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"Asiatic Black Man": W. E. B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes in Soviet Asia
Part I—The Shifting "Double-consciousness" of Du Bois

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ABSTRACT

This essay seeks to revisit the curious case of the "Asiatic Black Man" by demonstrating how this identity, inherent in the collective unconsciousness and shared by Muhammad Ali, W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, and Paul Robeson, could be consolidated as an "imagined community" through the microhistory of African Americans experiencing Soviet Asia. The essay proposes Afro-American Eurasianism as a transcontinental approach to converge the transnational, transatlantic, and transpacific perspectives in the Eurasian landmass, wherein the consilience of the Soviet overarching ambition of becoming the only world power as well as various themes that connected the micro-narrative of African Americans with the big history[1] of Asia rendered Eurasianism as a shared political ideology, to be exploited by each side as a grand strategy in ending global racial politics. By positioning the twin cases of Du Bois and Hughes, this paper aims to show how the Soviet Union's divergent endeavors of the "world revolution"—with Hungary and China as their primary targets for exporting revolutions in order to control the Eurasian "heartland"—and "socialism in one country"—with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as the in-the-making products of the Soviet nation-building experiments so as to convey the raceless image of Potemkin villages through Central Asia's window to the world—could draw them away from their initial embrace of Black nationalism and shape their radical thoughts toward the Soviet cause. Moreover, this study posits that Soviet Asia functioned as a psychogeographical and geopolitical conduit that facilitated the elaboration of the Afro-American "Asiatic Black Man" fantasy and imagination of the communistic utopia as an alternative international order, while it unexpectedly resulted in a new "double-consciousness," compelling Du Bois and Hughes to oscillate between Moscow and Beijing/Tashkent. (YZ)

KEYWORDS: Afro-American Eurasianism, Asiatic Black Man, Langston Hughes, Manchukuo, Soviet Asia, W. E. B. Du Bois, Hungary, China, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

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Introduction: Repositioning the "Asiatic Black Man" in the Soviet Eurasian context

During an ordinary day amidst the Vietnam War, the former World Boxing Champion Muhammad Ali made a less publicized, yet unique revelation about his identity in a radio appearance in Louisville: "I am not a Negro . . . I am Muhammad Ali . . . . And I am an Asiatic Black man" (qtd. in Deutsch 194). Ali's deliberate quest for inspiration from Asia in his identity making process led Nathaniel Deutsch to interpret his "Asiatic Black Man" as "the pan-Asiatic racial identity which tens of thousands of African Americans began to embrace in the first few decades of the twentieth century" (198).

As Deutsch suggests, the idea of this identity might have originated from Noble Drew Ali, who established the Moorish Science Temple in 1913 and described the African Americans as "olive skinned" and "Asiatic" (196). Indeed, Drew Ali, in his pamphlet *The Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple of America*, invited African Americans, whom he imagined to be "the fallen sons and daughters" of ancient Moabites, to embrace Islam and to build "the Asiatic Nation of North America" (56). Subsequently, with the *Ahmadiyya* movement in the United States and the establishment of the Nation of Islam by Wallace Fard Muhammad in Detroit in 1930, African Americans automatically assumed an "Asiatic" identity by converting to Black Muslims. Later, as Pauline Guedj in her article "Des 'Afro-Asiatiques' et des 'Africains'" [The "Afro-Asians" and the "Africans"] points out, "Afro-Asian" Muslims gradually realized their African origin was no less important. The rise of Afrocentrism in the American academia in the 1980s eventually cast Islam out of mainstream Black nationalist ideology, for it was considered as a religious tool once used by the Arabs to enslave Africans—the same way as Christianity was turned into a tool of subjugation by the Europeans—and so Afro-Asians became Africans again.

However, the Muslim identity of Muhammad Ali did not prevent him from sympathizing with the atheist Viet Cong, suggesting that the construction of the "Asiatic Black Man" identity should be understood as primarily influenced by factors other than religion. Alternatively, there was another trend among African American intellectuals and artists in developing the identity of the "Asiatic Black Man," based on the "imagined" shared cultural heritage and bloodline between Asia and Africa, rather than on religion. Already in the 1930s, bass baritone and civil rights activist Paul Robeson stated that the purpose of his artistic creation was "to show my poor people that their culture traces back directly to the great civilizations of Persia,

China and the Jews" (qtd. in Boyle and Bunie 284). W. E. B. Du Bois, however, claimed that "[t]he Asiatic and African blacks were strewn along a straight path between tropical Asia and tropical Africa," where the Chinese, Japanese, and Arabs were considered as mixed-race populations exhibiting a blend of Negroid and Mongoloid traits (*The World and Africa* 115), thus revealing his Afro-American version of *Drang nach Osten*. A term similar to "Asiatic Black Man" appeared in Langston Hughes's autobiography *I Wonder As I Wander*, published in 1956, where he depicted a Pamir Red Army friend he met in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan, as "a Chinese Negro, very brown" (130). Even though Deutsch mainly uses "Asiatic Black Man" as a metaphor, the term in fact embodies what Carl Jung in his *Von den Wurzeln des Bewusstseins* [From the Roots of Consciousness] calls "archetype," which is the representation of the collective unconscious, brought into reality through the *schöpferische Phantasie*, or "creative imagination" (94–95). Consequently, the "Asiatic Black Man" became one of the "imagined communities," which are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson 6).

Transnational American Studies is prompting a rediscovery of historical, political, and cultural connections between African Americans and Asians (see Ho and Mullen), and it offers three prevailing analytical frameworks for contemporary scholarship. The first framework explores the intricate relationship between Black nationalism and Black internationalism, bridging the objective of empowering African Americans within the US with Asian diplomatic, ideological, and even military endeavors for racial equality, involving countries and regions such as Imperial Japan, Maoist China, and Soviet Central Asia, as a global resistance campaign against what Roderick Bush identifies as the "white world supremacy" (Baldwin; Bush; Frazier; Gallicchio; Horne). Nevertheless, this framework essentially mirrors a Black Atlanticist perspective that treats Afro-American internationalism as a strategy without considering the self-perceived "Pan-Asiatic" identity within the African American community. Furthermore, the emphasis on "Black" overlooks the nuanced perspective some African Americans hold toward color. For example, Langston Hughes identified himself as "Brown" rather than "Black." It was also "Brown" that connected Muhammad Ali with the Vietnamese, as he stressed: "Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs?" (qtd. in Deutsch 193).

The second analytical framework is particularly championed by scholars with East Asian backgrounds advocating for a transpacific viewpoint that underscores the connections between African American leftist thinkers, including Du Bois, Robeson, and Hughes, with East Asian nations, such as China, Manchukuo, Japan, and Korea, and disclosing the shared East Asian-Afro-American experiences of a cross-racial collaboration against racial discrimination in the 1930s and 40s (Gao; Huh; Taketani). However, this transpacific perspective is no more than an antithesis to the transatlantic one; it neglects the internalization of the "Asiatic" identity in African Americans' historical interactions with Asia as well.

The third is the so-called "Afro-Orientalism," defined by Bill V. Mullen in *Afro Orientalism* as "a counterdiscourse that at times shares with its dominant namesake certain features but primarily constitutes an independent critical trajectory of thought on the practice and ideological weight of Orientalism in the Western world" (xv). Accordingly, Afro-Orientalism is a post-colonial version of Edward Said's Orientalism that provides African Americans with a conceptual platform to narrate their "subaltern" experiences in the Western capitalist world so that they could foster cultural understanding with the "colored" people in the Orient. This approach convincingly captures the Afro-American fantasy of Asia and seems to partially solve what concerns G. C. Spivak in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" when she claims that "in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak"; yet she dismisses the point that "the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (287). Still, it underscores the one-sided perception of Asia in the Black Atlanticist narrative and glosses over that the Occident and the Orient might not be perceived as fundamentally distinct, as Du Bois "began to see the race problem in America, the problem of the peoples of Africa and Asia, and the political development of Europe as one" (*Dusk* 23–24). Like the previous perspectives, Afro-Orientalism primarily deals with the dynamics between the East and West but fails to take notice of the conflicts between the developed North and subaltern South in the African American narrative.

