

Josephine Baker, Racial Protest, and the Cold War

Mary L. Dudziak

During the early 1950s, Josephine Baker was an international star who lived in a castle in France, who wore Dior gowns in concert, and whose most radical political idea seems to have been a hope that the world might some day live in racial harmony. She would hardly seem a threat to the national security of the United States. Nevertheless, during the early fifties, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) kept a file on Baker, and the State Department collected data on her activities, using the information to dissuade other countries from allowing her to perform. Baker was seen as a threat because she used her international prominence to call attention to the discriminatory racial practices of the United States, her native land, when she traveled throughout the world.

Baker was caught in the cross fire of the Cold War in Latin America in the early 1950s. Her seemingly simple campaign for racial tolerance made her the target of a campaign that ultimately pushed her from the limelight of the exclusive club circuit to the bright lights of a Cuban interrogation room. The woman lauded in Havana and Miami in 1951 as an international star was arrested by the Cuban military police two years later as a suspected Communist, but she had undergone no radical political transformation in the interim. That Josephine Baker engendered an international campaign to mute her impact is a demonstration of the lengths to which the United States and its allies would go to silence Cold War critics. More important, however, Josephine Baker found herself at the center of a critical cultural and ideological weak point in American Cold War diplomacy: the intersection of race and Cold War foreign relations.¹

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¹ There is a growing literature on the role of race in foreign relations. These works primarily consider the role of race in relations among different nations. See, for example, Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination* (Boulder, 1988); John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power*

In the years following World War II, the United States had an image problem. Gunnar Myrdal called it an "American dilemma." On one hand, the United States claimed that democracy was superior to communism as a form of government, particularly in its protection of individual rights and liberties; on the other hand, the nation practiced pervasive race discrimination. Voting was central to democratic government, for example, yet African Americans were systematically disenfranchised in the South. Such racism was not the nation's private shame. During the postwar years, other countries paid increasing attention to race discrimination in the United States. Voting rights abuses, lynchings, school segregation, and antimiscegenation laws were discussed at length in newspapers around the world, and the international media continually questioned whether race discrimination made American democracy a hypocrisy. When Sen. Glen Taylor was arrested for violating Alabama segregation laws, for example, the Shanghai *Ta Kung Pao* found a lesson for international politics: the incident did not demonstrate the moral leadership that would be required in a true world leader. "The United States prides itself on its 'liberal traditions,'" the paper noted, "and it is in the United States itself that these traditions can best be demonstrated."²

To raise the stakes even higher, as early as 1946 the American Embassy in Moscow reported that several articles on American racial problems had been published in the Soviet media, possibly signaling more prominent use of the issue in Soviet propaganda. The Soviet Union and the Communist press in various nations used the race issue very effectively in anti-American propaganda. Meanwhile, allies of the United States quietly commented that Soviet propaganda on race was uniquely effective because there was so much truth to it.³

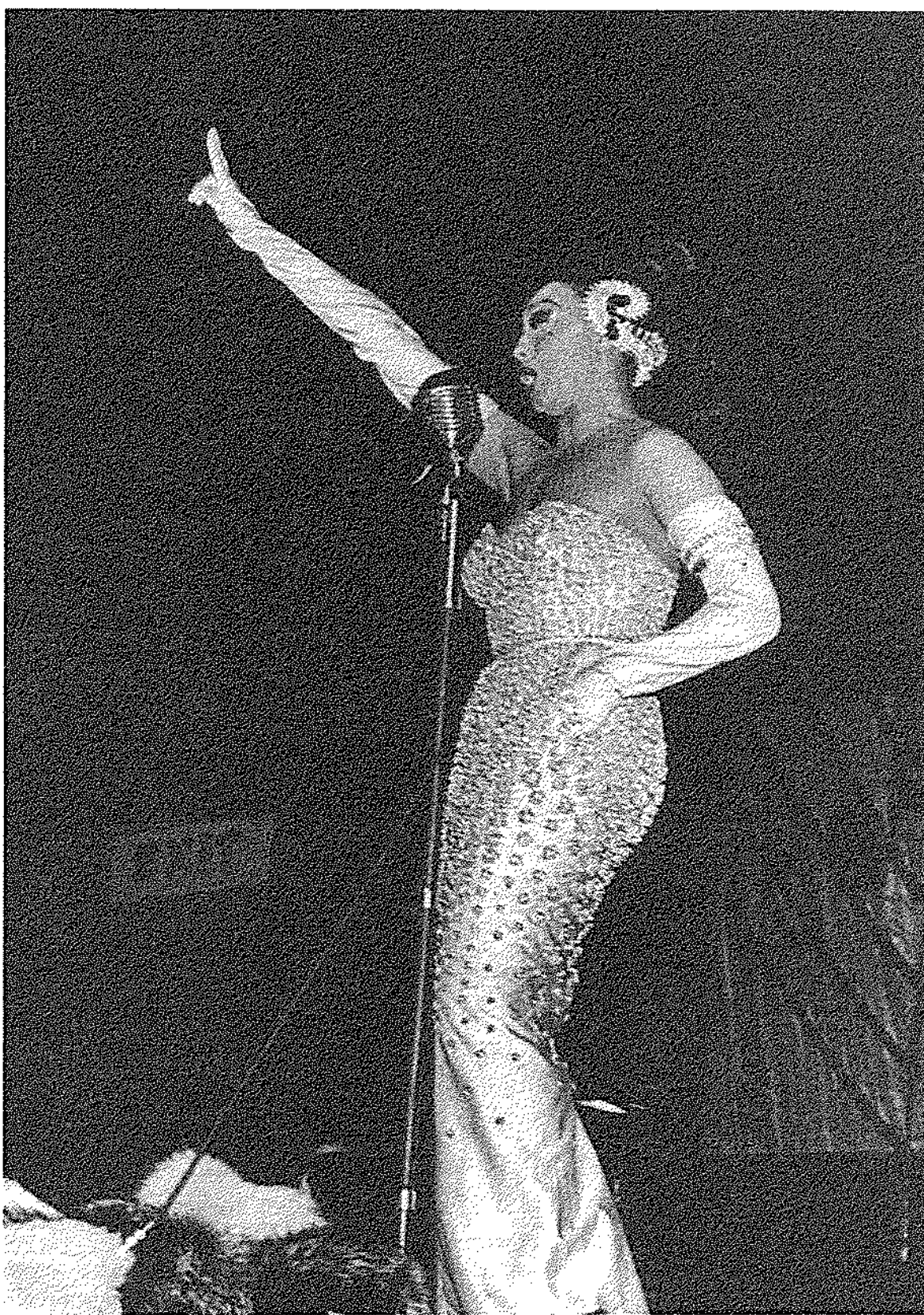
United States government officials were concerned about the effect of this international criticism on foreign relations. As Secretary of State Dean Acheson put it,

The existence of discrimination against minority groups in this country has an adverse effect upon our relations with other countries. We are reminded over and over

in the Pacific War (New York, 1986); Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York, 1993); and Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston, 1992). In contrast, this article is concerned with the intersection of domestic race politics and United States foreign relations. For related works, see Brenda Gayle Plummer, "Castro in Harlem: A Cold War Watershed," paper presented at the conference "Rethinking the Cold War: A Conference in Memory of William Appleman Williams," University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 1991 (in Mary Dudziak's possession); Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany, 1986); and Penny M. von Eschen, "African Americans and Anti-Colonialism, 1937-1957: The Rise and Fall of the Politics of Diaspora" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1994).

² Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, 1944). Steven Lawson, *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944-1969* (New York, 1976). James W. Ivy, "American Negro Problem in the European Press," *Crisis*, 57 (July 1950), 413, 416-18. For the statement in the *Shanghai Ta Kung Pao*, see Chinese Press Review no. 635 in American Consulate General, Shanghai, China, to Secretary of State, despatch 452, May 6, 1948, file 811.4016/5-1048, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State, RG 59 (National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

³ U.S. Embassy, Moscow, to Secretary of State, telegram 4180, Nov. 20, 1946, file 811.4016/11-2046, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State; Robert Coe, U.S. Embassy, The Hague, The Netherlands, to Department of State, Feb. 13, 1950, file 811.411/2-1350, *ibid.* See also Mary L. Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," *Stanford Law Review*, 41 (Nov. 1988), 80-93.



Josephine Baker performing at a benefit concert for the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) at the National Guard Armory, Washington, D.C., July 2, 1951.

Photograph by Fred Harris. Courtesy Bethune Museum and Archives, Washington, D.C.

by some foreign newspapers and spokesmen, that our treatment of various minorities leaves much to be desired. . . . Frequently we find it next to impossible to formulate a satisfactory answer to our critics in other countries. . . .

An atmosphere of suspicion and resentment in a country over the way a minority is being treated in the United States is a formidable obstacle to the devel-

opment of mutual understanding and trust between the two countries. We will have better international relations when these reasons for suspicion and resentment have been removed.

