of mobilizing African soldiers in France was being discussed at a high level within the French military. General Charles Mangin was a significant advocate for augmenting the French army with colonial troops—more specifically, *tirailleurs sénégalais*. In 1910, he published *La force noire* in which he describes the consequences that France's low birth rate will have for the armed forces, and how her colonies could solve that problem.[121] Mangin attempted to flip the perception of black Africans—or what he called "*le primitif."* In *livre III* of his book, he reframes the perceived "primitive" and "savage" nature that has been projected upon black African to suit French purposes. For example, Mangin cites the manner in which West Africans conducted warfare among themselves, before colonization "which has further strengthened their warlike qualities, which we use today."[122] This is a particularly salient shift in perception, as it was these very same "warlike qualities" that were used to construct the image of the African "savage." Indeed, nearly the whole image of *"les primitifs"* was being repackaged to serve the needs of the metropole. From their physical traits—such as skin tone and build—to their primarily Muslim cultural background, both were reframed from deficiencies into "*qualités guerrières*," which could be used to save a France suffering from a demographic crisis.[123]

Mangin's concept of "*qualités guerrières*" was closely related to the British idea of "martial races." For the British, specific ethnic, social, caste, or religious groups were more masculine or loyal, therefore making them better suited for service in the military; a "martial

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[120] John Keegan, *World Armies* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), 219-20.
[121] Mangin's book proposes a solution for France's manpower problem—which stemmed from its demographic issue—by augmenting the French military with colonial conscripts; chiefly made up of *tirailleurs sénégalais*. Charles Mangin, *La force noire* (Paris: Hachette et cie, 1910), Gallica.bnf.fr.
[122] Ibid., 226; "qui a renforcé encore leurs qualités guerrières, que nous utilisons aujourd'hui." The type of warfare that West Africans conducted prior to colonization was often continuous; consisting of territorial skirmishes and localized tribal disputes. Mangin feels this endowed these *tirailleurs sénégalais* with an innate affinity for combat.
[123] Ibid., 225-58.

race." Conversely, the concept of "non-martial races"—who were often educated and possessed political power— were excluded from service. Thus, the concept of "martial races" a was socio-political construct—articulated via a racial framework—used as a tool of imperial power to legitimize the subjugation of the British India and East Africa.[124] The French would not only use the concept of the "*qualités guerrières*" to legitimize the *mission civilisatrice* via the "school of the nation," they would also use the idea to repackage negative racial tropes into positives that benefited *la patrie*. Unfortunately for the French government, the image of the African "savage" was still entrenched in the public imagination. The average French citizen was not comfortable with these seemingly "primitive" people wandering unchecked through their villages. As such, the government commissioned commentators in an attempt to assuage the fears of the public. Alphonse Séché was one such commentator who spoke of French West Africans in a benevolent—though racist—light.[125]

In his work, *Les noirs*, Séché described the nature of Senegalese people, both generally and in relation of the military. This is conveyed to the reader through commentary on a series of reproduced speeches and anecdotes. In one such anecdote, a lone *tirailleur* is charged with guarding the French flag by his French commander. The setting was the Ubangi River in the French Congo during the late nineteenth century. Séché describes the African as being absolutely loyal to his commander as the *tirailleur*—outnumbered—sacrifices himself fighting a Belgian patrol. He is depicted as not only obedient but almost enraptured by his white commanders. The *tirailleur* "believed that if he disobeyed an order given that there would happen to him, after death, things worse than death, for the white man's order, too, is a fetish."[126] This story speaks to the manner in which the African's "savage" nature has been pacified by the *mission civilisatrice*. Though, more importantly, by attaching the African's docility to whiteness—in the capacity of the white man's word being a fetish—the public can be reassured that black Africans are completely loyal and non-threatening.

Another interesting motif that is recurrent in this anecdote is the infantilization of the African soldier. "In all the acts of the blacks," wrote Séché, "one finds the mixture of childishness and heroism, so much so that one is tempted to believe that their courage is an effect of the

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[124] Timothy H. Parsons, "Wakamba Warriors are Soldiers of the Queen: The Evolution of the Kamba as a Martial Race, 1890-1970," in *Ethnohistory* 46, no. 4 (1999), JSTOR; Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[125] Though published after the war itself, this is still a valuable source as much of the commentary is based on official documents and speeches made prior to 1914. Alphonse Séché, *Les noirs: d'après des documents officiels* (Paris: Payot & Cie, 1919).

[126] Ibid., 38.

simplicity of their nature."[127] This "simplicity" was most strikingly articulated by the simplified French—or *petit nègre*—spoken by the *tirailleur*. *Petit nègre* was a pidgin form of the French language that was taught to African soldiers. The expression of *petit nègre* had a distinct manner expression, often taking the form of "*y a*" rather than "*je suis*." In Séché's anecdote, the simplicity of the *tirailleur's petit nègre* is juxtaposed against the proper French of his Belgian adversary. Van Galen Last argues that usage of pidgin French was an expression of the civilizing mission by bringing *tirailleur* closer to the French.[128] Indeed, this certainly was true, teaching the African soldiers French was utilized both as a form of communication between soldier and officer, as well as "uplifting" the "*primitif*" via the language of the metropole. However, van Galen Last seems to ignore the inherent racialized context of *petit nègre*.

The very name of *petit nègre* is an articulation of a distinct form of French racism. By ensuring that black soldiers speak only a pidgin form of the language, they are automatically infantilized. For example, the heroic *tirailleur* as being committed to the idea "*y a service*" (it is duty) which is a phrase the *tirailleur* often repeats in the text. "*Y a service*" argues Séché, is "at once childish and sublime, like the one who yields to it."[129] This perpetuates the idea of a lower African intellect, as well as softens their image in the public eye as the *tirailleur* is presented as nothing more than a big child. This language is presented as a gift that has been handed down to the *tirailleur* by his white officers. By attaching *petit nègre* to the perceived generosity of the French colonizer, Séché furthers the idea of "benevolent" French racism. One that presents lip service to equality but is actually based on exploitation.

Such exploitation is transformed into the image of a *tirailleur* who is not a victim of colonization, rather, he is a grateful recipient of French "benevolence." Séché presents a lecture given by then Colonel Mangin at l'École des Sciences Politique in 1911, concerning the loyalty of the *tirailleur*. The lecture describes a group of *tirailleurs* who fought ferociously against the Sultan of Zinder in a region between Niger and Chad. Mangin speaks of one particular *tirailleur*—Sergeant Semba Taraore—who survived the Sultan's attack. Taraore is described as being compelled to report back to his superiors, and marches 1,100 km—54 days—to the nearest French camp, all the while being pursued.[130] As Mangin relates in the preface to

[127] Ibid., 39.
[128] Van Galen Last, *Black Shame*, 79.
[129] Séché, *Les noirs*, 39.
[130] Ibid., 39-41.

Séché's book, the *tirailleur* has a "grateful love for the country that delivered him from slavery and gave him French peace."[131]

Séché adds his own interpretation. He dwells on the idea of duty—"y a service"—arguing that it is not conscience, rather it is instinct; for "he is not responsible, a superior will guide his." For Séché, it was not simply a matter of being grateful, the *tirailleur's* actions were a product of his racial heritage. Taraore's dedication was a product of "a total absence of fear, and absolute scorn of death, dependent no doubt as much on the Senegalese's lack of nerves as upon his beliefs. The calm of the blacks is akin to insensibility and thoughtlessness, and is blended, moreover with their heroism."[132] Both Mangin and Séché—especially the latter—utilize the spirit of pseudo-scientific racism to shift the negative traits associated with blackness into a positive light. Rather than the black African being a "mindless savage," that same "thoughtlessness" was transformed into a heroically, single-minded focus on one's duty to his French delivers.

Both *petit nègre* and the racially dictated commitment to duty served a functional military purpose, while at the same time it perpetuated the infantilization of the black body in the public eye. A brief look ahead, into the period immediately after the war, will illustrate how this child-like perception of the black body—not just African, but African American as well—was articulated by the French public. In a letter addressed to Du Bois' assistant, William Stevenson, a French hotel owner named Charles Sadoux speaks quite highly of African Americans that were stationed in his hotel in Challes-Les-Eaux. Sadoux offered "congratulations for the good conduct and amiability which *these dear children* have proved during their too short stay with us."[133] The mayor of the same village had a similar opinion, as he saw these black American soldiers as "great children avid of amusement very friendly, with a generous heart, a Good camaraderie and of a French character."[134] This post-war positivity towards black people reflected a certain negrophillia that had developed in the public psyche of France.

While the efforts by some of the elements within both the French military and government certainly had an influence in shaping this shift toward a more positive—though qualified—view of the black body, it was only one part of a wider cultural shift towards

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[131] Charles Mangin, preface to *Les noirs: d'après des documents officiels*, by Alphonse Séché (Paris: Payot & cie, 1919), 7, "… son amour reconnaissant pour le pays qui l'a délivré de l'esclavage et lui a donné la paix française."

[132] "C'est aussi une absence totale de crainte, un mépris absolu de la mort tenant sans doute autant à ce que Sénégalais est dépourvu de nervosité, qu'à la vertu de ses croyances. La calme des noirs est voisin de l'insensibilité et de l'insouciance, il se confond d'ailleurs avec leur héroïsme." Séché, *Les noirs*, 42.

[133] Emphasis is my own. Sadoux, Charles. Letter from Charles Sadoux to William Stevenson, May 20, 1919. Du Bois Papers.

[134] Maire Challes-les-Eaux, Letter from Challes-les-Eaux Office of the Mayor to William Stevenson, April 17, 1919. Du Bois Papers.

negrophillia. Petrine Archer-Straw traces this trend of negrophilia from early nineteenth-century stereotypes of the African "primitif" to the reverence of African-American culture of the 1920s.[135] "For whites," Archer-Straw explains, "the negrophiliac relationship provided a space for rebellion against social norms. They naïvely considered blacks to be more vital, more passionate and more sexual." She concludes that the Parisian psyche was susceptible to wave after wave of new crazes, thus negrophilia was just another fashion craze like *chinoiserie*, *japonisme*, and *mélanomanie*.[136] Though this conclusion is a bit sensationalist, it certainly is an apt way to describe the French relationship with race. As Stovall argues, the French saw African American soldiers "through a haze of stereotypes."[137] This post-war view of African Americans in Paris was part of a wider and earlier trend of African American negrophilia in France, one that extended to black Africans as well.

For instance, this perception of an "exotic" black body was widely used to promote products during the turn of the century in France. Images of black Africans were assimilated into the French psyche via marketing campaigns that sought to attach the mystery and exoticism of the colonies to their products. Banania—a popular chocolate drink brand in France—used the image of the loyal Senegalese *Tirailleur*. (Fig. 7) The image of the grinning African soldier featured exaggerated features: big lips, squinted eyes, and an over enthusiastic smile. His over exaggerated expressions are at the same time reminiscent of the black minstrel in the United States and convey a childlike docility. The intention of this type of illustration was to strike a balance; keep the African othered, while still remaining familiar. This is all the more enhanced through the Banania mascot's signature the *petit nègre* expression, "*y'a bon!*."

This cautious—or measured—positivity towards black Africans was also applied to African Americans. An article written by a French woman outlines the general mood of the population of Brest as African Americans began to arrive in late 1917. As the American soldiers enter the village, the locals are surprised; "[t]hey are *black* soldiers! Black soldiers? Great astonishment, a little fear." A woman in the crowd begins to feel sick, the article's writer reassures her with a smile, saying "be quiet, they dont [sic] eat human flesh."[138] This exchange represents in a microcosm of a wider processes occurring in French society. There was a shift

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[135] Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000).
[136] Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia*, 15, 18.
[137] Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 17
[138] Charles A. Shaw, "The Colored Americans in France," in *The Crisis* 17, no. 4 (February 1919), 167. The Crisis Archive. From the caption describing the origins of this article: "This article appeared in a newspaper in a town in France where the Ninety-second Division was temporarily quartered. The author was a French Woman. The translation is by Lieutenant Charles A. Shaw."

in the way the black body was being perceived in the public psyche. The black man—particularly the black soldier—was softening. No longer were they *le primitif* from darkest Africa, they became sympathetic figures. Again, this positivity was qualified, as phrases like "Children of the Sun," or "intelligent and loyal faces" infantilized these men, rather than viewing them as fully realized individuals.[139]

This infantilization of the black African was particularly salient when it came to indigenous African soldiers serving in France. As mentioned, the French government and military had a vested interest in countering the aggressive image its colonial subjects. As such, there was a particular effort to soften the image of the black soldier. Here, a brief image analysis of contemporary caricatures will be instructive. They reflect a point of convergence where the ideas of gender, the infantilized other, the "colonial unconscious," and the shifting ideas of black Africa intersect to create a unique racial context. It is within this context that both African and—more significantly for our purposes—African American soldiers would create and experience unique racial artifacts. Examining the imagery is quite valuable when attempting to understand the manner in which a society handles an encounter between cultures. As Peter Burke argues, when such encounters occur, often each culture views the image of the other through a stereotypical lens. Though Burke qualifies his remark by adding that while the stereotypes may not always be false, they often exaggerate or obfuscate certain details.[140] Advertisements and illustrations in French print media speak to this stereotyping of the "Other."

