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DRAWING A GLOBAL COLOR LINE:  
“THE AMERICAN NEGRO EXHIBIT” AT THE 1900 PARIS EXPOSITION

On January 18, 1909, Thomas J. Calloway replied to a letter by W. E. B. Du Bois asking where “The American Negro Exhibit” was being stored, after it had been displayed at the 1900 Paris Exposition and, the following year, at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo and the South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition in Charleston. Calloway, a long-time friend of Du Bois and Special Agent for the Negro Exhibit in Paris, reported that “practically all of the Paris Exhibit prepared by you is in tact [sic] and is stored in the Library of Congress. It is not displayed there and I am sure that the Librarian will not object to letting you have it”. Du Bois never claimed the exhibit he had worked so hard to organize and arrange, leaving all the material at the Library of Congress, where it had been initially placed by assistant librarian Daniel A. P. Murray, and where it remains to this day.<sup>1</sup>

Over the last ten years, scholars have devoted an increased attention to the study of “The American Negro Exhibit”, focusing in particular on its visual language and on Du Bois’s participation in it. This chapter analyzes an aspect that scholars have largely overlooked, namely the relationship between the exhibit and changing forms of African American activism. Drawing on a range of different sources from U.S. as well as French archives, I argue that “The American Negro Exhibit”, or, as it was called in Paris, “L’Exposition des Nègres d’Amerique”, represented a turning point in the history of black political involvement, at a national and transnational level.<sup>2</sup>

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1 W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries; Daniel A. P. Murray Pamphlet Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

2 S. M. Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); *A Small Nation of People: W. E. B. Du Bois and African American Portraits of Progress*, eds. D. Levering Lewis and D. Willis (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003); M. Everett Travis, “Mixed Messages: Thomas Calloway and the ‘American Negro Exhibit’ of 1900” (Montana State University, MA Thesis, 2004).

Having been excluded (or heavily marginalized) from the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition and the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, some of the most prominent African American intellectuals and activists considered the Paris Exposition as a unique opportunity to showcase the progress the black community had made in the U.S. after the end of the Civil War, while also highlighting the emergence of new forms of racism, symbolized by the Black Codes. They assembled hundreds of photographs, charts, graphs and publications to present African Americans' achievements in the realms of education, industry, politics and literature. Dozens of individuals and institutions contributed by sending material to Calloway, and offering their own specific interpretation of race relations in the U.S. However, the final layout of "The American Negro Exhibit" reflected the leading role Booker T. Washington had acquired among African Americans in the late nineteenth century, and devoted particular attention to black Americans' hard labor and technical training, rather than to the widespread racism that characterized the American South. In the context of the Paris Exposition, such a view was acceptable – and, indeed, supported – by the U.S. government, which used it as a tool of foreign policy, to promote its newly acquired imperial role.

The Paris Exposition took place at a crucial moment in the history of race relations, as racism and racial segregation were drawing what historians Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have defined as a "global color line".<sup>3</sup> While the 1896 Supreme Court decision on the Plessy vs. Ferguson case legalized the "separate but equal" doctrine in public facilities, thus legitimizing segregation, racial violence characterized as never before Europe's colonial conquests of African territories, and the Second Boer War in particular. The process of assembling the material for "The American Negro Exhibit" led many black leaders – and especially Washington and Du Bois – to reflect on changing race relations in the U.S., and their wider international implications. In the Summer of 1900, many of them participated in the First Pan-African Conference, which took place in London, and put together people from Africa, the West Indies and the U.S., and came to believe that "the American South in the age of Jim Crow would shape, for better or for worse, a global color line".<sup>4</sup>

"The American Negro Exhibit", along with the First Pan-African Conference, represented a turning point, and led to a radicalization of black politics, with African American leaders taking different, and increasingly divergent, stances on race relations in the U.S. and globally. On the one hand, Washington and his followers became ever

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3 M. Lake and H. Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); C. Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

4 A. Zimmermann, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 64.

more convinced that African Americans' enfranchisement should be achieved through self-help, education and labor, and that the forms of racial integration promoted in the U.S. by the Tuskegee Institute should serve as a model for African colonies. On the other hand, Du Bois argued that emancipation could only be achieved by recognizing blacks' civil and political rights and challenging racism globally. For the first time in Paris, he presented his famous statement, "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line", which he used again in his speech at the First Pan-African Conference and, a few years later, in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*. For Du Bois and other African Americans, Africans and Caribbeans, the Paris Exposition thus became a way of forging new transnational alliances, and laying the stepping stones of Pan-Africanism.<sup>5</sup>

