

# Booker t. washington and w.e.b dubois views

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



Booker T. Washington and W. E. B DuBois were both African Americans who devoted their time in the struggle for freedom of the blacks in America. Booker Taliaferro Washington was a well-educated man who was born in April 5th, 1856 and died on 14th November 1915. He was born from a slavefamilybut later was freed from slavery when he was still a child. On the other hand, DuBois was born in 1865 on the 23rd of February in Massachusetts. His full names are William Edward Burghardt DuBois. He was a relentless African American activist who fought for rights of the blacks in America.

The two activists differed in their approach to be used in achievingequalityand freedom for the African Americans. This is what this essay will discuss about. I will also compare and contrast their views onleadershipand the means of achieving progress. These two leaders had certain similarities for example both were againstracism, segregation of blacks by the whites because of their color and agreed thatdiscriminationhad to be fought. However, the two differed when it came to the means to be used in achieving these objectives.

DuBois often criticized the approach that Booker T. Washington was using. DuBois perception had been shaped by the experience he gained after spending some time with the liberal whites in the academy that he attended and thus he was able to think outside the box. Booker T. Washington believed that blacks would not achieve an equal status with the whites by resorting to open hostility but he believed that it was only throughhard workthat they would progress. (Hine D. C. and Harold, 2003; 45-97).

He was convinced that the first step that was to be taken by the Blacks in order to prosper was to create a strong economic foundation for them. He devoted all his energies towards realization of this goal. He was convinced that the Whites were superior to Blacks simply because they were able to work hard and that if the Black Americans embraced the same, then they would uplift their social status to be equal to that of the Whites. He strongly held the belief that no race in the whole world could survive without owning any property, having no skills, no economic foundation and the required intelligence.

To him the only way of Blacks achieving this was through learning the industrial education. He took it upon himself to spread education in the rural areas. He showed the rural farmers how they could start small businesses on their farms to supplement what they had. Farmers were taught on the techniques to apply so that they could increase their harvest. Booker T. Washington never hated the whites and never thought of how the Blacks could revenge but instead he saw the two races as intertwined.

Unlike DuBois who believed that the two races were supposed to be equal and that the blacks had to resort to overt resistance, Booker T. Washington argued the Blacks were supposed to humble themselves though that they would be recognized by the Whites. Much of criticism against him came as a result of the speech that he made in 1895 in the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlantic where he accepted the segregation of the Blacks by the Whites He became very popular amongst the whites because of how he praised them.

In his speech he said that just like the Blacks had served the whites in the past, they would continue doing the same and even put their lives at stake if there was need in protecting the whites. In accepting segregation he said, "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 the mutual progress." (Cobb J. C. , 1994; 26-58) DuBois disagreed with Booker T. Washington especially when he said that blacks above anything else should have a strong economic base.

On the contrary, DuBois believed that what Blacks needed was liberal education and having a strong economy was not the solution. Still on education both differed, Booker T. never advocated for liberal education as DuBois and instead urged the Blacks to go for the industrial courses. Washington and DuBois also disagreed in the approach that was to be used in achieving freedom. DuBois believed that the educated blacks that he referred to as the "Talented Tenth" would help in bringing social change.

He criticized Washington's approach to unite the two races, which he deemed rather accommodative to the whites. He openly criticized Washington by referring to him as the first Uncle Tom. He may have been condemning Washington strongly because he had no knowledge of how bitter slavery was. DuBois was born in the North while Washington was born in the Southern America where slavery was well entrenched. (Elsa B. B. and Thomas C. H. , Eds. 2002; 82-135) DuBois unlike Washington strongly advocated overt confrontation if it was the only way that would end racism but Washington condemned this.

DuBois was for the idea of using demonstrations, staging boycotts to the segregated places and even striking and demonstrating in streets but <https://assignbuster.com/booker-t-washington-and-web-dubois-views/>

Washington was against this something that was attested during his Atlantic speech, “ The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremist folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be as a result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing.

” (Elsa B. B. and Thomas C. H. , Eds. 2002; 82-135). However, Washington believed that the whites had no right to deprive African Americans of their franchise right. But he did not mean that the blacks should confront the whites directly instead they were supposed to acquire properties, establish their own industries, intelligence and have a strong economy. Though the two leaders differed in many things, they both believed that education was the only tool of empowering the African American.

DuBois believed that the blacks would be freed from the shackles of racism if they pursued the liberal education. He constantly urged the brightest and well-educated African Americans to help their colleagues in fighting for their rights. To DuBois these ‘ Talented tenth’ were those well-educated Blacks. He believed that before any thing else was done, the Blacks were supposed to have liberal education. At this point Washington also agreed with DuBois that education was the key to social change but he differed in the type of the education.

He believed that Africa Americans needed industrial skills that would help them to benefit from the southern environment, which was suitable for farming also he believed that if blacks were taught on how to increase their productivity, then they would become economically stable. He even established his own school, Tuskegee where he taught the blacks on

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industrial courses, a move that was highly welcomed by the Whites. Though both leaders agreed that racism was the main set back to the progress of the Blacks, they differed in the approach that was to be used.

DuBois advocated for open confrontation of racism. He believed that lack of reacting to the racism is what had legitimized and strengthened this menace. On the other hand, Washington held that there was no need of holding demonstration, conducting strikes and attacking the whites but instead they were supposed to address their demons of laziness and criminality. They were also expected to be hardworking people, less promiscuous and stop complaining excessively.

In confronting DuBois call for African American's to agitate, he instead urged them to observe discipline. It is on this point that DuBois blamed Washington of excusing the Whites of the atrocities that they did to the African Americans and instead blamed all this on Blacks claiming that they were not trying hard like the Whites. Washington believed that it is for this reason that blacks were trailing behind the whites. They both believed that the status quo for blacks had to be uplifted to be like that of the whites. (Cobb J. C. , 1994; 26-58)

In conclusion, we can say that though the two leaders differed in their views especially in the approach to be employed they also had some things in common. They both believed that racism was a monster that had to be fought and they both believed that African Americans had to be educated so as to be able to face the ugly face of racism. Though they differed in the type of education, they also differed in the means of achieving freedom. For

example when DuBois wanted overt confrontation the other one wanted gradual approach of economically empowerment of the Blacks.

They both played a significant role in the struggle for the emancipation of the black Americans for each had a unique thing that they contributed.

Reference: Hine D. C. and Harold, 2003. *Africa American Odyssey Volume II Since 1863*. Prentice Hall. Elsa B. B. and Thomas C. H. , Eds. 2002. *Major Problems in Africa American History*. Vol. 2. Houghton Mifflin. Cobb J. C. , 1994; *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and The Roots of Regional Identity*. Oxford University Press, New York.