Popular French publications like *La Vie Parisienne* demonstrate this infantilization, as well as combining the negrophilic attitudes of the period. The July 1918 issue of the magazine features the image of smiling African soldier and a flirtatious white woman holding his face. (Fig. 8) The cover is entitled, "L'enfant du dessert" which is a play on the contemporary description of people from sub-Saharan African: "L'enfant du désert." However, the word "dessert" allows the image to be read two ways. The first, the oversized napkin conveys a certain youthful simplicity, while the woman's affectionate grasp of the man's face—as if he were a child—reinforces the infantilized undertone. Another way of reading the image conveys a more sexual tone. Her outfit—of the style of the sexually liberated "New Woman" of the period—and the man's physical size convey a sexualized undercurrent; one that is only enhanced by the term "dessert." The man is drawn in such a way to blur the lines between child and sexual object.

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[139] Ibid., 167-8.
[140] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 125.

These images reflect a lot of the contemporary trends occurring in France. Archer-Straws' idea of the negrophilic gaze—usually reserved for the African American—is now projected onto the African. Ezra's notion of the "colonial unconscious" can be observed in the exoticized, sexualized, yet infantilized image of this African soldier. (Fig. 9, 10, & 11) This contradiction of terms at once familiarizes and "others" the soldier, which speaks to the ambivalent space black people occupied in France. More importantly though, these images convey a process—that was both intentional and unconscious—to specifically endear African soldiers to the public. Intentional insofar as the efforts of the authorities to present black people as non-threatening children that need guidance from their French benefactors. While unconsciously, the idea of the exotic other which subtly moved from frightful to endearing created an unintended danger to established social and racial hierarchies.

Racial hierarchies defined the boundaries of a French society made increasingly diverse by the war. While white French attitudes toward African subjects may have been softening, negrophilia still reified white supremacy. Efforts to demystify the image of *le primitif*, such as pleasant imagery and anecdotes, were countered by efforts to maintain distance from black people. It is this distancing that is part of all colonial endeavors. Stoler speaks of this process occurring in both the Dutch East Indies and Indochina. Interracial relationships—or *Métissage*—were a very significant concern for colonial authorities. The manner in which these authorities handled these processes highlighted one of the major tensions of empire, which was the relationship between discourses of inclusion, exclusion, equality, and discrimination. It was *métissage* that represented a source of subversion that threatened white prestige and represented European degeneration.[141] As more and more black African soldiers entered France, these anxieties intensified; which was exacerbated as African-Americans entered the war in 1917. As Stoler and Frederick Cooper assert "the otherness of colonized persons was neither inherent nor stable; his or her difference had to be defined and maintained."[142]

The intimate contact with French civil society that resulted from the presence of African colonial soldiers in *la patrie* threatened to undermine the ambivalent construction of otherness that black people occupied in France. The contradiction was prescribed within French policy itself. On the one side, the "savage" black African meant to instill fear in the enemy. While on the other, these same men were the proof of the *mission civilisatrice* as they became the "*bon*

[141] Ann L. Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers—European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, eds. Les Back and John Solomos (London: Routledge, 1999), 324–25.
[142] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 7.

sauvage." It is this ambivalence which makes the treatment of black people—both African and African-American—so complex and fluid. As mentioned with Zehfuss' literary analysis of Léon Gaillet's novels communicated the shift from "savage" to "loyal children" as a result of sustained intimate contact. This contact worried French officials—like Lieutenant-Colonel Mangin—who manipulated race-based scientific arguments, accepting those that suited their needs, while rejecting those that did not. For instance, he would draw upon the racial stereotypes surrounding African endurance and ferocity in combat, while at the same time exalting their docility through a racialized desire to be commanded and serve.[143]

Justin Godart, French Under-Secretary for Military Health was concerned about nurses who exchanged letters or photos with their former black patients. These actions led to "self-important arrogance, which manifested itself in numerous acts of serious indiscipline."[144] Furthermore, the Justice Ministry ordered mayors to impede mixed-race marriages, which were discouraged by the military as well. These marriages, according to Justice Minister René Vivani, "can only undermine our prestige among the natives."[145] These actions demonstrate how race is a construction; never intrinsic, always in flux. Race needs to constantly be affirmed and reaffirmed to have any power. It is these reaffirmations that can be understood as racial artifacts. These actions—or artifacts—are the tangible manifestation of colonial anxieties of racial transgressions, which is itself a racial construction.

For the French, their interactions with their black colonial population were constantly informed by past prejudices and contemporary problems. When compared to the United States, France could be understood as a racially liberal state. However, that view needs to be qualified. When it came to the *mission civilisatrice*, equality was never the goal of colonial uplift in France, its purpose was exploitative. In *Les noirs*, Séché speaks of putting French West African troops through a process of "re-Seneglaization" after the war, as they needed to be cured of the "delusion that they had the same rights as white Frenchmen."[146] The pidgin French, the efforts

[143] Mangin understood black Africans as a monolith. They can be understood not as individuals, but through racial qualities, such as loyalty. See the original French on page 240: *"C'est donc une discipline très paternelle qu'il faut donner aux tirailleurs, des chefs qui s'imposent par le prestige des services rendus."* Mangin, *La force noire*, 247-48.
[144] Sous-Secrétaire d'Etat du Service de Santé Militaire, l'état d'esprit des militaires indigènes musulmans, December 7, 1915, Affaires Politique, carton 3034, dossier 3, Archives nationales d'outre-mer. www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.
[145] Le Garde des Sceaux, Ministère de la Justice (René Viviani) à M. Le Procurer Général, February 2, 1917, Affaires Politique, carton 192, dossier 5, Archives nationales d'outre-mer. www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.
[146] Séché, *Les noirs*, 246.

to infantilize black African soldiers, and the attempts to mediate the interaction between the colonial subject and French citizenry was part of a conscious—and unconscious—effort to reaffirm the crux of the colonial enterprise: the colour line. As J.P. Trouillet wrote in 1918, for France, its "entire rule in the African continent rests on the prestige of the white race."[147] It is into this context, that African-American soldiers would bring their own racial understandings; to be shaped and molded by their experience in France, and to be subsequently manifested as new racial artifacts back in the United States.

[147] J.P. Trouillet, "Un Nouveau Recrutement en Afrique Occidentale," *La Dépêche Coloniale*, January 22, 1918, microfiche. 75.

Part Two

“Defending Democracy Abroad; Demanding it at Home”

Altho, We fought in France for Freedom's cause,
We are still segregated by Jim Crow Laws…
- Burris Alexander, "The Plea of the Colored Soldiers"

Chapter Three

Liaisons, Dalliances, and Jim Crow in France

The racial context that African Americans entered when they came to France in 1917 was layered in new racial anxieties and colonial aspirations. Officials in the United States, particularly the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), were especially concerned with how black American soldiers would be affected by their time in France. In early 1919, after the war had been won, elements within the AEF became concerned with how the French war experience may affect African American reintegration stateside. In a secret order, Assistant Chief of the General Staff, General Dennis Nolan expressed his worry that returning black American soldiers would fight "any white effort, especially in the South, to reestablish white ascendency," with the intention of preserving "the social equality between the races as established in France."[148] This is a telling statement. It demonstrates that the relative equality exhibited in France—relative to the US—had convinced even the AEF that France was a pillar of perceived equality. This belief was prevalent among the black community in the 1920s and 1930s as France was considered a "European promised land" when it came to social equality.[149] Why should they not believe this? African soldiers had been decorated by the French army on numerous occasions.[150] As we have seen, this understanding of the French racial context was one sided and lacked nuance. Nevertheless, it was the experienced reality of these people. The racial artifacts created by the French state and citizenry had tangible consequences for both white and black American articulations of racial artifacts.

For white America, the tangible consequence was the potential for the French experience to, in the words of Col. Louis Linard, "spoil their niggers."[151] Again, it was the US

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[148] General Dennis E. Nolan, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, AEF, Secret Order, January 31, 1919, 17N46, Le Service historique de la Défense, www.servicehistorique.sga.defense.gouv.
[149] Meredith L. Roman. *Opposing Jim Crow: African Americans and the Soviet Indictment of U.S. Racism, 1928-1937* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 12.
[150] *The Crisis* often published numerous incidences of African American military commendations in the France. One such news item that was intended for publication spoke of the 53rd Battalion of the Senegalese Tirailleurs having been awarded the right to wear the green and red *Fourragère* of the *Croix de guerre*. This was an acknowledgement that the battalion had been cited twice for extraordinary heroism. *Crisis* News Item, 1918, Du Bois Papers.
[151] Louis Albert Linard, "Concerning Black American Troops," August 7, 1918, Du Bois Papers.

military that reflected the anxieties of American civil society. Thus, it was beholden upon the AEF to ensure that the status quo of "Brutal Racism" was maintained abroad in France. This maintenance would come in the form of an exported segregationist regime—Jim Crow à la France—made to assuage the existential threat of "imminent loss" of white prestige. In a similar vein as the stateside version of Jim Crow, that prestige was heavily centered around the protection of the white woman's body. For those who felt this threat of imminent loss, "nothing but the most prompt, speedy and extreme punishment can hold in check the horrible and bestial propensities of the Negro race."[152]

For many African Americans, the transfer of Jim Crow to France was immediately apparent when they arrived. 1st Sergeant, Louis Pontlock of the 368th Regiment observed that "the American Negro soldier in France was treated with the same contempt and undemocratic spirit as the American Negro citizen is treated in the United States."[153] The process of implementing Jim Crow in France began as no process at all. Its first iterations were slow and ad hoc in its expression. Segregation practices were implemented as early as the journey across the Atlantic. According to US customs, Officers were to receive 1st class deck privileges, NCOs 2nd class, and the soldiers got 3rd class. African American officers of the 368th were not allowed to eat with the whites and were placed in 2nd class.[154] Upon arrival in France, QM Sgt. Isaac N. Braithwaite was made Army Field Clerk of the 92nd Division, and the segregation continued. He was the only black Field Clerk, and was not permitted to eat with the other white clerks, nor ride with them on the same train cart, even if he was officially authorized.[155] All these expressions of segregation were extra-legal at the time as there were no explicit orders that called for such divisions when black soldiers served with white soldiers.[156] These acts were clear reflections of the pressures the war placed on the established race regimes of the period.

Once the AEF arrived in France, a more organized—though still unofficial—form of segregationist actions occurred. Black American soldiers were placed under heavy guard by white MPs, with the added caveat that they were not to converse with French women. While en route between Brest and Haute-Saône, Pontlock and other black soldiers were informed that

[152] "More Rapes, More Lynchings," *The Daily Commercial*, in Wells, *Southern Horrors*, 62.
[153] Louis Pontlock, Letter from Louis Pontlock to W. E. B. Du Bois, April 26, 1919, 11. Du Bois Papers.
[154] Ibid., 1-2.
[155] Ibid., 5.
[156] However, there were clear policies that controlled inter-racial relations. Chiefly, there was near complete military segregation, as most African Americans were placed into non-integrated divisions, which were often exclusively labour divisions.

white American soldiers lynched "colored labor troop for associating with a French girl."[157] Moreover, while in Bruyères, Pontlock's company was informed that the white US soldiers who had just left informed the French populace in the area there that "we were heathens, and would do outrageous acts, that we would eat them, and acted like the lesser civilized peoples, and to avoid our presence as much as possible."[158] The significance of these rumours is clear, the "benevolent racism" of France threatened to upset the status quo of America's "brutal regime." These were acts made to terrorize black soldiers into compliance with racial norms. However, the racial artifacts being articulated in France created an environment in which the public was not necessarily onside with official US domestic policy—in the capacity that the AEF represented an authority figure. This would require the AEF to articulate more concrete examples of segregationist racial artifacts.

Such articulations came in the form of more serious accusations against black American soldiers. In an anonymous report on the early history of the 368th Regiment in France, the writer speaks of the way Major General Charles C. Ballou and Colonel Allen J. Greer criticized black officers during maneuvers in the summer of 1918: "The rape in this division has got to be stopped or I shall send all of you to the S.O.S. This is a rape division. *We white people made this division and we can break it*."[159] The writer was astonished that the black officers were made to hear this "in the presence of all Allied Officers."[160] What is unique about these particular accusations is that they were coming from top Military brass and not the common white soldier. In addition, by doing this in front of Allied Officers, the AEF was subtly signaling to their allies that black people were a danger to their population. As the anonymous author of the report suspects, these commanders intended to "fill the hearts of the French, English, and other officers with the idea that the Negro was just what they had represented them to be."[161]

Mjr. Gen. Ballou was well known to often disparage, condemn, and cast aspersion on to African American officers; largely in public forums.[162] While training stateside in the spring of 1918, the 92nd Division was issued an official warning in the form of Bulletin no. 35 after a fight broke out after a black soldier entered a theatre where unofficial segregation was being

[157] Pontlock, Letter to Du Bois, 2.
[158] Pontlock, Letter to Du Bois, 3-4.
[159] Emphasis is my own; Arrival of the 368th in France, 1919, 4. Du Bois Papers.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., 5.
[162] Du Bois, "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man in the Great War," in *The Crisis* 18, no. 2 (June 1919), 70. The Crisis Archive.

enforced. The bulletin notes that the African American man was *legally* within his rights, while the theatre manager was *legally* wrong. “Nevertheless,” the bulletin continues “the sergeant is guilty of the greater wrong in doing anything, no matter how legally correct, that will provoke race animosity.”[163] The bulletin concludes with the warning: “The division commander Mjr. Gen. Ballou repeats that the success of the division, with all that success implies, is dependent upon the goodwill of the public. That public is nine-tenths white. *White men made the division, and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a troublemaker*.”[164] The fact that Mjr. Gen. Ballou’s sentiments during maneuvers in France almost match his words stateside clearly indicate that he is attempting to solidify the ad hoc segregation process into something more concrete. These processes would crystalize in the form of direct military justice.

