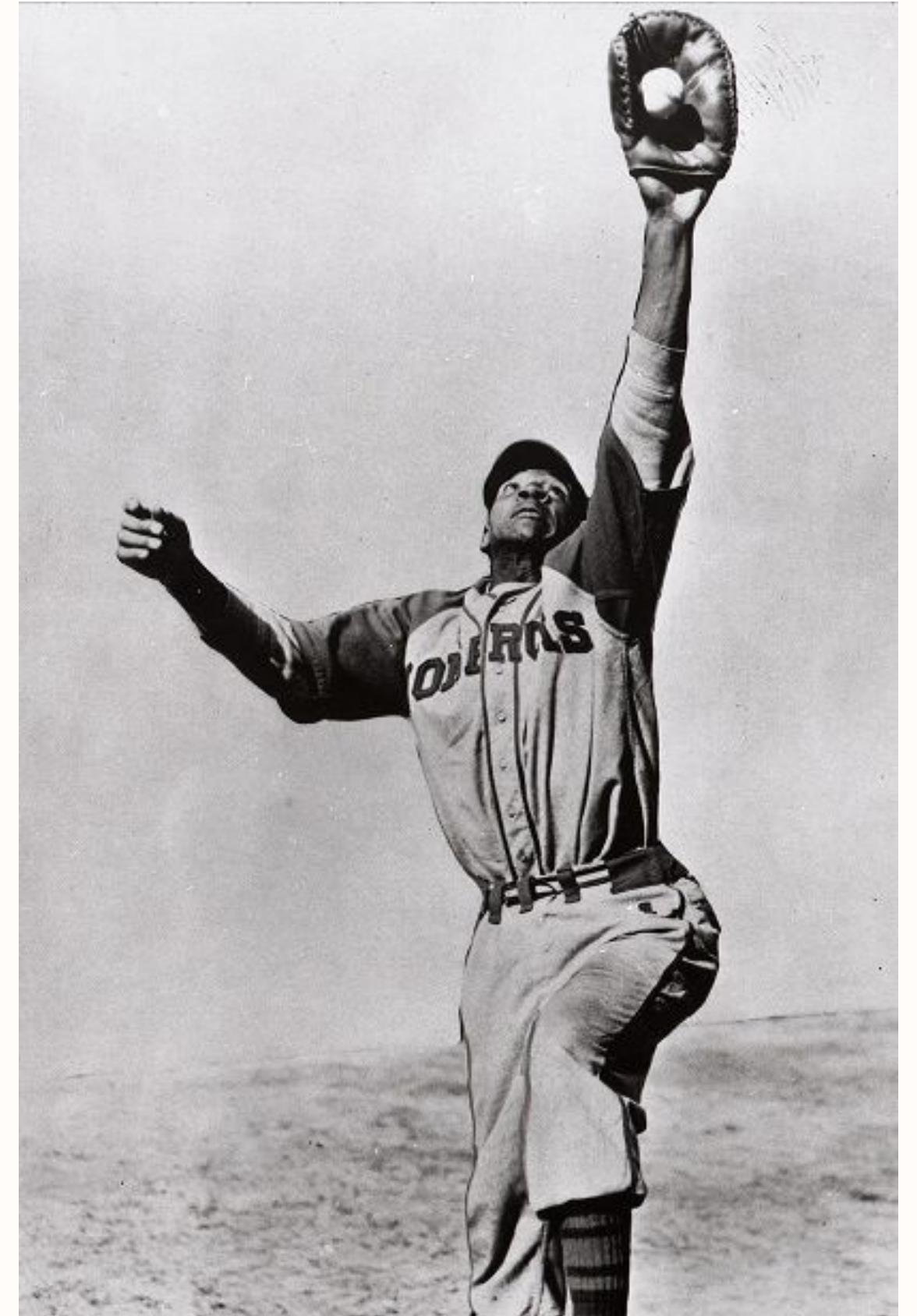


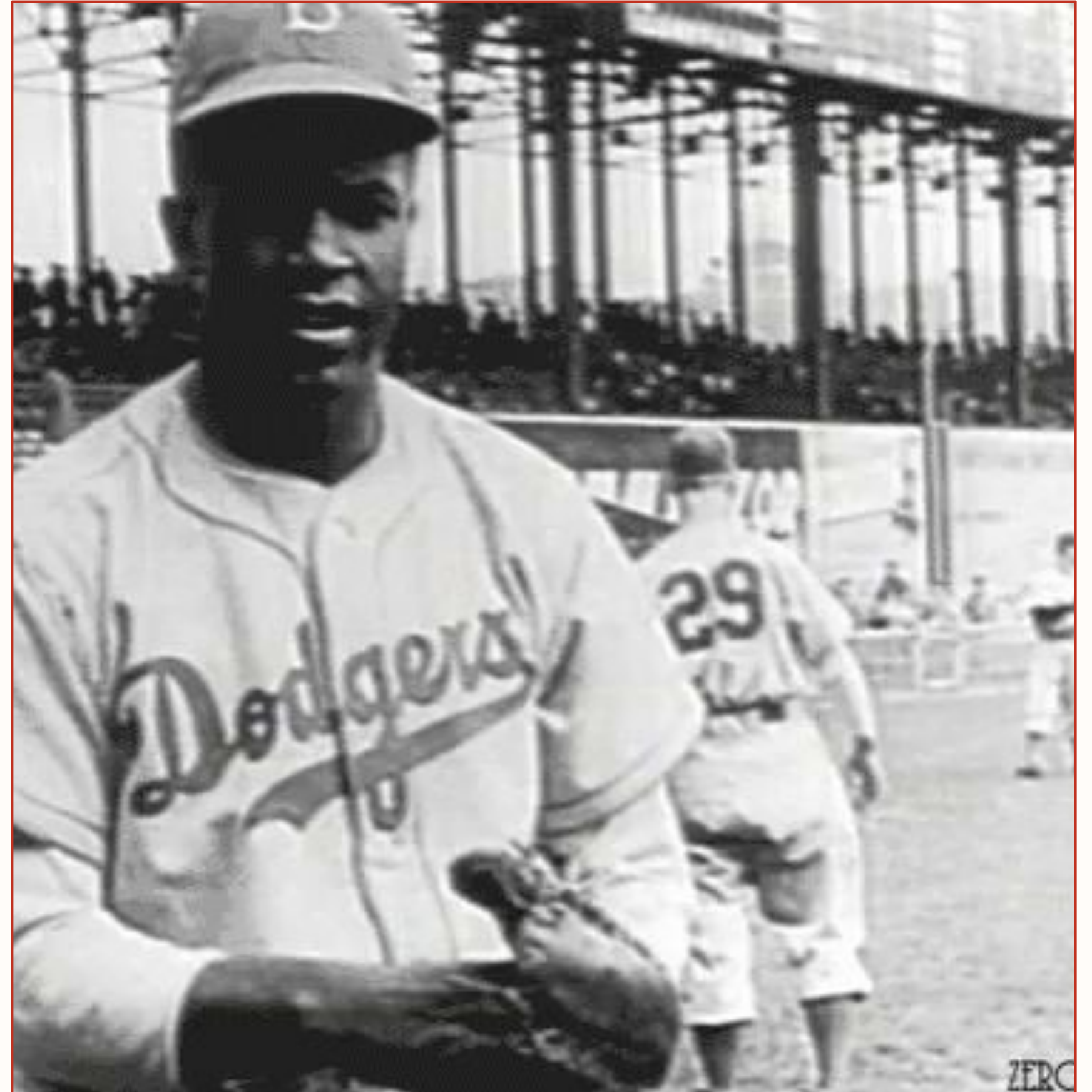
Connecting Kings and Pawns to The Negro Leagues: The Dilemma of Myopia

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SMC303 Presentation X
3/31/26



Presentation Agenda

1. *Forty Million Dollar Slaves*, Ch. 4
 - a. Rube Foster and his vision
 - b. National Negro League (NNL)
 - c. The fall of Foster
2. *Kings and Pawns*, Ch. 1-3
 - a. Harlem Renaissance
 - b. Intro to Robinson + Robeson
 - c. Who is a King and who is a Pawn?
 - d. Role of the US Government
3. Connection of material
 - a. Black figures gain visibility but..
 - b. Black success does not equal black power
 - c. Alienation + False Consciousness