### I. *LE BILAN D'UN SIÈCLE*

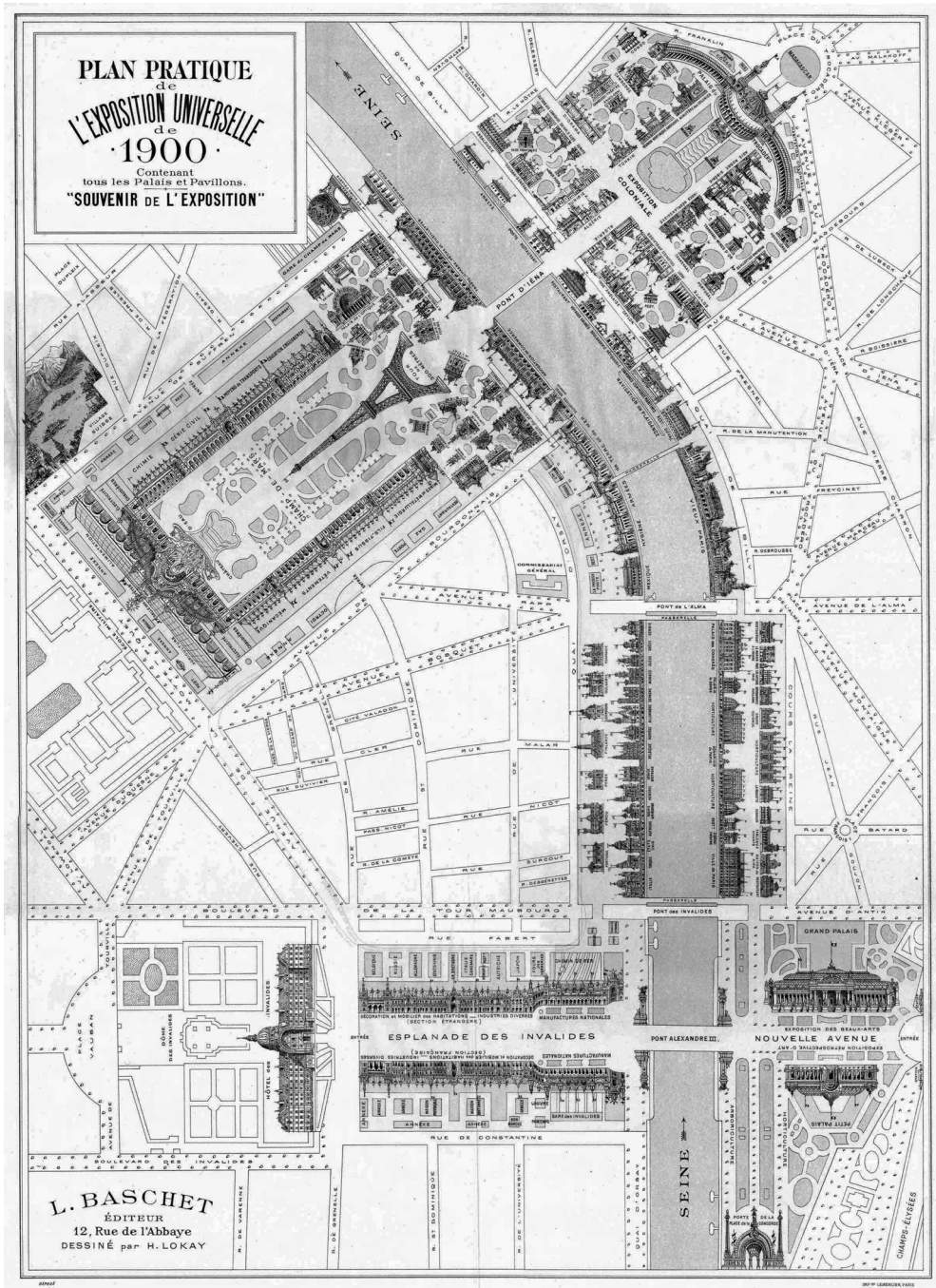
The 1900 Paris Exposition represented one of the greatest events of its time, in terms of the variety of its pavilions, the number of its visitors not only from France and Europe but from around the world, and its impact on public opinion. It was organized just as the nineteenth century was coming to an end, and aimed at celebrating the technological, social and economic success that had characterized the previous hundred years, while at the same time announcing a new century of progress (not surprisingly, its motto was "le bilan d'un siècle"). As Richard D. Mandell has argued, it took place "in a time that still had faith in optimistic and philosophical systems, hopes for social reform, joy in expanding material wealth, and confidence in the moral benefits of art".<sup>6</sup> The Exposition radically transformed the city of Paris, from an architectural and urban point of view, as it led to the building of new museums, bridges and train stations (the Pont Alexander III, the Grand Palais and the Petit Palais, the Gare d'Orsay and the Gare de Lyon, just to name a few). It stayed open for six months, between April and November 1900, and was visited by over forty-eight million visitors, more than any other previous World Exposition. Among them there were members of the middle classes, students, workers, trade union delegations, and people from the colonies.<sup>7</sup>

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5 J. M. Moore, *Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003); S. Luconi, *Gli afro-americani dalla guerra civile alla presidenza di Barack Obama* (Padova: Cleup, 2011).

6 R. D. Mandell, *Paris 1900: The Great World's Fair* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 5; A. C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire-New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

7 Archives Nationales de France (hereafter AN), F/12/4333; *L'Exposition Universelle 1900*, préf. de J. Duquesne (Paris: Éditions 1900, 1991).



Drawing of the 1900 Paris Exposition.

Compared to the 1889 Paris Exposition and even the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, in 1900 colonies figured much more prominently in the general layout, as well as in the different activities organized for the public. As in the past, colonies were assigned a separate area, across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower, signaling a physical, social and cultural separateness. Whereas French colonies occupied half the grounds – with Algeria playing a central place at the entrance of the area –, the other half included colonies belonging to other European nations. More than four hundred people from Africa and Asia were brought to Paris first to build and decorate the pavilions, then to pose “as residents and merchants in the reconstructed villages and bazaars”.<sup>8</sup> By displaying goods and people from the colonies, the pavilions aimed at celebrating the richness of Asian and, to a lesser degree, African architecture and, most importantly, the civilizing effects of French and British policies and the economic importance of colonial possessions.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, they allowed visitors to engage in the exotic experience of taking a stroll through an “Oriental” village and stopping in a café or restaurant to eat “a strange mixture of French and native cookery, which possesses the charm of novelty”, as one guide put it.<sup>10</sup>

The U.S. considered its participation in the Paris Exposition to be particularly relevant. Most members of the U.S. Commission had been involved in organizing the Chicago Columbian Exposition just a few years earlier. These included Special Commissioner Moses P. Handy, General Commissioner Ferdinand Peck, and Commissioner Bertha H. Palmer, who in Chicago had organized the Women’s Building and, as the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs put it, was “d’origine française, [... et] par son mariage atallée à la famille du President Grant, occupe aux États-Unis une situation des plus marquantes”.<sup>11</sup> The U.S. had played a marginal role at the 1889 Paris Exposition and, having become an economic and imperial power (after the Spanish-American war of 1898), wanted to be recognized as a member of the most important nations of the world. As Handy put it, “The industrial progress of the United States and the evolution of its material resources during the hundred years which the Exposition is to crown have

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8 W. Schneider, “Colonies at the 1900 World Fair”, *History Today*, 31 (1981): 35; D. S. Hale, *Races on Display: French Representations of Colonized Peoples, 1886-1940* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008); V. Ogle, “La colonizzazione del tempo: rappresentazioni delle colonie francesi alle esposizioni universali di Parigi del 1889 e del 1900”, *Memoria e Ricerca*, 17 (2004): 191-209.

9 *Les colonies françaises: Sénégal-Soudan. Agriculture, Industrie, Commerce* (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1900); *Le Pavillon du Sénégal-Soudan à l’Exposition de 1900* (Paris: Imprimerie Alcan-Lévy, 1900).

10 *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Paris and the Exhibition* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., Limited, 1900), xxx; *Paris 1900 Exposition Universelle* (Paris: Hélotypies de E. Le Deley, 1900); *Peerless Paris and its Marvelous Universal Exposition*, ed. G. J. Hagar (Philadelphia: Universal Exposition Publishing Company, 1900).

