

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN
TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

SERIES EDITORS

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COLD WAR CIVIL RIGHTS

RACE AND THE IMAGE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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INTRODUCTION

All races and religions, that's America to me.

LEWIS ALLAN AND EARL ROBINSON,

"THE HOUSE I LIVE IN" (1942)¹

Jimmy Wilson's name has not been remembered in the annals of Cold War history, but in 1958, this African American handyman was at the center of international attention. After he was sentenced to death in Alabama for stealing less than two dollars in change, Wilson's case was thought to epitomize the harsh consequences of American racism. It brought to the surface international anxiety about the state of American race relations. Because the United States was the presumptive leader of the free world, racism in the nation was a matter of international concern. How could American democracy be a beacon during the Cold War, and a model for those struggling against Soviet oppression, if the United States itself practiced brutal discrimination against minorities within its own borders?

Jimmy Wilson's unexpected entry into this international dilemma began on July 27, 1957. The facts of the unhappy events setting off his travails are unclear. Wilson had worked for Estelle Barker, an elderly white woman, in Marion, Alabama. He later told a Toronto reporter that he had simply wanted to borrow money from her against his future earnings, as he had in the past. As Wilson told the

story, Barker let him into her home one evening, they had an argument, she threw some money on her bed and he took it and left. The coins would not be enough to cover the cost of his cab home. Barker told the police that his motives were more sinister. After taking the money she had dumped on her bed, she said he forced her onto the bed and unsuccessfully attempted to rape her.²

Wilson was prosecuted only for robbery, for the theft of \$1.95. Over the objections of Wilson's attorney, Barker testified at trial about the alleged sexual assault. Wilson was quickly convicted by an all-white jury. Robbery carried a maximum penalty of death, and the presiding judge sentenced Wilson to die in the electric chair. When the Alabama Supreme Court upheld Wilson's sentence, news of the case spread across the nation. Because other nations followed race in the United States with great interest, the Wilson case was soon international news.³

Headlines around the world decried this death sentence for the theft of less than two dollars. The *Voice of Ethiopia* thought "it is inconceivable that in this enlightened age, in a country that prides itself on its code of justice, that, for the paltry sum of \$1.95, a man should forfeit his life." An editorial in the Ghanaian *Ashanti Pioneer* urged that the underlying law be repealed. According to the paper, it was "the High, inescapable duty of every right thinking human being who believes in democracy as understood and practised on this side of the Iron Curtain to venture to bring it home to the people of Alabama." The Jimmy Wilson story was widely publicized in West Africa, prompting American businessmen to call the U.S. embassy in Monrovia to express their concern that Wilson's execution would undermine "American effort to maintain sympathetic understanding [of our] principles and government" in that part of the world.⁴

Petitions and letters of protest poured in. Hulda Omreit of Bodo, Norway, describing herself as "a simple Norwegian housewife," wrote a letter to the U.S. government. She wished "to express her sympathy for the Negro, Jimmy Wilson, and plead for clemency for him. It makes no difference whether he is black or white; we are all brothers under the skin." Six members of the Israeli Parliament sent a letter of protest. The Trades Union Congress of Ghana urged

American authorities "to save not only the life of Wilson but also the good name of the United States of America from ridicule and contempt." The Congress thought Wilson's sentence "constitutes such a savage blow against the Negro Race that it finds no parallel in the Criminal Code of any modern State." The Jones Town Youth Club of Jamaica was just one of the groups that held a protest in front of the U.S. consulate in Kingston. In one extreme reaction, the U.S. embassy in The Hague received calls threatening that the U.S. ambassador "would not survive" if Wilson were executed. After a story about the case appeared in *Time* magazine, someone in Perth, Australia, hung a black figure in effigy from the flagpole of the U.S. consulate. Above it was a sign reading "Guilty of theft of fourteen shillings."⁵

John Morsell, a spokesman for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), thought that it would be "a sad blot on the nation" if Wilson were executed. The NAACP was worried about the international repercussions. According to Morsell, "We think the communists will take this and go to town with it." Sure enough, the communist newspaper in Rome, *L'Unita*, called Wilson's death sentence "a new unprecedented crime by American segregationists," while front-page stories in Prague appeared under headlines proclaiming "This is America." Even those friendly to the United States were outraged, however. A group of Canadian judges was disturbed about the sentence and passed a resolution conveying its "deep concern" to Alabama Governor James Folsom. The judges warned that "[i]f Alabama electrocutes Jimmy Wilson it will shock the conscience of the world." From St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Canon John Collins urged every Christian in Britain to protest the execution. The secretary of the British Labour Party thought it was unfortunate that "those who wish to criticize western liberty and democracy" had been given "such suitable ammunition for their propaganda."⁶

Before long, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was involved in the case. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had urged Dulles to intervene, calling the Wilson case "a matter of prime concern to the foreign relations of the United States." CORE warned that "if this execution is carried out, certainly the enemies of the

United States will give it world-wide publicity and thus convey a distorted picture of relations between the races in our country." A flood of despatches about the case from U.S. embassies around the world would make Dulles's participation inevitable.⁷

Secretary Dulles sent a telegram to Governor Folsom, informing him of the great international interest in the Jimmy Wilson case. Folsom did not need to be told that the world had taken an interest in Jimmy Wilson. He had received an average of a thousand letters a day about the case, many from abroad. The governor had "never seen anything like" it and was "utterly amazed" by the outpouring of international attention. He called a press conference to announce that he was "snowed under" with mail from Toronto demanding clemency" for Wilson. Folsom told Dulles that he stood ready to "aid in interpreting the facts of the case to the peoples of the world." After the Alabama Supreme Court upheld Wilson's conviction and sentence, Governor Folsom acted with unusual haste to grant Wilson clemency. The reason he acted so quickly was to end what he called the "international hullabaloo."⁸

Jimmy Wilson's case is one example of the international impact of American race discrimination during the Cold War. Domestic civil rights crises would quickly become international crises. As presidents and secretaries of state from 1946 to the mid-1960s worried about the impact of race discrimination on U.S. prestige abroad, civil rights reform came to be seen as crucial to U.S. foreign relations.

During the Cold War years, when international perceptions of American democracy were thought to affect the nation's ability to maintain its leadership role, and particularly to ensure that democracy would be appealing to newly independent nations in Asia and Africa, the diplomatic impact of race in America was especially stark. The underlying question of whether the nation lived up to its own ideals had, of course, been raised before, and activists in earlier years had looked overseas for a sympathetic audience for their critique of American racism. Frederick Douglass sought support for the abolitionist movement in Great Britain, arguing that slavery was a crime against "the human family," and so "it belongs to the whole human

family to seek its suppression." In 1893, Ida B. Wells traveled to England to generate support for the campaign against lynching. "The pulpit and the press of our own country remains silent on these continued outrages," she explained. She hoped that support from Great Britain would in turn "arouse the public sentiment of Americans."⁹

During World War I, NAACP President Morefield Story argued that since African Americans were risking their lives to make the world safe for democracy, the nation must "make America safe for Americans." W. E. B. DuBois took these ideas overseas when world leaders convened for the Paris Peace Conference. He hoped that international cooperation in a new League of Nations would provide a forum for the vindication of racial problems at home. "[W]hat we cannot accomplish before the choked conscience of America, we have an infinitely better chance to accomplish before the organized Public Opinion of the World."¹⁰

While World War I influenced civil rights activists' critique of American racism, it did not lead to extensive social change. The moment for broader change came after World War II, a war against a racist regime carried on by a nation with segregated military forces. During the war years the idea that a conflict inhered in American ideology and practice first gained wide currency.¹¹

World War II marked a transition point in American foreign relations, American politics, and American culture. At home, the meaning ascribed to the war would help to shape what would follow. At least on an ideological level, the notion that the nation as a whole had a stake in racial equality was widespread. As Wendell L. Willkie put it, "Our very proclamations of what we are fighting for have rendered our own inequities self-evident. When we talk of freedom and opportunity for all nations the mocking paradoxes in our own society become so clear they can no longer be ignored."¹²

The war years became an occasion for a serious examination of what was called the "Negro problem" in America. The most detailed treatment of this issue came from Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal and his team of researchers. In 1944, Myrdal published *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. According to Myrdal,

[I]n this War, the principle of democracy had to be applied more explicitly to race. . . . Fascism and racism are based on a racial superiority dogma. . . and they came to power by means of racial persecution and oppression. In fighting fascism and racism, America had to stand before the whole world in favor of racial tolerance and cooperation and of racial equality.¹³

The contradictions between racism and the ideology of democracy were, for Myrdal, a quintessentially *American* dilemma. Myrdal thought that all Americans shared an “American creed,” a belief in “ideals of the essential dignity of the individual human being, of the fundamental equality of all men, and of certain inalienable rights to freedom, justice and a fair opportunity.” Racism conflicted with this creed. The conflict between racist thoughts and egalitarian beliefs created tension and anxiety, leading Myrdal to emphasize that this American dilemma inured “*in the heart of the American*.”¹⁴

The American dilemma was a moral dilemma, and yet its implications stretched far beyond guilty consciences. According to Myrdal, there was a strategic reason for social change. During the war years, the American dilemma had “acquired tremendous international implications.” The “color angle to this War,” meant that “[t]he situation is actually such that any and all concessions to Negro rights in this phase of the history of the world will repay the nation many times, while any and all injustices inflicted upon them will be extremely costly.” American might would not be determined by military strength alone. “America, for its international prestige, power, and future security, needs to demonstrate to the world that American Negroes can be satisfactorily integrated into its democracy.”¹⁵

Myrdal’s concerns about the impact of American racism on the war effort were played out in Axis propaganda. Pearl Buck reported that “Japan. . . is declaring in the Philippines, in China, in India, Malaya, and even Russia that there is no basis for hope that colored peoples can expect any justice” from the U.S. government. To prove their point, the Japanese pointed to racism in the United States. According to Buck,

Every lynching, every race riot gives joy to Japan. The discriminations of the American army and navy and the air

forces against colored soldiers and sailors, the exclusion of colored labor in our defense industries and trade unions, all our social discriminations, are of the greatest aid today to our enemy in Asia, Japan. “Look at America,” Japan is saying to millions of listening ears. “Will white Americans give you equality?”¹⁶

In spite of these concerns, African Americans serving in the military in World War II were segregated and most often relegated to service units, not combat. A. Philip Randolph and many others mobilized against such wartime race discrimination. Civil rights groups capitalized on the nation’s new focus on equality, and World War II spurred civil rights activism. The NAACP developed, for the first time, a mass membership base. As Brenda Gayle Plummer has written, during the war “[t]he NAACP internationaliz[ed] the race issue.” A 1943 NAACP report suggested that race had become “a global instead of a national or sectional issue.” The war had broadened people’s thinking “with the realization that the United States cannot win this war unless there is a drastic readjustment of racial attitudes.”¹⁷

The thinking that World War II was a war against racial and religious intolerance, and that the United States stood to gain from promoting equality at home was so widespread that Frank Sinatra even sang about it. The lesson of his short film *The House I Live In* was that racial and religious intolerance were “Nazi” characteristics. To be “American” was to practice equality, at least toward one’s wartime allies. This Oscar-winning film ended with Sinatra singing, “all races and religions, that’s America to me.”¹⁸

As World War II drew to a close, the nation faced an uncertain future. Victory over fascism, a returned focus on the home front, the specter of a nuclear age—these joys and anxieties captured the nation. Yet more would be at stake in the postwar years. The purpose of the war would leave its victors with new obligations. And if the war was, at least in part, a battle against racism, then racial segregation and disenfranchisement seemed to belie the great sacrifices the war had wrought.¹⁹

This idea was captured by a military chaplain with U.S. Marine Corps troops at the Battle of Iwo Jima during the final months of the war. When the battle was over, Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn stood over newly dug graves on the island and delivered a eulogy. "Here lie men who loved America," he said.

Here lie officers and men, Negroes and whites, rich and poor, together. Here no man prefers another because of his faith, or despises him because of his color. . . . Among these men there is no discrimination, no prejudice, no hatred. Theirs is the highest and purest democracy.

The equality these soldiers had found in death was, for Gittelsohn, at the heart of the war's meaning.

Whoever of us lifts his hand in hate against a brother, or thinks himself superior to those who happen to be in the minority, makes of this ceremony, and of the bloody sacrifice it commemorates, an empty, hollow mockery. Thus, then, do we, the living, now dedicate ourselves, to the right of Protestants, Catholics and Jews, of white men and Negroes alike, to enjoy the democracy for which all of them have paid the price.²⁰

There was an irony in the equality Gittelsohn found among the fallen soldiers, a point not mentioned in the chaplain's eulogy. The military forces that fought on Iwo Jima were racially segregated. Yet the limitations on the military's practice of equality did not dampen Gittelsohn's passionate argument that out of the carnage of the war came a commitment and an obligation to give democracy meaning across the divisions of race, religion and class.

Too much blood has gone into this soil for us to let it lie barren. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We here solemnly swear: it shall not be in vain. Out of this will come, we promise, the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere.²¹

The commitment to democracy had been sealed in blood. And this "democracy" was more than a political system. It was an ideol-

ogy, a set of beliefs about the nature and moral power of the nation. What remained to be determined was the way this ideological commitment to egalitarian democracy would be put into practice in the years after the war.

Following World War II, reconversion came to domestic life as well as the workplace. A renewed embrace of domesticity fueled a baby boom and a focus on consumption. Would the desire to return to normalcy mean a renewed embrace of racial norms of segregation, disenfranchisement, and subordination?²² Paradoxically, international pressures would soon simultaneously constrain and enhance civil rights reform.

The inward turn of postwar American culture would have its limits, as the nation's political leaders soon warned that a new international threat loomed on the horizon. By 1947, the Cold War came to dominate the American political scene. As the Truman administration cast Cold War international politics in apocalyptic terms, "McCarthyism" took hold in domestic politics. If communism was such a serious threat world-wide, the existence of communists within the United States seemed particularly frightening. As the nation closed ranks, critics of American society often found themselves labeled as "subversive." Civil rights groups had to walk a fine line, making it clear that their reform efforts were meant to fill out the contours of American democracy, and not to challenge or undermine it. Organizations outside a narrowing sphere of civil rights politics found it difficult to survive the Cold War years.²³ Under the strictures of Cold War politics, a broad, international critique of racial oppression was out of place. As Penny Von Eschen has written, the narrowed scope of acceptable protest during the early years of the Cold War would not accommodate criticism of colonialism. Western European colonial powers, after all, were America's Cold War allies. For that reason, outspoken critics of colonialism found themselves increasingly under siege.²⁴

Civil rights activists who sought to use international pressure to encourage reform in the United States also found themselves under increasing scrutiny. The strategic value of civil rights reform had given civil rights activists an important opportunity. Drawing upon

international interest in race in America, following the war civil rights groups would turn to the United Nations. This new international forum, dedicated to human rights, might pressure the U.S. government to protect the rights of African Americans. However, to criticize the nation before an international audience and to air the nation's dirty laundry overseas was to reinforce the negative impact of American racism on the nation's standing as a world leader. It was seen, therefore, as a great breach of loyalty. As a result, just as the House Committee on Un-American Activities and the government's loyalty security program silenced progressive voices within the United States, through passport restrictions and international negotiations the long arm of U.S. government red-baiting silenced critics of U.S. racism overseas.²⁵

In spite of the repression of the Cold War era, civil rights reform was *in part* a product of the Cold War. In the years following World War II, racial discrimination in the United States received increasing attention from other countries. Newspapers throughout the world carried stories about discrimination against nonwhite visiting foreign dignitaries, as well as against American blacks. At a time when the United States hoped to reshape the postwar world in its own image, the international attention given to racial segregation was troublesome and embarrassing. The focus of American foreign policy was to promote democracy and to "contain" communism, but the international focus on U.S. racial problems meant that the image of American democracy was tarnished. The apparent contradictions between American political ideology and American practice led to particular foreign relations problems with countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Soviet Union capitalized on this weakness, using the race issue prominently in anti-American propaganda. U.S. government officials realized that their ability to promote democracy among peoples of color around the world was seriously hampered by continuing racial injustice at home. In this context, efforts to promote civil rights within the United States were consistent with and important to the more central U.S. mission of fighting world communism. The need to address international criticism gave the federal government an incentive to promote social change at home.

Yet the Cold War would frame and thereby limit the nation's civil rights commitment. The primacy of anticommunism in postwar American politics and culture left a very narrow space for criticism of the status quo. By silencing certain voices and by promoting a particular vision of racial justice, the Cold War led to a narrowing of acceptable civil rights discourse. The narrow boundaries of Cold War-era civil rights politics kept discussions of broad-based social change, or a linking of race and class, off the agenda. In addition, to the extent that the nation's commitment to social justice was motivated by a need to respond to foreign critics, civil rights reforms that made the nation look good might be sufficient. The narrow terms of Cold War civil rights discourse and the nature of the federal government's commitment help explain the limits of social change during this period.

In addressing civil rights reform from 1946 through the mid-1960s, the federal government engaged in a sustained effort to tell a particular story about race and American democracy: a story of progress, a story of the triumph of good over evil, a story of U.S. moral superiority. The lesson of this story was always that American democracy was a form of government that made the achievement of social justice possible, and that democratic change, however slow and gradual, was superior to dictatorial imposition. The story of race in America, used to compare democracy and communism, became an important Cold War narrative.

American race relations would not always stay neatly within this frame. Racial violence continued to mar the image of the United States in the 1950s, even as the United States Information Agency (USIA) heralded the Supreme Court's ruling that school segregation violated the Constitution. During the 1960s the civil rights movement and massive resistance in the South forced the federal government to devote more attention both to racial justice in the nation and to the impact of the movement on U.S. prestige abroad.

Out of this dynamic comes a rather complex story. Domestic racism and civil rights protest led to international criticism of the U.S. government. International criticism led the federal government to respond, through placating foreign critics by reframing the narrative

of race in America, and through promoting some level of social change. While civil rights reform in different eras has been motivated by a variety of factors, one element during the early Cold War years was the need for reform in order to make credible the government's argument about race and democracy.

To explore this story, this study will take up civil rights history from a different standpoint than histories of civil rights activists and organizations and histories of domestic civil rights politics. The events that drive this narrative are the events that captivated the world. This focus on particular events and often on prominent leaders should not be seen as an effort to privilege a top-down focus as "the" story of civil rights history. The international perspective is not a substitute for the rich body of civil rights scholarship but another dimension that sheds additional light on those important and well-told stories. Looking abroad and then at home at the impact of civil rights on U.S. foreign affairs, we might more fully see the great impact of civil rights activists. It was only through the efforts of the movement that the nation and the world were moved to embrace the civil rights reform that emerged from this period of American history.²⁶

The full story of civil rights reform in U.S. history cuts across racial groups. The U.S. policymakers in this study, however, saw American race relations through the lens of a black/white paradigm. To them, race in America was quintessentially about "the Negro problem." Foreign observers as well remarked that the status of "the Negro" was the paradigm for exploring race in America. Contemporary writers argue that the black/white paradigm renders other racial groups invisible. This limitation of vision affected the actors in this story, both U.S. policymakers and the international audience to which they were reacting. As a result, this history works within that narrowed conception of American race relations—not because race in America is a black/white issue, but because this study seeks to capture the way race politics were understood at a time when "the Negro problem" was at the center of the discourse on race in America.²⁷

It will be the task of this volume to explore the impact of Cold War foreign affairs on U.S. civil rights reform. It brings together

Cold War history and civil rights history, helping us to see that federal government action on civil rights was an aspect of Cold War policymaking. Narratives of twentieth-century America have tended to treat civil rights and foreign relations as two separate categories, unrelated to each other. If developments in the history of international relations had a bearing on domestic policy, it might be as part of the background, but not as a player on the same stage. For that reason, attention to foreign relations may seem out of place in a study of civil rights reform. Yet as the United States emerged from World War II as a world power, looked to for leadership amid ensuing Cold War fears of a new global conflagration, domestic politics and culture were profoundly affected by events overseas. They were affected as well by the way local and national actors thought domestic events would impact the Cold War balance of power. The Cold War created a constraining environment for domestic politics. It also gave rise to new opportunities for those who could exploit Cold War anxieties, while yet remaining within the bounds of acceptable "Americanism."²⁸

Chapter 1 explores the international reaction to postwar racial violence and race discrimination. Lynching and racial segregation provoked international outrage, and by 1949 race in America was a principal Soviet propaganda theme. These developments led the Truman administration to realize that race discrimination harmed U.S. foreign relations.

One way to respond to international criticism was to manage the way the story of American race relations was told overseas. Chapter 2 details U.S. government efforts to turn the story of race in America into a story of the superiority of democracy over communism as a system of government. The production of propaganda on U.S. race relations was one strategy. In addition, the government took steps to silence alternative voices, such as Paul Robeson's, when they challenged the official narrative of race and American democracy.

Ultimately the most effective response to foreign critics was to achieve some level of social change at home. Chapter 3 discusses Truman administration civil rights efforts, including its sustained reliance on national security arguments in briefs in the Supreme Court cases that would overturn the constitutional basis for Jim

Crow. In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the U.S. Supreme Court held that school segregation, a particular target of foreign criticism, violated the U.S. Constitution. *Brown* powerfully reinforced the story of race and democracy that had already been told in U.S. propaganda: American democracy enabled social change and was based on principles of justice and equality.

Brown would not bring this story to closure, of course. Chapter 4 takes up the major challenge to the image of America abroad during Eisenhower's presidency. Massive resistance to school desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, threatened to undermine the narrative of race and democracy carefully told in U.S. propaganda. As Little Rock became a massive worldwide news story, and as his leadership was questioned at home and abroad, Eisenhower was forced to act. Although the crisis in Little Rock would be resolved, in later years Little Rock remained the paradigmatic symbol of race in America and served as the reference point as Presidents Kennedy and Johnson faced civil rights crises of their own.

President Kennedy hoped to put off addressing civil rights so that civil rights initiatives would not interfere with his other domestic proposals and especially with his foreign affairs agenda. As chapter 5 illustrates, however, events in the early 1960s conspired to frustrate Kennedy's efforts to control the place of civil rights on his overall agenda. Ambassadors from newly independent African nations came to the United States and encountered Jim Crow. Each incident of discrimination reinforced the importance of race to U.S. relations with Africa. Sustained civil rights movement actions, and the brutality of resistance to peaceful civil rights protest, came to a head in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963. As Bull Connor's violent treatment of protesters became a subject of discussion among African heads of state, the diplomatic consequences of discrimination and the importance of more extensive social change were underscored.

President Kennedy's support for a civil rights bill in 1963 was celebrated internationally. His assassination led many nations to question whether federal support for civil rights reform would continue. Foreign leaders looked to President Johnson to maintain continuity—not only in U.S. foreign affairs but also in U.S. civil rights policy. Chapter 6 details the role of civil rights in international per-

ceptions of Johnson's presidency. During the Johnson years the role of foreign relations in U.S. civil rights politics changed significantly. The passage of important civil rights legislation convinced many foreign observers that the U.S. government was behind social change. The narrative of race and democracy seemed to have more salience. Yet just as new questions surfaced about urban racial unrest, the focus of international interest in U.S. policy shifted. As American involvement in Vietnam escalated, the Vietnam War eclipsed domestic racism as a defining feature of the American image abroad.

Cold War Civil Rights traces the emergence, the development, and the decline of Cold War foreign affairs as a factor in influencing civil rights policy by setting a U.S. history topic within the context of Cold War world history. The Cold War was a critical juncture in the twentieth century, the "American Century." For this century, characterized by the emergence of the United States as a global power, it makes sense to ask whether the expansion of U.S. influence and power in the world reflected on American politics and culture at home. Following the transnational path of the story of race in America, we see that the borders of U.S. history are not easily maintained. An event that is local is at the same time international. "Foreign" developments help drive domestic politics and policy. American history plays out in a transnational frame. The international context structures relationships between "domestic" actors. It influences the timing, nature, and extent of social change. This suggests that an international perspective does not simply "fill in" the story of American history, but changes its terms.²⁹

CHAPTER 1

Coming to Terms with Cold War Civil Rights

[T]he colour bar is the greatest propaganda gift any country could give the Kremlin in its persistent bid for the affections of the coloured races of the world.

