

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 1995

PREFACE

Major Robert A. Bright, Chief, Social Actions, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, served as a participant in the Topical Research Intern Program at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) during May/June 1994. He conducted the necessary research to prepare this report. The Institute thanks Major Bright for his contributions to the research efforts of DEOMI.

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INTRODUCTION

"Reflections on 1895: Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. DuBois," has been established as the Black history theme for 1995. Accordingly, this publication documents the meteoric rise of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. DuBois as recognized Black leaders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The influence they exerted in the minds and consciences of the White leadership of the day and their Black disciples was enormous. These men were truly giants during their eras.

Though there were fundamental differences in the philosophy of Washington as compared to Douglass and DuBois, careful analysis of their programs for social reform suggest that, in some instances, the differences were more in strategy than substance. Regardless, the common element among these men of vision was the obsession with the betterment of their race specifically, and humanity in general.

Douglass pursued his program of abolition, racial justice, and women's rights through the strategy of agitation. (10:47-48) Washington pursued his program of self-reliance from the bottom up via industrial education through the strategy of "pragmatic compromise." (9:102; 5:D1) At the same time, DuBois pursued his program of full citizenship rights for Blacks and public understanding of their contributions to America's stability and progress through literary commentary and civil rights organizations. (14:227) Not one of these men was without critics. They were criticized by others as well as by each other. Douglass, himself, was accused by William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist and publisher of the anti-slavery paper, *The Liberator*, after his philosophical break with Garrison because of having abandoned principle, and of "avarice, faithlessness, treachery, [and] ingratitude." (10:66) DuBois attacked Washington's ideology in *The Souls of Black Folk*, a book published in 1903; and, Washington, in turn, often attacked DuBois' "Talented Tenth" assertions. Other circles lodged attacks against both men. For example, the advocates of "Black nationalism," such as Marcus Garvey, criticized Washington as too passive and DuBois as too moderate. (2:54)

According to Nathan Irvin Huggins in *Slave and Citizen (The Life of Frederick Douglass)*, Douglass, the constitutional purist, "quickly discovered that to be political meant to seek the possible rather than the ideal." (10:68) In his introduction to *Booker T. Washington and His Critics, (the Problem of Negro Leadership)*, Hugh Hawkins points out that "the two figures of Washington and DuBois represent the differences between the optimistic opportunist and the idealistic agitator. Anyone who wants a better world (as both these leaders unquestionably did) must make choices that will align him on one side or the other." (9:ix)

This paper chronicles the occurrence of events which significantly shaped the direction of future race relations. From a historical perspective, however, 1895 marked the death of Frederick Douglass. His death, arguably, ended an era dominated by demands for full citizenship rights. Booker T. Washington, after his Atlanta Cotton Exposition speech in the same year, was elevated as leader of the Negro people, and his speech was dubbed "The Atlanta Compromise." During the "Era of Booker T. Washington" (1895-1915), his accommodationist stance, which stressed industrial education and gradual adjustments rather than political and civil rights, subjected him to bitter criticism as an advocate of segregation and second-class citizenship. (13:1177) In contrast, DuBois, once an ally of Washington, soon emerged as one of the most vocal opponents to Washington's philosophy and strategy as regarded the so-called "Negro Problem." (6:65) Hawkins also noted, "The history of the American Negro since 1865 has been in large part the story of changing strategies in the struggle for full equality." (9:v)

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

(Background)

Frederick Douglass was born a slave on February 14th, sometime around 1817, in Tuckahoe, Maryland. His actual name was Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey. His mother was a slave and his father a White man. (12:183) He was self-educated--taught to read and write by the wife of his mother's slavemaster. (18:116) He escaped from slavery in 1838, and worked in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He was married twice. His first marriage, on September 15, 1838, was to Anna Murray, a freeborn woman, who was eight years his senior. They had four children: Rosetta, Frederick, Jr., Lewis, and Annie. After Anna's death, he remarried, at the age of sixty-six. His wife, a White woman named Helen Pitts, was twenty years his junior. He was believed to be seventy-five years old at his death on February 2, 1895. (10:157)

The Douglass Era

When Frederick Douglass escaped to Massachusetts, he found abolitionists opposed to the institution of slavery--powerful men who were willing to put their prestige, power, and wealth behind the movement to end the institution of slavery. The anti-slavery movement leaders embraced Frederick Douglass and in 1841 enlisted him as a spokesman for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. According to a *Washington Informer* article dated December 29, 1993, Douglass represented in the flesh, "a man who

knew the personal agony and fury of slavery and who escaped the slave system in mind, body and soul." (11:19) Such were the social conditions at the time that confronted Frederick Douglass.