11 Ministère des Affaires étrangères to Ministre du Commerce, 30 April 1900. AN, F/12/4229.

been unequalled by that of any other nation. It is not too much to say that the United States now stands the greatest nation of the world in all the great lines of industry".<sup>12</sup>

In Paris, the U.S. was eager to showcase its achievements in agriculture, mining and industry, as well as in the fine arts and sciences. Accordingly, the funding provided by the government was four times that of the 1889 Paris Exposition. In 1897, President William McKinley urged Congress and the Senate to approve the U.S. participation at the Exposition, as a response to the "wish and expectation of our investors and producers that they may have adequate opportunity again, as in the past, to fortify the important positions they have won in the world's competitive fields of discovery and industry".<sup>13</sup> The aim was to offer "proof to the world of American greatness", while also establishing ties with new potential markets, at a time when Europe was becoming increasingly important, as an outlet for American production.<sup>14</sup> McCormick Harvesting Machines Company, whose products had conquered the American West and were making inroads into Russia and Italy, as well as South Africa, for instance, was at the forefront of U.S. displays.<sup>15</sup>

Despite its prowess, the U.S. struggled to establish its position at the Paris Exposition. The location of its building, and its main features, became a matter of controversy between the Americans and the French. During his first visit to Paris in 1897, Handy protested that "the space [...] reserved for the United States was very little more than that awarded us in 1889", and made it clear to the organizers that the U.S. needed an area "commensurate with the dignity and importance of the country, and adjoining in every case countries of the first rank".<sup>16</sup> The U.S. demanded a larger ground and, most importantly, that its building be placed on the Seine rather than behind other pavilions. The American sense of inadequacy, of being a late-comer, was clear in the "proportions grandioses" it assigned to its main building. As Alfred Picard, Commissaire Général of the Paris Exposition, lamented,

nous avons accepté, non sans quelque hésitations, les proportions grandioses que vous avez tenu à donner à votre Palais. [...] la façade de votre porche se détache en vigueur sur la ligne des Palais étrangers [...] on ne rencontre en réalité aucun point

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12 M. P. Handy, *Report of the Special Commissioner to the Paris Exposition of 1900* (1897), 14. AN, F/12/4229.

13 *Message from the President of the United States*, 14 April 1897. AN, F/12/4229.

14 Handy, *Report of the Special Commissioner*, 15.

15 M. Domosh, *American Commodities in an Age of Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2006); M. Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States gained and wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

16 Handy, *Report of the Special Commissioner*, 10-11.

d'où ce porche et le dome élevé qui le surmonte n'apparaissent d'une manière prépondérante.<sup>17</sup>

The U.S.'s new imperial dimension played a particularly important part in shaping the image the nation wanted to present. In Paris, the U.S. showcased its recent annexations – Cuba and Hawaii – by exhibiting their products and artifacts in the Trocadéro, and repeatedly pointed out that they did not constitute colonies, and were thus not to be placed across the Seine. Significantly, the American Commissioners kept silent on the Philippines, where the U.S. was fighting a particularly vicious, and racist, war against its only colony.<sup>18</sup>

## II. “THE AMERICAN NEGRO EXHIBIT”

The initial budget approved by the U.S. Congress for the Paris Exposition did not include any funds for African Americans. Such decision immediately became the object of debate, since blacks aimed at securing their presence and participation at such an important venue. Indeed, after having been excluded from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, African American intellectuals and activists lobbied to have a voice in fairs and exhibitions. While the U.S. government assigned them a “Department of Colored Exhibits” at the 1884-1885 World’s Cotton Exhibition in New Orleans, blacks were entirely absent from the National Board of Commissioners in charge of organizing the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, although they were ultimately able to secure the presence of one African American, Hale Parker, as a member of the Missouri delegation.<sup>19</sup>

For many African Americans, participating in the Expositions had a profound political meaning, and went hand in hand with the forms of enfranchisement achieved after the end of the Civil War. Blacks sought representation in the Board of Commissioners, as they did in the public and political realm. During the Columbian Exposition, some of

17 Alfred Picard to Benjamin D. Woodward, 21 December 1900, AN, F/12/4229. “The Paris Exposition”, *The New York Times*, 16 June 1898; *The United States and the Paris Exposition* (Chicago: A. R. Barnes & Co., 1899); H. Trocme, “Les Américains à l'exposition universelle de Paris”, *Revue française d'études américaines*, 59 (1994): 35-44.

18 AN, F/12/4229; interestingly, the U.S. Congress almost refused to approve funding for the Paris Exposition, due to France's support of Spain during the war. R. W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985); I. Musicant, *Empire by Default: The Spanish-American War and the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998).

19 C. R. Reed, *All the World is Here! The Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002); M. O. Wilson, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

the most important African American leaders – including Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells - wrote a short pamphlet, *The Reason why the Colored American is not in the World's Columbian Exposition*, which highlighted the contribution blacks had made to American progress and civilization. Douglass, in particular, denounced the forms of racism that existed in the U.S., symbolized by lynching in the South, and pointed out that they represented a challenge to the rhetoric of progress so prevalent throughout the pavilions. The pamphlet also critiqued the demeaning representations of Africans – embodied by the presence of Dahomeyans – that characterized the “native villages” in the Midway Plaisance. African Americans thus questioned the hierarchical opposition, so typical of Social Darwinism, between white and black, civilization and savagery, as well as the representation of African men as emasculated (or ungendered) and, thus, uncivilized.<sup>20</sup>

In order to avoid the controversies that had accompanied the Columbian Exposition, the organizers of the 1895 Atlanta Cotton States Exposition and Nashville's Centennial Exposition assigned Washington and other African American leaders the task of raising funds, while at the same time allowing blacks to have their own exhibits in a separate Negro Building. It was in the context of the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition that Washington established his position as a leader acceptable to conservative whites, with his famous “Atlanta Compromise” speech, delivered at the opening ceremony, in which he argued that blacks and whites should “be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress”.<sup>21</sup> Washington encouraged African Americans to focus on achieving technical skills through work and education and establish their economic position, thus laying the foundations for their future civil and political equality with whites.<sup>22</sup>

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20 G. Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); R. Poignant, *Professional Savages: Captive Lives and Western Spectacle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); *Zoos humains et expositions coloniales*, sous la direction de P. Blanchard et al. (Paris: La Découverte, 2002); B. Lindfors, *Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); R. W. Rydell, *The Reason why the Colored American is not in the World's Columbian Exposition: The Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999). On the forms of activism carried out by African Americans at the 1893 Columbian Exposition see Elisabetta Vezzosi's chapter in this volume.

21 Reproduced in B. T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday, Page & CO., 1901), 87.

22 *Booker T. Washington in Perspective: Essays of Louis R. Harlan*, ed. R. Smock (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989); R. J. Norrell, *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); K. J. Verney, *The Art of the Possible: Booker T. Washington and Black Leadership in the United States, 1881-1925* (New York: Routledge, 2001); S. Foster Jones, *The Atlanta Exposition* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2010); T. Perdue, *Race and the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition of 1895* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).



The “Atlanta Compromise” speech received immediate international attention, while Washington increasingly linked his interpretation of race relations in the U.S. to wider global transformations. In the late 1890s, he started presenting the South as a model of racial adjustment and African Americans “as an elite group that could bring ‘civilization’ and an aptitude for hard work to nonwhites anywhere”.<sup>23</sup> He supported the presence of African Americans in the U.S. Army fighting the Spanish American war, and promoted the idea that blacks trained at the Tuskegee Institute could become a select class of skilled workers capable of “uplifting” colonized people.