What is missing so far is a perspective that can reconcile, unite, and transcend the transnational, transpacific, and transatlantic approaches "as one." Considering the inadequacies of existing frameworks in addressing the curious case of the "Asiatic Black Man," I would propose here the framework of Afro-American Eurasianism as a transcontinental approach to fill this vacuum in literature, with a primary focus on Du Bois's writings centering on the Asiatic part in his Soviet trips, and on Hughes's detailing his encounters

in Soviet Central Asia, for analysis. By demonstrating how the microhistory of African American experiences in Soviet Asia can be tied to the narrative and strategy of Afro-American Eurasianism, I argue that Soviet Asia served as a psychogeographical and geopolitical medium through which the identity fantasy of the "Asiatic Black Man" could be further developed to connect the cultural identification of African Americans with Asia, to align their struggle against the racist, capitalist world with the communistic cause, and to deepen their imaginative exploration and pursuit of an alternative international order.

Soviet Asia is defined here as the Asiatic part of the Eurasian USSR in the narrow sense, as well as the "Asiatic" countries that adopted the Soviet system in one way or another in the larger sense, such as Manchukuo and the People's Republic of China, or even Hungary, as I will show in the case of Du Bois. Although Robeson visited the Uzbek SSR to attend the International Festival of Films of African and Asian Peoples in August 1958 (Duberman 468), the heat in Tashkent proved to be so intense, while his cold persisted, that it ultimately forced him to seek recovery along the Black Sea coast, instead of exploring the country (468–69). Hence, Robeson's experiences in Soviet Asia are only briefly mentioned to echo the narratives of Du Bois and Hughes, and to support the construction of the approach of Afro-American Eurasianism.

Eurasianism emphasizes the role of geography in shaping a country's cultural identity and geopolitical positioning, the latter of which could be attributed to English geographer Halford J. Mackinder's strategic idea, expressed in "The Geographical Pivot of History," that gaining control over the Eurasian landmass ("Heartland") is the key to dominating Afro-Eurasia ("World-Island"), and the entire world, subsequently. While Eurasianism as a political ideology is commonly found in Eurasian states like Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey, it has also assumed similar forms in Hungarian Turanism and Japanese Pan-Asianism.

Eurasianism was introduced to America when Russian-born American historian George Vernadsky began to teach Russian history at Yale University in 1927. In his *A History of Russia*, first published in 1929, he traces the origins of the Russian state to the Eurasian nomadic political organizations of the Scythians, Sarmatians, Hunnic tribes, Avars, and Altaic Turks (14–30) and states that the Russians were direct political successors of the Turko-Mongols (9), making Eurasian Russia "the only real unity possible" (5). Vernadsky's historiography of Russia from a Eurasian perspective led the English-speaking academia to reexamine the influence of Asia on Russia, exemplified by English historian Arnold J. Toynbee's recognition of Russian

Cossacks' borrowing military tactics from the Eurasian nomads to remake Russia as "the first sedentary Power to bring the Eurasian Nomadism into lasting subjection" in his *A Study of History* (374 n2).

As Du Bois used *A Study of History* as a source in his *The World and Africa*, he could not regard Russia as anything but Eurasian. Du Bois's Eurasian view of Russia was further supplemented by his observations of the USSR during his five trips to the country between 1926 and 1962. Although Russian Eurasianists initially opposed the Bolsheviks, by the mid-1920s, with the repatriation of Russian expatriates to the USSR, they either embraced a form of Eurasian totalitarianism within the USSR or adopted a strategy of establishing close ties with the regime, which led to an informal incorporation of the ideology of the government (Shlapentokh 136). By the time Du Bois first visited the USSR in 1926, the country had essentially transformed into a Socialist Eurasian Empire.

Another source that influenced Du Bois's worldview is *Histoire de la Civilisation Africaine* (*The World and Africa* 51), a French translation of German ethnographer Leo Frobenius's *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* [The Civilizational History of Africa]. The uniqueness of Frobenius's studying Africa involves his combining the concept of *Kulturkreis*, or "civilizational circle," which considers civilizational development within specific spatial and temporal boundaries, with *Kulturperiode*, or "civilizational period," which likens the development of civilizations to the progressive phases in the biological life cycle, to highlight the developmental role of universal value in advancing the regional civilizations toward a "cosmic" one (29; 163). Frobenius's *Kulturperiode* resonates with Du Bois's embrace of Karl Marx's historical materialism, wherein history proceeds toward the emancipation of all mankind.

The civilizational discourse was indeed a by-product of World War I, as it dismantled the myth of nation-states and gave rise to influential thinkers such as not only Frobenius and Toynbee, but also Oswald Spengler. Spengler in the second volume of *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* [The Decline of the West] criticizes *Das Volk*, or the "people," a nationalist product of German Romanticism, which exalted folklore, mythology, and the shared elements of language and history in the formation of national identity in the 19th century, and refines *Rasse*, or "race," not as *Das Volk*, but as *der Mensch*, or the "universal people," formed in history through the *Zusammenhang des Blutes*, or "consanguinity" (132–33). In this vein, Du Bois's emphasis on the shared blood ties between "Asiatic and African blacks" was an attempt to move away from his previous Black nationalist idea of the *Black Folk*, pronounced in his

The Souls of Black Folk (1904) and influenced by the Germanic *Das Volk* he studied at the University of Berlin in the late 1890s, toward Spengler's *Rasse*. The imagined consanguinity prompted Du Bois to cite Hughes's poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" to stress Africa's civilizational links with Europe and Asia, symbolized in the confluence of ancient rivers: "I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins. / My soul has grown deep like the rivers" (qtd. in *The World and Africa* 61).

One should not neglect Du Bois's employment of German geographer Friedrich Ratzel's work to support his reconstruction of Africa's relations with the world. In *The History of Mankind*, the English translated version of *Völkerkunde* [Ethnology] that Du Bois read, Ratzel perceives Central Asia as a region inhabited by people of mixed European and Asian ancestry and hypothesizes that Central Asians' migration westward and southward spread its civilization to Africa (Vol. 1 ix; 12). Russia, after its conquest of Turkestan and Siberia, is seen by him as "both European and Asiatic, which also ethnographically stands on the threshold and is fortunate enough in no relation to be measured purely by a European standard" (Vol. 3 568); and Russian influence reached as far as America through its "Asiatic coasts of Behring Straits" (Vol. 2 107). Facilitated by Ratzel's macroscopic synthesis of anthropology and geography, Du Bois's comprehensive worldview of uniting the regions of America, Africa, Europe, and Asia by blood and civilizational ties was born through his Afro-American reading of Eurasianism.

The creation of the Soviet Union served as a watershed in Du Bois's intellectual transformation as well as in Hughes's perception of world affairs. The configuration of the USSR as a union of socialist countries within the Eurasian landmass could be seen as both a post-colonial epistemological shock and a post-nationalist political one. Epistemologically, it reversed Imperial Russia's policy of favoring Europe's domination over Asia, and instead linked the Eurasian civilization with Marxist ideology, leading to the formation of a Soviet proletarian identity as a universal human identity against the racially defined colonial hierarchy. Politically, it fostered domestic Soviet nation-states in Central Asia, while endeavoring to export its socialist revolution worldwide.

Given the shared discontent among African Americans with domestic racism and international colonialism, Afro-American Eurasianism emerged, through Du Bois's, Hughes's, and Robeson's encounters with Soviet Asia, as a micro-narrative, as well as a grand strategy. As a micro-narrative, it sought to encourage Afro-Asian solidarity in Soviet Eurasia

through their personal experiences in actualizing the self-identity of the "Asiatic Black Man" to gain a greater sympathy from the Asians who embraced socialism. As a grand strategy, it aimed to leverage the geopolitical design of the Eurasian landmass, the superpower status of the USSR, the shared history of the colonized subaltern South and the post-colonial socialist South, and the communistic teleology of emancipating all the humankind from racism and colonialism from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the Jim Crow US, the industrialized North, and global capitalism.

By intertwining its solidarity narrative with transcontinental strategy, Afro-American Eurasianism evolved into an organized political ideology that aligned the African American anti-racist struggle with the Soviet revolutionary stages of transitioning from Mackinder's Eurasian "Heartland" to the Afro-Eurasian "World-Island" so that both the Pacific-Atlantic divide and "color-lined" intercontinental distance would be overcome for the sake of a communistic world order. However, in the Soviet practice of Eurasianism, there was still an imbalance in the power structure between Europe and Asia, contributing to the dialectical relationship between the "Asiatic Black Man" and the Afro-American Eurasian Narrative, evident in Du Bois's and Hughes's dilemma in making a choice between aligning themselves more closely with Moscow for ideological reasons, and with Asia for imagined cultural affinity and blood relationship. As a result, a new "double-consciousness," that of "an Asiatic Black Man, a leftist/socialist/Communist," was born against the geopolitical split between the European Kremlin and Soviet Asia.

