Racial Uplift
Booker T. Washington

- (1856-1915)--Educator and Reformer
- Promoted Self-help for blacks
- Racial Solidarity
- Accommodation
- Spoke to blacks about working hard in their jobs to advance their status and respectability in society rather than devote attention to discrimination they may be dealing with at present moment.
- Recommends blacks receive education in crafts, industrial, and farming
- Key to winning respect of whites and full acceptance as citizens and integration into all strata of society is with cultivation of patience, enterprise, and thrift.
- Usually associated with “Conservatives”
Racial Uplift

Booker T. Washington’s idea of racial uplift was a means of self-help for the black people.

- "To those of my race, who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land, or who underestimate the importance of preserving friendly relations with the southern white man who is their next door neighbor, I would say: “Cast down your bucket where you are.” Cast it down, making friends in every manly way of the people of all races, by whom you are surrounded." 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech
- “Any individual who learned to do something better than anybody else-Learned to do a common thing in an uncommon manner-had solved his problem, regardless of the color of his skin, and that in proportion as the negro learned to produce what other people wanted and must have, in the same proportion would he be respected.” *Up From Slavery*
Booker T. Washington

- Post-Reconstruction and Redemption era, Washington wanted to help the black people learn how to better accommodate themselves within the "white" community to help ease the reactions they would be receiving, and through economic and social self-help, they could, not only "prove" to the whites, but also to themselves they were deserving of full political and legal rights.

- Washington did not believe blacks should blame whites for all of their troubles; rather they should begin to pull themselves out of their situations on their own. He felt they needed to learn to do for themselves, so they could “fend” for themselves.

- Washington's teachings were to help blacks assimilate and work from within the system rather than trying to change the system. (Orey, 2004).
Racial Uplift

Tuskegee University (Alabama)

- Industrial v. Academic Education
- “through industry Blacks could gain economic stability, purchase land or homes, and consequently become socially stable” (Brown).
- Carlisle Indian School
W.E.B Du Bois

- (1868-1963) intellectual, scholar, political thinker
- Advocated political action and civil rights plan
- "the Talented Tenth" were his small group of college-educated blacks who were to carry out social change
- Co-founder the NAACP (1909)
- Usually associated with "Radicals"
- Demonstrations and protest for civil rights that flowed directly into the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and exploded in the 1960s (Frontline, 1998)
Racial Uplift

W.E.B. Du Bois’s idea of racial uplift was for blacks to gain the right to vote, gain civil rights, and to be educated.

- “To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.” *The Souls of Black Folk*
- “It is not enough for the Negroes to declare that color-prejudice is the sole cause of their social condition, nor for the white South to reply that their social condition is the main cause of prejudice. They both act as reciprocal cause and effect, and a change in neither alone will bring the desired effect. Both must change, or neither can improve to any great extent."(p.88)...."Only by a union of intelligence and sympathy across the color-line in this critical period of the Republic shall justice and right triumph,” *The Souls of Black Folk*
Conflict

Washington’s view and Du Bois’ view were fundamentally different.
Criticism

- Critics compared Racial uplift philosophy of black conservatives today to be aligned with white racial resentment against blacks (also known as racism) (Orey, 2004).

- “Washington's accommodationist policy contributed to the further disenfranchisement of blacks, the legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority, and steady withdrawal of aid from black institutions of higher learning” (Pierce)


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