Concern about the impact of race discrimination on foreign relations permeated government-sponsored civil rights efforts in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The international implications of civil rights were continually noted in briefs in the United States Supreme Court and in government reports.⁴

In this environment, African Americans who criticized race discrimination in the United States before an international audience added fuel to an already troublesome fire. When the actor and singer Paul Robeson, the writer W. E. B. Du Bois, and others spoke out abroad about American racial problems, they angered government officials because the officials saw them as exacerbating an already difficult problem. The State Department could and did attempt to counter the influence of such critics on international opinion by sending speakers around the world who would say the right things about American race relations. The "right thing" to say was, yes, there were racial problems in the United States, but it was through democratic processes (not communism) that optimal social change for African Americans would occur. It would make things so much easier, however, if the troublemakers stayed home. Consequently, in the early 1950s, the passports of Robeson, Du Bois, and Civil Rights Congress chairperson William Patterson were confiscated because their travel abroad was "contrary to the best interests of the United States."⁵

Entertainer Josephine Baker posed a special problem for the government. During her international concert tours in the 1950s, she harshly criticized American racism. The United States government could not restrict her travel by withdrawing her passport because she carried the passport of her adopted nation, France. The government had to employ more creative means to silence her.

Josephine Baker is best known as the young black entertainer from St. Louis, Missouri, who took Paris by storm in the 1920s. In France there was great interest in African art and in jazz during the twenties, and, to French audiences, Baker seemed

⁴ Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson to the Chair of the Fair Employment Practices Commission, May 8, 1946, quoted in Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae at 19-20, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948). For government concern about the impact of race relations on foreign affairs, see President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights* (Washington, 1947); Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948); Brief for the United States, *Henderson v. United States*, 339 U.S. 815 (1950); Memorandum for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950); and Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

⁵ Horne, *Black and Red*, 212-18; Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York, 1988), 389. On the choice of speakers by the State Department, see Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," 98-101; and von Eschen, "African Americans and Anti-Colonialism," chapter 5. On passport confiscations, see Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 389; Horne, *Black and Red*, 212-18; Gerald Horne, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946-1956* (London, 1988), 167; and William L. Patterson, *The Man Who Cried Genocide: An Autobiography* (New York, 1971), 198-201.

to embody the primitive sexual energy of black art and music that would energize European culture.⁶

The primary roles available for black entertainers in the United States at this time were heavily racially stereotyped. In France, Baker also had to cater to white fantasies about race. In the black review that brought her to Paris at the age of nineteen in 1925, Baker danced in a number called "Danse Sauvage," set in an African jungle. In her opening performance at the Folies Bergère the next year, Baker did the Charleston dressed only in a skirt of bananas, a costume that would become her trademark. Eventually, however, Baker was able to transcend racial stereotyping in France and to play the music halls descending long staircases in elegant gowns in the kind of role previously reserved for white stars.⁷

Baker's glamorous life in Paris was a stark contrast to her early years in St. Louis. Her family had been so poor that she and her brother would search for coal that had fallen off a conveyor belt in the freight yards in order to heat their home. For a time, the family of six slept in one bed. At the age of eight, Baker became a live-in housekeeper for a woman who beat her and made her sleep in the basement with a dog. She gained an early love for the theater, perhaps because it was an escape from the difficulties of her young life. She later explained that she danced to keep warm.⁸

Racism shaped Baker's early memories. When interviewed in 1973 by young Henry Louis Gates, Jr., about her life, Baker began with memories of the 1917 race riots, which occurred when she was eleven years of age. The East Saint Louis riots were violent and deadly, and in her autobiography Baker described atrocities she witnessed as she fled the burning city. Yet the riots occurred in East Saint Louis, across the Mississippi River from Baker's own home. The stories of the riots were seared in Baker's memory; so horrified was she that she remembered the riots as if she had been there herself.⁹

In Paris, Baker was generally free of the day-to-day insults of American-style racism. She lived a glamorous life-style free from racial segregation. Like many other African Americans, she found the city a haven in the years between the two world

⁶ As Josephine Baker constructed her stage image, she also reconstructed her personal history. Baker and those associated with her would at times commit versions of her life story to paper. On her work for the French Resistance, see Jaques Abtey, *La Guerre secrète de Josephine Baker* (Paris, 1948); for a memoir by Baker and her fourth husband, see Josephine Baker and Jo Bouillon, *Josephine*, trans. Mariana Fitzpatrick (New York, 1977). The groundwork for full-fledged biographies was laid by Lynn Haney, *Naked at the Feast: A Biography of Josephine Baker* (New York, 1981). An elegant volume that effectively evokes Baker as an artist is Phyllis Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra: Josephine Baker in Her Times* (New York, 1989). The most complete collection of photographs of Baker and Baker memorabilia is Bryan Hammond, *Josephine Baker* (London, 1988). The most comprehensive biography is Jean-Claude Baker and Chris Chase, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart* (New York, 1993). This work is full of previously unreported details about Baker's life. It is also an intensely personal portrait by a man who was taken under the entertainer's wing at the age of 14 and who considers himself to be her son. Jean-Claude Baker speaks directly to Josephine Baker in the book and urges upon the reader his interpretation of her complex personality. For a full bibliography of works by and about Josephine Baker, see *ibid.*, 506.

⁷ Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 18-45, 121-22, 150-52.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-17; Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 1-33; Baker and Bouillon, *Josephine*, trans. Fitzpatrick, 1-17.

⁹ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "An Interview with Josephine [sic] Baker and James Baldwin," *Southern Review*, 21 (July 1985), 597-601; Baker and Chase, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart*, 28-30; Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 14-15.

wars. In 1937, after marrying a Frenchman, Baker finally adopted her new nation by becoming a citizen of France.¹⁰

Early in Baker's professional life, her energies were focused primarily on the theater and on developing herself as a star. Her emphasis changed in 1939 when France declared war on Germany. Using contacts she had in the Italian embassy, Baker began doing intelligence work for the Allies and spending much of her time with refugees from the war. Adolf Hitler's forces occupied Paris in 1940. Knowing that black entertainers would be unable to work in occupied France and fearing Nazi racism, Baker fled to the south of France and, ultimately, to North Africa. While still in France she joined the Resistance and, using her performance tours through Europe as a cover, participated in relaying information on Axis troop movements to the Allies. She wrote information in invisible ink on her musical scores and then passed on the scores. Later in North Africa she was hospitalized for nineteen months with peritonitis; only barely recovered, she found the energy to perform for Allied troops. For her work for the Resistance, Baker was awarded the Cross of Lorraine by Charles de Gaulle in 1943, and in 1961 she was awarded the Legion of Honor and the Croix de Guerre in recognition of her wartime service to France. Baker's war work was in part motivated by her loyalty to her adopted country; at least as important, in fighting Nazism she was fighting racism. The struggle against racism and a search for universal racial harmony would be a driving force in her life in later years.¹¹

In 1948, Josephine Baker sailed to New York, hoping to gain the recognition in the country of her birth that she had achieved in France. She had returned to the United States to appear in the Ziegfeld Follies in 1935 but had received devastating reviews. In 1948 as well, she did not find the critical acclaim she had hoped for; what she did find was racial discrimination. She and her white husband, Jo Bouillon, were refused service by thirty-six New York hotels. Baker then decided to see for herself what life was like for an average African-American woman in the South. Leaving her husband behind, she traveled south using a different name, and she wrote for a French magazine about such experiences as getting thrown out of white waiting rooms at railroad stations. Becoming Josephine Baker again, she gave a speech at Fisk University, an African-American school in Tennessee, and she told the audience that her visit to Fisk was the first time since she had come to the United States that she felt at home. After this trip, she told a friend that she would dedicate her life to helping her people.¹²

In 1950 and 1951, Baker scheduled a tour of Latin American countries but made no plans to visit the United States. She was a smash hit in Cuba; agents and club operators in the United States then became interested in booking her. She declined their invitations, saying she was not interested in performing in theaters with racially segregated audiences. In December 1950, she received a telegram in Havana from a New York agent who offered her a "tremendous" salary for an engagement

¹⁰ Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 69-75; Baker and Chase, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart*, 219-20.

¹¹ Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 181-205; Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 218-37; Baker and Chase, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart*, 365; Baker and Bouillon, *Josephine*, 113-38.

¹² Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 247.

at the Copa City Club in Miami Beach. She asked an American newspaperman, "What is Copa City and what is its policy concerning Negroes?" He told her that it was probably the most luxurious nightclub in the country and that no African Americans had ever been admitted as guests. "Then the whole idea is ridiculous," she said.¹³

The next day, Baker was visited by Ned Schuyler, co-owner and general manager of Copa City. He had seen her Havana show, and he thought it was "the most magnificent and sensational act in show business." He told Baker, "I've just got to have you for my club." She declined, saying, "I cannot work where my people cannot go. It's as simple as that." After some negotiating, Schuyler offered Josephine Baker a contract with special provisions: "It is understood and agreed between both parties that patrons are to be admitted regardless of race, color and creed." Baker then made sure that the audience would be integrated. She had Schuyler fly in African-American and white celebrities from New York for her opening. When she went on stage at the Copa City, Baker told her audience that it was the most important moment of her life. "This is really my first appearance in this, my native land in 26 years. The other times didn't count. Now it is different. I am happy to be here and to be performing in this city under these circumstances when my people can be here to see me."¹⁴

Baker was a hit in Miami. One critic described her show as "one of the greatest acts I've seen." A *New York Herald Tribune* writer said, "She walks like Mae West, sounds as throaty as Edith Piaf, shakes like Diosa Costello, balances a hair-do that's a cross between Carmen Miranda and the Empire State building and wears Christian Dior originals like five of the annual list of ten best-dressed women."¹⁵

Baker was also praised for insisting on an integrated audience. Rep. Isidore Dollinger of New York paid tribute to Baker in Congress, calling her "one of America's greatest artists." He continued,

America owes a lot to Miss Baker for her successful attempts to eliminate segregation in Miami Beach, for this is proof that what has been done there can be done in other parts of the country where this un-American practice still flourishes. Miss Baker's courage, talent and sincerity, in my opinion, deserve the plaudits of this body.¹⁶

Following her success in Miami Beach, Baker signed contracts for performances throughout the United States; she always required that audiences be integrated and that she receive accommodations in first-class hotels. Baker was hailed by the African-American press for her efforts. The *New York Amsterdam News* reported, "A survey of Negro press editorial opinion revealed a widespread feeling of admiration for the star's refusal to appear where her people are barred."¹⁷

¹³ "Miami Success Climaxes Storybook Career," *Ebony*, 6 (May 1951), 76.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* While most African-American performers had to endure segregation if they wanted to work, Paul Robeson, like Baker, made a practice of demanding no segregation as a condition for his appearances: Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 256, 288.