Due to the complexity of the topic, this paper is divided into two interrelated parts, with the current one serving as Part I to analyze Du Bois's intellectual trajectory from the Russo–Japanese War to the Cold War and his perception of Afro-American-Eurasian relationship revolving around his Soviet trips, to be followed by Part II later on, with Hughes's escapade in Soviet Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in its focus. By aligning the twin "Asiatic Black" cases of Du Bois and Hughes in parallel in the Eurasian context, the impact of Soviet practices of "world revolution" and "socialism in one country" on African Americans becomes more apparent, molding their perceived black nationalism and internationalism into the Afro-American Eurasian discourse as a vehicle for embracing cosmic universalism, exemplified in their case through communism.

From Japan to Soviet Russia: The Eurasian paradigm shift in the "double-consciousness"

In his *The Souls of Black Folk* (1904), Du Bois invoked the conception of "double-consciousness," disclosing the dual nature of African Americans' self-consciousness:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness: an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (3)

Not coincidentally, the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" correlates with Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic concept of the "gaze." The Lacanian "gaze" initially emerges in the "mirror stage," which can be understood as a process of self-identification, where the subject observes himself in the mirror when he assumes a specular image. This specular image then gives rise to the ideal self, forming the *imago*, or what Lacan calls the "Ideal-I," which situates the agency of the ego in conflict with the subject's own reality ("Mirror Stage" 1–2). Accordingly, the "two-ness," emphasized by Du Bois, not only suggests a unique dualistic phenomenon in African American consciousness, but it also indicates the awakening of Black consciousness, manifested in their introspective quest for an idealized ego, even amidst internal conflicts.

As vision establishes connections between the self and the other, allowing them to view each other in the framework of represented figures, there is always a possibility that "something slips, passes" and "is transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it" (Lacan, "Split" 73). The elusive nature of "gaze" consequently occurs when the self is scrutinized insufficiently by others, leading to the external underappreciation of the internal ideal ego and the subject's anxiety for self-fulfillment. This eventually results in the split between the vision and the gaze, where the endoscopic, self-satisfied imagination clashes with the alienating reality brought about by the exoscopic perspectives. Putting Du Bois's "double-consciousness" in Lacan's psychoanalytic framework, it becomes evident that African Americans, in Du Bois's time, were acutely aware of the "gaze" directed at them by white others, which substantiates the very existence of racial discrimination. Their reflections on the exclusion of "Blackness,"

enforced by the external white order, from "Americanness," in turn, hindered their attempts to reconcile the "double-consciousness" of being "an American, a Negro" into a coherent, idealized self-identity, and cast the two *imagos* in a perpetual state of discord.

Nevertheless, Lacan regards the split between the vision and the gaze as a window of opportunity, opening for the subject to engage in a "scopic drive," which enables him to actualize his *weltanschauung* by demonstrating visionary distinctions from the others ("Split" 78). Similarly, Du Bois seized upon "double-consciousness" as a space for maneuvering and put forth his vision for the Black community, namely, "to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (*The Souls* 4). The remarkable aspect of Du Bois's proposition lies in the way that he sought a worldly engagement with the pervasive issue of racial discrimination and segregation, merging the consciousness of "measuring one's soul by the tape of a world" with his prediction that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line" (*The Souls* vii). Ultimately, Du Bois's strategy corresponds to the dynamic interaction, proposed by Lacan, between the *Innenwelt*, symbolizing the subjective inner world, and the *Umwelt*, representing the environment or the physical world. According to Lacan, the temporal dialectic of the "mirror stage" propels the subject from a recognition of their insufficiency toward the anticipation of a coherent mental self-image, whose process involves the spatial identification of fantasizing the fragmented body-image into a form of totality, referred to as "orthopaedic," and culminates in the mental development of a synthetic "alienating identity" that bridges the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt* ("Mirror Stage" 3).

Du Bois's apprehension of world politics turned out to connect the unfolding events occurring along the racial fault lines of the *Umwelt* with the "double-consciousness" rooted in the *Innenwelt*. Shortly after the publication of *The Souls*, the Russo–Japanese War (1904–1905) broke out, and Japan as a rising "yellow" power in the Far East quickly arrested the attention of many a spectator in the then racially hierarchical world. In his essay "Atlantic University" (1905), Du Bois promptly acknowledged the "epoch-making" Japanese challenge to a white imperial power even though the result was not certain at the time of his writing: "To-day for the first time in a thousand years the great white nation is measuring arms with the yellow nation and is shown to be distinctly inferior in civilization and ability . . . . The foolish modern magic of the word 'white' is already broken and the color line has been crossed in modern times as it was in the great past" (*From Servitude to Service* 197).

Contrary to the anxieties of Russian sociologist Jacques Novikow, who popularized the term "Yellow Peril" in the late 19th century but prioritized the economic concern of cheap Chinese labor over possible Asian military threats (*Le péril jaune* [The Yellow Peril] 1), the Russo–Japanese War heralded an era in which armed struggles were gradually adopted as a means for the "colored" people to achieve their emancipation. As August Meier and Elliott Rudwick suggest, the Japanese victory together with the Irish Easter Rebellion in 1916 made Du Bois believe that "no people ever achieved their liberation without armed struggle" and "a race war in which Negroes, allied with Asians, would overwhelm the white race" (241). Other Black leaders, such as Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey, found common ground with Du Bois in considering the Japanese as potential allies for racial emancipation during World War I (Horne 45–46). Through the fantasy of a potential racial/martial alliance with Japan, African Americans incorporated Asia into their "double-consciousness," establishing an agreement on an Afro-Asian solidarity and developing the alter ego of the "Asiatic Black Man."

One of the consequences of the Russo–Japanese War was the creation of a climate of discontent, paving the road for social upheaval and political change in Russia, while the anti-war sentiment triggered by World War I played a crucial role in undermining the authority of the Provisional Government and consolidating the Bolshevik rule after the October Revolution of 1917. Instead of concentrating exclusively on how Japan would lead the way in dismantling global racial segregation, Du Bois soon developed an interest in the Russian Revolution, as a fragment of Du Bois's manuscript on the Bolsheviks testifies (*The Bolsheviks* [fragment], ca. 1917). The unexpected collapse of Imperial Russia provided Du Bois with a new opportunity to re-evaluate Russia, this time from the angle of revolutionary socialism.

Without first-hand knowledge of the situation in Russia, however, Du Bois in the July issue of *The Crisis* (1921), speculated that "time may prove . . . that the Russian Revolution is the greatest event of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its leaders the most unselfish prophets" ("Negro and Radical Thought" 103). Rather be a silent observer than an adventurer, he sat "with waiting hands and listening ears, seeing some splendid results from Russia" (103). However, in 1924 a letter from James C. Jackson, an African American expatriate in Russia, disrupted the tranquility in Du Bois's editorial life:

> One must visit Russia to understand and appreciate the many beautiful social developments which are taking place in this strange land! Here at this colony are students from all the darker races—all except that of the Negro. And I am daily asked why no Negroes have come. There is a perfect spirit of internationalism here. Women from the various Circassian republics and Siberia, men from China, Japan, Korea, India, etc. all live as one large family, look upon one another simply as human beings. . . . Under the old regime Russia was burdened with many race problems, but today under the Soviet System there are no race problems. . . . Stanislaw Pestkovsky, former president of the Kirghiz Soviet Republic, and I spend many leisure hours together, and he never tires of telling me how Russia alone of all countries has solved her racial problems.
>
> (*Letter from James C. Jackson to W. E. B. Du Bois,* 15 July 1924. 1–2)

Motivated by his desire to learn about racial equality in Soviet Russia, Du Bois conceived the idea of visiting the country. Concurrently, he held a strong interest in the socialist political economy. With "ethical, economic," and "psychology" questions outlined in his research plan (*Russia Research Questions, ca. 1926*.), Du Bois embarked on his first visit to Russia in 1926.