*OBSERVER (CEYLON, 1949)*¹

One shot could have killed George Dorsey, but when he and three companions were found along the banks of the Appalachian River in Georgia on July 25, 1946, their bodies were riddled with at least sixty bullets. Many white men with guns had participated in this deed. Yet the ritual that produced the deaths of two “young Negro farmhands and their wives” required more than mere killing. The privilege of taking part in the executions, the privilege of drawing blood in the name of white supremacy, was to be shared.²

George Dorsey had recently returned to Georgia after five years of service in the United States Army. His mother received his discharge papers within days of his death. Dorsey survived the war against fascism to die in a hail of bullets on an American roadside. His crime was to be African American, and to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.³

Dorsey died in the company of his wife, Mac Murray Dorsey, and his friends Roger and Dorothy Malcom. Roger Malcom had been arrested after stabbing a white man during a fight. Bailed out by a wealthy white farmer, J. Loy Harrison, the Malcoms and the Dorseys took a ride from Harrison, who told them he wanted them to work his fields. When Harrison’s car came upon a wooden bridge over the Appalachian River, he noticed a car on the far side, blocking the way. Another car drove up from behind, and Harrison reported: “One of the men came out, put a shotgun against the back of my head and said, ‘All of you put ’em up.’”⁴

Someone pointed at Roger Malcom, saying, “There’s the man we want.” But both Malcom and George Dorsey were bound with ropes “expert like,” and dragged from the car. It appeared that the women would be spared. Then one woman began “cussing like everything and called out one of the men’s name whom she evidently recognized.” The leader of the group stopped and said, “Hold everything.” He picked four men, telling them, “Go back and get them.” The women were then pulled, shrieking, from the car. Harrison was asked, “You recognize anybody here?” He answered “No,” the same answer he would give investigators later when asked whether he could identify participants in this crime.⁵

The Dorseys and the Malcoms were lined up. Harrison could hear the mob’s leader say “‘One, two, three,’ and then boom. He did that three times. There were three volleys.” Shots were fired after the four had fallen. “It looked like it was a rehearsed affair,” the head of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation would later say. When the sheriff came upon the scene later that day, “the upper parts of the bodies were scarcely recognizable because of the mass of bullet holes.” As one reporter later put it, “nothing in the undertaker’s art could put back the faces of Roger Malcom or Mae Dorsey.”⁶

This crime was, in some ways, unremarkable. Its pattern was familiar: African American man detained by police, then released, then killed with companions by a white mob. So many had met gruesome deaths in this way that what distinguished the Monroe killings was not their brutality. It was the attention bestowed upon them.⁷

so many hundreds of letters and telegrams protesting the Monroe murders poured in to the U.S. Justice Department that attorney general Tom Clark held a press conference to answer them. “These crimes,” the attorney general said, “are an affront to decent Americanism. Only due process of law sustains our claim to orderly self-government.” Clark called upon “all our citizens to repudiate mob rule and to assist the authorities to bring these criminals to justice. The lives and liberties of none of us are safe when forces of terror operate outside the laws of God and man.” To some, the lynching of a black veteran was part of a chilling postwar turn in American race relations. According to Oliver Harrington, former war correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, “The Georgia lynchings were only part of the highly organized conspiracy to ‘put the returned Negro veteran in his place.’”⁸

While the investigation into the murders was stymied, demonstrators marched in front of the White House. This horrible crime was not a burden for Georgia alone to bear. The nation as a whole had a stake in its resolution. As fifty members of the National Association of Colored Women marched in front of the White House, their picket signs spoke to the nation’s role in achieving racial justice. “America, our home, let it be known that lynching must cease,” proclaimed one. “Where Is Democracy?” asked another. The press in other nations asked the same question, as this incident was widely covered overseas. The Monroe lynching was the lead story in an article on “Position of Negroes in the USA” in the Soviet publication *Trud*. The August 1946 story mentioned the incident as just one example of “the increasing frequency of terroristic acts against negroes” in the United States. The U.S. embassy in Moscow found this story to be “representative of the frequent Soviet press comment on the question of Negro discrimination in the United States.”⁹

In Monroe, in spite of offers of thousands of dollars of reward money for identifying those involved in the killings, a tight-lipped white community protected its own. Meanwhile relatives stayed away from the funeral they had carefully prepared for George Dorsey and Dorothy Malcom, his sister, out of fear of more violence.¹⁰

Two days after the killings, Senator William F. Knowland, Republican of California, introduced an account of the events into the



National Association of Colored Women delegates from across the nation picket the White House in July 1946 to protest the lynching of four African Americans in Georgia. (UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN)



George Dorsey's coffin was draped in an American flag in honor of his military service at funeral services for Dorsey and his sister, Dorothy Malcom, lynched July 25, 1946, outside Monroe, Georgia. (UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN)

Congressional Record. “[N]othing that we can do here today can bring back the lives of those people,” he said. “But by what we do here today we can show, or at least speak out and say that such things must not continue in the United States of America.” Knowland urged the attorney general to place “the full power of his office” behind efforts to solve the crime, “because this is not merely a blot upon the escutcheon of a single local area, but this and this sort of thing is a blot upon the entire United States of America.”¹¹

The idea that racism was “a blot” on the nation was to become a very familiar theme. In the years following World War II, a wave of violence swept the South as African American veterans returned home. Lynchings and beatings of African Americans, sometimes involving local law enforcement officials, were covered in the media in this country and abroad. The violence spawned protests and demands that the federal government take steps to alleviate that brutality and other forms of racial injustice.

In one incident during the summer of 1946, Sergeant Isaac Woodard was beaten with a nightstick and blinded in both eyes by the chief of police in Aiken, South Carolina. Woodard had been on his way home after three years of military service. The police chief was indicted for the incident but was then acquitted “to the cheers of a crowded courtroom.” Also that summer, Macio Snipes, the only African American in his district in Georgia to vote in a state election, was killed at his home by four whites. These incidents, the Monroe, Georgia, lynchings, and other race-based violence fueled African American protest. Demonstrations were held and thousands of letters of protest were sent to President Truman and the attorney general demanding federal action. In one protest action, close to four hundred members of the National Association of Colored Women marched on the White House, maintaining a picket line for over a week.¹²

In response to the lynchings, civil rights, religious, labor, and other groups formed the National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence. The committee met with President Harry S. Truman on September 19, 1946, to call for federal government action to ensure that lynchings were prosecuted. During the meeting, Walter

White of the NAACP described acts of violence to Truman, including the blinding of Isaac Woodard. Truman “sat with clenched hands through the recounting” and said that he was shocked at how bad things were. Following the meeting, he set up a presidential committee to study the problem of racial violence and discrimination, and to make recommendations for federal policy.¹³

Harry Truman would come to be seen as a president who put civil rights firmly on the nation’s agenda. When Truman assumed the presidency after Roosevelt’s death in April 1945, people on both sides of the civil rights issue had seen reasons for encouragement. As a border-state senator, Truman’s nomination as vice-president had been supported by the South. When he became president, southerners assumed he would be sensitive to southern-style race relations. Nevertheless, Truman’s record on civil rights in the Senate was considered good enough by the NAACP that an editorial in *The Crisis* remarked that he was “entitled to a chance to add to that record as President.”¹⁴

When he became president, Truman’s sensibilities on race were mixed. He would use racist language in private when referring to African Americans. At the same time, however, in a private letter to an old friend he wrote of his personal commitment to civil rights reform. Truman’s friend asked him to moderate his position on civil rights, but the president criticized his friend’s “antebellum proslavery outlook” and called to mind recent acts of brutality. “When a Mayor and a City Marshall can take a negro Sergeant off a bus in South Carolina, beat him up and put out one of his eyes, and nothing is done about it by the State Authorities, something is radically wrong with the system,” he wrote. “I can’t approve of such goings on and I shall never approve of it, as long as I am here . . . I am going to try to remedy it and if that ends up in my failure to be reelected, that failure will be in a good cause.”¹⁵

On matters of civil rights policy, as far as the NAACP was concerned, Truman did well in an early test. An important issue in domestic civil rights politics in 1945 was the establishment of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) that would protect racial and religious minorities from discrimination by government agencies and government contractors. Roosevelt had

established an FEPC by executive order in 1941 in response to A. Philip Randolph’s call for African Americans to march on Washington. Legislation to establish a permanent FEPC had been introduced in Congress, but Roosevelt had not pushed the matter. In contrast, upon the urging of NAACP executive secretary Walter White, Truman intervened with the House Rules Committee where the bill was mired, urging that it was “unthinkable” to abandon the principle the FEPC was based on. And when Truman found Congress uncooperative on the issue, he continued to keep the FEPC alive through executive orders. The FEPC’s effectiveness was seriously hampered, however, because without authorizing legislation, it had no enforcement powers, and because Congress refused to grant more than token funding.¹⁶

Increasing pressure on Truman to address race discrimination coincided with an impending presidential campaign. Truman’s advisors believed the African American vote would be important in the 1948 election. In order to court African American voters away from Progressive Party candidate Henry A. Wallace and Republican Thomas E. Dewey, a Truman campaign strategy memo recommended that Truman should “go as far as he feels he could possibly go in recommending measures to protect the rights of minority groups.” Otherwise, the memo warned, the African American vote would go Republican. Truman’s advisors believed that his position on civil rights need only involve election-year posturing, not tangible results. The strategy assumed that the administration “will get no major part of its own program approved.” Consequently, its tactics would be “entirely different than if there were any real point to bargaining and compromise. Its recommendations . . . must be tailored for the voter, not the Congressman; they must display a label which reads ‘no compromises.’” The advisors predicted that a pro-civil rights posture would not jeopardize Truman’s southern support. “As always, the South can be considered safely Democratic. And in formulating national policy, it can be safely ignored.”¹⁷

This strategy was right on two counts: the African American vote was of great importance in the ’48 election, and it could not be earned without a strong pro-civil rights position. Truman miscalculated on the South, however. In keeping with his aides’ recommendations,

Truman called for civil rights legislation that had no chance of passage. Southern politicians reacted by threatening to break with the Democratic Party if the nominating convention chose Truman and adopted a pro-civil rights plank. When both occurred, southerners formed the States' Rights Party and nominated segregationist Strom Thurmond as their presidential candidate. The party's platform denounced "totalitarian government" and advocated racial segregation. While Thurmond had no chance of winning the election, the State's Rights Party hoped to deprive Truman of enough votes to throw the election into the House of Representatives.¹⁸

Southern protest made it clear that a pro-civil rights posture could be politically risky. Truman downplayed the issue, depending on his audience. The African American vote, however, remained a priority. Consequently, although he appeared at a segregated white college, Truman also became the first president to speak in Harlem. Before the Harlem audience he promised to work for the achievement of equal rights "with every ounce of strength and determination that I have." Truman also took concrete steps to further civil rights during the campaign. He issued executive orders desegregating the military and establishing a Fair Employment Board in the Civil Service Commission to review complaints of race discrimination in employment in the executive branch.¹⁹

Though the polls predicted otherwise, Truman defeated Dewey by a surprising margin of electoral votes. The popular vote in key states was close, however, and some have argued that African Americans, particularly in urban areas in the North, provided the president with the margin of victory. In many areas, including Harlem, Truman received a greater proportion of the African American vote than Roosevelt had in 1944. While many groups could claim responsibility for the outcome in a close election, African American voters were an indispensable part of the electoral majority that put Truman over the top.²⁰ To pursue those voters, in the context of the election, Truman advocated civil rights reform.

Apart from electoral politics and pressure from civil rights activists, the Truman administration had another reason to address domestic racism: other countries were paying attention to the problem. News-

papers in many corners of the world covered stories of racial discrimination against African Americans. When nonwhite foreign dignitaries visited the United States and encountered discrimination, it led to serious diplomatic consequences. And as tension between the United States and the Soviet Union increased in the years after the war, the Soviets made effective use of U.S. failings in this area in anti-American propaganda. Concern about the effect of U.S. race discrimination on Cold War foreign relations led the Truman administration to adopt a pro-civil rights posture as part of its international agenda to promote democracy and contain communism.

Following World War II, anything that undermined the image of American democracy was seen as threatening world peace and aiding Soviet aspirations to dominate the world. In 1947, in an address before a joint session of Congress, President Truman warned the nation of the threatening environment of the Cold War. "At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life," he said. "The choice is too often not a free one." Nations were divided between a way of life "distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression," and a way of life that "relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms." The gravity of the situation made this a "fateful hour," and it placed upon the United States a new responsibility. "The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation."²¹

Truman's speech was "greeted with rapture" by members of Congress. His approach to international relations, what would be called the Truman Doctrine, informed U.S. foreign policy for many years. Anticommunism would not be limited to foreign affairs, however. With the communist threat now perceived in global, apocalyptic terms, scrutiny of how domestic policies affected the struggle against world communism became a priority. The most direct way in which this manifested itself was the concern about communist "infiltration" in American government. On March 21, 1947, only nine days

after his Truman Doctrine speech, the president signed an executive order creating a loyalty program for federal employees that required a loyalty investigation for federal employment. According to the order, "complete and unswerving loyalty" on the part of federal employees was of "vital importance," and therefore the employment of "any disloyal or subversive person constitutes a threat to our democratic processes."²²

In this atmosphere, many other government policies were evaluated in terms of whether they served or undercut the more central U.S. mission of fighting communism. In June 1947, for example, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act over Truman's veto. The act required officers of labor unions to sign affidavits indicating that the officer was not a Communist Party member and did not "believe in, and is not a member of or supports any organization that believes in or teaches, the overthrow of the United States Government by force or by any illegal or unconstitutional methods." A union whose officers refused to sign such an affidavit could not take advantage of protection for unions under the National Labor Relations Act. Motivated by the fear that communist infiltration in the public schools would poison fragile young minds, many states adopted loyalty oath requirements for public school teachers. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld a New York State loyalty oath statute in 1952, based on findings that communists "have been infiltrating into public employment in the public schools of the State. . . . As a result, propaganda can be disseminated among the children by those who teach them and to whom they look for guidance, authority and leadership."²³

In the area of civil rights, anticommunism figured prominently on both sides of the debate. Segregationists argued that efforts to abandon racial segregation were communist-inspired and would undermine the fabric of American society. According to Wayne Addison Clark, "Realizing the vulnerability of racial segregation as a social system, southerners most intent on pressing white supremacy consistently promoted the notion that only alien forces bent on social upheaval would challenge the racial status quo. Large segments of the population in the Deep South, including educated whites, accepted this explanation as the primary force behind resistance to white supremacy."²⁴

While efforts to change American society during the Cold War were usually viewed as "un-American," the NAACP cast its efforts at racial reform as part of the struggle against communism. According to NAACP executive director Roy Wilkins, "the survival of the American democratic system in the present global conflict of ideologies depends upon the strength it can muster from the minds, hearts and spiritual convictions of all its people." He argued that "the Negro wants change in order that he may be brought in line with the *American* standard . . . which must be done not only to preserve and strengthen that standard here at home, but to guarantee its potency in the world struggle against dictatorship."²⁵

As the United States held itself out as the leader of the free world, the nation opened itself up to criticism when its domestic practices seemed to violate the nation's principles. Race discrimination, in particular, was America's "Achilles heel." Robert E. Cushman, a Cornell University professor and member of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, explained the problem in a January 1948 *New York Times* magazine article. Following World War II, he argued,

the nation finds itself the most powerful spokesman for the democratic way of life, as opposed to the principles of a totalitarian state. It is unpleasant to have the Russians publicize our continuing lynchings, our Jim Crow statutes and customs, our anti-Semitic discriminations and our witch-hunts; but is it undeserved?

Cushman thought that Americans "cannot deny the truth of the charges; we are becoming aware that we do not practice the civil liberty we preach; and this realization is a wholesome thing."²⁶

International scrutiny of American race discrimination increased in the postwar years. U.S. diplomatic posts frequently reported to the State Department about foreign reactions to racial matters in the United States. In December 1946, for example, the American consulate in Suva, Fiji Islands, reported that the *Fiji Times & Herald* published an article entitled "Persecution of Negroes Still Strong in America." According to the Fiji paper, "the United States has within its own borders, one of the most oppressed and persecuted minorities

in the world today." In the southern states, "hundreds of thousands of negroes exist today in an economic condition worse than the out-and-out slavery of a century ago." Treatment of African Americans was not merely a question of race discrimination; "it is frequently a question of the most terrible forms of racial persecution."²⁷

The article described the 1946 Monroe, Georgia, lynchings. "This outrage," the article noted, followed Supreme Court action invalidating Georgia voting restrictions. "The decision gave the negro the legal right to vote but [Georgia Governor] Talmadge challenged him to exercise it. He also flung a defiance to the Court itself and asked the voters of his State to back him up, which they did." According to the paper, "very few negroes dared to vote, even though the country's highest tribunal had found them entitled to. Most of those who did, or tried to, were badly mauled by white ruffians." The article noted that federal antilynching legislation had been proposed in the past, and "further attempts are certain in the next Congress." The article also discussed other instances of discrimination, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution's refusal to allow opera singer Marian Anderson to perform in Constitution Hall.²⁸

The *Fiji Times & Herald* was not entirely critical, however. Reporting that a recent dinner honoring African American journalists had brought together African Americans and white southerners, the paper concluded that "the point is that the best culture of the south, in America, is opposed to the Bilbo-Talmadge anti-negro oppression and seems today more than ever inclined to join with the north in fighting it." Efforts against racial intolerance had particular consequences in the United States, for "there cannot be, on the basic tenants [sic] of Americanism, such a thing as second class citizenship." The issue also had broader implications, however. "The recognition and acceptance of the concept of a common humanity should, and must, shatter the longstanding bulwarks of intolerance, racial or otherwise, before anything entitled to call itself true civilization can be established in America or any other country."²⁹

The American consul in Fiji was unhappy with the *Times & Herald* article, which he saw as "an indication of certain of the anti-American and/or misinformation or propaganda now carried" in the paper. A response to the article seemed appropriate and necessary.

"If and when a favorable opportunity occurs, the matter of the reasonableness or justification in the publication of such biased and unfounded material, obviously prejudicial to American prestige throughout this area, will be tactfully broached to the Editor and appropriate government officials."³⁰

In Ceylon, American embassy officials were concerned about what they considered "Asian preoccupation with racial discrimination in the United States." Ceylon newspapers ran stories on U.S. racial problems picked up from Reuters wire service. In addition, a Ceylon *Observer* columnist focused on the issue, particularly the seeming contradiction of segregation in the capital of American democracy. In his article, Lakshman Seneviratne quoted *Time* magazine as saying, "in Washington, the seated figure of Abraham Lincoln broods over the capital of the U.S. where Jim Crow is the rule." According to Seneviratne, in Washington "the colour bar is the greatest propaganda gift any country could give the Kremlin in its persistent bid for the affections of the coloured races of the world, who, if industrialized, and technically mobilized, can well dominate, if domination is the obsession, the human race." How could the embassy combat such criticism? At this point American diplomats chose to point a finger in the other direction. Why should Ceylonese criticize the United States when that nation was plagued with prejudice of its own? American embassy officials planned to put together a brief description of "the 'caste system' as it exists in Ceylon today."³¹

In China, the media focused on the effect of U.S. race discrimination on the nation's leadership in postwar world politics. Shanghai's *Ta Kung Pao* covered the May 2, 1948, arrest of U.S. Senator Glen Taylor for violating Alabama segregation laws. At the time, Taylor was the vice-presidential running mate of Progressive Party candidate Henry A. Wallace. On May 2, 1948, Taylor, who was white, attempted to use the "colored entrance" to a Birmingham, Alabama, church where he was scheduled to speak to a meeting of the Southern Negro Youth Congress. As the paper reported it, a police officer stationed at the door informed Taylor that "[t]his was the colored entrance." Taylor responded that "it did not make any difference to me and started in." Five officers then arrested Taylor, who sustained

minor injuries in the process. “[They] treated me very rough—anything but gentlemanly,” he later said. “God help the ordinary man.” Although Taylor violated the Birmingham segregation law, he was only charged with disorderly conduct, circumventing a challenge to the city law.³²

Criticizing Taylor’s arrest, the Chinese paper noted that “the Negro problem is a problem of U.S. internal politics, and naturally, it is unnecessary for anybody else to meddle with it.” However, the issue had international ramifications.

We cannot help having some impressions of the United States which actually already leads half of the world and which would like to continue to lead it. If the United States merely wants to “dominate” the world, the atomic bomb and the U.S. dollar will be sufficient to achieve this purpose. However, the world cannot be “dominated” for a long period of time. If the United States wants to “lead” the world, it must have a kind of moral superiority in addition to military superiority.

According to the paper, “the United States prides itself on its ‘liberal traditions,’ and it is in the United States itself that these traditions can best be demonstrated.”³³

The American consul general in Shanghai believed that the *Ta Kung Pao* editorial “discusses the Negro problem in the U.S. in a manner quite close to the Communist Party line.” The consul general preferred an editorial in the *China Daily Tribune* that cast American race discrimination as a problem generated by a small minority who were acting against the grain. According to that paper, “Prejudice against people of color seems to die hard in some parts of the United States despite all that President Truman and the more enlightened leaders of the nation are doing to ensure that race equality shall become an established fact.”³⁴

Attention to problems of U.S. race discrimination sometimes focused on matters in the courts. State or federal court decisions that overturned discriminatory practices had favorable consequences for foreign relations. For example, when the California Supreme Court overturned that state’s antimiscegenation statute in 1948, the *Ma-*

nila Chronicle called the action “an answer to the prayer of Filipinos now residing in San Francisco, California.” According to the paper, there were “not enough women among the Filipinos there. So the laborers have been forced to seek life partners from among the whites.” In commenting on the story, the chargé d’affaires in the American embassy in Manila noted that

“color” feeling, stimulated by hearsay and/or fact of discrimination in the United States, is an ever-present catalyst among Filipinos. Therefore, it may be readily understood that the action of the Supreme Court of California, seemingly being evidence of concrete progress in eliminating racial discrimination, is important in dispelling or mitigating “color barrier” psychology and its concomitant, the tendency to formation of “color”, racial or “Asia for the Asiatics” groupings.

The *Manila Chronicle* story was “fairly representative of Philippine opinion” on this matter.³⁵

During the Truman years, in no country was the focus on American race relations of greater importance than in India. Chester Bowles discovered in 1951, early in his tenure as U.S. ambassador to India, that “the number one question” in Asia about the United States was “about America’s treatment of the Negro.” Bowles took Indian concerns very seriously because he believed India to be of great strategic importance to the United States.³⁶

Indian newspapers were particularly attuned to the issue of race discrimination in the United States. According to the American consul general in Bombay, “the color question is of intense interest in India.” Numerous articles with titles like “Negro Baiting in America,” “Treatment of Negroes a Blot on U.S.,” and “Untouchability Banished in India: Worshipped in America” appeared in the Indian press. The American consul general thought that the latter article was “somewhat typical of the irresponsible and malicious type of story on the American Negro which appears not too infrequently in segments of the Indian press.” This rather dramatic article was written by Canadian George T. Prud’homme, described as a “communist writer.” The story was illustrated with photographs of a chain gang and of a “Negro youth, worn out by hard labour and

tortured by man's [in]humanity to man," and "Waiting for Death." According to Prud'homme, "the farther South one travels, the less human the Negro status becomes, until in Georgia and Florida it degenerates to the level of the beast in the field."³⁷

Prud'homme's article described the history of American racial practices, including the history of the Ku Klux Klan and the denial of voting rights through poll taxes and discriminatory voter registration tests. It was a shameful story, and a contrast to the U.S. government's efforts to present American democracy as a shining example for the world. Instead, Prud'homme suggested that U.S. treatment of African Americans "strangely resembles the story of India under British domination." The "only bright spot in this picture" was provided by individuals like a white Baptist pastor who was committed to racial equality. But the minister told Prud'homme, "If one of us fights for true democracy and progress, he is labeled a Communist. . . . That is an effective way of shutting him up."³⁸

Soviet propaganda about American racial problems was equally harsh. A *Tass* article distributed in India claimed that "American imperialism destroyed the largest section of the native population of North America and doomed the survivors to a slow death." The same story found "the fate of Negroes" to be "equally tragic. . . . America's soil is drenched in the blood and sweat of Negro toilers."³⁹

U.S. officials in India felt that Indian criticism of American racial practices was somewhat ironic since India had a caste system. As the American consul in Madras put it, "an oft-repeated answer by the recent Consul General at this post to questions about the 'color problem' in the United States was 'Yes, it's almost as bad as it is in India.' This often caused such embarrassed confusion that the subject was immediately dropped."⁴⁰

Criticism of American racism came from Europe as well. The British press covered postwar racial tension in the South and Ku Klux Klan activity, giving particular attention to scheduled executions of African Americans. For example, in 1946, Charles Trudell and James Lewis Jr., both fourteen years old, were sentenced to death in Jackson, Mississippi, for murdering their white employer. By January 16, 1947, the U.S. embassy in London had received three hundred and two communications protesting the death sentences.