Washington came to represent someone the U.S. government could trust to showcase American race relations internationally. In 1898, the National Education Association Advisory Board asked him to join the U.S. Commission in charge of selecting the exhibits to be shown at the 1900 Paris Exposition. During a trip he took to Europe in the Summer of 1899, Washington met with Auguste Laugel, a professor at the École Polytechnique, a strong supporter of abolitionism, and a commissioner for the Exposition. The links he established across the Atlantic were crucial in securing a presence for African Americans in Paris, given the fact that Laugel was “deeply interested in all that concerns the colored race and America”.<sup>24</sup> For the U.S. government, the exhibit became a tool of foreign policy, showing the progress made by African Americans, and “silenc[ing] criticism of America’s presence in the Philippines, Cuba, and other nations where there were dark-skinned people”.<sup>25</sup>

When the time came to lobby for participation in the 1900 Paris Exposition, Thomas J. Calloway, a black lawyer who had already served as a state commissioner during the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition, made sure to ask Washington – a former colleague of his at Tuskegee Institute - to send a letter to Congress, in order to assure some funding. In his proposal, Calloway used a language that could be shared by many Congressmen, and argued that the race relations introduced in the South after Reconstruction could become a model for European colonies in Africa:

Since most of the countries of Europe are now engaged in colonizing Africa, it is the opportunity of the United States to show the lines upon which it is attempting racial adjustment. To the statecraft of Europe the ‘Negro Problem’ is destined

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<sup>23</sup> Zimmermann, *Alabama in Africa*, 63.

<sup>24</sup> *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. L. R. Harlan, vol. 5 (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 131.

<sup>25</sup> M. Bruce, “The New Negro in Paris: Booker T. Washington, the New Negro, and the Paris Exposition of 1900”, *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness*, eds. T. D. Keaton, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and T. Stovall (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 214.

to become a burning reality in their African colonies, and it is our privilege to furnish them the best evidence at hand to prove that the only solution that will ever succeed is that of an equal chance in the race of life without regard to “color, race or previous condition”.<sup>26</sup>

Washington sent a letter to McKinley asking for “a separate educational exhibit representing the progress of the Negro race”, and suggested that Calloway be nominated as its organizer. In January 1900, just a few months before the opening of the Exposition, Congress approved \$ 15,000 (on a budget of \$ 919,600) for what would become “The American Negro Exhibit”, the first exhibit about African Americans to be shown outside the U.S. Based on a recommendation by Washington himself, the U.S. Department of Education and Social Economy assigned Calloway the task of “compiling data and collecting material for an exhibit on the progress of the American negroes in education and industry”.<sup>27</sup> The display was to be placed in the Palace of Social Economy, the first of its kind in an international exposition, devoted to “social economy, hygiene and organized charities”. As one guide put it, in the Palace “many important questions [would] be settled”,<sup>28</sup> such as wages, child labor, labor regulations, “institutions for the intellectual and moral development of workmen”, and hygiene.<sup>29</sup>

Physically, as well as culturally, “The American Negro Exhibit” was located far away from the “African villages” that characterized the colonial section and offered a degrading representation of blacks.<sup>30</sup> For the U.S. government, as well as for African Americans, blacks were to be presented alongside working class associations, using the language of social reform that characterized many associations at the time. Indeed, many people who were involved in defining the politics of the Progressive Era in the U.S. viewed the Paris Exposition as a way of promoting their activities, and engaging in what was already a transatlantic dialog among social reformers. The jury for social economy included, besides W. H. Tolman, Secretary of the League for Social Service, and Westel F. Willoughby, Head of the Bureau in the Labor Department, also Jane Addams, who at the time was involved in running Hull House, the first settlement house

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<sup>26</sup> Reprinted in *The Appeal*, 13 October 1900.

<sup>27</sup> T. J. Calloway, “The Negro Exhibit”, *Report of the Commissioner-General for the United States to the International Universal Exposition, Paris, 1900, Vol. II*, U.S. Senate Document n. 232 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 463.

<sup>28</sup> *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Paris*, xxvi.

<sup>29</sup> Handy, *Report of the Special Commissioner*, 10-11.

<sup>30</sup> For an analysis of the forms of disciplinary power associated with expositions: T. Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex”, *New Formations*, 4 (1988): 73-102.

in the U.S., and was also a delegate to the International Women's Congress in Paris.<sup>31</sup> The French Ministry of Commerce and Industry received hundreds of applications from American organizations, such as the Tenement House Committee of New York, the New York League for Social Service, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Massachusetts Temporary Home for Working Mothers, and the American Federation of Labor, just to name a few.<sup>32</sup>

The exhibits shown in the Palace of Social Economy were profoundly different from those of the rest of the Paris Exposition. While most of them emphasized the technological achievements of the nineteenth century, or offered visitors the possibility of living an exotic experience and escaping from everyday life, social reformers adopted the rather dry language of sociology, statistics and photography to document both the progress and continued problems of the working classes, women and African Americans. The use of massive amounts of statistics, graphs and photographs might have drawn the visitor away from actually engaging with the field of social economy. As Tolman put it,

The value of the [Social Economy] exhibit would have been very greatly enhanced if it could have been made more self-explanatory [...] Business men strive to make their exhibits attractive and interesting, well knowing the advertising value of these characteristics. In the same way, similar care should be shown in the Department of Social Economy.<sup>33</sup>

Nonetheless, the organizers considered the exhibits to be a success, since, "while social economy is no new science, its application and interpretation have received great development within the last decade".<sup>34</sup> While they remained accessible only to an elite of people involved in social reform, they had the important effect of consolidating a transatlantic and, increasingly, transnational discussion about labor, race and gender.<sup>35</sup>

The U.S. had a room of about ten square meters at its disposal and selected its exhibits very carefully, "cramm[ing] into their [...] space a larger stock of material than

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31 *Liste des jurés proposés par les Etats-Unis*, n.d., AN, F/12/4229; *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*, eds. T. J. Boisseau and A. M. Markwyn (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

32 AN, F/12/4236.

33 W. H. Tolman, "Social Economics in the Paris Exposition", *The Outlook*, 311 (October 1900); Ministère du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes, *Rapports du Jury International. Introduction Générale*, Tome V et dernier (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1903).

34 Tolman, "Social Economics in the Paris Exposition", 315-316.

35 D. T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Era* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1998), 8-32.