As the war went on, and more black troops were deployed, the 92nd and the 93rd saw increased action and much praise from the French military and public alike.[165] Such positive attentions would alarm the AEF command structure, which led to them issuing General Order no. 40 on December 26, 1918. This order stipulated: that inspections were to occur twice daily, with strict inspections occurring once per week; six hours of daily military exercises were to be conducted; commanding officers of towns were required to place sentinels along thoroughfares, camps, and billets, to prevent men from visiting nearby towns and billets that were not their own; and a curfew to be set for 9pm, in which failure to comply would lead to arrest.[166] Clearly this order was strictly designed to control the movements of the soldiers of the 92nd Div. by occupying their time with over the top demands. Its tone was written in a manner to convey a non-racial bias, all except for one telling passage. MPs were charged with the duty to “prevent all enlisted men from addressing or holding conversations with the women inhabitants of the town.”[167] Not the *people* of the towns, but the *women*. This phrase alone demonstrates that the security measures were not in place to protect the French civilian population as whole, rather it was to ensure that the AEF’s black soldiers would not be “spoiled.”

A commentary written by Sergeant George W. Venters—a black man serving in the 92nd Div.—on General Order no. 40, describes it as being “intended to prevent men coming into

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[163] Emphasis is that of the of the original; Headquarters Ninety-Second Division, Bulletin No. 35, March 28, 1918, Military Archives Division, National Archives, Washington, DC, in Nalty, *Blacks in the Military*, 87.
[164] Emphasis is my own; ibid.
[165] Because the 92nd was primarily a non-combat division, most of the awards went to the 93rd, which received two Medals of Honor, 75 Distinguished Service Crosses, and 527 *Croix de Guerre* medals.
[166] United States Army Infantry Division, 92nd, Headquarters Ninety Second Division, General Order no. 40, December 26, 1918, Du Bois Papers.
[167] Ibid.

contact with white women."[168] This order would signal official efforts to prosecute any violations of that order—which were de facto transgressions against the colour line—with extreme prejudice. In response to a call for information on rape cases against black American soldiers solicited by the NAACP, Mjr. A. E. Patterson provides a list of soldiers in the 92nd Div. who were charged with rape and their subsequent punishments. In his letter, Mjr. Patterson lists 14 men charged with either rape or accessory to rape. Of these 14 men, five were acquitted, four received life imprisonment, four served 12 months of less, and one was executed. Concerning the executed man—James Favors—he was not a member of the 92nd, rather he was from the 331 Labor Battalion, which had white officers exclusively. In addition, he states that the three of the four life imprisonment sentences were the results of a General Headquarters Judge Advocate.[169]

Mjr. Patterson's letter conveys how the application of military justice was uneven for when it came to black soldiers. There are a variety of factors that lead to this unevenness. The cases adjudicated by the 92nd Div. proper—without going through GHQ—were often quite severe. Those that went to GHQ were often acquitted. And the execution of James Favors was conducted by an exclusively white officer core. This account suggests that the presence of a black officer core in the 92nd Div. proper acted as a brake on overly punitive sentences. In addition, the manner in which cases that were sent to GHQ often led to an acquittal or short sentence—12 months vs. life imprisonment—suggests that GHQ recognized the frivolity of the charges levied at these men.[170] Which is in line with the evidence as we have seen a major ad

[168] George W. Venters, Order from headquarters, 92nd Division, 1919. Du Bois Papers.
[169] Adam E. Patterson, Letter from Adam E. Patterson to National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, March 14, 1919. Du Bois Papers. This is a full list of the charges and sentences: 1. Sgt. James Richardson, assault with intent to rape, 15 years (later acquitted); 2. Cpl. Harry Ivy, rape, case still pending at the time of the letter's writing; 3. Arthur Blackwell, assault with intent to rape, life imprisonment; 4. John Bird, assault with intent to rape, not guilty; 5. Thomas Murry, assault with intent to rape, 12 months imprisonment; 6. Wilson Owen, assault with intent to rape, not guilty (but received 12 months for simple assault); 7. William Saitch, assault with intent to rape, not guilty and acquitted; 8. Janson Baker, rape, life imprisonment; 9. James Favors, rape, hanged (note from Mjr. Patterson: "This soldier was not a member of the 92nd Div. but of 331 Labor Battalion with white officers."); 10. Johnnie Crawford, assault with intent to rape, not guilty; 11. Pvt. Allen, rape, case sent to GHQ, could not be tried; 12. Claud Weaver, rape, life imprisonment; 13. Sgt. Vaughn, rape, not guilty (note from Mjr. Patterson: "In this case, testimony of woman involved showed that she was forced to say accused was guilty by an Amer. General and Priest."); 14. Unnamed soldier of 321 Labor Battalion; assault with intent to rape, life imprisonment.
[170] Note, seeking out the veracity of these charges is not the purpose of this analysis. Rather, I seek to exam how the racial artifact of rape accusations against black soldiers is mediated in a deeply racialized context. Indeed, as Mjr. Patterson concludes, "the final sentences in cases no. 4, 8, 10, and 12 [see previous footnote] were the result of GHQ Judge advocate or they would have been much severer than here shown."

hoc effort to spread disinformation among both the lower ranks of the military and the French population as a whole.

As the AEF continued their operations in France, elements within both the French State and civilian populations had a measured response to the importation of Jim Crow Laws. Sgt. Clarence C. Holmes from the 317 Motor Supply Train of the 92nd Div. recalls his time in France as such:

> The treatment accorded us by our American comrades was as a rule almost unendurable, altho [sic] the French treated us extraordinarily well. Our American comrades as you know, tried hard to plant the seed of prejudice in France, but thank Heaven the result were [sic] contrary to their efforts and desires.[171]

Holmes words demonstrate the new racialized context African Americans were introduced to during the later parts of the war. It illuminates the apparent dichotomy of race regimes as he saw it. Americans were "brutal," while the French were "benevolent." It is indeed true that the French resisted the imposition of a segregationist regime in the towns and villages American troops were stationed in, but it is also true that some of the racism of France's "benevolent" regime remained.

For example, the Mayor of Bordeaux, Charles Gruet, provided a nuanced account of what he thought of the black American soldiers who spent time in his town. He begins his letter, he describes that "the black American troops, did not give rise to any unfavourable remarks." However, when speaking of soldiers who were charged with, and executed for rape, he describes them as "two negro soldiers [who] were executed… for having violated a white woman."[172] There is a lot of things going on in this letter. First, M. Gruet seemed to express a neutral to positive reaction to many of the black Americans in his town. Accordingly, the original French term to describe these men—*les troupes noires*—seems to reflect this. However, when speaking of the men executed for rape, his language changes. He described these men as "*deux soldats nègres.*"[173] *Nègres* can be translated into "negro," but also "nigger." Clearly, we can see that he views these executed men with disdain, but when you examine the label alongside the phrase "for having violated a white woman," the racialized context is clear. These men had allegedly violated the body of a white woman and transgressed the colour line that was still at the foundation of the French colonial project.

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[171] Clarence C. Holmes, Letter from Clarence C. Holmes to unidentified correspondent [fragment], 1919. Du Bois Papers.
[172] Charles Gruet, Letter from the Mayor of Bordeaux to W.E.B. Du Bois, March 15, 1919. Du Bois Papers.
[173] When M. Gruet refers to well-behaved African Americans, he says: "… *les troupes noires américaines*." Though when speaking of black Americans charged with rape, he says: "… *deux soldats nègres furent exécuté par la Justice Militaire Américaine.*"

In the political sphere, again, French perceptions of race were complex and context specific. On July 25, 1919, the French Chamber of deputies discussed the rough treatment of black French soldiers by American MPs in French ports. Black deputies Achille René-Boisneuf of Guadeloupe and Joseph Lagrosillière of Martinique brought up the matter. They protested the incident as being counterintuitive to the ideals of the French Republic. The chamber would unanimously adopt a resolution condemning the American MPs behaviour.[174] Jules Pams, Minister of the Interior, acknowledged the seriousness of the incident, but asked the black deputies, for reasons of "high diplomacy," not to pursue the matter further. M. René-Boisneuf countered, protesting "against the complicity of the French military authorities in these incidents." To prove this, he cited a secret circular that was distributed among French officers, which elaborated on the American distaste of "familiarity between whites and blacks."[175] This Chamber discussion is important as it reflects how the transnational collision of two race regimes is having tangible effects. Exported segregation adds another layer to the creation of racial artifacts in France. The French have a duty to the ideals the Republic, however they have interests in maintaining American participation in the war. Therefore, a fine line was being towed by the French concerning treatment of both their own black colonial and African American soldiers.

The secret circular that M. René-Boisneuf is speaking of was a classified document entitled: "Concerning Black American Troops", by Colonel Louis Albert Linard.[176] In his position as liaison officer between French and American command, it was his responsibility to translate orders and to facilitate coordination between different AEF divisions—including the 92nd and 93rd. As the 93rd was integrated into the French army, the confidential document was distributed among their commanding French officers. The piece advised both the French military and population of how to treat and interact with "colored" American soldiers. In his role, Linard would become—whether intentional or not—a mouthpiece for American White Supremacy.

"The American point of view on the Negro question may seem strange to the Frenchman," writes Linard "but the French have no right to discuss what is known as prejudice. *American opinion is unanimous upon the Negro question and does not admit discussion*." Linard

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[174] The resolution is full of flowery language with calls to The Rights of Man and the Citizen, and absolute equality. This speaks to the cognitive dissonance between the French colonial project and its own ideals of universality. As these deputies speak of absolute equality of their colonial soldiers, while at the same time prevent the full realization of their equality. "French Demand Race Equality: Protest on American Soldier Acts to Colored Men," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 26, 1919, archives.chicagotribune.com, 1.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Linard, "Concerning Black American Troops;" Du Bois, "Documents of the War," in *The Crisis* 18, no. 1 (May 1919), 16-18. The Crisis Archive.

asserts that the estimated 15 million African Americans living in the US, threatened to degenerate the white race in the US, unless there is an "inexorable separation between blacks and whites." Believing that the danger did not exist in France, Linard states that the French people had become accustomed to treating black people with familiarity and "accept attentions from them." This indulgence was believed to hurt America and threaten national doctrine by filling African Americans with "ideas which the whites consider intolerable." African Americans were considered to lack intelligence, discretion, civil, and professional conscience, with a tendency toward familiarity. "The vices to a negro are a constant menace to the American who has to repress them sternly." Linard concludes this secret dossier with a direct call to action. He urges the prevention of intimate contact between French and African American officers, and not to commend them too highly, "particularly in the presence of Americans." Linard places particular emphasis on the fact that Americans become incensed by public displays of intimacy between black men and white women. He even cites the cover of the *Vie Parisienne* that features the image "L'enfant du dessert" as causing "violent protests" among the American officer core.[177]

Linard's secret circular is quite the loaded document. Whether this document represents Linard as a stenographer for his American charges, or his own beliefs, it clearly represents a survey of American racism. Du Bois believed that Linard's words represent "American and not French opinion."[178] This sentiment seems to reflect Du Bois hope that France was indeed true to the ideals of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Which is likely why he published the circular in *The Crisis* of May 1919. In fact, the acquisition of the circular was a product of Du Bois' effort to portray France in a positive light.

M. René-Boisneuf of Guadeloupe presented Linard's circular to the Chamber of Deputies on July 25, 1919. Gratien Candace was also a member of the Chamber of Deputies at the same time as René-Boisneuf. Moreover, M. Candace also attended the first Pan-African Congress held by Du Bois in February of 1919.[179] Thus, it seems very likely that Du Bois either

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[177] Ibid.

[178] Though it is worth mentioning that perhaps Du Bois was pushing for the idea of the value of African American service in the war by portraying France as a true defender of democracy. "Documents of the War," in *The Crisis*, May 1919, 16.

[179] Assemblée nationale, "Achille René-Boisneuf: Mandats à l'Assemblée nationale ou à la Chambre des députés," Assemblée nationale, http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche/%28num_dept%29/902#prettyPhoto; Assemblée nationale, "Gratien Candace: Mandats à l'Assemblée nationale ou à la Chambre des députés," Assemblée nationale, http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche/(num_dept)/1415; H. F. Worley and C. G. Contee, "The Worley Report on the Pan-African Congress of 1919," *The Journal of Negro History* 55, no. 2 (1970): 140-43. JSTOR; Du Bois, "History" in *The Crisis* 18. no. 1 (May 1919), 11. The Crisis Archive.

received the secret circular here, or laid the groundwork for its acquisition, as part of his mandate for visiting France was to collect and solicit soldiers, citizens, and politicians for any information concerning African American service in the war for his book. Regardless of how Du Bois acquired the document, its publication was certainly part of *The Crisis'* ongoing mission to communicate the idea of France as an egalitarian society and to present racism as a concept in need of constant reification.

