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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON'S MODERATE
MEANS TO RACIAL HARMONY

The ascendancy of the African American
educator 1881-1915

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Tässä tutkielmassa on päämääränä tarkastella 1900-luvun vaihteessa vaikuttaneen afro-amerikkalaisen opettajan, Booker T. Washingtonin mielipiteitä Yhdysvaltain mustaihoisen kansanosan elinolojen parantamisesta. Motivaationa tarkastelulle käytetään Washingtonin ajatusten aikanaan herättämää kritiikkiä. Booker Washingtonia, joka seurasi Frederick Douglassia afro-amerikkalaisten johtajana, syytettiin liiasta kuuliaisuudesta valkoihoisille. Useat mustan älymystön edustajat pitivät hänen kannanottojaan luopumisena mustaihoisten ihmisoikeuksista.

Materiaalina tutkielmassa käytetään ensisijaisesti kahta Booker T. Washingtonin omaelämäkertaa, hänen puheitaan, lehtiartikkeleitaan ja muita julkaistuja kannanottojaan. Edellämäinnittu materiaali on muokannut tämän tutkimuksen käsittelyn teemojen valintaa. Saatavilla olleiden lähteiden perusteella painopisteiksi valikoituivat: koulutus, työ, integraatio, poliittinen osallistuminen ja rotuun perustuva väkivalta.

Tuskegeessä Alabamassa olleen koulun perustajana ja rehtorina Booker Washingtonilla oli selvä kanta afro-amerikkalaisten kouluttamisesta. Hän korosti vastikään orjuuden kahleista vapautuneen kansan tarvitsevan perustason ammattikoulutusta; akateemisen opiskelun aika tulisi hänen mukaansa myöhemmin. Työn suhteen Washington piti tärkeänä, että mustaihoiset kokisivat kaikki tehtävät, huolimatta niiden mahdollisesta yksinkertaisuudesta, tärkeinä ja arvokkaina. Hän uskoi vankkumattomasti, että kun mustaihoiset aloittaisivat 'pohjalta' he pystyisivät nousemaan yhteiskunnassa osoittamalla kykynsä ja ahkeruutensa. Mustien integraatiosta ja heidän osallistumisestaan politiikkaan, sekä yleisemmin rotujen välisestä kanssakäymisestä, Washingtonilla oli selkeän varovainen kanta. Hän näki tärkeäksi, että yhteiskunnallisten muutosten tuli tapahtua ikään kuin 'omalla painollaan', ilman pakottamista. Erityisen tärkeää hänen mielestään oli rotujen välinen yhteistyö.

Tutkielman tarkastelun tuloksena voi tiivistää, että Booker T. Washingtonin asema 1800-luvun lopun ja 1900-luvun alun Yhdysvalloissa oli herkkä. Hänen konflikteja välttelevä periaatteensa oli tiettyyn rajaan asti perusteltu, koska afro-amerikkalaisten asema oli kaikenkaikkiaan vielä hyvin epävarma. Radikaalisti kovempi linja olisi mitä ilmeisimmin heikentänyt Washingtonin vaikutusmahdollisuuksia valkoisen Amerikan suuntaan.

Asiasanat: African American history. Industrial education. The Hampton Institute. The Tuskegee Institute. Washington, Booker T.

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1 INTRODUCTION

I made up my mind that opportunities that had been denied him [the African American] from without could be more than made up by greater concentration and power within.

- Booker T. Washington in *My Larger Education* (1911)
(Harlan ed. 1972a:418)

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was an African American educator who followed Frederick Douglass as the 'official' leader and spokesman of black Americans. He was born a slave on a plantation, and having to rely heavily on his motivation to learn, managed to get an education. Washington became the founder and principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881. The institute concentrated on industrial education for Blacks.

Booker T. Washington is a controversial figure in American history. He was strongly criticized by many prominent African Americans for being too submissive to white Americans' views. Washington did not want to upset white Southerners by forcefully demanding unconditional civil rights for black Americans. He called for co-operation between the two races and believed that by patiently working together with the whites, African Americans would prove their worth and in this way eventually gain full civil rights.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Booker T. Washington's views on a number of issues concerning African Americans' situation in the post-Civil War United States. The primary motivation for the study is the criticism Washington faced for his opinions. That criticism will be used as a hypothesis. Therefore, an attempt will be made to find out whether, according to the sources used, Booker Washington's approach could be justified, and if so, to what extent. Since it is known today that the position of African Americans did not improve radically until much after Booker Washington's ascendancy, it would be easy to judge his visions as much too optimistic and unrealistic. This is the reason why, in this paper, I will, insofar as it is possible, try and see the situation as it was at the time, approximately

at the turn of the century. The goal is to be critical and, at the same time, sensitive enough to be able to detect the motivation behind Booker T. Washington's reasoning.