It should be noted that Du Bois's trip coincided with the recall of Stanislaw Pestkowski, a Polish revolutionary working for the Soviet Union, mentioned by Jackson as "Stanislaw Pestkovsky" in his Russian form of name, from Mexico City to Moscow. About one month after Jackson wrote the letter to Du Bois, on 24 August 1924, Mexico became the first country in the Americas to recognize the USSR. Consequently, Pestkowski not only served as the Secretary of the Kirghiz (Kazakh) Regional Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1919–1920), but also as the first Soviet ambassador to Mexico (1924–1926). His role of ambassador involved representing the Soviet Union as a genuine "worker's state," financing revolutionary oppositionist newspapers, encouraging the Mexican railway workers to organize a strike against the industrialists, and seeking to cultivate friendly relations with Chinese diplomats by demonstrating sympathy and offering solidarity to the oppressed and discriminated-against Chinese nationals in Mexico. All of these actions were in line with his mission to neutralize what he saw as the "petty-bourgeois" Mexican government or even to challenge the hegemony of US "capitalist imperialism" in Latin America for the goal of world revolution (Spenser 38–44). As the Japanese government was not committed to exporting a racial war, envisioned by African Americans, on a global scale, Mexico served as the first testing ground for Du Bois's hope of "seeing some splendid results from Russia."

Given this context, it is reasonable to assume that Du Bois bode his time from 1924 to 1926, letting the two-year term of Pestkowski's ambassadorship influence his decision to visit the Soviet Union.

Curiously, in his *Istoriya meksikanskix revolyucij* [History of the Mexican Revolutions], published under the pseudonym of Andrej Vol'skij in 1928, Pestkowski furnished the Marxist theory of class struggle with the theory of identity politics to analyze the revolutions in Mexico. In his view, Mexican Indians, constituting 50% of the population, belonged primarily to the peasantry class, the Mestizos of mixed European and indigenous ancestry spanned across the classes of workers, intelligentsia, and petty-bourgeois to represent 40% of the Mexicans, while the small percentage of Criollos (10%) formed the elite classes of intelligentsia and petty-bourgeois (8–9). The 1810 Mexican War of Independence against the Spaniards unfolded as the Criollo elites joined the Amerindians in participating in the identity construction of "Americanness," and the Mestizos aligned with their cause due to their shared opposition to the Spanish colonial monopoly on trade (42, 46). On the other hand, the 1910 Mexican Revolution occurred as a result of the concentration of capitalism, which marginalized the urban bourgeoisie, turned Indians into semi-serf peons, and led to the widespread proletarianization of Mestizos and Criollos in the countryside (94). Pestkowski thus illustrated the Latin American version of "double-consciousness" of Mestizos and Criollos as "a Latin European, an American," coinciding with Du Bois's Afro-American identity of "double-consciousness." For the realization of the world revolution, currying favor with Mestizos, Criollos, and African Americans alike into the united front against global capitalism was important for him. Through Jackson's correspondence with Du Bois, Pestkowski's endeavor in the "world revolution" reached a tacit accord with Du Bois's concept of "race war," and a rosy picture of Soviet Eurasia was painted to indicate a classless and raceless future for the Americas.

Blurring the reality: Du Bois's evaluation of Soviet Russia as a projection of Eurasian fantasy

Despite his visit to the Soviet Union, Du Bois seemed to be swayed by a strong observation bias; his account of Soviet Eurasia is no less a documentary writing than a projection of his idealized fantasy of the country, whose temporary predicaments surrendered to the teleological purpose of communism. After returning to America, Du Bois put out a release through the channel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to confirm Jackson's finding that there were no racial issues

in Soviet Russia (*No Race Prejudice in Russia Declares Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois,* 24 June 1927). In the release, he was particularly attentive to the diverse, multiethnic composition of the largest country in the world and noticed Russia's distinctive Asiatic nature: "seven Iranians, ten varieties of Finns, twelve groups of Turks and Tartars, two sets of Monguls; besides Jews, Gypsies, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and five or six other races" (1). He wished to remind the American audience that "[n]o such tremendous mixture of race under one government has been seen elsewhere in the world, not even in the United States of America"; and his pertinent question was: "How does the new revolutionary government of Russia face the question of Race?" (2)

"Local governmental autonomy," as Du Bois pointed out, was the key answer: "Russia consists of ten autonomous soviet socialistic republics; and within these republics, are various partially autonomous governments based on race and language" (2). In "The Conservation of Races" (1897), Du Bois, given the bitter reality of racial segregation, called for the construction of a political community based on the distinctions of racial groups, and proposed Black nationalism as a solution to the "Negro problems" so that the consciousness of African Americans "shall unswervingly follow Negro ideals" (56). Duly, Soviet autonomous republics fulfilled Du Bois's dream of the Black nation state.

Furthermore, "Russia does not force racial segregation," he continued, "[a] Tartar may send his child to a Tartar school or to a Russian school, just as he pleases" (*No Race Prejudice* 2). To be sure, his description of Soviet Russia's practice of national autonomy contains implicit criticism of the Jim Crow laws in the South, which segregated education to limit Black aspirations. Du Bois once supported the guidance of race ideals in education for achieving a common national life ("Conservation" 58). However, in "The Field and Function of the Negro College" (1933) delivered at Fisk University, a historically Black liberal arts college and Du Bois's alma mater, he changed his educational philosophy: "If a group has a stable culture which moves, if we could so conceive it, on one general level, here would be the ideal of our school and university. But, of course, this can never be achieved by human beings on any wide stage" (84).

The ideal of national education cannot be attained as long as the privilege of receiving education persists in the mind of the youth within the group and nation ("Conservation" 85). Therefore, an ideal education system should be as inclusive in terms of class and race as possible to make the pursuit of knowledge shine: "Only a universal system of learning, rooted in the will and condition of the masses and blossoming from what manure up

toward the stars is worth name" (99). The Soviet education system, by granting ethnic groups the right to decide which education system best suited their interests, offered two options: either the participation in the national education for the fulfillment of their racial ideals or the integration of various ethnic groups into the educational experience, striving for inclusivity in the forging of a Soviet identity. Thus, owing to the Soviet shock, Du Bois found socialist internationalism as an alternative for Black nationalism and envisioned a future reform in American education aimed at enabling every African American to "merge his double self into a better and truer self": "If the college can pour into the coming age an American Negro who knows himself and his plight and how to protect himself and fight race prejudice, then the world of our dream will come and not otherwise" (101).

In a broader context, the European sense of "nation state" with one dominant ethnic group governing the rest was found by Du Bois to be out to destroy the minorities' cultures: "Usually nations have tried to suppress variant groups. They have hammered and pounded them into submission and disappearance as the Germans sought to do with the Poles, as the Hungarians treated the Slavs and as England, France and Spain have treated numerous smaller groups" (*No Race Prejudice* 3). Even in America, a nation built by immigrants, the Anglophone culture dominated: "we are trying to make Germans, Irish, Hungarians and Italians ashamed of the race that gave them birth" (3).

Conversely, Du Bois saw in Soviet Russia that every ethnic group was allowed or even encouraged to be proud of their culture and identity: "The colored peoples of the East—the dark Tartars, the Chinese and the Monguls within the bounds of the Russian republic—are given every encouragement" (3). The manifest representation of ethnic diversity at international events further impressed Du Bois. "There were not only Russians of all sorts and kinds but over one hundred Chinese and many Tartars, Caucasians and people from Turkestan and two or three Negroes," as Du Bois observed at the tenth annual celebration of Youth Day in 1926, "I have never seen a greater variety of human types" (4).

As a "colored" guest from America, Du Bois was quite satisfied with Soviet national policy in the 1920s and with his knowledge of Russia refreshed after the trip: "Russia has taken a firm stand for racial equality. She has demanded decent treatment for Africans and persons of African descent throughout the world and has gone out of her way to treat Negro visitors with courtesy" (*No Race Prejudice* 4). Picturing the future, Du Bois's paean to Russia bore a striking resemblance to his pro-Japanese sentiments voiced at

the beginning of the twentieth century: "Today Russia is the hope of Asia. She is the backbone of the present Chinese revolution and the hope of nationalism in India . . . . The solidarity of white Europe toward the colored world has been broken by Russia" (4). The Bolshevik revolution, as it was revealed to Du Bois, was also a great racial revolution of toppling the racist Russian Empire and replacing it with a union of autonomous ethnic republics under the red banner.

While praising Soviet Russia for its achievement in racial equality, Du Bois did not forget other philosophical questions that he had jotted down before the trip. He published the article "Judging Russia," in which his favorable disposition toward the Soviets was evident, as he held hopes for Russia's efforts to develop "a workingman's psychology" (189), which would position the working class as the protagonist of the state and thus break down the monopoly of the rich over capital resources. In other words, the invocation of working-class consciousness would reshuffle the ethical and economic structures within a nation state. Du Bois had tried to address the racial issue in the class struggle as early as 1921 and held that the class struggle of the Black is not identical with that of the white: "Theoretically we are a part of the world proletariat in the sense that we are mainly an exploited class of cheap laborers; but practically we are not a part of the white proletariat and are not recognized by that proletariat to any great extent" ("The Class Struggle" 151). However, this kind of tapestry of threads woven from race and the class struggle did not appear in "Judging Russia." It is safe to infer that the Soviet experience left Du Bois with an impression of a union of white and "colored" workers.