However, this vision of an idealized France is limited by its myopic outlook. It at once communicates the American intention to maintain their regime of "brutal racism" abroad; the ambivalent nature of the French Military's relationship with blackness, by simply allowing such a document to circulate; the mutual fear of a loss of white prestige via a perceived sexual threat; and the essential othering of black Americans from white Americans, as the document clearly differentiates "Americans" from "negros." The document is also significant in that it demonstrates how racism is not an intrinsic concept. Racism needs to be reified at every turn to serve as a political tool. In this case the racism expressed in this document was intended to serve as means to both reinforce American white supremacy abroad, and for the French, to help keep the US in the war. Nevertheless, France's relationship with race was still ambivalent, which lead to resistance once this secret document became public.

One such critique comes from a man, known only as M. Meugaut. He penned a critique of Colonel Linard's confidential circular. The fact that he is from Brest makes his critique particularly fascinating as Brest was one of the first disembarkation points of both the 92nd and 93rd Divisions.[180] Meugaut opens his letter by labelling Linard's circular as a "piece of propaganda" which is "as unjust as it is stupid," and a "reversal of French ideas concerning coloured Americans." The latter assertion, as we have seen, is charitable at best. He continues by calling American attitudes towards African Americans a "barbarous and ignobled process," and resents that those same attitudes are being forced upon the French. Menguat believes black soldiers who serve under French command will be treated with impartiality, praised and punished in the same way as all other soldiers. This is because he believes that the French have learned to treat blacks with familiarity because they are able to compare; weighing good with the bad.[181]

M. Meugaut's words are quite revealing, as they communicate how ideas concerning race, empire, and patriotism intersected in a Frenchman's mind. Clearly, M. Meugaut is a

[180] Being from Brest, would presumably place M. Meugaut in a position to make an informed critique, as he likely had direct contact with both African American and colonial African Soldiers. The latter being often billet during the summer in Northern departments, such as Brest.
[181] M. Meugaut, Critique of Louis Albert Linard, 1918, 1-2, Du Bois Papers.

patriotic man who fully subscribed to the ideals of *Le République Français*. He equated "frenchness" as being synonymous with justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, and humanity.[182] Accordingly, he viewed Colonel Linard's circular as being antithetical to what France—in Meugaut's mind—represented. This is a problematic perspective, considering the paternalistic execution of French imperialism. A paternalism which he articulates that "whites should know that we can do more with kindness than brutality."[183] This expression is a clear racial artifact that encapsulates Conklin's idea of the cognitive dissonance, and ambivalent nature in which France constantly shifts the meaning of the *mission civilisatrice*. This is a racial artifact that is articulated in response to an attempt to impose a tacit system of Jim Crow in France, which is a complete affront—in the eyes of M. Meugaut—of French ideals. In addition, it signals how transnational processes, in this case the social upheaval surrounding the First World War, can create unique articulations of racial artifacts.

The context in France was certainly complex. The very nature of the war caused a shift in the nature of the creation of policy and cultural products surrounding black people from one of dehumanization to infantilization; though to be clear, both remained exploitative. As the AEF increased its presence in France, there was more pressure to change. People similar to Linard took a hardline approach to accommodate such change, while people like M. Meugaut, M. René-Boisneuf, and M. Lagrosillière chose to resist. While both these sides were overt and public in their reactions, there were instances of more subtle and personal reactions.

"Take back these soldiers," shouts a frustrated mayor of the village of Vosges who was frustrated by rowdy white soldiers, "and send us some real Americans, *black Americans*."[184] This is one of many personal expressions of racial artifacts brought on by the Great War. Though there were certainly those who were cautious or apprehensive about so many black people being in their country.[185] Nevertheless, there was a significantly positive—though qualified—reaction to these newcomers. Concerning this positivity, Du Bois recalls that "when the circular on American Negro prejudice was brought to the attention of the French Ministry, it was quietly collected and burned. In a thousand delicate ways the French expressed their silent

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[182] Ibid., 4.
[183] The original French: "Les blancs devraient savoir que l'on arrive beaucoup mieux à faire ce que l'on veut de quelqu'un par la douceur que par la brutalité." Ibid., 3.
[184] Michel Fabre, *La Rive Noire: De Harlem à la Siene* (Paris: Lieu commun, 1985), 49.
[185] Many African Soldiers fought on the front as their "warrior instincts" were not questioned by the metropole French; in fact, they were valued on the front. Though, when these soldiers wintered in the South of France, some French villagers took precautions against the supposed savagery of these men. For more on the caution of the French civilian around colonial black soldiers see Lucie Cousturier, *Des inconnus chez moi*, (Paris: Le Sirène, 1920), 12-14, Archive.org.

disapprobation."[186] While his interpretation concerning the French Ministry is one sided, it was indeed true that many French people enjoyed the presence of black people amongst them; even if that enjoyment was a novelty. However, we must remember that all these instances of positivity should be understood as racial artifacts that were subject to the context they were expressed in, and the French context was complex indeed.

In the spring of 1919, Du Bois solicited local French notables for information concerning their experiences with black American soldiers billeted or passing through their towns. These accounts were intended for a book that Du Bois never completed: *The Black Man and the Wounded World*. Examining these accounts gives us a look into the nature of a unique cultural engagement. Many of these letters are universal in their praise for African American soldiers and unremarkable in their communication of that praise. They often praise the soldiers for their good behaviour, their pleasant demeanor, and how they will be missed by hotel staff.[187] A letter from a school teacher even praises how much their visits meant to their students, writing: "Brave "black soldiers," the children will never forget you."[188] The image painted of these black American soldiers is almost *too* positive. Regardless, discovering the veracity of these documents neither within the scope of this study, nor its purpose. What is important is what these letters communicate about the nature of racial landscape of their period, and how this encounter of different cultures created unique racial artifacts.

For instance, a French woman—Mara Buet—from the commune of Challes-Les-Eaux is quite telling. She speaks of witnessing the brutality African Americans suffered from white American soldiers. She says that she understands their suffering and wants to be more welcoming to offset the injustice they suffered. Just like the other letters, Mde. Buet speaks highly of the black soldiers who visited her town, as "none of them lacked correction, politeness, always obedient to the habits of the house, always quiet, eager to render service, grateful for the slightest proof of respect and sympathy."[189] The latter portion of this statement is quite interesting as it seems to express surprise among the African American soldiers at the racial regime of France. Perhaps some black Americans read *The Crisis* or heard about the perceived

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[186] Du Bois, "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man," 72.
[187] Pierre Bellemin, Letter from Pierre Bellemin to William Stevenson, 1919, Du Bois Papers; Letter from Hotel du Centre to William Stevenson, May 20, 1919, Du Bois Papers; Letter from Hôtel des Alpes to William Stevenson, June 3, 1919, Du Bois Papers; Maire Le Mans, Letter from Mayor of Le Mans, France to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 12, 1919, Du Bois Papers; Maire Liverdun, Letter from Mayor of Liverdun, France to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 3, 1919, Du Bois Papers; Maire Raon-l'Etape, Letter from Office of the Mayor of Raon-l'Etape, France to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 2, 1919, Du Bois Papers; Mairie Serqueux, Letter from Mayor of Serqueux, France to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 17, 1919, Du Bois Papers.
[188] Letter from unidentified correspondent to William Stevenson, June 2, 1919, Du Bois Papers.
[189] Mara Buet, Letter from Mara Buet to William Stevenson, May 23, 1919. Du Bois Papers.

equality black people could enjoy in France. Though not all were aware. This piece indirectly communicates the feeling of recognition that African American soldiers had of being in a profoundly different racial context.

Another letter speaks of an encounter between an African American soldier named Edward and a French person named A. Chevrinais. This document is another piece of general praise for black American troops. Though a certain extract stands out. “He [Edward] sent me a magazine ‘*The Crisis*’ that is very interesting, and I saw that the black Americans had appreciated the way the French welcomed them. *We all find that blacks can both be gentlemen and white*.”[190] Certainly, this last statement is a is racialized artifact. On one level, it can express a potential for equality. While on the other, it denigrates blackness to being something less than white, and needing to rise up to the level of whiteness. It labels whiteness as the top of the racial hierarchy; making it the standard by which all others are measured.

What makes it interesting is that this quote seems to signal an instance of a creation of a new racial artifact. The infantilist view of blackness was attached to black Africans of the *indigène* classification. The potential to be white was previously reserved for the Senegalese of the Four Communes in Senegal who were educated in proper French—*l’évolués*. This expression seems to be attaching African Americans to the racial category of *évolué*. Or perhaps these black American soldiers are being placed into their own unique category; one that is informed by the prevalence of negrophilia during the period. The polyvalence of the statement: “we all find that blacks can both be gentlemen and white,” is interesting as it can be read both ways; uplifting and denigrating. Such ambivalence echoes the very nature of the *mission civilisatrice*.

The ambivalence demonstrated in the Chevrinais letter can be see more widely across the tone of all these correspondences. The dynamic between Du Bois and the respondents seems to reflect a parent responding to another parent about the conduct of their children. The responses of “well-behaved, polite, and kind” seem to reflect a parent reporting to another about a play date, rather than grown men fighting in a war. We have already direct associations of black people being represented as children in phrases like “they are great children” or “children of the sun.” All this points to the manner in which official rhetoric soaked into the wider French culture. Accordingly, as more and more African American soldiers mingled with the public at large, we see how French culture reconciled—for many French people—an unknown quantity. For many people in France, black men were images in a magazine or figures in a book. To see

[190] Emphasis is my own; A. Chevrinais, Letter from A. Chevrinais to W.E.B. Du Bois, April 29, 1920. Du Bois Papers.

these men, having them live amongst them, challenged the French to understand them through their own context, thus leading to new articulations of racial artifacts. However, the infantilist perspective certainly is not the only perspective these correspondences communicate.

As mentioned, the rebranding of the black African from "*le primitif*" to "loyal children" had a negrophilic air. This exoticization of the black body would go hand-in-hand with the sexualization of the blackness.[191] These correspondences, reflect such incidences of sexualization; as well as the social taboos that surrounded them. For instance, a French woman by the name of J. Mallard speaks of how she visited the YMCA where she was treated "gently," "very graciously," and "with constant cordiality."[192] The YMCA in her commune of Challes-les-Eaux was a designated recreation area for locally billeted black American soldiers. The fact that she often visited this place and was pleasantly treated is significant. It demonstrates that both the French and black Americans often crossed the colour line, regardless of tacit French disapproval or overt orders from the AEF, such as General Order no. 40 or Bulletin no. 35.

However, both of these official orders used diplomatic language. While the meaning of the orders implicitly targeted African American soldiers, their language never explicitly labelled them as the specific targets of these directives. A memo released in the spring of 1919 seems to signal a lax in the tendency to use cautious language to control the movements of black American soldiers. Gone is the generic language of previous orders, as this memo is concerned over the increasing number of sexual assaults committed by "American negro soldiers," and recommends an increase in supervision and swift justice.[193] The tone of this memo expresses a concern over the punishment of these black soldiers' alleged transgressions not being pushed severely enough. This is in line with the anxieties AEF commanders had concerning the manner in which the French punished their own black colonial soldiers who transgressed the colour line.

Writing about the nature of French military justice during the occupation of the Rhineland in Germany between 1923-25, Major General Henry T. Allen muses about how serious the French take racialized sexual crime. There was a concerted effort by French authorities to punish these crimes. However, "their sentences are often milder than ours."[194] Thus, by taking into account the increasing contact between black American soldiers and white French women,

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[191] See figure 8.
[192] J. Mallard, Letter from J. Mallard to William Stevenson, June 2, 1919, Du Bois Papers.
[193] This memo is an extract from an untitled official letter from General Headquarters, and authorized by Chief of Staff, Brigadier General John S. Switzer; United States Army, American Expeditionary Forces, Memorandum no. 111 from unidentified correspondent, April 24, 1919, Dubois Papers.
[194] The milder sentencing was due to differing understandings of evidence in French courts, as well as a tendency not to punish these crimes as severely as the British or Americans would. Henry T. Allen, *The Rhineland Occupation* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1927), 321.

and the general suspicion of French punitive actions, one may observe Memorandum no. 111 in a different level. It was not a simple demand to maintain military order and civil obedience, rather it was articulation of a racial artifact. An artifact that articulated fears that African Americans were being "spoiled."

While they were certainly not tolerable, the simple praises of conduct or chivalrous expression of manners towards women were not the types of relationships that the AEF command structure feared most. Rather, it was the intimate dalliances that were shared between black men and white women. Such a relationship is described in a correspondence from an unidentified French woman to Dr. De Haven Hinkson, an African American MD and officer stationed in France. Once again, the piece reflects general praise for the African American soldier. However, her tone is far more intimate towards Dr. Hinkson himself. She speaks to Dr. Hinkson about why she tried to convince him to remain in France to practice medicine, because she understands that black people "are not treated as freemen" in the US.[195] She speaks of their commitment to one another, to staying contact, even though their situations were difficult. While there are no direct declarations of love, the tone and content heavily allude to at least a very close familiarity with one another, if not romantic feelings. Regardless, of the true nature of their relationship, this dalliance would certainly be considered a serious transgression against the stricter AEF policies in the spring of 1919.