¹⁵ "Miami Success Climaxes Storybook Career," 78.

¹⁶ Isidore Dollinger quoted in *New York Amsterdam News*, July 21, 1951, p. 23.

¹⁷ Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 252; *New York Amsterdam News*, July 21, 1951, p. 8.

Josephine Baker's civil rights work extended beyond the theater. She urged white business leaders in Chicago and San Francisco to hire more African Americans. She assisted the family of Willie McGee, an African American executed for allegedly raping a white woman, by paying for his funeral; and she stopped in at the racially charged trial of the Trenton Six to cheer up the defendants, African-American men accused of murdering a white shop owner. Baker personally tried to integrate a whites-only soda fountain at the Hecht department store in Washington, D.C. The *New York Amsterdam News* reported that Baker told the store manager refusing her service, "Washington is the capital of the world and should be an example of a living democracy." The article continued, "She also reminded the manager of the Negro boys who are dying in Korea for a democracy that their people can not enjoy." She was honored for these and other efforts when the New York branch of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) held "Josephine Baker Day" on May 20, 1951.¹⁸

Baker's prominence sometimes shielded her from harsh discriminatory treatment, sometimes not. In October 1951, *South Pacific* star Roger Rico and his wife took Baker and another guest, Bessie Buchanan, to New York's exclusive Stork Club for a late dinner. They were seated, and Baker ordered a steak. After nearly an hour, the food had not been served, and, according to Mrs. Rico,

none of the waiters, including the one who had taken the order, would come near us. They pretended not to hear when my husband called them. After some effort we finally forced our waiter to come to the table, and asked about Miss Baker's order, and he said they had no steaks. We asked about the crab meat cocktail, and he said they had no crab meat. We asked about the bottle of wine and he said they were still looking for one. When we said we would order something else, he went away again.¹⁹

Baker and Roger Rico then left the table to phone her lawyer and the police. When they returned from the phone booth, a waiter came to the table to take another order. According to Buchanan, "finally, after another long wait, they brought out a steak. But we had all been so embarrassed by then that Miss Baker refused to eat, and we left."²⁰

Baker filed a complaint with the New York City police about the incident. The NAACP backed her protest, sponsoring a star-studded picket line at the Stork Club. Executive Secretary Walter White called upon the FBI; he telegraphed a request that J. Edgar Hoover protest the Stork Club's refusal to serve Baker because "such discrimination . . . anywhere in the United States plays directly into the hands of communists and other enemies of democracy. Disapproval of such policy by those who make Stork Club success it is. . . will demonstrate vitality and integrity of democracy." Hoover responded, "I don't consider this to be any of my business."²¹

¹⁸ *New York Amsterdam News*, July 14, 1951, p. 22; Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 249-52.

¹⁹ *Chicago Defender*, Oct. 27, 1951, p. 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; see also Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 255-56.

²¹ Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 218-19. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to J. Edgar Hoover, telegram, Oct. 19, 1951, "Josephine Baker," Federal Bureau of Investigation File 62-95834 (J. Edgar Hoover



Josephine Baker is surrounded by admirers at the Council House in Washington, D.C. She was attending a reception held by the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) in July 1951 to honor her achievements. From left to right: an unidentified pianist, Josephine Baker, Jeanetta Welch Brown (executive director of the NCNW), and Vivian Carter Mason (vice president of the NCNW).

Photograph by Fred Harris. Courtesy Bethune Museum and Archives, Washington, D.C.

Baker received threats. The *Chicago Defender* reported, “‘Some people’ told her that if she pressed her case against the Club, her contracts would be cancelled, she would be forced to leave the country and it might end her career.” Baker responded, “I am willing to sacrifice my career for a princip[le]. If I have to leave the country, I will leave with my own dignity and the dignity of my race intact.”²²

Baker’s wrath was not directed only at the Stork Club, however. The prominent New York gossip columnist Walter Winchell was at the Stork Club at the same time, although it is unclear whether he was aware of the discrimination against Baker. In interviews about the Stork Club incident, Baker criticized Winchell for failing to come to her assistance. Winchell responded, first by defending himself, claiming that he had left the Stork Club before the discrimination against Baker occurred.²³

Then he began attacking Baker in his columns. For one column, he dug up a 1935 Associated Press report announcing Baker’s support for Benito Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia. He also passed on a rumor that “one of the complainants against

FBI Building, Washington, D.C.). On FBI surveillance of African Americans, see Kenneth O’Reilly, *“Racial Matters”*: *The FBI’s Secret File on Black America, 1960–1972* (New York, 1989); David Garrow, *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York, 1981); Kenneth O’Reilly, *Black Americans: The FBI Files*, ed. David Gallen (New York, 1994); and Michael Friedly and David Gallen, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: The FBI File* (New York, 1993).

²² *Chicago Defender*, Oct. 27, 1951, pp. 1–2.

²³ Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 256–57. *Washington Post*, Oct. 22, 1951, p. B9.

the Stork Club (and her husband) helped incite and participated in the Paul Robeson Peekskill riots," and he later referred to her as "Josephine Baker riot inciter." At one point he quoted from a *Pittsburgh Courier* editorial, calling the Stork Club incident "the flimsiest case of 'discrimination' on record." From it "a great rhubarb was raised, probably to the delight of Moscow. . . . It is difficult to see how it will help Negroes generally or in any way advance their cause." On November 5, after Baker had left the country, Winchell reported, "Gov't people interested in the Josephine Baker thing are keeping tabs on her . . . for use if they try to enter the U.S. again."²⁴

Sharing Sen. Joseph McCarthy's tendency to see the specter of communism in any adversary, Winchell had written to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, asking him to check up on allegations that Baker was a Communist. The FBI began collecting derogatory information on Baker, paying close attention to the question of whether she was sympathetic to communism.²⁵ In fact, Baker preferred to distance herself from the Left. Although she took a strong interest in the case of Willie McGee, Baker backed out of a rally in support of McGee when she learned that it was sponsored by the American Labor Party and that Paul Robeson and radical congressman Vito Marcantonio were also scheduled to speak. Baker was praised for this move by the staunchly anticommunist newsletter *Counterattack*. According to *Counterattack*, Baker, "unlike some other entertainers, . . . will not use her fight for justice and civil rights as an excuse for underhanded support of the CP." Her brother Richard Martin found irony in the allegation that Baker was a Communist. "Imagine Josephine a Communist," he said, "when you think of the way they dress in Moscow."²⁶

Meanwhile, the controversy surrounding the Stork Club incident affected Baker's ability to get and hold bookings in New York. She had become too controversial. Political activism in the entertainment industry at that time was tantamount to an invitation for an investigation by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and controversy was not good for business.²⁷

In 1952 Baker took her critique of American racial practices on the road on a tour of Latin America. In September 1952, after she had been in Uruguay for three weeks, the acting public affairs officer at the United States Embassy in Montevideo reported to the State Department on her activities. The officer's interest in Baker stemmed from an appearance she made in that country on September 25, 1952. That evening Baker was scheduled not to sing, but to give a lecture. The event was organized by the World Cultural Association against Racial and Religious Discrimi-

²⁴ *Washington Post*, Oct. 24, 1951, p. 15B; *ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1951, p. 15B; *ibid.*, Nov. 30, 1951, p. 15B; *ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1951, p. 9B.

²⁵ "Josephine Baker," FBI File 62-95834.

²⁶ *Counterattack*, March 23, 1951, Letter No. 200, pp. 3-4, in "Josephine Baker," FBI File 62-95834. Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 258.