Rube Foster

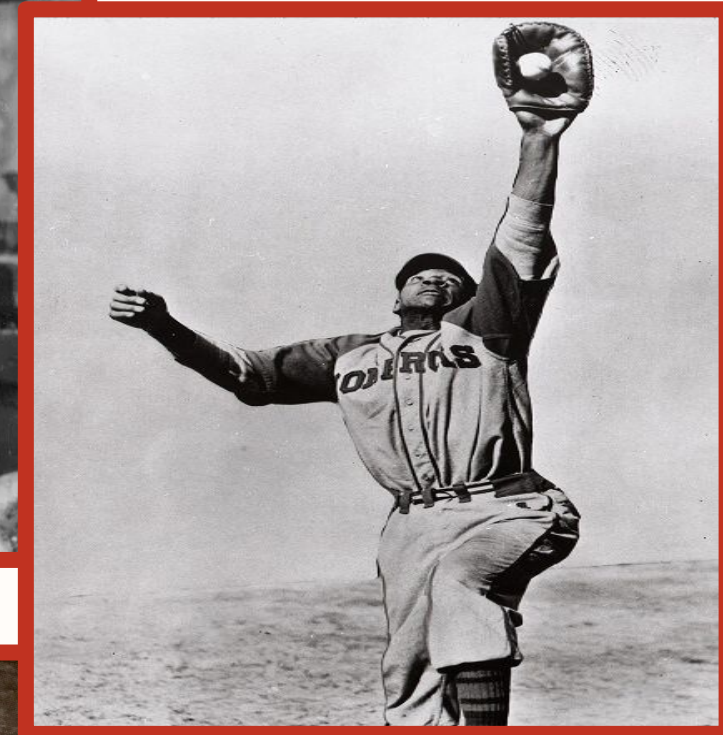


Core Pillars of Foster's Vision

- Complete control for African Americans
- Preserve Leverage for African Americans
- Preservation of Institutions

The National Negro League

- League was founded by Rube Foster in 1920
- The premise of the league was meant to be designed, and operated for the best interest of African Americans. =Both players, managers and fans
- It was a major part of social culture within the African American community at the time. A social gathering, place to relax.
- Something African Americans everywhere could TAKE PRIDE IN.
- The league attempted to nationalize African American Talent, to bring their talent across the nation to gain power socially.



The Fall of Foster

His Breaking Point

In 1926, Foster met with the American League president Ben Johnson and Giants Manager John McGraw to discuss a possible merger for the NNL.

The Idea was immediately shot down, which was a blow to Foster's Mental Health

The Consequences

Foster had spent the previous years of his life building up the NNL with everything he had. This was the end of his race.

On December 12th, 1926, Foster suffered a violent mental breakdown in his apartment in Chicago.

He was declared mentally incompetent and was sent to an asylum

The Final Blow

There were many opportunities for Foster to be released, but his wife Sarah refused to sign him out. She didn't believe he was ready.

December 12th, 1930, Foster passed away at the age of 51.

He gave his life to a league, that due to the climate of the world he lived in. Would have never given him the satisfaction he deserved.

What is the Harlem Renaissance?

- Late 1910s - Mid 1930s
- Characterized by the blooming of African-American culture
- Assertion of pride through art
- Militant desire for social and political equality

Who are some key figures of the Harlem Renaissance?



