

In Memoriam

Ralph Johnson Bunche

Ralph Johnson Bunche, the forty-ninth President of the American Political Science Association and the only Black to achieve that status, died in New York Hospital on December 9, 1971. Much of what he accomplished is well known, but there is little understanding that all of Bunche's work was that of the political scientist, for he was not only a scholar and a teacher of political science, but certainly this nation's most distinguished international civil servant and one of its ablest diplomats. Our presidents tend these days to move in the scholastic world, and in this world as events impinge upon it. Bunche was the political scientist using his craft to mold political and social events.

All of his accomplishments were against the odds, for not only was he orphaned early in his life but as a Black he was denied prizes fairly won. Jefferson High School in Los Angeles would not admit him to the National Honor Society even though he was the top student in his class and valedictorian.

Bunche entered UCLA on an athletic work scholarship, a measure of racial exploitation, and suffered football injuries resulting in double mastoiditis before it was made possible for him to receive aid on the basis of his Phi Beta Kappa grades. He played on a championship basketball team and possessed three gold basketballs to prove the fact that his team won the West Coast Conference championship three times. I surmise that he was the only APSA president to have been a top athlete.

Bunche was the first Negro to earn a Ph.D. in Political Science, and his major subjects were American Government and International Relations, wide areas for these times, but in a Woodrow Wilson tradition. He left Harvard to teach at Howard University where his students included Robert E. Martin, Vincent J. Browne and William P. Robinson. Nnamdie Azikiwe, the father of Nigerian and perhaps Ghanaian nationalism and the first President of Nigeria took graduate studies under Bunche. Judge William Bryant, the Black Federal District judge who brought honesty to the United Mine Workers' election of their president was a Bunche student and research assistant.

Ralph Bunche started his career in much the same manner as most young political scientists, teaching, studying and writing. He published in the *American Political Science Review* on Negro politics in Chicago and Detroit. His doctoral dissertation was a comparative study of the administration of the Togolands and the Camerouns as B Mandates. A Julius

Rosenwald fellowship made it possible for him to travel to Europe and Africa in pursuit of his research.

It became clear to him early, however, that he was interested in study and scholarship as a prelude to action — to social, racial and political change through the politics of administration. In preparation two areas of study and investigation followed. The first was in 1936, a second trip to Africa and a first trip to Southeast Asia under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council. In the same year, he wrote a bold and trenchant discourse, "A World View of Race," Bronze Booklet #4 in the series edited by Alain Locke. It was clear that Bunche regarded the color line as characteristic of European and American domination throughout the world, the greatest injustice of the capitalistic democratic system, its greatest source of danger to its own survival, and the greatest threat to the peace of this world in the future. Class and color exploitation seemed destined to him to bring about a downfall of those who organized their national systems on these bases. Clearly international systems organized on these bases were the enemies of justice and peace. He regarded the Mandates System as a sham even when the League had some life in it.

Bunche's second area of exploration was domestic, as chief of staff for the Carnegie-Myrdal study of race in the United States, resulting in Myrdal's two volume *An American Dilemma*. Bunche and Myrdal traveled the South together with results often not expected by Myrdal. The extended footnotes and quotations which take up a third of Volume II of *An American Dilemma* reveal the extent of the Bunche contribution since they include many of his own staff memoranda as well as references to the works of long-standing Bunche colleagues and friends, especially Allison Davis and W. Lloyd Warner, pioneering empirical American social anthropologists. In 1940 some of Bunche's Myrdal work appeared in a paper on "The Disfranchisement of the Negro" given at the 1940 annual meeting of the APSA.

Bunche's work with Myrdal carried him up to World War II. By this time he knew caste and class (Warner and Davis) intimately as determinants of macro-behavior in the American society. During his life he was always in the thick of racial action as a private citizens of the United States (Board of the NAACP, one of the founders of the National Committee against Discrimination in Housing, marcher on sick legs to Selma, etc.), but he knew that his main contribution to breaking the color line at home would come from the destruction of colonialism abroad based on color. An international system with non-white nations free and independent

would have a different input into the workings of American society and government than an international system where white nations controlled non-white nations and imposed a caste and class system upon them.

With the outbreak of World War II, Bunche went to work for the OSS, specializing in Africa, and especially in North Africa. He moved from there to the Department of State where he became concerned with the trusteeship plans for the new United Nations. He participated in the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944 and at the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco in 1945 where he served as the secretary of the committee dealing with trust and non-self-governing territories. At the outset of the UN he became Director of the Division of Trust Territories. In this and in similar capacities and as Under-Secretary of the United Nations and later as Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs, he presided over the decolonization of most of the world and all of Africa except the Portuguese areas, Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa.

Bunche's 1949 armistice of the Arab-Israeli war was the UN's first success and was badly needed. As a result he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. His success was not bureaucratic but personal. His basic maneuver was to remove his activities from the area of fighting and to isolate the negotiators on the island of Rhodes where public opinion would condemn the party which left first. These factors, an organized world opinion and the isolation of the negotiators, have been missing since — at Panmunjon, the Congo, Paris, the Middle East to name a few. Moreover, Bunche developed a new administrative skill, director of peace-keeping troops while simultaneously serving as peace negotiator and keeper of the armistice.

In 1955, Bunche became Under-Secretary of the United Nations, and the following year, the British, French and the Israelis tried their invasion of the Suez and Egypt. When that came to an end because of Eisenhower and the UN, Bunche was placed in charge of keeping the peace. That peace was kept until 1967 when Nasser demanded the withdrawal of the peace-keeping force from his territory, which in turn was followed by an Israeli attack and victory. Bunche's failing energies were applied thereafter elsewhere and there has been no peace in the area since.

In 1960 Bunche took over the guidance of the peace-keeping efforts in the Congo. His task here was to get the Belgians out after their return, prevent the secession of Katanga, hold off the interference of Russia and the United States, prevent a war in the Congo that would be a threat

to international peace, establish a modicum of viable services for the new state and get out. In 1963, the UN troops under Bunche ended the Tshombe-Katanga secession, and in June 1964 the UN left the country. Before the UN was out of the Congo, Bunche was keeping the peace in Cyprus.

Ralph Bunche's career with the UN spanned that organization's life from its inception until the middle of 1971. His devotion to it and to collective security allowed no sparing of himself. Griefously and totally ill, he spent most of the year before he died according to U Thant, "bearing the brunt of the complex private negotiations which finally led to the solution of the problem of the status of Bahrein." His last years were spent in seeing the world powers turn away from collective security and organized world moral authority, much in the same fashion as Woodrow Wilson spent his last years.

Woodrow Wilson, the sixth president of the APSA, was no friend of the American Negro, but with the mandates system, "a sacred trust of civilization," he started the world down the road to decolonization and self-determination. Is it a freak of history that the man most responsible for bringing to fruition the Wilsonian concept was a Black American political scientist, or is it what one would expect in the working out of American civilization, seized for almost four centuries with the curse of racism?

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Ralph Eisenberg

Ralph Eisenberg, Associate Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs and Assistant Provost at the University of Virginia, died in Charlottesville, Virginia on August 16, 1973. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis, a daughter, Andrea, and a son, Jay.

Ralph was born in Newark, New Jersey on May 17, 1930. He attended the public schools in Newark and finished high school in 1948. He entered the Newark Colleges of Rutgers University and, after one year, transferred to the University of Illinois where he received the B.A. degree in Political Science in 1952. While at Illinois he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha. In 1953 he received an M.A. degree in Political Science from the University of Illinois. After serving in the U.S. Air Force from 1953 to 1955, he entered Princeton University where he received the M.A. degree in 1957 and the Ph.D. degree in 1960, both degrees being in *Political Science*.

Ralph began his professional career while still a graduate student. He served as a Research Assistant on the staff of the New Jersey Law Revision and Legislative