²⁷ Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 258; Stephen Papich, *Remembering Josephine* (Indianapolis, 1976), 176-77. See Victor Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York, 1980).

nation, an association Baker founded to promote interracial understanding, and sponsored by the Uruguayan Cultural and Social Association and the Association of Bankers of Uruguay. According to the despatch, "Before an audience of approximately 200 Uruguayans," Baker "stated that she felt impelled by God and her deep religious feelings to fight discrimination by stressing this problem in talks to people wherever she goes." Baker began by criticizing racial practices in South Africa and then turned to a lengthy discussion of race discrimination in the United States. The officer described Baker as a "staunch crusader for the elimination of racial and religious discrimination throughout the world," and he thought that her objective was "a most worthy one." Nevertheless, he was concerned about her activities because "her remarks concerning racial discrimination in the United States are wholly derogatory, thus presenting a distorted and malicious picture of actual conditions in the United States."²⁸

The embassy officer was right that Baker had nothing positive to say about race discrimination. And since she illustrated her critique with experiences of people she knew, her lectures must have affected her audiences powerfully. In Uruguay, she told her audience a story about her brother-in-law. As the embassy reported it, her brother-in-law told Baker,

Negroes can not pass white people on the sidewalks in southern towns, but must step off into the street. One day she said, he was returning from church services and came upon a white man and his little son. Upon seeing the negro, the latter stopped and said to his father: "Father, you told me that the next time I saw a nigger, I could kill him." Josephine's comment to the audience was that her brother-in-law immediately left the town.²⁹

The embassy officer claimed that Baker's account was "distorted" because she did not mention that progress was being made. "Not once was any mention made of what the American people have done and are doing to eliminate racial and religious discrimination." He was also concerned because Baker's message had an effect. "It was evident that the spectators were impressed by her analysis of the status of the negroes in the United States."³⁰

Baker was "devoting as much time as her artistic schedule will permit" to her campaign against discrimination. According to the embassy officer, she would "undoubtedly . . . continue to misrepresent the United States with respect to the negro problem." Consequently, the officer thought that the State Department would be "interested in following her campaign."³¹

Baker's activities did not call for an immediate response in Uruguay. Only one local paper had given extensive coverage to her lectures. The embassy thought that countering her remarks with "a fair picture of the negro situation in the United

²⁸ U.S. Embassy, Montevideo, to State Department, despatch 256, Sept. 30, 1952, file 811.411/9-3052, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

States" would only focus more attention on Baker's statements and might generate critical responses from other papers. The embassy officer was concerned, however, that Baker might receive more media attention in other countries; he suggested that "the Department might find it advisable to prepare special material to counteract her activities."³²

The embassy seems to have had a hand in the low level of media coverage Baker received in Uruguay. Later that fall she commented, "Upon my arrival in Montevideo, the press was very kind to me, but after my speeches, only one newspaper dared to publish my discourse, and they told me that they had received a friendly visit from the American Embassy requesting them not to publish it."³³

Although the State Department was alarmed at Baker's harsh critique of American race relations, her notion of social change was not very radical. Baker's underlying philosophy was that education and respectful interaction among persons of different races and religions would overcome prejudice. As she explained in a speech in Buenos Aires, she believed that "there is only one race and that is the human race." Differences between people were a result of the different circumstances in which they had lived. Baker believed that such differences must be understood and respected. She argued,

In order to appreciate a friend, one must know his manner of life and his mentality. If one cannot travel, then one must come to know it by means of books and teaching. It is extremely important for Colored people to become better acquainted with the Whites and the Whites ought to know more about Colored people, in order to prevent vengeful feelings and heal the wounds of hatred.³⁴

If Baker seemed an odd ambassador for racial justice, she was operating within constraints that left her without other means to gain the influence she wished to have. The diplomatic corps was not something a desperately poor black girl from Saint Louis had the chance to aspire to as Baker grew up. And although Eleanor Roosevelt made a mark on world affairs, the role for women in international politics remained limited in the postwar years. Josephine Baker's only route to influence was through her role as a performer.

At the same time, however, Baker was not a political performer like Paul Robeson. Robeson would weave his politics into his performances; his manner of singing and his embellishment of the lyrics drew the attention of army intelligence agents, who thought that Robeson had "managed to further the CP line by means of his songs." Baker, however, would speak about justice at a press conference in the afternoon and then don a feathered gown and headdress for the evening show. She was lauded

³² *Ibid.*

³³ U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 606, Nov. 13, 1952, file 811.411/11-1352, *ibid.*

³⁴ Department of State, translation of article in *Buenos Aires Epoca*, Oct. 7, 1952, Buenos Aires, Argentina, TC 57594, file 811.411/10-352, *ibid.* During her travels, Baker sought to establish branches of her organization, World Cultural Association against Racial and Religious Discrimination. Baker sought government support and apparently engaged in fund raising for the organization in several countries, but it is unclear whether it was ever anything more than a paper organization. See *ibid.* U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 510, Oct. 24, 1952, file 811.411/10-2452, *ibid.*

for demanding racially integrated audiences; once on stage, however, overt politics were more of an interruption to her performances than a part of them. On the evening that Willie McGee died following an unsuccessful effort to save him from the electric chair, Baker began her show by explaining her grief. The execution of this man who she believed to be wrongly accused of rape took the heart out of her desire to perform, but she would go on that night. "They have killed Willie McGee, one of my people," she explained. "A part of every American Negro died a little with him."³⁵

While Baker did not overtly address race relations in her performances, the performances themselves in some ways crossed racial boundaries. This woman, who first appeared on Broadway in blackface in a caricatured black production, had replaced floppy shoes and a plaid dress with jewels and designer gowns. In the place of crossed eyes were now eyes that looked out from behind a curtain of mascara. Baker's mere acceptance by American theatergoers in the postwar years marked a cultural transition from the narrow roles for black women in the 1920s to the possibility of stardom. Baker also reconceptualized the image of black entertainers in a more fundamental way. Phyllis Rose notes, "With her sophistication and couture wardrobe, her act now in every way called attention to her artifice, the triumph of art over nature." In contrast to her earlier exoticism, Baker was now eager to make the point "that black people were not children of nature."³⁶

Baker's desire for world harmony was implicitly woven into her signature song, "J'ai Deux Amours," but in a way that was quite personalized. "I have two loves," she sang, "my country and Paris."³⁷ It was as if love itself, and Baker as eros, could transcend national boundaries, as if through loving the United States and France, Baker could bring these nations together. This love of hers, which she had earlier directed toward the many men she acquired, was now, in her eyes, a force for world peace; Baker courted world leaders with her charm and her celebrity, taking them not to bed, but into her "brotherhood" of racial harmony. Baker used seduction as a political tool.

If American Embassy officers seemed overly sensitive to Josephine Baker's crusade against racism, they had reason to be concerned. During this period, according to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, "the damage to our foreign relations attributable to race discrimination has become progressively greater." In countries sensitive to the status of persons of color, a "hostile reaction" was "growing in alarming proportions." Acheson found that "the view is expressed more and more vocally that the United States is hypocritical in claiming to be the champion of democracy while permitting practices of racial discrimination here in this country." Exacerbating this problem, the Soviet Union increased its use of race in anti-American propaganda; by 1949, American race relations were a "principle Soviet propaganda theme."³⁸ Race became a weapon in the Cold War, a weapon easily deployed against the

³⁵ Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 352–54, 375, 316–20, esp. 320. Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 214–15, esp. 215.

³⁶ Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 54–63, 210–15, esp. 212.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁸ Quotation from letter, Secretary of State to the Attorney General, Dec. 2, 1952, in Brief for the United States as Amicus Curiae at 7, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). U.S. Embassy, Moscow, U.S.S.R., to Secre-

United States. Government officials came to realize that if they wished to save Third World countries for democracy, they would have to improve the image of American race relations.

In this context, Josephine Baker was a threat. The United States had enough of a foreign relations problem from Soviet propaganda and from international media coverage of events at home. It did not help matters when individuals such as Baker actively sought to generate foreign interest in American racial discrimination. Consequently, the United States government did what it could to limit her activities and to respond to her accusations.

The State Department became increasingly concerned about Baker's actions when she traveled to Argentina in the fall of 1952, and her complicated politics, or perhaps her attraction to powerful people, led her into a close association with Juan Perón.³⁹ When Baker arrived in Buenos Aires, she received the sort of attention the embassy officer in Uruguay had been concerned about. Her statements about race discrimination were given "dramatic play" by most Buenos Aires newspapers. Baker also escalated the rhetoric in her critique of the United States. In a speech covered by the evening paper *Crítica*, Baker reportedly compared American racism to the Holocaust. She said that in Europe during the war

I met thousands of Americans from the North and from the South. They believed, in good faith, that they were fighting for democracy and civilization that were being menaced by totalitarianism. Many had no hesitation in expressing their horror and their indignation at the news of massacres of Jewish prisoners. But as for the negro, the Southerners still continued and now keep on thinking that all the evil that is done is all right, and is necessary. How they reconciled these two opinions is something I have still not been able to figure out.

According to *Crítica*, Baker believed that "Negroes throughout the world entirely rightly are looking upon the United States in the same way the Jewish people pointed a short time ago to the land where they had been sentenced to extinction." Baker urged world support for the struggle for civil rights in the United States. She argued,

Unless there is a halt to the wave of lynchings, electrocutions without proof, collective aggressions and other beauties of the 'American way of life,' it means that all the blood spilled in the last war has been in vain. The apparent enemies of Hitler see his triumph multiplied in the Southern United States.⁴⁰

Baker sometimes tailored her speeches to particular racial and ethnic groups in Argentina. When she spoke to members of the Japanese community in Buenos

tary of State, Airgram A-677, July 27, 1949, file 811.4016/6-2749, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State.

³⁹ Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 259-65.