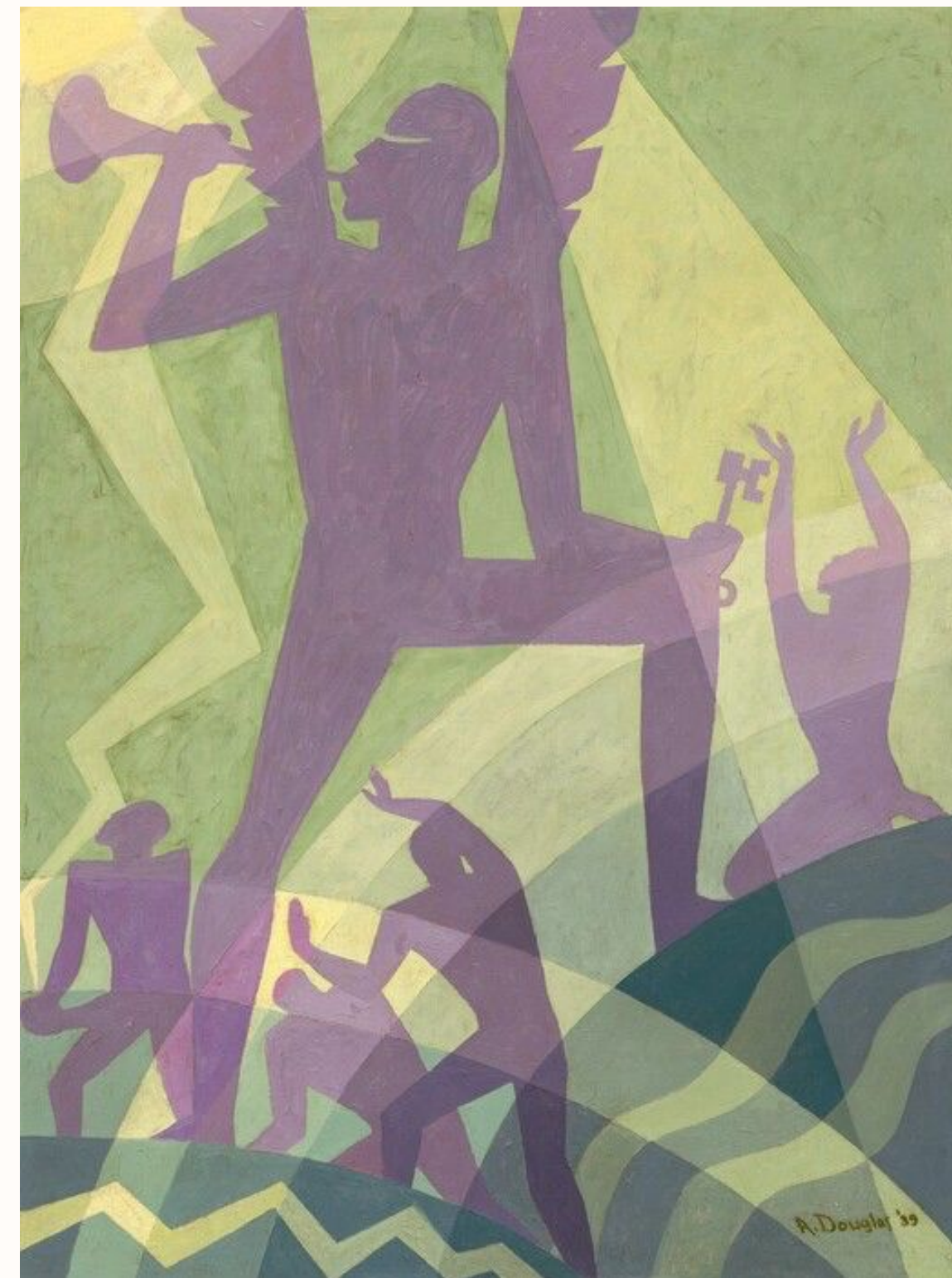
Louis Armstrong



Bessie Smith



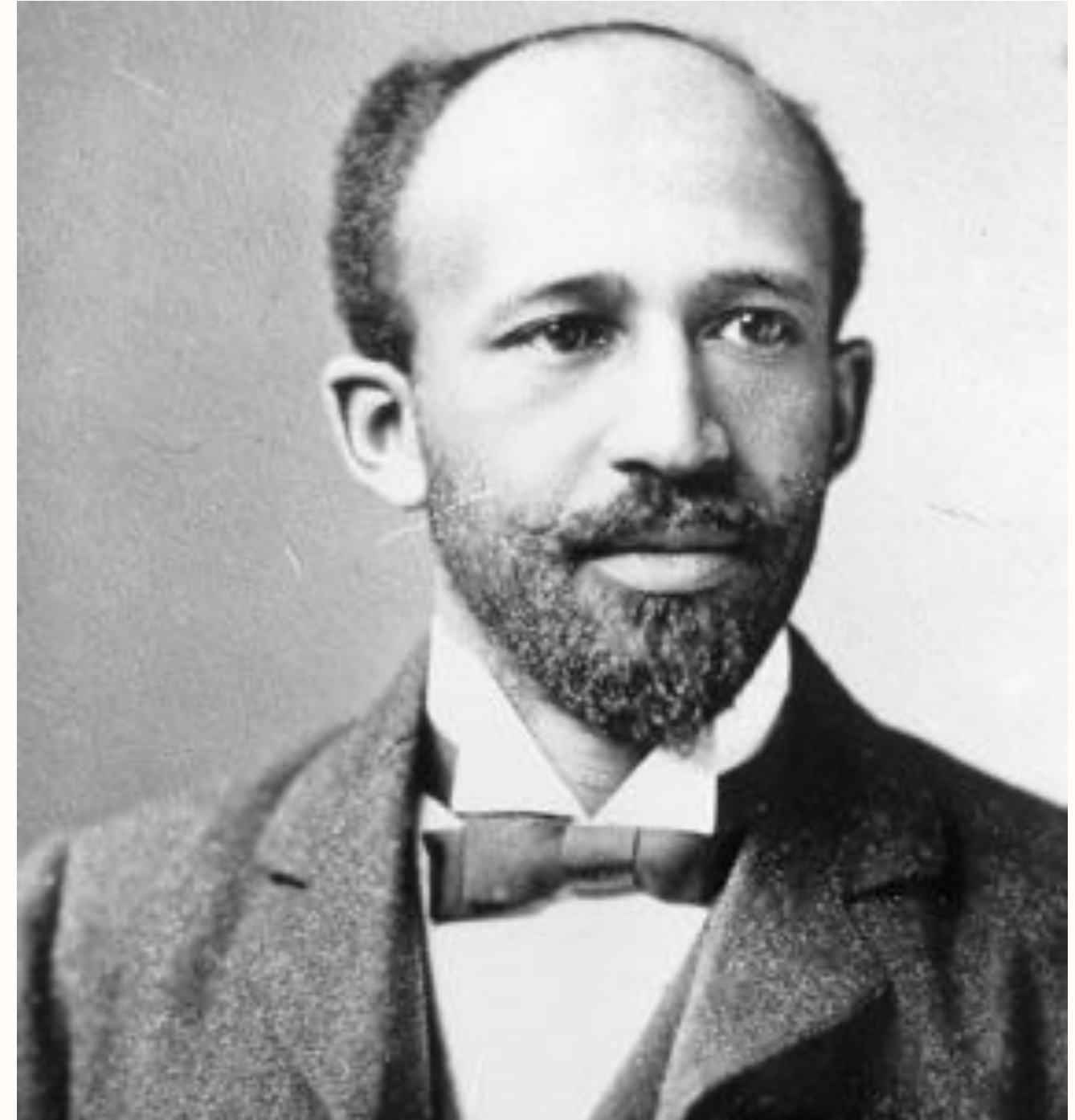
Aaron Douglas



Marcus Garvey

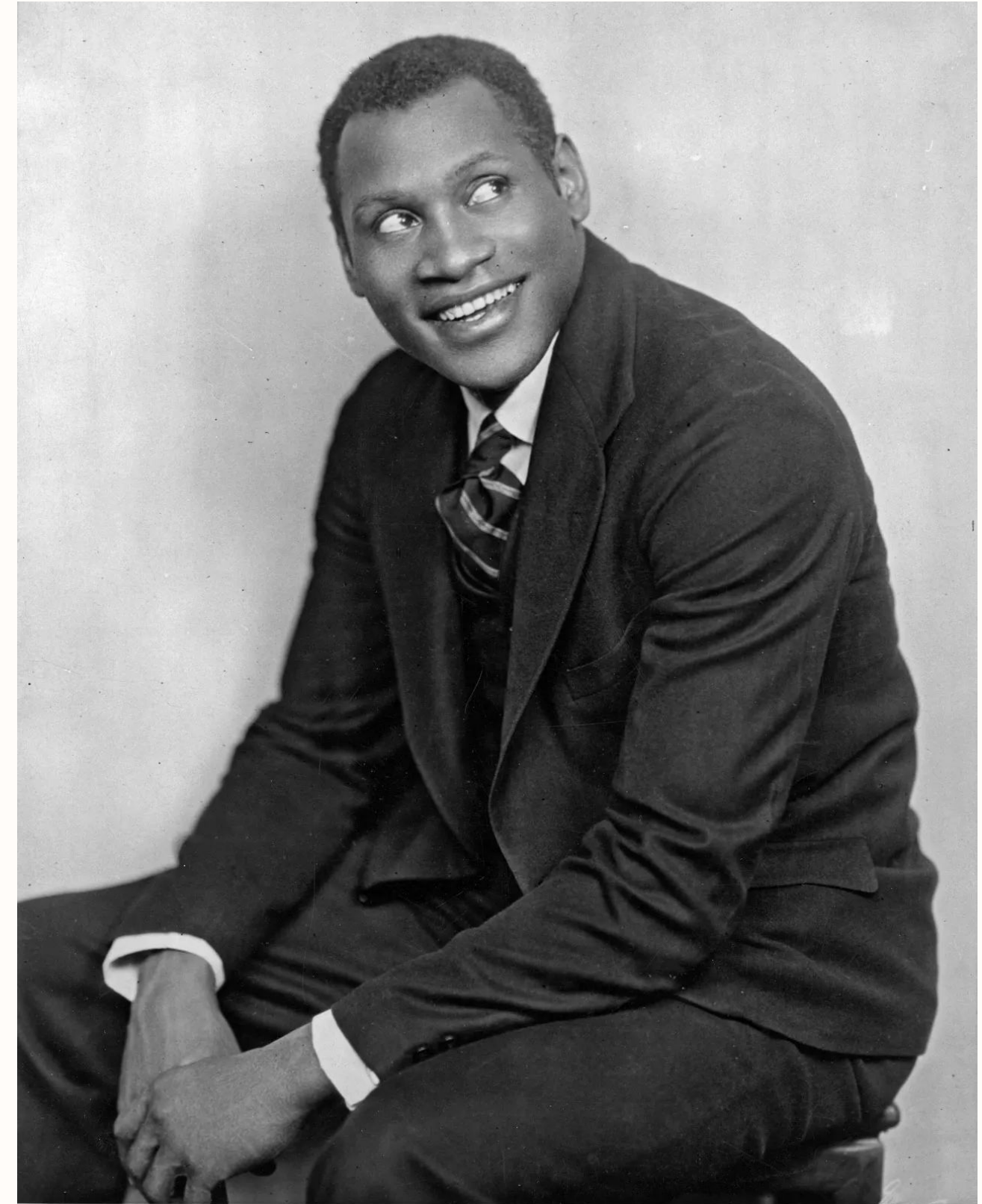


W.E.B. Dubois



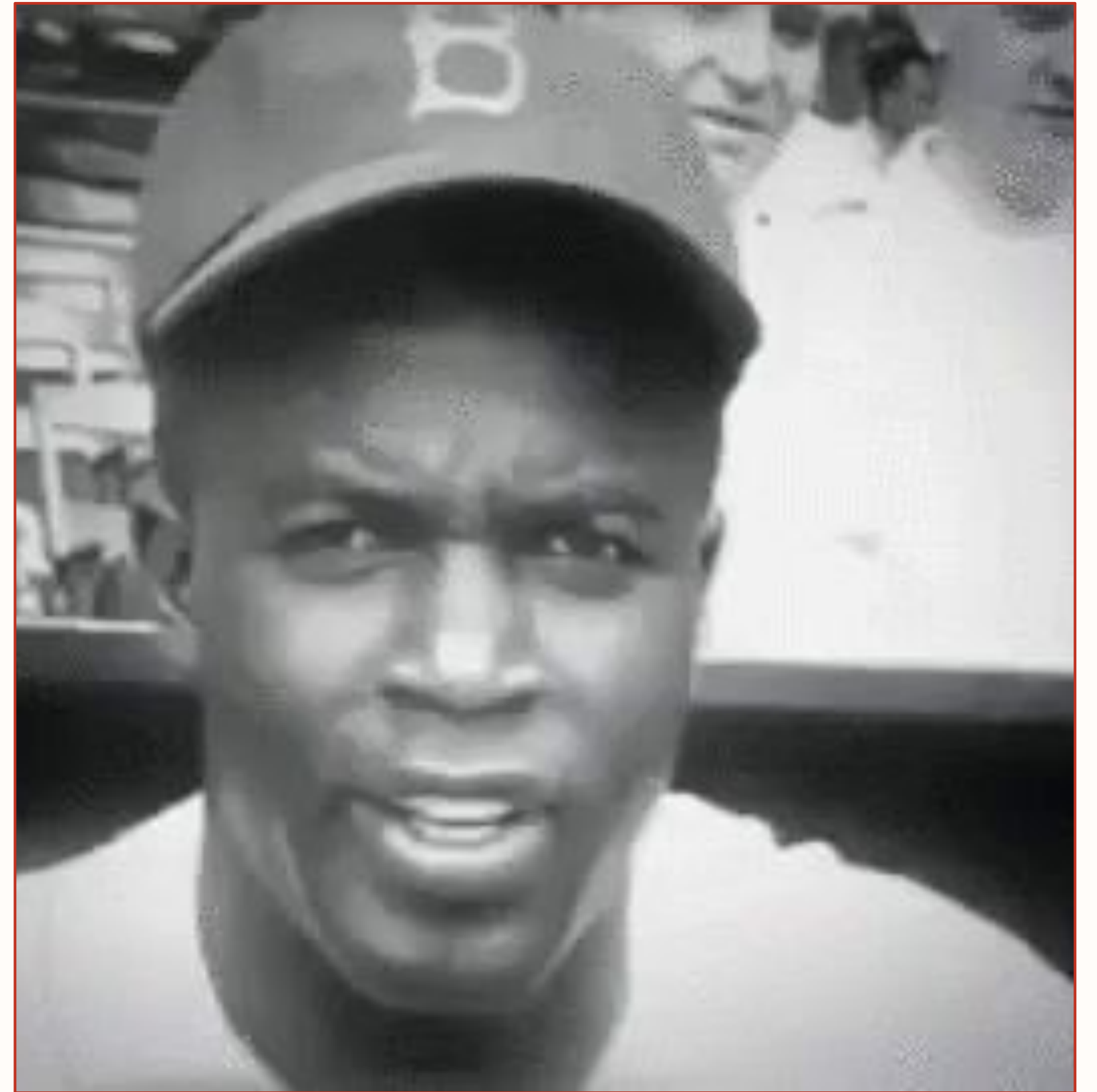
Intro to Paul Robeson

- **Born in New Jersey, 1898**
- **Coveted student-athlete, playing football for Rutgers University**
