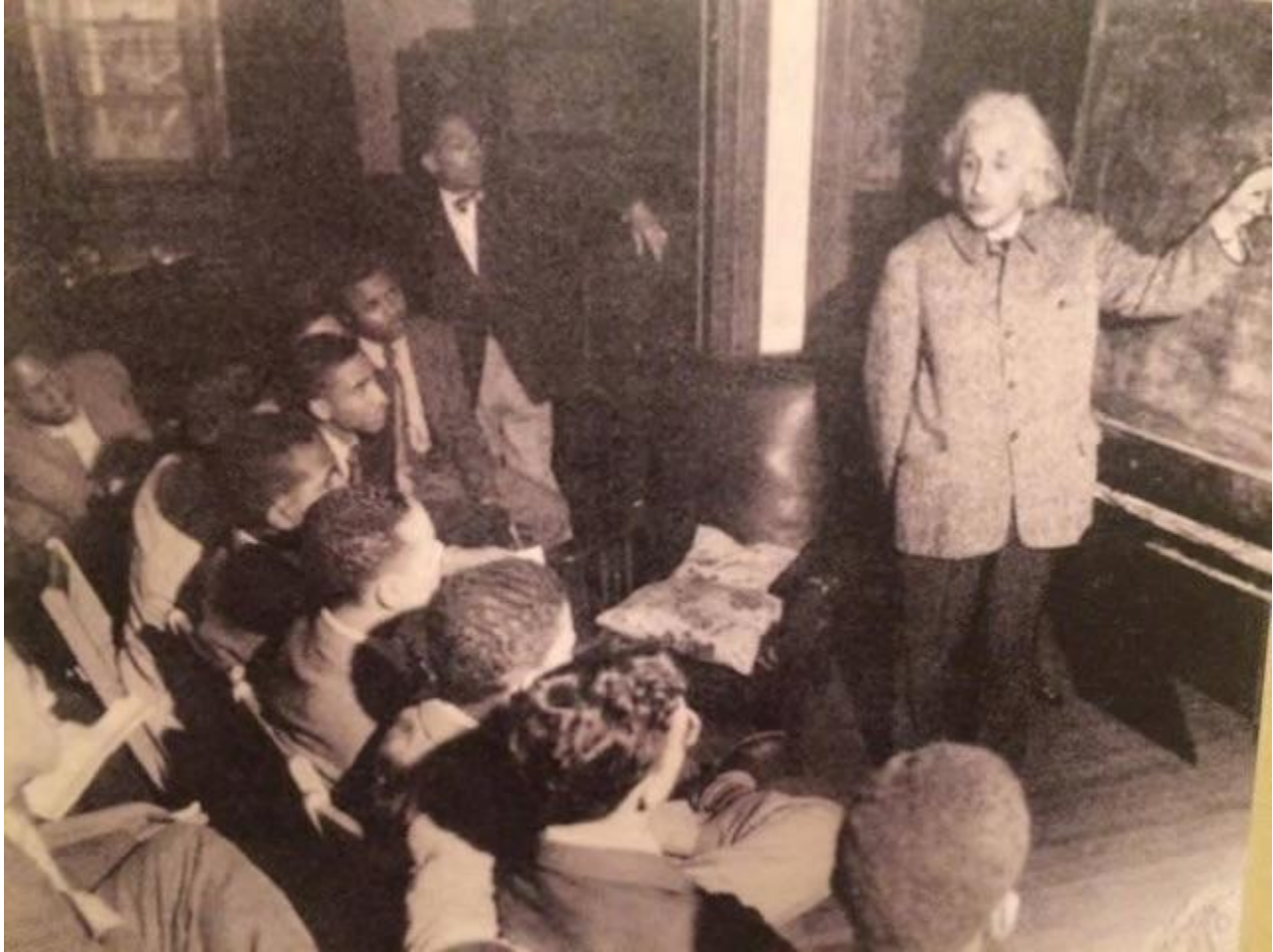


Albert Einstein — Advocate for Racial Justice



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Albert Einstein came to the United States in 1933 and became a U.S. citizen in 1940, after fleeing Nazi persecution. In his new home, he became a visible and outspoken supporter of African American civil rights—backing the cause in public, behind the scenes, and through groups and campaigns.

Writings and public statements

In 1946, Einstein published an essay called “The Negro Question,” where he called racism in the U.S. a “deeply entrenched evil.” He argued that the American promise of equality mostly applied to “men of white skins,” and he said he couldn’t accept staying silent while that reality persisted.

That same year, at Lincoln University (a historically Black college), he received an honorary degree and lectured on relativity. He later made a statement that many people still quote today: racism, he said, was “a disease of white people,” and he added, “I do not intend to be quiet about it.”

Mainstream newspapers barely covered his visit—most of the attention came from the Black press.

Organizational work and alliances

Einstein wasn't just a lone voice—he also worked within civil rights networks. He was a member of the NAACP, publicly supporting their goals. He joined efforts to push for federal anti-lynching legislation and partnered with prominent activists like Paul Robeson. Together, they co-chaired anti-lynching campaigns and collaborated on other civil rights initiatives.

He also publicly defended the Scottsboro Boys—nine Black teenagers who were falsely accused of rape in Alabama in the 1930s. Einstein used his platform to highlight these kinds of injustices and the broader patterns behind them.

Personal interventions and support

When contralto Marian Anderson was denied a hotel room in Princeton because she was Black, Einstein invited her to stay at his home during that visit—and again during later trips.

In Princeton, he built ongoing relationships with the local Black community. He'd walk through neighborhood streets, talk with residents, give candy to children, and pay tuition for at least one young student. He also spoke out against segregation in his adopted town—something Paul Robeson later described as “the northernmost town in the South.”

Legal and public-pressure support

Einstein also offered support through correspondence and advocacy. He worked closely with W. E. B. Du Bois. In 1951, when Du Bois was indicted for failing to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act associated with the Stockholm Peace Petition, Einstein offered to appear as a character witness. His willingness to vouch for Du Bois helped persuade the judge to drop the case.

Even during the late 1940s and 1950s—when anti-Communist investigations made progressive activism risky—Einstein kept lending his influence to civil-rights causes and calls for equal treatment under the law.

Historical scholarship and visibility

Most of Einstein's work on race and racism didn't get much attention at the time, and it's still not emphasized in many standard biographies. A 2006 book, *Einstein on Race and Racism*, by Fred Jerome and Rodger Taylor, lays out many of his statements and actions and argues that this side of his public life has been underrecognized. Scholars also suggest his experience as a Jewish

refugee facing antisemitism in Nazi Germany helped sharpen his awareness of racial injustice in America—fueling his willingness to engage and speak up.

Overall impact

Einstein brought together moral conviction, public speaking, private giving, organizational support, and legal pressure to advance African American civil rights. He used his international fame to challenge segregation and lynching, support Black artists and thinkers, and push for structural change—because, as he saw it, these weren't optional concerns for someone who had found refuge in the United States.

More can be found ...

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