
Post-slavery Curtail To American People

In the 1800s the African population was able to accomplish a feat no other race had accomplished in America. They had abolished something so ordinary at the time, that in today's era could be looked at as ordinary as using telephones. Although ordinary at the time, slavery constantly caused so much irreversible damage to families that they had to find an alternative. The abolishment of slavery could have not occurred in America if it weren't for the brave resistance of the African people in America. With works from many brilliant activists such as Booker T. Washington in "Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition Speech" and W.E.D. Du Bois in "The Souls of Black Folk", we can learn more about the effects of slavery. Although slavery was abolished in 1865, the African population in America still endured racism by Euro-Americans.

Although racism was abolished in 1865 the African citizens in America were still vulnerable to scrutiny despite their class or gender. In *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois in the first sentence he talks about an unasked question: "unasked by some through feelings of delicacy... How does it feel to be a problem"(W.E.B. Dubois, 1903, p. 62). From this quote it's obvious that the African people felt they had an aura that Euro-Americans loved to feed on and antagonize. W.E.B. Du Bois combats these harassments by saying, "I answer seldom a word", meaning he rarely answered. As a child W.E.B. Du Bois was also targeted for racism post-abolishment of slavery when he realized he was different from all the other children (W.E.B. Dubois, 1903, p. 62). W.E.B Du Bois stated, "Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil" (W.E.B. Dubois, 1903, p. 62). In this quote W.E.B. Du Bois feels a vast veil is covering him from the rest of the world, depriving him of opportunities. W.E.B. Du Bois had struggled with racism at a young age meant that even age could have not protected African Americans from the ongoing pressure of racism after slavery.

While racism was still present in America post-abolishment of slavery, many can still form the argument saying that is not the case. Using the primary source "Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition Speech " by Booker T. Washington, some can argue that if the African population in America was still targeted for racism how come Booker T. Washington instead of opposing or threatening Euro-Americans comes to a different conclusion. Booker T. Washington says, "To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land... I would say cast down your bucket where you are - cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded" (Booker T. Washington, 1895, p. 59). Booker T. Washington talks about how instead of despising relations with the Southern white man a closer relationship is needed for both races to prosper.

The matter of the fact is that Booker T. Washington understands the importance of this relationship. Booker T. Washington understands like W.E.B. Du Bois that suffering is needed to grow. Booker T. Washington states this, "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 will come to us, must be the result of severe and constant struggle, rather than of artificial forcing" (Booker T. Washington, 1895, p. 61). W.E.B. Du Bois talks about this constant struggle that Booker T. Washington says that is needed for the relationship between

these two races to strengthen. W.E.B. Du Bois says “He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit on by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face” (W.E.B. Dubois, 1903, p. 63).

Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois not only knew there was still racism going on after slavery, they believed “It is at the bottom of life we must begin and not at the top” (Booker T. Washington, 1895, p. 60). Although unfair they understood that to make it to the top they had to work hard. Booker T. Washington stated, “we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be in defense of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil and religious life with your in a way that shall make the interests of both races one” (Booker T. Washington, 1895, p. 60), that mindset could have not only been used in his time but in today’s modern era also.

References

1. Washington, Booker T., 'Address By Booker T. Washington, Principal Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, At Opening Of Atlanta Exposition,' 18 September 1895
2. Du Bois, W. E. B. 1. (1968). *The Souls of Black Folk: essays and sketches*. Chicago, A. G. McClurg, 1903. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp.