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**A Mobilized Diaspora:  
African Americans, Military Service, and the Tensions of Nation in the  
First World War**

The Historical Society 2008 Conference  
SESSION IIC: African Americans in the Era of the Great War

Submitted on April 1, 2008

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"Yet in a very real sense Africa is a prime cause of this terrible overturning of civilization which we have lived to see."<sup>1</sup> Writing in 1915, W. E. B. Du Bois observed the World War with close personal interest. His ties to Europe and two of the principal warring nations ran deep; Du Bois had studied in Germany at the University of Berlin from 1892 to 1894, an experience that profoundly influenced his intellectual sensibilities. He could also trace to lineage back to France and held an abiding admiration for the nation of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*. But as the *Crisis* editor made sense of the European maelstrom, he unreservedly rested his allegiances with the oppressed darker races of the world. In his seminal May 1915 *Atlantic Monthly* essay "The African Roots of War," Du Bois set forth his thoughts on the war, challenging the prevailing Eurocentrism of its origins and casting the conflict in the broader context of Africa and its diaspora. Anticipating similar critiques made by Vladimir Lenin and others, he detailed the destructive history of Western imperialism in Africa fueled by the dual engines of capitalism and white supremacy, the complicity of the white working classes in legitimizing the oppression of African peoples, and how, in the end, the furious dash to control the continent's resources lay at the heart of the European civil war.<sup>2</sup> "The ownership of materials and men in the darker world," he wrote, "is the real prize that is setting the nations of Europe at each other's throats to-day."<sup>3</sup> The fate of modern civilization and any hope for peace, Du Bois surmised, hinged on the future of Africa and the expansion of "a world-democracy" to the continent free from foreign domination.<sup>4</sup> Make no mistake, Du Bois conveyed, this was a war about black people, and as such they had an important role to play in its eventual outcome, whatever it may be.<sup>5</sup>

Two years later, in the spring of 1917, when the United States entered the war on the side of the Allied powers, Du Bois found himself at the forefront of efforts to rally African American patriotic support and ensure the participation of black soldiers and officers in the war effort. The

war fundamentally transformed black America. The lure of wartime jobs and social freedom compelled an estimated 500,000 black southerners to migrate to northern and midwestern cities. Military service, both volunteer and compulsory, brought over 380,000 black men into the national army. African Americans, soldier and civilian, male and female, North and South, began to reconsider their relationship to the nation and the very meaning of democracy as a result of the exigencies of war and its rhetorical framing by Woodrow Wilson. Even more broadly, the First World War marked a watershed moment in the historical development of the modern African diaspora.<sup>6</sup> As war of empire, the conflict set in motion and dispersed millions of colonized peoples of African descent from throughout the world. From Port-a-Prince to Dakar, Algiers to Cape Town, military labor and combat at once tightened and challenged the bonds of imperial rule, as the armies of France, Great Britain, Germany and others dramatically exposed black people to new lands, new people, and new ideas. Across the diaspora, the war caused peoples of African descent, in the United States and beyond, to ponder the dimensions of their social, political, and racial identities, the nature of their relationships to one another, and ultimately their collective future in a modern world in the midst of epochal transformation.

In this essay I explore the ways in which diaspora was both articulated, as a discursive process, and experienced, as a historical condition, by African Americans in the specific context of the First World War, France, and the military participation of peoples of African descent.<sup>7</sup> Despite the wealth of scholarship emphasizing the impact of World War I in shaping interwar black internationalism and various articulations of diaspora, scant historical attention has been devoted to the war itself and, more specifically, the discursive function and experiential place of black soldiers in this transformative moment. I do not purport to present a comprehensive historical rendering of the experiences of all peoples of African descent in the war and its holistic

impact on the diaspora; such an endeavor, while needed, is well beyond the constraints of a singular article. More narrowly, I focus on the black press and African American soldiers to explore how they presented and experienced diaspora within the particular historical context of the First World War. The war created new openings and possibilities for African Americans to both imagine and situate themselves as part of a broader democratic world and diasporic community of African peoples. It also exposed the conflicted place of the nation in the lives of African Americans, its centrality to their racial and political identities, and ultimately its function in shaping how African Americans, and soldiers in particular, engaged with questions of diaspora.

A focus on the First World War and the experiences of black soldiers specifically offers an alternative conceptual and methodological framework for examining the meaning and construction of the modern African diaspora for African Americans, with all of its complexities. Joseph Harris posits the emergence of a "mobilized" modern African diaspora, coinciding with the early twentieth-century apex of European colonialism, comprised of "descendant Africans with a consciousness of the identity of their roots, occupational and communication skills, social and economic status, and access to decision-making bodies in their host country."<sup>8</sup> Harris conceptualizes mobilization largely in terms of collective political organization around issues of race and ethnicity. But in thinking about a different type of mobilization—the mobilization of material, ideas, and most significantly men for employment in the First World War—we gain a deeper historical understanding of the making of the modern African diaspora and the place of African Americans in it.<sup>9</sup> The war set millions of descendant Africans in motion through the demands of combat and labor, bringing them into contact with one another and fundamentally transforming the demographic, ideological, and imaginative contours of the diaspora. Through

their experiences and encounters, soldiers of African descent grappled with the ideological vicissitudes of race, nation, empire, class, gender, community and, above all, the harsh realities and existential challenges of life and death. They likewise confronted national and imperial regimes of power in ways that were at once highly personal, yet reflective of broader struggles facing oppressed peoples of African descent throughout the diaspora. Any understanding of the modern twentieth-century African diaspora and the formation of diasporic consciousness must acknowledge the crucial role that black servicemen during the First World War played in this process.

How African Americans experienced diaspora in the context of the war reflected the particular social and political dynamics surrounding military service and, most importantly, the role of France. The war and its immediate aftermath have been traditionally cast as a crucible giving rise to a diverse range of black internationalist social, political, cultural, and intellectual movements, many centered in and connected to the Parisian metropole.<sup>10</sup> As the central front of the war, France functioned as an epicenter of diasporic mobilization, serving as host to thousands of black soldiers, workers, and intellectuals from the United States, Canada, the West Indies, and the African continent.<sup>11</sup> France likewise constituted a geographic, metaphorical, and ideological space in which peoples of African descent reformulated their sense of national, racial, and diasporic belonging, and where African Americans pondered the meaning of their Americanness, their Africanness, and distinct African Americanness. Many of the 200,000 black soldiers who traveled overseas romantically gazed upon France as a model of democratic republicanism and universal equality, juxtaposing American white supremacy with French racial egalitarianism. As African American troops interacted with French men and women, and encountered North and West African soldiers, France seemed to embody everything the United States and its racist

military was not: a nation that recognized the fundamental humanity of black people. At home, the black press encouraged a similar view of France, praising its unconditional embrace of African American troops and widespread employment of colonial African soldiers on the western front.

Scholars have thoroughly exposed and debunked the myth of a color-blind France.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the power of this trope for African American soldiers and civilians alike during the First World War says much about African American investment in the potential of nationality within the specific historical parameters of the First World War, and, in the end, their engagement with diaspora. African Americans have historically looked beyond the confining and racially circumscribed parameters of the American nation-state, adopting transnational approaches to challenge white supremacy.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the nation, and nation-specific concerns of citizenship, democracy, and political rights remain central to African American identity, and thus have figured prominently in how they have understood themselves as a diasporic people. It is therefore not surprising that the nationalistic exigencies of the American war effort, with its Wilsonian focus on the expansion of global democracy, would resonate with many African Americans, especially those engaged in military service on the behalf of the United States, and elevate the centrality of the nation as an ideal in their racial, political, and emergent diasporic consciousness. It is also not surprising that another nation-state, France, would function as a crucial mediator in how African Americans imagined, articulated and experienced diaspora. Diaspora need not necessarily be cast as diametrically opposed to nation; indeed processes of diaspora and black internationalism have historically been shaped by and emerged within the social, political, and cultural vicissitudes of the nation-state.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, during the First World War, African Americans experienced diaspora not in opposition to, but *through*

the nation, a process that spoke to the contextually specific and historically contingent nature of wartime African American identity.

But the elevated place of the nation in the wartime consciousness of African Americans lent towards a deeply contradictory, politically narrow, and often racially hierarchical engagement with diaspora. Diaspora has been defined as much by difference and discontinuity amongst various peoples of African descent, than by a transcendent, essentialized racial consciousness or shared metaphorical experience.<sup>15</sup> This was particularly true during the First World War. African Americans took deep and genuine interest in other peoples of African descent, particularly those serving in the French army. Their interests, however, were informed and shaped by their historical experiences with and investment in the American nation. Their diasporic articulations and encounters often reflected the depths to which African Americans had internalized dominant representations of African peoples perpetuated by Western national and imperial regimes of power. And while the war situated African Americans firmly in the contentious history and social realities of empire, they lacked a critical awareness of its complexities to fully comprehend the multicultural and multinational nature of diaspora within this context. How African Americans responded to these encounters reflected their political parochialism, naiveté of the racialist dimensions of empire, and a lack of familiarity with the historical and cultural diversities of African peoples.

