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Article Title

The Pro-Japanese Utterances of W.E.B. Du Bois

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Abstract

When the United States entered the first world war as a direct participant, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, in a controversial editorial that he would later regret, called upon black Americans to "close ranks" with their white fellow citizens in order to defeat the common German menace. Some years later when his country went to war against Japan, however, Du Bois lacked enthusiasm and issued no such clarion call due to his belief that Japan was a colored nation, that color was a root cause of the war, and that there was "a certain bond between the colored peoples because of world-wide prejudice."

In a letter to Andrew J. Allison, the alumni secretary at Fisk University dated February 3, 1941, Du Bois said that he was glad his alma mater had not yet yielded to the war hysteria. His satisfaction, he explained, was due to the conviction that "in this war we are trying to attack Japan because of race prejudice," but he did feel that the United States might be justifiable in the event of a defensive war.

As one of the most learned men of his generation and the premier spokesman and propagandist for the higher aspirations of black Americans, Du Bois analyzed international events and tried to explain how the rise of Japan affected their ongoing struggle for justice and equality. For more than three decades, his interpretations consistently sought out the positiveness in the policies of the government of Japan. More simply stated, W. E. B. Du Bois' remarks regarding Japan's position in East Asia were invariably favorable toward Japan.

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