From 1926 to 1936, economic hardship hit the magazine business of *The Crisis,* and amid the Great Depression Du Bois was active in seeking opportunities to travel abroad in search of a solution that would redress the capitalist dilemma. After being asked to carry out academic research in Europe and invited by the Japanese to attend conferences, Du Bois in 1936 set his foot on the Eurasian landmass again. Between his two chief destinations of Germany and Japan lay the Soviet Union and Manchuria, where Du Bois spent some time transiting; he could not help but engage in a new round of reflections of socialism. In his letter to publisher Alfred Harcourt right after his return from the trip in 1937, Du Bois revealed his ambition of writing a book titled *In Search for Democracy*: "I want to see how far I can induce Democracy, Fascism, and Communism to speak the same language and to draw into the picture the colored peoples of the world; the people of China, Japan, and India, and the peoples of Africa" (*Letter from W*.

E. B. Du Bois to Harcourt, Brace and Company, 11 February 1937). The book was never completed, despite the survival of a draft manuscript. In the draft *A World Search for Democracy*, chapter 11 is reserved for Russia but missing in content. It is possible that Du Bois reused materials of this section for the writing of another unpublished project *Russia and America* in 1950 since he retold many of his experiences in the USSR from his first two trips in the manuscript of *Russia and America*.

In *Russia and America*, Du Bois's thoughts, as expressed in "Judging Russia," were further elaborated upon in chapter 2, titled "The Soviet Union in 1926." As Du Bois recalled, isolated by the international society, the Soviet people turned to the US for potential cooperation since democracy in America was supposed to stand with the working class, the "colored," and those without economic privileges: "The Russians in 1926 were determined to believe that the fundamental American democracy, bursting up from a land of workers, who had freed slaves and made the lowly rich, would eventually sympathize with and support the struggling Russian state" (44). Insinuatingly, he was denouncing capitalists, racial segregationists, and the administrations of Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover for their joint effort to withhold recognition of a regime based on racial and economic equality, in contrast to the pro-Soviet attitude of former Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles. In chapter 5, "The Reign of Roosevelt," Du Bois overtly criticized the National Recovery Administration (NRA) for not covering Black labor in the industrial codes, while the establishment of minimum wages only played the role of replacing Black workers with white labor in certain places so that the white standard of living would at the least be secured (183–84). The New Deal, according to Du Bois, "had not international aims and small transfer of wealth" (190). The hidden reason, he argued, lay in President Roosevelt and his advisors' lack of knowledge of economic development in the world and "they paid no attention to Karl Marx, St. Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen or Louis Blanc" (172). Contextually, he was suggesting that the Soviet system would be a suitable alternative for America because there was no racial prejudice there, and workers were masters of the state.

The aim of his 1936 trip to the Soviet Union was "to see how the experiment, which I had seen briefly and broadly in 1926, had succeeded in practical effort" (*Russia and America* 109). Yet Du Bois confessed that a transit of ten days was not enough for him to realize his goal. Therefore, he mainly drew on sources from his personal contacts and from what he read for making judgments. What he did observe were "dirt and bad manners" (107) of the Russian mass and their admiration for people with power and influence

(108). However, Du Bois regarded all these as initial obstacles to a grand project. He then, mostly by interpreting Soviet sources, delineated how Soviet democracy worked, how politics, business, and industry were managed by the government, how peoples with different origins and colors associated with one another, how sexual equality was promoted, how atheism freed people from religious persecution and paved the way for science (110–25). After all, he was certain that "it [the Soviet Union] has earned its right to exist and carry on its task" (125).

Notably, in 1937, the year of Du Bois's return to America, also marked the arrest of Stanisław Pestkowski. Du Bois's account of the 1936 trip and his subsequent reflections on Soviet policy in the 1930s evidently downplayed the severity of the Great Purge, orchestrated by Joseph Stalin. When Stalin died on 5 March 1953, Du Bois published a eulogy in *National Guardian* on 19 March, disregarding the entire issue of red terror and praising Stalin as his "judgment of men was profound" and "he suffered under continuous and studied insult; he was forced to make bitter decisions on his own lone responsibility" ("On Stalin"). Accordingly, Stalin's "greatness" was partially attributed to the Du Boisian view that ordinary people could hardly comprehend his clairvoyance, thus making any expected critique to the leader a "studied insult." Du Bois's hagiographic portrayal of Stalin as a great man reflected his fantasy for an all-knowing, charismatic leader. Indeed, this was in accordance with his personal history: he grew to admire German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck during his studies at Fisk University and might even have fancied himself as a "future black Bismarck" for the Black nation (Marable 12). While the Bolshevik revolution facilitated Stalin's meteoric rise from a humble Georgian villager to an Asiatic Caucasian leader in the Kremlin, the American racial hierarchy, in contrast, barred Du Bois from actualizing his political potential and deconstructed his idealized self-identity. Correspondingly, Stalin was the role model for the "truer self" that succeeded in overcoming the "double-consciousness."

In Seminar VII, Jacques Lacan proposes the "formula of fantasy": $\$ \diamond a$ (*Transference* 315), where $\$$ represents the "barred subject," the subject who "does not grasp himself as desiring" (361), a represents the Lacanian *objet a*, or "the object in fantasy" (269), and $\diamond$ represents the "constitutive fragmentation" that allows "a mutual identification between the subject and the object" (214). As Lacan emphasizes, the formula should be applied to the situation where the cathexis of the desired object is transferred to the traumatized subject (361). Fitting the case of Du Bois, whose lost political ambitions rendered him the Lacanian "barred subject" and in turn nurtured

his fantasy rhetoric of Stalin's charismatic mythos, in the formula, it is possible to reconstruct the mechanism of Du Bois's flight of fancy in the formulaic way as: *Du Bois* ◇ *Stalin/Soviet system*, where the Stalinist Soviet Union was comprehended by him as a desired, inclusive regime, open for a full spectrum of social class, ethnic, and racial political participation. Through the revealing medium of Soviet Asia that substantiates the punch ◇, Du Bois identified Stalin with the consummation of his "scopic drive," and his eulogy of Stalinism was no more than a defense mechanism of the ideal ego.

Between Soviet Russia and Japan: Manchukuo as the microcosm of a raceless international order on the Eurasian Pacific Rim

Du Bois's pro-Soviet stance influenced his assessment of Manchukuo and Japan to a certain extent. Manchuria was the homeland of the Manchus, who founded the Qing dynasty in China and became the point at issue between Japan and Russia at the turn of the twentieth century. Fearing Russia's encroachment on the East, Japanese Pan-Asianists established the paramilitary, ultranationalist organization *Kokuryū kai*, or the "Black Dragon Society," in 1901 with the purpose of expelling the Russians from the Amur River, known to the East Asians as the "Black Dragon River." During the Russo–Japanese War, Russian journalist and ethnographer I. S. Levitov in his monograph *Zheltorossiya, kak bufernaya koloniya* [Yellow Russia as a Buffer Colony] proposed the Russification of Manchuria as a "yellow" buffer colony for Imperial Russia to counteract growing Japanese influence and British and American commercial interests in the Far East. However, the Japanese victory in 1905 chased the Russian influence out of the region. Subsequently, the increasing Japanese influence in Manchuria led to the confrontation between Japan and the Republic of China.

The Mukden Incident of 1931 was the pretext for Japan to take full control of Manchuria, and the puppet state Manchukuo was established in 1932 with the support of the Japanese Kwantung Army to contain the potential Soviet expansion and China's irredentism. Notwithstanding Japan's geopolitical gains in East Asia, it faced severe isolation in international society, exemplified by its withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933. Du Bois once, in his "Manifesto to the League of Nations (1921)," held hope that the League of Nations would wield the "moral power of world public opinion" to advance "peace and justice among men" (63–64). However, the organiziation failed to meet his expectations. Therefore, Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations indicated its ambition to establish a raceless international order, particularly when considering the US rejection of Japan's

submission of the Racial Equality Proposal as an amendment to the Treaty of Versailles during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. As African Americans generally held a favorable view toward Japan's cause, Japan secretly approached Black leaders for their political understanding. For example, in 1932, Japanese intelligence agent Nakane Naka, a member of the Black Dragon Society and known to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as Satokata Takahashi, reached out to Wallace Fard Muhammad and Elijah Muhammad to express Japan's solidarity with the Nation of Islam and African Americans, highlighting that they should consider aligning with Japan in the event of a war between Japan and America (Evanzz 106–07). Against this background, the Japanese invitation to Du Bois could be seen as another attempt to gain intellectual and moral support for their propaganda campaign.