Interior of "The American Negro Exhibit".

in any display but France's itself".<sup>36</sup> It chose material from the Department of Labor, documenting pension and factory inspection systems and labor unions, from the League for Social Service, and placed several models of New York's tenement houses, promoted by the Tenement House Committee, at the center of the room.<sup>37</sup>

Calloway's call for participation was met with great enthusiasm. Six black universities – Fisk University, Howard University, the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Shaw University, the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, and the Haines Industrial Institute – sent material concerning the education of African Americans. Daniel Murray, a librarian at the Library of Congress, compiled a list of books and pamphlets written by African Americans and tried, as he himself put it, "to secure a copy of every book and pamphlet in existence, by a Negro Author, the same to be used in connection with the Exhibit of Negro Authorship at the Paris Exposition of 1900, and later placed at the Library of Congress".<sup>38</sup> Andrew F. Hilyer, of the National Negro Business League, made a list of all the businesses owned by African Americans in the South for a "Collective Exhibit of Negroes in Merchandise, Factories, and Allied Occupations". Du Bois "prepare[d] a statistical display of sociological work", based on his recent publication, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. The exhibit received fifteen different prizes, including a Grand Prize, gold medals for Calloway and Du Bois, and for the Tuskegee Institute, and a silver medal for Washington's monograph, *The Education of the Negro*. The meaning of the exhibit was summarized in one article, which pointed out that the display showed "to what extent colored men became thinkers and scholars in days when it was a crime to teach negroes to read and write", a tradition that had a long history in the black diaspora.<sup>39</sup>

"The American Negro Exhibit" occupied one corner of the room and displayed a wealth of material about African Americans' achievements in the U.S. since the end of the Civil War, in education, occupation, business and culture, and presented "a general sociological study of the racial conditions in the United States".<sup>40</sup> Its aim was to challenge the most common stereotypes about blacks, and some of the main arguments used to

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36 Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 15.

37 Tolman, "Social Economics in the Paris Exposition", 312.

38 D. A. P. Murray, *Preliminary List of Books and Pamphlets by Negro Authors* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1900).

39 "The Negro in Literature", *Literary Digest*, 4 August 1900, 130; *The Bulletin of Atlanta University*, December 1899; B. T. Washington, *The Education of the Negro* (Albany: J. B. Lyon company, 1900); L. Hill, *Visualizing Blackness and the Creation of the African American Literary Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

40 W. E. B. Du Bois, "The American Negro at Paris", *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, 22, 5 (1900): 575.

justify lynching and the denial of political, economic and social rights to blacks. In a letter he sent to Washington, Calloway emphasized the urgency of the matter,

While I deplore as deeply as any other member of my race the matter of drawing the color line at any time where it is not already drawn by the other race, there are times, and this is one, when we owe it to ourselves to go before the world as Negroes. Every one who knows about public opinion in Europe will tell you that the Europeans think us a mass of rapists, ready to attack every white woman exposed, and a drug in civilized society [...] How shall we answer these slanders? Our newspapers they do not subscribe for, if we publish books they do not buy them, if we lecture they do not attend. To the Paris Exposition, however, thousands upon thousands of them will go and a well selected and prepared exhibit [...] will attract attention [...] and do a great and lasting good in convincing thinking people of the possibilities of the Negro.<sup>41</sup>

It should come as no surprise that the organizers of “The American Negro Exhibit” attributed such an important role to photography. In the late nineteenth century, watching people being lynched and “looking at the pain of others” was part and parcel of building a society that revolved around racism, sexism and violence. Thousands of photographs and postcards of lynched men were distributed across the South and became part of many people’s everyday lives, just like images of mutilated people became part of Europeans’ support for colonialism.<sup>42</sup> In the many conferences Ida B. Wells held in England at the turn of the nineteenth century, photographs of lynched men played a prominent role. They were used to draw the attention of international public opinion to the violence that characterized the American South, and encourage support for an anti-lynching law in the U.S.<sup>43</sup>

Calloway put together hundreds of photos – displayed in swinging panels – taken by African American professional photographers, who were opening their studios in many cities of the South, and aimed at offering a different image of the black community, one that challenged existing stereotypes. Most of the pictures exhibited in Paris were shot by Thomas Askew, a photographer from Atlanta, who was closely linked to the city’s growing black middle class. In order to document African Americans’ lives and achievements in the South, Calloway hired Harry Shepherd, who had been the first black

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41 Harlan, *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, 226-227; M. Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

42 D. Apel and S. M. Smith, *Lynching Photographs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*, ed. J. Allen (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000); S. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003).

43 Ida B. Wells published some of these pictures in *Southern Horror: Lynch Law in all Its Phases* (New York: The New York Age Print, 1892).

photographer to open a studio in St. Paul, Minnesota. Between February and March, 1900, Shepherd traveled with Calloway and shot hundreds of pictures of black colleges and universities (including the Tuskegee Institute) in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and Tennessee, and used his trip to organize blacks against racial segregation.<sup>44</sup> The pictures of the Hampton Institute, on the other hand, were taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston, one of the first female photojournalists, who had also worked for the White House covering the Spanish-American war. She was present in Paris as delegate to the International Congress of Photography, and organized an exhibit of images taken by other female photographers.<sup>45</sup>

“The American Negro Exhibit” was characterized by a multiplicity of different, and sometimes contrasting, interpretations of race relations in the U.S. However, its final layout reflected the preeminence Washington had acquired not only among African Americans but also in high political circles. As Marcus Bruce has argued, “Washington viewed the American Negro Exhibit to the Paris Exposition of 1900 as one more opportunity to broadcast and publicize the work of Tuskegee and confirm his status as the preeminent African American leader of the nation”.<sup>46</sup> Not only was his portrait hung at the very top and center of the displays (while a small statue of Frederick Douglass was placed on one side), but most of the photographs presented emphasized African Americans’ achievements in education and business, rather than highlighting racial tensions.

“The American Negro Exhibit” placed particular emphasis on the experiences of the so-called New Negroes, which were so crucial to Washington’s understanding of race relations. The exhibit aimed at building what historian Deborah Willis has called “a New Negro visual aesthetic”, which revolved around young blacks who were establishing their position as middle class, respectable, men and women in the decades following the Civil War.<sup>47</sup> The photographs never represented poverty, or even the experience

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44 The photographs can be seen at Library of Congress, African American Photographs Assembled for 1900 Paris Exposition, last accessed 1 June 2014, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/anedub/>. D. Willis, “The Sociologist’s Eye: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Paris Exposition”, *A Small Nation of People*, eds. Lewis and Willis, 51-78; D. Willis, *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers 1840 to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002); *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, eds. M. O. Wallace and S. M. Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); “Small Nation, Large Lives”, *Philadelphia City Paper*, 9-15 October 2013, last accessed 1 June 2014, <http://archives.citypaper.net/articles/2003-10-09/cover2.shtml>.