- **Became global celebrity for his theater acting**
- **Key figure in the Harlem Renaissance**
- **Civil rights and anti-fascist activist**
- **Principle over career**



Intro to Jackie Robinson

- **First black player integrated into the Major League Baseball, historical great**
- **Works fittingly in the American system that was/is present**
- **Symbol of progress & the American Dream**
- **Publicly opposed Robeson in a court of law**
- **A product + a tool for capitalism**



Who is the King? Who is the pawn?



- Kings have power and influence, are protected
- Pawns are a small piece of a larger system, a sacrifice
- Ultimately pieces on a chessboard
- Howard Bryant leaves this to ambiguity



What is the role of the US Government?

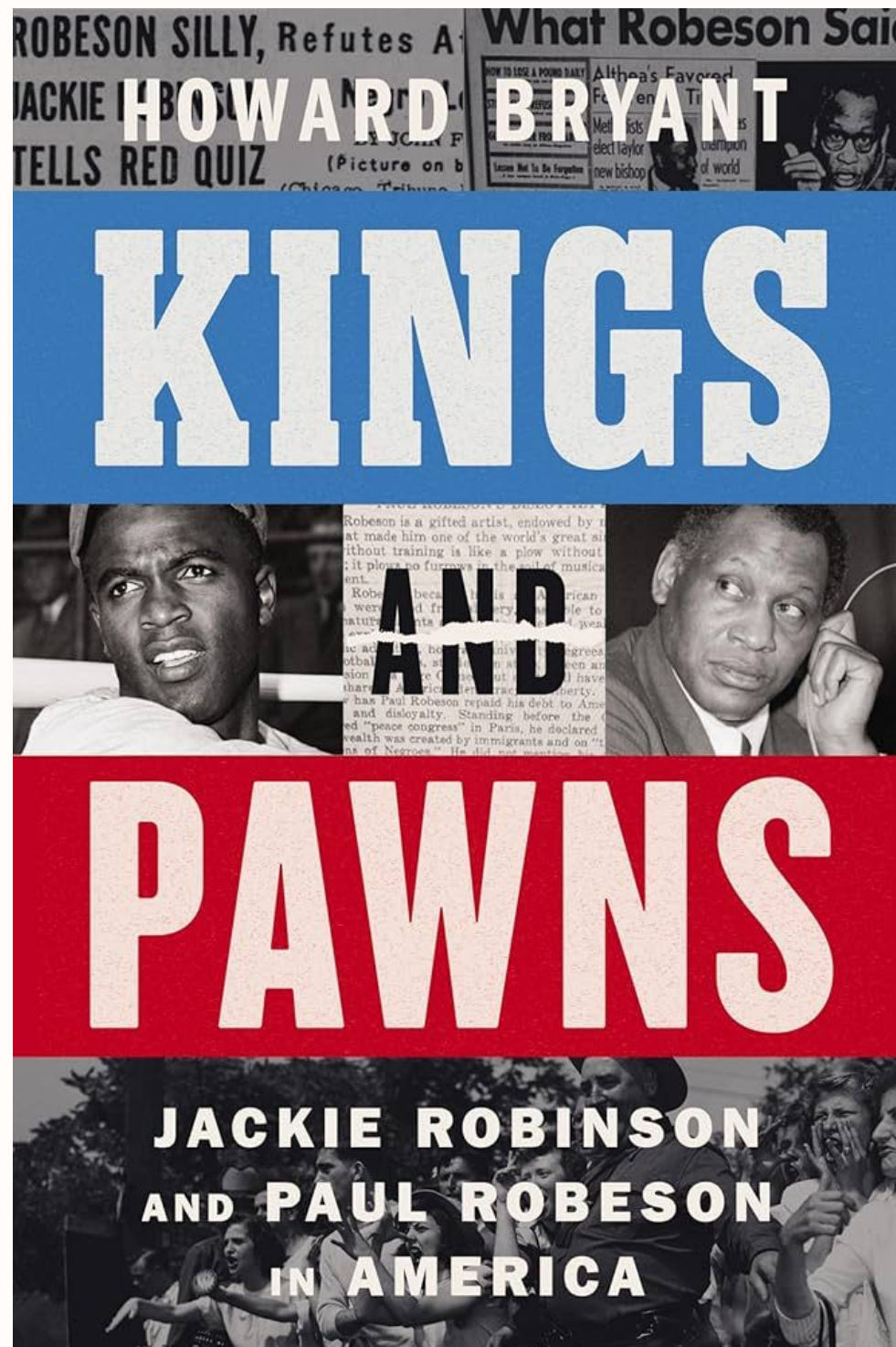
- Robeson + Robinson are not natural enemies
 - Pitted against each other
- Cold War pressure
 - Must remain unified
 - Must remain patriotic
- Robeson = targeted
- Robinson = used as positive example