Forty-eight of those were petitions with several hundred signatures. In addition, three members of the House of Commons sent a telegram to President Truman, urging him to "protect basic human rights by intervening" to stop the executions. Petitions were also sent to the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, requesting his intervention, and the matter was discussed in the House of Commons. The secretary declined to become involved because the death sentences were "a matter of United States domestic policy in which it would not be proper for His Majesty's Government to intervene" and because the case was pending in the U.S. Supreme Court. The convictions and sentences were affirmed by the Mississippi Supreme Court, and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the cases. In spite of the attention given to the cases, Mississippi Governor Fielding Wright denied clemency.⁴¹

In Europe, according to U.S. Senator William Benton, the "Communist-inspired press and radio" carried the same themes. In addition to oppression of African Americans, "Italy is told about discrimination against Italians; Slavic countries are told that the Slavs hold a very low place on the 'American racial ladder.'" A characteristic twist to these stories was illustrated by a January 17, 1950, Bucharest radio report that "Joe Louis is forced to take up boxing activities again because racial laws hinder his finding other means of livelihood."⁴²

European reporting on the "American Negro Problem" was so widespread that it was the subject of a July 1950 article in the NAACP publication *The Crisis*. James W. Ivy analyzed more than five hundred clippings from the press of ten European countries. "Black Tragedy in the United States is No Myth" stated the headline of one Swiss paper, while other European papers carried stories under headlines such as "Odor of Burning Flesh," "Lincoln or Lynch?" and "Is the Negro a Man?" The European press was also interested in African American politics and culture. In addition to accounts of racism, the periodicals printed biographical sketches of Ralph Bunche, Paul Robeson, Lena Horne, and others.⁴³

Ivy found that European criticism of American race relations was often quite harsh. For example, Georges Duhamel wrote in *Ici Paris* that "this great nation which has taken such a delight in lecturing Europeans on colonialism and the duties of the white race early

simplified its problems by exterminating the Indians." As Ivy put it, "our segregation, our mob violence, and our Dixiecrats contribute grist to the European mills of anti-Americanism. To preach democratic equality while making distinctions of color and race strikes Europeans as bizarre, if not perverse."⁴⁴

Ivy felt that the "preoccupation of the European press with the American Negro and his problems" had emerged in the postwar period, partly in response to racial segregation among U.S. servicemen stationed in Europe during World War II. "Even the European man in the street sensed the incongruity of a 'democratic equality' that condemned Negroes to service battalions and segregated outfits." In addition, European intellectuals resented American "meddling in Continental affairs."⁴⁵

Reports by American embassy staff on foreign press coverage of racial problems in the United States poured in through the Truman years. Embassy reporting usually contained information on the political leanings of the publication, particularly whether it tended to be "anti-American" and/or "leftist." While coverage would cross political boundaries, embassy officials often thought that the "leftist" media was more "critical and unfriendly to the United States," while other writers showed "some understanding." When criticism came from a source perceived as leftist, the writer's motive was often called into question. When embassy officials found critical coverage of U.S. race discrimination in politically conservative publications, however, they were less likely to assume that the writer was biased. In one example, Helen Vlachos, a writer for *Kathimerini*, a prominent conservative Greek newspaper with the highest circulation of all Athens daily papers, noted, "America has its Achilles heel and . . . the heel is quite black!" Following a trip to the American South, the writer felt that she understood "the bitter answer of a small Negro boy who, when asked by his teacher what punishment he would impose upon Adolph Hitler, said: 'I would paint his face black and send him to America immediately!'" According to K. L. Rankin, the chargé d'affaires at the American embassy in Athens, Vlachos's writing on the United States had generally been "well disposed with respect to the American people and their institutions and in har-

mony with the basically friendly attitude the author has always shown toward the United States." Accordingly, "her comments . . . should therefore be regarded, not as stemming from any anti-American bias, but as the author's frank reaction to what she regards as a deplorable situation." Rankin noted that Vlachos's views were "being widely read and discussed by educated Athenians, the overwhelming majority of whom share her feelings in the matter."⁴⁶

In a world divided by Cold War, it was frightening to see the Soviet Union capitalize on America's "Achilles heel." Soviet propaganda exploited U.S. racial problems, arguing that American professions of liberty and equality under democracy were a sham. The U.S. embassy in Moscow took notice of this issue in 1946, reporting that a number of articles that year "may portend stronger emphasis on this theme as [a] Soviet propaganda weapon." In August 1946, the U.S. embassy in Moscow sent the State Department a translation of an editorial from the periodical *Trud* that was "representative of the frequent Soviet press comment on the question of Negro discrimination in the United States." Soviet reporting did not require extensive research. The *Trud* article was based on information the Soviets had gathered from the "progressive American press." It described lynchings and poor labor conditions for African Americans in the South.⁴⁷

According to *Trud*, American periodicals had reported "the increasing frequency of terroristic acts against negroes," including "the bestial mobbing of four negroes by a band of 20 to 25 whites" in July 1946 in Monroe, Georgia. In another incident, near Linden, Louisiana, "a crowd of white men tortured a negro war veteran, John Jones, tore his arms out and set fire to his body. The papers stress the fact that the murderers, even though they are identified, remain unpunished." U.S. census figures indicated that three-quarters of African Americans lived in the South. In the southern "Black Belt," "the negroes are overwhelmingly engaged in agriculture, as small tenant-farmers, share-croppers and hired hands. Semi-slave forms of oppression and exploitation are the rule." African Americans were denied economic rights because of the way the legal system protected the interests of the landowners upon whose property

sharecroppers and tenant farmers labored. In addition, "the absence of economic rights is accompanied by the absence of social rights. The poll tax, in effect in the Southern States, deprives the overwhelming majority of negroes of the right to vote."⁴⁸

Trud observed that "the movement for full economic, political and social equality is spreading among the negro population," but that "this movement has evoked exceptional fury and resistance." "Particularly great efforts" had been made by "the reaction" during recent primary elections in the South, resulting in "unbridled terror directed against the negroes . . . to keep the negro masses from participating in the elections . . . and to crush the liberation movement among the negroes at its root." According to the paper, "the progressive public opinion of the USA is indignant at the baiting of negroes, and rightly sees in this one of the means by which reaction is taking the offensive against the working people."⁴⁹

The *Trud* story was one example of an increasing tendency of the Soviet Union to exploit American racial problems. By 1949, this issue had become so prominent that the U.S. embassy in Moscow reported that "the 'Negro question,' [was] [o]ne of the principal Soviet propaganda themes regarding the United States." According to the embassy, "[T]he Soviet press hammers away unceasingly on such things as 'lynch law,' segregation, racial discrimination, deprivation of political rights, etc., seeking to build up a picture of an America in which the Negroes are brutally downtrodden with no hope of improving their status under the existing form of government." *Pravda* reported that there were "mass Negro pogroms" in the United States, while Soviet radio claimed that "our Constitution was written by representatives of exploiting classes and does not truly guarantee civil rights."⁵⁰

A U.S. embassy official believed that Soviet preoccupation with the American "Negro problem" "serves political ends desired by the Soviet Union and has nothing whatsoever to do with any desire to better the Negro's position." The "Soviet press seizes upon anything showing the position of the US Negro in a derogatory light while ignoring entirely the genuine progress being made in America in improving the situation." The writer felt that his point was "graphically revealed" by the way Ralph Bunche, a United States representa-

tive in the United Nations, was treated in the Soviet media. Although Bunche's name was mentioned frequently in conjunction with his role in the UN, in that context his race was not mentioned. He was identified by race, however, when Bunche announced that " 'Jim Crow' practices in Washington had been one of the contributing factors in his decision to decline the offer of an appointment as an Assistant Secretary of State." In addition, "the Moscow newspapers passed over in silence Dr. Bunche's speech at Fisk University in May when he asserted that the democratic framework of society in the United States offers the greatest hope to the American Negro."⁵¹

Senator William Benton warned his U.S. Senate colleagues that Soviet propaganda on American civil rights was most vigorously used in the "critical periphery," the areas "where the Cold War is raging most fiercely." According to Benton, "These sensitive areas, where the fate of mankind may be decided, are in Latin America, in Germany, and the Slavic countries of Europe, among the dark-skinned nations of Africa and southeast Asia, and among the yellow-skinned peoples on the Asiatic mainland and the nearby island areas." He thought that "by far the most active use of the civil rights issue" was in the Far East, including China and India.⁵²

For Senator Benton, U.S. Ambassador to India Chester Bowles, and many U.S. diplomats, race discrimination undermined the nation's prestige abroad, threatening its Cold War leadership. If other nations, and particularly nonwhite peoples, were to have faith in democracy, the United States would need to reassure them that American democracy was not synonymous with white supremacy.

Race discrimination in the United States was not only directed at American citizens. When nonwhite foreign dignitaries visited the country, they were often subjected to similar treatment, and incidents of discrimination against visiting foreigners would generate a highly critical reaction against U.S. racism in their home country. In 1947, for example, Mohandas Ghandi's physician was barred from a restaurant during a visit to the United States. A story about the incident was carried in every newspaper in his hometown of Bombay.⁵³

In November 1947, François Georges, Haiti's secretary of agriculture, traveled to Biloxi, Mississippi, to attend a conference he had been invited to by the National Association of Commissioners, Secretaries and Directors of Agriculture. Unaware that Georges was black, the Biloxi Buena Vista Hotel had confirmed a reservation for him. Upon his arrival, Georges was informed that for "reasons of color" he would not be able to stay in the hotel with others attending the conference but would be offered separate accommodations. There was some dispute regarding the nature of the separate accommodations. According to one source, they were "servants' quarters which had not been prepared to receive guests." According to the manager of the Buena Vista, the accommodations consisted of "one of our attractive guest cottages which are very much in demand with our regular guests located immediately adjacent to the hotel." Georges was informed that his meals during the conference would be served in his rooms, rather than in the hotel restaurant with other guests. Indignant, he left without attending the conference. He later told a U.S. embassy official in Haiti, "You can see how I would not wish to visit your country soon again."⁵⁴

The Haitian ambassador to the United States lodged a complaint with the secretary of state regarding the incident. According to the ambassador, Georges had accepted the invitation to attend the conference in the belief that "it would afford one more occasion for setting forth how much his country is determined to furnish its cooperation in all circumstances for strengthening the solidarity among the democratic nations anxious to see the establishment in the world of a just and lasting peace based on the principles of justice and equality." The ambassador found Georges's treatment out of step with such principles. He concluded that, "considering the unfavorable repercussions produced on opinion by incidents of this kind, the Haitian Government would be disposed to decline all invitations to congresses and conferences which are to take place in States where its delegates would be exposed to slights not to be endured by the representatives of a sovereign and friendly country."⁵⁵

Although some Haitian newspapers initially "thought [it] better not to mention" the Biloxi incident, on November 17 *La Phalange* reprinted a *Miami Herald* article reporting the Haitian ambassador's

protest of the discrimination against Georges. Other papers followed with editorials the next day. According to a U.S. embassy airgram, "Popular Socialist *La Nation* begins its attack on [the] United States with reference to recent accusations made by its readers to [the] effect [that] this newspaper was too pro-Soviet and anti-United States." According to *La Nation*,

[T]he ardent defenders of American democracy now have before their eyes the brutal fact of what this democracy is. . . .

Can a civilized people call the treatment of which our minister has been a victim other than barbaric; can serious people still speak of American democracy? Can the Americans themselves speak of Pan-American solidarity when among themselves they make a fierce discrimination between the peoples of the Americas?

The editorial concluded that "the Negro of Haiti understands that the word democracy in the United States has no meaning."⁵⁶

In contrast to the *La Nation* indictment of American democracy, the U.S. embassy reported that *Le Nouvelliste* "place[d] [the] onus on ignorance and backwardness in [the] Southern states." That paper noted that other states, such as New York, prohibited race discrimination. Nevertheless, Southern racism was a "hideous disgusting fact that constitutes shame for any country as civilized as [the] United States." The Biloxi incident "reenforces [sic] the unhappy opinion which is held throughout the world of the stupid color prejudice which is rotting certain Southern states of the United States."⁵⁷

The U.S. embassy in Haiti responded to this incident by apologizing and advising Haitians that they should contact the State Department before accepting invitations from nongovernment organizations in the future. Meanwhile, the international implications of the event were not lost on a New York import-export company. Robert P. Holt, vice-president of Gillespie & Company, wrote to Secretary of State George C. Marshall that "at a time when the vast problems of international relationship not only presuppose but require the utmost tact, it is to be deplored that an incident of this nature should have occurred, but even more so that those on the ground

apparently should have been unable to mitigate the effect if not the circumstances.”⁵⁸ If international relations and international trade were to proceed unfettered, the United States would have to handle such incidents more effectively. If race discrimination could not go away, at the very least it must be handled with more foresight and tact.

Discrimination against foreign nationals could at times provoke more than outrage. In January 1945, Pan American Airways refused to allow a Jamaican journalist to eat in its Miami airport public restaurant. The *Kingston Daily Gleaner* reported the incident and the matter was discussed in the Jamaican Council. Councillor Wills O. Isaacs stated that “any nation which indulges in racial discrimination . . . is a nation that is devoid of any real culture and any real decency.” He argued that “if these people cannot respect the people of this country and place them on an equal footing with the people of America, then as far as I am concerned I would not allow one Pan American plane to fly over this country at all.” Councillor E. H. Fagan agreed. “If we are to get anywhere as a coloured people,” he argued, “let us get it in our cranium that Jamaicans as a whole are coloured people, and in common with the big majority of coloured people all over the world it is time for us to talk out loud whenever acts of discrimination are practised against us. We find that the Americans do not care anything about us.” In reporting on the incident to the secretary of state, however, the American consul in Kingston dismissed Isaacs by noting that he “has definite leftist tendencies.”⁵⁹

Even when foreign persons of color were not subject to discrimination, they did not necessarily leave the States with a positive impression. As one Indian visitor put it,

American racialism is not logical. Non-American non-whites on their visit to the States are accorded a kind of “honorary” white status which is embarrassing to them and the source of considerable justified grievance to colored nations. Instances are not uncommon of Negroes donning a turban or an English accent to escape the prejudice which as American citizens they are made to suffer.⁶⁰

* * *

American vulnerability on the race issue gave civil rights activists a very effective pressure point to use in advocating for civil rights reform. Civil rights organizations relied on the argument that race discrimination harmed U.S. interests in the Cold War. At the same time, they effectively brought international pressure to bear on the Truman administration. The United Nations provided a convenient forum for African American leaders to present their grievances before an international audience. It also provided an environment in which critics of the United States would have an opportunity to focus attention on the country’s weaknesses.

In February 1946, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights was established. The commission was charged with preparing “proposals, recommendations and reports concerning a) an international bill of rights; b) international declarations or conventions on civil liberties, the status of women, freedom of information and similar matters; c) the protection of minorities; d) the prevention of discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, language or religion.” The work of the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities would create the greatest difficulty for the United States. State Department officials recognized this prior to the subcommittee’s first meeting. Dean Rusk wrote in a November 4, 1947, memorandum that the

first session of the Subcommittee is a very important one to the United States, principally because it deals with a very difficult problem affecting the internal affairs of the United States. United States problems concerning relationships with minority groups have been fully treated in the press of other countries. This Subcommittee was established on the initiative of the U.S.S.R., and there is every indication that that country and others will raise questions concerning our domestic problems in this regard.⁶¹

Rusk was right. However, the most powerful critique of U.S. racism presented before the United Nations came not from the Soviets but from African Americans. In June 1946, the National Negro Congress filed a petition seeking “relief from oppression” for American

blacks. The organization expressed "profound regret that we, a section of the Negro people, having failed to find relief from oppression through constitutional appeal, find ourselves forced to bring this vital issue, which we have sought, for almost a century since emancipation, to solve within the boundary of our country to the attention of this historic body." The group sent a copy of the petition to President Truman. Although the United Nations did not act upon the petition, it reinforced international scrutiny of American race discrimination.⁶²

On October 23, 1947, the NAACP filed "An Appeal to the World," a petition in the United Nations protesting the treatment of blacks in the United States. The petition denounced U.S. race discrimination as "not only indefensible but barbaric." It claimed that racism harmed the nation as a whole. "It is not Russia that threatens the United States so much as Mississippi; not Stalin and Molotov but Bilbo and Rankin; internal injustice done to one's brothers is far more dangerous than the aggression of strangers from abroad." The consequences of American failings were potentially global. "The disenfranchisement of the American Negro makes the functioning of all democracy in the nation difficult; and as democracy fails to function in the leading democracy in the world, it fails the world." W. E. B. DuBois, the principal author of the petition, said that the purpose behind the appeal was to enable the United Nations "to prepare this nation to be just to its own people."⁶³

The NAACP petition "created an international sensation." According to Walter White, the NAACP was

flooded with requests for copies of the document, particularly from nations which were critical of the United States, including Russia, Great Britain, and the Union of South Africa. It was manifest that they were pleased to have documentary proof that the United States did not practice what it preached about freedom and democracy. But it was equally apparent that Russia, Great Britain, and the Union of South Africa were morally afraid that acceptance of the appeal on behalf of American Negroes and action on the document would establish a precedent giving the United Nations authority in those countries.⁶⁴

The petition received extensive coverage in the American and foreign media. Meanwhile, Attorney General Tom Clark remarked, "I was humiliated . . . to realize that in our America there could be the slightest foundation for such a petition." Although Eleanor Roosevelt, a member of the board of directors of the NAACP, was also a member of the American delegation to the United Nations, she refused to introduce the NAACP petition in the United Nations out of concern that it would harm the international reputation of the United States. According to DuBois, the American delegation had "refused to bring the curtailment of our civil rights to the attention of the General Assembly [and] refused willingly to allow any other nation to bring this matter up; if any should, Mr. [sic] Roosevelt has declared that she would probably resign from the United Nations delegation."⁶⁵

The Soviet Union, however, proposed that the NAACP's charges be investigated. On December 4, 1947, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights rejected that proposal, and the United Nations took no action on the petition. Nevertheless, the *Des Moines Register* remarked that the petition had "accomplished its purpose of arousing interest in discrimination." Although the domestic press reaction was generally favorable, the West Virginia *Morgantown Post* criticized the NAACP for "furnishing Soviet Russia with new ammunition to use against us." DuBois responded to similar criticism from southern journalist Jonathan Daniels, a member of the United Nations Subcommittee on Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, by stating that "the NAACP is not 'defending Russia' or anybody else; it is trying to get men like Mr. Daniels to stand up and be counted for the decent treatment of Negroes in America."⁶⁶

U.S. diplomats around the globe were concerned about the effect of domestic race discrimination and of propaganda on U.S. racial problems on the anti-United States or pro-Communist leanings of other nations. In a confidential memorandum to the State Department regarding "Dutch Attitudes Toward American Racism," Robert Coe of the American embassy, The Hague, reported on a "casual conversation" between an unnamed embassy officer and a Dutch Foreign Ministry official. According to Coe, the Dutch official had

remarked that the Netherlands is very unreceptive to anti-American propaganda, whether it emanates from Communist sources or from right-wing colonial die-hards. However, he added that the opponents of American policies possess one propaganda theme which is extremely effective throughout Europe and even more effective in Asia—criticism of American racial attitudes.⁶⁷

According to the memorandum, the Dutch official was “well-informed about American politics and the American culture generally,” but, nevertheless, “he himself had never been able to understand the American point of view toward negroes and other minority groups, and that the point of view was extremely difficult for friends of America to explain, let alone defend.” The Dutch official’s “knowledge of America” had

convinced him that America has made real progress in eliminating the worst aspects of racism, and he agreed that the nature and extent of American racial feeling has been grossly exaggerated by the Communists. However, he said that, in his opinion, the actual situation is sufficiently bad to provide a very solid foundation for the fabulous structure of lies which the Communists have built up.

There was a solution to this problem, however. The Dutch official suggested that the “United States information program should devote a major portion of its facilities and energies to a campaign aimed at counteracting the impression which so many people have of American racial suppression.”⁶⁸

If the nation could not eradicate the conditions that gave rise to foreign criticism, it could at least place them “in context.” It could weave them into a story that led ultimately to the conclusion that, in spite of it all, America was a great nation. Rehabilitating the moral character of American democracy would become an important focus of Cold War diplomacy.

CHAPTER 2

Telling Stories about Race and Democracy

These neighbors in a housing project, like millions of Americans, are forgetting whatever color prejudice they may have had; their children will have none to forget.

U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY,

*THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN LIFE (ABOUT 1950)*¹

In 1947, Public Affairs Officer Frederick C. Jochem wrote an article for a Rangoon, Burma, newspaper, with the approval of the U.S. consul general in Rangoon. The article, entitled “Negro Problem,” politely suggested that the Burmese did not have all the facts on the issue of race in the United States. It began:

A Burmese friend was astonished the other day when I told him that a Negro had just been appointed to a professorship in my university back home. We were discussing the “Negro problem” in America, and it turned out that a number of facts and viewpoints that I take for granted are surprising news in Burma.²

majority of Americans now accept the idea that discrimination is wrong and must be ended," he argued. "The remaining differences are over the timing and the method." Yet Bowles questioned how much time remained. "Since the end of World War II our country, somewhat reluctantly, has advanced to the center of the world stage. . . . With such leadership the world comes to know more about us, both good and bad."⁶⁵

"How much does all our talk of democracy mean, if we do not practice it at home?" Bowles asked. "How can the colored peoples of Asia be sure we are sincere in our interest in them if we do not respect the equality of our colored people at home?" It would be easier to answer these questions "if we have a better answer from home. I can think of no single thing that would be more helpful to us in Asia than the achievement of racial harmony in America." This issue was of such importance, Bowles would later write, that "of one thing I am certain. I have not exaggerated. It is impossible to exaggerate."⁶⁶

CHAPTER 3

Fighting the Cold War with Civil Rights Reform

It is in the context of the present world struggle between freedom and tyranny that the problem of race discrimination must be viewed.

BRIEF FOR THE UNITED STATES AS AMICUS CURIAE,
BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION (FILED 1952)¹

American embassies scattered throughout the world tried to do their part to salvage the tarnished image of American democracy. They used the tools available to them: speakers and news stories that would cast American difficulties in the best light possible. Meanwhile, in Washington, the Truman administration could take more affirmative, less reactive steps. President Truman and his aides sought change in the domestic policies and practices that fueled international outrage.

In 1947, Truman's President's Committee on Civil Rights issued a report that highlighted the foreign affairs consequences of race discrimination. The committee's report, *To Secure These Rights*, argued that there were three reasons why civil rights abuses in the United States should be redressed: a moral reason—discrimination was morally wrong; an economic reason—discrimination harmed

the economy; and an international reason—discrimination damaged U.S. foreign relations. According to the report,

Our foreign policy is designed to make the United States an enormous, positive influence for peace and progress throughout the world. We have tried to let nothing, not even extreme political differences between ourselves and foreign nations, stand in the way of this goal. But our domestic civil rights shortcomings are a serious obstacle.

The committee stressed that “we cannot escape the fact that our civil rights record has been an issue in world politics. The world’s press and radio are full of it.” Countries with “competing philosophies” had stressed and distorted American problems. “They have tried to prove our democracy an empty fraud, and our nation a consistent oppressor of underprivileged people.”²

To support this argument, the committee report quoted a letter from Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson to the chairman of the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). According to Acheson,

[T]he existence of discrimination against minority groups in this country has an adverse effect upon our relations with other countries. We are reminded over and over by some foreign newspapers and spokesmen, that our treatment of various minorities leaves much to be desired. . . . Frequently we find it next to impossible to formulate a satisfactory answer to our critics in other countries.