The French experience for African American soldiers did not line up with the rhetoric that black leaders like Du Bois were hoping for. At every turn, the AEF made it perfectly clear that they did not intend to allow the French racial context to subvert the status quo of a "brutal" American race regime back home. From ad hoc applications of segregationist mentality to full blown attempts to codify Jim Crow style laws in areas under direct AEF control, American officials were committed to not letting France "ruin" their black soldiers. Regardless of these attempts to export Segregation to France, the French public was still able to interact with African American soldiers. Such interactions served to demonstrate how the presence of black American soldiers created new expressions of racial artifacts within French society. As we saw in Chapter Two, the necessity of war caused a shift towards paternalism concerning France's colonial troops. As the war progressed, the new necessity of garnering American support shifted French opinions again. French ambivalence to colonial matters informed paradoxical opinions of elements within political and civil society. Simultaneously, the French socio-political apparatus attempted to

[195] Letter from unidentified correspondent to De Haven Hinkson, February 20, 1920, Du Bois Papers.

object and acquiesce to American segregationist attitudes. Such a contradiction was most salient surrounding Col. Linard's secret circular.

At the same time, the intimate contact between black American soldiers and white French civilians was an inevitability as soldiers began to be billeted in French towns and villages. These exchanges would further demonstrate how the war mediated French understandings of black Africans and black Americans. The analysis of French civilian opinions of African American soldiers via personal correspondences demonstrates a complex and contradictory understandings of blackness; one that reflected both old and new types of paternalistic racial artifacts.

We return.
We return from fighting.
We return fighting.
- W. E. B. Du Bois, “Returning Soldiers”

How’re You Gonna Keep ‘em Down on the Farm, After They’ve Seen Paree?
- a song of the same name by Joe Young & Sam Lewis

Chapter Four

Strategies of Black Resistance in The United States and France

The French experience for African Americans was at once transformative and reformative: transformative in that it gave African Americans a chance to experience a form of equality that they did not enjoy in the United States; reformative in that the assumed promise of receiving that same equality when they returned stateside was a lie. The Great War represented something more than simply supporting an ally to defeat a mutual enemy. It represented a true equality—in the eyes of African Americans—and its defence against German incursion was of the utmost importance. As one should recall, victory over Germany as an integral part of ensuring a positive future for the “darker races.” For Du Bois, black men made a huge sacrifice for democracy by fighting “[f]or bleeding France and what she means and has meant and will mean to us and humanity and against the threat of German race arrogance.”[196] However, after traveling to France in February 1919 for the first Pan-African Congress, he personally bore witness to the brutality and humiliation of Jim Crow in France.[197] This caused Du Bois to break ranks with his pre-war mentality, and reminded him of black America’s “special grievances.” In May of 1919, Du Bois conveyed his change in attitude.

> This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which we fought! But it is our fatherland. It was right for us to fight. The faults of our country are our faults. Under similar circumstances, we would fight again. But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land.[198]

[196] Du Bois, “Returning Soldiers,” in *The Crisis* 18, no. 1 (May 1919), 13, The Crisis Archive.
[197] Du Bois spent three months in France, where he organized the 1st Pan-African congress. He also toured the battlefields where the 92nd Div. fought and spoke with soldiers, where he heard first hand, the abuses and slanders that African Americans suffered under AEF discrimination.
[198] Du Bois, “Returning Soldiers,” 14.

This is where Du Bois doubled down on his rhetoric concerning the value of the war in gaining the rights of a citizen. But it is a qualified expression. Prior to the war he spoke of putting the differences in opinion concerning race and treatment of blacks aside. With the hopes that fighting for country will gain them their rights in the eyes of white America. Now post-war, seeing that justice was still not being served, he still said blacks needed to fight, but now they would fight with the full knowledge of the sacrifice and subjugation they experienced in France.

Du Bois spoke of the double experience of "devilish persecution from their own countrymen" and the democracy experienced in France, as being a revolutionizing experience.[199] Here, Du Bois is framing the war experience in France as transformative, which was also transnational in its scope. Other African Americans shared this sentiment as well. For example, William A. Hewlett was a black American soldier serving in France, and he wrote to Du Bois to express his feelings on post-war America. He was very upset with the lack of change in the US post-WWI. Hewlett asks if American democracy is simply "disenfranchisement, Jimcrowism, lynch laws, bias judges and juries, segregation, [and] taxation without representation… why did we fight Germany… Was it to make democracy safe for white people?" He concludes by concurring with Du Bois and states that if we fought to make democracy safe for white people, "we will soon fight to make it safe for ourselves and our posterity."[200]

Hewlett demonstrates that Du Bois' words were reaching the wider African American population as the rhetoric was similar in its expression. In addition, Hewlett's tone and language suggests that his interests were wider than simple disgust with the treatment of black people.[201] It's an expression of being part of a movement that the Great War helped to shape. Indeed, as Herbert J. Seligmann in his contemporary study of the "Negro problem" wrote, the war had "made the Negro more politically self-conscious than ever before in his history in this country."[202] While the previous chapter outlined how the French articulation was uniquely affected by the insertion of black soldiers in France. This chapter will examine how the double experience that Du Bois spoke of, tangibly affected black Americans themselves while serving in France. As well as how that experience informed the articulation of racial artifacts as these black men returned to the United States.

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[199] Du Bois, "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man," 72.
[200] William A. Hewlett, Letter from William A. Hewlett to W. E. B. Du Bois, August 26, 1919, 3-4, Du Bois Papers.
[201] The salutation of his letter to Du Bois reads, "Sincerely yours for the race, William A. Hewlett." This is a clear articulation of the politically motivated inspiration his letter, and his desire to affect change for his "race."
[202] Herbert J. Seligmann, *The Negro Faces America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), 151.

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Published in the June 1919 issue of *The Crisis*, "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man in the Great War," was Du Bois' main articulation of the Great War as being a positive struggle for the advancement of black civil rights in America. This essay was likely a precursor to his unfinished book, *The Black Man and the Wounded World.* The article provides a brief primer on the contributions of black people—including Senegalese soldiers—to the war effort against Germany. This brief inclusion of the story of these African soldiers hints at the Du Bois' idea of the War being part of a global struggle for the liberation of all the "darker races" of the world. However, the main thrust of the essay is an idealized image of France as a "vision of real democracy." Du Bois speaks to just how pervasive the exporting of Segregation to France really was. Jim Crow was reflected in the hotels of countless villages; by the Massachusetts Colonel who "hates niggers;" and by the Georgian General who orders African Americans not to speak with whites. "All this ancient and American race hatred and insult in a purling sea of French sympathy and kindliness, of human uplift and giant endeavor, amid the mightiest crusade humanity ever saw for justice."[203] The callbacks to the Massachusetts Col. and Georgian Gen. speaks to Du Bois non-distinction between the brutal racisms of the Southern and Northern United States. In addition, he doubles down on the significance he attached to the struggle in France.

In May of 1919, Du Bois wrote about how foolish the black American would be for not fighting for his rights at home in the same way he fought for them abroad. In June of the same year, he re-emphasized that idea. However, in doing so, Du Bois overlooked the complexity of the race regime in France; one that he acknowledged, if not always consciously. In an editorial entitled "Rape," Du Bois asked why the AEF—by extension, white America—so readily accused and punished black American soldiers for alleged rapes in France. He suspects that "Americans would rather have lost the war than to see a black soldier talking to a white woman."[204] Moreover, he speaks of an order that the Mayor of Bar-sur-Aube issued, which read: "According to orders given by American Military authorities, it is strongly recommended that no French women receive visits from colored soldiers or talk with them on the streets."[205] This statement demonstrates how France was not always the "bastion of absolute human rights" as Du Bois often presents it as. Rather, France would often acquiesce to US demands concerning matters of race relations to engender continued participation in the war. The French Chamber of

[203] Du Bois, "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man," 63.
[204] Du Bois, "Rape," 13.
[205] Ibid.

Deputies reflected this acquiescence as did the Mayor of Bar-sur-Aube. Even within Du Bois own view, the situation in France was not as clear cut as he would have liked to believe.

Regardless of the complicated reality of what was happening on the ground in France, the idealism surrounding France and the wider struggle to defend it from Germany had tangible meaning for both Du Bois and black people as a whole. For instance, while stationed in France, Lt. Charles A. Shaw meditates on the war and what it means to fight in it as a black American. Lt. Shaw reflects on the struggle at large and his role as a "colored American" fighting alongside the Allied nations in a struggle for the principles of democracy. He wondered what will become of him when he returned home. "Will we be treated as men," asks Lt. Shaw, "with the feelings, thoughts, desires, and ambitions of any other race of people?"[206] This concern—rather, demand—to be considered a man, was the crux of the struggle for equality. Lt. Shaw places much emphasis on the inherent dignity associated with being considered a man. He feels fortunate to witness a change in his men's lives who "have not had an opportunity to appreciate what life really meant having their first chance to *experience the rights of manhood*, and enjoying an equal privilege in every way."[207]

For Lt. Shaw, France was the "country of all countries," in which "democracy, and its principles, are manifested on every hand, for these people in France know a man only by the amount of good that he contributes to the community of State, and not by the color of his skin, or the texture of his hair."[208] As we have seen, this vision of France is highly selective in its expression. But the reality of French policy is not the fulcrum of this transnational exchange. What matters is the experience that men like Lt. Shaw had. The true pivot point of this exchange is the exchange itself; what each person took away from their experience. For Lt. Shaw, his experience said France was an unshakeable nation of equality, regardless of what actual French policy and actions said to the contrary. It is the lived experience of his time in France that informed Lt. Shaw's demands for the dignity of manhood in the United States. This distinctly black version of masculinity is a racial artifact that was born from the French experience.

The positive rhetoric pointed at France as a champion of democracy was itself the product of an exchange within the transnational community of black Americans; between the US and those fighting in France. In a letter, E. A. Carter—a black American soldier, formerly stationed in France—spoke of what Du Bois' work meant to the soldiers in France. Carter thanked the editors of *The Crisis* for making their "humiliating and galling experience" known

[206] Charles A. Shaw, Reflections, February 1918, Du Bois Papers.
[207] Emphasis my own. Ibid.
[208] Ibid.

and as broadly published as possible. Also, congratulated the editors for their "exposé of some of the things that are not officially reported."[209] Moreover, Sgt. Charles R. Isum of the 92nd Division—who wrote in response to Du Bois' solicitations for information on the black wartime experience—was pleased that "someone has the nerve and backbone" to tell the public the truth about the "brutal racism" demonstrated by the AEF in France.[210] In addition, Carter also reveals that many black newspapers were distributed among the black soldiers in France, which were subsequently confiscated.[211] Both of these are interesting accounts as they suggest a sort of feedback loop in the transnational exchange brought on by the war. Du Bois himself personally journeyed to France and commissioned others to gather information on the black experience in France. He would then publish these accounts in *The Crisis*, which in turn were read by black Americans at home and abroad.[212] *The Crisis* became a sort of forum for African American soldiers to speak about their experiences in France. This fact would explain how people like Hewlett articulated notions of racial uplift similar those portrayed in *The Crisis*.

Prior to official American involvement in the war, Du Bois fervently believed in the emancipatory power of fighting for Democracy in France.[213] However, as efforts to export Jim Crow to France and stories of African American brutalization at the hands of the AEF became more salient, Du Bois shifted his outlook. Rather than "first your country, then your rights," Du Bois championed the idea of returning home fighting for one's rights. Such a shift could be considered an echo of his previous notions of race relations. Writing in 1900, Du Bois stated that "we must inveigh against any drawing of the color line which narrows our opportunity of making the best of ourselves and we must continually and repeatedly show that we are capable of taking hold of every opportunity offered."[214] Tracing Du Bois' changing articulations of racial artifacts concerning the pursuit of equality demonstrates how the Great War informed those changes. The goal was always, the uplift of the "dark races of the world," and the war seemed to provide

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[209] Concerning the "exposé," Carter is likely referring to the numerous articles and personal account surrounding the mistreatment of African American soldiers by the AEF that were published the "Documents of the War" sections of numerous issues of *The Crisis*. Though it is important to recognize that this speculation on my part, as Carter does not name any pieces specifically. E. A. Carter, Letter from E. A. Carter to W. E. B. Du Bois, May 7, 1919, Du Bois Papers.
[210] Charles Isum, Letter from Charles R. Isum to W. E. B. Du Bois, May 17, 1919, Du Bois Papers.
[211] Carter, Letter from Carter to Du Bois.
[212] In the article "History," Du Bois discusses the importance of providing a clear history of the African American experience in France to counter any potential attempts of disinformation. In addition, he writes of his efforts to collect information while in France. Du Bois, "History." in *The Crisis* 18. no. 1 (May 1919), The Crisis Archive; The article "The Black Man in the Revolution of 1914-1918" was the most salient example of the publication of the experiences of black soldiers.
[213] See "A Philosophy in Time of War" and "Our Special Grievances."
[214] Du Bois, "The Present Outlook for the Dark Races of the Mankind," 117.

an opportunity for such uplift. However, the recognition of an exported segregationist regime in France signaled a renewed focus—though informed by the French war experience— of rights before anything else.