Douglass was viewed as an "Apostle of Freedom." According to Nathan Irvin Huggins in *Slave and Citizen*, Douglass "chose to emphasize how slavery undermined family feeling among slaves. [Douglass reasoned that] it could not be otherwise when a system profited from the natural increase of its subjects, not their moral and circumspect behavior." Huggins went on to say that Douglass believed, "The point was clear. It was not a matter of good or bad men treating subjects well or badly. The central evil was the ownership of human beings and the lack of freedom this imposed." Huggins also commented that Douglass believed, "real freedom--self-reliant, self-respecting, humanity dignifying freedom--was at bottom the issue, and there could be no substitute for it." The simplicity of a statement made by Douglass drove the point home when he discussed one of his kindest owners, "He was the best master I ever had, till I became my own master." (10:21-22)

Douglass fought slavery on the lecture circuit on both continents. He was a fugitive and had left the United States on August 16, 1845, out of fear of capture. While on the lecture circuit he was quick to point out the hypocrisy of Christian churches over slavery. (10:30)

Contrary to popular belief, Douglass did not purchase his own freedom. Shortly before his thirtieth birthday, however, several of his English friends purchased Douglass' freedom from his owner for approximately seven hundred dollars. (10:34; 3:374-376) On April 4, 1847, he returned to the United States where he resumed his denunciation of slavery. (10:36,37) Douglass was not opposed to any method that would end slavery. According to Huggins, Douglass met with John Brown in late 1847 to discuss any plan for freeing slaves, even those involving violence. Huggins was uncertain if, when Douglass met John Brown at this time, he fully comprehended the extreme measures that Brown was willing to undertake to free slaves. Finally, on August 20, 1859, when he learned how drastic John Brown's plan was for freeing slaves, he refused to join him. Though not personally involved in John Brown's plan to attack Harper's Ferry, Virginia, on the advice of friends Douglass chose to cross the border into Canada, rather than to trust his fate to the American justice system. He left Canada for Britain on November 12, 1859, and stayed there until returning home on the news of the death of his youngest child, Annie, in 1860. (10:61-66)

When Douglass chose political agitation as a preferred method of eradicating slavery versus the Garrisonian approach of "moral suasion and disunion," he angered William Lloyd Garrison. (10:59,60) These two men, Douglass and Garrison, who had called each other friend since Douglass became a lecturer for the Anti-Slavery Society in 1841, were never to speak again after Douglass merged his newspaper with a rival newspaper to Garrison's *Liberator*. (10:67) According to Huggins, Garrison even went so far as to accuse Douglass of "avarice, faithlessness, treachery, [and] ingratitude." (10:66)

The rift was caused by the two men's obviously different strategies to ending slavery. By 1851, Douglass had come to accept the argument that the Constitution should be interpreted as an anti-slavery instrument. (10:65)

Douglass' Philosophy

Insight into Douglass' philosophy regarding race relations is concisely summarized by this excerpt from a speech he made at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Boston, Massachusetts, in April 1865, when he said:

Everybody has asked the question, and they learn to ask it easily of the abolitionists, "What shall we do with the Negro?" I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with him. Your doing with us has already played the mischief with us. Do nothing with us! . . . If you see him on his way to school, let him alone, don't disturb him! If you see him at the dinner table at a hotel, let him go! If you see him going into the ballot box, let him alone, don't disturb him! (19:17)

In an article Douglass published in the *New National Era* on May 2, 1872, he wrote, "We look to mixed schools to teach that worth and ability are to be the criterion of manhood and not race and color." (19:20). In a speech he gave on September 24, 1883, titled "Three Addresses on the Relations Between the White and Colored People of the United States," Douglass stated,

Though we have had war, reconstruction, and abolition as a nation, we still linger in the shadow and blight of an extinct institution. Though the colored man is no longer subject to be bought and sold, he is still surrounded by an adverse sentiment which fetters all movements. In his downward movement he meets no resistance, but his course upward is resented and resisted at every step of his progress. (19:22).