The title of this study confines the discussion between 1881 and 1915. 1881 was the year when Booker T. Washington established the Tuskegee Institute, which was to become his life-long career. In 1915 he died which is therefore chosen as the year to close up the period under discussion. Between those years Booker Washington became a public figure in the United States. He gave speeches on a variety of issues concerning African Americans. Characteristic to Washington's leadership was his insistence on moderation in dealing with white Americans, hence the phrase 'moderate means' in the title.

Primary sources in this study include volumes 1 and 2 of *The Booker T. Washington Papers* (1972), edited by Louis R. Harlan. Especially the first volume, *The Autobiographical Writings*, is important. It contains two of Washington's autobiographies *The Story of My Life and Work* (1900) and *Up From Slavery* (1901), extracts from his other autobiographical writings and some articles Washington wrote for newspapers. The second volume, *1860-89*, consists of letters, speeches, articles and other texts. The biography *Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in American Life* (1955) by Samuel R. Spencer Jr., as well as August Meier's *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915; Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (1969) will be used as basic material here. Some Booker T. Washington's articles etc. used in this paper are from books that mainly function as secondary sources in the thesis.

Secondary sources in this study include books about the history of the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries by such historians as Kolchin, Altschuler, Takaki, Smedley, Walker and Lindsey. More specific works on African American education, voting etc. will be used as secondary sources.

The structure of the thesis will be a combination of chronological and thematical approaches. Chapters 2 and 3 of the background section, will be based on a chronological presentation and the central chapters of the thesis, 5, 6 and 7 will be thematical.

After the Introduction, chapter 2 will present an account of the main turning points in the history of African Americans approximately between the Civil War and WW I. It will concentrate on relevant issues of the period, with an emphasis on the African Americans' optimism immediately after the war and the following disillusionment towards the turn of the century.

Chapter 3 will be the biography of Booker T. Washington. Washington's career and the policy he advocated can be seen as analogous with his life story. He was successful in his life because of his unwavering resilience and he thought the same method would be effective for the elevation of the whole people of African Americans. This is the reason why Booker T. Washington's life is an important part of the thesis.

Chapter 4 will discuss the criticism against Booker T. Washington. His contemporaries', especially W.E.B. DuBois', arguments will be presented, in order to lay the foundation for the initial hypothesis mentioned above. More modern historians' views on the ideology of Washington will also be discussed.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will form the core of the thesis. In these chapters there will be a discussion of various issues directly concerning the position of black Americans in American society during Washington's career, especially in the South, and the development thereof. The discussion will be based on Booker T. Washington's statements on the issues, and it will therefore be limited in its comprehensiveness and themes by the availability of the material. Every chapter of the three will deal with a separate theme.

Chapter 5 will be about African American education. Booker Washington was an educator and for that reason his statements about a correct direction in education are relatively numerous. The chapter will begin with a section on industrial education followed by another on the Hampton Institute, where Washington got his own education. The main part of the chapter will be about Booker T. Washington's views on African Americans' education and his career as the founder and principal of the Tuskegee Institute.

Chapter 6 will be a discussion on the kind of work Booker Washington thought would suit the African American. Slavery, with its humiliating forced labour, was behind and Washington urged black Americans to acknowledge the

importance of seeing 'the dignity of labour' in every work they did. He believed that it would be possible for Blacks to rise in society even if they at first had to be contented with simple occupations.

Chapter 7 will discuss the general integration of Blacks to American society. Separate sub-sections will include Washington's opinions on political activity, segregation and basic human rights. In general terms Booker T. Washington felt that any permanent changes to the Southern society had to come from within, ie. they had to be initiated by white Americans and not by African Americans' own agitation.

In the conclusion an attempt will be made to bring the discussion in the thesis together and thereby shed more light on the hypothesis at the beginning of this paper, namely the accusation by for example DuBois that Booker T. Washington's policy was too conciliatory and accomodationist toward the white America for it ever to be able to secure the rights of African Americans. I realize that it would be unrealistic to assume that this work could produce a definite answer to that question, simply because of the limited source material. My aim, therefore, is to be able to uncover some of the factors that made Booker Washington choose his policy in the way he did, despite the challenges to his leadership, especially later on in his life.

2 FROM EMANCIPATION TO JIM CROW

2.1 The Reconstruction falls short

In 1865, the year the Civil War ended, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States put an end to slavery (Kolchin 1994: 210). In the war the North had had two goals: on the one hand to secure the unity of the country, and on the other to end slavery. Although, in the end, there could not be any doubt as to the winning side, the peace agreement proved to be a hard one to achieve. Besides the obvious reluctance on the part of the South to yield to the demands,

there was the principle concerning individual states' rights to consider. (Olsen ed. 1980: 3.) The balance between federal guidance and state independence was difficult to find. Altschuler (1982:2) states that those who most eagerly wanted equal opportunities for both races also shared a common belief, at the time, that governmental activeness suffocated individual enterprise. He goes on to claim that it was indeed these people's ambivalence towards federal programmes that hastened the end of the period known as the Reconstruction.

Olsen (ed.1980:1) claims that "the radical Reconstruction of the Confederate South was the final bewildering act in the great drama of the American Civil War." He condenses the period into three factors: the lifting of an enslaved race, an effort to completely change the political system, as far as black Americans' participation was concerned, and, as a reaction to these two, the violence and terrorism of organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. The elevation was meant to be achieved with the help of both the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, the former of which gave ex-slaves official freedom. The Fourteenth Amendment defined United States citizenship and disallowed any state from unlawful deprivation of "life, liberty and property". (Altschuler 1982:3,5.) The redistribution of political power called for enfranchisement of African Americans. This was eventually secured by the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870. (Kolchin 1994:211.) The organized terrorism and violence Olsen mentions as the third defining feature of Reconstruction was not overcome by federal force. Kolchin (1994:234) states that despite the fact that the Ku Klux Klan was eliminated to a large extent in the early 1870s, there were a number of similar groups to take its place.

Voting rights was a key issue in the North's efforts to secure both the future of the Union and human rights for African Americans. Furthermore, Olsen (ed. 1980:4) states the most important aspect of the Reconstruction programme to have been the fact that it moved "the burden of determining the ultimate results of the Civil War from the national government to black voters" in the South. This view seems quite plausible when one considers how strictly the ex-Confederate states were 'disciplined' after the war. Henry A. Bryant Jr. (Baydo ed. 1982:36), for example, states that the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 "led to the military occupation of the South... and the formation of new...governments" in Southern states.

Considering the above, enfranchisement was perhaps the only way to try and maintain a relatively healthy union between the North and the South without too much compromising the civil rights of the newly freed people. Eventually, in fact quite soon, however, it was the civil rights that had to give way to the unity of the nation.

The race question in post-Civil War America was by no means resolved by formal legislation. As Smedley (1993:226) puts it: “[E]mancipation...did not bring freedom from the debilities and tyranny of the racial worldview.” While class division was temporary and situational in American society, racial barriers could not be crossed (Smedley 1993:227). In the first optimistic months following Emancipation, African Americans waited anxiously for equal opportunities like for example the redistribution of land, but their hopes were never really realized. From the beginning of the 1870s Blacks saw their chance for real equality ebb away. The new governments, that the Reconstruction had brought to the South, were being replaced with ‘old-style’ ones in Southern states and the excitement of African Americans during the immediate post-war period changed into extensive disillusionment. (Kolchin 1994:231-232.) According to Olsen (ed.1980:5-6) “the entire spirit of Reconstruction...essentially had come to an end by 1877” , and so the decade-long radical Reconstruction experiment lost every bit of its momentum and the inevitable end result was that it came, little by little, to a grinding halt.

2.2 Separate and unequal

The failure of Reconstruction was a bitter disappointment for African Americans. Kolchin (1994:216), however, points out the fact that although “[h]istorians continue to debate how radical ‘Radical Reconstruction’ really was”, for “Southern blacks, the vast majority of whom had been slaves until 1865, there can be no doubt that Reconstruction represented an extraordinary departure.”