An atmosphere of suspicion and resentment in a country over the way a minority is being treated in the United States is a formidable obstacle to the development of mutual understanding and trust between the two countries. We will have better international relations when these reasons for suspicion and resentment have been removed.

Because he thought it was “quite obvious” that race discrimination interfered with foreign relations, Acheson wrote that the State Department had “good reason to hope for the continued and increased

effectiveness of public and private efforts to do away with these discriminations.”³

Why was the acting secretary of state advocating civil rights reform? Perhaps State Department officials argued that race discrimination harmed foreign relations simply because they thought that argument would be useful to civil rights reform at home, not because they thought there was any substance to it. Perhaps Acheson was seeking to further a domestic civil rights agenda, not to protect U.S. foreign policy interests. The State Department’s preoccupation with American race discrimination during the early Cold War years and the volume of diplomatic cable traffic on the issue would seem to belie that point. More importantly, it was simply not Dean Acheson’s job to focus on purely domestic matters. As a State Department official, he was charged with furthering American foreign policy interests, not domestic policy. Acheson’s own philosophy was that moral imperatives should not drive foreign policy, so it would be ironic if he used his position at the State Department to further views about the morality of racial practices at home. For these reasons, it is unlikely that Dean Acheson, along with other American diplomats, was a closet civil rights activist crafting an argument, for the purpose of furthering a social change agenda at home, that race discrimination harmed U.S. foreign relations.⁴

The President’s Committee on Civil Rights took the impact of race discrimination on U.S. foreign relations very seriously. The committee report stressed, however, that “the international reason for acting to secure our civil rights now is not to win the approval of our totalitarian critics. . . . [T]o them our civil rights record is only a convenient weapon with which to attack us.” Instead, “we are more concerned with the good opinion of the peoples of the world.” Maintaining U.S. prestige abroad would help safeguard democracy in other lands.

Our achievements in building and maintaining a state dedicated to the fundamentals of freedom have already served as a guide for those seeking the best road from chaos to liberty and prosperity. But it is not indelibly written that democracy will encompass the world. We are convinced that our way of

life—the free way of life—holds a promise of hope for all people. We have what is perhaps the greatest responsibility ever placed upon a people to keep this promise alive. Only still greater achievements will do it.

The consequences were stark, for the future was uncertain. The committee emphasized that “*the United States is not so strong, the final triumph of the democratic ideal is not so inevitable that we can ignore what the world thinks of us or our record.*”⁵

President Truman, trying to lead the free world through the dangers of the Cold War, made this message his own. The president repeatedly emphasized the importance of civil rights to U.S. foreign affairs. On February 2, 1948, he delivered a special message to Congress, outlining several civil rights initiatives. Truman told Congress that the “position of the United States in the world today” made civil rights “especially urgent.” According to the president, “The peoples of the world are faced with the choice of freedom or enslavement.” The United States was promoting human rights with the goal of preserving world peace. The nation had to protect civil rights at home to be effective and to strengthen the nation. “We know that our democracy is not perfect,” he said, but democracy offered “a fuller, freer happier life” than totalitarianism.

If we wish to inspire the peoples of the world whose freedom is in jeopardy, if we wish to restore hope to those who have already lost their civil liberties, if we wish to fulfill the promise that is ours, we must correct the remaining imperfections in our practice of democracy.⁶

Truman urged Congress to enact civil rights laws that would establish a permanent civil rights commission, outlaw lynching, and protect the right to vote, among other proposals. Congress did not pass civil rights legislation while Truman was in office, however. Truman’s relations with Congress were sufficiently strained that he did not have great success with any of his domestic legislative proposals. On civil rights, his prospects were particularly bleak because of the hold of Southern Democrats on key Senate committee chairmanships. Truman had greater latitude to act on civil rights when

he could act alone. For that reason his greatest civil rights accomplishments were things within executive power: the issuance of executive orders and the involvement of the Justice Department in landmark desegregation litigation.⁷

One of President Truman’s most important civil rights accomplishments was initiating desegregation of the armed services. Discrimination and segregation in the military were particularly galling to people of color who risked their lives to protect the nation yet were not treated equally even during their military service. When troops traveled to foreign lands, other nations were directly exposed to American racial practices. During World War II, U.S. segregation followed American troops overseas, creating an awkward situation for their foreign hosts. In September 1942, Winston Churchill was asked in the House of Commons to politely ask U.S. military authorities in Britain “to instruct their men that the colour bar is not the custom in this country and that its non-observance by British troops or civilians should be regarded with equanimity.” The British government was unable to avoid responding to this problem. Although conflict arose when some British residents encouraged a code of conduct reminiscent of the mores of the American South, Christopher Thorne has written that “a greater danger appeared to lie in the very warmth of the welcome which many people were ready to give to these soldiers—a response which threatened to conflict with the patterns of behaviour and expectations brought over with them by white Americans.” The warm welcome created resentment on the part of white American troops. The British had their own race issues, particularly their hold on colonial subjects. Yet because of their “growing material dependence on the U.S.A. and the perceived need to retain her cooperation after victory,” the British found themselves unable to respond to criticism of empire by pointing out racism in Alabama.⁸

NAACP executive secretary Walter White thought it was “perilous” to transport American racism overseas during the war. “I have seen bewilderment in the eyes of brown, yellow and black peoples in the Pacific at the manifestations of race prejudice by some American whites, not only against American Negro servicemen but against

the natives whose aid we need *now* in winning the war, and whose friendship we will need *after* the war if we are to have peace." Racism gave the enemy an effective propaganda weapon, White argued.

The Japanese eagerly capitalize on these incidents and on race riots, lynchings and segregation in the United States. They utilize the anti-Negro rantings of congressmen like Rankin and of senators like Bilbo in filibustering against a Fair Employment Practices Committee. In Guam I saw a poster which has been put up all over the Island during the Japanese occupation which read, "Fight on to Asia with Asia's own. Drive out the imperialist, aggressive American. The sole purpose of the white peoples of the earth is to exploit colored people."

White warned that "[n]one can yet tell how deep such roots have sunk into the thinking of the one billion colored peoples of the Pacific, Asia and Africa who constitute with colored peoples in other parts of the world two-thirds of the earth's population."⁹

Waging the Cold War would require military strength. Military preparedness would be one line of defense against Soviet aggression. Although the armed forces were the nation's physical line of defense against Soviet aggression, they were also a source of the nation's moral failure, for American forces in the postwar years continued to be segregated.

Racial segregation in the armed forces came under fire in the report of Truman's President's Committee on Civil Rights. There was strong sentiment on the part of the committee that segregation in the armed services should be eliminated as quickly as possible. Committee member James Carey spoke of the "paradox of massing an army in World War II to fight for the Four Freedoms, and in engaging in that work they segregate people on the basis of race." Channing Tobias insisted that the committee call for immediate desegregation, rather than gradualism. "Segregation is wrong wherever it exists," he argued, "but when our Government holds up before its citizens the Constitution, with the Bill of Rights, saying to every man that he is a citizen and appealing to him for loyalty in peace

and war on that basis, then I don't think we have any right to permit the pattern that has grown up in any section of the country to dominate the national policy."¹⁰

In spite of this sentiment, A. Philip Randolph was concerned that a proposed Universal Military Training Program would continue to perpetuate patterns of segregation in the armed services. On December 28, 1947, he wrote to President Truman protesting the proposal as "a great threat to Negro youth and the internal stability of our nation. Segregation becomes all the more important when the United States should be assuming moral leadership in the world." Randolph threatened that African Americans would refuse to serve in a Jim Crow army. "Negro youth will have no alternative but to resist a law, the inevitable consequences of which would be to expose them to un-American brutality so familiar during the last war." According to Randolph, "So long as the American government attempts to sponsor any program of Jim Crow, its aspiration to moral leadership in the world will be seriously impaired."¹¹

This sentiment would come, as well, from ordinary citizens. Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Dagen wrote President Truman urging him to "use all the power you have to abolish . . . undemocratic segregation of ANY kind" in the armed services. "We feel that one of the most effective, firm, and noticeable ways in which we can show the rest of the world we believe in democracy is to practice such a virtue . . . at home. We believe this will still Russian propaganda against us for this gross injustice in this country."¹²

On February 2, 1948, in his special message to Congress on civil rights, President Truman announced that he had "instructed the Secretary of Defense to take steps to have the remaining instances of discrimination in the armed services eliminated as rapidly as possible." Truman called for reinstatement of the draft in March 1948, but the legislation passed by Congress did not address segregation, and the army intended to continue it. Randolph organized the Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service to pressure President Truman to act. If Truman did not desegregate the military, the committee would "work in the big East Coast cities on behalf of a campaign of civil disobedience, nonregistration and noninduction." On March 22, 1948, at a meeting with the president at the

White House, Randolph warned Truman that “Negroes would not shoulder a gun to fight for democracy abroad while they were denied democracy here.” He reiterated his call for civil disobedience later that month in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee.¹³

Then, on July 26, 1948, Truman issued Executive Order 9981. The order stated that it was “essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country’s defense.” Under the order, it was “the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.” This policy was to be implemented “as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.” The order did not specifically mention desegregation, however, and provided no deadline by which “equality” should be accomplished.¹⁴

The timing of Truman’s order—in the middle of the 1948 election campaign—lends support to the argument of many historians that a principal motive behind the action was political. The order came shortly after the Democratic Party convention. The Democrats adopted a strong civil rights party platform; prompting southern Democrats to walk out and form their own Dixiecrat Party. The departure of the Dixiecrats meant that Truman would have to look elsewhere for electoral support. This reinforced the importance of the black vote to his campaign. In light of political motives, Bernard Nalty suggests that the order resulted from “a marriage of politics and principle,” as Truman stood to gain politically from an action that, Nalty believes, Truman thought was morally right.¹⁵

In an effort to maintain as broad a political base as possible, Truman was silent on civil rights for much of the campaign to avoid alienating critics of his civil rights stance. When he appeared in Harlem on October 29—the first major presidential candidate who had done so—Truman emphasized his accomplishments. The president told the crowd that when Congress had not enacted civil rights legislation, he had turned to executive orders. His actions served the need for equality and also safeguarded democracy. “Today the democratic

way of life is being challenged all over the world. Democracy’s answer to the challenge of totalitarianism is its promise of equal rights and equal opportunities for all mankind.” Maintaining a hold on the black vote as well as other critical constituencies, Truman went on to win the 1948 election by the narrowest of margins.¹⁶

Publicly and privately, the president persistently stressed the importance of civil rights reform to the nation’s Cold War foreign relations. Michael Sherry has written that “[c]ivil rights leaders, and Truman himself on occasion, did also invoke morality and justice, but national security was the dominant rationale” for civil rights reform. It was also “the most persistent.” While domestic politics and principle surely played a role in Truman’s decision to desegregate the military, safeguarding the nation’s overseas image, an important theme throughout Truman’s presidency, was also a critical factor.¹⁷

In spite of the desegregation order, racism in the armed forces continued to be an issue. Congressman Jacob Javits of New York drew attention to the problem on January 12, 1950, by calling for a congressional investigation. According to Javits, race discrimination continued, and “[n]othing could be more useful . . . to the Communist propagandists in the ‘cold war.’” Javits had been to Europe, where he had been repeatedly questioned about American racial practices in many areas, including the military. He reported that “[t]he Communist propagandists in Western Germany and Western Europe seek to build up the alleged evils and to magnify them, but there is enough to them to damage us seriously in the cold war.” In Asia and Africa the problem was “even worse.” The “fall” of China exacerbated this crisis, for now China was another source of anti-American propaganda. As Javits put it, “With Communist China as a propaganda base, segregation and discrimination on grounds of race, creed or color in the United States can be used to win tens of millions to the Communist cause.” The problem of discrimination had become, at least in part, “a question . . . relative to the foreign policy of the United States.”¹⁸

A turn in the Cold War finally led to meaningful racial integration in the army. In June 1950 North Korean troops invaded South Korea. Hoping to contain communism, Truman sent U.S. troops to

Korea to attempt to push back North Korean forces. The war would ultimately expand into an unsuccessful effort to liberate North Korea. This long and bloody "police action" required a substantial commitment of U.S. troops. When American units needed reinforcements, American commanders came to realize that attempts to maintain segregation were interfering with military objectives. It was ultimately the imperatives of wartime that led military leaders to assign reinforcements without regard to race.¹⁹

Equality in service meant equality in death. The casualties of the Korean War would achieve the democracy at last that Chaplain Gittlesohn had imagined on Iwo Jima during World War II. "White men and Negroes alike, Protestants, Catholics and Jews," their guns held the line at the Cold War's periphery. These integrated troops fulfilled the promise of U.S. propaganda. Their bodies held the line in the battle for the hearts and minds of the people of the world.

Congress took up the issue of the effect of discrimination on U.S. foreign relations, but with less success. When legislation to create a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission to combat race discrimination in employment under federal defense contracts was before the Senate in May 1950, Democratic Senator William Benton of Connecticut argued that the bill was essential to national security. Benton spoke with authority, since he had previously served as assistant secretary of state in charge of public affairs. In that capacity, he said that it had been his "unhappy responsibility to study how Communist propaganda twisted and distorted our civil-rights problems in the channels of world communication." As an American delegate to UNESCO, he "saw how our unsolved civil rights problems hampered our efforts and our prestige in reaching out—gropingly as it were—for the hearts and the minds of men." It was not only "Sovietized" minds and the minds of Asians and Africans that Americans could not reach, but Europeans and Central and South Americans as well.²⁰

Benton argued that civil rights problems had "enormous but little understood worldwide impact." He cautioned that "it can be a great and tragic mistake for us if we underestimate this weakness of ours in this highly dangerous world. . . . It is impossible to exaggerate

how sensitive other countries are to the question of civil rights in America, and how much single instances of discrimination are magnified in their eyes."²¹

Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia responded that he was confused by Benton's argument. He did not understand why the Senate "should pass the bill because of the Communists' propagandizing a state of affairs that does not exist in this country." On the one hand, senators were urged to support the Marshall Plan because communists opposed it. "Now we are told that we must pass the FEPC bill because the Communists are in favor of it. That is somewhat confusing." Benton argued that passage of the FEPC legislation would be a great blow to communist propaganda, and that failure to pass it would be exploited by the communists as evidence of American racial prejudice. Russell then countered that the communist *Daily Worker* "has claimed credit for originating the whole idea of the FEPC legislation, and has supported it constantly since the first day it was introduced in this body." While Benton tried to focus on the issue of Soviet propaganda and its effectiveness, Russell remained unconvinced. His position was "that we cannot believe anything which comes out of Russia and that any of us who believes anything that comes from Russia is very foolish."²²

Senator Russell turned the Cold War argument on its head. In a political and cultural climate steeped in anticommunism, arguing that civil rights reform would be a capitulation to communists, who themselves must clearly be pursuing ulterior motives to undermine American society, proved to be a very effective strategy. Anticommunism was more important to Congress than civil rights. For that reason, casting a red taint on a civil rights bill was an effective way to derail it.

Benton's argument did not seem to go very far with the rest of the Senate. When he finally yielded the floor, a quorum call revealed that only twenty-two members, less than a quorum, had heard him out. The FEPC legislation ultimately failed to pass. Representative Vito Marcantonio, the bill's chief sponsor in the House, assailed the Democrats, the Republicans, and the President, arguing that "everybody wants civil rights as an issue but not as a law." *New York Times* columnist Arthur Krock blamed President Truman for this

defeat, arguing that in failing to push the Democratic leadership in the House to bring the legislation up for a vote, Truman preserved the issue of civil rights as a 1950 campaign issue without accomplishing civil rights reform. Even if he had been a more active supporter of civil rights legislation, however, Truman might not have had much success in getting his programs through Congress.²³

Desegregation of the military is often thought of as Truman's principal civil rights accomplishment. Of great significance as well, however, was the Truman administration's participation in the landmark desegregation cases leading up to *Brown v. Board of Education*. Although *Brown* itself was decided in 1954, when Dwight D. Eisenhower was president, it was Truman's Justice Department that initiated the government's participation in the legal battle to overcome Jim Crow. The Justice Department's most important brief in *Brown* itself was filed in December 1952, during the last weeks of Truman's presidency. The decision to participate in these cases was made at the highest levels of the Truman administration, at times involving the president himself.²⁴

In amicus curiae, or "friend of the court," briefs in civil rights cases, the Truman administration stressed to the Supreme Court the international implications of race discrimination and at times focused on the negative impact on U.S. foreign relations that a pro-segregation decision might have.²⁵ In terms of its consequences for American prestige, a Court decision rendering segregation unconstitutional was potentially of the greatest symbolic value. Change emanating from a Supreme Court interpretation of the Constitution would show that the principle of racial equality was already there in the governing document of American democracy. This would show that, as Gunnar Myrdal had suggested, it was a principle waiting to be realized as Americans perfected their practice of democracy.

The Truman administration's involvement in high-profile desegregation cases was a new practice. The United States was not a plaintiff or defendant in these cases. The Justice Department filed amicus curiae briefs to inform the Court of important interests at stake beyond those presented by the parties to the cases. Previously, the Justice Department had filed amicus briefs only in cases where the United

States had a concrete interest at stake. The cases leading up to *Brown v. Board of Education* did not involve a concrete federal interest. Instead, the federal government was interested in the abstract concept of justice at stake in these cases, and in the well-being of the plaintiffs. Why was the Justice Department filing briefs to vindicate the interests of one of the parties? In brief after brief, the Justice Department argued that crucial national interests were also implicated. The segregation challenged in these cases damaged U.S. prestige abroad and threatened U.S. foreign relations. In the context of heightened Cold War tensions, the stakes in these cases were very high.²⁶

The Truman Justice Department began its participation as amicus curiae in civil rights cases with a restrictive covenant case, *Shelley v. Kraemer*. In *Shelley*, whites sold residential property to African Americans in violation of a covenant among landowners prohibiting sales to nonwhites. State supreme courts in Missouri and Michigan had ruled that the covenants were enforceable. The question in *Shelley* was whether judicial enforcement of the covenants constituted "state action" violating the Fourteenth Amendment rights of the African Americans who purchased the property. The Justice Department argued that state court action was "state action" and therefore that when state courts enforced racially restrictive covenants they violated the Fourteenth Amendment.²⁷

According to Solicitor General Philip Perlman, the Justice Department brief filed in the restrictive covenant cases was "the first instance in which the Government had intervened in a case to which it was not a party and in which its sole purpose was the vindication of rights guaranteed by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments." In previous civil rights cases, the solicitor general participated when the litigation involved a federal agency and when the question in the case concerned the supremacy of federal law. A different sort of federal interest was involved in the restrictive covenant cases. According to Perlman, racially restrictive covenants hampered the federal government "in doing its duty in the fields of public health, housing, home finance, and in the conduct of foreign affairs." The brief for the United States in *Shelley v. Kraemer* relied on the State Department's view that "the United States has been embarrassed in the conduct of foreign relations by acts of discrimination taking place in

this country." To support this argument, the brief quoted at length from the Dean Acheson letter relied on in *To Secure These Rights*.²⁸

Although not addressing the international implications of the case, the Supreme Court agreed with the result sought by the Justice Department. The Court ruled that enforcement of restrictive covenants in state courts constituted state action violating the rights of African Americans to equal protection of the laws. Private agreements to exclude African Americans from housing were therefore not enforceable by state courts. The *Shelley* decision was celebrated by civil rights supporters in the U.S. and abroad. The decision was heralded by an Indian newspaper as "another victory in the battle for civil rights that is now going on in America."²⁹

In 1949 the Justice Department filed a brief in *Henderson v. United States*, a case about segregation in railroad dining cars. Because the legal foundation for Jim Crow, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, was also a case about railroad segregation, *Henderson* held the potential to overturn this icon of racial oppression. In *Henderson*, the Justice Department took a position contrary to the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) regarding the validity of segregation under the Interstate Commerce Act's equal treatment requirement. The ICC had ruled that the Southern Railway Company's practice of providing separate seating behind a curtain in dining cars for African American passengers did not violate the statute. The Justice Department's position on appeal was, first, that dining car segregation was unlawful under the Interstate Commerce Act, and, second, that if it was authorized, this segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment.³⁰

As in *Shelley*, the government argued that the case had implications for U.S. foreign relations. The *Henderson* brief elaborated more fully on the problem. The Justice Department told the Court of the "frequent and caustic" foreign press coverage of U.S. race discrimination. The brief bolstered its argument with examples from Soviet publications and critical statements about U.S. race discrimination made in United Nations proceedings. It quoted from recent statements made by representatives of other governments in a United Nations subcommittee meeting that "typify the manner in which

racial discrimination in this country is turned against us in the international field." For example, a representative of the Soviet Union had commented, "Guided by the principles of the United Nations Charter, the General Assembly must condemn the policy and practice of racial discrimination in the United States and any other countries of the American continent where such a policy was being exercised." Similarly, the representative from Poland "did not . . . believe that the United States Government had the least intention to conform to the recommendations which would be made by the United Nations with regard to the improvement of living conditions of the coloured population of that country."³¹

In one example of the foreign press, the brief quoted an article from *The Bolshevik* that claimed that

the theory and practice of racial discrimination against the negroes in America is known to the whole world. The poison of racial hatred has become so strong in post-war America that matters go to unbelievable lengths; for example a Negress injured in a road accident could not be taken to a neighbouring hospital since this hospital was only for "whites."

A story in the *Soviet Literary Gazette* titled "The Tragedy of Coloured America," stated,

It is a country within a country. Coloured America is not allowed to mix with the other white America, it exists within it like the yolk in the white of an egg. Or, to be more exact, like a gigantic ghetto. The walls of this ghetto are invisible but they are nonetheless indestructible. They are placed within cities where the Negroes live in special quarters, in buses where the Negroes are assigned only the back seats, in hairdressers where they have special chairs.³²

Through its reliance on United Nations statements and the Soviet press, the *Henderson* brief hammered home the point that racial segregation hampered the U.S. government's fight against world communism.

There was another turf upon which the battle for democracy waged: the home front. The *Henderson* brief raised the specter of

African American radicalism. "The apparent hypocrisy of a society professing equality but practicing segregation and other forms of racial discrimination furnishes justification and reason for the latent urge to rebel, and frequently leads to lasting bitterness or total rejection of the American creed and system of government." However, the brief emphasized that African American protest was not tied to the Communist Party. The brief drew from the testimony of baseball player Jackie Robinson, who had appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Robinson testified:

Just because Communists kick up a big fuss over racial discrimination when it suits their purposes, a lot of people try to pretend that the whole issue is a creation of Communist imagination.

But they are not fooling anyone with this kind of pretense, and talk about "Communists stirring up Negroes to protest," only makes present misunderstanding worse than ever. Negroes were stirred up long before there was a Communist Party, and they'll stay stirred up long after the party has disappeared—unless Jim Crow has disappeared by then as well.³³

The clear implication was that while African American protest was not directly tied to communism, racial injustice added to discontent among African Americans and, if not remedied, could lead them to reject American democracy. Equality was a safeguard against domestic subversion. Racial segregation threatened the government's ability to maintain its role as a leader of the free world and to govern peacefully at home.

In *Henderson*, the Supreme Court ruled that railroad dining car segregation violated the Interstate Commerce Act because it was unequal treatment. Since segregation violated a federal statute, the Court did not need to decide whether segregation in interstate travel was unconstitutional and whether *Plessy v. Ferguson* should be overturned.³⁴

In the same year as the *Henderson* case, the Justice Department participated for the first time in cases challenging school segregation. The department argued that *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education* and *Sweatt v. Painter* were of "great importance"

to the nation because "they test the vitality and strength of the democratic ideals to which the United States is dedicated." In *McLaurin*, the University of Oklahoma had admitted an African American student, G. W. McLaurin, to its graduate program in education after he successfully challenged Oklahoma's segregation statutes in federal district court, but McLaurin was segregated within the university. He was assigned to a separate table in the library, a separate row in the classroom, and a separate table in the cafeteria. The NAACP argued that this different treatment on the basis of race violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. *Sweatt* involved a challenge to racial segregation at the University of Texas Law School. Heman Marion Sweatt was denied admission to the law school because he was African American. When a state trial court found that the university's action violated the Fourteenth Amendment, the state responded by quickly opening a separate black law school. There were great differences between the schools in libraries, faculties, and other resources. The question before the Supreme Court was whether the legal education provided at the black school was equal to that provided to whites at the University of Texas.³⁵

The U.S. brief in *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* stressed again that race discrimination was "the greatest unsolved task for American democracy." This time the Justice Department urged the Supreme Court to consider the foreign policy repercussions the Court's ruling in the cases might have.