In an article on lynching published on August 11, 1892, in the *Christian Reader*, Douglass wrote:

Now where rests the responsibility for the lynch law prevalent in the South? It is evident that it is not entirely with the ignorant mob. The mob who breaks open jails and with bloody hands destroys human life are not alone responsible. These are not the men who make public sentiment. They are simply the hangmen, not the court, judge, or jury. They simply obey the public sentiment of the South - the sentiment created by wealth and respectability, by the press and pulpit. A change in public sentiment can be easily effected by these forces whenever they elect to make the effort. Let the press and pulpit of the South unite their power against the cruelty, disgrace and shame that is settling like a mantle of fire upon these lynch-law States, and lynch law itself will soon cease to exist. (19:22)

According to Huggins, Douglass believed:

Race improvement would come through self-improvement, which meant economic independence and self-reliance. (10:51)

Afro-Americans should insist upon a recognition of their legitimacy as Americans.

Free Blacks were obliged to fight in their native country for the emancipation of their fellows in chains. (10:55)

Emigration would deny the Black man's birthright, in conceding to, in fact, if not in word, the White American contention that Blacks had no claim to citizenship.

It was the Black man's duty to remain in America, force the United States to live up to its ideals and its divine destiny to be a Nation of Nations.

Voting rights for all free men. (10:57)

The Black man's power rested on two facts: he constituted the labor on which the South depended to rebuild, and his citizenship rights had been established in the Constitution. (10:150)

Blacks were the nation's embarrassment, not because they were poor and backwards, but because they belied by their oppressed condition American pretensions to civilization, Christianity, and democracy. (10:169)

The real problem was the race prejudice in the hearts of White people which corrupted the nation. (10:177)

Douglass' Strategy

Frederick Douglass, the "Apostle of Freedom," fought slavery prior to the Civil War and for full franchisement of the Negro in every way available in the post-Civil War era. (10:21) He attacked the social ills of his day through the power of oratory and journalism, coalitions with the rich and powerful, political organizations, and government service. He became one of the most influential speakers in the fight against slavery through his role as lecturer for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. (10:2) In 1847, Douglass began publishing *The North Star*. He stated,

The object of *The North Star* was to attack slavery in all its forms and aspects; to advocate Universal Emancipation . . . promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the colored people; and to hasten the day of freedom to our three million enslaved fellow-countrymen. (10:42)

Douglass participated in one of the first national conventions of colored citizens, held in Buffalo in 1843. The topics were employment, education, and social improvement of the free Black population. (10:40) And, in 1848, he was the key organizer of the 1848 convention, which addressed itself mainly to Northern Blacks. He was the primary author

of the "Address to the Colored People of the United States." This speech was instrumental in encouraging Northern Blacks to join in the fight against slavery. Douglass told the convention participants that Blacks needed to :

put themselves in occupations that would make Whites in the community "as dependent on us as we are on them." By moving into the mechanical trades and farming in large numbers, they would become indispensable to the community. That would be the beginning of the end of racial prejudice and oppression. With an independent and self-reliant Northern Black population, slavery in the South could not survive. (10:51)

This optimism would not be supported by later events. (10:51)

Douglass' strategy also included

devising a scheme to advance economic independence for Northern Blacks through support for an industrial school. [He also] attempted to establish the National Council for Colored People. Following the pattern of national political parties, the [goal was] to create in the council a permanent national organization with representatives from each of the ten Northern states where there would be grass-roots representation in elected local councils.

Both of the preceding strategies were platform items at the 1853 convention; however, nothing ever came of the initiatives. (10:52-53)

He advocated a strategy of service to his country. He helped recruit the members of the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments during the Civil War, and his sons, Charles and Lewis, quickly joined the 54th. (10:88) His strategy also involved accepting political appointments, no matter how insignificant the role, within the bounds of the individual conscience. According to Huggins, Douglass reasoned that "future appointments would be easier to make; leading to the time when blacks in public service in the United States would occasion no special notice at all." (10:126).

Douglass was absolutely opposed to emigration. He believed that those who advocated it were detrimental to the cause. In his view, "emigration would deny the Black man's birthright." More importantly, he felt that "emigration schemes would draw off only the most enterprising and skilled Black Americans-the very ones, as Douglass saw it, who were needed most in the struggle in America." (10:57)

BOOKER TALIAFERRO WASHINGTON

(Background)

