

## W.E.B. Du Bois: A Recorded Autobiography, 1961

**W.E.B. Du Bois:** I found that this Negro, Sam Hose, had been caught and lynched and that in the meat market, which was on the way I had to pass, his fingers and toes were being exhibited. Well, I didn't deliver the letter. I went back to Atlanta University. And then I made up my mind that knowledge wasn't enough. That even if people were ignorant of essential matters which they had to know, they wouldn't correct their actions without more realization of just what the difficulties were. They had not only to know, but they had to act.

And so I changed from studying the Negro problem to propaganda, to letting people know just what the Negro problem meant in what the colored people were suffering and what they were kept from doing. I was practically compelled to make this change because the people who were supporting Atlanta University were a little uneasy about the way in which I talked about the Negro problem, and pressure began to be put upon the university to do without my services. I had begun to criticize Booker Washington, saying it wasn't enough to teach Negroes trades. The Negroes had to have some voice in their government, they had to have protection in the courts, and they had to have trained men to lead them.

Well, all this together put such pressure upon Atlanta University that at last I resigned. I mean they would have had to drop me if they wanted to keep the philanthropic gifts that were coming from the rich people of the North. So I accepted an invitation to come to New York in 1910 and helped the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I had attended their conference in 1909. I became one of the incorporators and founders of the association. I came up in 1910 and was slated to be secretary of the organization, but I didn't want to be secretary because a secretary raises money, and I couldn't raise money. What I wanted to do was to write and to talk.