



AGENTS OF PEACE

by Albert E. Kahn

five cents

PUBLISHED BY
THE HOUR PUBLISHERS

The portrait on the cover is of Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois.

AGENTS OF PEACE

By ALBERT E. KAHN

"I take my stand beside the millions in every nation and continent and cry PEACE—NO MORE WAR!"

—Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois

1. COURT HOUSE SCENE

ON THE MORNING of February 16, 1951, in the Federal District Court House in Washington, D. C., one of the greatest living Americans was arraigned on criminal charges brought against him by the United States Department of Justice. He was Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, the eighty-two year old world-renowned scholar and Negro statesman who, as John Gunther writes in *Inside America*, "has a position almost like that of . . . Einstein, being the most venerable and distinguished of leaders in his field."

For more than half a century, the vast and varied talents of Dr. Du Bois had been passionately devoted to the advancement of world peace and the well-being of mankind. On myriad fronts, he had waged an incessant, uncompromising, wrathful struggle against war, the wrongs of society and the suffering of man. Universally revered as a protagonist of his people, world-famed as an exponent of freedom for the colonial nations, this small, sedate, quiet-spoken

American Negro stood as a colossus of his time whose thundering eloquence echoed around the earth like a tocsin of the human conscience.*

Now Dr. Du Bois was accused by the Justice Department of a most extraordinary crime. He was charged with the advocacy of peace. Together with four former associates in the Peace Information Center, of which he had been Chairman, Dr. Du Bois had been indicted by the Department of Justice on the charge of failure to register as a foreign agent.**

The proceedings in the Federal Court House were held in the Criminal Courtroom. Before Dr. Du Bois and his associates were summoned to the bar, a number of accused criminals appeared before the presiding magistrate, Judge Dickinson Letts, to have dates scheduled for their trials. As one of the journalists present, I noted down the crimes with which these individuals were charged: "Manslaughter—assault to commit robbery—violation of lottery laws—theft—forgery." Such was the category in which the Peace Information Center case had been placed . . .

After setting the date for the Peace Information Center

* Poet and university professor; co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and editor of *The Crisis* for more than twenty years; U. S. minister plenipotentiary to Liberia and special consultant to the United Nations; founder of the Pan-African Congresses and author of such brilliant works as *The Souls of the Black Folk*, *Dark Water*, *Dusk of Dawn* and *Black Reconstruction*—these were some of the multiple attainments of the amazingly versatile and prolific Dr. Du Bois.

** Indicted with Dr. Du Bois were Mrs. Elizabeth Moos, well-known educator, the first executive director of the Peace Information Center; Abbott Simon, subsequent executive director, a World War II veteran who had played a leading role in peace organizations since the end of the war; Kyrle Elkin, a public-spirited businessman who had been the Center's treasurer; and Sylvia Soloff, a young woman indicted merely because she had been employed at the Center as a clerical worker.

trial,* Judge Letts ordered Dr. Du Bois and his co-defendants into the custody of a U. S. marshal while bond was being posted on their bail. They were led from the courtroom and taken down the "criminal chute" into the cell block. There, behind heavily barred doors, in the company of suspected drug addicts and prostitutes, they were photographed, fingerprinted and searched for weapons.

Then Dr. Du Bois was brought from the cell block; and on the wrists of the elderly genius there were manacles . . .

Later, outside the courthouse, near a statue of Abraham Lincoln, newsmen interviewed Dr. Du Bois.

"It is a curious thing," Dr. Du Bois told the reporters, "that today I am called upon to defend myself against criminal charges for openly advocating the one thing all people want—peace."

2. MEETING PLACE FOR PEACE

IT WAS early in April 1950 that a group of writers, churchmen, small businessmen and trade unionists had come together in New York City and founded the Peace Information Center.**

Only five short years had elapsed since the agony and havoc of the Second World War; and yet, incredibly enough, the dark clouds of a new and even more fearsome conflict now brooded ominously over every land. The secure and lasting peace so hopefully projected at Yalta and Potsdam seemed like an ill-remembered dream of the past. Fierce international tensions, prodigious armament pro-

* Originally set for April 2, the date of the Peace Information Center trial was subsequently postponed to May 14 and then October 2.