For African Americans during the World War I moment, diaspora functioned as an expression of hybridity, multivocality, at once challenging and reifying the nation, and ultimately reflecting the conflicted nature of black racial and political identity during the war.<sup>16</sup> I explore these tensions from two perspectives: the words and images of African American newspapers, and the experiences of African American soldiers in France. Black newspapers and journals

expanded the discursive parameters of diaspora by highlighting the participation of African soldiers in the French army, reflecting a growing interest in the diaspora informed by the war. Their coverage, however, simultaneously privileged the domestic, nation-centric political concerns of African Americans and their self-proclaimed cultural superiority in relation to other peoples of African descent. African American soldiers fought, labored, and socialized with Algerian, Moroccan, and West African troops in France, experiences that spoke to a shared diasporic condition within highly racialized and discriminatory militaries. Nevertheless, glaring cultural, linguistic, and political discontinuities characterized these encounters that reflected the historical and ideological ties of African American soldiers to the American nation. How African Americans grappled with and made sense of this dilemma encapsulates the dynamism of diaspora during the First World War and its unique ability to shed light on the complex historical experiences and conditions of people of African descent.

### **Diasporic Mobilization: War, Empire, and Military Service**

W. E. B. Du Bois presciently identified the imperial origins of the First World War and its connection to Africa. But what made the conflict truly imperial in nature was the employment of colonized peoples of color as soldiers and laborers on the part of the major warring nations.<sup>17</sup> Reflecting the geographically distinctive nature of European colonialism and its diverse political dynamics, black men from Canada, the Caribbean, and every region of Africa became both willing and unwilling participants in the European war which quickly assumed global dimensions. Over two million Africans served in the war, and Africa itself became a key battlefield, with France and Great Britain taking aim the German colonial possessions of



Togoland, Cameroon, South West Africa, and German East Africa.<sup>18</sup> The most extensive campaign occurred in German East Africa and drew black soldiers from throughout the continent and beyond. Although white South African and English soldiers fought in East Africa, the British army employed thousands of troops from Kenya and its other east African colonies, many of whom served in the King's African Rifles (KAR), as well as men from India and one battalion of the British West Indies Regiment. The German forces, led by General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, relied almost exclusively on African servicemen. An estimated 50,000 African servicemen, the majority carriers, lost their lives to combat and disease in the protracted struggle that concluded two weeks beyond the November 11, 1918 armistice.<sup>19</sup>

Imperial racial ideologies shaped the decisions of the major warring nations to use African soldiers on the European front. Colonial benevolence did not supersede a powerful belief in Western white supremacy and a widely held view of the conflict as a “white man’s war.” For Great Britain and Germany, this meant that soldiers of African descent had no place on the battlefield with white soldiers. Although a few men managed to sneak through the cracks, Great Britain steadfastly refused to allow soldiers they classified as “black” to fight in France.<sup>20</sup> Black soldiers of the BWIR were overwhelmingly consigned to labor duties in Italy, and although South African soldiers labored in France, the British military heavily policed their presence in order to minimize social interactions with white French men and women.<sup>21</sup> The German government, with its belief in Teutonic *kultur*, held firm that Africans had no place in war between the white races.

Germany reacted with outrage to France's decision to extensively employ African peoples as soldiers and laborers on the western front, a strategy that opened the door to a dramatic influx of peoples of African descent to European soil and exemplified the war's impact on reshaping the

diaspora. Devastating casualties at the onset of the war prompted French military officials to expand the use of their colonial soldiers beyond the African continent. While a significant number of soldiers from France's Caribbean possessions, such as Guadeloupe, fought in the war and served in metropolitan forces, the vast majority of France's colonial soldiers came from Africa.<sup>22</sup> France undertook a massive recruitment campaign throughout its African colonies and, by the end of the war, some 450,000 colonial Africans had traveled to Europe to fight on the behalf of the motherland.<sup>23</sup> France raised over 200,000 troops from its North African colonies of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia who participated in several major battles, including Verdun and the crucial battle of the Marne.<sup>24</sup> Another 46,000 came from Madagascar, although these soldiers saw limited action and served in more specialized roles.<sup>25</sup> The use of the *tirailleurs sénégalais*, a generic label applied to all colonial West African soldiers, was a subject of considerable debate both within the colonies and the metropole. Colonial military officer Charles Mangin emerged as the most vociferous proponent of employing Africans, particularly those from the French West African Federation (AOF), for European combat duties. In his influential 1910 book *La Force Noire*, Mangin, utilizing a combination of military logic and civilizationist discourse, argued for the use of Africans in the increasingly inevitable event of a European war to counter the demographic imbalance between France and Germany.<sup>26</sup> Military service, he and his supporters asserted, represented another potential step in the process of elevating Africans to a higher level of humanity, as well as an opportunity to spare precious French lives. A February 1912 decree sanctioned conscription in the colonies, but it was not until late 1915 that plans to mobilize West Africans on a mass scale proceeded. Over 140,000 conscripted West Africans fought on the Western Front during the war, frequently serving as the first wave of assault or counter-attack against German positions.<sup>27</sup>

French colonial and racial ideology fused to shape both the decision to use African subjects in the European theatre and the nature of their service in the French military. Colonial officials rationalized that as recipients of French civilization and freedom, subject Africans had a reciprocal obligation to provide service in defense of the nation. However, as Alice Conklin and Richard Fogerty have argued, republican universalism and racialism underpinned French colonial rule, and as such informed the employment of African troops.<sup>28</sup> In the context of the French civilizing mission and the exigencies of war, French military officials viewed colonial Africans as a limitless and ultimately expendable reservoir of manpower. Although French opinions of its colonial subjects varied according to region and ethnic group—some West African tribes, for example, were perceived as being more “warrior-like” than others—military officials rooted their decision to utilize African colonial subjects in a core ethnocentric belief that, intrinsically, all African peoples possessed a natural acclivity to warfare, had a higher physical tolerance for pain than Europeans, were culturally predisposed to the discipline and hierarchal nature of military life and, because of their inherent mental inferiority, would unquestionably follow orders from their white commanders. Military necessity, cultural relativism, and biological determinism thus crudely converged to construct Africans as ideal soldiers by glorifying the assumed warrior-qualities of the race.<sup>29</sup> This racist conception of African soldiers translated into their use in battle. The *tirailleurs sénégalais* in particular were primarily used as “shock troops,” and as a result suffered disproportionately higher casualty rates than white French soldiers.<sup>30</sup> French military employment of Africans troops exposed the paradoxes of French colonial ideology and the deeper racist underpinnings of the European war.

## **Articulating Diaspora: The African American Press, France, and the Meanings of Black Military Service**

With European civilization in crisis and black people dying on the front lines, the war captivated the attention of the African American press. Editors of black newspapers and journals closely observed the conflict and its broader racial implications, but did so with one eye overseas and another eye firmly fixed on the domestic struggles of African Americans. The war and the actions of its European participants created an opportunity to recast critiques of American racial discrimination and white supremacist violence in an internationalist context.<sup>31</sup> James Weldon Johnson sardonically wrote in February 1915, "It is worth while to think about the hypocrisy of this country. Here we are holding up our hands in horror at German 'atrocities,' at what is being done in Belgium and at what is being done on the high seas while the wholesale murder of American citizens on American soil by bloodthirsty mobs hardly brings forth a word of comment."<sup>32</sup> In a similar tone, W. E. B. Du Bois compared the April 1915 sinking of the *Lusitania* to "the same sort of happenings hidden in the wilderness and done against dark and helpless people by white harbingers of human culture." When "Negroes were enslaved, or the natives of Congo raped and mutilated, or the Indians of the Amazon robbed, or the natives of the South Seas murdered, or 2,732 American citizens lynched," Du Bois continued, "we civilized folks turned deaf ears."<sup>33</sup> The ongoing violence and suffering of black people in the United States took on new meaning as violence and suffering now engulfed the broader world.