Indra

Making the connection

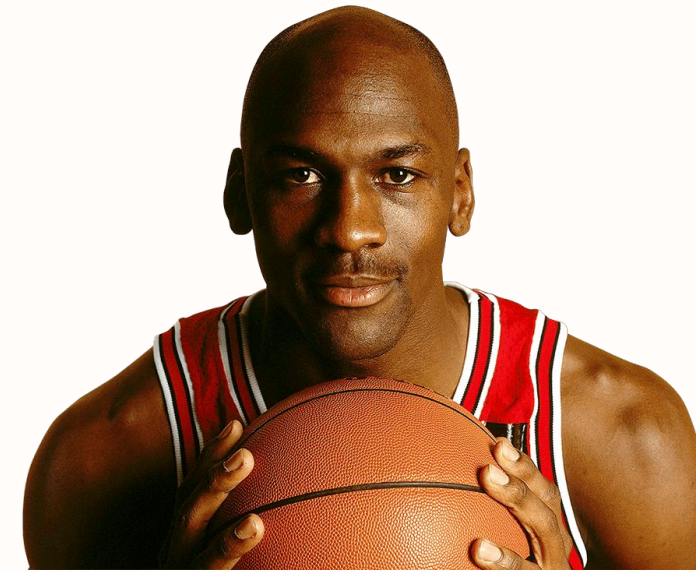
- Black leaders are often pitted against one another
- A byproduct of media and politics
- Controlled by institutions
- Black success \neq Black power ->

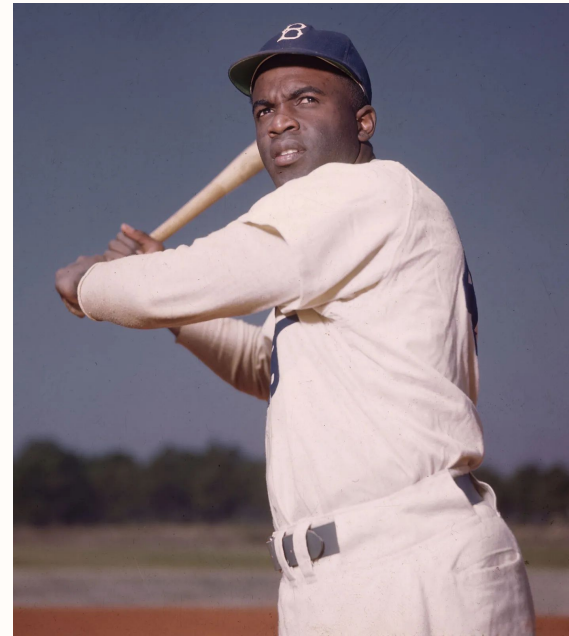


Jackson

Black success \neq Black power

- Financial or career success does not equate to power
- Influence can only go so far
- Visibility does not grant decision-making
- Rube Foster (owner, manager, and founder) was a representation of real power





Indra

- **Robeson (perceived as communist and threat) = Isolated, silenced, blacklisted**
- **Robinson (perceived as ideal American/product of American dream) = Pressured, separated from his community**

- **Built a league with visibility and control**
- **After integration (framed as progress), visibility increases but control halts**
 - **Black players leave black teams**
 - **Forego connection to black-controlled spaces**
 - **Operating in systems that do not represent them**

Formal Conclusion / Connection

