

The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America 1638-1870

W.E.B. DUBOIS.

New Introduction by
Herbert Aptheker

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PREFACE BY MRS. SHIRLEY GRAHAM DU BOIS

It is a tremendous undertaking to collect, edit, and set in background and sequence the published works of one who for over seventy-five of his ninety-five years recorded and commented upon the life and times of America as it swirled and turned in the mainstream of a world baffled by the emergence of *The Darker Brother*.

Thus, the commencement this year of the appearance of *The Collected Published Works of William Edward Burgardt Du Bois* is an event of major importance. Some historians, educators and sociologists have not forgotten that, in 1900, Du Bois clearly and unerringly predicted "the problem of the 20th century." Now, as present generations still search, often blindly, for solutions, they may well turn to the prophet's writings and find guidance, understanding, inspiration and unexpected beauty.

While still a student in the public schools of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the dark-skinned boy, with his crisp curly hair, was caught up in the spell of words and grasped something of their power. Though his childhood was happy he soon realized that he was alien among his playmates; he sought to give expression to his pondering; he began his search for Truth. In time his observations sharpened until he was writing for a weekly newspaper. Avidly, he consumed millions of words until gradually he comprehended much of the Past and recognized himself as a link in the chain uniting Past with Future. Wholeheartedly he accepted the responsibility this entailed and he prepared himself for service. Now as he wrote he chose words carefully and painstakingly, scorning obscurities, trivialities or mere "style". He polished his words so that, untarnished and crystal clear, they might reflect Truth as Life unfolded it to him. The adult craftsman wrote:

"What have been the tools of the artist in times gone by? First of all he has used Truth—not for the sake of Truth, not as a scientist seeking truth, but as one to whom Truth eternally thrusts itself as the highest handmaid of imagination, as the one great vehicle of

universal understanding . . . All Art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda, for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy."

The reprinting in one accurate edition of his books brings to this generation much of which it knows nothing. It is true that *Souls of Black Folk* has become an international classic and that *Black Reconstruction* is recognized at home and abroad as, in the words of an *Herald Tribune* commentator: "A solid history of the period, an economic treatise, a philosophical discussion . . . a poem, a work of art all rolled into one." But how many have ever heard of his novel *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, first published in 1911, which realistically portrayed the impact of cotton, racism and peonage upon the nation in the early 20th century? And there is the moving romance *Dark Princess*, published in 1928, a story of colored peoples attempting to bring about basic changes on a world scale. This novel voices significant prophecies which have since been fulfilled.

But even more important for today is the Trilogy: three novels, which he called *The Black Flame*. For in these books Du Bois reveals himself and his philosophy through the protagonist, Manuel Mansart, born of the closing Civil War, whose three generations endeavor to "build a school" in the Deep South. *Black Flame* and other late books appeared in the United States during the unhappy McCarthy Era and were therefore summarily "swept under the rug". Few ever had a chance to read them. Now all his later books may be found in the Collection.

Then there are the writings originally published in newspapers, periodicals, government bulletins, anthologies and pamphlets which have been brought together for the first time. As edited and reset by Dr. Aptheker they make up eighteen volumes. And the Annotated Bibliography is the most complete reference work ever available on Du Bois.