Booker T. Washington was born on April 5, 1856, in Hale's Ford, Franklin County, Virginia. The son of a Negro slave and a White father (13:1177), he was the last major Black leader to be born in slavery. He spent his boyhood in Malden, West Virginia, where he worked in a salt furnace and coal mine while attending school. In 1872 he

entered Hampton Institute, the Negro vocational school in Virginia, where he earned his board by working as a janitor. He graduated in 1875, then taught school in Malden from 1875 to 1877, and for a short time was a student at Wayland Seminary in Washington, DC. In 1879, he returned to Hampton Institute and supervised the Indian dormitory and night school. Soon afterwards, he was chosen to establish a Negro normal school in Tuskegee, Alabama. (13:1177; 17:166) On July 4, 1881, Booker T. Washington and thirty new students gathered in a one-room building. (17:22) There he founded the Normal and Industrial Institute for Negroes which soon became known as simply the Tuskegee Institute. (17:22)

Washington was married three times. His wives were the former Fanny Norton Smith, Olivia A. Davidson, and Margaret Murray, the first two preceding him in death. (8:137, 146, 149, 176, 187)

According to the *Encyclopedia of American History*, Booker T. Washington soon became the foremost advocate of Negro education and was active as a public speaker on race relations, stressing industrial education and gradual adjustment rather than political and civil rights. (13:1177) He transformed Tuskegee Institute into a world-famous center for vocational training, the first Black institution of its kind in the United States.

Washington's literary achievements included *The Future of the American Negro* (1899), *Sowing and Reaping* (1900), the autobiographical *Up From Slavery* (1901), and *Frederick Douglass* (1907). (13:1177)

Washington's Era

In September 1895, less than a year after Frederick Douglass' death, Booker T. Washington stood before a primarily White audience in Atlanta, Georgia, and made a speech that outlined his position on the races. (10:179) Washington, who came to be known as the "Apostle of Good Will," understandably could not have predicted the reaction his speech would arouse in competing interest groups. He was convinced that in 1895 it would have been a mistake to ask for equal rights for Negroes. As a result of this Atlanta Cotton Exposition speech, however, Washington was proclaimed by the White leadership as the leader of the Negro people. Some people have, in fact, called the years 1895 to 1915 "The Era of Booker T. Washington."

As stated by Kelly Miller, author of the article "Washington's Policy" in *Booker T. Washington and His Critics (the Problem of Negro Leadership)*, "Washington came upon the stage at the time when the policies which Douglass embodied had seemed to fail. Reconstruction measures had proved abortive." (9:51) Such was the social condition in 1895 that confronted Washington, who at one time was the only person in the movement speaking out for Negro advancement. (14:132) Consequently, according to Miller, in his struggle to improve the lot of his people, Washington "avoided controversial issues and moved, not along the line of least resistance, but of no resistance at all." (9:51)

As previously mentioned, Washington's speech was reprinted and distributed widely. According to Sanford Wexler in *The Civil Rights Movement: An Eyewitness History*:

Although many Blacks resented Washington's eagerness to accept an inferior role, Whites hailed the "Atlanta Compromise" speech as an end to Black agitation for equality in return for an opportunity to gain a little economic prosperity. Soon thereafter, Washington's speech was the target of rebuttals by other Black voices, such as John Hope, president of Atlanta University, who said, "If we are not striving for equality, in heaven's name for what are we living? I regard it as cowardly and dishonest for any of our colored men to tell white people or colored people that we are not struggling for equality." (19:7)

Public attention became focused on the following excerpt from the "Atlanta Compromise" speech, "In all things that are purely social, we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." (14:134) After the speech, Washington was described as a "compromiser" and an "Uncle Tom" by those who opposed him. (15:11)

The *Atlanta Constitution* described the speech as "a revelation," and the *Boston Transcript* said it "seemed to have dwarfed all the other proceedings." (2:47) W.E.B. DuBois felt that the speech set back the cause of complete freedom of the Negro, but the average Negro saw the message as words of immortal wisdom. (2:47) The speech not only fueled debates during Washington's life but after his death in 1915 as well. In the *Pittsburgh Courier* (November 10, 1945) J. A. Rogers said, "But if you analyze it, you will find it one of the worst pieces of tripe ever uttered. How can two individuals, even a man and his wife, or even Siamese twins, be any closer than the fingers on the hand?" Southern Whites, however, appreciated the speech because they felt it legitimized their continued exploitation of Negro labor. (2:46)

Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of New York, attacked the speech and accused Washington with "delivering the souls of black folk into the hands of the masters." (2:47)

In a letter to the *New York Times* in 1906, Powell's father, the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell wrote: "...under Dr. Washington's policy the two races in the South are a thousand times further apart than they were fifteen years ago and the breach is widening every day." (19:8)

