

W.E.B DUBOIS
V.
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

“Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others”
from *The Souls of Black Folk*

William Edward Burghardt DuBois

1868-1963



W.E.B. Du Bois, a towering black intellectual, scholar and political thinker (1868-1963) said no--Washington's strategy would serve only to perpetuate white oppression. Du Bois advocated political action and a civil rights agenda (he helped found the NAACP). In addition, he argued that social change could be accomplished by developing the small group of college-educated blacks he called "the Talented Tenth:"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/etc/road.html>

Booker Taliaferro Washington

1856-1915



Booker T. Washington, educator, reformer and the most influential black leader of his time (1856-1915) preached a philosophy of self-help, racial solidarity and accomodation. He urged blacks to accept discrimination for the time being and concentrate on elevating themselves through hard work and material prosperity. He believed in education in the crafts, industrial and farming skills and the cultivation of the virtues of patience, enterprise and thrift. This, he said, would win the respect of whites and lead to African Americans being fully accepted as citizens and integrated into all strata of society.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/etc/road.html>

DuBois v. Booker T.

- Advocate for the civil rights of African-American and the descendants of Africans throughout the diaspora
- Believed in agitation and protest for civil rights
- Advocate of education beyond the industrial arts and crafts
- Notion of “racial uplift”
- Encouraged African-Americans to temporarily accept discrimination and racial prejudice
- Believed agriculture=owning and farming lands was key to the advancement of Af. Ams



DuBois v. Booker T.

- Advancement (progress) through education
 - “The Talented Tenth”
- “He continued to fight against the demand by many whites that black education be primarily industrial and that black students in the South learn to accept white supremacy.” *from PBS.org*
- Founded Tuskegee Institute, where he put into practice his belief that the ultimate solution to the race problem was for Blacks to prove themselves worthy by becoming reliable and superior laborers, eventually making themselves indispensable to the economic well-being of the country. *The Journal of Technology Studies*



Important Quotes & Passages

What are Booker T. Washington's core views and what was he advocating for African-Americans?

“His programme of industrial education, conciliation of the South, and submission and silence as to civil and political rights . . . [was not wholly original]” (DuBois 45).

“Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission” (DuBois 52).

“Mr. Washington's programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life. Moreover, this is an age when the more advanced races are coming in closer contact with the less developed races, and the race-feeling is therefore intensified; and Mr. Washington's programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races” (DuBois 52).

Important Quotes & Passages

What did other African-Americans think of Washington's views?

“... after a confused murmur of protest, it silenced if it did not convert the Negroes themselves (DuBois 45).

“Among his own people, however, Mr. Washington has encountered the strongest and most lasting opposition, amounting at times to bitterness, and even to-day continuing strong and insistent even though largely silenced in outward expression by the public opinion of the nation” (DuBois 47-48).

Important Quotes & Passages

What did other African-Americans think of Washington's views?

“... there is among educated and thoughtful colored men in all parts of the land a feeling of deep regret, sorrow, and apprehension at the wide currency and ascendancy which some of Mr. Washington's theories have gained” (DuBois 48).

“Naturally the Negroes resented, at first bitterly, signs of compromise which surrendered their civil and political rights, even though this was to be exchanged for larger chances of economic development. The rich and dominating North, however, was not only weary of the race problem, but was investing largely in Southern enterprises, and welcomed any method of peaceful coöperation. Thus, by national opinion, the Negroes began to recognize Mr. Washington's leadership; and the voice of criticism was hushed” (DuBois 52).

Important Quotes & Passages

What did whites think of Washington's views?

“It startled the nation to hear a Negro advocating such a programme after many decades of bitter complaint; it startled and won the applause of the South, it interested and won the admiration of the North” (DuBois 45).

“The South interpreted it in different ways: the radicals received it as a complete surrender of the demand for civil and political equality; the conservatives, as a generously conceived working basis for mutual understanding. So both approved it . . .” (DuBois 45-46).

Important Quotes & Passages

What did whites think of Washington's views?

“In the North the feeling has several times forced itself into words, that Mr. Washington's counsels of submission overlooked certain elements of true manhood, and that his educational programme was unnecessarily narrow. Usually, however, such criticism has not found open expression . . .” (DuBois 47).

“While, then, criticism has not failed to follow Mr. Washington, yet the prevailing public opinion of the land has been but too willing to deliver the solution of a wearisome problem into his hands, and say, “If that is all you and your race ask, take it.” (DuBois 47).

Other Important Quotes & Passages

“In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing” (DuBois 53).

“Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things, —
First, political power,
Second, insistence on civil rights,
Third, higher education of Negro youth, —
and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South”
(DuBois 53).

Other Important Quotes & Passages

“As a result of this tender of the palm-branch, what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement of the Negro.
2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro.
3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

These movements are not, to be sure, direct results of Mr. Washington's teachings; but his propaganda has, without a shadow of doubt, helped their speedier accomplishment” (DuBois 53-54).

Other Important Quotes & Passages

“ . . . they also know, and the nation knows, that relentless color-prejudice is more often a cause than a result of the Negro's degradation . . . ” (DuBois 56).

“But, nevertheless, they insist that the way to truth and right lies in straightforward honesty, not in indiscriminate flattery . . . ” (DuBois 56).

Other Important Quotes & Passages

“they are absolutely certain that the way for a people to gain their reasonable rights is not by voluntarily throwing them away and insisting that they do not want them; that the way for a people to gain respect is not by continually belittling and ridiculing themselves; that, on the contrary, Negroes must insist continually, in season and out of season, that voting is necessary to modern manhood, that color discrimination is barbarism, and that black boys need education as well as white boys” (DuBois 57).

Other Important Quotes & Passages

- Washington's Triple Paradox – page 54
- The rights most African-American leaders feel we should have – page 55
- Industrial slavery and civic death – pages 57-58
- The attitude of Southerners – page 58
- Supplementary truths – pages 59-60
- The duty of Black men – pages 60-61

Sources for Further Enrichment & Learning

Yale-New Haven Teacher's Institute

<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1978/2/78.02.02.x.html>

The Journal of Technology Studies

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JOTS/v30/v30n4/pdf/johnson.pdf>