Du Bois was not an unknown figure to the Japanese. In 1928, Japanese journalist and scholar Mitsukawa Kametarō published the book *Kokujin mondai taikan* [A Broad View of the Black Problem,] providing an overview of the African American political movements for the general Japanese audience. An illustration of Du Bois appeared in the front endpaper of the book, listing him as one of the "Warriors of Black Emancipation Movement" (*kokujin kaihō undō no senshi*). A section of the manifesto, "To the World," which Du Bois delivered at the Second Pan-African Congress in London in August 1921, was translated into Japanese in a sense-for-sense manner and quoted by Mitsukawa to illustrate Du Bois's endorsement of mutual respect among racial groups in the broader context of humanity (5). As Mitsukawa understood Du Bois, there was a strong sense of justice in the rhetoric of racial equality, yet the injustice of racial discrimination persisted as a harsh reality. To address this issue, Du Bois's proposition for the convergence of the "horizon line of the black people" (*kokujin no suiheisen*) and the "white-line" (*hakujin no sen*) into a unified perspective was more than critical (6). Evidently, Du Bois's prediction of the "color-line" problem reached its ideal target audience in East Asia.

Du Bois's stay in Manchukuo was as brief as a week. Although the Manchukuo regime was anti-Soviet by nature, and the Soviet influence was absent in this former Russian sphere of influence, Du Bois's pro-Soviet stance did not prevent him from recognizing the Japanese puppet state for he believed that the Japanese military presence could save local people from the loot of bandits and, more importantly, defend Asian peoples from the invasion of Western powers (*Russia and America* 131–32). To ease interethnic tensions and promote collaboration among the Manchus, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Mongols, the "Five Races Under One Union" (*gozoku kyōwa*)

was adopted as the state motto of Manchukuo. Du Bois seemed to take this to heart and concluded with the finding of no racial problems in Manchukuo: "It was a new world. My color was nothing unusual" (129).

Several months before he visited Manchukuo, Du Bois in his exchange with N. S. Subba Rao, a professor of economics and political science at Maharaja College, Mysore, expressed his wish of seeing an organized union of the "colored" people in the future:

> If now the Asiatic and African worlds are going to think of themselves only as appendages of the European world; if they are going to refuse to envisage a future quite independent of Europe, if necessary—and even in opposition to well-known European aims—the result is bound to be weakness, defeatism and lack of all organized power. On the other hand, if the coloured world wants to meet the white world on a plane of real equality and effective brotherhood, and without compromise and doubt evolve and establish a real union of all colours and of races, then first of all the coloured world must be a strong world, strong in its own inner organization, strong in its power of thought and defence.
>
> ("The Union of Colour [1936]" 151–52)

Correspondingly, Manchukuo as "a new world" fulfilled Du Bois's vision of the "union of color," contrasting with the European world, and hinted at the advent of a raceless international order where the Afro-Asiatic worlds run crisscross.

After immersing himself in the multiracial environment in the Japanese-orchestrated new Manchuria, Du Bois's interests soon shifted to "how far it [Manchukuo] would follow some form of socialism" (*Russia and America* 132). His curiosity was not baseless because one month earlier (October 1936) the Manchukuo government in Hsinking announced the implementation of a Five-Year Industrial Development Plan (Nagaharu 326). While Du Bois's confidence in the regime was bolstered by the prospect of socialism taking root in Manchukuo, he, in a conversation with Japanese diplomat Matsuoka Yōsuke in Manchuria, was more than content to learn that "in some ways Japan was the most communistic of modern states," and that the Japanese had "through the family and clan a strong sense of common ownership of all wealth, of willingness to give to others and sacrifice for the common good" (*Russia and America* 133). Japan thus became not only the beacon for all "colored" people to rebel against white international order but it also, like Soviet Russia, provided a political economic alternative for the US capitalistic system. "Russia and Japan," as Francis L. Broderick summarizes

for Du Bois, were "the fountain of socialism and the first-born of budding 'colored' world powers" (193).

Nevertheless, Du Bois in "What Japan Has Done (1937)" expressed concern about Japan's alliance with fascism. He noted that Japan found itself in a precarious position, "between the devil and deep blue sea" (157). Europe's desire to acquire Manchuria compelled Japan to seize the region preemptively, fearing Europe might do so first, while the following Sino-Japanese conflict as the result of the establishment of Manchukuo played into the European strategy of exploiting the "split between colored people" to deter Japan from seeking rapprochement with China. Thus, Japan had no option but to form an alliance with Germany and Italy (157). Additionally, he saw Japan's diplomatic rupture with Soviet Russia was the "worst of all" because the Soviet attack on family and religion contradicted Japanese traditional values, while Japanese industrialists, fearing communism, were more willing to ally with international capitalists (157–58). For Du Bois, Japan's future was enigmatic enough to elude clear predictions, leaving him with a sense of intrigue about the nation's path.

Closing the "double-consciousness" of world order: Du Bois's theory of Hungary as a Soviet fusion of Turanism and historical materialism

When Du Bois was lamenting on Japan's parting with the Soviet Union, Hungary became a culturally congenial ally for Japan. In his 1936 trip, lesser known is the fact that before reaching the Soviet Union and Manchukuo, Du Bois passed through Hungary from Germany, as he mentioned in an unpublished draft around 1956, titled "The Theory of Hungary": "I have been in Hungary twice, in 1893 and 1936" (1). Du Bois first traveled to Hungary when he was studying at the University of Berlin. According to him, Hungary in 1893 bore "a far-off likeness to my American South" and noticed that "the Hungarians were asserting their desire for independence" from Austria, while the death of Lajos Kossuth—the governor of the Kingdom of Hungary during the revolution of 1848–1849, who toured America in the early 1850s—in Italy in 1894 intensified this sentiment (*Autobiography* 174). Apparently, Du Bois's Black nationalism resonated with Kossuth's Hungarian nationalism during the 1890s, as both of them were striving for the self-determination of their respective nations.

Hungary in 1936 was under the regency of Miklós Horthy where the influence of the ideology of Turanism prevailed. As the country lost a significant portion of its pre-World War I territory and population because of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, there arose a social demand for Turanism

as an alternative ideology to shape national identity and shift foreign policy focus away from the West for retaliation (Ablonczy 83). While the term "Turan" is somewhat ambiguous, it serves to explore the Asiatic origins of the Hungarians by categorizing them as part of the Finno-Ugric peoples within the Ural-Altaic ethnic family and establishing ethnic and linguistic connections between them and the Samoyeds, Turkic-Tatars, Mongols, Manchus, Japanese, and Koreans (Farkas 861).

Consequently, four of the "five nations" of Manchukuo could be considered as relatives of the Hungarians. This was observed by Japanese Turanist Nozoe Shigetō, who, in his 1932 pamphlet *Nippon minzoku shidōgenri toshite no Han Tsuranizumu* [Pan-Turanism as the Guiding Principle of the Japanese Nation], regarded Manchuria as the spiritual homeland of all Turanic peoples, to be guarded against European and American invaders (25–31), while seeking to collaborate with Hungarian Turanists simultaneously by revealing the Hungarians' perceived betrayal by the Indo-Germanic Europeans during and after World War I (44-46). As a response, Hungarian Turanist István Mezey in his work *Az igazi Japán* [The Real Japan] (1939), which recounts the journey of Hungarian journalist and writer János Kovrig to Manchukuo and Japan in 1933, arrived at a conclusion similar to that of Du Bois regarding Japanese activities in Asia "for the rights of self-determination of the Asian peoples" (qtd. in Zimándi 605). Eventually, Hungary, under the influence of the Japanese Turanian lobby, partnered with Manchukuo to join the Anti-Comintern Pact, initially signed in 1936 by Germany and Japan, in 1939 (Wintermantel and Sally 136–37).