More pointedly, black journalists and editors alerted their readers that however distant and seemingly inapplicable to the immediacy of their everyday lives, the war did matter for no other reason than it had the potential to fundamentally alter the fates of millions of peoples of

African descent throughout the globe. An October 1914 *New York Age* editorial asserted, "We colored Americans might well interest ourselves in speculating upon what this war will finally mean for those engaged in it who are racially and nationally in positions similar to our own." Taking the European carnage into account, the *Age* deduced that "perhaps, after all, the oppressed peoples will come out of this titanic struggle as the only real victors."<sup>34</sup> The *Baltimore Afro-American* reflected in December 1915, "There is but little doubt but greater recognition of the manhood of the darker races will be conceded by all parties after this war is over."<sup>35</sup> In speaking of the "oppressed peoples" of the "darker races," the African American press posited an abstract conception of diaspora, one in which the connections, real and imagined, between black Americans and their scattered descendants were predicated upon a vague but nevertheless shared racial oppression. These initial ruminations on the impact of the conflict on black people throughout the globe were significant, as acts of framing, in alerting African Americans to the realization that this was not simply a "white man's war," but a potentially significant moment in the larger history of the diaspora.<sup>36</sup>

France functioned as a crucial mediator in the gradual evolution of a transnational view of the war concerned with expanding the boundaries of racial democracy beyond the ideological parameters of the American nation-state. African Americans' romantic affair with France originated well before the First World War. The ideals of the French Revolution captured the imaginations of African Americans, enslaved and free, during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ranging from 19<sup>th</sup> century figures such as William Wells Brown and Frederick Douglass, to 20<sup>th</sup> century notables like Henry Ossawa Turner, Mary Church Terrell, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a number of African Americans with the means to do so found both temporary and long-term political, social, cultural, and emotional refuge in France and its capital of Paris. They

propagated an image of France as the singularly color-blind and authentically democratic nation amongst her Western counterparts, including the United States.<sup>37</sup> Thus as the United States prepared to enter the war, France, as an embodiment of the transnational potential of democracy, functioned as a source of inspiration for African Americans. As the Baltimore *Afro-American* wrote in May 1917, "The blessings of 'Liberty, equality and fraternity' which the French citizenry won in the memorable revolution of 1789 have been actually enjoyed by every Frenchman whether he is European or African. Every man in France is a Frenchman first and then afterwards white or black."<sup>38</sup>

African American newspapers and journals devoted particular attention to the participation of African soldiers in the French army in their efforts to highlight the distinctions between France and the United States on matters of race and democracy. As the glowing words of papers like the Baltimore *Afro-American* reflected, the black press chose not to critically interrogate France's imperialistic and deeply contradictory historical relationship with peoples of African descent. Instead, they interpreted the participation of African soldiers in the war as further evidence of France as a sanctuary of racial egalitarianism. Several stories on France's African servicemen appeared in black newspapers in the months preceding American entry into the war, presenting another western nation that, unlike the United States, saw black people as playing an important role as combatants in the defense of the nation." Whenever and wherever black soldiers are placed they fight with the same steadiness and intelligence as white soldiers," the *New York Age* proclaimed in September 1914, and continued, "The French is the only government in Europe that appreciates this fact and makes the most of it."<sup>39</sup> In September 1916 *The Crisis* reported on the presence of French "colored troops" "mixed with white troops from the finest regiments" engaged in fighting at Verdun.<sup>40</sup> These statements functioned to swell

African American racial pride, but more significantly challenge the democratic legitimacy of the United States in comparison to France.

Black America's most influential newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, chose pictures over words to convey the contribution of African peoples to the French war effort. Between the spring of 1916 and 1917, the *Defender* featured several photographs of African soldiers in the French army on its front pages. The power of photography as a site of imaginary reunification of peoples of African descent across temporal and geographic distance made the images appearing in the *Defender*, with its circulation reaching into the deep South, ripe with both effective and symbolic meaning.<sup>41</sup> Viewed one way, they functioned as a powerful visual education for dispersed African Americans, especially those lacking the privilege of literacy, about the participation of African peoples in the war and its diasporic reach. The various images of Algerian and West African soldiers had the potential to invoke feelings of transnational racial pride by highlighting their military achievements and concomitant manhood. One of the earliest photos appeared in April 1916, and featured a photo of a contingent of unspecified "African" soldiers traveling through Bordeaux on their way to the front. The accompanying caption read, "These Stalwart Men Are Relied upon for Their Courage and Valor."<sup>42</sup> A subsequent June 3 photo was more specific, and depicted two Algerian soldiers on horseback above the statement, "These Brave Troops Have Meant Much to the French in Their Success Around Verdun."<sup>43</sup> African American readers casting their eyes upon these photos were connected to the war through proof of African martial heroism, valor and sacrifice.



The photos in the *Defender* functioned as visual refutations of racialist and civilizationalist constructions of African peoples. Several images emphasized the essential humanity of African peoples by showing soldiers eating and engaging in moments of relaxation.<sup>44</sup> As they conveyed, these were not savages, but civilized men possessing a fundamental humanity that transcended racial difference. Moreover, the *Defender* used African soldiers within the context of the war as a watershed moment in the history of modernity to critique discourses that positioned African peoples outside the bounds of modern civilization. An extremely powerful photo appeared in the January 27, 1917 issue. Under the heading "Picking Off Germans," it showed African soldiers manning machine gun turrets and included a statement alerting readers to "Notice the latest model of machine guns these troops are using."<sup>45</sup> The editors of the *Defender* appeared cognizant of colonial propaganda asserting that African soldiers lacked the inherent mental capacity to master the use of sophisticated modern weaponry. With visible evidence to the contrary, they turned such racialist logic on its head. Photos such as this



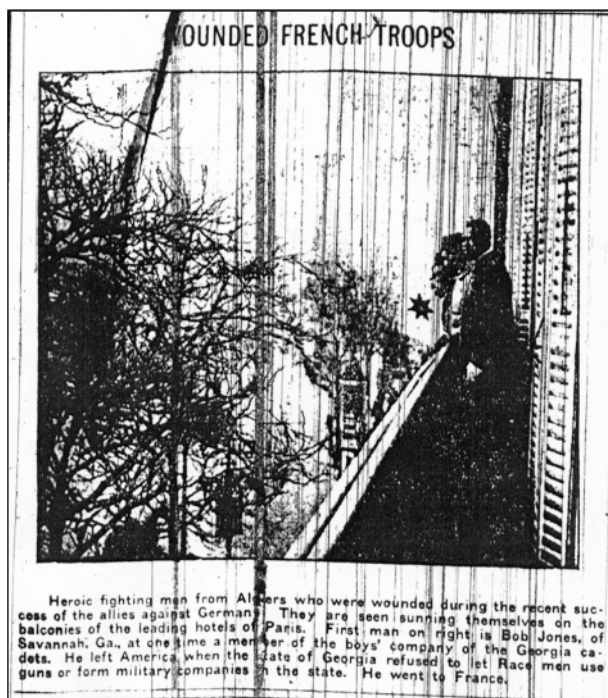
and others that ran in the pages of the *Defender* represented powerful examples of how the black press attempted to foster an affirmative consciousness of the diaspora and its relationship to the French war effort by framing images of African soldiers, as symbols of African peoples more broadly, in a way that challenged their perceived inferiority.



This fact notwithstanding, and considering the Chicago *Defender's* ideological orientation and domestic commitment to African American social and political progress, the paper's photos also served a more provincial purpose. Just as significant as how these images were framed was how they were not framed. Notably, they appeared alone, with no accompanying articles. As a result, the images stood completely removed from the colonial context in which African soldiers fought, thus further reinforcing a romantically distorted view of France's relationship with its

subject populations. The paramount goal of the *Defender* was not only to glorify the heroic exploits of African soldiers, but to critique the United States government and its racially exclusive social and military policies by positioning it in dialectical opposition to an essentialized democratic and racially egalitarian France. This reflected a broader strategy by African American papers like the *Defender* of employing France and colonial African soldiers as a discursive mechanism to both highlight the racially marginalized condition of African Americans and discredit the moral and international political legitimacy of the United States.

One photo was explicit in this regard. An image appearing on the front page of the *Defender's* July 22, 1916 issue, under the heading "Wounded French Troops," showed a group of Algerian soldiers, wounded in combat against Germany, "sunning themselves on the balconies of the leading hotels in Paris." One of the men in the photo was an African American expatriate named Bob Jones, who apparently left the United States when the state of Georgia refused to allow African Americans to enlist in its national guard. "He went to France," the caption bluntly stated.<sup>46</sup>



The caption conveyed a clear message: in the United States, black men in most sections of the country lacked the opportunity to defend their country and, due to Jim Crow segregation, the sight of several black men casually relaxing on the balcony of a prominent hotel was unimaginable. In comparison to France, as the photo and its accompanying caption made clear, the hypocrisy of the United States is glaring. But this incredibly provocative image left many significant questions unaddressed: who were these Algerian soldiers, and what were the conditions under which they fought? How did they get to Paris, and what type of reception did they receive? Who was Bob Jones? How did he get to France, where did he fight, and how did he end up in Paris?<sup>47</sup> How well did Jones know these Algerian soldiers? What type of exchanges occurred between them? The *Defender* leaves these burning questions for the imagination, thus casting explication of a moment of potentially powerful diasporic unity to the wayside in lieu of a skewed juxtaposition of France and America's respective racial attitudes. The war and the participation of African people in it provided the *Defender* with a broadened range of discursive possibilities to cast critiques of American racial inequality in a transnational and, more specifically, diasporic framework. But as discourse, diaspora functioned in this context to promote a still very much nation-centered agenda of African American democratic rights, as opposed to a broader critical interrogation of the conditions of and relationships between various peoples of African descent, African Americans included.