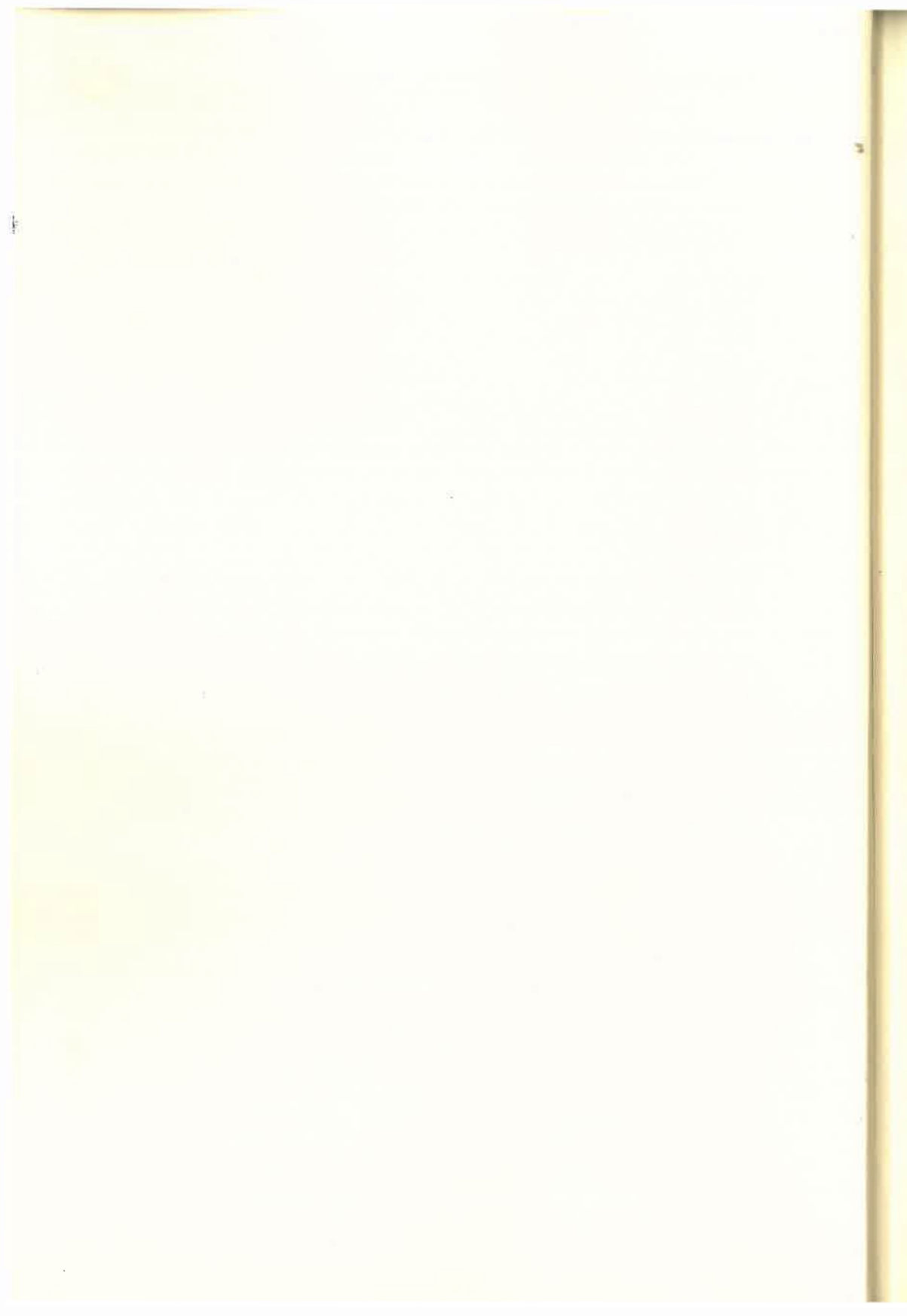
Here I would pay tribute to Herbert Aptheker. Seldom does one find such a combination of scholarship, research tenacity and dedication as this editor has brought to the Du Bois project. He has worked for years—searching, checking with Du Bois' extensive correspondence, annotating, adding footnotes where necessary, placing entries in the historical context as revealed in the correspondence and personal papers.

On this One Hundred and Fifth Anniversary of W.E.B. Du Bois' birth, I congratulate Kraus-Thomson for making such a significant

contribution to the study of Black Culture and to History; I thank the many who unselfishly gave of their time in hunting old papers and out-of-print periodicals; I thank Herbert Aptheker for his patience and endurance, and Fay Aptheker for her indispensable aid.

Much work, faith and vision have combined to produce this sole authorized edition of the Collected Published Writings of W.E.B. Du Bois.

Shirley Graham Du Bois
February 23, 1973
Cairo, Egypt



INTRODUCTION

Having graduated in June, 1884 from the high school in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the 16-year old Du Bois, with the support and encouragement of relatives and townsfolk, went South to study at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. He graduated with four classmates (three of them, women) in 1888 and then realized his bold dream of entering Harvard, as a junior that Fall. Two years later, at a commencement where he was one of the orators, Harvard conferred an A.B. upon him.

Scholarships had made this possible and further grants allowed the Black orphan to go on to graduate studies at a Harvard which contained probably the most remarkable aggregation of scholars ever to grace one United States faculty: William James, Albert Bushnell Hart, Edward Channing, Frank Taussig, Justin Winsor, Josiah Royce, George Palmer, Nathaniel Shaler, Barrett Wendell, Charles Eliot Norton, Francis Peabody and George Santayana were among them; of these, most influential in Du Bois' development were Peabody, Royce, Wendell, Channing, and—in particular—James and Hart. Indeed, the last two became friends; Du Bois visited their homes, knew their families and exchanged letters for years. In history, it was Hart above all who guided the young student; for him and with him, Du Bois studied especially the institution of slavery in the United States, the struggle to abolish it, the uprising of Nat Turner and—at Hart's direct suggestion—an examination of the African slave trade to the United States and efforts to suppress that abomination.