The Court is here asked to place the seal of constitutional approval upon an undisguised species of racial discrimination. If the imprimatur of constitutionality should be put on such a denial of equality, one would expect the foes of democracy to exploit such an action for their own purposes. The ideals embodied in our Bill of Rights would be ridiculed as empty words, devoid of any real substance.

The consequences of such a ruling would be stark, extending far beyond the cases, and affecting the American way of life.

It is in the context of a world in which freedom and equality must become living realities, if the democratic way of life is to survive, that the issues in these cases should be viewed. In

these times, when even the foundations of our free institutions are not altogether secure, it is especially important that it again be unequivocally affirmed that the Constitution of the United States, like the Declaration of Independence and the other great state papers in American history, places no limitation, express or implied, on the principle of the equality of all men before the law.

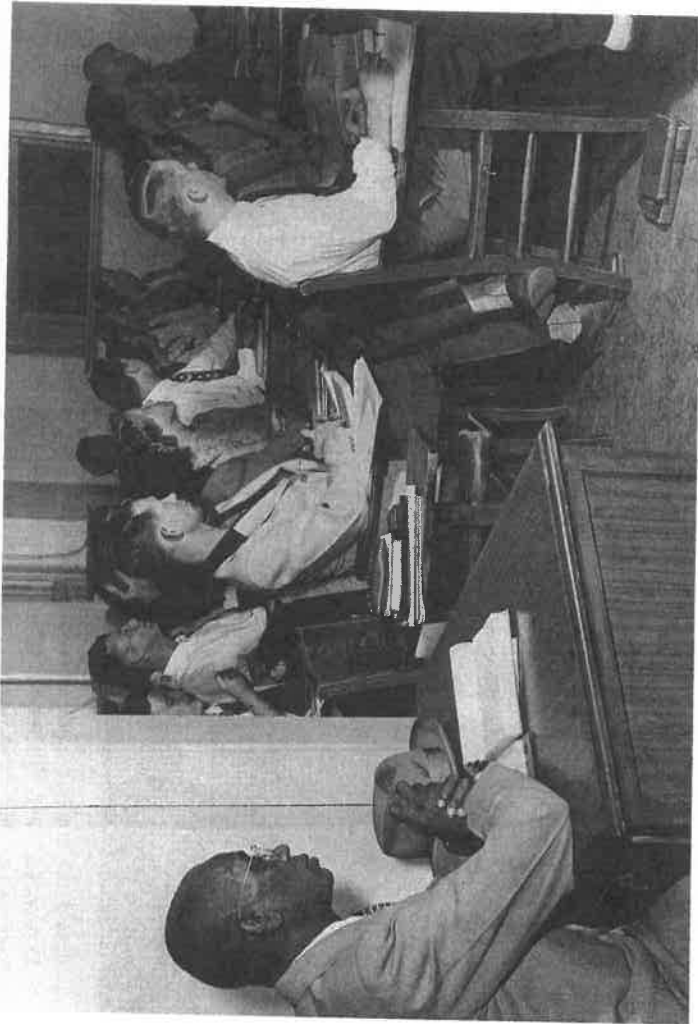
The brief then noted again the specific foreign policy implications of U.S. race discrimination that the Justice Department had previously outlined in the *Henderson* brief.³⁶

In *Sweatt* and *McLaurin*, the Supreme Court again sided with the Justice Department and the NAACP. In important rulings that significantly eroded the separate-but-equal doctrine, the Court found that segregation at the University of Texas Law School and the University of Oklahoma School of Education denied the African American plaintiffs equal treatment. The Court found that the plaintiffs' very isolation from white students meant that the education provided to them was unequal. Isolating them from white classmates denied Heman Sweatt and G. W. McLaurin the equality guaranteed them by the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court, however, declined to reconsider directly the constitutionality of segregation itself.³⁷

Segregation in the District of Columbia was an issue in the next series of crucial desegregation cases before the Court. While racial discrimination in southern states and throughout the nation had been the subject of foreign criticism, segregation in the District of Columbia was particularly embarrassing and was often a special focus of international attention. If segregation only existed in particular areas of the country, it would have been easier for the federal government to characterize it as a regional phenomenon, as something at odds with generally accepted American practices. As long as the seat of the federal government was segregated, however, any claims that segregation was not a widespread national practice seemed hollow. The District of Columbia was "the window through which the world looks into our house." If the United States were to clean up its international image, Washington was the place to begin.³⁸



President Harry S. Truman receiving the report of his President's Committee on Civil Rights, October 29, 1947. The report argued that one important reason the nation needed to make progress on civil rights was that race discrimination harmed U.S. foreign relations. (UPI/CORBIS-BETTANN)



George McLaurin was able to attend the University of Oklahoma School of Education but was segregated within the school. Here he attends class in an anteroom, separated from his white classmates, October 16, 1948. In McLaurin's Supreme Court challenge, the Justice Department argued that discrimination like this harmed the international image of American democracy. (UPI/CORBIS-BETTSMANN)

Segregation in the District was at issue in *Bolling v. Sharpe*, a companion case to *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Brown* challenged the constitutionality of racial segregation in public schools in cases from the states of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. The NAACP argued that state school segregation violated the equal protection clause, even if other conditions in the schools were equal. Because the federal government was responsible for District of Columbia schools, in *Bolling* the NAACP argued that school segregation in the District violated the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment, which applied to the federal government.³⁹

The school desegregation cases were consolidated, and the Justice Department filed one amicus brief arguing that school segregation in all five cases was unconstitutional. The brief emphasized the embarrassment of race discrimination in the nation's capital. "[F]oreign officials and visitors naturally judge this country and our people by their experiences and observations in the nation's capital; and the treatment of colored persons here is taken as the measure of our attitude toward minorities generally." The brief quoted President Truman's statement that "the District of Columbia should be a true symbol of American freedom and democracy for our own people, and for the people of the world." However, the President's Committee on Civil Rights had found that the District of Columbia was "a graphic illustration of a failure of democracy." The brief quoted at length from the Committee's report describing the segregation of African Americans in Washington:

The shameful and absurdity of Washington's treatment of Negro Americans is highlighted by the presence of many dark-skinned foreign visitors. Capital custom not only humiliates colored citizens, but is a source of considerable embarrassment to these visitors. . . . Foreign officials are often mistaken for American Negroes and refused food, lodging and entertainment. However, once it is established that they are not Americans, they are accommodated.⁴⁰

Beyond concerns about the District of Columbia, the implications of the school cases were very broad. Discrimination in public school systems raised "questions of the first importance in our society. For

racial discriminations imposed by law, or having the sanction or support of government, inevitably tend to undermine the foundations of a society dedicated to freedom, justice, and equality." Under the "rule of law" embodied in the U.S. Constitution, every arm of government "must treat each of our people as an *American*, and not as a member of a particular group classified on the basis of race or some other constitutional irrelevancy."⁴¹

Racial segregation interfered with the Cold War imperative of winning the world over to democracy, for

the existence of discrimination against minority groups in the United States has an adverse effect upon our relations with other countries. Racial discrimination furnishes grist for the Communist propaganda mills, and it raises doubts even among friendly nations as to the intensity of our devotion to the democratic faith.⁴²

To document this claim, the Justice Department devoted nearly two pages of the brief to a lengthy quotation from Dean Acheson, who was now secretary of state. Acheson expanded upon his earlier statement on race discrimination. Now he argued that the problem had worsened.

[D]uring the past six years, the damage to our foreign relations attributable to [race discrimination] has become progressively greater. The United States is under constant attack in the foreign press, over the foreign radio, and in such international bodies as the United Nations because of various practices of discrimination against minority groups in this country. As might be expected, Soviet spokesmen regularly exploit this situation in propaganda against the United States, both within the United Nations and through radio broadcasts and the press, which reaches all corners of the world. Some of these attacks against us are based on falsehood or distortion; but the undeniable existence of racial discrimination gives unfriendly governments the most effective kind of ammunition for their propaganda warfare.⁴³

World attention to U.S. discrimination was of increasing concern to the State Department, because

the hostile reaction among normally friendly peoples, many of whom are particularly sensitive in regard to the status of non-European races, is growing in alarming proportions. In such countries the view is expressed more and more vocally that the United States is hypocritical in claiming to be the champion of democracy while permitting practices of racial discrimination here in this country.⁴⁴

School segregation, in particular, had been "singled out for hostile foreign comment in the United Nations and elsewhere. Other peoples cannot understand how such a practice can exist in a country which professes to be a staunch supporter of freedom, justice, and democracy." The secretary of state concluded that "racial discrimination in the United States remains a source of constant embarrassment to this Government in the day-to-day conduct of its foreign relations; and it jeopardizes the effective maintenance of our moral leadership of the free and democratic nations of the world."⁴⁵

With this clear statement of the national security implications of the cases before the Court, the Justice Department brought its discussion of the interest of the United States to a close, and the brief turned to a more conventional constitutional argument. The centrality of the Cold War imperative to the government's posture on segregation was then reemphasized in the brief's closing paragraphs. The brief concluded by reiterating the notion that race discrimination "presents an unsolved problem for American democracy, an inescapable challenge to the sincerity of our espousal of the democratic faith." An affirmation of constitutional principles "in these days, when the free world must conserve and fortify the moral as well as the material sources of its strength, . . . is especially important." The final statement in the brief consisted of a quote from President Truman:

If we wish to inspire the people of the world whose freedom is in jeopardy, if we wish to restore hope to those who have already lost their civil liberties, if we wish to fulfill the promise

that is ours, we must correct the remaining imperfections in our practice of democracy.

We know the way. We need only the will.⁴⁶

The NAACP referred to the Cold War argument, although briefly, when the *Brown* case was reargued in 1953. It stressed that the “survival of our country in the present international situation is inevitably tied to resolution of this domestic issue.” Meanwhile the significance of the pending *Brown* litigation was not lost on foreign critics of American racism. In December 1952, a prominent Amsterdam newspaper pointed to the pending cases as a “dynamic development of the handling of the negro problem in the United States.” Referring to Gunnar Myrdal’s definition of the “American Dilemma” as “the divergence between the American credo and American practice,” the paper believed that “the fact that the Washington Court deals with this problem, indicates that the bridge between credo and reality is nearing its completion.”⁴⁷

In *Brown* and *Bolling*, the Supreme Court, adopting the position the Justice Department had been urging since *Henderson*, ruled that racial segregation violated the Constitution. The Court emphasized the “importance of education to our democratic society.” Education was “required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces.” It was “the very foundation of good citizenship.” Because “in these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education,” where a state provided public education, it is “a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.” Relying on social science data detailing the harmful effects of segregation on schoolchildren, the Court concluded that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”⁴⁸

Making national security arguments in civil rights cases would seem an odd thing for the Justice Department to do. The cases would presumably turn upon the Justices’ reading of the Constitution and of the cases interpreting it. The Justice Department briefs were filed with a Court that had been focused for some time on questions of national security. During World War II, the Court regularly interpreted the Constitution in light of wartime necessities,

foreign and domestic. For example, for a time the Court allowed schools to expel children who failed for religious reasons to salute the flag, arguing in 1940 that “national unity is the basis of national security.” When the Court reversed itself in 1943, it argued that suppression of religious liberty was a step down the road to totalitarianism. National security had required the denial of a right but later served as the basis for its protection. In perhaps the most dramatic line of wartime individual rights cases, the Court upheld aspects of the program to relocate Japanese Americans to internment camps. Justice Harlan Fiske Stone, often a champion of minority rights, wrote in *Hirabayashi v. United States* that “distinctions between citizens solely because of their ancestry are by their very nature odious to free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality.” Yet Stone wrote the Court’s majority opinion upholding a curfew requirement as applied to Japanese American citizens. According to Stone, “[w]e cannot close our eyes to the fact, demonstrated by experience, that in time of war residents having ethnic affiliations with an invading enemy may be a greater source of danger than those of a different ancestry.” When Japanese Americans were ordered from their homes and sent to what Justice Owen Roberts called America’s concentration camps, the Court majority in *Korematsu v. United States* acknowledged that this was a hardship, but “hardships are part of war.”⁴⁹

In the wartime cases, the Court’s assessment of the requirements of national security and the correct balance between security and liberty came not simply from the facts of the cases and the briefs before the Court but also from what members of the Court felt that they knew about the world. In *Hirabayashi*, the Court dared not “close its eyes” to what it thought to be the danger of ethnic ties. During the Cold War, as well, members of the Court would draw upon their own understanding of the world in assessing new questions of national security. In *Dennis v. United States*, a 1951 case upholding the prosecution of Communist Party members for subversive activities, Justice Felix Frankfurter suggested in a concurring opinion that the Court was not limited to the facts presented by the parties. “We may take judicial notice that the Communist doctrines which these defendants have conspired to advocate are in the ascen-

dency in powerful nations who cannot be acquitted of unfriendliness to the institutions of this country." The perceived threat of communism was a necessary backdrop to the case. To understand the "meaning of the menace of Communism," Frankfurter turned to the architect of containment himself, George F. Kennan, and quoted at length from an essay Kennan had published in the *New York Times* magazine.⁵⁰

In these cases the Court was explicit about something that surely happens as a matter of course. Members of the Court bring to each case their understanding of the world and the same hopes and fears about the future that grip other mortals. Unable to step out of their own cultural and political moment, members of the Court operated during the Cold War within an environment shaped by Cold War tensions. They applied the law to the world they knew.⁵¹ Within their world, national security was at risk, and national security would be enhanced by racial equality. In *Korematsu*, national security required discrimination; in *Brown*, national security required equality. The Justice Department hammered home in *Brown* an argument that any reader of American newspapers would already have been familiar with. The function of the briefs, therefore, was not to introduce to the Court a new idea but to underscore its role in the cases, and to emphasize the Court's responsibility. The briefs were a call to arms to enlist the Court in a project it was already engaged in: safeguarding national security in the Cold War.

The *Brown* opinion itself does not directly invoke national security and does not contain explicit Cold War rhetoric. It would, of course, be somewhat impolitic of the Court to suggest that the decision was motivated not by a dispassionate reading of the Constitution but rather by a concern about how others viewed the morality of the American form of government. *Brown* would be a more effective Cold War tool by suggesting that racial equality was simply an American constitutional principle.

There does not appear to be direct evidence that members of the Supreme Court discussed the impact of racial segregation on Cold War foreign relations in their deliberations in *Brown*, but the Justices were well aware of this issue. Justice William O. Douglas, in particular, addressed the impact of race discrimination on American pres-

tige abroad in his writings. When Douglas went to India in 1950, the first question asked of him at his first press conference in New Delhi was "Why does America tolerate the lynching of Negroes?" In his 1951 book, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*, he wrote about the importance of Asian "color consciousness." Douglas found that in India "this color consciousness is a major influence in domestic and foreign affairs. The treatment of colored peoples by other nations is an important consideration in the warmth of India's relations to the outside world." As a result, Douglas wrote, "the attitude of the United States toward its colored minorities is a powerful factor in our relations with India."⁵²

Douglas believed that a speech by Edith Sampson, an African American attorney from Chicago, "created more good will and understanding in India than any other single act by any American." Speaking in New Delhi in 1949, Sampson told her audience that she would not tolerate criticism of the United States for its civil rights record because, in the previous eighty years, African Americans had advanced further "than any similar group in the entire world." Douglas's sense of the significance of Sampson's speech was in keeping with his view that in the battle for Asia's allegiance, "it is ideas that will win, not dollars." He wrote that goodwill between peoples was ultimately of most importance to the Cold War struggle for the allegiance of other nations. "Neither wealth nor might will determine the outcome of the struggles in Asia. They will turn on emotional factors too subtle to measure. *Political alliances of an enduring nature will be built not on the power of guns or dollars, but on affection.*"⁵³

An account of Douglas's later Himalayan trek reflects increasing concern about communist influence in Asia. He observed among the people "a race and color consciousness that is a dominant and often overriding factor in basic policy issues." In July 1951 in Peshawar, Pakistan, a man Douglas described as a "Mongol prince" told him that the Soviet Union would prevail over the United States in the battle for Asia in part because the United States was not viewed as an advocate of social justice. "America has the wealth and the military power," he told the Justice. "Russia has the ideas."⁵⁴

Chief Justice Earl Warren saw things the same way. He agreed with Justice Douglas that the Cold War was a war of ideas, and he

thought that the judiciary had a role to play in this battle. Justice Warren told the judges of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in June of 1954 that the world needed “a sense of justice instead of a sense of might.” He suggested that the American conception of justice “separates us from many other political systems of the world.” If the judiciary would uphold the ideals of American justice, “you and I can make our contribution to justice at home and peace in the world.” Later that year in a speech at the American Bar Association, Warren stressed that

[o]ur American system like all others is on trial both at home and abroad. The way it works; the manner in which it solves the problems of our day; the extent to which we maintain the spirit of our Constitution with its Bill of Rights, will in the long run do more to make it both secure and the object of adulation than the number of hydrogen bombs we stockpile.

A peaceful world, he argued, “will be accomplished through ideas rather than armaments; through a sense of justice and mutual friendships rather than with guns and bombs and guided missiles.” American ideals were central in the “contest for the hearts and minds of people.” Chief Justice Warren’s understanding of the importance of *Brown* to U.S. foreign relations would be illustrated most dramatically when President Eisenhower sent him on a goodwill tour of India in 1956. It was because Warren was the author of *Brown* that his mere presence was thought to promote good relations with that nation.⁵⁵

Other members of the Court traveled extensively abroad in the years before *Brown v. Board of Education*. Spending time overseas during a period when American race discrimination was a prominent source of news headlines, these Justices could not have helped but recognize the international concern over American civil rights abuses. Members of the Court were also concerned about the impact of their opinions on a broader audience and so were well aware of the importance of the concern expressed by the Justice Department that an opinion by the Court upholding segregation would have negative implications for foreign relations. Justice Hugo Black once cautioned that airing “dirty linen” in Supreme Court opinions was unwise, par-

ticularly when “‘softer blows’ yielded the same results without displaying ugly facts that enemies abroad could use ‘to do us harm.’”⁵⁶

When *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided, the opinion gave the U.S. government the counter to Soviet propaganda it had been looking for, and the State Department and USIA wasted no time in making use of it. Within an hour after the decision was handed down, the Voice of America broadcast the news to Eastern Europe. An analysis accompanying the “straight news broadcasts” emphasized that “the issue was settled by law under democratic processes rather than by mob rule or dictatorial fiat.” The *Brown* broadcast received “top priority on the Voice’s programs” and was to be “beamed possibly for several days, particularly to Russian satellites and Communist China.” As the Voice of America put it: “[I]n these countries . . . the people would know nothing about the decision except what would be told them by the Communist press and radio, which you may be sure would be twisted and perverted. They have been told that the Negro in the United States is still practically a slave and a declassified citizen.”⁵⁷

The rosy picture of racial equality celebrated in the USIA’s coverage of *Brown* seemed to fulfill a promise that had already been made in official government materials on race in America that were disseminated overseas. *Brown* was an essential and long-overdue affirmation of the story of race and American democracy that the government had already promoted abroad.

The *Brown* decision had the kind of effect on international opinion that the government had hoped for. Favorable reaction to the opinion spanned the globe. On May 21, 1954, for example, the president of the Municipal Council of Santos, São Paulo, Brazil, sent a letter to the U.S. embassy in Rio de Janeiro celebrating the *Brown* decision. The municipal council had passed a motion recording “a vote of satisfaction” with the ruling. It viewed *Brown* as “establishing the just equality of the races, essential to universal harmony and peace.” The council desired that “the Consul of that great and friendly nation be officially notified of our desire to partake in the rejoicing with which the said decision was received in all corners of the civilized world.”⁵⁸

Newspapers in Africa gave extensive coverage to the decision. According to a dispatch from the American consul in Dakar, *Brown* was "greeted with enthusiasm in French West Africa although the press has expressed some slight skepticism over its implementation." *Afrique Nouvelle*, a weekly paper that was a "highly vocal opponent of all racial discrimination," carried an article under the headline "At last! Whites and Blacks in the United States on the same school benches." According to the consul, *Afrique Nouvelle* was concerned that there would be

"desperate struggles" in some states against the decision but expresses the hope that the representatives of the negroes and the "spiritual forces" of the United States will apply themselves to giving it force and life. The article concludes by saying that "all the peoples of the world can salute with joy this measure of progress."

According to the dispatch, "other editorial comment has been similar and the news has been prominently featured in all papers received by the Consulate General since the decision was made." The American consul was pleased with this response. "[W]hile it is, of course too soon to speculate on the long range effects of the decision in this area," he wrote, "it is well to remember that school segregation more than any other single factor has lowered the prestige of the United States among Africans here and the overall results, therefore, can hardly fail to be beneficial."⁵⁹

Not all reaction to *Brown* was enthusiastic. In South Africa, the decision "elicited general public interest, but little articulate reaction." According to the U.S. embassy in Cape Town, "[M]ost South African Whites are segregationists and, though they may see some similarity in America's color problem, regard their own racial situation as having no true parallel elsewhere. Their interest in the decisions, then, would be very academic."⁶⁰

In India, where substantial attention was paid to American racial problems, Carl Rowan would not face the usual inquiries on his 1954 speaking tour in that country because the *Brown* decision had dampened criticism. He wrote that "at least five people in USIS and the Embassy told me I could expect less heat on the race question

than previous visitors, because USIS, the Voice of America and other agencies had done a thorough job of publicizing the May 17, 1954, decision of the United States Supreme Court declaring racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional." When Chief Justice Earl Warren arrived in India in October 1956, his reputation had preceded him. According to the vice-chancellor of Delhi University, Warren "rose to fame in 28 minutes of that Monday afternoon as he read out his momentous decision outlawing racial segregation in American public schools."⁶¹

It is not surprising that Justice Warren's Indian hosts were fully aware of *Brown*. According to an August 1954 National Security Council Report, the U.S. Information Agency "exploited to the fullest the anti-segregation decision of the U.S. Supreme Court." *Brown* "was of especially far-reaching importance in Africa and India." In Africa, for example, the report noted that "the decision is regarded as the greatest event since the Emancipation Proclamation, and it removes from Communist hands the most effective anti-American weapon they had in Black Africa." To take advantage of the ruling, "[a]rticles on the decision were placed by the Agency in almost every African publication, and its post in Accra published a special edition of the American Outlook for distribution in British West Africa and Liberia." Throughout the Near East, South Asia, and Africa, "the initial effort is being followed up with reports of how the decision is being put into effect."⁶²

A report on end-of-the-year activities also noted that desegregation stories were continuing to be emphasized in India and Africa. The impact of *Brown* in India came as a great relief. As a State Department document noted in 1956, "Criticism of the United States because of color discrimination practices . . . has markedly declined in recent years, partly as a result of the Supreme Court decisions in the school segregation cases."⁶³

Although the initial decision to participate in *Brown* had been made by the Truman administration, the Republican National Committee (RNC) was happy to take credit for it. On May 21, 1954, the RNC issued a statement that claimed that the decision "falls appropriately within the Eisenhower Administration's many-frontal attack on global Communism. Human equality at home is

a weapon of freedom. . . . It helps guarantee the Free World's cause." President Eisenhower himself was less enthusiastic, however, and he repeatedly refused to endorse *Brown* publicly.⁶⁴

Newspapers in many parts of the United States celebrated *Brown* as affirming democratic principles. According to the *New York Herald Tribune*, the decision "squared the country's basic law with its conscience and its deepest convictions." Others considered the decision's foreign policy benefits to be of central importance. The *San Francisco Chronicle* believed that "great as the impact of the antisegregation ruling will be upon the states of the South in their struggle to make the physical and intellectual adjustment which it requires, still greater, we believe, will be its impact on South America, Africa and Asia, to this country's lasting honor and benefit." The paper believed that "to the vast majority of the peoples of the world who have colored skins, [*Brown*] will come as a blinding flash of light and hope" that "presents a new picture of America and puts this Nation in a new posture of justice." As the *Pittsburgh Courier* saw it, "[T]his clarion announcement will . . . stun and silence America's Communist traducers behind the Iron Curtain. It will effectively impress upon millions of colored people in Asia and Africa the fact that idealism and social morality can and do prevail in the United States, regardless of race, creed or color."⁶⁵

Throughout the South, many newspapers called for calm. In North Carolina, the *Charlotte News* urged that "somehow, the South must keep the sweep of human history in proper perspective, must apply its intelligence coolly and dispassionately, and must find the resources for giving all its children equality of education." Many southern politicians, however, were less magnanimous. Governor Herman Talmadge of Georgia, who had promised that "there will never be mixed schools while I am governor," claimed that the decision "has reduced our Constitution to a mere scrap of paper." Governor James F. Byrnes of South Carolina was "shocked" at the decision but called for whites and blacks to "exercise restraint and preserve order." Although most Alabama public officials "met news of the high court's ruling with a calm wait and see attitude," one state legislator claimed, "we are going to keep every brick in our segregation wall intact." Some southerners, however, welcomed the decision. Ac-

ording to the *Atlanta Daily World*, "local leaders and educators" in Atlanta viewed *Brown* "as a giant step forward for democracy at home and abroad." A member of the Atlanta Board of Education proclaimed that *Brown* had "given an effective and resounding reply to the Communist criticism of our treatment of our minority group."⁶⁶

Anticommunism in the South cut both ways. Robert Patterson, a founder of the first White Citizens Council, thought that the "dark cloud of integration" was communist-inspired. He protested "the Communist theme of all races and mongrelization" and promised that, if southerners worked together, "we will defeat this communistic disease that is being thrust upon us."⁶⁷

The Justice Department had argued that segregation had to be abandoned because of its use in Soviet propaganda. This sort of argument was too much for Governor Herman Talmadge. In his 1955 book *You and Segregation*, Talmadge claimed that "for over a decade now, the American people have been undergoing . . . vicious and dangerous 'brain-washing' " directed by international communists. "Stop and think for a moment," he urged.