Returning to Hewlett, he spoke once again to the true democracy that he and the nearly 400,000 other African Americans enjoyed while in France. However, he regreted that on "October 10th, 1919, that we will sail for our home in Petersburg Va. where true democracy is enjoyed only by white people." This demonstrates the rhetoric of Du Bois, the expectations and experiences in France, and the problems yet to be faced back in the US. While people like Hewlett were certainly in line with Du Bois rhetorically, there were people who took direct action. James G. Wiley was an African American soldier who served in the 92nd Div. in France. In a letter to Du Bois, he relates how in his capacity as Secretary of the Bordeaux Y.M.C.A. he was "sent away because of my activity in *protecting the rights of the common soldiers*."[215] During his 13 month tour in France, he would bounce around the 92nd Div. as an infantryman and artilleryman; each time being transferred for being stalwart on the issue of protecting his rights. "I have always stood solidly on the race question," concluding his letter in a similar manner to Hewlett, "and that accounts for my many removals."[216] Although Wiley did not specifically outline the particular actions, he took to resist imported Jim Crow, the fact that he did resist is significant.

In another act of resistance, Chaplain James T. Simpson provides an account that demonstrates a unique confluence of French and American racial artifacts. The Chaplain speaks from personal experience of plain clothed men following African American officers away on leave. If they were caught associating with French women, the establishment where they were caught would be placed off limits for all black American soldiers. This process was done through a loophole. Official military law stipulated that if an establishment served cognac and is frequented by prostitutes, AEF authorities could then prohibit black soldiers from visiting. "All French ladies," according Simpson, "associating with colored men are 'prostitutes.'"[217] This is significant as it is corroborated by Sgt. Pontlock.[218] This process of accusation and prohibition would also work in tandem with the French Gendarmerie, as they would have the authority to enforce the status of prostitute on the French woman. The gendarmes would arrest the accused

[215] Emphasis is my own. James G. Wiley, Account of France-based Y.M.C.A. service, July 3, 1919, Du Bois Papers.
[216] Ibid.
[217] James T. Simpson, Letter from James T. Simpson to W. E. B. Du Bois, June 7, 1919, Du Bois Papers.
[218] A French woman was seen associating with a black officer and was subsequently branded as a prostitute. However, when she was revealed to be the daughter of the Mayor of Mayenne, it was labeled a mistake. "Such was the case in many instances." Pontlock, Letter from Pontlock to Du Bois, 9.

woman and detain her for eleven days. Upon her release, she would be considered a legal prostitute.[219] In light of the stigma and official shame, French women often refrained from associating with African American soldiers.

Simpson labeled this as a "climactic result of American propagandism," which worked to associate black American officers with legal prostitution.[220] This is a fascinating chain of events as it demonstrates a unique process of US segregationist mentality affecting change within the context of the French race regime. Now, was this a function of French officials wanting to appease the AEF and keep them in the war, or was this a result of US appealing to racist ideas latent in the French mentality? Considering there is evidence for both—the Chamber of Deputies meeting and French ambivalence—it is difficult to be sure. What is certain, is Chaplain Simpson's interpretation and subsequent actions. He believed that because France had been devastated by war and was under martial law, that the French were "being intoxicated upon this damnable virus of race-prejudice."[221] Which is a fair interpretation, and certainly a articulation of a racial artifact created by the war.

As Chaplain, Simpson advised "all the men who have lady friends and love them, as if they are competent, to marry them for mutual protection."[222] This action was a clear act of resistance against the exported segregationist regime. Which, incidentally, is in itself a unique racial artifact, as both the "brutal" and "benevolent" racial regimes combine to create a novel mechanism of oppression. Simpson used his position as a tool to defeat what he envisaged as AEF propaganda. This action is significant as this was an attempt to create a space of transgression against the colour line, which was antithetical to the both French and American race regimes. Both Wiley and Simpson's acts of resistance demonstrate an intersection of the narrative of racial uplift coming from Du Bois and a personal sense of maintaining and demanding the dignity of manhood. Moreover, this intersection itself was partially informed by a transnational exchange of ideas and stories between African Americans on both sides of the Atlantic. These accounts demonstrate how the social upheaval caused by the First World War created unique expressions of racial artifact creation.

As the AEF made strides to impose a "brutal racist" regime in France, it became apparent that civil rights would not be handed to black Americans. Consequently, Du Bois' rhetoric shifted from the attainment of rights to a demand for dignity. Such a shift in mentality came to be

[219] Simpson, Letter from Simpson to Du Bois.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid.

reflected in the wider black community in the US as well. For instance, post-war memoirs by black soldiers—such as Emmett J. Scott and Charles H. Williams emphasized how transformative their experiences were in France. This effort helped to both highlight the racism still incurred by blacks in America and disseminated the notion that there was better to be had. Moreover, Reverend Francis J. Grimke spoke in Washington, D.C., saying that the African American participation in the war in Europe would not help in the pursuit of equality "unless you have come back with the love of liberty, equality, fraternity burning in your souls, and the determination to set other souls on fire with the same spirit."[223]

The sentiment among the black community in the US was informed not only by the French experience, but also by a surge in anti-black collective violence. This surge occurred in the summer of 1919 and was known as the Red Summer. During this summer, there were more than 20 large scale incidents of anti-black collective violence in major US cities, including Chicago, Houston, East St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and many others. The causes for this surge in violence were myriad—the Great Migration of black Americans from the South to Northern towns, thousands of decommissioned soldiers returning stateside, many of those being black. Though, more specifically, these wider causes point to a more basic cause for violence: the threat of imminent loss. These mass shifts in demographics led to a threat to the status quo, which was the maintenance of white prestige in America.

As such, to meet this threat of imminent loss, white Americans found reasons to harass, subjugate, or even kill black people to protect against this perceived threat. And in many cases, it was the recently returned black soldier—the "French-woman-ruined nigger"—that elicited strong responses from white Americans.[224] For instance, in an anonymous report written to *The Crisis*, the author writes of a returned black soldier walking down a street in Sylvester, Georgia. He says the soldier is bumped into by a poor white man who has "contemptuous envy for the honor that has been accorded the colored troopers in France." An argument ensued, the black man was arrested, and sentenced to thirty days community service. At a later date, this soldier would be removed from his guard station and "whipped unmerciful[ly]."[225]

Appeals were made for justice to the mayor's office, on behalf of the black soldier were met with the remark: "Let him serve his sentence, this is a white man town, and white men runs [sic] it." Accordingly, the brother of the author—who is black and spoke out against the

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[223] Krugler, *1919, The Year of Racial Violence*, 2.
[224] The term "Frenchwomen-ruined niggers" was a term that was coined by Mississippi Senator, James K. Vardaman. He, and many others felt threatened by the potential for returning soldiers to upset the racial status quo. Seligmann, *The Negro Faces America*, 58.
[225] My first taste of real Georgiaism was very disgusting, May 1919, Du Bois Papers.

treatment of the black soldier—received a letter that the author attempted to recite from memory. It read: “Life is sweet nigger, and if we hear any more from you relative to that nigger soldier working on the street, we will give you just six hours to get out of this town.”[226] This account is a very good example of the type of treatment black soldiers received within the United States.

African American soldiers walked with pride when they returned to the US as not only publications like *The Crisis* relayed their distinguished military service, but also black newspapers like the *Cleveland Gazette* did as well.[227] A particular piece from the *Cleveland Gazette* concerning the heroic welcome of Ohio’s 372nd Infantry Regiment requests that the reader “call your friend’s attention to it—particularly your white friends.”[228] The intention was to communicate to white people the value and importance of black military service abroad. Nevertheless, the pride with which these soldiers carried themselves, and the prestige afforded to them by elements in the media, inflamed old racial hatreds and punishments. Thus, terror was used to maintain the status quo.

It is against this type of treatment that Du Bois, *The Crisis*, returning soldiers, and black newspapers wanted to resist. For many African American soldiers, returning to the United States after surviving the horrors of trench warfare in Europe, only to continue to be dehumanized was too much to bear. In a letter to *The Crisis*, Pvt. Jerome E. Williams expresses his frustrations and willingness to resist.

> We whom was [sic] so proud to go over and fight for a country which we are not welcome in.
> Went over and fought to make this world a decent place to live in and safe for democracy.
> And to find such a change when we return. Not only in the Southern States but in the whole U.S.A. we find a great change. We see it writing [sic] in plain letters before our eyes.
> Our heroes welcome home but that only mean the white soldiers.
> Such little credit we are getting for the great work which was set before us to do.
> We are hardly noticed in war uniform only by our own people.
> *We are back from war and are going to have our rights if we have to have another fight over here.*
> We didn’t get a fair deal in France and we are not going to stand for the same over here as we did over there we stood enought [sic] as it was.

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[226] Ibid.

[227] Du Bois, “The Black Man in the Revolution of 1914-1918”; An article in the *Cleveland Gazette* spoke about the harrowing acts of African American soldiers in France. In addition, the same article included excerpts from other black newspapers that mentioned similar feats. These black papers included *The Baltimore Afro-American* and *The New York Age*. “Made Grand Record,” *Cleveland Gazette*, March 1, 1919, 4, newspapersarchive.com; “Ohio Afro-American Heroes of the Old Ninth Battalion,” *Cleveland Gazette*, March 1, 1919, 1, newspapersarchive.com.

[228] “Ohio Afro-American Heroes of the Old Ninth Battalion,” *Cleveland Gazette*, March 1, 1919, 4.

Enought [sic] of a thing is enought [sic] and to [sic] much will make a dog sick.
I myself is willing to die for the rights I didn't get full in the great battle but I will give my life for equal.
Now we as going over and return to make this world safe for democracy.
Now we have got to make it a decent place for our own people to live in.

Oblige yours, Jerome E. Williams[229]

This is a powerful statement of purpose coming from a returning soldier. It also juxtaposes the pride of serving one's country, only to be denied and cast aside upon return. It communicates the pain of being humiliated abroad by Jim Crow in France. Nevertheless, Pvt. Williams echoes the sentiment of Du Bois and other black leaders, he is returning fighting, and he is willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to see it through.

What is important to recognize is the role of the media in communicating the struggles of African Americans serving in France, and by extension, the need to fight for justice stateside. The *Chicago Defender*, a black run newspaper, published commentary of French opinions concerning the "riots" occurring during the Red Summer. The piece begins with the common praise of France's race utopia. It continues by relating an excerpt from the French newspaper, *L'Avenir*. It condemned the segregationist attitudes that lead to the mass violence, but more peculiarly it spoke directly to what motivates African Americans to fight back. It read, "[u]ntil now the Negro population of the United States has accepted this condition. But war has developed in them the spirit of revolt."[230] Again, the veracity of this document is not what is important, what is relevant is that fact that the idea of a "spirit of revolt" stemming from the African American war effort was being published.

Another black newspaper, the particularly militant *Baltimore Afro-American*, began a report of the July 23rd violence in Washington, D. C. with a tally of the dead and wounded. It read,

COLORED CASUALTIES
3 killed—6 wounded—8 beaten
WHITE CASUALTIES
4 killed—22 wounded—12 beaten[231]

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[229] Emphasis is my own. Jerome E. Williams, Letter from Jerome E. Williams to Crisis, August 7, 1919, Du Bois Papers. Concerning the line that reads, "We are hardly noticed in war uniform only by our own people." The line was very difficult to read, and the writer had very cumbersome grammar. The reproduction of this line serves as my best interpretation.
[230] John DeGrandt, "French Give Opinion of Riot, Foreigners Say Lack of Color Line Abroad Impressed Yanks," *Chicago Defender*, August 2, 1919. newspapersarchive.com.
[231] "Soldiers Try to Terrorize Colored Folk," *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 25, 1919, p. 1 news.google.com.

This particular fashion of presenting the violence almost resembles a sports score. It conveys that the paper is clearly rooting for one side, and that side seems to be "winning." The intention of the paper seems to be attempting to engender the idea that resistance is possible. In fact, the paper promotes the idea of armed-self defence quite clearly. "For two days no colored resistance was organized and many individuals were beaten," the author indicates, however "On Monday, the colored people infuriated by the inability of the police to afford protection retaliated by shooting and beating every white person that came into the Southwest section."[232] Individual acts of resistance are recorded as well, including the death of a white police officer and injured white soldiers after harassing black people.[233]

The overt radicalism of this article is clearly in line with Du Bois metaphorical assertion of "We return fighting." Indeed, the paper often advocated retaliation as the only way to make white America acknowledge the "Negro Question." (Fig. 12) However, newspapers like the *Baltimore Afro-American* were converting metaphor into action. And the manner of this action seemed to be to respond to suspicions of white-led obfuscation of the facts in the media. For instance, William A. Byrd accuses the reporting on the number of white men killed in the Washington to be "much larger than published." Byrd believed this was done to keep black people from striking back.[234] Again, it is difficult to determine where Byrd got these numbers from as the death toll so soon after the event was constantly influx. Regardless, the veracity of the account is not what's important. It is the mobilization of the black willingness to resist in this period of social flux that is significant.

Equally important to recognize is that this article comes immediately after a piece about black Africans being beaten by white MPs and the process of exporting Jim Crow abroad. It also precedes an article entitled "Southern American Villain Abroad," which contained more calls for resistance.