The nationalist priorities of the black press became even more pronounced when the United States formally entered the war in April 1917 and debates regarding the use of African American soldiers dominated racial discourse. Print culture has been central to the formulation of various nationalisms, a phenomenon reflected in African American press coverage of the war.<sup>48</sup>

While quick to expose the hypocrisy of Woodrow Wilson's claim to make the world "safe for democracy" through American participation in the war, black papers did not abandon the ideal of nationality, but instead stressed a longstanding historical tradition of black patriotism and nationalistic service. "In loyalty to the country," the *New York Age* declared on the eve of American entry into the war, "the Negro people of the United States yield to none, and this despite the strain put upon that loyalty by an administration most unfriendly to them. But they remember that administrations come and go but the Nation endures forever. So despite the insult and wrong done to them by the advocates of a so-called service to Humanity, they remain loyal to the flag."<sup>49</sup> The war became increasingly cast as a potentially transformative moment in the domestic struggles for citizenship and democratic rights, with African American soldiers functioning as catalysts of change. In the *Chicago Defender* and other papers, photos of African American soldiers increasingly replaced photos of African soldiers in the French army and elsewhere. And when the black press did mention African soldiers, it was now regularly in the context of discussions of African American military service and the domestic racial politics of the war. The *Richmond Planet*, for example, preached a gospel of unconditional African American loyalty and in a June 1917 editorial upheld the historical record of black soldiers as evidence of this purported fact. The paper invoked France's African soldiers to underscore their argument, writing, "If the French Senegalese are the terror of the enemy, the well-trained Southern Negro will make a soldier worth while. We believe it without qualification!"<sup>50</sup>

The fact that the *Richmond Planet* even mentioned France's Senegalese troops is significant and speaks to the growing war-inspired interest in Africa amongst the black press. Unpackaging this statement, however, reveals a great deal about how many black papers not only viewed African soldiers, but employed them for use within a nation-centric discourse of African

American political rights advocacy. The label "French Senegalese" empowered the imperial motherland with effective ownership of Senegalese peoples, effectively reinforcing a racialist hierarchy of West African subjugation to French colonial benevolence. Describing the Senegalese as "the terror of the enemy" likewise buttressed a civilizationist construction of the inherent warrior-like nature of West Africans. This led to clear juxtaposition between Senegalese soldiers and African Americans; whereas the Senegalese were naturally fierce fighters, African Americans, even from the South, had progressed beyond such an evolutionary state, were receptive to training, and would make equally, if not more effective soldiers than their African counterparts. As newspapers like the *Richmond Planet* invested in the service of African American soldiers, they positioned African Americans as occupying a higher rung than France's African colonial soldiers on the ladder of modern Western civilization, thus demonstrating African American fitness for full citizenship rights. Embedded within this articulation of diaspora and simultaneous wartime commitment to nationality were dominant civilizationist discourses of citizenship that African Americans both challenged and appropriated to meet their contextually specific social and political concerns.

In one particularly revealing case, the black press, in its haste to promote African American national loyalty and fitness for citizenship, served as a partner with French military officials in propagandizing the imperial civilizing mission. Well before America's official entrance into the war, France had taken active steps to cultivate and maintain fruitful relations and open lines of communication with the United States by sending several key officers of the French High Command to its embassy in Washington, DC. One of these men, Edouard Réquin, was a close confidant of French Marshals Joffre and Foch with past experience commanding Senegalese soldiers in North Africa. Former NAACP Chairman Joel Spingarn, as part of his

"constructive programme" in Negro subversion with the Military Intelligence Bureau (MIB), and Booker T. Washington's longtime secretary Emmett Scott, in his capacity as special assistant to the Secretary of War, saw Réquin as a potentially valuable resource for increasing black support for the war.<sup>51</sup> At Spingarn's behest, Réquin attended and spoke at the June 1918 Washington, DC editors' conference, a historic gathering convened in cooperation with the Committee on Public Information (CPI) and attended by forty-one African American newspaper editors and political leaders with the goal of forging a united front on black support for the war effort.<sup>52</sup> Réquin's speech lauding France's employment of African soldiers so impressed Spingarn that he asked the French officer to compose a similar statement for national distribution through the auspices of the CPI and the War Department.

As propaganda, Réquin's statement titled "Emploi des Troupes de Couleur dans L'armee Francaise" read as a glowing tribute to the success of French colonialism in rescuing Africans from their previously backwards state, providing them with the civilizing benefits of military service, and granting them the ultimate privilege of defending the motherland. Réquin explicitly stated the utilitarian purpose African troops served prior to the war, writing "they have been the best instrument of our colonial expansion." He went on to single out the service of Algerian and Moroccan troops as a prime example of the civilizing mission's effectiveness at overcoming Muslim colonial resistance, stating, "If one considers that in North Africa the Mohammedan group has been essentially refractory to all foreign intervention, the voluntary participation of colored men in the defense of French soil consecrates definitely the motivating principles of our expansion." The most glaring aspect of Réquin's article was his characterization of the *tirailleurs sénégalais*, which placed the racist beliefs held by French military officials of West African soldiers on stunning display. Completely devoid of self-conscious agency and autonomous

thought, as Réquin articulated, they exhibited a blind devotion to their white officers and disregard for their own bodily safety. Unable to master the complexities of modern warfare, such as use of the machine gun, the *tirailleurs sénégalais* were in his words "particularly apt for attack and counter-attack," a euphemism for their crude battlefield utilization as shock troops. This held little consequence because, as Réquin rationalized, these Africans were "equally devoted to France, whom they serve most loyally, and to the flag which represents France," and "so that just as we have delivered these black men from African barbarism so we have given them civilization and justice; it is their duty in turn to defend among us that justice and that civilization against Prussian barbarism." It would seem that Réquin had forgotten his article was intended for African Americans who might take umbrage to such flagrantly racist characterizations of Africans. But he in fact remained fully cognizant of his audience and made it clear that any negative depictions of African soldiers he propagated did not apply to African Americans. "But they are primitive men," Réquin wrote of France's West African soldiers, "without civilization—men who cannot be compared from this point of view with colored Americans."<sup>53</sup> In one eye-catching statement, the French officer provided African Americans with an opportunity to distance themselves from African soldiers, West Africans more broadly, and proclaim their evolutionary superiority.

A classic piece of French propaganda from Réquin's perspective to promote France's colonial *mission civilisatrice*, the article also functioned for the black press to reify a socially constructed diasporic cultural hierarchy that elevated African Americans over other peoples of African descent, specifically those from the continent itself. Réquin forwarded the article to Joel Spingarn, who saw no problems with his observations and translated the document, without revision, into English. After receiving the translated copy from Spingarn, Emmett J. Scott

similarly expressed his pleasure with the article's content, its potential to "cheer and hearten the colored people generally," and promised to have it disseminated to "some of our more important colored newspapers."<sup>54</sup>

One of these papers was the influential *New York Age*. The *Age* featured Réquin's article on the front page of its August 10, 1918 issue, under the subheading "French Officer Says Colored Soldiers of France are Received Exactly the Same as White Soldiers—Foreign Colored Troops Cannot be Compared with Colored Americans who are Products of Civilization."<sup>55</sup> These constituted the two central points of Réquin's article the *Age* wanted readers to come away with. As a framing mechanism, the subheading functioned to first position France in ideological opposition to the United States and its racially segregated military, a consistent theme throughout much of the black press in its coverage of African soldiers. Second, it reinforced a civilizationist hierarchy of African peoples by positioning African Americans as self-conscious agents of superior mental, cultural, and historical development, thus justifying their full social and political inclusion into modern Western and, more specifically, American democracy. Just as coverage of the war, France, and African soldiers could forge a broadened diasporic awareness amongst African Americans, it also functioned to illuminate significant difference in how African Americans saw themselves in relation to other peoples of African descent and ultimately the importance of the nation in African American racial and political consciousness.

### **African American Soldiers, French African Soldiers, and the Process of Diaspora**

As black people in the United States struggled with the conflicted place of the nation in their lives, the real and symbolic presence of African American soldiers occupied a central place



in the discursive and experiential practice of diaspora and its vicissitudes during the war. Of the roughly 380,000 African Americans who served in the wartime American forces, over 200,000 engaged in overseas duty in France. The 92<sup>nd</sup> Division, composed of black draftees, and the 93<sup>rd</sup> Division, composed mostly of national guardsmen who fought under the French flag, allowed over 40,000 black men to demonstrate their manhood on the battlefields of France. The vast majority of African American troops, however, served as laborers, performing the inglorious, yet essential tasks of loading and unloading transport ships, constructing and repairing trenches, and burying the dead. The racial nationalist and white supremacist realities of American democracy remained vividly present throughout the experiences of African American soldiers in France. After all, they were in the army, an institution of the nation-state, which replicated on French soil the domestic racial hierarchies and concomitant systems of dominance, control, and violence inflicting African Americans in the United States. African American officers were slandered, black labor troops systematically abused, and segregation pervaded everything from military hospitals to YMCA huts. The AEF High Command, as evidenced by an infamous August 1918 memo titled “Au Sujet Des Troupes Noires Americaines” (“Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops”), went so far as to educate French officers in command of African American troops on the core tenants of American Jim Crow and white supremacy.<sup>56</sup> “I regret to say that I have come home from France with a feeling of intense bitterness towards white men,” Lieutenant James H. N. Waring, a black officer in the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division, angrily told the Baltimore *Afro-American* following his service.<sup>57</sup> African American soldiers fought two enemies in France: Germany and trans-Atlantic American racism.

Nevertheless, service in France constituted a remarkable social experience for African American servicemen, one that transformed how many positioned themselves as global citizens.