⁴⁰ U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 406, Oct. 6, 1952, file 811.411/10-652, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State. Department of State, translation of article in *Buenos Aires Crítica*, Oct. 3, 1952, Buenos Aires, Argentina, TC 57594, T-19/R-I, file 811.411/10-352, *ibid.*

Aires, Baker discussed “a tragic situation,” the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. She claimed that the United States occasionally allowed individual Japanese-American actors or artists “to attain limited success ‘as a pacification’ because ‘the whites knew that a little would calm the Japanese race and the white race could continue being master.’” She asserted, “This same system is being employed with the negroes, Hindus, Indians and other colored races who live in North America.” She told another audience in Argentina, “Let me recall to the inhabitants of Latin America the card placed in the hotels in Texas . . . : ‘This is a clean establishment and neither negroes nor Mexicans are admitted.’”⁴¹

Josephine Baker delivered her speeches in English, and they were simultaneously translated into Spanish by an interpreter. The State Department subsequently translated *Crítica*'s Spanish quotations back into English. These translations may well have affected some of the language and the tone of Baker's statements. For example, although the State Department translation indicates that she referred to the “Yankee South,” the word “Yankee” might well have originated in the translation into Spanish.⁴² Baker's speeches seemed to take on a sharper tone in Argentina, but it is difficult to know how much of the inflammatory language originated with her.

Baker's speeches in Argentina were reported in American media, and her message did not find a warm reception among African Americans. Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., tried to contact Baker after he saw reports that Baker said that she had seen lynchings and electrocutions of African Americans. He asked the State Department to investigate whether she had made the statements. Powell would later make a mark for himself through a spirited defense of American democracy at a conference of Third World leaders in 1955. He captured headlines back home when he responded to questioning by *Pravda* about American racism by urging that racial progress in the United States was a model for the world. Although a staunch civil rights advocate, Powell refused to criticize the United States before a foreign audience. Josephine Baker did not share Powell's willingness to close ranks, perhaps because she did not share his indebtedness to the political system he was protecting.⁴³

On November 10, 1952, Acting Assistant Secretary of State Ben H. Brown wrote to Powell that the American Embassy in Buenos Aires had been unsuccessful in its attempts to speak directly with Baker. He reported, however, that an embassy official discussed the matter with Baker's secretary, Carolyn Carruthers. Carruthers was asked whether the statements attributed to Baker in the newspaper *Crítica* were

⁴¹ U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 511, Oct. 24, 1952, file 811.411/10-2452, *ibid.* U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 406, Oct. 6, 1952, file 811.411/10-652, *ibid.* See also State Department translation of article in *Crítica*, note 40 above.

⁴² U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 567, Nov. 6, 1952, file 811.411/11-652, *ibid.*; State Department translation of article in *Crítica*, note 40 above.

⁴³ *New York Amsterdam News*, Nov. 29, 1952, p. 20; State Department to the U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, telegram, Oct. 23, 1952, file 811.411/10-2352, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State. U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to secretary of state, telegram 343, Oct. 31, 1952, file 811.411/10-3152, *ibid.* Ben H. Brown to Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Nov. 10, 1952, *ibid.* Wil Haygood, *King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.* (New York, 1993), 200–204.

true; she replied, somewhat ambiguously, "*Critica* said them. She did not say them. They are *Critica's* opinions not hers. What *Critica* said is true." When the officer asked, "May I say she was misquoted?" Carruthers answered, "Yes."⁴⁴

The acting assistant secretary told Powell that it was very unfortunate that Baker was "permitting herself to become the tool of foreign interests which are notoriously unfriendly to the United States and which are only interested in the causes which she sponsors in so far as they can be made to embarrass the United States." He told Powell that it was "the policy of this Government to bring an end to race discrimination as rapidly as possible." The State Department believed that "Miss Baker retards progress toward this goal in the United States by joining forces with the Argentine Government and Communist sponsored press in their attacks on this country."⁴⁵

Powell then held a press conference to denounce Baker. He ignored her secretary's statement that Baker had been misquoted; he reported that Baker simply had failed to respond to queries from him and from the State Department. Powell said that he was therefore "forced to conclude that Miss Josephine Baker has not been misquoted by the Argentine press." Instead, Baker was "guilty of deliberate distortion and misrepresentation of the situation in the United States."⁴⁶

Powell was harshly critical of Baker, calling her a "manufactured Joan of Arc." The *New York Amsterdam News* reported that the congressman called Baker's motives into question.

Powell intimated that Miss Baker's concern for Negro rights was based on box-office considerations. He said that she had been an "artistic flop" when she came here four or five years ago, when "she said nothing and did nothing to help the fight for the rights of Negro people and other minorities."

Meanwhile, the United States had made progress in reducing racial segregation and discrimination "without any help from Miss Baker." Powell encouraged "'right-thinking white people of America and Negro people' to 'completely disregard what she . . . has said as not being the slightest bit representative of the facts or of public opinion.'" His harsh statements notwithstanding, Powell indicated that he criticized Baker "with extreme reluctance" because he and his wife had befriended Baker when she was in the United States.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the State Department was upset about the effect of Baker's speeches in Argentina. According to an internal memo on Baker's activities, "her work was welcomed in Argentina by the Peronistas who had been making much of the discrimination issue in their propaganda against the U.S." One staff member suggested that the department should do something "to counteract the effects of her visit. One of the most effective ways to my mind would be to have one or two outstanding negro intellectuals make trips through the southern part of the hemisphere." The

⁴⁴ Brown to Powell, Jr., Nov. 10, 1952, file 811.411/11-1052, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *New York Amsterdam News*, Nov. 29, 1952, p. 20.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

staff of the United States Information Service (USIS), which was then part of the State Department, began to consider that strategy, involving such people as Ralph Bunche, Walter White, and Jackie Robinson.⁴⁸

They acted carefully. One staff member felt that the USIS should not “immediately rush in with our big cannon (like Bunche) just because La Baker has a ‘running off at the mouth.’” The staff member suggested that the USIS instead send embassy public affairs officers information on Baker “for confidential background use.” Before people were selected for lecture tours, the USIS would make sure they were likely to say the right thing. Though another staff member suggested Walter White, he was not sure “what kind of an impression or what kind of a line Walter White, Pres. of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People, would take with a foreign audience, but this might be investigated.” The Harlem Globetrotters had been to Buenos Aires, but that staff member did not “recall that one single line was printed indicating that they believe the racial question is improving in the U.S.” The Globetrotters were popular and would probably be returning to Argentina; he wondered whether one of them could “speak out on the progress [the] U.S. is making on the racial question.”⁴⁹

Although they had different ideas about strategy, USIS staff members were unanimous on one point. As one individual put it, “Naturally we should avoid any appearance of having sent someone to ‘offset’ J. Baker.” According to another, “To put ourselves on the defensive in this case could serve to weaken our arguments. We should do nothing to directly refute Baker’s charges.” A third person noted that such a cautious approach was “in keeping with the Department’s policy to avoid doing things which draw attention to the fact we have a problem in connection with the negro.” In order to avoid the appearance of having someone like Bunche respond directly to Baker, the suggestion was made that “surely there will be an anniversary celebration, a conference, or some occasion where he would attend—and still have some time left over for press interviews, and perhaps invitations to speak might be stimulated.” Discussing the possibility of sending an African-American labor leader on a tour, one memo stressed that sending such a speaker “as a labor leader and not as a negro” would avoid the appearance of reacting to Baker.⁵⁰ Josephine Baker herself had seen such efforts in Europe, and she believed that they were misguided. During her 1951 tour in the United States, the *New York Amsterdam News* reported, she

expressed quite frankly her disapproval of Negroes who come to Europe as “good-will” ambassadors of the U.S. Government and attempt to sell the European people on the idea that all is well for Negro citizens in America. “Europeans are not ignorant,” she said. “They read and they visit America. They are quite familiar with the race situation in this country.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Office Memorandum ARA/P: Philip Raine to PO—Mr. Haden, Oct. 20, 1952, file FW 811.411/9-3052 CS/W, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; Office Memorandum ARA/P: John Ordway to 1F1/A—Mr. Reid, Dec. 30, 1952, file 811.411/12-3052 CS/W, *ibid.*

⁵¹ *New York Amsterdam News*, July 14, 1951, p. 22.