Despite Washington's accommodating stance, he became "the most prominent and influential Black leader at the beginning of the twentieth century." This was the result of his philosophy of self-help and racial unity. (6:16,64) Washington saw himself as the Negro of the hour, whose career and racial program most realistically represented what Blacks needed to maintain themselves against White encroachments and to make progress toward equality in America. Regardless, Washington managed to keep successful an all-Black school with an all-Black faculty at a time when White missionaries were still running most Black colleges. Reflective of Washington's ideals, Tuskegee emphasized education in the trades leading to economic independence in an

area where sharecrop agriculture predominated. Washington was, however, successful in convincing the southern Whites that Tuskegee was not educating Black youth away from the farms. (6:4)

Tuskegee acquainted its students with a middle-class way of life. They bought up surrounding farmland and sold it at low rates of interest, creating a community of small landowners and homeowners and so became a model Black community. (6:4)

According to Louis B. Harlan in the book, *Blacks of the Twentieth Century*, Washington was not without power and influence on a national scale. "He became the chief Black adviser of Presidents [Theodore] Roosevelt and William Howard Taft." (6:5) W.E.B. DuBois commented in this excerpt from *Dusk of Dawn*,

..but beyond this difference of ideal lay another and more bitter and insistent controversy. This started with the rise at Tuskegee Institute, and centering around Booker T. Washington, of what I may call the Tuskegee Machine. Of its existence and work, little has ever been said and almost nothing written. . . . Not only did presidents of the United States consult Booker Washington, but governors and congressmen; philanthropists conferred with him, scholars wrote to him. . . . After a time almost no Negro institution could collect funds without the recommendation or acquiescence of Mr. Washington. Few political appointments were made anywhere in the United States without his consent. . . . Contrary to most opinion, the controversy as it developed was not entirely against Mr. Washington's ideas, but became the insistence upon the right of other Negroes to have and express their ideas. Things came to such a pass that when any Negro complained or advocated a course of action, he was silenced with the remark that Mr. Washington did not agree with this. . . . Negroes who sought high position groveled for his favor. . . . Tuskegee became the capital of the Negro nation I was increasingly uncomfortable under the statements of Mr. Washington's position: his depreciation of the value of the vote; his evident dislike of Negro colleges; and his general attitude which seemed to place the onus of blame for the status of Negroes upon the Negroes themselves rather than upon the whites. And above all, I resented the Tuskegee Machine. (16:175-178)

Harlan believed that "Washington offered Blacks not the empty promises of the demagogue but a solid program of economic and educational progress through struggle." (6:3)

No wonder that Booker T. Washington was referred to as "The Wizard" and the years 1895 to 1915 called "The Era of Booker T. Washington." (9:vi)

Washington's Philosophy

At the heart of Washington's philosophy was the principle of learning by doing and the concept of vocational education. (17:22)

Washington taught that "Blacks must prove themselves worthy of freedom by developing their own capabilities." According to Harlan, Washington believed that "tact, good manners, a resolute will, and a tireless capacity for hard work ensured success for the individual and for the race." (6:112)

Harlan stated that "outspoken complaint against injustice was necessary but insufficient, and he (Washington) thought factional dissent among Black leaders was self-defeating and should be suppressed." (6:3) According to Harlan, Washington "believed that blacks should, for the time being at least, abandon political agitation and seek to get along with whites while concentrating on improving their economic conditions." (19:7)

In addition to earnest hard work and initiative, Washington advocated creativity in business. He once stated, "The Negro . . . must prove not merely his capacity to learn what others have done but to act on his own initiative, and do things new and different. . . . The Negro race must learn to make the most of its own peculiar qualities, learn to turn the very obstacles and difficulties of its position to advantage." (5:D1)

Washington believed in universal suffrage but at the same time he supported an educational test, a property test, or both combined to protect the ballot if they applied equally to both races. Protection of the ballot, in this manner, was necessary, he believed, due to the peculiar conditions that existed in the South.