On the other hand, Turanism colluded with Pan-Turkism in countering Russia's influence. In his poem "Turan," Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp romanticized the unification of Ottoman Turkish and Turkestani Turkic peoples under one homeland of Turan: "The homeland is neither Türkiye for the Turks nor Turkestan / The homeland is a vast and eternal country: Turan" (qtd. in Jäschke 5). While the Turkic peoples in the Russian Empire endeavored to standardize their languages by modifying Ottoman Turkish as a universal language to foster a Pan-Turkic identity, as evident in the correspondence of Hungarian Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry in his "A Tatárok kultur-törekvései" [The Cultural Aspirations of the Tatars] with Yusuf Akçura, an Ottoman ideologist of Volga Tatar descent, both the Turanists and the Pan-Turkists found Western powers and, particularly, Russia, as barriers to the cultural awakening of the Turkic peoples (375–76). With the anti-Russian sentiment and anti-Bolshevik stance in support of the "Turanians" in mind, Regent Miklós Horthy asked in his letter to Adolf Hitler

regarding the "Bolshevist Peril" in mid-April 1941, on the eve of Operation Barbarossa, "why must the Mongols, the Kirghiz, the Bashkirs, etc., or the Ruthenians be Russians," and answered the question by himself: "Today there are Soviet republics, if all of them were turned into independent states, the problem would be solved" (180).

Despite Horthy's insight into nationalism as a disruptive factor, the disintegration of the Soviet Union did not occur during World War II. In contrast, the reverie of Turanism and the aspiration of constructing Manchukuo all became pipe dreams after the defeats of Hungary and Japan in 1945. With the victory of the USSR, the Soviet impression as a raceless socialist country resurged for Du Bois, leading him to advocate: "The world had to be recast with Russia as one of the main partners, with Asia starting toward autonomy not simply in political control but in economic independence" (*Russia and America* 198). World War II had also made Du Bois realize the danger of the "race war," prompting him to integrate the race problem into a single line of thought instead: "Peace on Earth" (*Autobiography* 287). The Cold War soon ensued, and Du Bois made a brief visit to Moscow in 1949, where he attended the All-Union Peace Conference from 25 to 27 August as a foreign guest to convey his message for peace (Panova 96). Around the time of his third Soviet trip, the Hungarian People's Republic and the People's Republic of China were established in succession, occupying the westernmost and easternmost parts of the socialist Eurasian landmass, with the Soviet Union serving as the connecting link between the two. However, the US Department of State became suspicious of Du Bois's activities, questioning his political beliefs and refusing him a passport from 1951 to 1958 (*Autobiography* 11). Consequently, Du Bois did not attend the Budapest Meeting of World Peace Council in person in 1953, while leaving a draft of his speech to the World Peace Council, wherein he managed to "wipe away all memory of ill to my people of the Negro race" and "speak as an American" ("To the World Peace Council, Budapest (1953)" 270), blaming the US as "an hysterical nation" that was militarily threatening the civilizational designs of the Soviet Union (266).

The regret of not being able to visit Hungary rekindled Du Bois's personal memories of the country and invigorated his intellectual pursuits: "From these brief glimpses, and from reading and listening, I have evolved a theory of Hungarian history" (*Theory of Hungary* 1). As Du Bois anchored his sources in "reading and listening," he could not have cast off the influence of Turanism in the historiography of Hungary. Therefore, the history of Hungary in Du Bois's version began with the movement of the Huns from

the East to the West, with the settlement of the Magyars in the valley of the Danube marking the nation's birth. When Stephen I was crowned king by the Roman Catholics, Hungary became a feudal country where magnates and bishops held land, while other inhabitants were made into serfs. The unsuccessful peasants' revolt led by György Dózsa against the Church resulted in the loss of liberty and "eternal servitude" of all peasants. The serfs further suffered from the Catholic attempt to counter the Protestant Reformation and the constant struggles between the Turks, Germans, and Slavs for control of the country when the Habsburgs came in 1526 (1).

The revolutions in Hungary in the next three centuries did not liberate the serfs because they were "in essence the attempt of the middle class to wrest recognition from the magnates and to enjoy their privileges and their right to exploit the labor of the peasants" (*Theory of Hungary* 2). The twentieth century witnessed the migration of Hungarian peasants and workers to America, where they became the "exploited labor of the coal and iron mines," while those who remained in Hungary faced the imposition of martial law by landlords and their attempt to import Chinese coolies to lower wage levels (3).

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand led the Austrians to draft the Hungarians in World War I, while the subsequent defeat forced Hungary to sign the humiliating Treaty of Trianon. Nevertheless, the treaty brought peace as well as a political reorganization that turned Hungary from a kingdom to a republic. By quoting Count Karolyi's words, "[o]nly under the Russian shield can a Slavonic Europe feel safe," Du Bois sympathized with his effort "to construct Hungary on a basis of ties to Slavs, replacing oligarchy with a federation of Slavic nationalities" (*Theory of Hungary* 3). Through the Slavic connections, the Hungarian Soviet Republic, led by Béla Kun, emerged in 1919 as an echo of the Russian Revolution. However, it only lasted four months and was overthrown by the concerted effort of the Hungarian nobilities and Romanian soldiers, resulting in the establishment of the Horthy regime with the support of Hungarian nobles and American bankers (3-4). Yet the Hungarian nobles' underestimation of Soviet Russia's resistance to Hitler's invasion led the country to declare war against the USSR and the Allies. When the Soviet troops struck back westward, they occupied Hungary and established a provisional government that initiated land reform, nationalized industries and banks, and assumed control of the schools from the Catholic Church (5–6).

Subsequently, the Soviet advance of socialism in Central Europe was opposed by the US, which launched the Marshall Plan in 1947 to subsidize

its capitalist allies and boycott socialist nations, and formed the North Atlantic Alliance in 1949 as the "containment" of further socialist expansion, clandestinely collaborating with the Hungarian magnates, lesser nobles, and the Church to overthrow the socialist regime in Hungary (*Theory of Hungary* 6–7). Despite that, socialism continued to make progress in Hungary until "foreign propaganda" exacerbated the social change to the clash between the Hungarian demonstrators and the socialist government on 23 October 1956 (7–8). In the end, Du Bois viewed the reappearance of Soviet troops in Budapest as another battle for the "freedom to build socialism" and the stand-off between the USSR and the US in Central Europe a dangerous sign of a possible "Third World War" (8–9).

Intelligibly, Du Bois's intellectual trajectory evolved as the history of Hungary unfolded. The dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1893 appeared to Du Bois as a reincarnation of the "double-consciousness," with Hungary representing America's Black rural South and Austria symbolizing the white industrialist North. However, when Hungary realized its independence after World War I, its nationalism, as mentioned in Du Bois's 1927 release, led to the mistreatment of its Slavic minorities, which contradicted his celebration of interracial solidarity in Soviet Asia. When the Turanist Hungary in 1936 looked east, as Du Bois traveled east, to Manchukuo and Japan, he unfortunately found their opposition to Eurasian Russia. Therefore, in the formulation of the "theory of Hungary," Du Bois intentionally hinted at the Asiatic origin of the Hungarians to stress their ties with Russia, while he utilized Karl Marx's historical materialism to emphasize the role of class struggle in shaping history against the religious and capitalist "reactionaries." Hence, the Hungarian People's Republic was theoretically reconstructed as the extension of Soviet Asia to justify the Soviet intervention in 1956. Du Bois thence regarded safeguarding socialism as a solution to overcome the Cold War structure, wherein socialist Eurasia struggled with capitalist and racist Euro-America to merge the "double-consciousness" of world order with the Communist political order.

Crossing the red axis of Budapest–Moscow–Tashkent–Beijing: The "Long March" to communism

Like Paul Robeson, upon receiving his new passport in 1958, Du Bois immediately embarked on a trip to the socialist countries between 1958 and 1959. "But today there is sunshine over the 150,000 square miles of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic" (*Autobiography* 40), Du Bois thus distinguished his fourth trip to the USSR from his previous visits. In

Tashkent, he attended the Afro-Asian Writers Conference, where the "interrelation of all cultures was stressed," and he was surprised to find that his work was "known to many of the delegates" from 36 countries across Asia and Africa and the Soviet Republics (41). After Sharof Rashidov, Chairman of the Uzbek SSR, declared that "[o]ur Conference is unfettered by any racial, political, geographical, ethnic, or other limitations . . ., it forms a firm bridge for the development of friendly ties between the literatures and cultures of all countries throughout the world" (qtd. in Graham Du Bois 1), Du Bois in his address to the Conference, *I am an American—I am an African*, reinstated his African American identity and advocated the "patriotic sacrifice" for the collective welfare of all the peoples (Graham Du Bois 2). "It is doubtful," as his wife Shirley Graham Du Bois summarized for the Conference, "if any more appropriate place for this history making Conference could have been found than the sunny tree-lined city of Tashkent, deep in the heart of Eurasia" (2). Considering the Afro-Eurasian context of the Conference, what Du Bois meant by "patriotic" was not directed solely at the US but at all continents. Indeed, in Tashkent, he became an "Asiatic Black Man," merging his "double-consciousness" of an African American into the broader Eurasian world and, accordingly, revealing his "truer self" (*The Souls* 4).