“My mind broadened and I had a greater vision of the world,” remarked Robert Gilliam, a private in the famous 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Division.<sup>58</sup> Interactions with French men and women played a significant role this process. Countless African American troops remarked during and after the war about their relations with French men and women, whom they came to greatly admire. While temporarily stationed at Brest, France, William Dyer, a medical officer in the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division 317<sup>th</sup> Ammunition Train, observed, “We found these people to be extremely fine and what pleased us most, there was no thought of prejudice for with them there was no color line.”<sup>59</sup> France's relationship with colonized peoples of African descent obviously spoke to a much different reality, and Dyer's comments in fact say more about the virulently racist treatment of black soldiers in the American army than an inherent—and wholly mythic—French racial egalitarianism. And while it is also accurate to critique the purported French embrace of African Americans during the war as in part acts of exoticization and civilizationist idealization of a “noire évoluée,” many black soldiers nevertheless encountered, some for the first time in their lives, “white people” who treated them with respect and dignity.<sup>60</sup> Arthur Gaston of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division relished his interactions with the French, and, most important, their acceptance of him as “an equal, as a friend.” “I could feel it surge in me,” he reflected, “this new sense of confidence, of being equal.”<sup>61</sup> Their visions distorted by the sting of American racism, black soldiers may not have fully understood the complexities of French racial ideology. But the powerful experience of overseas travel and, more specifically, exposure to an alternate system of racial beliefs and social interactions still effectively broadened the international consciousness of many African American soldiers, their self-worth, manhood, and sense of democratic possibility.

While romantic descriptions of white Frenchmen and women are prevalent in the memoirs and recollections of African American soldiers, many took particular interest in the

sight of African colonial troops. Combat, labor, and social fraternization brought both African American and African colonial soldiers into close contact with each other throughout 1918. In addition to combat soldiers, an estimated 135,000 Africans, largely from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, arrived in France during the war as laborers, employed to fill the severe shortage of male workers lost to the army.<sup>62</sup> They were complimented by the more than 160,000 African American servicemen attached to the overseas American forces who performed similar duties. These soldiers were linked by both physical proximity and the racialized nature of their labor. Combat duty on the frontlines likewise presented opportunities for African American troops to interact with other soldiers of African descent. This was particularly true for the 93<sup>rd</sup> Division, whose four regiments—approximately 27,000 men—often fought side by side with the more than 100,000 African colonial troops from the AOF, Algeria and Morocco in the French 4<sup>th</sup> Army. In fact, the first assignment for the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment took place in a region dubbed the "Afrique" sector because of the extensive service and presence of French colonial troops.<sup>63</sup>

For African American servicemen, coming upon and interacting with other black men, other black soldiers, dressed in foreign garb, speaking different languages represented a remarkable experience. But for these same reasons, the initial encounters between African American and French colonial troops were regularly characterized by exoticization and cultural misunderstanding. African American medical officer William Dyer reached France on June 27, 1918 and spent much of his first month in France traveling en route to the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division's headquarters at Bourbonne-les-Bains. Along the way he stopped at the bustling Mediterranean port city of Marseille, which he described as "the most cosmopolitan city on earth," filled with "people of every nation with their most peculiar dress and customs." He was particularly struck by the sight of whom he perceived to be Algerian soldiers. "The Algerians wearing their little red

skull caps, many of whom were black as tar, were the strangest looking," he wrote. "These men all being soldiers, I cannot to this day see how with such clothing and peculiarities of dress, they could be of best service on the Western Front where small neat fitting garments seem essential."<sup>64</sup> The soldiers Dyer came into contact with were more than likely not Algerian, but West African *tirailleurs* from the AOF, an error reflective of his lack of familiarity with the nature of French colonialism, as well as the geographic, ethnic, and cultural diversity of various African peoples. Moreover, Dyer's initial impressions of these "strange" looking men spoke to an exoticization of African troops regularly engaged in by African American soldiers, reflective of the extent to which they had been Westernized to view African peoples as a cultural "other."

Language and the complexities of translation played a significant role in the cultural disjuncture, or, as Brent Edwards theorizes, *décalage*, between African American servicemen and African soldiers.<sup>65</sup> African American soldiers could not speak Arabic, Wolof, Mandé, Bamanankan, or any of a host of West African dialects.<sup>66</sup> Nor could African colonials speak English, a fact that surprised many African American soldiers who had never before encountered a black person outside of the United States. A post-war Army War College report on American-Franco relations had few observations on the relations between African American soldiers and the French, but stated, "We find merely such inconsequential items as one concerning the astonishment of U.S. Colored troops at the inability of French Colored Colonial to speak English."<sup>67</sup> While white military officials may have found this issue "inconsequential," it remained crucial in shaping the nature of interactions between African American and African troops, who quite literally spoke past each other. For example, Julius Paul, a private in the 371<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment had a frustrating first encounter with a Senegalese soldier of the French army. Karl Bardin, his white First Lieutenant, recounted how Paul's inability to speak French and the

Senegalese soldier's lack of English hindered their initial attempts to communicate with each other. The fact that Paul approached this Senegalese soldier and made the effort to speak with him is itself significant, and speaks to the potential power of blackness to forge diasporic connections between dispersed peoples of African descent. Blackness, however, had its limitations. Having never, in his words, seen "a nigger before that couldn't talk United States," Private Paul presumed the Senegalese soldier was crazy and reported him to Lieutenant Bardin. To Paul's relief, Bardin explained, "Why Paul, that is one of your real Brothers from Africa. He is just as same as you are, but he only speaks French and his own African dialect." Although Bardin, through his white gaze, may have seen Paul and the Senegalese soldier as "just as same," they were in fact quite different. Paul's comment about talking "United States" revealed the linguistic and cultural divide between the two black soldiers, and how the identities of African American soldiers remained rooted in a strong connection to the American nation.

But diaspora was indeed a process, and as such the relationships between African and African American soldiers evolved with the course of the war and the nature of their service in France. Over time, the sight of African soldiers became less of a shock, and African American soldiers developed a strong respect for their African counterparts. Horace Garvin, a private in the 801<sup>st</sup> Pioneer Infantry, recalled, "We came in contact with Algerians. They seemed to be good soldiers."<sup>68</sup> Military service functioned as an experiential bridge for African American soldiers to find common ground with African servicemen. It also facilitated a deepened respect and admiration for France's African soldiers. James Reese Europe, the famed bandleader of the 369<sup>th</sup> "Harlem Hellfighters" Infantry Regiment, wrote in July 1918 to the *New York Age*, "It is glorious to see the French regiments intermingled with black boys, and I wish to state here of all the black French troops I have seen over here, I have never seen one without some sort of

decoration and I have met thousands.”<sup>69</sup> African soldiers increasingly represented a source of diasporic racial pride for African American soldiers, many struggling against a racist American military power structure that attempted to devalue their service.

As African American soldiers developed a better grasp of the French language, and African soldiers did the same, their familiarity and interactions with each other increased. A correspondent embedded with the AEF reporting on African American soldiers observed, "Many of the men have become fluent French talkers and I have heard animated conversations between Colored men and the Senegalese who chanced to be passing."<sup>70</sup> These conversations led to the establishment of camaraderie with African soldiers in the French army, an appreciation for their shared humanity, and in some cases political exchange that paved a foundation for post-war pan-Africanism. African American and African soldiers occupied similar racially marginalized positions in their respective armies. Whether in the French army or the AEF, soldiers of African descent shared a common bond—a common diasporic condition—as victims of racial discrimination and white supremacy. This fact functioned as an important link for African American troops to develop an increasingly politicized conception of diaspora. In a letter to W. E. B. Du Bois, an unnamed soldier admitted to being taken aback when a black Frenchman, presumably another soldier, asked him if the American army intended to hang the remaining men convicted in the August 1917 Houston rebellion, where African American soldiers of the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry struck back in retaliation for weeks of racial abuse and killed seventeen white people.<sup>71</sup> The soldier wrote of the French Africans he encountered, "They know everything and what they don't know we will tell them."<sup>72</sup> War mobilization nurtured transnational circuits of social, cultural, and political exchange, allowing African Americans to experience diaspora through their interactions with French African soldiers.

While explicitly political exchanges between African and African American servicemen were pregnant with possibility, they nevertheless remained few and far between, as the realities of diasporic difference remained difficult to overcome. Despite a militaristic admiration and sense of racial affinity, African American soldiers lacked a nuanced grasp of the complex social, political, and historical conditions informing the presence of African soldiers in France. Horace Pippin, a soldier in the 369<sup>th</sup> and future reknowned artist, described the Algerian soldiers fighting alongside him and his regiment as "a good lot," and observed that "they did not care for the French mutch."<sup>73</sup> Although Pippin clearly understood some French, a considerable communication barrier still existed between himself and the Algerian soldiers he encountered. This was linguistic, and at the same time historical. Pippin's linguistic and experiential parochialism prevented him from asking a crucial question: *why* did this Algerian soldier dislike the French? Pippin could not fully appreciate the first-hand lesson he received in the contentious colonial relationship between France and Algeria, one characterized by violent colonial aggression and equally fierce resistance. Understanding such complexities would necessitate a process of linguistic, historical, and experiential immersion into the gradations of the diaspora, a process the war initiated but did not by any means complete.