** Those assembled at the meeting constituted themselves as Advisory Council to the Peace Information Center. Dr. Du Bois was elected Chairman, and Mrs. Elizabeth Moos was appointed Executive Director.

grams and frenzied preparations for atomic global warfare were the nightmarish reality of the present.

"We have drifted into an age of unprecedented anxiety and fear," declared Dr. John B. Thompson, Dean of the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. "It is not simply that we fear that we shall die . . . It is the fear that the whole human enterprise is washed up and hopeless." But there were Americans, added the eminent churchman, who refused to resign themselves to the ineffable disaster of another war. "We still believe that peace is possible . . . we do not believe that there are any differences between us and our potential enemies great enough to justify mutual destruction."

The beliefs of Dr. Thompson were fervently shared by the founders of the Peace Information Center. Of urgent moment, they felt, was the spreading of knowledge about the tidal wave of peace sentiment sweeping through the world. Day and night, the American press and radio were bruited dire prophecies of war and portentous accounts of the imminent danger of armed attack. Scarcely a whisper was to be heard about mammoth peace conferences in Paris, Rome, Bombay and Prague, or the activities of multiple peace groups in the United States. Yet what was of more momentous concern than that the peoples of all lands be made aware of their common hopes and strivings for peace? What, indeed, could more surely advance the cause of peace than the dissemination of this knowledge?

Reasoning thus, the founders of the Peace Information Center set these as the organization's chief objectives: to publicize facts about peace endeavors of all sorts in America and throughout the rest of the world; and to provide media for the interchange of ideas for the promotion of peace and amity among the nations.

Headquarters for the Peace Information Center were established in a small office in New York City, and the work of the organization got under way.

The initial project of the Center was a bi-weekly bulletin entitled *Peacegram*. Concisely summarizing international peace developments, the first issue of the bulletin reported such events as these:

Italy: 30,000 peace committees organized. . . . In *Israel, Bombay, Budapest* thousands attend peace conferences and call for banning atomic weapons. . . .

Geneva: Worldwide appeal to outlaw atomic weapons launched by International Red Cross Committee. . . .

United States: Philadelphia—Women organize petition campaign for peace. . . . *Boston*—Massachusetts Action Committee for Peace inaugurates campaign for 100,000 votes to outlaw the atom bomb, for general disarmament, and immediate peace talks between the great powers. . . . *Chicago*—Mid-Century Conference for Peace called by Committee for Peaceful Alternatives. . . .

There was nothing pretentious about the *Peacegram*. The terse facts filling its four multigraphed pages were presented without stylistic embellishment or editorial comment. But the facts had an eloquence of their own.

Letters began pouring into the office of the Peace Information Center. They came from the Pacific coast, the deep South and the midland plains, from great industrial centers and obscure little towns, from organizations and individuals. They enthusiastically hailed the establishment of the Center, eagerly requested more news of the world peace movement, and exuberantly told of local peace activities—of forming peace councils and holding peace rallies, of staging demonstrations, distributing leaflets, circulating petitions. In different words, they all voiced the same mes-

sage: a message of kinship with the peoples of other lands and of determination to keep the peace.

And suddenly it was as if, by some strange alchemy, the hectic little office with its clattering typewriters and jangling telephone had been transformed into a meeting place where men and women from all parts of the land were clasping hands in a solemn covenant to safeguard the lives and laughter of their children.

With requests for more peace material mounting daily, the Peace Information Center supplemented its *Peacegram* with a series of leaflets.* As rapidly as they were printed, the leaflets were consumed by communities throughout the country. Surfeited with war propaganda, people were famished for words of peace.

Numerous persons urged that a peace petition be added to the literature distributed by the Peace Information Center. Hundreds of peace petitions with various appeals were being circulated in America and other lands. Of all of them, one promised to inspire the broadest response among the American people.

It was known as the World Peace Appeal or Stockholm Pledge.

3. WORLD PEACE APPEAL

THE WORLD PEACE APPEAL called for outlawing atomic weapons, strict international control to enforce this measure, and branding as a war criminal the first government to resort in the future to the use of such weapons. Crystallizing the fervent will of countless millions in every nation, the

* These were the titles of some of the leaflets published by the Peace Information Center: *The People of the World Want Peace*, *Catholics Speak for Peace*, *The Negro People Speak for Peace*, *The Text of the International Red Cross Appeal*.

Appeal had been unanimously voted in Stockholm on March 19, 1950, by the Permanent Committee of the World Congress of the Defenders of Peace.*

Overnight the Appeal had become the rallying cry of a peace crusade of titanic scope. In scores of languages, its words raced across the continents of the world. Unresting legions of people yearning for peace began collecting signatures on Appeal petitions. By the end of May, more than 100,000,000 human beings had already signed the Appeal.

"Who is signing the Appeal?" wrote the famous French priest, Abbe Jean Boulier, in a letter addressed to religious leaders in every land. "The human race."**

Early in June, responding to insistent demands on all sides, the Peace Information Center undertook to print World Peace Appeal petitions and make them available for

* The World Congress of the Defenders of Peace had been founded in Paris in April 1949 at a huge congregation of 2000 delegates from seventy-two countries who represented organizations with a total membership of approximately 700,000,000 persons. Attending the Congress was a delegation of forty Americans, headed by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and O. John Rogge, former Assistant U. S. Attorney General, both of whom had served together with Bishop Arthur W. Moulton as co-chairmen of an American Sponsoring Committee. The Congress elected a Permanent or Executive Committee of 140 members, including eight Americans. The central theme and purpose of the Congress was the promotion of peace activities among the peoples of the world.

The March 1950 conference at Stockholm of the Permanent Committee of the World Congress was attended by one hundred delegates from approximately fifty countries. The three members of the American delegation were the famous artist and writer, Rockwell Kent, O. John Rogge and the author of this pamphlet.

** In addition to Abbe Jean Boulier, many religious leaders endorsed the World Peace Appeal. Twenty-four outstanding French Protestant Pastors issued a manifesto entitled "For Peace," in support of the Appeal. Eight Italian Bishops signed the Appeal. The General Conference of the French Rabbinical Organization endorsed the Appeal, as did Cardinal Sapieha, Roman Catholic Primate of Poland, Monsignor Santin, Archbishop of Trieste, and scores of other religious leaders of every denomination.

A total of some 500,000,000 persons ultimately signed the Appeal.

distribution in the United States. Within a matter of days, across the whole great span of the land, Americans were enlisting by the thousands in the worldwide crusade to avert the measureless horror of an atomic war. In city after city, peace committees and trade unions, organizations of women, youth, veterans, parents and students pledged themselves to collect signatures on the Appeal. Prominent churchmen, scientists, writers, jurists and educators endorsed the Appeal and urged others to sign.*

In a letter informing the Peace Information Center of their intention to collect 50,000 signatures, members of the Pension Union in Washington State wrote: "Of course, we are old people, but we want to see the state we helped build stay green and beautiful and not be turned into a bleak Nagasaki."

Almost one million Americans had signed the World Peace Appeal by the fateful last week of June, when smouldering international tensions flamed into war in Korea and the armed forces of the United States were committed on the side of the Syngman Rhee regime.

And during the dark and perilous days that followed, as a third world war seemed ever more imminent, Americans added their signatures by the tens of thousands in an impassioned expression of their resolve to maintain peace.

There were, however, powerful interests in America which regarded not war but peace as a dread menace.

On August 4, with corporation profits from war orders

* Among the noted Americans signing the Appeal were Bishop Arthur W. Moulton of Utah; Bishop Sherman L. Greene of Alabama; Justice James H. Wolfe of the Supreme Court of Utah; composer Duke Ellington; nuclear physicist, Dr. Philip Morrison; Fred Stover, President of the Iowa Farmers Union; Paul Robeson; Emily Greene Balch, Nobel Prize winner; and Dr. Anton Carlson of the University of Chicago.

soaring to unprecedented heights, the big business journal, *U. S. News and World Report*, admonished its readers:

Just keep this point in the back of your minds.

A peace offensive can break out. Peace is Russia's propaganda game.

Peace moves by Russia, right now, could embarrass U. S. They would get much support in a world fearful of big war . . . Of course, if a real "peace scare" should now develop, watch out . . . the boom would crack.

A similar anxiety over the chance of peace was felt in top army circles. As Holmes Alexander reported in his syndicated column:

Military chiefs dread even the remote possibility of mediation in Korea . . . They need an extensive period in that bloody peninsula in order to pyramid what is realistically called "bodies and guns." Pentagon chiefs know that the more men in Korea, the more men and weapons Congress will authorize for services elsewhere. . . . War-mongering may now be called the almost official Pentagon policy.

Nor were high-ranking members of the U. S. Government disregarding the danger of a "peace offensive."

4. COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

SOON AFTER the outbreak of the Korean war, confidential letters were dispatched from the U. S. State Department to a number of carefully selected individuals in different parts of the United States. I chanced to see one of these communications. Signed by Francis H. Russell, Director of Office of Public Affairs, the letter had been sent to the president of a West Coast bank. Russell informed the banker that the State Department was holding private

conferences to devise methods of thwarting the collection of signatures on the World Peace Appeal in America. "I should be pleased," wrote Russell, "to arrange for you to attend one of the Department's regular briefing sessions on world developments if you will let me know anytime that you plan to be in the vicinity."

Accompanying Russell's letter was a three-page mimeographed memorandum entitled *Moscow's "Signatures for Peace" Campaign*. Characterizing the World Peace Appeal as "the newest major development in Moscow's 'peace offensive'," the memorandum declared that one of the sinister aims of the Appeal was "to make any use of the atom bomb seem morally indefensible."

This memorandum had not been prepared solely for the consideration of the West Coast banker. Although bearing no markings identifying its origin or authorship, the memorandum was being sent by the State Department to congressmen, government agencies and U. S. foreign missions, as well as to numerous editors, radio news-commentators, educators, Negro leaders and other persons in a position to influence public opinion . . . *

* As the two Americans on the Resolutions Committee at Stockholm which had drafted the World Peace Appeal, Rockwell Kent and the author of this pamphlet wrote Secretary Acheson informing him of the flagrant inaccuracy of the State Department memorandum on the Appeal. We advised the Secretary that the American delegates to the Stockholm Conference had received no "orders from Moscow" but had supported the demand to outlaw the atom bomb because "we knew we were expressing the heartfelt desire of millions of Americans to eliminate the threat of this most monstrous weapon." We added that we would be glad to come to Washington to give a firsthand account of the democratic parliamentary conduct of the Stockholm Conference and its "broadly representative character . . . not only in terms of nationality but also of vocation, religious faith and political persuasion."

However, unlike the West Coast banker and other recipients of letters from Director of Public Affairs Francis Russell, Kent and I were not invited to visit the State Department.

On July 12 Secretary of State Acheson released to the press an official statement denouncing the World Peace Appeal as a "propaganda trick" in a Soviet "peace offensive." "I am sure," declared Secretary Acheson, "that the American people will not be fooled by the so-called 'world peace appeal.'"

The Administration, however, preferred not to rely upon the judgment of the American people in this matter. Secretary Acheson's statement and the memorandum, *Moscow's "Signatures for Peace" Campaign*, were the opening phases of an elaborately contrived, intensive propaganda campaign to convince the public that the World Peace Appeal was part of a Machiavellian Soviet conspiracy against the interests and security of the United States.

Newspapers from coast to coast were soon featuring articles and editorials virulently attacking the Appeal. Radio commentators urged their listeners to turn in to the police authorities or FBI the names of persons circulating the Appeal. The Un-American Activities Committee published a report assailing the Appeal as "a Communist worldwide peace offensive." Ambassador Warren Austin, American delegate to the United Nations, publicly declared that signers of the Appeal were "traitors to their country."

There were other, more grim aspects to the campaign against the World Peace Appeal.

An epidemic of violence against persons circulating the Appeal had broken out in the country. In Linden, New Jersey, a man collecting signatures was set upon by hoodlums and beaten unconscious. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a man who had signed the Appeal was hurled from a second-story window; he suffered a broken back. In Philadelphia, Detroit, Los Angeles and other cities, peace rallies

were forcibly broken up and peace demonstrators assaulted. When arrests were made, the police almost invariably jailed those who had been attacked or were circulating the peace petitions. "Instead of putting these guys in jail," declared Governor James Duff of Pennsylvania, "they ought to be hanged."

On August 2, in New York City, the campaign of violence against the peace movement reached a bloody climax.

A rally sponsored by the National Labor Peace Conference had been scheduled for that afternoon in Union Square; but Mayor O'Dwyer had arbitrarily refused to grant a permit for the assembly. To protest the ban and demonstrate their desire for peace, thousands of New Yorkers gathered quietly along the streets bordering the Square at the time set for the meeting. The Square itself was ringed by more than a thousand uniformed police officers, mounted policemen, radio-car patrolmen and detectives. . . .

Suddenly, and without warning, the police charged into the crowd. Flailing right and left with their riot sticks, they savagely beat men and women to the ground. Mounted police spurred their horses onto the sidewalks, riding people down, indiscriminately clubbing demonstrators and onlookers. Describing the scene, Sid Kline later reported to the *New York Daily Compass*:

I heard beaten men groan with pain, and saw them kicked again before the sound of their cries had vanished. I heard women scream in agony, and I heard the sobs of other women driven near to hysteria by what they saw happen to others whom they did not know—but who were human beings.

Scores were seriously injured . . .

Ted Thackrey, editor and publisher of the *Compass*, bitterly commented: "Our democracy is not dying—it is being clubbed to death."

5. THE NATURE OF THE CRIME

THE WIDESPREAD concerted campaign of propaganda, intimidation, repression and violence had failed, however, to dam the ground swell of anti-war sentiment surging through the land.

With casualties grimly mounting among U. S. troops on the desperately-held beachhead in Korea, more and more citizens on the home front were demanding an end to the sanguinary military adventure. Press and radio polls showed overwhelming majorities opposed to continued American participation in the war. By mid-summer the number of young men failing to answer their draft calls had reached such proportions nationally that the figure was being kept a military secret and special FBI contingents had been formed to round up the delinquents.

Regarding peace activities during the early days of August, the *National Guardian* reported:

From thousands of pulpits in hundreds of U. S. communities religious leaders were resisting the tide toward war . . . From coast to coast a small army of brave people were still ringing doorbells, canvassing their neighbors, holding street corner rallies, getting more signatures to peace petitions. In many localities this had become dangerous but the work went on . . .

By August the Peace Information Center had distributed throughout the country more than a million peace emblems, pamphlets, bulletins and petitions. Included among the petitions were tens of thousands of copies of the World

Peace Appeal. Notwithstanding every official and unofficial contrivance to stop them, two million Americans had thus far signed the Appeal . . .

It was clear that if the growing demand for peace was to be stifled, new and more stringent measures were essential on the part of the Administration. One such measure was about to be taken.

On August 11 the Department of Justice summarily demanded that the Peace Information Center register immediately "as an agent of a foreign principal . . . under the terms of the Foreign Agents Registration Act."

Shocked and outraged, the leaders of the Peace Information Center denounced the Justice Department's action as an effort to discredit their work and frighten them into inactivity. Speaking as the Center's Chairman, Dr. Du Bois declared in a public statement:

The Peace Information Center is an entirely American organization whose sole object is to prevent a third World War . . . The desire for peace cannot be made an "alien sentiment."

But the action of the Justice Department was not without its effect. Branded as a "foreign agent" by the press and radio, it became increasingly difficult for the Center to function effectively and raise sufficient funds for its work.

On October 12, after bringing its message of peace to millions of Americans, the Peace Information Center was dissolved by decision of its executive board.

Four months later, on February 9, 1951, the Justice Department indicted Dr. Du Bois and four of his former associates in the Peace Information Center for failure to register as foreign agents. Conviction on this charge could

carry a prison sentence of five years and a \$10,000 fine for each of the accused.

For the Administration had not been content merely with the dissolution of the Peace Information Center. The American people needed to be taught a more important lesson.

And this was the lesson Americans were intended to learn: that advocacy of peace had become a crime in the United States and that those who spoke out against war were "foreign agents."

6. FOR THE DEFENSE

THE SHOCKING indictment of Dr. Du Bois and his associates precipitated an outcry of protest and condemnation throughout the country. Numerous civic, religious, professional, labor and Negro organizations, and scores of outstanding public figures, sharply decried the persecution of the former leaders of the Peace Information Center and called for the immediate withdrawal of the indictment.