Du Bois spent about thirty months through part of 1889, all of 1890 and most of 1891 in a thorough examination of contemporary sources and the then few secondary accounts treating the African slave trade and the history of the efforts to suppress it so far as the United States was concerned. In 1891 Harvard conferred upon Du Bois an A.M. degree; early in December he presented to the Hart-conducted seminar in history the results of his findings. With Hart's encouragement and support, young Du Bois was on the program of the 1891 Annual Meeting

of the American Historical Association, which met in Washington in December.¹ Here he presented a paper entitled, "The Enforcement of the Slave-Trade Laws,"² which anticipated and in a way outlined the book now in the reader's hands.

For a young Black man, in the City of Washington in the year 1891, to report on any subject before a gathering of (all-white) scholars was unusual; to have that Black man describe something of the realities of the African slave trade, the complicity of the highest officials of the United States in violation of law and to conclude in the manner that follows certainly was extraordinary:

If slave labor was an economic god, then the slave trade was its strong right arm; and with Southern planters recognizing this and Northern capital unfettered by a conscience it was almost like legislating against economic laws to attempt to abolish the slave trade by statutes. Northern greed joined to Southern credulity was a combination calculated to circumvent any law, human or divine.

The response among the auditors was polite and two among them published appreciative accounts of the occasion and the paper for periodicals then of national importance. Professor Herbert Baxter Adams, of Johns Hopkins University (then Secretary of the Association), devoted a straight-forward paragraph in his account of the Meeting to summarizing the "scholarly" paper presented by "Mr. W.E.B. Du Bois, A.M. Fellow of Harvard University." He made no mention of Du Bois' color. Edward G. Bourne—then a professor at Adelbert College in Michigan—published a column on the "American Historical Association" in which he emphasized the "harmonious gathering together" of Northern and Southern scholars for the discussion of subjects ordinarily considered "inflammable." Further, he added:

What would Southern teachers of history within the lifetime of many many readers...have thought of going to Washington to listen, among other things, to a paper on the Enforcement of the Slave-Trade Laws by a colored man, the holder of a fellowship at Harvard University? It will surprise many to learn that Mr. Du Bois estimated that from 1808 to 1861 over 300,000 slaves were smuggled into the United States.³

¹The Association was then in its infancy; it had been formed in 1884 but only incorporated by act of Congress in January, 1889; its organ, *The American Historical Review* did not appear until 1895.

²In *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1891* (Washington, 1892, Government Printing Office), pp. 163-74. In his posthumously published *Autobiography* (N.Y., 1968, International Publishers, p. 149) this is erroneously dated as 1892.

³Professor Bourne was inexact. Du Bois had said: "...from 1807-1862...the total number thus brought in contravention alike of humanity and law was not less than 250,000." (Cited article, p. 173). The Bourne piece was in *The Congregationalist* (Boston), January 4, 1892; 57:2; that by Adams in *The Independent* (N.Y.), January 7, 1892; 44: 10-11.

On the basis of a grant from the Slater Fund—then headed by former President Rutherford B. Hayes—graduate student Du Bois received a total of \$1,500 (half of this a loan, at 5% interest) for two years of study at the University of Berlin. He worked under Gustav Schmoller, Adolf Wagner and Heinrich von Treitschke, heard Max Weber lecture and—probably most important—traveled widely through Europe. All this while he was maturing his scholarship; upon his return to the United States in 1894 he not only at once sought employment (and found it as a teacher of “classics”—meaning Greek and Latin—at Wilberforce University in Ohio) but also completed the preparation of his dissertation for the degree of doctor of philosophy granted him by Harvard in 1895.

In that same year Harvard's department of history had decided to commence the publication of an Historical Series; not then having its own press, the early volumes were published by Longman, Green & Co. in New York City and the first in this series, issued in 1896, was the present book⁴ (the reader will observe that its preface is dated March, 1896).

The book was widely reviewed and well received. *The Nation* (December 31, 1896; 63:498-500) in a six-column review—published without signature, as was then its custom—accurately summarized its contents. In a notable closing paragraph, the reviewer observed that Du Bois was a Black man, that his book was written with great clarity “and in an interesting style rarely found in monographs.” While pedantry was absent, the reviewer continued, the scholarship was sound; it was confidently, and accurately, predicted “that this study will long remain the authoritative work on the subject.” Furthermore:

Amid all the discussion over the probable future of the negro in this country, it is a matter of profound significance and great encouragement that a member of the race which, scarcely more than a generation ago, was openly