African American soldiers frequently resorted to dominant, and often highly stereotypical, generalizations of African soldiers as fierce fighters. Horace Pippin may have indeed admired the Algerian soldiers he came into contact with, but his impressions focused on their ruthless fighting ability, use of crude weaponry, and lack of compassion for their German adversaries. "[T]hey were a bad lot to their foe," Pippin recalled, "for they would not gave a foe a chance. I have seen them go over the top mineys a time and they never have a prisoner but his knife would have fresh blood on it, when he came back." Pippin, like many other African

American soldiers, was fascinated with the *tirailleurs* use of the bolo knife, their purported weapon of choice in lieu of the rifle or machine gun and a highly racialized symbol of perceived African inferiority. "They would carry this knife in their belt all the time," Pippin continued, "but when they would go over the top they would put this knife in to their mouth and no rifle at all with them. I have seen them do it. But when they come back do not look for a German, for they would not have any with them. . .<sup>74</sup> A fellow veteran of the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment similarly recalled how the Moroccan troops he encountered "were game and they wouldn't take no prisoners." He went on to state how instead of allowing German soldiers to surrender, they "cut their ears off and strung 'em on a string and tied around their waist."<sup>75</sup> From one perspective, these observations reflect a sense of diasporic connection and racial pride on the part of African American soldiers who admired the valor, manhood, and abilities of African troops to strike down Germans with impunity. But more pervasively, the perceived actions of African soldiers, both North and West African, not taking prisoners and engaging in acts of mutilation provided evidence of African peoples' continued lack of civilization and validated for African American troops their assumed diasporic evolutionary superiority. While the war facilitated a deepened appreciation of various diasporic peoples through the martial heroics of military service, it was nevertheless hierarchical and informed by broader civilizationalist discourses that placed Africans and African Americans at different stages of cultural and political evolution.

The observations and reflections of African American soldiers were also deeply influenced by, and continued to reinforce, a racist perception of Africans as lacking the mental capacity to master the sophistication of advanced weaponry, thus effectively placing them outside the boundaries of a western conception of modernity. Monroe Mason and Arthur Furr, two black soldiers who served as historians of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Division's 372<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment,



described the participation of the regiment in the fall 1918 Allied Meuse-Argonne offensive. They were particularly struck by the sight of African troops, most likely from Morocco, manning huge artillery guns. Mason and Furr wrote that the African troops "took delight in explaining some of the important features" of these weapons of modern warfare to "interested and curious spectators."<sup>76</sup> It must have been a remarkable sight, witnessing African soldiers providing an education to white people on the use of complicated war machinery. Their demonstration, and the description of Mason and Furr, provided powerful evidence that African peoples possessed the requisite skill to not just be effective soldiers, but to assert their place in the modern world.

Nevertheless, Mason and Furr held firm to a hierarchal view of these Moroccan soldiers in comparison to African American troops. The two African American authors describe them as "African," making no effort to acknowledge their ethnic particularity. In describing the Moroccan 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, they wrote, "A marked impatience and fierceness prevailed among the African troops, whose valor as assaulting forces were unsurpassed by any of the Allies," a simultaneous compliment and civilizationist critique of the Moroccan soldiers.<sup>77</sup> They continued in their description of the fighting that occurred at daybreak on September 26, writing, "Never was there a more appalling sight. The furious Africans plunged onward waving their arms and huge knives with fiendish glee, charging German machine-gun nests with absolute disregard of death and injury. Although their ranks were seriously depleted by the unerring machine-gun fire of the Huns, they drove on taking one position after another, leaving nothing but the wounded and dead, and utter destruction in their wake." The participating African American soldiers, however, "advanced in a more scientific manner, using the wave formation, which made it appear that there were double the number of men."<sup>78</sup> The observations of Mason and Furr spoke to their political goals in writing a history of the 372<sup>nd</sup>, replete with glorification of the regiment's

achievements as proof of African American's contribution to the war, and thus worthiness for equal citizenship. They also reflected a pervasive view of how many African American soldiers viewed their African counterparts, an internalized sense of cultural and evolutionary superiority, and willingness to stress diasporic difference in the cause of promoting full African American inclusion into the American nation.

African American troops and their relationship to African colonial soldiers of the French army thus embodied the historical, cultural, and experiential incongruities of diaspora. Service in France provided the opportunities for black soldiers to develop broadened racial, political, and cultural identities that were internationalist in scope. Their interactions with troops from West Africa, Morocco, and Algeria further expanded their sense of globality, but within the particular context of the diasporic dimensions of the war and military service. Nevertheless, the Americanness of African American soldiers, and their susceptibility to misrepresentations of African peoples informed by white supremacist nationalist and imperialist ideologies precluded the development of a transcendent anti-racist diasporic solidarity. Diaspora, as African American troops demonstrated, was a process, one characterized by the looming presence of the nation, which informed deep cultural, linguistic, and ideological tensions between African Americans and various African peoples that would take time and experience to understand.

### **Legacies and Lessons**

As the possibilities of a racially uninhibited inclusion within the American nation dissipated in the wake of Versailles and the domestic bloodshed of 1919, the possibilities of diaspora as a viable alternative and imaginative space to express aspirations for African

American social and political freedom increased. Power to effectively combat American white supremacy, as the war painfully made clear, had to come not just from within but also outside of the nation itself. The most obvious examples of this development were the post-war pan-African Congresses, in particular those held in 1919 and 1921. Led by W. E. B. Du Bois and Blaise Diagne, the Senegalese deputy from the Four Communes to the French Parliament, the congresses represented important milestones in signaling a new determination on the part of political leaders across the diaspora to forge a common pan-African racial identity rooted in the broader collective advancement of all peoples of African descent.<sup>79</sup> While having little immediate impact on the course of European colonialism and white supremacy, the congresses nevertheless inspired a spirit of diasporic solidarity, as witnessed by the actions of René Boisneuf, the black deputy from Guadeloupe, who dramatically stood before the French General Assembly on July 25, 1919 and delivered an impassioned denunciation of the August 1918 "Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops" directive, prompting the assembly to reaffirm its commitment to the rights of man.<sup>80</sup> This political milieu informed the aesthetic nature of various forms of African American cultural production, ranging from literature to jazz, which became increasingly disseminated within and shaped by diasporic circuits of exchange and collaboration.

Socially, culturally, and politically, former soldiers experienced diaspora in ways that were especially acute. African American veterans constituted the core of a burgeoning Parisian expatriate community that regularly interacted with and learned from other peoples of African descent.<sup>81</sup> One of these expatriates, Rayford Logan, a former lieutenant in the 93<sup>rd</sup> Division who opted to remain in Europe following his thoroughly disillusioning military experience, served as translator for the 1921 Pan-African Congress and played a crucial mediating role between Du

Bois and Blaise Diagne. Two other African American veterans, Napoleon Bonaparte Marshall and William Stuart Nelson attended the Congress as well.<sup>82</sup> Eugene Bullard and Opal Cooper were two of several African American veterans who contributed to the popularization of jazz in post-war Paris, a phenomenon initiated by black regimental bands during the war. In the United States, many African American veterans translated their disillusionment into political action by joining radical diasporic organizations such as the African Blood Brotherhood and, most notably, the Universal Negro Improvement Association led by Marcus Garvey, who rhetorically and organizationally drew upon former servicemen to act as leaders of his movement. These men constituted part of a broader diasporic community of ex-soldiers of African descent who stood at the vanguard of post-war radical protest against western imperialism and race and class inequality. A number of discharged *tirailleur sénégalais*, most notably Lamine Senghor, emerged from the war as radical advocates of African independence and diasporic solidarity, while disgruntled veterans of the BWIR led a wave of working-class strikes in Trinidad and Jamaica and joined the UNIA en masse.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, the post-war international New Negro was, in many respects, the veteran of war.<sup>84</sup>

Just as the war and the experiences of black people established the groundwork for the emergence of interwar black internationalist and diasporic movements of racial commonality and affinity, it also foreshadowed the significant tensions, differences, and misunderstandings that characterized this period. Ideological divisions underlay the post-war pan-African Congresses, as Du Bois and Diagne, despite both men owing much of their wartime stature to the participation and record of black soldiers, approached their leadership positions with distinctly divergent racial and political sensibilities. Whereas Du Bois favored an unequivocal stance in support of African and Caribbean independence, Diagne and other black Francophone leaders strenuously

objected, asserting that France's colonial subjects desired not independence, but equal citizenship and greater inclusion into the French body politic. Pan-Africanism, of course, was far from a monolithic concept or movement. Both Du Bois and Diagne had vocal critics in the form of individuals such as Marcus Garvey, Cyril Briggs, Lamine Senghor, and René Maran, among others, who offered alternative and in some respects more radical programs of pan-Africanism and diasporic resistance. Even the refuge of France had its limitations for African Americans in search of social, political, and spiritual freedom. While Paris' dynamic diasporic community maintained a strong attraction for African American expatriates, they could not fully escape their Americanness and the pull of the nation, as many individuals, such as former soldier Rayford Logan, eventually returned to the United States. The hybrid nature of African American racial identity, when interconnected with the variegated and multidimensional social and political dynamics characterizing the conditions of other peoples of African descent, made diaspora as experienced by African Americans a highly volatile process, replete with fissures, incongruities, and disagreements.