"As a worker in science," declared the eminent nuclear physicist, Dr. Philip Morrison, "I am especially moved to protest the injustice of a prosecution based on the idea that the search for peace is alien. Peace, like science, ought to know no boundaries. It demands not stigma, but recognition."

From every section of the American Negro community came fiery denunciations of the Government's action against Dr. Du Bois and the monstrous indignity of his arraignment in Washington.

"If an outstanding American like Dr. Du Bois who has given fifty years of his life in the battle to wipe out second class citizenship for the Negro could be indicted because he

was an officer sponsoring a petition for peace throughout the world," stated Judge Hubert T. Delaney of New York City, "then few of us are safe from attack upon our loyalty to the country of our birth."

In the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Marjorie McKenzie wrote:

The choice of Dr. Du Bois as a defendant is neither random nor routine . . . It occurs at a time when no other American Negro of comparable stature has spoken so fearlessly and critically of United States policies . . . We have to take a stand, here and now, with Dr. Du Bois.

On February 23, one week after his arraignment, a testimonial dinner to honor Dr. Du Bois on the occasion of his eighty-third birthday took place in New York City. The sponsoring committee of the dinner was composed of more than three hundred of the nation's outstanding educators, writers, religious leaders and scientists.

"I stand tonight facing the possibility of celebrating my future birthdays in prison," Dr. Du Bois told the hundreds of men and women assembled to pay tribute to him. "The prospect is not pleasant. Yet I continue to maintain that advocacy of peace is not treason; that I am the agent of no foreign principal and never have been; that I am the champion of no idea alien to this nation; and that I have the right within the law in the future as in the past to fight for peace."

It is to safeguard this right not only for Dr. Du Bois and his associates but for the nation as a whole that ever-growing numbers of Americans are demanding the Government abandon its willful prosecution of the Peace Information Center.

And in proclaiming their prerogative to fight for peace and the prevention of an atomic war, these Americans are asserting their unalienable right to life itself.

HOW TO AID IN THE DEFENSE

There are a number of ways in which to render aid to the defense of Dr. Du Bois and his associates.

Messages should be sent to President Truman and Attorney General McGrath urging that the indictments be promptly dropped.

Financial support should be given to the National Committee to Defend Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and Associates in the Peace Information Center, 16-18 West 29th Street, New York City, N. Y. (Make checks payable to Shirley Graham, Treasurer.)

Local groups should be established to assist in the defense campaign; and such groups should keep the National Committee advised of their activities.

This pamphlet, AGENTS OF PEACE, is available in quantity lots of twenty-five or more copies, at a price of 4 cents a copy. The pamphlet can be obtained from Albert E. Kahn, Croton-on-the-Hudson, N. Y.; or from the National Committee to Defend Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and Associates in the Peace Information Center, 16-18 West 29th Street, New York, N. Y. Payment should accompany orders.

Concerning the author of this pamphlet

A graduate of Dartmouth College and winner of the Crawford-Campbell Literary Fellowship, Albert E. Kahn was editor during 1939-1944 of *The Hour*, a newsletter which achieved wide distinction for its revelations concerning Axis espionage, sabotage and propaganda operations in the Americas. In 1942, in collaboration with Michael Sayers, Mr. Kahn wrote *Sabotage!*, which was reprinted in condensation in *Reader's Digest* and became one of the leading bestsellers of the war years. Together with Michael Sayers, Mr. Kahn wrote two more bestsellers: *The Plot Against the Peace* (1945) and *The Great Conspiracy* (1946). In addition to reaching a circulation of a quarter of a million copies in the United States, *The Great Conspiracy* has been translated into approximately thirty languages and published in probably more foreign lands than any other non-fiction book of the last decade. Mr. Kahn's most recent book, *High Treason: The Plot Against the People*, has already had a circulation of more than 60,000 copies in America and has been translated into numerous languages.

This is the first of a series of "Pamphlets For Peace" to be issued by The Hour Publishers. The second pamphlet in this series will be entitled THE GAME OF DEATH: WAR PREPARATIONS FOR AMERICAN CHILDREN. Advance orders can be placed with Albert E. Kahn, Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y.