Finally, he was opposed to the immigration of foreign workers into the United States. In fact, according to Otis C. Graham and Roy Beck in an article published in the *New Pittsburgh Courier*:

He implored his audience of powerful white industrialists [during his famous 1895 Atlanta Exposition address] to stop bringing millions of workers from Europe to take up the factory jobs opening by industrialization and instead to turn to the underemployed freed slaves and descendants. "Put down your bucket where you are" was his memorable phrase. (7:v,83,88)

Washington's Strategy

According to C. Vann Woodward in his article, "The Atlanta Compromise," in the book *Booker T. Washington and His Critics*, Washington's basic strategy was that of accommodation or conciliation. According to Woodward, "Washington's life mission was to find a pragmatic compromise that would resolve the antagonisms, suspicions, and aspirations of 'all three classes directly concerned--the Southern white man, the Northern white man, and the Negro.'" (9:102) As Ronald Evans pointed out in the *New York Amsterdam News*, Washington

advised African-Americans to pursue careers in domestic service; in agriculture, as mechanics, in commerce and in the professions.... [He] admonished Blacks to "cast down your bucket where you are" in the Deep South and to forget about political and civil

rights and demands for social equality. Over time. . .the White Southerners would become "our brothers" in pursuit of a "new world order" in the new South. (4:13)

The views that Washington postulated in 1895 at the International Exposition, in his "Atlanta Compromise" speech made him a national and international celebrity and he was recognized as the foremost African-American leader of his era. (4:13) As such, Washington was able to capitalize on his fame which translated into support for his agenda. As Evans editorialized,

No black leader since Washington has ever achieved anything close to the enthusiastic support (translated: money and enormous press coverage) from White industrialists (Carnegie, Harriman, etc.) and politicians (including two presidents), or held this status for so long (1895-1915) as Booker Washington. (4:13)

As Louis R. Harlan explained in his article "Booker T. Washington and the Politics of Accommodation" in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, because of the power and prestige he commanded, "the Tuskegee Machine had the middle and undecided majority of white and black people behind it." Harlan continued, "Among blacks he had the businessmen solidly behind him, and even. . .a majority of the Talented Tenth of professional men, so great was his power to reward and punish, to make or break careers. He had access to the wellsprings of philanthropy, political preferment, and other white sources of black opportunity." (6:16)

The key to Washington's success was his willingness to renounce social equality in exchange for economic prosperity. Rayford W. Logan, in *Booker T. Washington and His Critics*, commented, "Washington was convinced, and rightly so, that it would have been folly to ask in 1895 for equal rights for Negroes." (9:21) He embraced the separate but equal doctrine as evidenced by this excerpt from his "Atlanta Compromise" speech, "In all things that are purely social, we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." (14:134; 15:11)

He also engaged in emotional appeal to keep his critics on the defensive. For example, he was successful against his most vocal critic, W.E.B. DuBois, by criticizing his "Talented Tenth" philosophy. Also in *Booker T. Washington and His Critics*, Francis L. Broderick states that Washington charged that "DuBois was interested only in a hand full of Negroes, while he concerned himself with the masses." (9:47)

And in this same source, Ray Stannard Baker in his article, "An Ostracized Race In Ferment," captured the essence of Washington's emotional appeal to the Negro when he stated,

Where Washington reaches the hearts of his people, DuBois appeals to their heads. DuBois is not a leader of men, as Washington is; he is rather a promulgator of ideas. While Washington is building a great educational institution and organizing the practical activities of the race, DuBois is the lonely critic holding up distant ideals. (9:57)

Consequently, Woodward concluded in his "Atlanta Compromise" article that during the two decades from 1895 to Washington's death in 1915, "Negro thought and policy in matters of race relations, labor, education, and business enterprise conformed in large measure to the Tuskegee philosophy." (9:103)

WILLIAM EDWARD BURGHADT DUBOIS

(Background)

William Edward Burghadt DuBois (pronounced "du boyce") was known as W.E.B. DuBois throughout his life. He was born February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and was of French Huguenot, Dutch, and Black ancestry. (1, 53)

This social scientist, political activist, author, editor, educator, and visionary had a distinguished beginning. He became a correspondent for two Black newspapers before he was fifteen, the *Springfield Republican* and *New York Globe*, and reported on local community news. He graduated from high school in 1884, and attended all-Black Fisk University in Nashville on a scholarship. While there he studied classical literature, German, Greek, Latin, philosophy, chemistry, and physics, and was the editor of the *Fisk Herald*. (1:53)

As Barbara Carlisle Bigelow recorded in *The Contemporary Black Biography, Volume 3*,

during summers DuBois taught school in a small town where he was profoundly influenced by the dismal social and economic conditions endured by rural Blacks. At Fisk, DuBois solidified his goals for improving the status of Blacks and came to believe that higher education was an important means of combating racial oppression. . . . After graduating with a B.A. from Fisk in 1888, DuBois enrolled at Harvard University, where he excelled as a student. [While there he became acquainted] with some of the leading intellectuals of the day, including William James, George Palmer, George Santayana, and Albert Bushnell Hart, and was encouraged to direct his studies toward history and the social sciences. (1:53)

DuBois' European travels allowed him to more fully comprehend the racially-based social structure of the United States. On the eve of his twenty- fifth birthday, he composed a journal entry that set forth his commitment to pursuing intellectual endeavors in the service of his race.