While the State Department planned a propaganda response to Baker, embassy personnel also took steps to silence or discredit her. Baker found it increasingly difficult to perform in Latin American countries. She was unable to travel to Peru in December 1952 because that country denied her request for a visa. A representative of the theater in Lima, Peru, where Baker was scheduled to perform told the local press that Baker's contract had been canceled because she insisted on using her performances not just for artistic purposes but also to express her views about racial inequality. A scheduled trip to Colombia was called off for the same reasons. According to Baker, her Bogotá appearances were canceled when she refused to make a written commitment to refrain from making speeches against racial discrimination while in that city.⁵²

In early 1953, Baker was scheduled to appear in Havana, Cuba. In late January, the American Embassy in Havana, concerned about what they called "further anti-American activity," urgently cabled the State Department for background information on Baker. They wanted to know about her "anti-American statements" and the recent cancellations of appearances in Peru and Colombia; they wanted quotations from African-American newspapers criticizing Baker, and personal data, including that she gave up her American citizenship. The information supplied included the fact that Baker had been married three times (it was actually four) and that two of her husbands were white.⁵³

Embassy officers then contacted Goar Mestre, who owned the theater where Baker was scheduled to perform, and local newspapers. Embassy personnel

informally outlined to Mr. Mestre and to certain newspaper people that Miss Baker had given statements to the Argentine press highly uncomplimentary to the United States. The idea was planted discreetly that Miss Baker might use the Cuban press, particularly its communistic elements, as a further sounding board for her accusations of the mistreatment of Negroes in the United States.⁵⁴

The press reaction to Baker's anticipated visit was mixed. On January 27, *El Mundo* reported a Baker interview in which she stated that she was fighting "not only for the Negroes but for all persecuted people" and that her efforts were being supported in Latin America. In contrast, the *Havana Herald*, an American-managed paper, ran an editorial calling Baker "the darling of the Kremlin and of Peron" and a "Kremlin propaganda transmission belt."⁵⁵

⁵² There is no direct, unclassified evidence of United States Embassy involvement in the cancellation of Baker's visa and contracts in Peru and Colombia. In one unclassified despatch, the American Embassy in Lima, Peru, clearly showed satisfaction at the cancellation of Baker's appearances but noted that "some people in Lima will believe that this Embassy had something to do with the cancellation of her contract—which, of course, is not the case." The events in Peru and Colombia were so similar to what would later happen in Cuba, where State Department records clearly indicate embassy involvement, that it is likely the embassies in Peru and Colombia took similar actions to discourage Baker's visits. U.S. Embassy, Lima, to State Department, despatch 495, Dec. 31, 1952, file 811.411/12-3152 IWC, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State; U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 817, Dec. 29, 1952, file 811.411/12-2952, *ibid.*; U.S. Embassy, Santiago, to State Department, despatch 670, Dec. 30, 1952, file 811.411/12-3052, *ibid.*; U.S. Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, to State Department, despatch 1124, Feb. 2, 1953, file 811.411/2-253, *ibid.*

⁵³ U.S. Embassy, Habana, to Secretary of State, telegram 361, Jan. 27, 1953, file 811.411/1-2753, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ U.S. Embassy, Habana, to State Department, despatch 1171, Jan. 30, 1953, file 811.411/1-3053, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ For quotations from *Havana Mundo* and *Havana Herald*, see *ibid.*

Baker did not arrive in Cuba in time for her scheduled performances. She sent a wire from Rio de Janeiro requesting a later date. Instead, her performances were canceled. As Mestre put it, "We know that Josephine Baker has terrific drawing power, but we can't keep adjusting our business to her." According to an embassy officer, Baker's tardiness "may well have provided her Habana employers with just the legal loophole they needed to 'get out from under' a ticklish situation."⁵⁶

Baker showed up in Havana anyway. She gave a press conference on February 10 and blamed American influence for her contract cancellations. She claimed that Teatro América had canceled a scheduled performance because the theater was afraid of losing its American film franchise. According to the embassy, "failure to arrive at a financial understanding is closer to the truth." Baker had a history of financial disputes with her employers, and at times she tried to hold out for more money than had originally been agreed to; it is entirely possible that a disagreement over her pay was an element in the cancellation of her Teatro América contract. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the United States Embassy took steps to show its displeasure over the possibility that Baker might perform in Cuba. Consequently, it is most likely that any disagreement over finances, like Baker's tardiness, provided the theater with an excuse to avoid a politically uncomfortable situation.⁵⁷

Though Baker's other engagements in Havana had been canceled, an advertising agency scheduled a February 11 appearance for her on "Cabaret Regalias," a popular evening television show. The agency did not, however, seek approval from Goar Mestre, the president of the television station. When she arrived at the studio on February 11 for an afternoon rehearsal, Mestre threw her out and ordered his doorman to bar Baker from reentering the television studio. As the American Embassy reported it, "Adamant, Miss Baker, costume over her arm, stood outside the gate from 3:00 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. in an apparent effort to elicit sympathy." Mestre told the *Havana Herald* that Baker could stand there "'until hell freezes over' before he would permit her to perform." Mestre "would not permit Miss Baker or anyone else 'to order me around.'" He then "sent down a chair for her to sit down in and told her to make herself comfortable for she was in for a long wait if she thought she was going to be admitted into the building again." Meanwhile, the embassy reported, "'Cabaret Regalias' went on the air without her."⁵⁸

After much effort, Baker finally was able to arrange an appearance in Cuba. On February 16, Baker opened a one-week run at the Teatro Campoamor, described in an embassy despatch as "a down-at-the heels theater which last year was a burlesque house." The embassy reported that "there was no indication she . . . used the Campoamor stage for political purposes." Baker was warned not to. At 4:30 P.M. the day after her opening, Baker was taken into custody by the Cuban military police. They filed no charges against Baker, but they interrogated her for three hours about her

⁵⁶ For quotation from Goar Mestre and embassy commentary, see *ibid.*

⁵⁷ U.S. Embassy, Habana, to State Department, despatch 1257, Feb. 12, 1953, file 811.411/2-1253, *ibid.*; U.S. Embassy, Habana, to State Department, despatch 1171, Jan. 30, 1953, file 811.411/3053, *ibid.*

⁵⁸ U.S. Embassy, Habana, to State Department, despatch 1257, Feb. 12, 1953, file 811.411/2-1253, *ibid.*; "Josephine Baker Fails in Try to Force CMQ to Let Her Perform," *Havana Herald*, Feb. 12, 1953, "Josephine Baker," FBI File 62-95834.



“What an insult, as if I were a thief, as if I were a terrorist, as if I were going there to do something wrong!” exclaimed Josephine Baker to a Cuban police officer who was called to prevent her from entering the premises of CMQ-TV in Havana, where she was scheduled to perform.
Illustration from *Habana Noticias de Hoy*, February 13, 1953, 1.

political and social views. The military police reported that “the questioning was in response to a suggestion by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation that Miss Baker might be an active Communist.” Baker was photographed and fingerprinted. The military police asked her to sign a stenographic report of her interrogation, but she refused. Baker later wrote in an autobiography that the statement would have her admit to “being paid by Moscow and indulging in subversive activities.” When she was fingerprinted, “the word ‘Communist’ was marked beneath my picture.” Baker was warned to “stick to her art and refrain from any voicing of political views at the Campoamor.” She was released in time for her evening appearance.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ U.S. Embassy, Habana, to State Department, despatch 1303, Feb. 18, 1953, file 811.411/2-1853, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State; U.S. Embassy, Habana, to State Department, despatch 1312, Feb. 19, 1953, file 811.411/2-1953, *ibid.*; Baker and Bouillon, *Josephine*, 189.

Baker's visit to Cuba had far less artistic and political impact than she would have liked. After she left the country, the American Embassy in Cuba concluded that "Miss Baker's visit to Cuba must be considered of little value to her cause." The embassy also felt that Baker had done little harm. "All in all, Miss Baker's influence on Cuban Negroes may well be appraised as negligible. The Negro press ignored her, and Negro societies made no fuss over her." The embassy reported that a Cuban newspaper editor "explained to an Embassy officer that the attitude of the Cuban Negro toward the United States has changed radically in the last few years and that the Cuban Negro is now aware that real progress is being made in the United States toward the elimination of racial discrimination."⁶⁰

After her visit to Cuba, Baker planned to appear in Haiti. This created a more delicate problem for the State Department because Haiti was a black country. In anticipation of her visit, Maclair Zéphyrin, Haitian minister of the presidency and acting minister for foreign relations, telephoned the chargé d'affaires at the American Embassy to express the fear that Baker might use her visit to create trouble between the United States and Haiti, and he wanted to know the chargé's views on the subject. The chargé reportedly told Zéphyrin that "he did not see how he could restrict Miss Baker's freedom of speech nor how he could properly comment on the advisability of the visit." He added that Baker's "past statements indicated a friendliness to Communist goals but that he did not know whether she was or was not a Communist." The chargé admitted that some of the things Baker had said about race discrimination in the United States were accurate. He told Zéphyrin that Josephine Baker's visit was a problem the Haitian government would have to handle.⁶¹

Three days later, on January 27, Minister Zéphyrin showed the chargé a letter he had written, apparently to Baker's agent in New York. Zéphyrin reportedly wrote that Baker "was welcome to Haiti but should clearly understand that she was not to embarrass the Haitian Government by anti-American remarks which would disturb the excellent relations between the American and Haitian Governments." He also commented that "Haiti has its own racial problems and that it has been the policy of President Magloire to keep these problems in the background and that he would not appreciate it, should she bring them to the fore."⁶²

Reflecting on the issue, the embassy public affairs officer noted,

It can readily be understood that, were Miss Baker a white woman, the problem would not have arisen. Without doubt she would have been refused entry. However, since Miss Baker is a negro, the militant American negro, the negro press, and the anti-American and anti-white Haitians would protest, should Miss Baker be refused entry to this negro republic.⁶³

⁶⁰ U.S. Embassy, Habana, to State Department, despatch 1361, March 3, 1953, file 811.411/3-353, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State.