45 Special Correspondence, Frances Benjamin Johnston Papers, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., box 26; J. M. Przyblyski, “American Visions at the Paris Exposition, 1900: Another Look at Frances Benjamin Johnson’s Hampton Photographs”, *Art Journal*, 3 (1998): 60-68; L. Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

46 Bruce, “The New Negro in Paris”, 209-210.

47 Willis, “The Sociologist’s Eye”, 53.



African American man giving piano lesson to young African American woman. Daniel Murray Collection (Library of Congress).



of slavery, and focused instead on African Americans' success in the South. Many of them portrayed leaders of the black community, such as Reverend Henry Hugh Proctor, minister of Atlanta's First Congregational Church; others focused on skilled workers' lives in factories owned by African Americans, such as the Coleman Manufacturing Company; still others emphasized women's role as teachers. As Miles Everett Travis has convincingly argued, with few exceptions the images portrayed blacks as groups of students and laborers, capable of establishing their success and becoming members of American society through hard work and discipline, rather than individuals who had the right to be enfranchised.<sup>48</sup>

A different image of race relations in the U.S. came out of the material arranged by Du Bois, one that contested Washington's interpretation. Du Bois had known Calloway for many years, since the two had studied together at Fisk University, where they had directed *The Fisk Herald*, the first African American university newspaper. After having earned his doctorate at Harvard University, Du Bois had devoted most of his time to the sociological study of blacks, first in Philadelphia, then in the South. Once he joined the faculty at Atlanta University, he surrounded himself of students interested in examining the condition of African Americans in Georgia. Du Bois considered his participation at the Paris Exposition to be momentous. As he later stated,

In 1900 came a significant occurrence which not until lately have I set in its proper place in my life. I had been for over nine years studying the American Negro problem [...] I wanted to set down its aim and methods in some outstanding way which could bring my work to the notice of the thinking world. The Great World's Fair at Paris was being planned and I thought I might put my findings into plans, charts and figures, so one might see what we were trying to accomplish.<sup>49</sup>

By the time he participated in organizing "The American Negro Exhibit", Du Bois had started developing his theory of black nationalism, based on the richness of African American and, indeed, Pan-African culture. He had not yet broken away from Washington, and both shared the idea that economic independence was crucial in assuring African Americans' emancipation. However, Du Bois increasingly critiqued the notion that blacks should be absorbed into a superior white culture, and emphasized the idea that blackness should be desirable and a source of pride, rather than self-hatred. In

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<sup>48</sup> Travis, *Mixed Messages; Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self*, eds. C. Fusco and B. Wallis (New York: Henry R. Adams, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Du Bois, "Negro at Paris", 575-577; "Il negro americano a Parigi, di W. E. B. Du Bois", a c. di R. Sassatelli, *Studi Culturali*, 2 (2004): 317-335; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1899); *W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City: The Philadelphia Negro and its Legacy*, eds. M. B. Katz and T. J. Sugrue (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).



African American woman. Daniel Murray Collection (Library of Congress).



African American man. Daniel Murray Collection (Library of Congress).

his famous 1897 essay *The Conservation of the Races*, he called on the need to promote “a Negro School of literature and art”, one that, as Sterling Stuckey has argued, would be “independent of European values and enabling black writers and artists to contribute to the liberation of their people”.<sup>50</sup> He was also developing the idea that black nationalism should be guided by what a few years later he called the Talented Tenth.<sup>51</sup>

The process of assembling the exhibit, and deciding how to represent African Americans to an international audience, led Du Bois to think in new ways about the question of race in the U.S. and globally. In one section, he presented the results of his research on African Americans in Georgia, which followed in the footsteps of his previous work, *The Philadelphia Negro*. Du Bois received \$ 2,500 from Calloway and, with the help of several students and research assistants, spent five months collecting hundreds of photographs and statistics that could document African Americans lives’ in a state that he considered to be particularly representative of the American South. In Paris, he displayed dozens of graphs and charts that showed the rates of illiteracy among blacks, their marital status, their employment, along with hundreds of portraits of African Americans. Among the material presented, the public could also find a copy of the Black Code of Georgia, a symbol of the forms of African American disenfranchisement that had followed the Reconstruction period.<sup>52</sup>

One of Du Bois’s aims was to blur the color line by demonstrating “that differences between races were insignificant or due to factors other than inherent racial deficiencies”. He did so by comparing African Americans with Europeans, or by challenging racist views about blacks. In one of the charts, for instance, he presented the African American population side by side with that of several European countries, thus allowing visitors “to personalize the black experience”.<sup>53</sup> In other charts, he showed how illiteracy among black Americans was lower than that of several European countries, such as Russia, and compared marital status in the U.S. to that in Germany or France. By doing so, he was not only able to catch the public’s attention, but challenged the very notion of racial differences and hierarchies.

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50 S. Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 265.

51 “The Song of Smoke”, *Horizon*, 1899; *Sulla linea del colore. Razza e democrazia negli Stati Uniti e nel mondo*, a c. di S. Mezzadra (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010).

52 *The Sociological Souls of Black Folk: Essays by W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. R. A. Wortham (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011); Wilson, *Negro Building*; R. W. Williams, WEBdubois.org, last accessed 1 June 2014, <http://www.webdubois.org/wdb-1900exp.html>.

53 Travis, *Mixed Messages*, 46; University of Miami, The Exhibit of American Negroes, The Georgia Negro, ed. E. F. Provenzo, last accessed 1 June 2014, <http://www.education.miami.edu/ep/paris/html/georgianegro.html>.

In this respect, Du Bois's use of photographs was particularly effective, and allowed him to develop his interpretation of race as a "double consciousness", which he later defined in *The Souls of Black Folk* as that "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others".<sup>54</sup> As Shawn Michelle Smith has pointed out, many of the pictures assembled by Du Bois replicated mug shots, while at the same time drawing on the iconographic language of middle class family portraits. They questioned the forms of surveillance carried out against African Americans, and questioned the divide between black criminality and white respectability. Furthermore, many of the images challenged the idea that there existed a clear-cut separation between blacks and whites, by showing bi-racial subjects, or subjects that could not be easily classified as belonging to one race or the other. By displaying such images, Du Bois refused the forms of segregation that followed the Plessy v. Ferguson case, and invited the public to "critically engag[e] in the visual and psychological dynamics of 'race' at the turn of the century".<sup>55</sup>

He introduced his exhibit with the image of the African slave trade, described with the following words: "This case is devoted to a series of charts, maps and other devices designed to illustrate the development of the American Negro in a single typical state of the United States". Just below the caption, Du Bois inserted his famous statement, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line", which he used again during his speech at the First Pan-African Conference, and then published a few years later in *The Souls of Black Folk*. In Paris, and later London, Du Bois advanced a new interpretation of race relations, which emerged in the context of American segregation, but was fully developed through his participation in "The American Negro Exhibit" and at the First Pan-African Conference.