But, if anything, the war and the experiences of black soldiers in France demonstrated that these tensions and differences were worth grappling over, debating, and wrestling with. The issues articulated by the African American press, and later experienced first hand by African American soldiers in France were far from abstract; they contained a concreteness that shaped a broader political dynamic within which peoples of African descent began to re-think and re-imagine their place in the world and their relationships to each other. The war and the place of black people in it fostered social and ideological conditions that proved fertile for a broadening of the internationalist and diasporic subjectivities of African Americans, both within and outside of the army. Discursively and experientially, African Americans idealistically latched onto

France as a site where racial democracy and aspirations for freedom could become a reality, and where creating bonds of diasporic unity were indeed possible. The nation and western civilizationist racial ideologies continued to loom large in the consciousness of African Americans, often contributing to cultural and political misunderstandings that impeded the formation of true diasporic solidarity. Appreciating this fact, however, only adds to our understanding of the richness and complexity of diaspora and its methodological utility in developing a nuanced approach to the history of peoples of African descent. The war and the African American experience in it laid a crucial foundation for the future development of black internationalism and diasporic mobilization, processes that would continue to evolve and mature during the post-war period and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," *The Atlantic Monthly* (May 1915), 707.

<sup>2</sup> Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. (Moscow, 1916).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 711.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 712.

<sup>5</sup> For further analysis of "The African Roots of War" see: David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919*. (New York, 1993), 503-5 (hereafter *W. E. B. Du Bois, Vol. I*).

<sup>6</sup> For a useful definition of the "modern African diaspora" see: Colin A. Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora," *Perspectives*, 36, no. 6 (September 1998): 22-25.

<sup>7</sup> I take the postulation of diaspora as both process and condition from Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley's seminal essay. Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review*, 43, No. 1 (April 2000): 11-45. Historian Kim Butler, in her important essay, likewise stresses the need to move away from employing diaspora simply as a descriptive ethnographic label, towards an emphasis on the "social processes of diasporization." Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Redefining a Discourse," *Diaspora*, 10, no. 2 (2001), 193. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza builds on these theoretical assertions by describing diaspora as "a process, a condition, a space and a discourse." Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic," *African Affairs*, 104:414 (2005), 41.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph E. Harris, "Dynamics of the Global African Diaspora," in *The African Diaspora*, Alusine Jalloh and Stephen E. Maizlish, eds. (College Station, 1996), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Kim Butler alludes to the need to more closely consider the impact of global forces, such as warfare, on the formation and developmental trajectories of various diasporas (Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Redefining a Discourse," 211).

<sup>10</sup> Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*. (Cambridge, 2003); Michel Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980*. (Urbana, 1991), 46-62; Milfred C. Fierce, *The Pan-African Idea in the United States, 1900-1919: African-American Interest in Africa and Interaction with West Africa*. (New York: 1993); Kenneth R. Janken, "African American and Francophone Black Intellectuals during the Harlem Renaissance," *The Historian*, 60, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 487-506; Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*. (Boston, 1996) and "Harlem-Sur-Seine: Building an African American Diasporic Community in Paris," *Stanford Electronic Humanities Review*, Vol. 5.2 (Spring 1997) <http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-2/>.

<sup>11</sup> Tyler Stovall, "Race and the Making of the Nation: Blacks in Modern France," in *Diasporic Africa: A Reader*, ed. Michael A. Gomez. (New York, 2006), 209.

<sup>12</sup> For key works on French racial thought regarding African Americans see: Petrine Archer-Shaw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s*. (London, 2000); Brent A. Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire: The Exotic Black Other in Jazz-age France*. (Amherst, 2002); Jody Blake, *Le Tumulte Noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris 1900-1930*. (University Park, PA, 1999); Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris*; Stovall, *Paris Noir*.

<sup>13</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, "'But a Local Phase of a World Problem': Black History's Global Vision, 1883-1950," *The Journal of American History*, 86, No. 3 (December 1999): 1045-1077.

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<sup>14</sup> On this point see: Sidney Lemelle and Robin D. G. Kelley, eds., *Imagining Home: Class, Culture and Nationalism in the African Diaspora*. (London, 1994); Minkah Makalani, "For the Liberation of Black People Everywhere: The African Blood Brotherhood, Black Radicalism, and Pan-African Liberation in the New Negro Movement, 1917-1936," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2004); Michelle Ann Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962*. (Durham, 2005); Stovall, "Race and the Making of the Nation," 201.

<sup>15</sup> The most significant theoretical work positing the centrality of difference within discourses and experiences of diaspora is Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*. Also see: Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of *Diaspora*," *Social Text*, 66, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 45-73; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford. (London, 1990); Earl Lewis, "To Turn as on a Pivot: Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas," *The American Historical Review*, 100, No. 3 (June 1995): 765-787.

<sup>16</sup> Stovall, "Race and the Making of the Nation," 203. Also see: Michelle M. Wright, *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora*. (Durham, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> John H. Morrow Jr., *The Great War: An Imperial History*. (New York, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Melvin E. Page, "Black Men in a White Man's War," in *African and the First World War*, ed., Melvin E. Page. (New York, 1987) 14.

<sup>19</sup> Key studies of the East Africa campaign include: Ross Anderson, *The Forgotten Front: The East African Campaign: 1914-1918*. (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2004); Charles Miller, *Battle for the Bundu: The First World War in East Africa*. (New York, 1974); Anne Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East Africa Campaign, 1914-1918: The Union Comes of Age*. (London, 2006). On the King's African Rifles see: Malcolm Page, *A History of the King's African Rifles and East African Forces*. (London, 1998); Timothy H. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-file: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964*. (Portsmouth, NH, 1999). On the British West Indies Regiment see: Glenford D. Howe, *Race, War and Nationalism: A Social History of West Indians in the First World War*. (Kingston, 2002); C. L. Joseph, "The British West Indies Regiment 1914-1918," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 2 (May 1971): 94-124; Richard Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War: Race, Masculinity and the Development of National Consciousness*. (Manchester, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Great Britain initially used Indian troops at the onset of the war, but growing ambivalence about their use led to their withdraw to a strictly support and labor capacity. See: Alan J. Guy and Peter B. Boyden, eds., *Soldiers of the Raj: The Indian Army, 1600-1947*. (London, 1997); David Omissi, ed., *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters, 1917-18*. (London, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> Joseph, "The British West Indies Regiment 1914-1918;" Albert Grundlinch, "The Impact of the First World War on South African Blacks," in *Africa and the First World War*, ed. Page, 56-8.

<sup>22</sup> France mobilized roughly 11,000 men from Guadeloupe for military service, 8,700 of whom actually served in combat. Eric T. Jennings, "Monuments to Frenchness? The Memory of the Great War and the Politics of Guadeloupe's Identity, 1914-1945," *French Historical Studies*, 21, no. 4 (Autumn 1998) 562.

<sup>23</sup> Anthony Clayton, *France, Soldiers and Africa*. (London, 1988); C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "France, Africa, and the First World War," *The Journal of African History*, 19, no. 1 (1978) 16;

<sup>24</sup> John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation*. (Bloomington, 1992), 111; 14. Moshe Gershovich, *French Military Rule in Morocco: Colonialism and its Consequences*. (London, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Richard Standish Fogerty, "Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918. (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002), 143, 148-9.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Mangin, *La Force Noire*. (Paris, 1910).



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- <sup>27</sup> Marc Michel, *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre: L'appel à l'Afrique (1914-1918)*. (Paris, 2003).
- <sup>28</sup> Fogerty, "Race and War in France;" Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930*. (Stanford, 1997), 144; "Colonialism and Human Rights, A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914," *The American Historical Review*, 103, No. 2. (April 1998), 423.
- <sup>29</sup> Fogerty, "Race and War in France," 158-188; Joe Lunn, "'Les Races Guerrieres': Racial Preconceptions in the French Military about West African Soldiers during the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34, No. 4. (October 1999) 519-25; Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War*. (Portsmouth, NH, 1999).
- <sup>30</sup> For discussions regarding the use of West African soldiers and debates concerning casualty rates see: Charles Balesi, *From Adversaries to Comrades-In-Arms: West Africa and the French Military, 1885-1918*. (Waltham, MA, 1979); Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The 'Tirailleurs Sénégalais' in French West Africa, 1857-1960*. (Portsmouth, NH, 1991); Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom*; Michel, *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre*. Senegalese soldiers from the Four Communes of Dakar, Goree, St. Louis, and Rufisque, because of their albeit ambiguous status as French citizens, were not conscripted, served in the French metropolitan forces, and were therefore not subject to the high casualty rates of the *tirailleurs*. See: G. Wesley Johnson, Jr., *The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal: The Struggle for Power in the Four Communes, 1900-1920*. (Stanford, 1972).
- <sup>31</sup> William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers & America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920*. (Chapel Hill, 2001).
- <sup>32</sup> "Well Worth Thinking About," *New York Age*, February 10, 1915.
- <sup>33</sup> "Lusitania," *The Crisis*, June 1915.
- <sup>34</sup> "The After Results of the Great War," *New York Age*, October 15, 1914.
- <sup>35</sup> "Editorial," *Baltimore Afro-American*, December 25, 1915.
- <sup>36</sup> Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*,
- <sup>37</sup> Michel Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980*. (Urbana, 1991).
- <sup>38</sup> "In America and In France," *Baltimore Afro-America*, May 5, 1917.
- <sup>39</sup> "African Troops in the War," *New York Age*, September 3, 1914.
- <sup>40</sup> "Foreign" *The Crisis*, September 1916.
- <sup>41</sup> Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 224.
- <sup>42</sup> "French Reinforcements," *Chicago Defender*, April 22 1916.
- <sup>43</sup> "French Goumiers," *Chicago Defender*, June 3, 1916.
- <sup>44</sup> "French African Troops," *Chicago Defender*, October 21, 1916; "Thanksgiving Dinner in the Trenches," *Chicago Defender*, December 2, 1916; "French Soldiers Cooking Mid-day Meal," *Chicago Defender*, March 17, 1917.
- <sup>45</sup> "Picking Off Germans," *Chicago Defender*, January 27, 1917.
- <sup>46</sup> "Wounded French Troops," *Chicago Defender*, July 22, 1916.

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- <sup>47</sup> Jones was most likely one of less than ten African Americans who joined the French Foreign Legion. According to legionnaire Eugene Bullard's memoirs, six African Americans served in the Foreign Legion during the war. P. J. Carisella and James W. Ryan, *The Black Swallow of Death: The Incredible Story of Eugene Bullard, the World's First Black Combat Aviator*. (Boston, 1972), 113. James Wellard, *The French Foreign Legion*. (London, 1974), 81. For a detailed history of the French Foreign Legion see: Douglas Porch, *The French Foreign Legion: A Complete History of the Legendary Fighting Force*. (New York, 1991).
- <sup>48</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. (London, 1991).
- <sup>49</sup> "Loyalty," *New York Age*, March 29, 1917.
- <sup>50</sup> *Richmond Planet*, June 9, 1917.
- <sup>51</sup> For more on Joel Spingarn and his activities within the MIB see: Mark Ellis, "Joel Spingarn's 'Constructive Programme' and the Wartime Antilynching Bill of 1918," *Journal of Policy History*, 4 (1992): 134-62; For more on Emmett Scott's work in the War Department see: Emmett J. Scott, *Scott's Official History of the American Negro in the World War*. (New York, 1919).
- <sup>52</sup> Emmett J. Scott to George Creel, June 3, 1918, Box 3, folder 6, General Correspondence of Carl Byoir, Records of the Committee on Public Information, RG 63, United States National Archives (hereafter NA); Joel E. Spingarn to Churchill, June 22, 1918, 10218-154, MID, RG 165, NA; "Help Us To Help," *The Crisis*, August 1918; Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy*, 122-8.
- <sup>53</sup> Réquin, "Emploi des Troupes de Couleur dans L'armee Francaise," 10218-195, MID, NA.
- <sup>54</sup> Joel Spingarn to Colonel Réquin, July 30, 1918, Emmett J. Scott to Joel Spingarn, July 31, 1918, 10218-195, MID, NA.
- <sup>55</sup> "Tells of the Employment of Negro Troops By French," *New York Age*, August 10, 1918.
- <sup>56</sup> L. Linard, "Au Sujet Des Troupes Noires Americaines," Août 7, 1918, 17N 76, Service Historique de l'Armee de Terre, Château de Vincennes, Paris, France (hereafter SHAT). The memo was later translated as "Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops," and reprinted in the May 1919 issue of *The Crisis*. Arthur Barbeau and Florette Henri most thoroughly detail the pervasive discrimination African American soldiers experienced in the United States army during the First World War. Arthur Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I*. (Philadelphia, 1974, reprint New York, 1996).
- <sup>57</sup> Lieuts. Tell of Raw Deals From Superiors," *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 14, 1919.
- <sup>58</sup> Robert Gilliam, Virginia War History Commission Questionnaire, (<http://www.lva.lib.va.us>), The Library of Virginia.
- <sup>59</sup> Memoir of William H. Dyer, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library (hereafter SC/NYPL).
- <sup>60</sup> Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 20-22.
- <sup>61</sup> A. G. Gaston, *Green Power: The Successful War of A. G. Gaston*. (Birmingham, 1968), 30, 39-42.
- <sup>62</sup> Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, "France, Africa, and the First World War," 16. An estimated 119,000 Algerian laborers, both requisitions and volunteers, arrived in France during the war. (Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 111).
- <sup>63</sup> American Battle Monuments Commission, *93d Division: Summary of Operations in the World War*. (Washington, DC, 1944) 5; Richard Slotkin, *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality*. (New York, 2005) 138.

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<sup>64</sup> Memoir of William H. Dyer, SC/NYPL.

<sup>65</sup> Brent Edwards posits the French word *décalage*, strictly translated as “gap” “interval” or “shift,” as occupying a central place in the process of diaspora. He defines *décalage* in the context of diaspora as “the kernel of precisely that which cannot be transferred or exchanged, the received biases that refuse to pass over when one crosses the water.” Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora” 65.

<sup>66</sup> Bamanankan functioned as a lingua franca of the *tirailleur* corps. Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century*. (Durham, 2006), 163.

<sup>67</sup> “A Study of Anglo-American and Franco-American Relations During World War I,” July 1942, Army War College, Historical Section, Miscellaneous Records Relating to World War I Studies, 1942-1943, box 1, RG 165, NA.

<sup>68</sup> Horace E. Garvin, World War I Survey, United States Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

<sup>69</sup> “Europe Writes From Europe,” *New York Age*, July 28, 1918.

<sup>70</sup> “Learning French,” *New York Age*, June 8, 1918.

<sup>71</sup> After the first of three court martial proceedings, the army hung thirteen convicted soldiers without due process. For more on the Houston rebellion see: Robert V. Haynes, *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917*. (Baton Rouge, 1976).

<sup>72</sup> Unnamed soldier to W. E. B. Du Bois, January 10, 1918, Box 55, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Fisk University.

<sup>73</sup> Horace Pippin war notebooks, ca. 1920, Smithsonian Archives of American Art, Washington, DC (hereafter SAAA).

<sup>74</sup> Horace Pippin war notebooks, ca. 1920, SAAA.

<sup>75</sup> Albert Veyrene, in, *Men of Bronze*, Director, William Miles (1977).

<sup>76</sup> Monroe Mason and Arthur Furr, *The American Negro Soldier With the Red Hand*. (Boston, 1920), 112-3.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>79</sup> During the war, Diagne rose to prominence as a vocal advocate of West African military service as an avenue towards French citizenship and gained favor amongst French government officials, including Prime Minister George Clemenceau, by leading a recruitment drive in 1918 that brought an additional 63,000 men into the *tirailleur* army. While principally concerned with the political future of his fellow Senegalese *originaires*, he also took deep interest in the racial status of African Americans and, in particular, the discrimination they encountered during the war. Diagne received permission from Clemenceau to hold the Congress, which took opened on February 19, 1919.

<sup>80</sup> *Annales de la Chambre Des Députés, Débats Parlementaires, 11me Législature, Session Ordinaire de 1919, De 1er Juillet au 25 Juillet 1919, Vol. 115, Service des Archives de le Assemblée Nationale, Palais Bourbon, Paris, France.*

<sup>81</sup> Stovall, “Harlem-Sur-Seine.”

<sup>82</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte Marshall, a veteran and decorated officer of the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment attended the London session, and William Stuart Nelson, a former officer and Howard University graduate who at the time was a student at the Sarbonne, attended the Paris session. While in Paris, Nelson published a short history of African Americans,

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*La Race Noire dans la Democratie Americaine*. (Paris, 1922). Dunnigan, *The Fascinating Story of Black Kentuckians*, 213-4; Janken,

<sup>83</sup> For more on Lamine Senghor and interwar black radical politics in France see: Philippe Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres en France, 1919-1939*. (Paris, 1985).

<sup>84</sup> For discussion of the participatory and symbolic presence of veterans of African descent in the New Negro movement see: Dewitte, *Les Mouvements Nègres en France, 1919-1939*; W. F. Elkins, "A Source of Black Nationalism in the Caribbean: The Revolt of the British West Indies Regiment at Taranto, Italy," *Science & Society* 34 (Spring 1970): 99-103; Howe, *Race, War, and Nationalism*; Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America*. (London: Verso, 1998); Tony Martin, "Revolutionary Upheaval in Trinidad, 1919: Views from British and American Sources," *The Journal of Negro History* 58, No. 3 (July 1973): 313-326; Steven A. Reich, "Soldiers of Democracy: Black Texans and the Fight for Citizenship, 1917-1921," *Journal of American History* 82: 4 (March 1996): 1478-1504; Kelvin Singh, *Race and Class Struggles in a Colonial State: Trinidad 1917-1945*. (Calgary, 1994); Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War*; Chad L. Williams, "Vanguards of the New Negro: African American Veterans and Post-World War I Racial Militancy," *Journal of African American History*, 92, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 347-370.