

In the early years of the 20th century, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey developed competing visions for the future of African Americans.

Civil War Reconstruction failed to assure the full rights of citizens to the freed slaves. By the 1890s, Ku Klux Klan terrorism, lynchings, racial-segregation laws, and voting restrictions made a mockery of the rights guaranteed by the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, which were passed after the Civil War. The problem for African Americans in the early years of the 20th century was how to respond to a white society that for the most part did not want to treat black people as equals. Three black visionaries offered different solutions to the problem.

- **Booker T. Washington** argued for African Americans to first improve themselves through education, industrial training, and business ownership. Washington believed that his vision for black people would eventually lead to equal political and civil rights. In the meantime, he advised blacks to put aside immediate demands for voting and ending racial segregation.
- **W. E. B. Du Bois** agreed that self-improvement was a good idea, but that it should not happen at the expense of giving up immediate full citizenship rights. He envisioned the creation of an elite group of educated black leaders who would lead African Americans in securing equal rights and higher economic standards.
- Another visionary, **Marcus Garvey**, believed black Americans would never be accepted as equals in the United States. He pushed for them to develop their own separate communities and businesses or even emigrate back to Africa.

All we want is that everybody get behind the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company and send us the necessary amount of money to pay for our first ship and secure other ships so as to carry out our trade contract with the Negroes of Africa, West Indies, South and Central America and these United States. The Association is devoting its time and energy now to building up an international commerce and trade as to stabilize Negro industry. There is much for us to do. In taking the raw materials from the West Indies, South and Central America to the United States, and taking back to them our finished and manufactured products in exchange, we have a whole world of industrial conquest to make and it can be done splendidly if each Negro will give us the support that is necessary.

1. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen. Effort or means so invested will pay a thousand percent interest. These efforts will be twice blessed—blessing him that gives and him that takes. There is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable:

*The laws of changeless justice bind
Oppressor with oppressed;
And close as sin and suffering joined
We march to fate abreast.*

2. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

What do we want? What are the things we are after? As it was phrased last night it had a certain truth: We want to be Americans, full-fledged Americans, with all the rights of other American citizens. But is that all? Do we want simply to be Americans? Once in a while through all of us flashes some clairvoyance, some clear idea, of what America really is. We who are dark can see America in a way that White Americans cannot. And seeing our country thus, are we satisfied with its present goals and ideals?

3. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

The time has come for the Negro to forget and cast behind him his hero worship and adoration of other races, and to start out immediately, to create and emulate heroes of his own. We must canonize our own saints, create our own martyrs, and elevate to positions of fame and honor black men and women who have made their distinct contributions to our racial history. Sojourner Truth is worthy of the place of sainthood alongside of Joan of Arc; Crispus Attucks and George William Gordon are entitled to the halo of martyrdom with no less glory than that of the martyrs of any other race. Toussaint L'Ouverture's brilliancy as a soldier and statesman outshone that of a Cromwell, Napoleon and Washington; hence, he is entitled to the highest place as a hero among men. Africa has produced countless numbers of men and women, in war and in peace, whose lustre and bravery outshine that of any other people. Then why not see good and perfection in ourselves?

4. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which we fought! But it is our fatherland. It was right for us to fight. The faults of our country are our faults. Under similar circumstances, we would fight again. But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land.

We return.

We return from fighting.

We return fighting.

Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.

5. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

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 the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.

6. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating 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 in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

7. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

Some of us believe that this slave race of ours will live in the United States of America and in the future again become law makers for the white race (our slave masters of sixty years ago). Nothing of the kind has happened in all human history. There is not one instance where a slave race living in the same country (within the same bounds as the race of masters that enslaved them and being in numbers less than the race of masters) has ever yet ruled and governed the masters. It has never been so in history, and it will never be so in the future. The hidden spirit of America is determined that it shall never be, caring not what hopes and promises we get.

The only wise thing for us as ambitious Negroes to do, is to organize the world over, and build up for the race a mighty nation of our own in Africa. And this race of ours that cannot get recognition and respect in the country where we were slaves, by using our own ability, power and genius, would develop for ourselves in another country in our habitat a nation of our own, and be able to send back from that country,--from that native habitat -- to the country where we were once enslaved, representatives of our race, that would get as much respect as any other ambassadors from any other race or nation.

8. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

It has been claimed that the Negro can survive only through submission. 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. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years, and has been triumphant for perhaps ten years. 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.*

9. Booker T Washington W.E.B. Du Bois Marcus Garvey

Explain why:

10. Which of the three viewpoints would best serve the interests of African Americans? Site one example from the quotes above to support your answer (3-5 sentences)