⁶¹ U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, to State Department, despatch 502, Feb. 3, 1953, file 811.411/2-353, *ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

The officer concluded that "in spite of the good intentions of the Haitian Government," the American Embassy could "expect unpleasant and embarrassing publicity which will tend to counteract much positive effort which has been made in the past by American officials in Haiti to better relationships." Even though the embassy was likely "to see many of its 'friends' brought under the spell of Miss Baker and considerable encouragement to Anti-Americanism, it does not appear possible for the Embassy to take a firm stand against her proposed visit."⁶⁴

Upon receiving this account of the situation in Haiti, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles contacted the embassy in Port-au-Prince with background information on Baker. The material contained information on Baker's change of citizenship and the fact that, according to Dulles, "her activities have been widely denounced by prominent negroes and by the negro press in the United States." Dulles said that the embassy was authorized to make the information available to the Haitian acting foreign minister. Ultimately, for whatever reason, Josephine Baker's trip to Haiti never happened.⁶⁵

Clearly frustrated in her efforts to appear in Latin America and the Caribbean, Baker would soon be unable to turn to the United States as an alternative market for her performances. In 1954, Baker returned to the United States to file a libel action against Walter Winchell. She was able to enter the country because, according to the FBI, there was "insufficient derogatory subversive information to use as a basis for her exclusion." Her prospects for future entrances to the United States were lessened, however. According to an FBI internal memorandum of December 10, 1954, the commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had taken "a personal interest in the case of Josephine Baker and has directed that INS obtain sufficient information with which to order her exclusion from the U.S." The INS requested that FBI files be reviewed to ensure that "all pertinent derogatory information" had been forwarded to the INS. J. Edgar Hoover then sent a one-page document to the INS commissioner regarding Baker, most of which was deleted by the FBI when supplied to the author under the Freedom of Information Act on the grounds that it contained "material which is properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy."⁶⁶

Whatever was in the document seems to have been enough. On January 21, 1955, the *New York Herald Tribune* reported that Josephine Baker was detained by the INS at a New York airport, where she had stopped en route from Paris to Mexico City. She was held for four hours before being allowed to depart. No explanation

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Dulles, State Department, to U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, airgram 1588, Feb. 17, 1953, file 811.411/2-353, *ibid.* There are no additional despatches concerning Josephine Baker and travel to Haiti in declassified State Department records from the 1950s, nor are there news stories in the Haitian press on any visit to Haiti in the 1950s. The Haitian press did report on Baker's experiences in Cuba; see *Port-au-Prince Matin*, Feb. 13, 1953, p. 4; and *ibid.*, Feb. 20, 1953, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Memo N. W. Philcox to R. R. Roach, Re: Josephine Baker, Dec. 10, 1954, "Josephine Baker," FBI File 62-95834; Memo Director, FBI, to Commissioner, INS, Re: Josephine Baker, Jan. 6, 1955, *ibid.* A sheet entitled "Explanation of Exemptions" was provided to Dudziak by the FBI along with Baker's FBI file. The relevant Freedom of Information Act exemption from full disclosure of the memo is 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b) (1).

was given for the INS action. While Baker's reaction to her exclusion is not reported, she had earlier stated, "If my entry into the United States is forbidden, for me this [will be] an honor because it will show that my work for humanity has been successful."⁶⁷

The INS action was probably not necessary to keep Baker from performing in the United States in the mid-1950s. Theater owners were unlikely to book such an "un-American" figure. Nevertheless, Baker's literal exclusion from the United States capped government efforts to exclude her from the discourse on American race relations. She would return to perform in the early 1960s and to participate in the 1963 March on Washington, then a tired and aging, though still very popular, performer. And although she expressed regret for some of her harsh criticism in earlier years, by 1963 Baker's voice no longer stood out amid the chorus of critics of American race discrimination.⁶⁸

Baker's detention by the INS brought government surveillance and harassment of the entertainer full circle. In 1951 the FBI had initiated its investigation after Baker publicly charged Walter Winchell with racism. The FBI could document no "subversive" acts on Baker's part and in fact had information that seemed to suggest that Baker may have been anticommunist. Nevertheless, the bureau passed on the derogatory information it had to the State Department, which in turn sent it on to the American embassies. Embassy staff members then engaged in behind-the-scenes negotiations to interfere with Baker's ability to speak out against race discrimination. The INS, in turn, restricted Baker's ability to travel freely, signaling to the world that she was considered to be too dangerous to tolerate. It is surely a mark of the government's sensitivity to charges of race discrimination and its concern about the impact of negative attention to American racial problems on foreign relations that the FBI, the State Department, and the INS felt they needed to spend so much time and effort to keep one woman from speaking out.

Josephine Baker was of course not alone in being harassed by the Cold War-conscious State Department. Perhaps the most prominent target of Cold War travel restrictions was Paul Robeson. Robeson's troubles began not long after a speech he delivered at the Congress of World Partisans for Peace in Paris in 1949. He reportedly said that United States government policy was "similar to that of Hitler and Goebbels" and that it was "unthinkable" that African Americans would go to war against the Soviet Union. According to Martin Duberman, Robeson's statements were misquoted. Still, Robeson was widely denounced in the American press and by African-American leaders. Rioting at a Robeson concert in Peekskill, New York, was widely covered in the international media. Though the rioters included Ku Klux

⁶⁷ *New York Herald Tribune* report in teletype message to FBI, Jan. 28, 1955, "Josephine Baker," FBI File 62-95834. U.S. Embassy, Buenos Aires, to State Department, despatch 567, Nov. 6, 1952, file 811.411/11-652, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State.

⁶⁸ As Ellen Schrecker has suggested, there were two steps to blacklisting; first the government identified individuals as subversive, and then private employers (in this case theater owners) made decisions against hiring them: Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York, 1986), 9. Baker and Chase, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart*, 368-76.

Klan members, Robeson was blamed for this international embarrassment because his friendliness toward the Soviet Union was perceived to have caused the disturbance.⁶⁹

Robeson continued to speak out. In 1950 he criticized President Harry S. Truman's decision to send troops to Korea, arguing that "if we don't stop our armed adventure in Korea today—tomorrow it will be Africa." At this point, the State Department and the FBI took action. The State Department issued a "stop notice" at all ports to prevent Robeson from leaving the country. J. Edgar Hoover sent out an urgent call to FBI agents to find Robeson. Robeson was asked to surrender his passport, but he refused, leading the State Department to inform the Immigration and Naturalization Service that Robeson's passport was invalid and that he should not be allowed to leave the country. State Department officials indicated that the reason for their action was that "Robeson's travel abroad at this time would be contrary to the best interests of the United States." His "frequent criticism of the treatment of blacks in the United States should not be aired in foreign countries," they explained. "It was a family affair."⁷⁰

The State Department also barred Robeson from entering Canada, where a passport was not required, leading Robeson to host a concert at the Peace Arch at the Canadian border. While well attended by Canadians, this concert and others failed to draw the American crowds expected, and blacklisting seriously interfered with Robeson's ability to perform and to earn a living within the United States for many years. His international popularity meant that he was always a big draw abroad, but without a passport Robeson was exiled by his own country from his international audience.⁷¹

Other civil rights activists, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, also had their passports revoked. William Patterson of the Civil Rights Congress had his passport confiscated upon returning to the United States from Geneva where he had attempted to bring the congress's petition about American racism, "We Charge Genocide," before the United Nations. Restrictions on Robeson, Du Bois, Patterson, and other civil rights activists can be seen as part of a broader pattern of suppression of the Left during the Cold War.⁷²

But what of Josephine Baker? Hardly a radical, she so retreated from support for progressive groups that even *Counterattack* could praise her. In earlier years, although she would later deny it, she called upon African Americans to support Mussolini in his invasion of Ethiopia.⁷³ And then there was Perón. Josephine Baker does not fit neatly into the paradigm of suppression of the Left during the Cold War. Although it seems that any critic of the United States government was summarily

⁶⁹ W. James Ellison, "Paul Robeson and the State Department," *Crisis*, 84 (May 1977), 185; Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 341–50, 364–72.

⁷⁰ Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 388–89; Alan Rogers, "Passports and Politics: The Courts and the Cold War," *Historian*, 47 (Aug. 1985), 499–502; Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand* (New York, 1958), 71–81.

⁷¹ Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 398–403.

⁷² Horne, *Black and Red*, 212–21; Patterson, *Man Who Cried Genocide*; Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945–1983* (Jackson, 1984), 12–41.

⁷³ Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 258; Baker and Chase, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart*, 190.

categorized as a radical in the context of Cold War politics, there was another dimension to Baker's challenge. And unpacking the reasons that Baker was viewed as threatening may help to explain more fully the travel restrictions placed on others.

During the early Cold War years, the United States government perceived American race relations as a major stumbling block in foreign relations. The Soviet Union's success at exploiting the issue heightened State Department anxieties. In nonwhite nations in particular, the perception of the United States was heavily influenced by concern about American race relations. So prominent was this issue in United States relations with Asian countries that Chester Bowles, American ambassador to India, remarked, "I can think of no single thing that would be more helpful to us in Asia than the achievement of racial harmony in America."⁷⁴

Faced with widespread negative international reporting on race discrimination in the United States, the USIS attempted to project a counterimage through propaganda efforts such as *The Negro in American Life*, a booklet describing American racial progress. Translated into several languages and disseminated over the world in the 1950s, *The Negro in American Life* showed pictures of African-American leaders, racially integrated workplaces and housing projects, and African-American and white students learning together from an African-American teacher. The message of the booklet was that the gradual process of democracy was the key to liberation for persons of color at home and throughout the world. These ideas were reinforced through speeches given by many carefully screened African Americans who participated in State Department-sponsored speaking tours.⁷⁵

Many felt that these efforts paid off. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas thought that a speech by African-American attorney Edith Sampson "created more good will and understanding in India than any other single act by any American." Speaking in New Delhi in 1949, Sampson told her audience that she would not tolerate criticism of the United States for its civil rights record because, in the previous eighty years, African Americans had advanced further "than any similar group in the entire world." Carl Rowan was told in the fall of 1954 that he would not be bombarded with the usual questions about American race relations while

⁷⁴ Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," 80–117. Chester Bowles, "Racial Harmony—How Much Does It Matter in World Affairs?," 1952, folder 540, box 115, series II, Chester Bowles Papers (Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn.). See also Chester Bowles, *Ambassador's Report* (New York, 1954), 31, 216–17, 395–96.