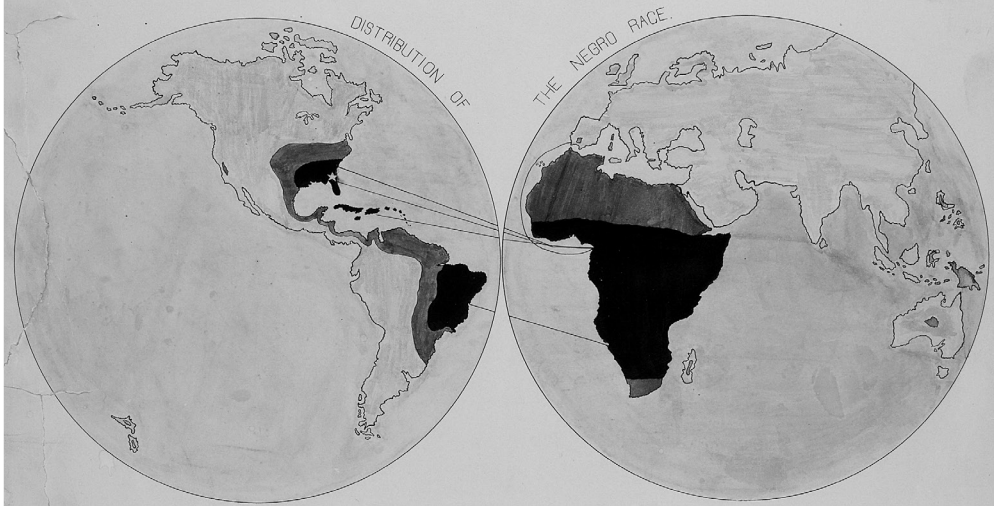
### III. FROM PARIS TO LONDON AND BACK

Despite the fact that "The American Negro Exhibit" won several important prizes, it was largely ignored by the American as well as by the French press. The main French newspapers, such as *Le Figaro* and *Le Petit Parisien*, did not even mention it, while *The New York Times* and *The New York Herald* referred to it only in passing. The same was true about the numerous guidebooks published for travelers visiting the Exposition from the U.S., Great Britain and other European countries, which devoted only scant

54 W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 8.

55 S. M. Smith, "'Looking at One's Self through the Eyes of Other': W. E. B. Du Bois's Photographs for the 1900 Paris Exposition", *African American Review*, 4 (2000): 583; ead., *Photography on the Color Line*; J. Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

**THE GEORGIA NEGRO .**  
A SOCIAL STUDY  
BY  
W.E. BURGHARDT DU BOIS .



≡ ROUTES OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE.

★ THE STATE OF GEORGIA.

THIS CASE IS DEVOTED TO A SERIES OF CHARTS, MAPS AND OTHER DEVICES DESIGNED TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO IN A SINGLE TYPICAL STATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

" THE PROBLEM OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IS THE PROBLEM OF THE COLOR-LINE."

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Georgia Negro: A Social Study*. The plate shows the routes of the African slave trade with the state of Georgia starred. Daniel Murray Collection (Library of Congress).

attention to the Building of Social Economy.<sup>56</sup> This was partly a result of the location of the exhibit. If one looks at the general layout of the Paris Exposition, “The American Negro Exhibit” occupied a marginal space and a small one even inside the Building of Social Economy. While we do not have any information about the number of visitors that went to see the exhibit, it is very likely that most of them were more interested in admiring the wonders of electricity, manufactured goods, and the exoticism of the colonies, than the statistics, books and photographs presented in such great numbers by African Americans.

Maybe most importantly, the framework of the Paris Exposition did not allow much space for social and political conflict, since its main aim was to celebrate the progress of the nineteenth century and, in the case of “The American Negro Exhibit”, of the U.S. as a powerful nation. Unlike (white) women, who had their own pavilion in which to host meetings (including one about Harriet Beecher Stowe), African Americans did not organize any conferences.<sup>57</sup> As Calloway put it in a letter to Washington, “What I had hoped to bring about is a Congress on the subject, but thus far I can see no practical way of reaching it [...] the difficulty of securing delegates and attendants in sufficient quantity, to justify in doing so is the difficulty not to be gotten around”.<sup>58</sup>

Nonetheless, for African Americans the exhibit represented an important landmark and a turning point in thinking about race relations, both in the U.S. and internationally. Some of the main black newspapers, such as *The Colored American*, which was in charge of covering the exhibit, emphasized its relevance, by arguing that,

Few things have been done for us in the last few decades that have counted so much for our dignity and capacity as the winning of so many prizes of high distinction in Paris last summer. The peoples of other countries will know the Negro American better and think more of him hereafter than they have done before, for they have seen him rated among other races at Paris as a man who can do something along all lines of commendable behavior.<sup>59</sup>

While “The American Negro Exhibit” was on display, several African Americans, including Du Bois and Calloway, traveled to London to participate in the First Pan-African

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<sup>56</sup> *The New York Times*, 12 May 1900; *The New York Times*, 18 August 1900; B. D. Woodward, “The Exposition of 1900”, *The North American Review*, 521 (1900).

<sup>57</sup> On the Palais de la Femme: AN, F/12/4356.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas J. Calloway to Booker T. Washington, n.d., The Booker T. Washington Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division (hereafter BTW Papers), box 38, reel 34.

<sup>59</sup> “The Negro Exhibit at Paris”, *The Colored American*, 3 November 1900. J. M. Przyblyski, “Visions of Race and Nation at the Paris Exposition, 1900: A French Context for the American Negro Exhibit”, *National Stereotypes in Perspective: Americans in France, Frenchmen in America*, ed. W. L. Chew III (Atlanta: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2001), 209-244.

Conference, which was held in the summer of 1900 to take advantage of the presence of many blacks in Paris. As Washington put it during his trip to Europe just a year earlier,

I beg and advise as many of our people as can possibly do so, to attend this conference. In my opinion it is going to be one of the most effective and far-reaching gatherings that has ever been held in connection with the development of our race.<sup>60</sup>

The Conference aimed at “tak[ing] steps to influence public opinion on existing proceedings and conditions affecting the welfare of the natives in various parts of the world”.<sup>61</sup> More than forty delegates from England, the West Indies, the U.S., Liberia, South Africa and Ethiopia attended, and discussed the treatment of blacks in South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as the growing forms of racism across the world.<sup>62</sup> Du Bois’s participation at the Conference, which was somewhat fortuitous, represented a turning point for him. During the Conference, he gave a lecture titled, “To the Nations of the World”, in which he repeated the statement printed on his plate displayed at the “American Negro Exhibit”, “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line”:

I lived to see a dream come true [...] Just what thoughts were back of the meeting, I do not know, but as I was made secretary, I wrote out my ideas in the resolutions eventually adopted. They were simple and aimed at bringing together in regular meetings Africans, their friends and descendants to discuss and clarify their social problem.<sup>63</sup>

Among those who participated at the Conference there were several African American women, the most prominent of whom was undoubtedly Anna Julia Cooper, who continued to play a leading role in Pan-African movements. Cooper, who was born a slave, already had a long experience of social and political activism. She was one of the first to write a book about African American women’s lives, *A Voice from the South by a Woman from the South*, and worked as a teacher at the M Street High School, promoting the idea that blacks, particularly women, should achieve their full

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60 Quoted in Zimmermann, *Alabama in Africa*, 62.

61 Harlan, *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, 155.

62 M. Sherwood, *The Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams and the African Diaspora* (New Brunswick: Routledge 2010); ead. “Pan-African Conferences, 1900-1953: What Did ‘Pan-Africanism’ Mean?”, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 4 (2012): 106-126.