DuBois often wrote of himself as "either a genius or a fool," and frequently declared his intention to "make a name in science, to make a name in literature and thus to raise my race. Or perhaps to raise a visible empire in Africa thro' England, France, or Germany." (1:53)

After his return from Europe, DuBois began a career as a writer and scholar. He began teaching as professor of liberal arts at Wilberforce University in Ohio, where he met his first wife, Nina Gomer. In 1895, he became the first Black to ever receive a Ph.D. from

Harvard. His doctoral thesis, entitled "The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870," was published by Longmans Green as the first volume in the *Harvard Historical Monograph Series*. (1:53)

The next year he was named assistant professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania and was hired by the university to conduct a sociological study of the Black population of Philadelphia. He began the first in-depth analysis of a Black community, and in 1899 *The Philadelphia Negro* was published. (1:53) According to Elliot Rudwick in an essay in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, "at this point in his career [DuBois] passionately believed that social science would provide white America's leaders with the knowledge necessary to eliminate discrimination and solve the race problem." (6:65) Thus began his career of political activism. However, his philosophy soon brought him into conflict with Booker T. Washington.

DuBois' Philosophy

According to Marcella Thum in *Hippocrene U.S.A. Guide to Black America*, DuBois' book "went against the teachings of the popular educator, Booker T. Washington, because [it] argued that Black people stood little chance to advance in America unless they fought for change." (17:167)

DuBois was committed to higher education for Black people, and felt that a college degree was important because it provided Black youth with the knowledge and wisdom required to improve minorities. As cited by Elliot Rudwick in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, DuBois was "committed to a platform of racial unity." Rudwick wrote that even as a student, he was "earnestly lecturing fellow students that as 'destined leaders of a noble people,' they must dedicate themselves to the Black masses." (6:65) Thus was the inception of his "Talented Tenth" philosophy. (15:11) According to DuBois, the "so-called upper tenth of the race were destined to be leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among the Negro masses." (2:66)

It should be noted, however, that DuBois initially agreed with Washington's strategy which involved seeking the support of powerful Whites, and encouraged Blacks not to protest against discrimination. DuBois, believed that Blacks could obtain political leverage through industrial education, hard work, and property accumulation. As a result, they would eventually gain their civil rights. However, with the publication of *Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois became the chief leader of the opposition against Washington that polarized the Black community into the "conservative" supporters of Washington and his "radical" critics. The position of DuBois, as illustrated by Rudwick, was for Blacks to "open the doors of opportunity by adopting tactics of militant protest and agitation." (6:65)

Most important, DuBois believed Blacks wanted full admission into American society, and that all social stratification as the result of race/color discrimination should be abolished..

Rudwick also believed that DuBois "exhibited a nationalistic side--a strong sense of group pride, advocacy of racial unity, and a profound identification with Blacks in other parts of the world." DuBois once stated:

One ever feels his twoness--an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keep it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife--this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face. (6:64)

According to Rudwick, "DuBois in his speeches and writings moved from one proposed solution to another, and the salience of various parts of his philosophy changed as his perceptions of the needs and strategies of black America shifted over time." (6:64)

DuBois' Strategy

DuBois' strategy was direct and uncompromising. According to Bigelow, he sought "unconditional equal and civil rights for all Blacks." His strategy to effect social reform manifested itself through literary commentary and civil rights organizations. (1:52)

His scathing attacks on color line discrimination were relentless. He sought different avenues in which to get his message out. One of these was the Niagara Movement, which he co-founded in the early 1900s.

