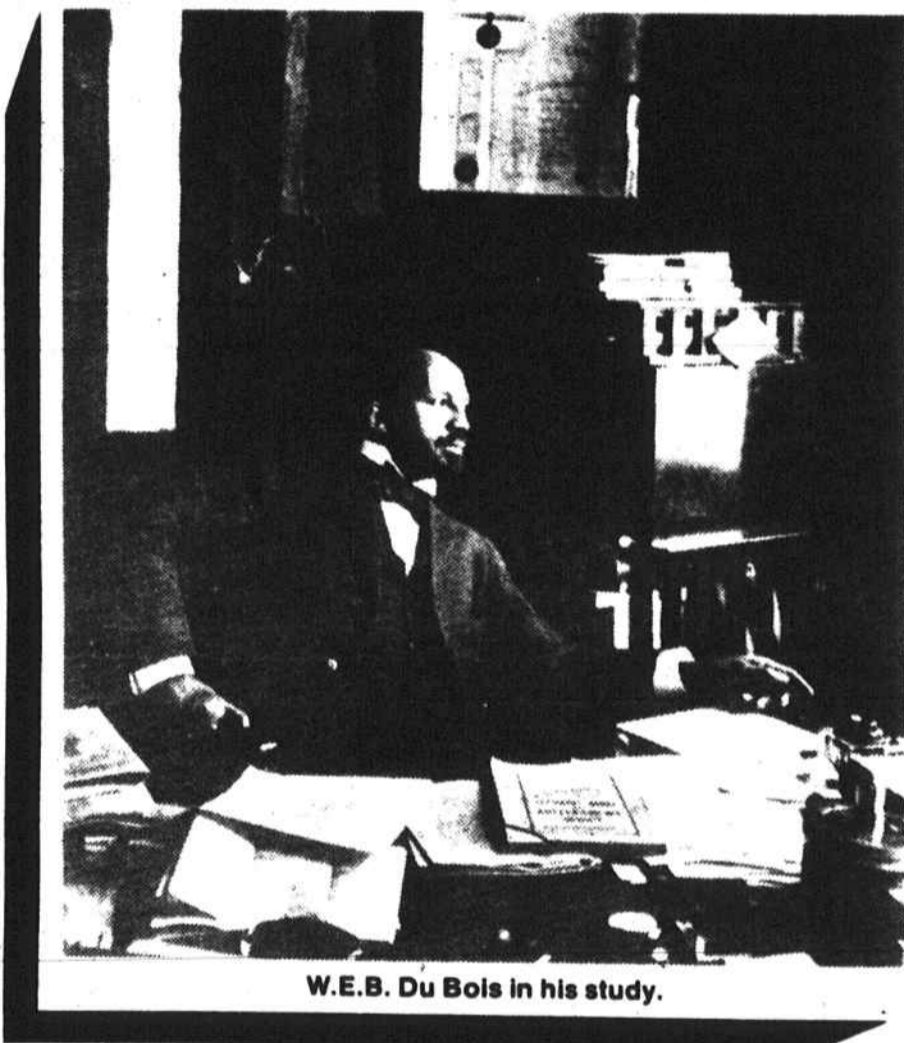


# PROFILE

## W.E.B. DU BOIS 1868-1963



W.E.B. Du Bois in his study.

### Scholar and Activist

William Edward Burghart Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. He attended school there. Du Bois became a very well-educated man. Indeed, he became a scholar. Du Bois received B.A. degree from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee and a second B.A. degree from Harvard University, as well. Thus, W.E.B. Du Bois became the first African American to earn a doctorate from Harvard. He also studied at the University of Berlin. He was awarded several honorary degrees.

### Taught Latin and Greek

Early in his career, he taught Latin and Greek at Wilberforce University in Ohio and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. He loved teaching and inspiring students to opt for education. He stressed developing the ability to think and to fight racism and discrimination. Du Bois taught at his beloved Atlanta University twice, first from 1897-1910 and again in 1933.

### Critic of American Social Order

He was a fierce opponent of segregation and inequality, although his emphasis and directions for solutions changed at different times. However, he remained a critic of the American social order and its suppression of African Americans.

### Conflict with Contemporaries

Du Bois held strong beliefs and they brought him into conflict with contemporaries of his day. In 1903, he wrote a scathing essay entitled "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," denouncing Washington's willingness to accept a "temporary" second-class citizenship for African Americans. Du Bois demanded immediate restoration of political and social rights for Blacks. He urged them to embrace their African heritage.

### The Talented Tenth

This intellectual giant advocated leadership and uplift of the masses through an educated Black elite, called "The Talented Tenth." He was one of the founders of the NAACP and served as editor of its magazine, *Crisis*, for twenty-two years (1910-1932).

### Formed the Niagara Movement

One could always count on Dr. Du Bois to raise his voice in protest against any treatment he felt hurt Black people, whether it was proposed by whites or blacks. He founded the Niagara Movement, a protest organization whose membership consisted of many African American intellectuals. The organization lasted only a few years, due to lack of fund. The group met first in 1905 in Niagara, Canada, after being denied hotel accommodations in Niagara, New York. During the meeting in Boston in 1907, a controversy between Du Bois and Black publisher William Monroe Trotter was another factor in the breaking up of the organization. Du Bois's attention turned to the emerging NAACP.

### Linked with Communism

He became very interested in pan-Africanism and Marxist socialism. Through his efforts, the first major pan-African congress was held in 1919. He also became interested in the Communist revolution and the experiment in Russia. After a trip to Russia in 1920, he began to embrace Marxist views in his writings. During the 1940s and '50s, he was linked increasingly with Communist groups. Such linkage led to his indictment by the U.S. Justice Department. However, Du Bois was acquitted.

### Urged Socialism

At an all-African conference in 1958 in Accra, Ghana in West Africa, he urged socialism over capitalism. Three years later, at age 93, he joined the Communist Party. Dr. Du Bois returned to Ghana in voluntary exile. He was invited to live in this dynamic country by its first prime minister, Kwame Nkrumah. This brilliant scholar devoted his last two years to directing the writings of an African encyclopedia.

### Wrote Books and Articles

Du Bois was a prolific writer of books and articles. His materials are widely read today among people who recognize his intellect.

### A Scholar and an Activist

W.E.B. Du Bois died in Ghana in 1963, one day before the August 18, 1963, March on Washington. He left a long and distinguished record of achievement. He was both a scholar and an activist of extraordinary ability.