⁴Not quite accurately, Professor John Hope Franklin, in reviewing the 1954 re-issue of this book, wrote: “As the first book in the Harvard Historical Studies it set the stage for university sponsorship of the publication of learned manuscripts” (*Journal of Negro History*, April, 1955; 40:182); and in his introduction to a 1969 reprint, Professor Franklin referred to the Harvard Historical Studies as “the first series of scholarly works to be published by an American university” (edition published by Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, p. vi). The John Hopkins University Studies commenced in 1882; under Albert Bushnell Hart's direction there had commenced what were called Fay House Monographs, being Publications of the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women and in 1891 through Ginn & Co. it published Marion G. McDougall's pioneering *Fugitive Slaves, 1619-1865* cited herein by Du Bois. Also, through G.P. Putnam's Sons, the history and economics department of the University of Nebraska commenced publication of scholarly work in 1891, while J. Franklin Jameson edited *Papers from the Historical Seminary of Brown University* which commenced in 1894.

bought and sold and hunted in our streets, should have traced, out of abundant knowledge and with unbiassed mind, the course of our national connection with that unholy traffic, from its beginning to its close, in a volume which is an honor alike to its author, to the university whose approval it has received, and to American historical scholarship.

A four-page, unsigned⁵ review in *The American Historical Review* (April, 1897; II, 559-59) also is largely devoted to a summary of its contents, illustrated with rather lengthy quotations. There are three gently critical suggestions. The reviewer thought that Du Bois presented the development of a more commercialized slavery in the 19th century, as contrasted with an allegedly "patriarchal serfdom [at the time] of the founders of the republic" in "perhaps" an exaggerated form; he did not sufficiently observe the existence of opposition to reopening the slave trade among some slave-owners inside "the cotton states" nor the arguments they offered; and the author permitted himself "the use of a few adjectives here and there that characterize the advocate rather than the historian." Overall, however, the reviewer found the book "an immense amount of faithful and diligent work."

Of the three criticisms, the first would seem to be unwarranted by the facts; if anything, indeed, Du Bois displays a tendency to exaggerate the "patriarchal" nature of 18th century slavery in areas like Maryland and Virginia and to accept somewhat uncritically the then very widely held belief that in those areas at that time the institution was in decay and was widely expected to more or less automatically disappear in the fairly near future. This is related to the highly dubious concept, also then universally held as valid, and present in this work, of a "Cavalier" origin to the ruling circles of Virginia in particular as contrasted to rather ruder beginnings for the inhabitants of both New England and the deeper South.

The second point is well-taken, and documented in the review; though it might well have been added that Du Bois' work was the first extended examination of the movement within considerable sections of the slaveholding class to reopen the African slave trade—one of the many areas wherein Du Bois pioneered.

The third point, of "advocacy" as allegedly in contradiction to history-writing, raises a matter still very much in dispute, of course. On this question, Du Bois' attitude was clear and unchanging: history-writing was inseparable from advocacy but by no means the same as advocacy. In applying for his fellowships at Harvard in 1890 he made plain that he sought to master scholarship the better to serve his people; while

⁵This unsigned review was written by Stephen B. Weeks, as is noted in the index to the volume. I am obliged to Professor John Hope Franklin for calling my attention to this.

studying in Berlin he told his diary, in 1893, that this was his purpose and that though it cost him his life he would serve it. From time to time, Du Bois put this in print; a good example comes from the paragraphs he devoted to *The Rise of American Civilization* by Charles A. and Mary R. Beard in his *Black Reconstruction*.⁶

Reading their book, wrote Du Bois, one had "the comfortable feeling that nothing right or wrong is involved." Two differing systems develop in the North and the South, Du Bois continued, and "they clash, as winds and waters strive." The "mechanistic interpretation" failed because human experience was not mechanistic. Furthermore in such a presentation

there is no room for the real plot of the story, for the clear mistake and guilt of building a new slavery of the working class in the midst of a fateful experiment in democracy; for the triumph of sheer moral courage and sacrifice in the abolition crusade; and for the hurt and struggle of degraded black millions in their fight for freedom and their attempt to enter democracy. Can all this be omitted or half suppressed in a treatise that calls itself scientific?

The reader, then, will find in the book that follows—and in all of Du Bois' writings—no doubt as to what was right and was wrong in his opinion and the bringing forward of "the hurt and struggle" of his people was his fundamental and towering contribution to human knowledge. Indeed, in this very book, in its preface, the reader is told of the author's hope that it will represent "a small contribution to the scientific study of slavery and the American Negro"; Du Bois never doubted that the absence of such study reflected, as it bulwarked, racism and that providing it was part of the "struggle" to overcome the "hurt."

Another unnamed reviewer gave the book some five hundred words; he found it "thorough" and characterized by "great clearness and fairness" and even "brilliance." Still, half the review was taken up with an effort at refuting Du Bois' reiteration (on p. 21) of what was then a "general tradition"—namely, that the Germantown, Pennsylvania protest of 1688 against slavery emanated from Quakers; not so, wrote the reviewers—it was the work of Mennonites. The reviewer was terribly long-winded about this, the more so since he seems to have been wrong.⁷

⁶Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (N.Y., 1935, Harcourt, Brace) pp. 714-15; on this point see my *Afro-American History: The Modern Era* (N.Y., 1971, Citadel Press) pp. 51-55.