The Niagara Movement, according to *The Negro Almanac on the Afro-American*, "pressed for full citizenship rights for Blacks and public understanding of their contributions to America's stability and progress." This coalition of Black intellectuals marked a turning point in Black history. As was expressed by Harry A. Ploski and James Williams in *The Negro Almanac*, "No longer would black leadership be dominated by men who felt it necessary to promise whites that blacks would settle for second-class citizenship and jobs." (14:227) The Niagara Movement platform was drawn up as the basis for settling the race problem. In *National Thoughts: Introduction to the Niagara Movement Platform*, Theora Richards listed the five principles that comprised their proclamation:

- (1) full manhood suffrage
- (2) condemnation of all race discrimination in public accommodations
- (3) freedom of social intercourse
- (4) equality in the enforcement of laws

(5) National Government intervention to step in and wipe out illiteracy in the South and wipe out any undying proposal to educate Black boys and girls simply as servants and underlings or simply for the use of other people. (15:11)

In 1909, DuBois became one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The organization, which was comprised of most of the Blacks from the by then defunct Niagara Movement and sympathetic Whites, emerged as the first Black organization with the expertise and finances to fight for justice in America's courts and legislatures. (14:227) According to Sanford Wexler in *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, 1865-1948*, the organization's specific goals were "to achieve, through peaceful and lawful means, equal citizenship rights for all American citizens by eliminating segregation and discrimination in housing, employment, voting, schools, the courts, transportation, and recreation." W.E.B. DuBois served as the NAACP's director of publicity and editor of the *Crisis* magazine until 1934. (19:9) According to Marcus Hanna Boulware in *The Oratory of Negro Leaders: 1900-1968*, the *Crisis* "became the medium for all kinds of Negro expression [and reached] a circulation of 100,000 shortly after World War I." (2:66)

In 1919, the NAACP crusaded for a federal anti-lynch law. In Boulware's opinion, "to create public sentiment against the evil, the NAACP published 'Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889 to 1918.'" (2:64) Federal anti-lynching bills twice passed the House of Representatives in the 1930s, but Southern senators killed them in the Senate. (19:9)

According to Bigelow, "Pan-Africanism" was another major focus of DuBois' political career, and in 1905, he organized a series of Pan-African conferences, in Paris, Lisbon, Brussels, London, and New York City, between 1921 and 1927. According to Bigelow, "DuBois put forth his ideas of self-government for oppressed Black people under colonial powers." It was at these conferences that heated debates occurred between DuBois and Marcus Garvey, a Black leader who promoted social change through economic growth and mass education. Garvey's ideas were rejected by DuBois and DuBois attempted to destroy Garvey's credibility by exposing his corruption and mismanagement of the Black Star Shipping Line (a Black transportation company). (1:55)

Because of his frustrations with the American capitalistic system, DuBois' political views became increasingly socialistic, which eventually distanced him from the civil rights movement. DuBois visited the Soviet Union and China and publicly urged African nations to seek Communist support in their efforts for self-government. (1:55)

In 1951, DuBois was tried and later acquitted on the charge that he was an unregistered agent of a foreign power. However, he and his second wife were denied travel visas. The State Department eventually lifted this ban in 1958, and the couple again toured Africa and the Soviet Union. (1:55)

In the early 1960s, DuBois officially joined the Communist Party, moved to the West African country of Ghana, and became a citizen of that country in 1963. Concerning his

status as a Communist, DuBois wrote: "I have been long and slow in coming to this conclusion, but at last my mind is settled . . . Capitalism cannot reform itself; it is doomed to self-destruction. No universal selfishness can bring social good to all." (1:55)

DuBois died in Accra, Ghana, in 1963, just prior to the historic civil rights march on Washington, DC. (1:55)

CONCLUSION

Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. DuBois may have differed in their philosophical and strategic approaches to the race problem in this country but not in focus--to achieve full rights of citizenship for their people. These men, to the masses they led, functioned as the moral equivalent to Moses leading his people out of Egypt to the "promised land."

Douglass, the idealistic agitator, over time evolved into a political realist (10:68,150,178); Washington, the accommodationist, asserted himself more into the political arena (5:D1; 6:1,5; 16:176); and DuBois, frustrated with the shortcomings of a capitalistic system, joined the Communist Party and eventually became a citizen of an African nation. (1:55)

Whether their philosophies were too ambitious or failed miserably for the eras in which they lived is a topic for historical hindsight and passionate debate. However, such debate would change nothing. What is clear is that the flame lit by these men for full rights of citizenship without regard to color or any other arbitrary form of discrimination lived past their deaths.

Black leaders such as the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. became torch bearers in the fight (6:17), and the NAACP spawned the birth of other civil rights organizations that, along with the NAACP have survived into 1995.

In reflecting on 1895--the pivotal year that marked the death of Frederick Douglass and the beginning of an era that was dominated by the competing philosophies and strategies of Washington and DuBois, we bear witness in 1995 that the fire for full franchisement that Douglass, Washington, and DuBois fanned burns hot and will not be extinguished.

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