> We take this opportunity to say to America that neither in France nor America will colored men suffer indignities from southern white brutes whether they are in the uniform of the United States or in citizens' garb.
> …
> The white southern villain takes with him a gun to enforce his brutality. Other people will also take their guns to enforce their rights when dwelling among savages.[235]

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[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid., 4.
[234] William A. Byrd, "Hiding the Truth," *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 2, 1919, 1. news.google.com.
[235] Byrd, "Southern American Villain Abroad," *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 2, 1919, 1. news.google.com.

The language did not mix words, many people within the black community were inspired to take up arms to defend themselves against attempts to enforce white supremacy, and the black press reflected this willingness to resist.

Returning to Hewlett's letter to Du Bois, he was inspired to write his account of his French experience after reading the August 1919 issue of *The Crisis*. This particular issue of *The Crisis* had very powerful and combative language. In a similar vein to the expressions of resistance in black newspapers—though less militantly overt in tone—the Opinion section of the August 1919 issue of *The Crisis* was full of language intended to call black Americans to action and fight for their rights. Du Bois began by connecting the bible verse "To your tents, O Israel!" (Kings 12:16) to the struggle of black people in the US. He continued with the biblical analogy: "Face heat and cold and hunger; know hurt and death; and FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT, for Freedom, for the Assyrian is death and slavery…" Though the most striking phrase in the piece is when he asked, "how shall we fight? … With a Great Weapon."[236] This weapon he speaks of is the NAACP, whose members numbered at 75,000.[237] The language is certainly strong; however, it is the direct reference to how strong their movement was, which signaled the intent for serious action. Thus, when read in conjunction with black papers calls to "have a U. S. Army Riot Gun in your home," one can see how the experience of war attached the metaphorical weapon of black awareness and numbers to a willingness and ability to resist, leading to multiple acts of armed self-defence.[238]

In the same volume of *The Crisis*, two other writers speak to the need for resistance at home. John L. Hurst spoke of how black people went as a race to France, and "gave the country four hundred thousand of our best sons to make the supreme sacrifice in order to make the world free from German oppression. These same boys should be willing to make this country free from American oppression against their race. I know they are willing and ready."[239] Another writer, P. O'Connell championed the idea of fighting for the dignity of manhood. "I am a man and I challenge for myself as a man reverence from all men everywhere."[240] This particular issue of *The Crisis* represents a sharp change from the pre-war rhetoric of patience and allowing white America to recognize African American sacrifice abroad.

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[236] Du Bois, "Opinion of W. E. B. Bu Bois," in *The Crisis* 18, No. 4 (August 1919), 179. The Crisis Archive.
[237] Before 1914, the NAACP numbered around 9,000 people, however, by the early 1920s the membership reached over 100,000 nationwide. Mark Robert Schneider, *"We Return Fighting": The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 80.
[238] "The Mob!: A Warning," *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 2, 1919, 1. news.google.com.
[239] John L. Hurst, "Fight," in *The Crisis* 18, no. 4 (August 1919), 180. The Crisis Archive.
[240] P. O'Connell, "The Bitter Truth," in *The Crisis* 18, no. 4 (August 1919), 180. The Crisis Archive.

In 1919, America was dealing with the mass influx of black Americans in Northern cities, who were working jobs once held by white Americans—which I reiterate, had already caused anti-black collective violence in 1917. Furthermore, there was no process for absorbing demobilized military personnel, which subsequently led to mass unemployment. Thus, the post-war context was ready to spill over into racial violence. And they did, as Washington D.C. experienced the first major incidence of anti-black collective violence. James Weldon Johnson, field secretary for the NAACP, wrote an investigative piece for *The Crisi*s concerning the Washington incident. Weldon spoke of the anxiety he felt being in Washington during the violence; of his amazement that his people were being lynched in the shadow of the Capitol. The northwest section of the city had seen a lot of violence, however, black people there resisted. "They had reached the determination that they would defend and protect themselves and their homes," wrote Johnson, "at the cost of their lives, if necessary, and that determination rendered them calm." Johnson went on to praise black people for rising to the occasion to save themselves by fighting and not running. If it was not for such actions, he feared that "Washington would have been another and worse East St. Louis." [241]

Johnson's investigation had a very different tone than that of Martha Gruening's account of the East St. Louis riot. Instead of account after account of black victims of lynch mobs. Johnson communicated an active resistance to anti-black collective violence. While the references to the calmness and nobility of the black resistors is most certainly embellishment, the act of resistance itself is true. Johnson's accounts can be corroborated with numerous newspaper accounts of the days following the initial violence on July 19, 1919. For instance, *The Washington Post* spoke of nearly 20 uniformed black soldiers being treated for injury and subsequently arrested for rioting.[242] The *Washington Times* spoke of black men firing on police sent to arrest them, and even the formation of armed posses of black men driving around and defending their own neighbourhoods.[243]

President Wilson's promise of making the world safe for Democracy turned out to be a falsehood when it came African Americans. Both in France and back home in the United States, black Americans were degraded and dehumanized. This disrespect was all the more sour in light of the sacrifice African Americans made during the war. For Du Bois, these circumstances

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[241] James Weldon Johnson, "The Riots: An N. A. A. C. P Investigation," in *The Crisis* 18, no.5 (September 1919), 242. The Crisis Archive.
[242] "Race Riots Renewed," *The Washington Post*, 21 July 1919, 1. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[243] "Policeman is Shot During Riot in S.W.," *The Washington Times*, July 20, 1919, Section Two, Library of Congress; "Desperadoes Shoot," *The Washington Times*, July 21, 1919, 1-2, Library of Congress.

caused yet another shift in perspective. “We return fighting” became attitude of Du Bois as *The Crisis* renewed its calls for the vigorous pursuit of the full rights and privileges of citizenship for all black Americans. Simultaneously, black newspapers that already displayed radical tones added the war experience to their repertoire of black resistance. The *Baltimore Afro-American* would often attach personal stories of distinguished African American military service alongside more militant calls for armed self-defence; which was a publication strategy seemingly adopted from *The Crisis* as it had been publishing African American service records since the US entry into the war.[244]

These calls for resistance were part of a larger narrative: the pursuit of a unique form of black masculinity. Fighting for one's country, only to be robbed of the dignity of not only manhood, but personhood was uniquely an African American experience. As the pogroms against African Americans increased in post-war America, black publications responded with calls for African Americans to seize their rights and their manhood. It was in this context that Claude McKay published his militant demand for black manhood, “If We Must Die.” The last few lines of the poem succinctly capture the mood of the era: “Like me we’ll face the murderous, cowardly pack, Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!”[245]

While Du Bois did not necessarily lead the charge of an organized armed resistance—in fact, there is no evidence to even suggest it was organized—*The Crisis* contributed greatly to laying the groundwork for an organic expression of black social activism to arise. Post Office Translation Bureau Chief, Robert Bowen certainly felt that *The Crisis* carried some clout among the black community as he had 100,000 copies of the issue which contained “Returning Soldiers” held for six days. Though this black activism was reactionary, ad hoc, and certainly not organized, it was very real. Du Bois and *The Crisis* certainly played a significant role in developing the wider movement of black publications seeking rights through metaphorical and physical resistance.

[244] “A Word from a Soldier,” *Baltimore Afro-American,* May 16, 1919, 4, news.google.com.; “Sergt. Webb Tells of 808th Pioneer Infantry in France,“ *Baltimore Afro-American,* Mar. 21, 1919, 4, news.google.com.
[245] Claude McKay, “If We Must Die,” *The Liberator* (July 1919). The poem would also be published in *The Messenger* in September of 1919.

Conclusion

To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious,
is to be in a rage almost all of the time.
- James Baldwin, Radio Interview (WBAI-FM)

The Great War was intended to be "a war that ended all wars." For Du Bois, the fate of all the "dark races" of the world hung in the balance. According to his perception of the conflict, "the triumph of Germany means the triumph of every force calculated to subordinate darker peoples;" the struggled between the Allies and the Central powers in Europe was for the right to control, exploit, and pillage the marginalized societies—particularly in Africa.[246] The war was not a European problem, it was a transnational struggle to attain and secure equality for these marginalized peoples. A colour line separated white exploiters from the darker exploited; thus, a colour line "belted" the world. Du Bois envisioned a world through this dialectic, which informed discursive my framework of the divide between the exploited and the exploiter; the division between "criticism" and the "ideal."

This division between the "criticism" and the "ideal" was the main issue facing exploited peoples around the world—especially African Americans. The "criticism" was articulated by the exploiter, it sought to keep "darker peoples" oppressed and vulnerable due to a negative racialized outlook towards these people. The "ideal" was the potential for these exploited peoples to uplift themselves and gain full equality. Du Bois would attach this logic to the First World War and articulate these sentiments through the pages of *The Crisis*. The war represented an opportunity for black Americans to rise up to the "ideal" and seize both their rights and their humanity. Coming to the aid of *Le République Française* was thought to be the best wait to attain those freedoms.

As such the France came to represent an ideal vision of an egalitarian society by many different groups. For instance, in *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War*, Joe Lunn interviewed 85 Senegalese veterans of the First World War. These men rejected any idea of a racist French society, often citing that black Africans were highly regarded, with race playing no role in their French experience.[247] Which is interesting, as these men were interviewed decades after the conflict ended. As we have discussed above, France was indeed a racist society. It demonstrated a form of discrimination that I have labeled as

[246] Du Bois, "The War and the Color Line," 29.
[247] Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom*, 111.

"benevolent racism.' Regardless, the perceptions of these Senegalese veterans matter, and cannot be discounted. Nor can the perceptions of Du Bois, *The Crisis*, or the countless African American soldiers who went across the Atlantic to defend France. The war highlights the importance of tangibility and relativity. While France certainly was a "benevolently racist" society, the paternalism experienced by African American soldiers was perceived as a relative improvement when compared with "brutal" American racism. Thus, this study traced these relative experiences—or racial artifacts—through the lens of paradoxical black military service.

Part One described the race regimes of both the United States and France Respectively. Both these chapters communicated each nation's attempts to protect their own definitions of "whiteness" from the perceived threat of the black male body. The US did so by attempting to separate blacks and whites in both civil society and within the military; with both cases often leading to acts of extreme violence towards African Americans. The French interaction with their black colonial troops was a constant mediation of unconscious attitudes surrounding empire and ambivalent colonial policy. The paradoxical practice of welcoming the black African, while at the same time "othering" them permeated all interactions with black soldiers—both African and American. In both the US and France, the war acted as impetus in the creation of racial artifacts. Returning to Lake and Reynolds, both countries demonstrated that the protection of "whiteness" was "at once transnational in its inspiration and identifications but nationalist in its methods and goals."

Part Two delved into the story of African Americans deployment into France and the consequences of that experience as they return to the United States. As African American soldiers enter France, they became painfully aware that there was an attempt to impose Jim Crow style laws in France. American attempts to police the colour line via segregationist actions collided with ambivalent French approaches to race. On the one had the French welcomed black Americans—demonstrating a unique form of paternalism applied only to African Americans. While on the other, socio-political elements made attempts to partially acquiesce to American demands for racial separation. Regardless, black Americans and white French people did interact—with varying degrees of intimacy. All of these experiences, the liaisons, the dalliances, the acts of segregation; all would inform the manner in which African Americans returned to the US.

The return of black American soldiers created yet another set of unique racial artifacts. Processes already underway in the United States—such as the continuing African American Great Migration; economic issues caused by the sudden loss of the war economy; and major demographic shifts due to the war—were exacerbated by hundreds of thousands of returning

African American soldiers. These soldiers brought with them their experiences of relative equality from their time in France, as well as the media apparatus that was attached to their experience. Publications such as *The Crisis* and numerous black newspapers conveyed the black American soldier's French Experience to the public. From Du Bois' promises of global racial liberation through military service, to the imposition of Jim Crow abroad; from heroic acts and French military commendations, to brutal lynchings of soldiers. All of this galvanized an African American population in such a way that no longer were they reticent to be victims like they were during the East St. Louis pogrom of 1917. Rather, the Red Summer 1919, saw numerous and significant acts of armed self-defence in the way of mass anti-black collective violence. Yet, what wider insights can be gleaned from this period of paradoxical African American military service?

The most salient feature of this study was the idea of black manhood. Du Bois' interpretation of the global colour line and the calls to rise up and seize the opportunity of equality he believed the war represented; or the collective expressions of France and the United states to protect their respective notions of "whiteness," all of these instances revolved around the idea of how to negotiate what it meant to be a black man during the period of the Great War. Were black people children or men? When they were considered men, what type of men were they? Sexually deviant, bestial, "savage?" Ida B. Wells' commentary of lynchings in America was telling as she conveyed how white mob violence in the late nineteenth century was a product of anxieties of white loss. Such anxieties would continue into the pre-war period, during the war itself, and beyond. Indeed, the war's impact on the pursuit of black manhood even had an effect on the development of the New Negro Movement.

As demonstrated, the war did afford African Americans a modicum of masculine dignity as military service—though flawed and limited—allowed for black Americans to prove themselves worthy of equality in France. However, "benevolent" and "brutal" racial artifacts prevented the full realization of African American manhood. Yet, the relative experience of equality in France was indeed important as it served to awaken a sense of activism in both black soldiers and significant portions of the African American community. While the efforts of the black media apparatus certainly had a role in developing a new, more active expression of race-consciousness; in the wider scope, it was more of a contributory factor. The war itself, and the associated acts of tangibility—continued segregation and racial violence—that held the most impact. Thus, the conflict to end all conflicts helped usher in a new era of black consciousness, that contested notions of black manhood through the tensions demonstrated in black military service under the auspices of white supremacy.