⁷For the evidence on this, see especially, Thomas E. Drake in *Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association* (1934); 22: 96ff. The review referred to appeared in *The Critic*, August 21, 1897; 31: 100. Du Bois mentions this review and the question it raises, and affirms the probability that the reviewer is wrong, in his *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), p. 11, note 3.

The most critical review appeared in the magazine which later in the same year was to publish one of Du Bois' seminal essays; this was *The Atlantic Monthly*. Two pages in an unsigned section, "Comment on Recent Books in American History," treated the book. The tone was patronizing; it noted that Dr. Du Bois taught at "an institution devoted to the higher education of the colored race." The reviewer felt that Du Bois had "shown good judgment" in choice of subject and that he had been "most industrious" though the book's "substance" might be "reached more succinctly" in an encyclopedia! Still his "reasoning" was weak and "what we may call his hortatory application seem to disclose a lack of appreciation of the subject in its historical proportions." Those "proportions" were the realities of racism so that "the suppression of slavery and the slave-trade was not such a simple matter as he [Du Bois] considers it." The reader having the book before him will search in vain for any evidence that Dr. Du Bois thought this a "simple matter"; on the contrary one of the fundamental points of his book is that it was far from a simple matter since both slavery and the slave-trade had become basic components of the socio-economic system in the pre-Civil War United States and that, therefore, the government of the United States was in fact subservient to both the system of enslavement and the trade. One feels that it is these findings and the unequivocal nature with which the Black scholar was asserting and proving them that made the *Atlantic Monthly* reviewer uncomfortable—and untruthful.⁸

One of the better of the contemporary reviews was that by Bernard C. Steiner, then on the faculty of Johns Hopkins. No biographical data concerning Du Bois is offered; Professor Steiner writes only of the book and reports it to be "a thoroughly good piece of work" whose "research has been exhaustive and accurate."⁹ A brief but astute summary is offered and particular attention is called to the fact that Du Bois' work had documented "the influence which the Haytian revolt, under Toussaint l'Ouverture" had had upon United States history—another of the pioneering contributions in Du Bois' first book.

Professor Steiner did wonder "whether Mr. Du Bois is not too severe in his condemnation of the founders of our national constitution for their compromise on the slave trade," but he seems to conclude that he was not for he wrote: "Some circumstances may be urged by way of

⁸*Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1897; 79: 560-62. Du Bois' essay, "Strivings of the Negro People," appeared in this magazine in August, 1897; 80: 194-98; this was his first publication in a nationally-circulated periodical.

⁹In *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, May, 1897; 9: 432-34.

palliation, none by way of excuse. This indictment is not made with passionate invective, but through the careful statement of well-ascertained facts."

He did note that "the papers on slavery in the Johns Hopkins University Studies are not mentioned" and this is a legitimate criticism. How or why this omission occurred is not easily explained; at least two of those studies were quite germane to Du Bois' effort. Certain other omissions mentioned by Professor Steiner are less significant, for the works involved barely touch Du Bois' subject and Steiner's suggested "correction" of Du Bois concerning slavery in Vermont seems to be mistaken.¹⁰

One of the most discerning reviews of this book came from the pen of H.T. Kealing of Philadelphia, the editor of the *A. M. E. Church Review*¹¹ and a man with whom Du Bois had a fairly close relationship for several years. This calls particular attention not only to the role of Toussaint in Du Bois's book but also that work's emphasis upon the reality and the fear of slave militancy and rebellion as affecting questions of the slave trade—still another of the pioneering insights offered by Du Bois. Keenly, Kealing estimated the book as "epochal" and urged that its author "must write more" since all that he will produce, Kealing was certain, would help bury "the almost antediluvian conceit of exclusive Caucasian scholarship."¹²

* * *

For some fifty years after its first printing, Du Bois' book was out of print. It was cited thousands of times; but this seems most often to have been merely ritual as so often happens with a "standard" work. The illuminations and suggestions and openings it offered—and offers—certainly were not assimilated by the historical profession in the United States, overwhelmingly racist as it was and still largely remains.

So far as Du Bois was concerned, quite out of the blue he received a letter, dated March 30, 1954, from a just-established organization,

¹⁰See Jeffrey R. Brackett, *The Negro in Maryland: A Study of the Institution of Slavery* (Baltimore, 1889, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press); Bernard C. Steiner, *History of Slavery in Connecticut* (Baltimore, 1893, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press). On Vermont, the question revolves about the existence of slavery; the source Steiner cites tends to substantiate Du Bois rather than Steiner—see Isaac Jennings, *Memorials of a Century...* (Boston, 1869, Gould & Lincoln), pp. 63-64.