63 *Encyclopedia of African American History*, ed. P. Finkelman, *1896 to the Present*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 43.



emancipation through education. At the Conference, Cooper presented a paper titled “The Negro Problem in America”, and, as a member of the Executive Committee, wrote a series of petitions supporting the right to independence and citizenship of all colonies and subjects. Furthermore, she sent a petition to Queen Victoria, asking to put an end to the Boer War.<sup>64</sup> The public of the Conference included other prominent African American women, such as Ella D. Barrier, a colleague of Cooper’s at the M Street High School and an activist in the so-called “club movement” and in the Colored Women’s League of Washington D.C., and Adrienne Herndon, a faculty member at Atlanta University, and wife of businessman Alonzo Herndon. The only other African American woman to talk at the Conference was Anna H. Jones, who presented a paper on “The Preservation of Race Individuality”.<sup>65</sup>

Most of the African Americans who participated in the First Pan-African Conference traveled to Paris to visit “The American Negro Exhibit”, and were invited to attend a dinner in the U.S. pavilion. As *The New York Times* put it, the event

produced a reunion and most cordial congeniality among colored people, more or less strangers to each other and meeting for the first time under the hospitable roof of the United States Building in a foreign land, but under the Stars and Stripes.<sup>66</sup>

Far from being strangers, many of the twenty-five participants already knew each other and were engaged in various forms of activism, both domestically and internationally. These included Joan Imogen Howard from the State of New York, who was the only African American woman to belong to a state board, and had actively participated in the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, where she presented a series of statistics on blacks’ success; Agnes Moody from Chicago, who served as vice-President of the National

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64 Cooper later returned to Paris to pursue a doctorate at the Sorbonne, where she wrote a dissertation titled “L’attitude de la France à l’égard de l’esclavage pendant la Révolution”. V. M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper, Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007); A. J. Cooper, *A Voice from the South by a Woman from the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); J. James, “The Protofeminist Politics of W. E. B. Du Bois with Respects to Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells Barnett”, *W. E. B. Du Bois on Race and Culture: Philosophy, Politics, and Poetics*, eds. B. W. Bell, E. Grosholz and J. B. Stewart (New York: Routledge, 1996), 141-160; S. Y. Evans, “African American Women Scholars and International Research: Dr. Anna Julia Cooper’s Legacy of Study Abroad”, *Frontiers*, 18 (2009): 77-100; “Women and Historical Pan-Africanism: Anna J. Haywood Cooper (1858-1964), Organizer and Peace Activist”, *Pan-African News Wire*, 19 November 2006, last accessed 1 June 2014, [http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2006/11/women-and-historical-pan-africanism\\_1729.html](http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2006/11/women-and-historical-pan-africanism_1729.html).

65 *The Bulletin of Atlanta University*, December 1899; G. E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996). For African Americans women’s role in World’s Fairs, see Elisabetta Vezzosi’s chapter in this volume.

66 “Colored Americans Dine”, *The Colored American*, 25 August 1900.

Association of Colored Women; and Fannie Barrier Williams, an activist and writer from Chicago.<sup>67</sup>

The experience of dining with white Americans, and thus enjoying a privilege they were denied at home, pushed some of the participants to further reflect on race relations in the U.S. Cooper, for instance, “remarked sarcastically that while her passport served as a pledge by the U.S. government to protect her abroad, the same government could not, or at least would not, protect her in North Carolina or Louisiana”, while *The Colored American* pointed out that, “too bad though, that we have to go abroad to get what is promised at home”.<sup>68</sup> In both cases, African American activists remarked on the impossibility, at the turn of the nineteenth century, of being both black and American.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

For many African American activists, the experience of putting together “The American Negro Exhibit” and participating in the First Pan-African Conference in London represented a turning point. In the summer of 1900, Du Bois distanced himself from the gradualist approach endorsed by Washington. By traveling across the Atlantic and forging new transatlantic and Pan-African relations, he became increasingly aware of the lack of rights and the forms of racism inside the U.S., and the need to challenge racism globally. In many ways, the ties he established in Paris and London laid the groundwork for the emergence of new forms of activism, revolving around Pan-Africanism and black nationalism which would flourish in the interwar period.<sup>69</sup>

At the same time, the exhibit served to present the American South as a model to be followed internationally, and allowed Washington to promote himself as a leader of black emancipation, both in the U.S. and in the African colonies. Washington became convinced that technical training would allow Africans to become enfranchised and that the students of Tuskegee Institute represented an elite of African Americans, who could bring civilization to non-white people across the globe. The Paris Exposition confirmed his ideas and gave them an even wider international appeal. In the summer of 1900, British and German representatives contacted Calloway to ask him to send some of

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67 J. I. Howard, “The American Negro Exhibit”, *The Colored American*, 1 September 1900; W. A. Hendricks, *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998).

68 Bruce, “The New Negro in Paris”, 217-218; “Shreds and Patches”, *The Colored American*, 18 August 1900, quoted in Bruce, 217.

69 M. Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Tuskegee's students to their colonies. Baron Von Herman convinced Washington that it would be a good idea to have some educated African Americans in Togo "to teach the 'Negroes' there American methods of cotton growing".<sup>70</sup> Among those who eventually traveled to the German colony there was also James Calloway, Thomas J. Calloway's brother and a faculty member at Tuskegee. Together with three other people from the Institute, he set up a farm in Tove, about sixty miles from the capital, Lomé, where he planted a type of cotton grown in the American South, which was to be sold to European textile factories.<sup>71</sup>

"The American Negro Exhibit", on the other hand, continued to have a life of its own. Shortly after the Paris Exposition ended, Calloway started working on transferring the exhibit to Charleston, so that it could be displayed at the South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition, to be held in 1902. He wanted to continue collecting data and information about African Americans' status, and asked the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives to have a government bureau specifically devoted to this matter, inside the newly constituted Department of Labor.<sup>72</sup> Before going to Charleston, the exhibit was displayed at the Pan-American Exposition, held in Buffalo in 1901, where African American women played a particularly important role in lobbying for a fair representation for blacks.<sup>73</sup> Once "The American Negro Exhibit" left the grounds of the Paris Exposition and returned to the U.S., however, Du Bois's voice was increasingly silenced, as Washington took a leading role inside the various Commissions in charge of organizing the Expositions.

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70 Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*, 64.

71 Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*, 64.

72 Calloway to the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 4 February 1901. BTW Papers, box 38, reel 34.

73 "Africans, Darkies and Negroes: Black Faces at the Pan American Exposition of 1901, Buffalo, New York", *The Buffalonian*, eds. P. Brooks-Bertram and B. A. Seals Nevergold, last accessed 1 June 2014, [http://www.buffalonian.com/history/articles/1901-50/ucqueens/negro\\_exhibit\\_at\\_pan\\_am.htm](http://www.buffalonian.com/history/articles/1901-50/ucqueens/negro_exhibit_at_pan_am.htm).