How many times have you read in your newspapers and magazines or heard over the airwaves this question:

"What will Russia say if our government does this?"

How many times have you read or heard this: "What will the Reds say if we don't do this?" or "What will the Communist newspaper *Pravda* print about the United States because we do this or that?" In some instances we have shaped our national policy by trying to please the Communists.

Talmadge thought that "too many things are being done in our country and by our country because we keep looking back over our shoulders at the Communists. Who cares what the Reds say? Who cares what *Pravda* prints?" He claimed that "only one group stands to gain" from the "attacks on the Bill of Rights" that *Brown* represented. "That group is the Communist party and its fellow travelers."⁶⁸

As Talmadge's segregationist polemic suggested, U.S. actions taken to dismantle racial segregation were motivated, in part, by what *Pravda* printed. This was not, as Talmadge suggested, because

the U.S. government was procommunist, but because it was anti-communist. The simple reality of American race discrimination, and the impact of its use in communist propaganda abroad, meant that the United States could not leave these charges unanswered and still succeed with its Cold War international agenda.

Although *Brown* was heralded as a great advance, significant segregation remained in the nation's schools. The Supreme Court appeared satisfied, for the time being, with abstract pronouncements about equality. When *Brown* was decided in 1954, the Court announced the formal legal principle that racial segregation in public education violated the Fourteenth Amendment, but the Court put off the question of how the denial of equal rights might be remedied. In 1955, the Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education II* that lower courts should fashion relief in a way that led to desegregation "with all deliberate speed." The lower courts, in taking up *Brown II*, interpreted it as an indication that delaying school desegregation was appropriate. As a result, the rights upheld in *Brown* remained abstract rights. The Supreme Court then stayed out of the business of defining and enforcing the rights in *Brown* for several years. Although the Court would extend *Brown's* desegregation principle to other areas, in the school cases the Court, for the most part, remained silent.⁶⁹

Some actual change had been needed to give the State Department and information programs something more convincing to work with. Although *Brown II* required no immediate, concrete steps to implement *Brown's* nonsegregation principle, embassy and USIA personnel could still point to the formal right to equality established in *Brown*, and argue that change was at hand.

Following *Brown*, the world kept a close eye on U.S. race relations, but the perspective had changed for the better. In Madras, India, for example, the American consul reported that "South India interest in the progress of racial desegregation in the United States has been keen ever since the Supreme Court's decision." The Montgomery bus boycott and white resistance to Autherine Lucy's attempt to enroll at the University of Alabama were prominently cov-

ered in newspapers in that region, but the coverage reflected "the hope of most South Indians that the conflict will be resolved quickly and relatively painlessly, in compliance with the ruling of the Supreme Court."⁷⁰

While incidents such as the Lucy case continued to captivate foreign audiences, criticism would at times be tempered with discussions of American constitutionalism. For example, an editorial in the Swiss paper *La Sentinelle* expressed outrage over acquittals in the lynching of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till in Mississippi but also praised a Florida judge who sentenced a white man to life in prison for the rape of an African American woman. This difference was attributed to "United States federalism." The paper believed that American racism existed in particular regions of the country where "habit and tradition are so deep rooted that nothing (short of a Federal law) could change such revolting trial ethics." While most stories on the Till case blistered with indignation, another Swiss paper "balanced" its coverage with a reference to *Brown*.⁷¹

The continuing reality of racial brutality in the American South kept American race discrimination on the pages of the foreign press, but the framework provided by *The Negro in American Life*, capped by *Brown v. Board of Education*, provided a counternarrative to Soviet exploitation of this American dilemma. National policy was said to endorse ever burgeoning equality. The basic charter of the nation embraced equal rights for all. Yet the very document that provided the foundation for the value of equality, the American Constitution, also protected freedom to dissent. Expression of racial animosity was therefore a sign of the strength, not the weakness, of the nation. America was sufficiently sure of herself that she could tolerate the free expression of dissent even as she encouraged her people on the path toward racial enlightenment.

American constitutional change, the Voice of America had proclaimed in announcing *Brown*, illustrated the superiority of democratic process over communist oppression. *Brown* and the image of American democracy it projected were thought to be of the utmost importance in a world torn by Cold War animosities. Any threat to that image was a threat to U.S. national security. Although the

American image was battered after *Brown* by the Autherine Lucy case and the murder of Emmett Till, these events would be eclipsed by a direct threat to *Brown* and to the carefully crafted image of *The Negro in American Life*. The place would be Little Rock, Arkansas, where the opening of school in 1957 precipitated a crisis within the city that would reverberate around the world.

CHAPTER 4

Holding the Line in Little Rock

Little Rock has unfortunately become a symbol of Negro-White relations in the United States.

AMERICAN CONSULATE, LOURENÇO MARQUESZ, MOZAMBIQUE
TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE, SEPTEMBER 30, 1957¹

The school year would not begin easily in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. On September 4 of that year, nine African American students tried to enroll at Little Rock's Central High School. Their admission had been ordered by a federal district court. However, just two days earlier, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus declared that the students' enrollment threatened "imminent danger of tumult, riot and breach of the peace and the doing of violence to persons and property." He proclaimed a state of emergency and ordered the Arkansas National Guard into service. These troops surrounded Central High School on September 4 and turned the students away as they tried to enter the school.²

What transpired that day would capture the attention of the international media and of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. School desegregation in Little Rock was no longer a local or state issue, but a critical national problem.³

nations decried the United States death penalty. And many questioned the state of racial justice in America when Amadou Diallo, an immigrant from Guinea, was shot nineteen times by New York City police officers as he stood, unarmed, in the doorway of his home.⁶

The international critique has been persistent. What has changed is the perception of whether it has strategic importance. In the absence of immediate strategic advantages there remains, however, the ever-present international gaze, and the questions of new generations about the nature of American democracy. As Locksley Edmundson put it, "Those states best technically equipped to maintain world order are not necessarily the ones whose credentials recommend them as the most appropriate guardians of a global conscience." Edmundson's point was at the center of the international critique of American racism during the Cold War. World politics is no longer structured by Cold War divisions, but one aspect of international relations remains the same. We live, now as then, in a world of color. As Martin Luther King Jr. suggested, the destiny of people of color "is tied up in the destiny of America," and justice at home will have an impact on the nation's moral standing in a diverse and divided world.⁷

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Lewis Allan and Earl Robinson, "The House I Live In," (1942), *The Great American Songbook* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1991), 54. Several artists, including Paul Robeson, recorded "The House I Live In." Frank Sinatra popularized the song in 1945, when he sang it in a wartime short film. Earl Robinson with Eric A. Gordon, *Ballad of an American: The Autobiography of Earl Robinson* (Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 1998), 151–157.
2. Consulate General, Toronto, to Department of State, August 25, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/8–2558, National Archives (enclosure: story from *Toronto Star*, August 20, 1958).
3. *Ibid.*; *Wilson v. State of Alabama*, 268 Ala. 86, 105 So. 2d 66 (Ala. 1958); Janie L. Ellzey, "Criminal Law—Evidence—Proof of other Crimes as Part of *Res Gestae*," *Alabama Law Review* 11 (Fall 1958): 169–173; Dulles to All African Posts, September, 12, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–1258; National Archives; American Consul, Edinburgh, Scotland, to Department of State, September 10, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–1058, National Archives; American Embassy, Bern, to Department of State, September 16, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–1658 HBS, National Archives.
4. American Embassy, Addis Ababa, to Department of State, September 23, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–2358 HBS, National Archives; American Embassy, Accra, to Department of State, August 30, 1958, enclosure no. 1, RG 59, 811.411/8–3058, National Archives; Monrovia to Secretary of State, September 3, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–358, National Archives; American Embassy, Monrovia, to Department of State, July 1, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/7–158, National Archives.
5. Translator's Summary of Communication, September 12, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–1258, National Archives; Members of Israeli Parliament to Government of the United States of America, September 21, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–2158, National Archives; Trades Union Congress (Ghana) to Chargé d'Affaires, American Embassy, Accra, September 16, 1958, Enclosure 1 to American Embassy, Accra, to Department of State, September 18, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–1858, National Archives; American Consul General, Kingston, Jamaica to Department of State, September 10, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–1058, National Archives; The Hague to Secretary of State, September 12, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/

- 9–1258, National Archives; Perth to Secretary of State, September 5, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–558, National Archives.
6. *New York Times*, August 23, 1958, p. 16; *New York Times*, August 25, 1958, p. 16; *New York Times*, August 27, 1958, p. 16; *New York Times*, September 13, 1958, p. 9; *New York Times*, September 15, 1958, p. 21; *New York Times*, September 23, 1958, p. 20.
7. Robinson to Dulles, August 22, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/8–2258, National Archives.
8. *New York Times*, September 14, 1958, p. 56; *New York Times*, September 25, 1958, p. 20; *New York Times*, September 30, 1958, p. 1; Circular to All American Diplomatic Posts—Except Taipei, September 9, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–958, National Archives; Circular to All American Diplomatic Posts—Except Taipei, September 12, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–1258, National Archives; Dulles to Folsom, September 4, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–458, National Archives; Montgomery, Alabama, to Secretary of State, September 5, 1958, RG 59, 811.411/9–558, National Archives.
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10. Jonathan Seth Rosenberg, “‘How Far the Promised Land?’: World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement from the First World War to Vietnam” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1997), 84, 90–91, 116, 147–148; Carol Elaine Anderson, “Eyes Off the Prize: African-Americans, the United Nations, and the Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1952” (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1995), 55–104. The importance of race at the Paris Peace Conference is detailed in Paul Gordon Lauren’s masterful work, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 82–107.
11. On the impact of World War I on civil rights reform, see Philip A. Klinkner with Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 109–118.
12. David M. Bixby, “The Roosevelt Court, Democratic Ideology and Minority Rights: Another Look at *United States v. Classic*,” *Yale Law Journal* 90 (March 1981): 741.
13. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), 1004.
14. *Ibid.*, lxix, 4 (emphasis in original).
15. *Ibid.*, 1015–1016.
16. Pearl S. Buck, *American Unity and Asia* (New York: John Day, 1942), 29; Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, 1016; John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 5, 26.
17. Paula F. Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Herbert Garfinkel, *When Negroes March: The March on Washington Movement in the Organizational Politics for FEPC* (Glencoe, Ill.:

- The Free Press, 1959); Lucy Grace Barber, “Marches on Washington, 1894–1963: National Political Demonstrations and American Political Culture” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1996), 251–362; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 86. On domestic civil rights consciousness, see Peter J. Kellogg, “Civil Rights Consciousness in the 1940s,” *The Historian* 42 (1979): 18–41.
18. *The House I Live In* (RKO, 1945); Kitty Kelley, *His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 115–116. I will always be grateful to Steve Wizner for telling me about this film.
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23. Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little Brown, 1998), 154–200, 359–415; David Cauter, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978); Manning Marable, *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1984); Gerald Horne, *Communist Front?: The Civil Rights Congress 1946–1956* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988); Kenneth O’Reilly, “Racial Matters”: *The FBI’s Secret File on Black America, 1960–1972* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).
- The Cold War turn in American race politics stifled a left-progressive tradition that had existed in the years before the war. See Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).
24. Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 112–121. See also Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid’s Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 56.
25. Rosenberg, “‘How Far the Promised Land?,’” 395–475; Klinkner with Smith, *The Unsteady March*; Kenneth R. Janken, “From Colonial Liberation to Cold War Liberalism: Walter White, the NAACP, and Foreign Affairs, 1941–1955,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21 (November 1998): 1074–1095; Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Knopf,

1988), 341–350, 364–372, 388–389; Horne, *Communist Front?*; Victor Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Viking Press, 1980); Mary L. Dudziak, “Josephine Baker, Racial Protest and the Cold War,” *Journal of American History* 81 (September 1994): 543–570.

26. On approaches to civil rights historiography, see Armstead L. Robinson and Patricia Sullivan, *New Directions in Civil Rights Studies* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991); Steven F. Lawson, “Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of The Civil Rights Movement,” *American Historical Review* (April 1991): 456–471; Charles M. Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 413–441; David Chappell, “Introduction,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 56 (Fall 1997): 11–16 (editor’s introduction to collection of essays on the Little Rock crisis).

The question of the role of the Cold War and foreign affairs in domestic civil rights reform has been noted consistently by some scholars but until recently has been at the margins of civil rights historiography. The work of Gerald Horne, Brenda Gayle Plummer, and others has helped lay a foundation for a broadening literature on race, civil rights, and foreign relations. Derrick Bell has long argued that the Cold War was a critical factor in influencing the development of the constitutional right to equality. Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. DuBois and the Afro American Response to the Cold War* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Plummer, *Rising Wind*; Derrick A. Bell Jr., “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” *Harvard Law Review* 93 (January 1980): 518, reprinted in Derrick A. Bell Jr., *Shades of Brown: New Perspectives on School Desegregation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1980); Derrick A. Bell Jr., “Racial Remediation: An Historical Perspective on Current Conditions,” *Notre Dame Lawyer* 52 (October 1976): 5, 12. See also Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid’s Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire. Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); Michael L. Krenn, *Black Diplomacy: African Americans and the State Department, 1945–1969* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999); “Symposium: African Americans and U. S. Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 20 (Fall 1996): 531; Mark Solomon, “Black Critics of Colonialism and the Cold War,” in *Cold War Critics: Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years*, Thomas G. Patterson, ed. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 205–239; Mary Francis Berry, *Black Resistance White Law: A History of Constitutional Racism in America* (New York: Penguin Press, 1994), 135, 146; Mary L. Dudziak, “Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative,” *Stanford Law Review* 41 (November 1988): 61–120; Richard Lentz and Pamela Brown, “The Business of Great Nations’: International Coverage, Foreign Public Opinion and the Modern American Civil Rights Movement” (paper presented to the Western Journalism Historians Conference, Berkeley, California, February 28–29, 1992); Yvette Richards, “Race, Gender and Anticommunism in the International Labor Movement: The Pan-African Connections of Maida Springer, International Labor Representative,” *Journal of Women’s History* 11 (Summer 1999). On race and U.S. foreign affairs, see Michael M. Hunt, *Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), 46–91; *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Colonial Period to the Present*, 5 vols., Michael

L. Krenn, ed., (New York: Garland, 1998). Drawing upon works like these, and looking more broadly across the span of American history, Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith in their important book argue that periods of conflict, including the Cold War, have been a crucial element in moments of change leading to greater racial equality in the United States. Klinkner with Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 317–351.

27. For powerful critiques of the black/white paradigm, see Robert S. Chang, *Disoriented: Asian Americans, the Law and the Nation-State*; Juan F. Perea (New York: New York University Press, 1999), “The Black/White Binary Paradigm of Race: The ‘Normal Science’ of American Racial Thought,” *California Law Review* 85 (October 1997): 1213–1258.

28. *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of the Cold War*, Lary May, ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); E. May, *Homeward Bound*; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). Adolph Reed argues that the Cold War intellectual climate also limited the focus of scholarly inquiry on African American thought. Adolph L. Reed Jr., *W. E. B. DuBois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6–11.

During the early Cold War years, “Americanism” came to be identified with support for the status quo, and unqualified defense of American democracy. This focused Americanism replaced a more diverse set of ideas. During the pre-World War II years, labor activists and civil rights leaders found in the concept of Americanism notions of justice and equality and employed Americanism as rhetoric for social change. Gary Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5–15.

29. For other works that place American history within a transnational framework, see Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); David Thelen, “The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History,” *Journal of American History* 86 (December 1999): 965–975, and other essays collected in “The Nation and Beyond: A Special Issue,” *Journal of American History* 86 (December 1999): 965–1307. While the global turn is often seen as a new methodology in American historiography, Robin D. G. Kelley argues that “Black studies, Chicano/a studies, and Asian American studies were diasporic from their inception.” Robin D. G. Kelley, “‘But a Local Phase of a World Problem’: Black History’s Global Vision,” *Journal of American History* 86 (December 1999): 1045.

CHAPTER ONE

1. American Embassy, Colombo, Ceylon, to Secretary of State, May 25, 1949, RG 59, 811.4016/5–2549, National Archives.

2. *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 2d Sess., 1946, 92, pt. 8:10259 (reprinting article from *New York Herald Tribune*, July 27, 1946). The broader context of these killings is discussed in Wallace H. Warren, “‘The Best People in Town Won’t Talk’: The Moore’s Ford Lynching of 1946 and Its Cover-Up,” in *Georgia in Black and White: Explorations in*

the Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865–1950, John C. Inscoe, ed. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 266–288.

3. *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 2d Sess., 1946, 92, pt. 8:10259 (reprinting article from *New York Herald Tribune*, July 27, 1946).

4. *Ibid.*; *New York Times*, July 28, 1946, pp. 1, 25; Warren, “The Moore’s Ford Lynching.”

5. *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 2d Sess., 1946, 92, pt. 8:10259 (reprinting article from *New York Herald Tribune*, July 27, 1946).

6. *Ibid.*; *New York Times*, July 28, 1946, pp. 1, 25; *The Times* (London), July 27, 1946, p. 3; Lynching—Walton GA/Press Releases & Statements, II-A-400, Frame 588, Papers of NAACP: The Anti-Lynching Campaign 1912–1955, Series A (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America).

7. Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 280–325; Charles M. Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

8. *New York Times*, July 31, 1946, pp. 1, 48; *Daily Worker* (New York), August 7, 1946, p. 2, in Lynching—Walton GA/Press Releases & Statements, II-A-400, Frame 530, Papers of NAACP: The Anti-Lynching Campaign 1912–1955, Series A (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America).

9. *New York Times*, July 31, 1946, pp. 1, 48; U.S. Embassy, Moscow, to Department of State, August 26, 1946, RG 59, 811.4016/8–2646, National Archives.

10. *New York Times*, July 29, 1946, p. 36.

11. *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 2d Sess., 1946, 92, pt. 8:10258.

12. Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, *Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1973), 45–48; Walter White, *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), 322–323, 327.

13. McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 47–48. While Truman appeared to be acting spontaneously upon Walter White’s suggestion that he set up a committee on civil rights, William Berman has written that Truman and his advisors had previously decided to set up such a committee and used the meeting with the National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence as the vehicle to announce the decision. William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970), 51.

14. Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945–1948* (New York: Norton, 1977), 32–33.

15. *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, Robert H. Ferrell, ed., (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 146–147; David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 588–589; Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 364–666.

16. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 32–33, 114; McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 32–33; A. Philip Randolph, “Call to the March,” in *Black Protest Thought in the*

Twentieth Century, 2d ed., August Meier, Elliott Rudwick, and Francis L. Broderick, eds. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), 220–224.

While some historians have viewed Truman’s support for FEPC legislation as evidence of his commitment to civil rights, others have considered it an example of his ineffectiveness. According to Louis Ruchames, Truman supported permanent FEPC legislation, which he knew wouldn’t get through Congress, and at the same time refused to push for an appropriation for the existing temporary FEPC, which might have been aided by his active support. Louis Ruchames, *Race, Jobs and Politics: The Story of FEPC* (Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1953), 126. See also Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 26–29.

17. Clark Clifford to Truman, November 19, 1947, Political File—Confidential Memo to President, box 21, Clark Clifford Papers, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, pp. 3, 12–13, 19, 40; Harvard Sitkoff, “Harry Truman and the Election of 1948: The Coming of Age of Civil Rights in American Politics,” *Journal of Southern History* 37 (November 1971): 597. While Clark Clifford claims authorship for the memo which bears his name, David McCullough has written that the memo was actually drafted by James A. Rowe Jr. and edited by Clifford and George Elsey. According to McCullough, Rowe’s authorship was obscured because he was the law partner of a man Truman disliked. Compare Oral History Interview with Clark M. Clifford, vol. 1, Harry S. Truman Library (April 1977), 215–220, with McCullough, *Truman*, 590.

Others also held the view that the black vote was highly important in 1948. That year, Henry Lee Moon published a book arguing that the black vote could play a critical role in the 1948 election and that the black vote was “in the vest pocket of no party,” but would have to be earned. Henry Lee Moon, *The Balance of Power: The Negro Vote* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1948), 11–12, 213–214.

18. McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 127, 131–134, 145–146.

19. Sitkoff, “Election of 1948,” 610; McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 129, 143.

20. Sitkoff, “Election of 1948,” 613–614; McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 143–144, 145–147; Barton J. Bernstein, “The Ambiguous Legacy: The Truman Administration and Civil Rights,” in *Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration*, Barton J. Bernstein, ed. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 712–713.

21. Harry S. Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine,” March 12, 1947, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1947* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), 176–179; Bernard A. Weisberger, *Cold War, Cold Peace: The United States and Russia Since 1945* (New York: American Heritage, 1984), 55–61; Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, “Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930s–1950s,” *American Historical Review* 75 (April 1970): 1046; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), 217–219.

22. Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998); David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 30. On Truman and the origins

of McCarthyism, compare Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 86–91 (arguing that McCarthyism as a social phenomenon was due to factors external to Truman administration politics, and that Truman was a strong, although ineffective, denouncer of McCarthyism), with Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 5 (arguing that McCarthyism was “the result of a deliberate and highly organized effort by the Truman administration in 1947–48 to mobilize support for the program of economic assistance to Europe”). See also Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992); *The Truman Period As a Research Field, A Reappraisal, 1972*, Richard S. Kirkendall, ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 105–108, 129–136, 182–187.

23. *Labor-Management Relations (Taft-Hartley) Act*, § 9(h), Pub. L. 80–101, 61 Stat. 136, 146 (1947); Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes*, 266–273; Cauter, *The Great Fear*, 355–356; *Adler v. Board of Education*, 342 U.S. 485 (1952); 1939 N.Y. Laws § 1318, as amended 1940 N.Y. Laws § 1499; 1949 N.Y. Laws § 1024; Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 82. See also Ellen Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

24. Wayne Addison Clark, “An Analysis of the Relationship Between Anti-Communism and Segregationist Thought in the Deep South, 1948–1964” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1976), 12, 30, 34.