¹¹This is in 13: 357-39 (1896/97); for an indication of the Du Bois-Kealing relationship, see my *Afro-American History: The Modern Era* (cited work), pp. 149, 290.

¹²Of other contemporary notices and reviews, three may be mentioned: in *The Dial*, August 16, 1897, p. 90; *Athenaeum*, August 13, 1898, p. 224; and highly favorable and rather long, signed by C.P. Lucas, in *English Historical Review*, July, 1897; 12: 572-74.

Social Science Press, located in New York City and headed by a then-graduate student at Columbia named Eugene D. Genovese.¹³ This informed the Doctor that one of its hoped-for accomplishments was the reprinting of the *Suppression* volume. Du Bois was delighted and responded favorably at once; he suggested that "a preface, 'sixty years after' might be needed."¹⁴ Preparations continued; by the end of August Du Bois envisioned not a preface but what he then called a "postlude". "I want it," he wrote on August 25, "at the end of the book instead of at the beginning, and to be a short explanation of the omissions in that book."

The reprint appeared at the close of 1954; one thousand copies were produced. The book was photo-offset from the 1896 edition and contained a three-page "Apologia" —updated but written in October, 1954. In those three pages Du Bois made four points, as the reader will see. He thought that the concentration on a specific and limited topic—necessary to the monograph—did tend toward some distortion; he added, however, that the particular subject of this book produced a minimum of such imbalance. Something of this criticism had appeared in the review of the original edition in *The Atlantic Monthly* to which reference has been made,¹⁵ it may be that Du Bois recalled that when he went on to comment on two other failings which he wrote he had not seen discussed.

These were a certain naivete in terms of the realities of human motivation and psychology which reflected, he felt, the pre-Freudian epoch of the book's production; and another omission to which he gave greater weight, namely, that of the Marxian analysis. Here Du Bois carefully distinguished between the economic emphasis, which, as he quite correctly points out, *is* in his book and the concept of class domination of the State and class interest and struggle as basic in the process of history, which is not in the book. At any rate, and this was the Apologia's final point, the book was a good one; it did represent conscientious effort and on the whole was accurate and complete.

Two reviews of this 1954 edition were published—and both appeared in scholarly journals issued by predominantly Black organizations. One was especially pleased with the fact that Du Bois had not hidden his

¹³This is the now well-known historian who heads the department of history at the University of Rochester at the present time (1972).

¹⁴Du Bois to Genovese, April 2, 1954, replying to a letter from Genovese dated March 30, The letters are in the custody of the Editor.

¹⁵The words in that review read: "We suspect that he has failed in a satisfactory answer to the historical problem involved in his thesis by trying to isolate it too completely..." (cited work, p. 562).

partisanship in writing of the slave trade; indeed, "this moral indignation adds to the worth of the study." But this reviewer, as also John Hope Franklin—who similarly felt the 1896 work to be indeed classical—regretted Du Bois' emphasis in his *Apologia* on the failure to apply the Marxian insight to his material. Professor Franklin, in particular, thought that Du Bois had underplayed the economic emphasis in his original work by this lament; but here Professor Franklin is himself repeating the common mistake of identifying economic determinism with Marxism. Of course, the economics of slavery and the slave trade are in Du Bois' study and its emphasis helps make the study quite remarkable for its time; and in the *Apologia*, Du Bois comments on this presence. But he also observes that it is not economic interest itself which makes a study Marxian, but rather its appreciation of the class interests and class struggle aspects of history which are decisive to the Marxian vision. As Du Bois writes, quite explicitly in his *Apologia*: "What I needed was to add to my terribly conscientious search into the facts of the slave trade the clear concept of Marx on the class struggle for income and power, beneath which all considerations of rights or morals were twisted or utterly crushed."¹⁶

Certainly, this is the plain judgment of the fully mature author of this work first produced by a budding scholar at the age of twenty-seven.

* * *

Du Bois' *Suppression of the African Slave Trade* is the first treatment of a significant subject and one which has not been supplanted. It is, also, the first full-length product of Afro-American scientific scholarship; as such it is the seed, just as Du Bois is himself the Father, of the Afro-American intelligentsia.