⁷⁵ *The Negro in American Life*, folder 503, box 112, series II, Bowles Papers; Mary L. Dudziak, "'The Negro in American Life': The Construction of Race Relations in Postwar American Propaganda," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Anaheim, Calif., April 1993 (in Dudziak's possession). The undated 33-page pamphlet, published by USIS, appears to have been published in 1950 or 1951. It relies on 1950 census data and discusses Supreme Court cases decided in 1950 but not later. USIA records show the first printing date for one of the many translations as Dec. 15, 1951. Enclosure in Lola L. Secora to Senator Tom Harkin, July 14, 1992 (letter regarding FOIA case #92-283F) (on file with Dudziak). I am grateful to Sen. Tom Harkin's staff for help with this matter. On international press coverage of civil rights in the United States, see Richard Lentz and Pamela Brown, "'The Business of Great Nations': International Coverage, Foreign Public Opinion, and the Modern American Civil Rights Movement," paper presented at the Western Journalism Historians conference, Berkeley, Calif., Feb. 1992 (in Dudziak's possession). Although speakers were told that they could say whatever they liked, the department's screening process ensured that individuals who would criticize the United States abroad were not asked to go: see Mary L. Dudziak, "Cold War Civil Rights: The Relationship between Civil Rights and Foreign Affairs in the Truman Administration" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1992), 136–43.

traveling in India because the embassy had spread the word about *Brown v. Board of Education*.⁷⁶

Louis Armstrong was one of many African Americans tapped by the State Department for travel abroad. For Armstrong, it was his cancellation of a State Department-sponsored trip to the Soviet Union that led to angry public reaction and to government concern. During the crisis over the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the fall of 1957, Armstrong said that "the way they are treating my people in the South, the government can go to hell." Were he to go to the Soviet Union, "The people over there ask me what's wrong with my country, what am I supposed to say?" Armstrong later added, "The Government could go to the devil with its plans for a propaganda tour of Soviet Russia." Many harshly criticized Armstrong's angry words. In Armstrong's FBI file for that year was an anonymous letter stating, "Louis 'Satcho' [*sic*] Armstrong is a communist, why does State Dept. give him a passport?" While Armstrong's passport was not seized, the FBI recorded the episode and continued to collect information on his activities.⁷⁷

In the eyes of the federal government, Armstrong, like Baker, spoke out of turn under the etiquette of Cold War race politics. Domestic problems were to be shielded from outside ears. And the discourse on civil rights was bounded by the terms of Cold War liberalism. Some level of liberal activism would be tolerated, but only if articulated in a way that did not challenge the democratic order. Armstrong's offense was that he seemed unwilling to defend the nation against Communist critics. Patriots were supposed to close ranks.

Outside the borders of the United States, other African Americans found themselves under surveillance. After moving to France, Richard Wright formed an organization concerned with racism in Paris that would examine the hiring practices of American businesses based abroad. Its meetings were infiltrated, and reports on Wright's activities were placed in his FBI file. FBI interest in James Baldwin, also living in Paris, was heightened when he considered writing a book about the FBI.⁷⁸

Acceptable activists included such people as NAACP executive secretary Walter White. After White had traveled on behalf of the government to settle disputes involving African-American soldiers during World War II, and after the NAACP had passed a resolution excluding Communists from its membership, White had earned the credentials to criticize, within the walls of the White House, racial violence and segregation. When sent abroad, however, he would emphasize racial progress in the United States and argue that persons of color had nothing to gain from communism.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ William O. Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People* (New York, 1951), 296; Carl T. Rowan, *The Pitiful and the Proud* (New York, 1956), 19.

⁷⁷ Among Louis Armstrong's critics was Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., who, according to Lucille Armstrong, "later got on the bandwagon when it was safe." Gary Giddings, *Satchmo* (New York, 1988), 160-65, esp. 163, 164; Hugues Panassie, *Louis Armstrong* (New York, 1971), 34-36, esp. 35.

⁷⁸ James Campbell, "Black Boys and the FBI," *Times Literary Supplement*, Nov. 30-Dec. 6, 1990, pp. 1290-91; O'Reilly, *Black Americans*, ed. Gallen, 78-79.

⁷⁹ Walter White, *A Man Called White* (New York, 1948), 242-61, 271-93; Walter White, *How Far the Promised Land?* (New York, 1956), 3-28; Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, *Quest and Response: Minority Rights in the Truman Administration* (Lawrence, 1973), 261-64; O'Reilly, *Black Americans*, ed. Gallen, 17-24.

Relying on White, Ralph Bunche, Edith Sampson, and many others, the State Department put a lot of energy and resources into trying to shore up the image abroad of American race relations. Josephine Baker threw a wrench into this scheme. Instead of talking about progress, she talked about lynching. Instead of describing expanding employment opportunities, she described segregation. While the State Department tried to frame the debate as one about the nature of change within a democratic order, Baker and others argued that race discrimination called into question the nature of American democracy itself. At a time when world politics were seen as divided between the “free world” and Communist nations, between liberty and tyranny, critics of American democracy were seen as aiding a vicious enemy. From the State Department’s perspective, the stakes were too high to tolerate dissent.

The restrictions on Josephine Baker’s ability to travel and to perform did more than harm her career as an entertainer; they denied her the role she sought for herself as a personal ambassador for equality, furthering equal rights by winning the hearts of nations and their leaders. When Baker returned to France, she turned her focus on racial harmony inward. She sought to create at home the equality she hoped to see among the world’s peoples. In 1954, Baker and Bouillon began adopting children of various races and religions. The “Rainbow Tribe,” as she called them, grew to twelve children. Baker hoped that her family would demonstrate that people of different races and religions could live in harmony.⁸⁰

Although the FBI ultimately concluded that Josephine Baker was not “procommunist,” but “pro-Negro,” bureau officials continued to pass derogatory information about her to the State Department and other sources for several years. She would ultimately be able to perform again in the United States and Latin America after adopting a more conciliatory posture toward the United States government. The restrictions placed upon her during the 1950s, however, had a lasting impact on her life.⁸¹ Josephine Baker’s relative poverty in her later years was clearly attributable to poor financial management and her pursuit of expensive dreams such as the Rainbow Tribe. Still, following World War II she was a superstar with international appeal. Once she began criticizing American race relations, she lost valuable markets for her performances—both in the United States and, owing to the efforts of the embassies, in other countries sensitive to American influence.

Josephine Baker’s ultimate embrace of domesticity as the locus of her politics in the late 1950s seems oddly consistent with the pre-*Feminine Mystique* status of women in the United States. While American women were forced out of the factories and encouraged into the maternity wards in the postwar years, Baker was ultimately blacklisted out of the international entertainment circuit. Without a public platform for her call for equality, she sought to promote racial justice through her own vision of motherhood. And just as the federal government had a hand in con-

⁸⁰ Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra*, 231–38; Haney, *Naked at the Feast*, 269–80; Baker and Bouillon, *Josephine*, 190–203.

⁸¹ Memo, G. H. Scatterday to A. H. Belmont, Re: Josephine Baker, 10 Feb. 1960, “Josephine Baker,” FBI File 62-95834. American Consulate, Bordeaux, to State Department, Aug. 4, 1958, despatch 811.411/8-458 HBS, Department of State Decimal File, Records of the Department of State.

structing the postwar culture of domesticity, it played a not-too-subtle role in ushering Baker off the stage.⁸²

While "containment" of women in the home seemed an important Cold War value, as Elaine Tyler May has argued, "containment" of Josephine Baker within French borders, where she would no longer be a threat to the image of American democracy, was seen as a national security imperative. By the mid-1950s the government made some progress in ameliorating international criticism. The message of *Brown v. Board of Education*, that racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional, was the top priority of Voice of America programming for several days in May 1954. Even as massive resistance forces began to organize in the American South, American Embassy personnel reported that *Brown* had softened criticism in India.⁸³ Through limited social change, advertised through American propaganda, there was a possibility of bolstering American prestige and credibility. Silencing Josephine Baker was simply a part of the propaganda campaign. Excluding her voice would make it easier to maintain a carefully crafted image of American democracy. And the image of race in the United States was no small matter. In the words of Ambassador Chester Bowles, its importance to the Cold War was "impossible to exaggerate."⁸⁴ In the face of the war between the superpowers, Josephine Baker's international crusade for racial harmony would have to wait.

⁸² Carolyn Jones, "Split Incomes and Separate Spheres: Tax Law and Gender Roles in the 1940s," *Law and History Review*, 6 (1988), 259. See Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York, 1963).

⁸³ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, 1988), 16-134. *New York Times*, May 18, 1954, p. 1; Rowan, *Pitiful and the Proud*, 19.

⁸⁴ Bowles, *Ambassador's Report*, 396. See also Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*.

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