25. Roy Wilkins, “Undergirding the Democratic Ideal,” *The Crisis* 58 (December 1951): 647, 650 (emphasis in original). See also Gloster Current, “The 41st—A Convention of Great Decision,” *The Crisis* 57 (August/September 1950): 512, 523; “Resolutions adopted by the Forty-Second Annual Convention of the NAACP at Atlanta, GA., June 30, 1951,” *The Crisis* 58 (August/September 1951): 475, 476; Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964), 132–141.

26. Robert E. Cushman, “Our Civil Rights Become a World Issue,” *New York Times* magazine, January 12, 1948, p. 12.

27. American Consulate General, Suva, Fiji Islands, to Secretary of State, December 27, 1946, RG 59, 811.4016/12–2746, National Archives.

The article was motivated by a *Chicago Tribune* article criticizing Britain for its handling of the Palestine crisis in 1946. The *Fiji Times & Herald* article began by claiming that “many people in the United States seem to enjoy crusading as long as they avoid entanglements and can direct criticism across the Atlantic.” *Ibid.*

The idea that the United States had unclean hands and, accordingly, no standing to criticize Britain on the issue of Palestine was suggested in the British media as well. A cartoon in the June 8, 1947, *London Sunday Express* showed two white men reading a newspaper entitled “Southern Press” and standing in front of a whites-only hotel that was draped with an American flag. Behind them a dead man lay beneath a tree beside a rope. One of the whites remarked to the other, “Shameful the way the British are handling this

Palestine business.” American Consul General, Hamburg, Germany, to Secretary of State, June 10, 1947, RG 59, 811.5016/6–1047, National Archives.

28. American Consulate General, Suva, Fiji Islands, to Secretary of State, December 27, 1946. The reference in the *Fiji Times & Herald* is to the denial of Supreme Court Review in a case in which lower federal courts had found Georgia voting laws to be unconstitutional. In this case, Primus E. King sued the Democratic Executive Committee of Muscogee County, Georgia, claiming that he had been denied the right to vote in the July 1944 Democratic primary solely on the grounds of his race. Following *Smith v. Allwright*, 321 U.S. 649 (1944), which abolished the Texas white primary, the district court ruled that the Georgia Democratic primary was an integral part of the state electoral process, and therefore the refusal of Democratic officials to allow King to vote was impermissible state action, violating the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Seventeenth Amendments. This victory was short-lived, however. In February 1947 the Georgia legislature repealed all state primary laws. *King v. Chapman*, 62 F. Supp. 639, 649–650 (M.D. GA 1945), affirmed, 154 F.2d 460 (5th Cir. 1946), cert. denied, 327 U.S. 800 (1946); Steven F. Lawson, *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944–1969* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 49.

Instances of racism on the part of the DAR received widespread critical attention in the foreign press. For example, when the DAR refused to permit African American pianist Hazel Scott to perform in Constitution Hall, the American Consul General in Bombay, India, stated that news of the incident “was fully reported in practically all of the local press.” The Bombay *Morning Standard* called it a “shameful manifestation of racial intolerance.” American Consulate General, Bombay, India, to Secretary of State, October 17, 1948, RG 59, 811.4016/10–1745, National Archives.

29. The dinner was funded by an endowment left by Wendell Willkie, the 1940 Republican presidential candidate, who the *Fiji Times & Herald* described as “a notable fighter against the persecution of negroes.” American Consulate General, Suva, Fiji Islands, to Secretary of State, December 27, 1946.

30. *Ibid.*

31. American Embassy, Colombo, Ceylon, to Secretary of State, December 22, 1948, RG 59, 811.4016/12–2248, National Archives; American Embassy, Colombo, Ceylon, to Secretary of State, December 31, 1948, RG 59, 811.4016/12–3148, National Archives; American Embassy, Colombo, Ceylon, to Secretary of State, May 25, 1949, RG 59, 811.4016/5–2549, National Archives.

32. *New York Times*, May 3, 1948, pp. 1, 12.

33. Chinese Press Review No. 635, American Consulate General, Shanghai, China, May 6, 1948, Enclosure No. 1, American Consulate General, Shanghai, China, to Secretary of State, May 10, 1948, RG 59, 811.4016/5–1048, National Archives (quoting Shanghai *Tu Kung Pao*).

34. *Ibid.* (quoting *China Daily Tribune*).

35. American Consulate General, Madras, to Secretary of State, May 6, 1948, RG 59, 811.4016/5–648, National Archives (concerning editorial on *Shelly v. Kraemer*, 344 U.S. 1 (1948)); American Embassy, Manila, to Secretary of State, October 5, 1948, RG 59,

811.4016/10-548, National Archives. In *Perez v. Sharp*, 32 Cal. 2d 711, 198 P.2d 17 (1948), an African American man and a white woman had been denied a marriage license by the Los Angeles county clerk. The California Supreme Court held that the state statute forbidding interracial marriage was void on equal protection grounds.

36. Chester Bowles, *Ambassador's Report* (New York: Harper, 1954), 2-3, 31, 99.

37. Frenise A. Logan, "Racism and Indian-U.S. Relations, 1947-1953: Views in the Indian Press," *Pacific Historical Review* 54 (February 1985): 71-79; American Consulate General, Bombay, India, to Secretary of State, March 28, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/3-2847, National Archives; American Consulate General, Bombay, India, to Secretary of State, July 11, 1945, RG 59, 311.4016/7-1145, National Archives (quoting *Sunday Standard* (Bombay), July 8, 1945); American Consulate General, Bombay, India, to Secretary of State, May 4, 1949, RG 59, 811.4016/5-449, National Archives (quoting *Blitz*, April 23, 1949).

38. American Consulate General, Bombay, India, to Secretary of State, May 4, 1949.

39. American Embassy, New Delhi, "Survey of Communist Propaganda in India," vol. 2, no. 13, July 1-31, 1952, folder 507, box 112, series 2, Chester Bowles Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, pp. 8-9.

40. American Consulate General, Madras, India, to Secretary of State, May 6, 1948, RG 59, 811.4016/5-648, National Archives (concerning editorial on *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 344 U.S. 1 (1948)).

41. American Embassy, London, to Secretary of State, June 25, 1946, RG 59, 811.4016/6-2546, National Archives (concerning *Manchester Guardian* editorial on Ku Klux Klan); American Embassy, London, to Secretary of State, September 12, 1946, RG 59, 811.4016/9-1246, National Archives (concerning *Manchester Guardian* article "Race Friction in the South: The War and the Negro"); *London Sunday Express* cartoon, American Consul General, Hamburg, Germany, to Secretary of State, June 10, 1947, RG 59, 811.5016/6-1047, National Archives; London, via War Department, to Secretary of State, January 10, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/1-1047, National Archives (discussing attention given to case in London press and Parliament); London, via War Department, to Secretary of State, January 16, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/1-1647, National Archives; American Embassy, London, to Secretary of State, February 6, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/2-647, National Archives; *Lewis v. State*, 201 Miss. 48, 61, 28 So.2d 122, 124 (1946); *Trudell v. State*, 28 So.2d 124, 125 (Miss. 1946); *Trudell v. Mississippi*, 331 U.S. 785 (1947); *New York Times*, January 5, 1947, p. 42.

Publicity from such protests was important in generating outside scrutiny of the criminal justice system in the South. Such protests were often unsuccessful in changing the outcome in a particular case, however. The impact of anticommunism on local politics helped to undercut the effectiveness of mass protest. For example, in the Martinsville Seven case, in which seven African American men were sentenced to death in Virginia for the rape of a white woman, domestic and international protest was in part orchestrated by the Communist Party and the Civil Rights Congress. Eric Rise has written that Virginia Governor John Stewart Battle's refusal to grant clemency to at least some of the defendants was influenced by his desire not to "to appear to be bowing to the radical influence." Eric

W. Rise, *The Martinsville Seven: Race, Rape and Capital Punishment* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 99-116.

42. Senator William Benton, *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., May 9, 1950, 6692.

43. James W. Ivy, "American Negro Problem in the European Press," *The Crisis* 57 (July 1950): 413, 416-418. As Richard Lentz and Pamela Brown have written, the American media paid extensive attention to the way American race relations were viewed overseas. Richard Lentz and Pamela Brown, "The Business of Great Nations': International Coverage, Foreign Public Opinion and the Modern American Civil Rights Movement" (paper presented to the Western Journalism Historians Conference, Berkeley, California, February 28-29, 1992).

44. Ivy, "American Negro Problem," 416-417.

45. *Ibid.*, 416.

46. Chinese Press Review No. 635, American Consulate General, Shanghai, China, May 6, 1948, Enclosure No. 1, American Consulate General, Shanghai, China, to Secretary of State, May 10, 1948, RG 59, 811.4016/5-1048, National Archives (quoting Shanghai *Tu Kung Pao*); American Consulate General, Bombay, India, to Secretary of State, May 4, 1949, RG 59, 811.4016/5-449, National Archives (quoting *Blitz*, April 23, 1949); American Embassy, Oslo, Norway, to Department of State, August 5, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/80-547, National Archives; American Embassy, Athens, Greece, to Secretary of State, July 22, 1938, RG 59, 811.4016/7-2248, National Archives.

47. Moscow to Secretary of State, November 20, 1946, RG 59, 811.4016/11-2046, National Archives; American Embassy, Moscow, to Department of State, August 26, 1946, RG 59, 811.4016/8-2646, National Archives.

48. American Embassy, Moscow, to Department of State, August 26, 1946. The *New York Times* reported that John Jones's body was discovered on Dorcheat Bayou in Louisiana by a group of fishermen. He had apparently been beaten to death. Jones and a companion, who was also African American, had been arrested after allegedly trying to break in to a white woman's home. No charges were filed, and the two were released. Soon after their release, the men were picked up by a group of unidentified persons and placed in separate cars. Jones's companion was beaten and survived. Jones was later found dead. The Linden, Louisiana, police chief, B. Geary Gantt, two deputy sheriffs, and three others were later indicted by a federal grand jury for depriving Jones and his companion of their constitutional rights by "causing them to be released and handed over to a mob which then inflicted a beating upon both." Five of the defendants were tried and acquitted by a Shreveport, Louisiana jury. The *Times* did not report the disposition of the charges against Police Chief Gantt. *New York Times*, August 16, 1946, p. 36; *New York Times*, October 19, 1946, p. 22; *New York Times*, March 2, 1946, p. 63.

49. American Embassy, Moscow, to Department of State, August 26, 1946, RG 59, 811.4016/8-2646, National Archives. State laws that continued to allow the system of peonage described in the *Trud* article were overturned by the Supreme Court in the 1940s. *Taylor v. Georgia*, 315 U.S. 25 (1942); *Pollock v. Williams*, 322 U.S. 4 (1949); Pete Daniel, *The Shadow of Slavery: Peonage in the South, 1901-1969* (Urbana: University of Illinois

Press, 1972), 175–192; William Cohen, “Involuntary Servitude in the South, 1865–1940: A Preliminary Analysis,” *Journal of Southern History* 42 (February 1976): 31.

50. Moscow to Secretary of State, July 27, 1949, RG 59, 811.4016/6–2749, National Archives; *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., May 9, 1950, 6692. While it criticized the United States, the Soviet Union was not without its own ethnic strife. Largely through conquest, the Soviet Union was an amalgam of different nationalities, yet non-Russian nationalism was often suppressed as “bourgeois.” Stalin himself was not Russian but Georgian, yet ironically it was Stalin who pursued a policy of Russian cultural superiority. John S. Reshetar Jr., *The Soviet Policy: Government and Politics in the USSR*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 9–19, 281–292; Robert Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), 2, 141–300.

51. Moscow to Secretary of State, July 27, 1949, RG 59, 811.4016/6–2749, National Archives.

52. *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., May 9, 1950, 6993.

53. As reported by Senator William Benton, *ibid.*, 6694.

54. Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Subject: Alleged Discrimination Against Haitian Agriculture Minister, November 14, 1947, RG 59, FW 811.4016/11–1247, National Archives; H. K. Thatcher to Norman Armour, December 1, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/12–147, National Archives; Jimmie Love to Robert F. Woodward, November 25, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/11–2547, National Archives; American Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to Secretary of State, November 18, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/11–1847, National Archives.

55. Ambassador of Haiti to Secretary of State, November 12, 1947, TC No. 46760, Department of State translation, RG 59, 811.4016/11–1247, National Archives.

56. Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to Secretary of State, November 20, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/11–2047, National Archives (quoting *La Nation*). Representatives from other countries and territories in North and Central America were in attendance and were not segregated. American Embassy, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to Secretary of State, November 18, 1947.

57. Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to Secretary of State, November 20, 1947 (quoting *Le Nouvelliste*).

58. Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Subject: Alleged Discrimination Against Haitian Agriculture Minister, November 14; Holt to Secretary of State, November 28, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/11–2847, National Archives.

59. John H. Lord to Secretary of State, September 12, 1945, RG 59, 811.4016/9–1245, National Archives.

60. Logan, “Racism and Indian-U.S. Relations,” 76 (quoting *Bombay Chronicle*, July 4, 1952).

61. Virginia A. Pratt, *The Influence of Domestic Controversy on American Participation in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1946–1953* (New York: Garland, 1986), 37; Rusk to Hulten, November 4, 1947, RG 59, 501.B.D Human Rights/11–447, National Archives.

62. *New York Times*, June 2, 1946, p. 33; “The First Petition to the United Nations from the Afro-American People,” in Herbert Aptheker, *Afro-American History: The Modern Era* (New York: Citadel Press, 1971), 301–311; Abner W. Berry, “Rough, Tough and Angry,” *New Masses*, June 18, 1946, pp. 17–19.

63. “An Appeal to the World,” reprinted in W. E. B. DuBois, “Three Centuries of Discrimination,” *The Crisis* 54 (December 1947): 380; *New York Times*, October 24, 1947, p. 9; *New York Times*, October 12, 1947, p. 52; McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 67; Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 65–66.

64. Walter Frances White, *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), 358–359; McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 67; Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. DuBois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 15, 78.

65. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 66; McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 67; Joanna Schneider Zangrando and Robert L. Zangrando, “ER and Black Civil Rights,” in *Without Precedent: The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 88, 101–102.

66. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration*, 66; White, *Man Called White*, 359; Horne, *Black and Red*, 79–80 (quoting *Des Moines Register* and *Morgantown Post*).

67. Robert Coe, U.S. Embassy, The Hague, The Netherlands, to Department of State, February 13, 1950, RG 59, 811.411/2–1350, National Archives.

68. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER TWO

1. *The Negro in American Life*, folder 503, box 112, series 2, Chester Bowles Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

2. American Embassy, Rangoon, Burma, to Secretary of State, October 7, 1947, RG 59, 811.4016/10–747, National Archives.

3. *Ibid.*

4. James L. Tyson, *U.S. International Broadcasting and National Security* (New York: Ramapo Press: National Strategy Information Center, 1983), 4–5; Walter L. Hixon, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997); Laura Ann Belmonte, “Defending a Way of Life: American Propaganda and the Cold War, 1945–1959” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1996); *Congressional Record*, 80th Cong., 2nd Sess., 6560–6561 (1947) (remarks of Representative Everett Dirksen); S. Rep. No. 811, 80th Cong., 2d Sess., reprinted in 1948 U.S. Code Cong. & Admin. News 1011, 1013, 1023; *Expanded International Information and Education Program by the United States: Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on S. Res. 243*, 81st Cong. 2d Sess. 39–40 (1950) (statement of Secretary of State Dean Acheson).

54. American Embassy, Habana, to Secretary of State, January 27, 1953, RG 59, 811.411/1-2753, National Archives.

55. American Embassy, Habana, to State Department, January 30, 1953, RG 59, 811.411/1-3053, National Archives.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.; American Embassy, Habana, to State Department, February 12, 1953, RG 59, 811.411/2-1253, National Archives.

The U.S. embassy thought that failure to arrive at a financial understanding was closer to the true reason Teatro América canceled Baker's performance. Baker had a history of financial disputes with her employers, and at times tried to hold out for more money than had originally been agreed to. Consequently, it is entirely possible that a disagreement over her pay was an element in the cancellation of her Teatro América contract. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the U.S. Embassy took steps to show its displeasure over the possibility that Baker might perform in Cuba. Consequently, it is most likely that any disagreement over finances, like Baker's tardiness, provided the theater with "just the legal loophole they needed to 'get out from under' a ticklish situation." American Embassy, Habana, to State Department, January 30, 1953.

58. American Embassy, Habana, to State Department, February 18, 1953, RG 59, 811.411/2-1853, National Archives; American Embassy, Habana, to State Department, February 19, 1953, RG 59, 811.411/2-1953, National Archives; Josephine Baker and Jo Bouillon, *Josephine*, trans. Mariana Fitzpatrick (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 189.

59. American Embassy, Habana, to State Department, March 3, 1953, RG 59, 811.411/3-353, National Archives.

60. American Embassy, Port-Au-Prince, to State Department, February 3, 1953, RG 59, 811.411/2-353, National Archives.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid. I found no additional despatches concerning Josephine Baker and travel to Haiti in declassified State Department records from the 1950s. Although there was occasional coverage of Baker's activities in the Haitian press, there are no news stories regarding a visit to Haiti during this period. See *Le Matin*, February 13, 1953, p. 4; *Le Matin*, February 20, 1953, p. 1 (discussing Baker's experiences in Cuba).

63. N. W. Philcox to R. R. Roach, Re: Josephine Baker, December 10, 1954, FBI file, teletype message to FBI, January 28, 1955; G. H. Scatterday to A. H. Belmont, Re: Josephine Baker, February 10, 1960, FBI file.

Hoover sent a one-page document to the INS commissioner regarding Baker, most of which was deleted by the FBI when supplied to me under the Freedom of Information Act on the grounds that it contained "material which is properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy." Director, FBI, to Commissioner, INS, Re: Josephine Baker, January 6, 1955, FBI file.

In 1952 Baker indicated that she was aware of efforts to ban her from the country. She said that "If my entry into the United States is forbidden, for me this (will be) an honor because it will show that my work for humanity has been successful." American Embassy,

Buenos Aires, to State Department, November 6, 1952, RG 59, 811.411/11-652, National Archives; Scatterday to Belmont, Re: Josephine Baker, February 10, 1960.

64. Chester Bowles, "Racial Harmony—How Much Does it Matter in World Affairs?" 1952, folder 540, box 115, series 2, Chester Bowles Papers. See also Chester Bowles, *Ambassador's Report* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), 31, 216-217, 395-396.

65. Chester Bowles, "Racial Harmony—How Much Does it Matter in World Affairs?" 1952, folder 540, box 115, series 2, Chester Bowles Papers.

66. Ibid.; Bowles, *Ambassador's Report*, 396.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, p. 6, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) (filed December 1952).

2. According to the committee, the moral reason was that "the pervasive gap between our aims and what we actually do is creating a kind of moral dry rot which eats away at the emotional and rational bases of democratic beliefs." U.S. failures in the area of civil rights bred "cynicism about democratic values" that was harmful to all. The economic reasons were that "one of the principal economic problems facing us and the rest of the world is achieving maximum production and continued prosperity." Discrimination interfered with economic growth because it led to "the loss of a huge, potential market for goods." Discrimination in the marketplace gave rise to interrelated losses in market and human terms. President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), 139-148.

3. Ibid., 20, 148.

4. Dean Acheson, "Morality, Moralism and Diplomacy," in *Grapes from Thorns* (New York: Norton, 1972), 125-140. Douglas Brinkley has suggested that since Acheson would at times use moralism in his own arguments about foreign relations, at least while secretary of state, his objections may have been to the moralism of John Foster Dulles, and not to moralism per se. Douglas Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-71* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 24-26.

Acheson's prolific writings do not disclose a strong interest in race relations. He had one important foray into the making of civil rights policy, however. He helped Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Baines Johnson steer the Civil Rights Act of 1957 through the Senate. While the bill had to be watered down so significantly to pass that the civil rights movement contemplated opposing it, the legislation was nevertheless the most significant civil rights bill at that time since reconstruction. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969); Dean Acheson, *Power and Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958; New York: Atheneum, 1970); Dean Acheson, *A Democrat Looks at His Party* (New York: Harper, 1955); Dean Acheson, *A Citizen Looks at Congress* (New York: Harper, 1957); Brinkley, *Dean Acheson*, 204-205.

5. President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights*, 148 (emphasis in original).

6. Harry S. Truman, "Special Message to the Congress on Civil Rights," February 2, 1948, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1948* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1964), 121–126.

7. Louis Ruchames, *Race, Jobs and Politics: The Story of FEPC* (Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1953, 1971), 208; William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970), 167; Barton J. Bernstein, "The Ambiguous Legacy: The Truman Administration and Civil Rights," in *Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration*, Barton J. Bernstein, ed. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 271–277, 291; Susan M. Hartmann, *Truman and the 80th Congress* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971); Richard M. Dalfume, *Desegregation of the Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939–1953* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 157–174; Mary L. Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," *Stanford Law Review* 41 (1988): 61, reprinted in *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy During the Cold War*, Michael L. Krenn, ed. (New York: Garland, 1998), 177–236.

8. Christopher Thorne, "Britain and the Black G.I.s: Racial Issues and Anglo-American Relations in 1942," in *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy from 1900 through World War II*, Michael Krenn, ed. (New York: Garland, 1998), 342–349; Thomas Hachey, "Walter White and the American Negro Soldier in World War II: A Diplomatic Dilemma for Britain," *Phylon* 39 (September 1978): 241–249, reprinted in Krenn, *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy from 1900 through World War II*, 333–341.

9. Walter White, Broadcast over Columbia Broadcasting System from Cincinnati, Ohio, July 7, 1945, NAACP Papers, part 9, series B, reel 26, F0188. The text of the broadcast indicated that it was "[a]pproved by War and Navy Departments."

10. President's Committee on Civil Rights, transcript of meeting, April 17, 1947, p. 20, Papers of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, Reel 6, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri; President's Committee on Civil Rights, transcript of meeting, June 30, 1947, Papers of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, Reel 6, Truman Library.

11. Randolph to Truman, December 28, 1947, Digitalization: Project Whistlestop, Desegregation of the Armed Forces, Truman Library; *Blacks and the Military in American History: Basic Documents*, Bernard C. Nalty and Morris J. MacGregor, eds. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1977), 182.

12. Dagen and Dagen to Truman, June 15, 1948, Digitalization: Project Whistlestop, Desegregation of the Armed Forces, Truman Library. Andrea Champlin's well-researched paper drew my attention to this correspondence. Andrea Champlin, "The Desegregation of the Armed Services," (paper, University of Southern California Law School, March 1999).

13. Harry S. Truman, "Special Message to the Congress on Civil Rights," February 2, 1948, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1948*, 126; Harry S. Truman, "Special Message to Congress on the Threat to the Freedom of Europe," March 17, 1948, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1948*, 182–186; Dalfume, *Desegregation of the Armed Forces*, 167; Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History: A New Perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 182.

14. President Harry S. Truman, executive order, "Establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, Executive Order 9981," *Federal Register* 13 (July 26, 1948): 4313; David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 587.

15. Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 241–242.

16. McCullough, *Truman*, 712–713; Bernstein, "Ambiguous Legacy," 291–292; Foner, *Blacks and the Military*, 185; Michael J. Klarman, "Brown, Racial Change and the Civil Rights Movement," *Virginia Law Review* 80 (February 1994): 32–35; Harry S. Truman, "Address in Harlem, New York, Upon Receiving the Franklin Roosevelt Award," *Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1948*, 924.

17. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, 241; Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 147.

18. Jacob K. Javits, press release, January 12, 1950, Digitalization: Project Whistlestop, Desegregation of the Armed Forces, Truman Library.

19. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, 255–269.

20. *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1950, 96: 6692.

21. *Ibid.*, 6692–6693.

22. *Ibid.*, 6694–6695. Opposition to civil rights reform was also cast in anticommunist terms when legislation to fund the temporary FEPC was before Congress in 1944. Representative John Rankin of Mississippi called it "the beginning of communistic dictatorship. . . . They want to dictate to you who shall work in your factory, who shall work on your farm, who shall work in your office, who shall go to your schools, and who shall eat at your table, or intermarry with your children." Ruchames, *Race, Jobs and Politics*, 94.

23. *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1950, 96: 6694–6695; Ruchames, *Race, Jobs and Politics*, 94.

24. Truman administration scholars have different perspectives on whether the civil rights briefs should be thought of as an important part of Truman's civil rights program. Since an understanding that they *should* be viewed that way underlies this chapter, I will consider this issue at some length. Some scholars pay little attention to the court efforts, focusing instead on legislative efforts and executive orders, the traditional subject matter of works on civil rights politics. In such accounts, the legal battle is simply a different story and revolves instead around the organizations and individuals supporting and opposing legal change, as well as focusing on the courts. As an account of civil rights politics, this approach is incomplete, missing the critical political judgements about whether the government should participate in these high-profile cases.

Some writers do take up the amicus brief strategy but conclude that it should not be understood as high-level, Truman administration policy. Barton J. Bernstein has argued that the briefs were filed as a result of the efforts of members of the solicitor general's staff and that the administration simply acquiesced in them. Bernstein's analysis of the amicus briefs is in keeping with his view that Truman was a "reluctant liberal" who left an "ambiguous. . . legacy" in the area of civil rights. Bernstein's primary source for this interpretation appears to have been a 1966 interview with Philip Elman, a former attorney in the solicitor

general's office who was involved in writing the amicus briefs. Bernstein, "Ambiguous Legacy," 296–297, 303, 312 n. 49, 314 n. 60; Barton J. Bernstein, "Commentary," in *The Truman Period as a Research Field: A Reappraisal, 1972*, Richard S. Kirkendall, ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 105–108, 161, 187; Barton J. Bernstein, "The Truman Administration and Minority Rights: A Review Essay," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* (Fall 1973): 66, 70–71. For contrary views, see Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 189–190; Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, *Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1973), 211–212, 218–221; John T. Elliff, *The United States Department of Justice and Individual Rights, 1937–1962* (New York: Garland, 1987), 254–259.

A later Elman interview published in the *Harvard Law Review* undercuts Bernstein's argument. While Elman views his role as pivotal, he also provides enough information to show that the amicus briefs were not simply the effort of an isolated and committed group of lawyers in the solicitor general's office but can appropriately be described as Truman administration actions. Philip Elman, "The Solicitor General's Office, Justice Frankfurter and Civil Rights Litigation, 1946–1960: An Oral History," *Harvard Law Review* 100 (February 1987): 817–818, 826–830 (interview conducted by Norman Silber). See also Randall Kennedy, "A Reply to Phillip Elman," *Harvard Law Review* 100 (June 1987): 1938–1948 (questioning the importance of Elman's role).

The first amicus brief, filed in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, was signed by attorney general Tom C. Clark, as well as Solicitor General Perlman. As Elman noted, it was unusual for the attorney general to sign Supreme Court briefs. Clark's name was placed on the brief so that it would be "as authoritative a statement of the position of the United States as possible." Although Elman does not say whether Clark personally approved having his name on the brief, it is unlikely that such a departure from Justice Department policy involving the use of his name in such a high-profile case would have happened without his knowledge. The fact that the very filing of the brief was an innovation in Department policy reinforces the likelihood that Clark knew about and approved the fact that his name was being placed on the brief. Further, Clark and Perlman were so pleased with the *Shelley* brief that they published it as a book. President Truman himself identified the government's participation in *Shelley* as one of his administration's civil rights accomplishments in a 1948 campaign speech in Harlem. Elman, "Oral History," 254–259, 819–820; Tom C. Clark and Philip Benjamin Perlman, *Prejudice and Property: An Historic Brief Against Racial Covenants* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1948); Harry S. Truman, "Address in Harlem, New York Upon Receiving The Franklin Roosevelt Award," October 29, 1948, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1948*, 924; Berman, *Politics of Civil Rights*, 127.

According to Elman, pressure from within the administration to file a brief in *Shelley* first came from Phineas Indritz, an attorney in the Department of the Interior, and Oscar Chapman, the secretary of the interior. The State Department assisted Elman's efforts on the brief by sending a letter to the attorney general regarding the effect of race discrimination on foreign policy. Although Elman did not know who finally approved the filing of a

brief, his best guess was that "probably Tom Clark made the decision after checking with Truman." Elman, "Oral History," 818.

Attorney General J. Howard McGrath considered the segregation cases *Henderson v. United States*, *Sweatt v. Painter*, and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma* to be among "some of the most important cases in this generation." In a departure from Justice Department practices, he participated in oral argument in *Henderson v. United States*, 339 U.S. 816, 817 (1950). Attorney General James P. McGranery unsuccessfully petitioned the Court for permission to present an oral argument in *Brown*. Notwithstanding his argument that Truman was disinterested and uninvolved in the amicus briefs, Bernstein has written that Truman "specifically approved the filing of a brief in *Brown*." McGrath to Truman, June 6, 1950, Papers of J. Howard McGrath, Truman Library; Bernstein, "Minority Rights," 71 (apparently relying on an interview with Elman); Daniel M. Berman, *It Is So Ordered: The Supreme Court Rules on School Segregation* (New York: Norton, 1966), 61. See also Berman, *Politics of Civil Rights*, 232 (arguing that the *Brown* brief was filed on the Justice Department's own initiative).

This record of high-level participation in the desegregation cases makes it appropriate to characterize the amicus briefs as consciously adopted Truman administration policy. Cabinet-level advisors were involved in the cases. Even if, as is likely, Truman did not personally approve all of the briefs, high-level members of his administration charged with furthering his interests and desires participated in the cases. Truman's advisors were so attuned to the political consequences of civil rights efforts that it is hard to imagine government participation in such well-publicized civil rights cases as being anything other than a deliberate policy decision made at the highest levels of the Truman Administration. William Berman's work is consistent with this analysis. Berman, *Politics of Civil Rights*, 239–240.

25. The amicus briefs were also helpful for domestic political purposes. Truman referred to them in his 1948 campaign speeches before African American audiences. McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 134–135.

26. On Justice Department policy, see Elliff, *The United States Department of Justice and Individual Rights*, 254–259.

27. *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1, 6–7 (1948); *Hurd v. Hodge*, 334 U.S. 24 (1948); *Mitchell v. United States*, 313 U.S. 80 (1941); *Taylor v. Georgia*, 315 U.S. 25 (1942); Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948).

28. Oral argument of Solicitor General Perlman, *United States Law Week* 16 (January 20, 1948): 3219 (paraphrased account of argument); Clement E. Vose, *Caucasians Only: The Supreme Court, The NAACP, and the Restrictive Covenant Cases* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 200; Elliff, *The United States Department of Justice and Individual Rights*, 254–259 (quoting address by Perlman to the National Civil Liberties Clearing House (February 23, 1950)); Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, p.19, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948).

Because my purpose is to examine the Truman administration's participation in these cases, this study does not dwell on the crucial role in the cases played by the NAACP. For excellent treatments of the NAACP's litigation efforts, see Mark V. Tushnet, *NAACP's*

Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education 1925–1950 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Knopf, 1976); Jack Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Courts: How a Dedicated Band of Lawyers Fought for the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

29. *Shelley*, 334 U.S. at 20; *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., May 9, 1950, 96: 6694.

30. Elliff, *The United States Department of Justice and Individual Rights*, 323–329; *Henderson v. United States*, 339 U.S. 816, 820–822 (1950); Brief for the United States, pp. 9–11, *Henderson v. United States*, 339 U.S. 816 (1950).

The Interstate Commerce Act provided that “it shall be unlawful for any common carrier . . . to make, give, or cause any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any particular person . . . in any respect whatsoever; or to subject any particular person . . . to any undue or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage in any respect whatsoever.” *Interstate Commerce Act*, ch. 722, § 5(a), 54 Stat. 898, 902, 49 USCA § 3(1) (1946).

31. Brief for the United States, pp. 60–61, *Henderson v. United States*, 339 U.S. 816 (1950) (quoting United Nations, General Assembly, *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, Third Session, Part 2, Summary Record of the Fifty-Third Meeting (May 11, 1949)), 6, 12. The brief also quoted from the same letter from Dean Acheson that the Department had relied on in *Shelley*.

32. *Ibid.*, 61 n. 73 (quoting Frantsov, “Nationalism—The Tool of Imperialist Reaction,” *The Bolshevik* (U.S.S.R.), no. 15 (1948), and Berezko, “The Tragedy of Coloured America,” *The Literary Gazette* (U.S.S.R.), no. 51 (1948)).

33. *Ibid.*, 59–60 (quoting *Hearings Regarding Communist Infiltration of Minority Groups—Part I*, 479). On Jackie Robinson, see Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Greatest Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

34. *Henderson*, 339 U.S. at 825–826.

35. Memorandum for the United States as Amicus Curiae, pp. 1–2, *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950), and *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950); *McLaurin*, 339 U.S. at 638–640; *Sweatt*, 339 U.S. at 631–634.

36. Memorandum for the United States as Amicus Curiae, pp. 11–13, *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950), and *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950).

In 1949, the solicitor general's office also filed a brief in *Graham v. Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen*, 338 U.S. 232 (1949), a case involving noncompliance by a railroad and a union with a previous Supreme Court decision, *Steele v. Louisville & Nashville R.R. Co.*, 323 U.S. 192 (1944), forbidding racially discriminatory collective bargaining agreements. Elliff, *The United States Department of Justice and Individual Rights*, 323.

37. *Sweatt*, 339 U.S. at 636; *McLaurin*, 339 U.S. at 638, 642.

38. Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, p. 4, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). American critics of U.S. race discrimination focused on the contradictions of segregation in the capital as well. National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, *Segregation in Washington* (Chicago: National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, 1948).

39. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483, 486 (1954); *Briggs v. Elliott*, 103 F. Supp. 920 (E.D.S.C. 1952), reversed, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955) (*Brown II*); *Davis v. County School Board*, 103 F.Supp. 337 (E.D. Va. 1952), reversed, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955) (*Brown II*); *Brown v. Board of Education*, 98 F. Supp. 797 (D. Kan. 1951), reversed, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 359 U.S. 294 (1955) (*Brown II*); *Belton v. Gebhart*, 32 Del. Ch. 343, 87 A.2d 862, affirmed, *Gebhart v. Belton*, 33 Del. Ch. 144, 91 A.2d 137 (Del. 1952), affirmed, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955) (*Brown II*); *Bolling v. Sharpe*, 347 U.S. 497, 498 (1954).

40. Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, pp. 4–6, *Brown*, 347 U.S. 483 (quoting Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on Civil Rights,” 124, and quoting President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights*, 89, 95).

41. *Ibid.*, 3 (emphasis in original).

42. *Ibid.*, 6.

43. Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, p. 7, *Brown*, 347 U.S. 483 (quoting letter from the secretary of state (December 2, 1952)).

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*, 8.

46. *Ibid.*, 31–32 (quoting Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on Civil Rights,” 126).

47. Brief for Appellants on Reargument, p. 194, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); The Hague, Netherlands, to Department of State, December 30, 1952, RG 59, 811.411/12–3052 LWC, National Archives.

48. *Brown*, 347 U.S. at 493–495; *Bolling*, 347 U.S. at 500. In *Brown* the Court ruled that public school segregation by states violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and in *Bolling* the Court found that such segregation in the District of Columbia violated the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment.

49. *Minersville v. Gobitis*, 310 U.S. 586, 595 (1940); *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624, 641 (1943); *Hirabayashi v. United States*, 320 U.S. 81, 100–101 (1943); *Korematsu v. United States*, 323 U.S. 214, 219 (1944); Mary L. Dudziak, “The Supreme Court and Racial Equality During World War II,” *Journal of Supreme Court History* 1996 (November 1996): 35–48. On the Court and the internment cases, see Peter H. Irons, *Justice at War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Jacobus tenBroek, Edward N. Barnhart, and Floyd W. Matson, *Prejudice, War and the Constitution* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 68–184. For works on the role of totalitarianism in Supreme Court caselaw, see David M. Bixby, “The Roosevelt Court, Democratic Ideology and Minority Rights: Another Look at *U.S. v. Classic*,” *Yale Law Journal* 90 (March 1981): 741; Richard Primus, “A Brooding Omnipresence: Totalitarianism in Postwar Constitutional Thought,” *Yale Law Journal* 106 (November 1996): 423–457; Margaret Raymond, “Rejecting Totalitarianism: Translating the Guarantees of Constitutional Criminal Procedure,” *North Carolina Law Review* 76 (April 1998): 1193–1263. A classic treatment of the impact of war on the Constitution is Edwin S. Corwin, *Total War and the Constitution* (New York: Knopf, 1947).

50. *Hirabayashi*, 320 U.S. at 101; *Dennis v. United States*, 341 U.S. 494, 554–555 (1951), concurring opinion of Justice Frankfurter (citing George F. Kennan, “Where Do You Stand On Communism,” *New York Times* magazine, May 27, 1951, pp. 7, 53, 55).
51. On the contextuality of thought, see Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Worth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1968), 2–4. For excellent works on the Court’s deliberations in the desegregation cases, see Dennis Hutchinson, “Unanimity and Desegregation in the Supreme Court, 1948–1958,” *Georgetown Law Journal* 68 (October 1979): 1; Mark V. Tushnet with Kayta Lezin, “What Really Happened in *Brown v. Board of Education*,” *Columbia Law Review* 91 (December 1991): 1867–1930.
52. William O. Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People* (New York: Harper, 1951), 296.
53. *Ibid.*, 296, 321, 326 (emphasis in original).
54. William O. Douglas, *Beyond the High Himalayas* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953), 317, 321–323.
55. *New York Times*, June 29, 1954, collected in Papers of the United States Information Agency, Reel 42, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston Massachusetts; *New York Times*, August 20, 1954, collected in Papers of the United States Information Agency, Reel 42, Kennedy Library. On Warren’s trip to India, see *New York Times*, July 27, 1956, p. 1; *New York Times*, September 1, 1956, p. 3; *New York Times*, August 29, 1956, p. 12. On Warren’s European travel the year before *Brown* was decided, see Earl Warren, *The Memoirs of Earl Warren* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 265–269.
56. Justice Robert Jackson took a leave from his Court duties to serve as a prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials in Germany. J. Woodford Howard Jr., *Mr. Justice Murphy: A Political Biography* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 354.
57. *New York Times*, May 18, 1954, p. 1. The Voice of America’s ability to use the decision effectively was enhanced by the fact that the opinion was short and easily understood by lay persons. As Chief Justice Earl Warren described it, *Brown* was “not a long opinion, for I had written it so it could be published in the daily press throughout the nation without taking too much space. This enabled the public to have our entire reasoning instead of a few excerpts.” Warren, *Memoirs*, 3.
58. U.S. Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, to Department of State, June 2, 1954 (embassy translation), RG 59, 811.411/6–254, National Archives.
59. U.S. Consul, Dakar, French West Africa, to Department of State, May 26, 1954, RG 59, 811.411/5–2654, National Archives.
60. U.S. Embassy, Cape Town, South Africa, to Department of State, June 9, 1954, RG 59, 811.411/6–954, National Archives.
61. Carl T. Rowan, *The Pitiful and the Proud* (New York: Random House, 1956), 19; “Chief Justice Warren In India,” *Baltimore Sun*, October 1, 1956, India 1956 Correspondence, Clippings, Photographs Folder No. 1, Foreign File, Personal Papers, Papers of Earl Warren, Library of Congress.
62. National Security Council, “Status of United States Program for National Security as of June 30, 1954,” NSC 5430, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1984), 11:1777, 1785–1786.

63. National Security Council, “Status of United States Program for National Security as of December 31, 1954,” NSC 5509, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1987), 9:504, 516; The Historical Background of the Nehru Visit, December 16–20 (1956), State, Dept. of (1956) (Briefing Book—Nehru’s Visit) (2), Confidential File, Records as President, White House Central Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

64. Republican National Committee, News Release, May 21, 1954, p. 3, White House Files—Civil Rights—Republican National Committee 1954, box 37, Philleo Nash Papers, Truman Library; Robert Frederick Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 144, 162, 165–166; Michael S. Mayer, “With Much Deliberation and Some Speed: Eisenhower and the *Brown* Decision,” *Journal of Southern History* 52 (February 1986): 43. Eisenhower criticized “foolish extremists on both sides” of the school desegregation controversy, and, in an effort to distance his administration from the Supreme Court’s ruling, he “rebuked Vice President Nixon for referring to Earl Warren as the ‘Republican Chief Justice.’” Chief Justice Warren was angered by the President’s stance. He believed that if Eisenhower had fully supported *Brown*, “we would have been relieved . . . of many of the racial problems that have continued to plague us.” Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights*, 162–163; Warren, *Memoirs*, 291; J. Harvie Wilkinson III, *From Brown to Bakke: The Supreme Court and School Integration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 24.

65. *New York Times*, May 18, 1954, p. 2 (quoting *New York Herald Tribune* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*); *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 1954, p. 18.

66. *Birmingham Post-Herald*, May 18, 1954, p. 5 (quoting *Charlotte News*); *New York Times*, May 18, 1954, pp. 1, 20; *Atlanta Daily World*, May 18, 1954, p. 1.

67. John Barlow Martin, *The Deep South Says Never* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1957), 1–4, 24. On anticommunism in segregationist thought, see Wayne Addison Clark, “An Analysis of the Relationship Between Anti-Communism and Segregationist Thought in the Deep South, 1946–1964” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1976).

68. Herman E. Talmadge, *You and Segregation* (Birmingham, Ala.: Vulcan Press, 1955), vii, 1. Talmadge’s book was popular. The first printing of ten thousand copies sold out in one week, and a second printing of fifty thousand copies was ordered. *Time*, November 14, 1955, p. 31.

69. *Brown v. Board of Education (Brown II)*, 349 U.S. 294, 301 (1955); Stephen L. Wasby, Anthony A. D’Amato, and Rosemary Metrailler, *Desegregation from Brown to Alexander: An Exploration of Supreme Court Strategies* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 162–173; Jack Bass, *Unlikely Heroes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981); J. W. Peltason, *Fifty-eight Lonely Men: Southern Federal Judges and School Desegregation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961); Hutchinson, “Unanimity and Desegregation,” 60.

It was not until *Goss v. Board of Education* in 1963 and *Griffin v. County School Board* in 1964 that the Court reentered the fray, invalidating state plans, including the closing of public schools in Virginia that were intended to directly circumvent the Court’s ruling in *Brown*. The Court suggested in *Griffin* that “the time for mere ‘deliberate speed’ has run out.” Then, in 1968, in *Green v. County School Board*, the Court insisted that “[t]he burden

on a school board today is to come forward with a plan that promises realistically to work, and promises realistically to work now." *Goss v. Board of Education*, 373 U.S. 683 (1963); *Griffin v. County School Board*, 377 U.S. 218, 234 (1964); *Green v. County School Board*, 391 U.S. 430, 439 (1968) (emphasis in original); *Covington v. Edwards*, 264 F.2d 180 (4th Cir. 1959); *Shuttlesworth v. Birmingham Board of Education*, 162 F. Supp. 372 (N.D. Ala. 1957), *affirmed* 358 U.S. 101 (1958); Wasby, D'Amato, and Metrailler, *Desegregation from Brown to Alexander*, 194–195.

Also in 1963, the Court required immediate desegregation of municipal recreational facilities in *Watson v. City of Memphis*, 373 U.S. 526, 530 (1963). In *Watson* the Court noted that "*Brown* never contemplated that the concept of 'deliberate speed' would countenance indefinite delay in elimination of racial barriers in schools."

70. American Consul General, Madras, India, to Department of State, February 28, 1956, RG 59, 811.411/2–2856, National Archives.

71. American Embassy, Bern, to Department of State, October 6, 1955, RG 59, 811.411/10–655, National Archives (enclosure no. 2, translation of "If Shame Could Kill," *La Sentinelle* (La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland), October 4, 1955); Enclosure no. 2, American Embassy, Bern to Department of State, September 30, 1955, RG 59, 811.411/9–3055, National Archives (translation of Charles-Henri Favrod, "The Verdict in Sumner," *Gazette de Lausanne*, September 29, 1955). On the international reaction to the Till case, see Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 46.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. American Consulate, Lourenço Marques, to Department of State, September 30, 1957, RG 59, 811.411.9–3057 HBS, National Archives.

2. Jack Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Courts: How a Dedicated Band of Lawyers Fought for the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 229–230; *Aaron v. Cooper*, 143 F. Supp. 855, 866 (E.D. Ark 1956); *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, Wilson Record and Jane Cassels Record, eds. (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing, 1960), 36.

3. *Faubus v. United States*, 254 F.2d 797, 799–801 (8th Cir. 1958).

4. *Arkansas Gazette*, September 5, 1957, p. A1, reprinted in Record and Record, *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, 40.

5. Record and Record, *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, 209; Orval Faubus, *Down from the Hills* (Little Rock, Ark.: Pioneer, 1980), 211; Herbert Brownell and John P. Burk, *Advising Ike: The Memoirs of Attorney General Herbert Brownell* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1993), 207.

6. Faubus, *Down from the Hills*, 19–20, 55; Robert Fredrick Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 154–156; Tony Allan Freyer, *The Little Rock Crisis: A Constitutional Interpretation* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 63–68.

7. Record and Record, *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, 37.

To his last days, Faubus maintained that his decision to use the National Guard to block integration was motivated by reports of impending violence. He was never forthcoming, however, with evidence to back up his assertions about such reports. An FBI report concluded that his allegations were groundless. Scholars have generally concluded that Faubus was instead motivated by a desire to court segregationist voters as massive resistance polarized southern politics. This was Attorney General Herbert Brownell's view as well. *Arkansas-Democrat Gazette*, November 21, 1993, p. 63; *Arkansas-Democrat*, October 17, 1993, p. 1A; Freyer, *Little Rock Crisis*, 113 n. 65; Michael Klarman, "Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement," *Virginia Law Review* 80 (February 1994): 110, 118–119; Brownell and Burk, *Advising Ike*, 209.

8. Record and Record, *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, 38, 41–42; *Thomason v. Cooper*, 254 F.2d 808, 809 (8th Cir. 1958); Freyer, *Little Rock Crisis*, 102.

9. Record and Record, *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, 39; Eisenhower to Faubus, September 5, 1957, microformed in series D, reel 1, frame 358 (U.S. Government Printing Office) NAACP Papers, Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

10. Record and Record, *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, 51–53.

11. Faubus, *Down from the Hills*, 205 (quoting *Arkansas Gazette*).

12. *Arkansas Gazette*, September 11, 1957, p. 2A, reprinted in Record and Record, *Little Rock, U.S.A.*, 48–49; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956–1961*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 162, 168.

13. See, for example, American Consul General, Nairobi to Department of State, October 2, 1957, RG 59, 811.411/10–257, National Archives; American Consul, Curitiba, to Department of State, October 1, 1957, RG 59, 811.411/10–157, National Archives; American Embassy, Brussels, to Department of State, October 8, 1957, RG 59, 811.411/10–857, National Archives; *New York Times*, September 27, 1957, p. 12; *New York Times*, September 26, 1957, p. 14; *New York Times*, September 7, 1957, p. 9; *New York Times*, September 10, 1957, p. 10. See also Faubus, *Down from the Hills*, 205–328 (discussing international coverage).

The international reaction to Little Rock is discussed in Mary L. Dudziak, "The Little Rock Crisis and Foreign Affairs: Race, Resistance, and the Image of American Democracy," *Southern California Law Review* 70 (September 1997): 1641–1716; Cary Fraser, "Crossing the Color Line in Little Rock: The Eisenhower Administration and the Dilemma of Race for U.S. Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* (Spring 2000); Azza Salama Layton, "International Pressure and the U.S. Government's Response to Little Rock," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 56 (Fall 1997): 257–272; Harold R. Isaacs, "World Affairs and U.S. Race Relations: A Note on Little Rock," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 22 (Autumn 1958): 364–370. See also Martin M. Teasley, "Promoting a 'Proper Perspective' Abroad: Eisenhower Administration Concern with Domestic Civil Rights as an Overseas Image Problem" (unpublished paper, 1990).

14. *Times of India*, September 6, 1957, p. 1; *Tanganyika Standard*, September 6, 1957, p. 1; *East African Standard*, September 6, 1957, p. 1; *East African Standard*, September 7, 1957, p. 1; *Daily Mail* (Sierra Leone), September 11, 1957, p. 1; *Egyptian Gazette*, September 5, 1957, p. 1; *Egyptian Gazette*, September 10, 1957, p. 1; *Egyptian Gazette*, September