In addition to its pioneering emphasis upon the economics of slavery and the slave trade, its observation of the central role in both of the militancy of the slaves and the significance for United States history

¹⁶The two reviews were by Willis H. Lofton in *Phylon* (1955); 16: 105-106; John Hope Franklin in *The Journal of Negro History* (1955); 40: 182-84. Professor Franklin repeats this point in his introduction to the 1969 reprint of *The Suppression* book, issued by Louisiana State University Press and containing the *Apologia*. There have been two other reprints: one is by Dover Publications (N.Y., 1970); this does not contain the *Apologia* of 1954 and has a four-page preface by Philip S. Foner. The other was issued in 1969 by Schocken Books (N.Y.) and prints the *Apologia* in the beginning of the work; it contains a 19-page introduction marked by a high incidence of misinformation from A. Norman Klein. Among other astonishing errors is Professor Klein's statement (p. xxi) that Du Bois "overlooked the African slave-trade with Brazil and Cuba," an allegation important to a major point Klein is making. The reader is invited simply to inspect the index of this book to judge the accuracy of this criticism.

of Toussaint and the revolution he led—to which attention has been called earlier—there are additional investigations in this work which, at the time, were quite new.

Thus, the *Suppression* volume contains a detailed examination of the relationship of slavery and the slave trade to the national politics of the United States, and especially to the politics (including international ramifications) of the Revolutionary period and the years of the formation and adoption of the Constitution. In the latter, for example, Du Bois' work is in no way superceded by that of Staughton Lynd, published in 1967,¹⁷ though Dr. Lynd does not cite Du Bois at all in this connection.

Similarly, Du Bois' book contains the first discussion of the movement in the South for the legalization of the slave trade, of the reasons for this, of the arguments offered against it and of the politics associated with it up to the Civil War. Again, a very recent book finally treating this important subject at length, does not render obsolete Du Bois' work though it very nearly completely ignores it.¹⁸

The historical profession has yet to produce a work analyzing the roots of the Civil War in the United States that is superior to that Du Bois offers in chapter ten of this book. His concept of the War's origins as being an attempted "political *coup d'etat*" by a desperate slaveholding oligarchy (pp. 153-54) remains years ahead of most in the historical profession and it forms a significant element in post-Beard, not to speak of post-Rhodes thinking.

The book is a blistering attack upon the practice of the United States government in helping to maintain the oppression of Black people either through positive action or through deliberate failure to enforce its own laws where such enforcement would challenge that oppression. Thus, Du Bois shows repeatedly and courageously that acts inhibiting or outlawing the slave trade "came very near being a dead letter" (p. 109); or that "The execution of the laws within the country exhibits grave defects and even criminal negligence" (p. 127); or "The efforts of the ex-

¹⁷See Lynd's *Class Conflict, Slavery, and the United States Constitution* (Indianapolis, 1967, Bobbs-Merrill), especially chapters 6, 7, 8.

¹⁸Ronald Takaki, *Pro-Slavery Crusade* (Urbana, 1971, University of Illinois Press).

Note: A typographical feature of the book deserves notice. In the 1896 edition the word "Negro" is spelled throughout with the upper-case N. This was not general practice at the time and did not become general practice in the non-Black press until about 1930. The Harvard Historical Series volumes, after Du Bois', all used a lower-case n for Negro as late as its Number 37, by Roland D. Hussey, *The Caracas Company* (1934). Du Bois battled over this question for a generation; just how he managed this particular victory in 1896 is not clear from his Papers.

ecutive during this period [the 1850's] were criminally lax and negligent" (p. 184).

One must recall that Du Bois is publishing in 1896 when George Bancroft's concept of the divinity of the Fathers and the Constitution held sway to appreciate the full impact and daring of such observations as these:

No American can study the connection of slavery with United States history, and not devoutly pray that his country may never have a similiar social problem to solve, until it shows more capacity for such work than it has shown in the past. It is neither profitable nor in accordance with scientific truth to consider that whatever the constitutional fathers did was right, or that slavery was a plague sent from God and fated to be eliminated in due time (pp. 197-98).

While the moralistic conclusion, with its non-class approach and its generalized reproach was the kind of weakness Du Bois had in mind in his 1954 Apologia, altogether valid is a theme of the book: the enslavement of Black people vitiates the quality of life in the United States as a whole. That enslavement finally resulted in a War that threatened the very existence of the Republic and took half a million lives; the practices surrounding and bulwarking that slavery have not been extirpated and the question of their elimination "sometime must be fully answered" as the young Du Bois warned on the last page of this 1896 book and as he continued to warn until his last breath almost seventy years later.

What the young Du Bois hoped when he penned the preface to this book back in Ohio in 1896, he accomplished—to make a "contribution to the scientific study of slavery and the American Negro."

Herbert Aptheker

October, 1972

*A Bibliography on the African Slave Trade to the United States
and its Suppression, since Du Bois' Volume*

Readers may find of value a list of the significant publications on the subject of this volume which appeared after 1896. In chronological order they are:

- Spears, John R., *THE AMERICAN SLAVE TRADE: AN ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGIN, GROWTH AND SUPPRESSION* (N.Y., 1900)
- Donnan, Elizabeth, "The New England Slave Trade After the Revolution," *NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY*, April, 1930; 3: 251-78
- Donnan, Elizabeth, ed., *DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HISTORY OF THE SLAVE TRADE TO AMERICA* (Washington, 1930-35; 4 vols.) Volume I deals with the period from 1441 to 1700; II, the 18th century; III, New England and the Middle Colonies; IV, the Border and Southern Colonies. This is the basic source collection; it does not deal with the 19th century.
- Wish, Harvey, "The Revival of the African Slave Trade in the U.S., 1856-1860," *MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW*, March, 1941; 27: 569-88
- Lloyd, Christopher, *THE NAVY AND THE SLAVE TRADE: THE SUPPRESSION OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY* (London, 1949)
- Davies, Kenneth G., *THE ROYAL AFRICAN COMPANY* (London, 1957)
- Davidson, Basil, *BLACK MOTHER: THE YEARS OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE* (Boston, 1961)
- Wax, Harold D., "Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade in Colonial Pennsylvania," *PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY*, April, 1962; 86: 144-59
- Mannix, Daniel P. and Malcolm Cowley, *BLACK CARGOES: A HISTORY OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE, 1518-1865* (N.Y., 1962)
- Duignan, Peter and Clarence Clendenen, *THE U.S. AND THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE, 1619-1862* (Stanford, 1963)
- Howard, Warren S., *AMERICAN SLAVERS AND THE FEDERAL LAW, 1837-1862* (Berkeley, 1963)
- Bernstein, Barton J., "Southern Politics and Attempts to Reopen the African Slave Trade," *JOURNAL OF NEGRO HISTORY*, January, 1966; 51: 16-35
- Rottenberg, Simon, "The Business of Slave Trading," *SOUTH ATLANTIC QUARTERLY*, Summer, 1967; 66: 402-23

- Curtin, Philip D., ed., *AFRICA REMEMBERED: NARRATIVES BY WEST AFRICANS FROM THE ERA OF THE SLAVE TRADE* (Madison, Wis., 1967)
- Wells, Tom H., *THE SLAVE SHIP 'WANDERER'* (Athens, Ga., 1967)
- Pope-Hennessy, James, *SINS OF THE FATHERS: A STUDY OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADERS, 1441-1807* (N.Y., 1968)
- Curtin, Philip D., *THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE: A CENSUS* (Madison, 1969)
- James, C.L.R., "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery," in *AMISTAD I: WRITINGS ON BLACK HISTORY AND CULTURE* (N.Y., 1970), pp. 119-64
- Klein, Herbert S., "North American Competition and the Characteristics of the African Slave Trade," *WILLIAM AND MARY QUARTERLY*, January, 1971; 28: 86-102
- Higgins, W. Robert, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *SOUTH ATLANTIC QUARTERLY*, Winter, 1971; 70: 34-47
- Kilson, Martin, "West African Society and the Atlantic Slave Trade"; Basil Davidson, "Slaves or Captives? Some Notes on Fantasy and Fact"; Philip Curtin, "The Slave Trade and the Atlantic Basin: Intercontinental Perspectives," appear in N.D. Huggins, M. Kilson, D. Fox, eds., *KEY ISSUES IN THE AFRO-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* (N.Y., 1971), pp. 39-93
- Takaki, Ronald, *A PRO-SLAVERY CRUSADE: THE AGITATION TO REOPEN THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE* (N.Y., 1971)
- Bethell, Leslie, *THE ABOLITION OF THE BRAZILIAN SLAVE TRADE* (N.Y., 1971). Useful as a comparative study
- Emmer, Peter C., "The History of the Dutch Slave Trade: A Bibliographical Survey," *THE JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC HISTORY*, September, 1972; 32: 728-47

Errata

The factual and typographical slips in this volume are few. They include:

<i>page</i>	<i>line</i>	
10	25	The slave insurrection led by Cato at Stono, S.C. occurred in 1739, not 1740.
174	11	South.” (Quotation marks omitted)
329	8	omit second “of”

In the bibliography certain errors appeared, as follows:

316, under Franklin B. Dexter, “Estimates of Population in the American Colonies,” in *American Antiquarian Society, Proceedings New Series*, V (October 1887-October, 1888), pp. 22-50 (published by the Society, Worcester, 1889).

318, under the second title listed for Carl Gareis, the publication date was 1884, not 1885.

320, T. and J. W. Johnson are given as authors of *Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States* and no date is given. This is confused with the work of Thomas R. R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, Philadelphia, 1858, published by T. and J. W. Johnson.

321, in the second entry under George H. Moore, the magazine volume is V (1869), not XV.

**The Suppression of the
African Slave-Trade to
the United States of
America 1638-1870**