When Du Bois was about to leave the USSR for China, he particularly criticized religion, reflecting on it during the two months he lived in Moscow opposite the inscription of Marx's words on the "Second House of the Soviets" (historically and contemporarily known as "Hotel Metropol"): "Religion is the opium of the people" (*Autobiography* 41). In Du Bois's view, religion was "worse than opium," and he believed that the Soviet effort to keep religious influence out of public education should be encouraged to prevent people from believing in "conventional lies" (42–43). The theme of religion recurred during his subsequent trip to China in spring 1959. While Du Bois stayed at the border between Tibet and Sichuan province, he witnessed the 1959 Tibetan rebellion in which "the landholders and slave drivers and the religious fanatics revolted against the Chinese" (48). To express an equivalent level of support as he did for the Soviet military intervention in Hungary, Du Bois endorsed the Chinese People's Liberation Army's military suppression of the Tibetans: "Let 'Divine Slavery' persist in Tibet until China kills it" (53). Conversely, he commended the state-run education, which aimed to reduce the influence of religion, for Tibetan minorities in Kunming, Yunnan province (48); at Peking University in Beijing, he celebrated the inclusion of "the 50 or more races of China" (47).

Comparing it with his perception of Shanghai in the Republic of China era as "an epitome of the racial strife" (45) during his transit from the "new world" Manchukuo to Japan in 1936, Du Bois attributed the coherence of the multiethnic structure of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to its Soviet-style competence in uniting its Inner Asian minorities with East Asian majorities economically and doctrinally: "The Communists linked the two [China Proper and Tibet] by roads and began reforms in landholding, schools and trade" (48). Like the Hungarian People's Republic, the People's Republic of China is a twice-born socialist regime, succeeding the Chinese Soviet Republic (1931–1937). As the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) faced encirclement by the Kuomintang government in the civil war, the Communist Red Army undertook the great retreat, known as the "Long March," which "had just ended its 6,000 miles from Kiangsi [Jiangxi] to Yenan [Yan'an]," when Du Bois visited China in 1936 (46). The spirit of the "Long March" was borrowed by Du Bois to intimate the *Zeitgeist* in the unfolding of historical materialism "from feudalism, past capitalism and socialism to communism in our day" (50).

When Du Bois returned to Moscow to prepare his next trip to attend the tenth session of the World Peace Council in Stockholm, Sweden, he on the way visited several socialist countries in the Eastern Bloc and referred to the Central Europeans as "Pawned People whose future depended so absolutely on the outcome of this war [World War II]" (*Autobiography* 28). Fearing Central Europe's potential shift of allegiance to the Western side and the restoration of bourgeois rule there, Du Bois reiterated his judgment of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 as an "age-old strife between the Roman Catholic church and landholding aristocracy in one group; the rising bourgeoisie supported by Western enterprise and capital in another group; and the great mass of degraded peasants who, as I saw them in 1893, were distinctly below the level of American Negro serfs." He "was glad when the Soviet Union intervened and thus served notice on all reactionaries that the Russian revolution was still unwilling to yield its gains before a show of force" (25–26). Du Bois's positive comments about the USSR's resolution in securing satellite states were favorable for the Soviet-backed János Kádár's regime, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences granted him a corresponding membership (26). Eventually, Du Bois embraced the ideologies of socialism and communism in his analysis of world affairs following his travels through Tashkent, Beijing, Moscow, and Budapest in 1958 and 1959.

This was not a mere coincidence. As early as 1933, Du Bois hypothesized his becoming a Communist in the USSR, stating in his Address to the Rosenwald Economic Conference, "Where Do We Go from Here?": "If I were in Russia, I should be an enthusiastic Communist" (124). As Du Bois celebrated his birthday in China in 1959, Chinese writer Mao Dun, who had translated the patriotic poem "Nemzeti dal" [National Song] of Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi into Chinese and met Du Bois at the Afro-Asian Writers Conference in Tashkent, published an article in the *People's Daily*, titled "Yuan yueyuan renshou, guangming de geng guangming! Buxiu de geng buxiu" [May the Moon be Full, May You Live Long, the Bright one even Brighter, and the Immortal one even more Immortal!], on 23 February 1959, Du Bois's birthday, associating the beautiful prospect of socialism with Du Bois's anti-imperialist efforts and employing the Chinese saying "yueyuan renshou" ("May the Moon be Full, May You Live Long") to suggest that Du Bois should exploit his remaining years to become a Communist so as to achieve a satisfying conclusion to life, much like the full moon (565). In Wuchang in August of the same year, Du Bois met Mao Zedong, the Chairman of the People's Republic of China. Du Bois confided in Mao that he had consistently been misidentified as a Communist, although he was not one. In response, Mao half-jokingly expressed that he would gladly recommend Du Bois to Karl Marx, who would be willing to accept Du Bois as a Communist (Xu). With the statement, "Communism—the effort to give all men what they need and to ask of each the best they can contribute—this is the only way of human life" (qtd. in Kihss), Du Bois joined the Communist Party at the age of 93 on 23 November 1961.

The next year Du Bois paid his last trip to both the People's Republic of China and the USSR. The Soviets noticed that Du Bois seemed to have been ideologically influenced by the Chinese Communist Party leaders, as he demonstrated a sense of alienation from Moscow this time. Despite that, his fifth visit to the USSR marked the canonization of African American literature in the Soviet translation community (Panova 102). However, the Eastern Bloc carefully adapted Du Bois's works to align with their censorship requirements and sought to create the specific image of an ideal hero who was dedicated to combating American racism (Beck). Similarly, the Chinese propaganda machine portrayed him as a stereotypical Black hero battling American imperialism, even though the translation of Du Bois's works did not occur until he visited the People's Republic of China when most of the Chinese populace were far from knowing him. Ironically, just as Du Bois needed an ideal image of socialism to serve as a foil to America's racial issues,

the image of Du Bois was idealized as an anti-racist, anti-imperialist symbol by the socialist countries.

Two days after Du Bois's death, Chinese poet and historian Guo Moruo, who also met Du Bois in Tashkent, wrote the poem "He duboyisi boshi wenda" [Q&A with Dr. Du Bois] on 29 August 1963 in honor of his legacy and published it in the *People's Daily* on 8 September 1963. In the poem, Guo fictionalized a dialogue with the deceased Du Bois and emphasized his conversion to communism as a consequence of China's proselytization:

> Q: Dr. Du Bois, is it true that you are about to leave this world?
> A: No! I will not leave! I am just transforming myself into a red flag,
> to be planted in the place where the oppressed nations and oppressed peoples reside, and where justice is upheld for national liberation and lasting peace. (A4)

With the onset of the Sino-Soviet Split in 1961 and the PRC's aspiration to replace the USSR as the leader of the socialist world, Guo appropriated Du Bois's concept of the "color-line" to categorize the continents by colors, while he emphasized his support for China's role in guiding the oppressed people worldwide:

> A: Indeed, I agree. I've already transformed into a red flag, into a torch,
> into the bugle call of the "March for Freedom," into the fervent waves of sound.
> I want to shout to the people of the world, shout forever and tirelessly:
> "No matter the black continent, the yellow continent, the red continent, or the white continent, all oppressed people can receive the most friendship and sympathy from China." (A4)

As a result, the image of Du Bois was redesigned as an "Asiatic Black Man" by the People's Republic of China in order to monopolize the interpretation of his symbolic value with its cause, distinguishing him from the Eurasian influence of the Eastern Bloc.

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Note

1 The term "big history" exists in the discipline of history to refer to the "mega-paradigmatic" historiographical approach in interpreting world history. For further details, see *Teaching & Researching Big History: Exploring a New Scholarly Field,* edited by Leonid Grinin, David Baker, Esther Quaedackers, and Andrey Korotayev, and *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*, by David Christian, Cynthia Brown, Craig Benjamin.

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