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Appendix

Fig. 1 Lucian Bernhard. "*Zeichnet die Neunte! Es geht um Alles was wir lieben*." (Subscribe to the ninth! It concerns everything we love), 1914-18. Gallica.bnf.fr.

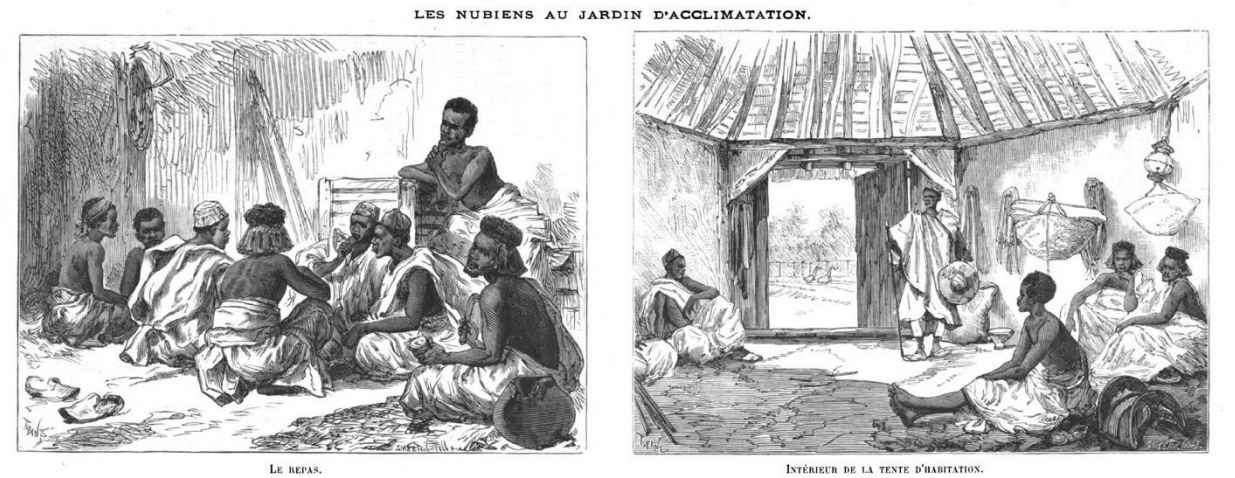

Fig. 2 "Le Repas" and *" Intérieur de la tente d'habitation."* In *L'Illustration: Journal Universel* 70, no. 1797 (August 4, 1877): 72. HathiTrust.

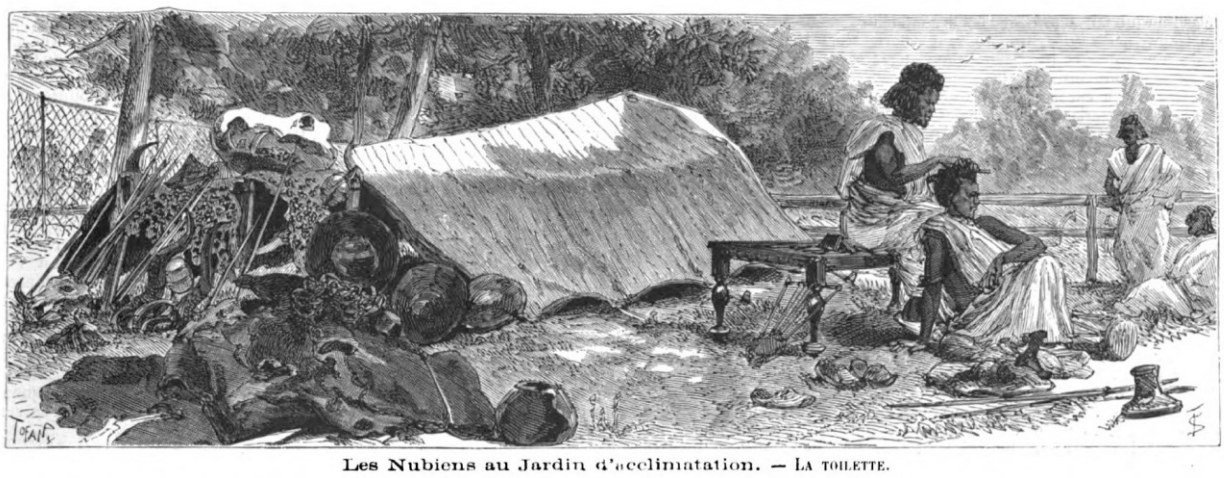

Fig. 3 "La Toilette." In *L'Illustration: Journal Universel 70,* no. 1797 (August 4, 1877): 73. HathiTrust.

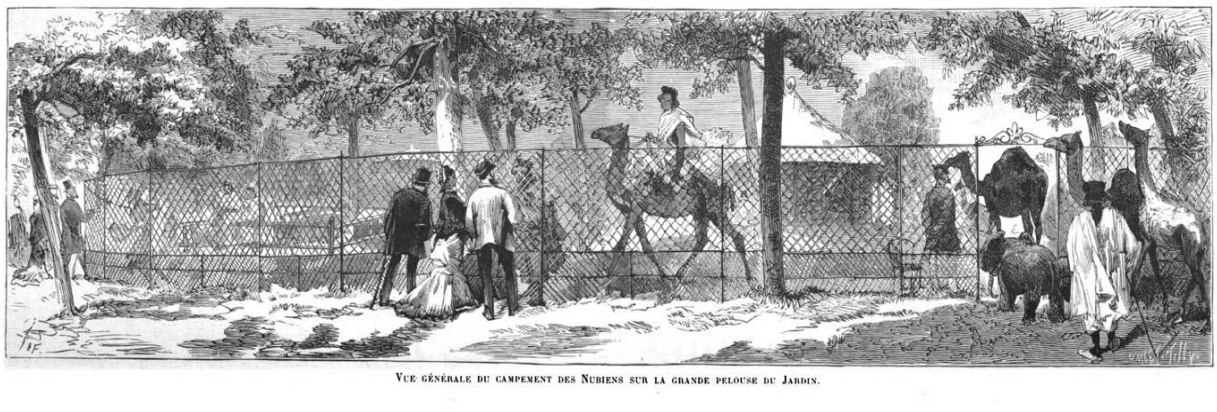

Fig. 4 "Vue Générale du campement des Nubiens sur la Grand Pelouse du Jardin." In *L'Illustration: Journal Universel* 70, no. 1797 (August 4, 1877): 72. HathiTrust.

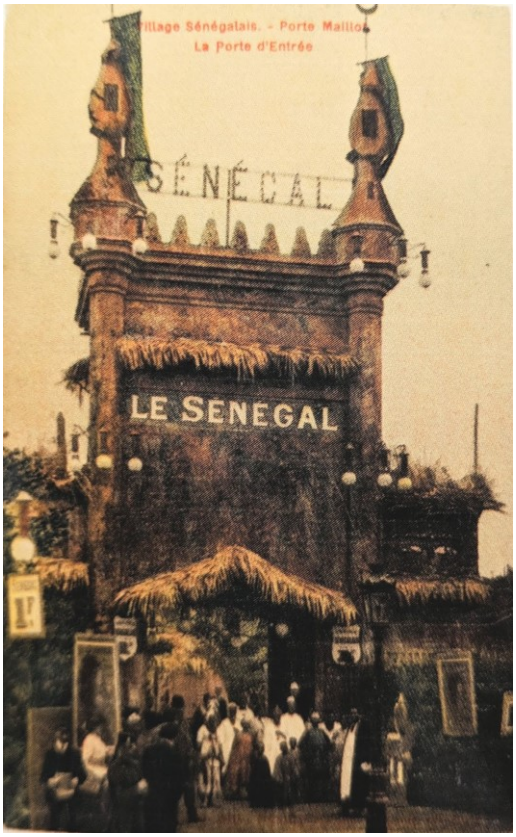

Fig. 5 "Village Sénégalais – Porte Maillot." Paris. Postcard,1905. In *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, edited by Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Gilles Boëtsch, Éric Deroo, Sanrine Lemaire, and Charles Forsdick. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.

Fig. 6 "Village Sénégalais – Une naissance au village." Amiens International Exhibition. Postcard, 1906. In Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires, edited by Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Gilles Boëtsch, Éric Deroo, Sanrine Lemaire, and Charles Forsdick. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.

Fig. 7 "Banania, «Y'a Bon»." Advertising Poster. *l'Histoire par l'Image*. www.histoire-image.org/fr/etudes/y-bon-banania

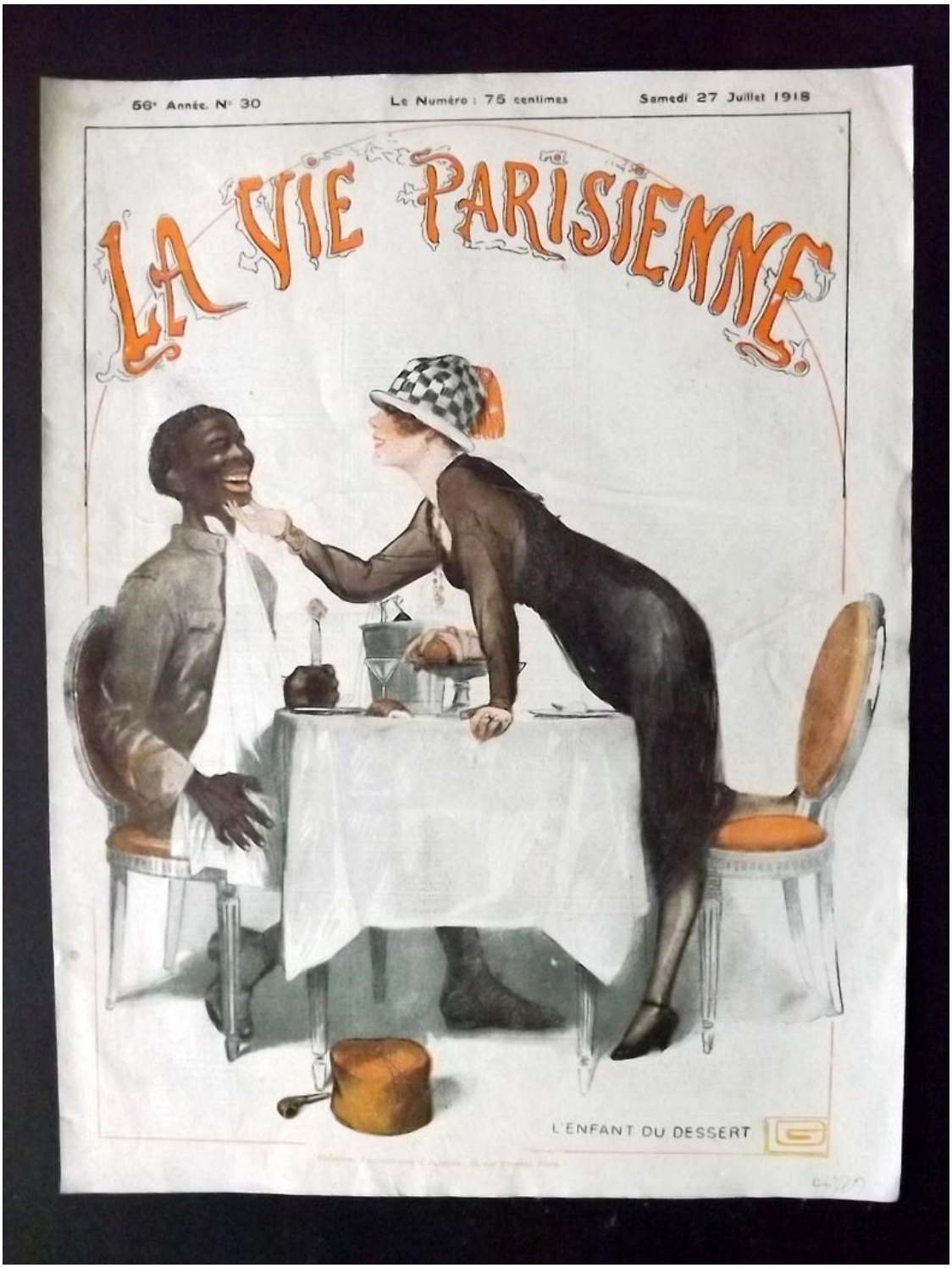

Fig. 8 "*l"Enfant du Dessert*." In *La Vie Parisienne* 56, no. 30 (July 27, 1918): cover. Gallica.bnf.fr.

Fig. 9 "Et tous les matins, en pensant à vous on prendra chacune un petit noir …" In *La Baïonnette* 2, no. 65 (September 28, 1916): 611. Gallica.bnf.fr.

Fig. 10 "La Marraine." In *La Baïonnette* 2, no. 65 (September 28, 1916): 621. Gallica.bnf.fr.

Fig. 11 "Chochotte prend son chocolat dans son lit." In *La Rire* 6, no. 29 (July 7, 1900). Gallica.bnf.fr.

Fig. 12 "Wake Up, Uncle! Or You Are Going to Fall." In *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 8, 1919. news.google.com.