Now free to move, a lot of African Americans chose to leave the South. Initially, during Reconstruction, black migration had been relatively rare, but as the disillusionment of the post-Civil War South began to appear, with equality nowhere

in sight, moving northward increased. For instance, in 1879-80 a large number of black Southerners moved to Kansas after having heard of "cheap and plentiful land" there. (Kolchin 1994:232.)

Those who remained in the South saw their political power diminish as they faced complications in their voting, obviously designed to curtail the effects of the Fifteenth Amendment. Mississippi and South Carolina, in 1890 and 1895 respectively, were first to include disfranchisement in their constitutions. (Meier 1969:19.) These laws included, for example, "literacy tests, poll taxes", prerequisites about the material prosperity of voters and "the grand fatherclause". They were often enough to deprive African Americans of the vote.(Altschuler 1982:21; Kolchin 1994:236.) The application of the literacy and understanding tests illustrates well the plight African Americans were placed under. Lawson (1976:11) explains that had these tests been applied the way they were supposed to, they would have stopped a sizeable number of both black and white people from voting. In practice, however, it was left to the white officials to determine whether the person in question passed the 'understanding' part of the requirement which was enough to qualify him for the suffrage. Often the decision was made based on skin colour alone.

With fewer opportunities to take part in the running of their lives, black Americans were beginning to lose hope in the United States government's ability to protect their civil rights (Altschuler 1982:18.) Racially motivated violence also increased, directed especially at better-off African Americans who had managed to secure a higher position in society, and this violence "set the tone for political discourse and social relations in the post-Reconstruction South".(Kolchin 1994:235.)

The ultimate form of violence, lynching, was a prominent feature, especially in Southern communities. According to Walker (1991:30-32) almost four thousand African Americans were lynched between 1889 and 1946. He discredits, parallel to Smedley's argument above (p.9), the theory that class antipathy was the cause of this violence. Walker states that the racial horror was aimed at African American people as a whole.

Meier (1969:21) says that all over the nation, also in the North, prejudice against African Americans increased towards the turn of the century. He goes on to claim that even many of those who had been speaking openly for the cause of black Americans in the first place, had been “paternalistic rather than equalitarian”. Now they too had become more and more disillusioned, when the high hopes that they had attached to African Americans’ progress right after the war, began to get diluted in the racially motivated reality. Meier argues that, as the war memories faded into the background, reconciliation, as well as nationalism, became more important for white Americans. And so the North, little by little, came to accept the way Southern states discriminated against African Americans.

Between 1887 and 1891 the first significant wave of state laws segregating black Americans from whites in public facilities, the so-called “Jim Crow laws”, came into reality. For instance, in 1890 Georgia and Louisiana created railway car rules which, on paper, provided for “separate but equal facilities”. In reality, however, Blacks had to travel in inferior cars.(Meier 1969:23,72.) Segregation found its way into every section of society, and as a result funding for services for Blacks was usually severely limited, which made for poorer quality. (Kolchin 1994:236.)

African Americans had little choice but to try and make the best of it, and they even took pride in their own institutions. In 1895 in Baltimore, for instance, a local black newspaper vigorously protested against hiring white instructors to teach in black schools of Baltimore.(Clift et al. eds.1962:50.) Those Blacks who welcomed separate institutions, usually saw them only as temporary stages towards full equality. They provided work, for instance, for black teachers, who were not often hired to teach in integrated schools. (Meier 1969:48.)

In 1896 the Supreme Court supported segregation in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the possibility for progress for black Americans began to seem very remote indeed. At the turn of the century the fresh idealism of the Reconstruction’s promise had hit rock bottom. Most rural African Americans found themselves either tenant farmers or sharecroppers. They had to work “a white man’s land with a white man’s plow and a white man’s mule.” (Takaki 1993:138.)

It might not be too much exaggerated to say that all that the Civil War accomplished for African Americans was their official freedom. Officially they were no longer anybody's property, but in reality the improvement of their status was questionable, to say the least. In fact, Kolchin (1994:234) claims that because the ex-slaveholders had lost their valuable 'property', they ceased to have any, selfish or otherwise, interest in the wellbeing of the freedpeople. Therefore, the problem of racial worldview was left untouched in American society. Kolchin (1994:236) sums up this issue at the beginning of the twentieth century by saying that "an uninformed observer of the South in 1910 might well be pardoned if he or she concluded that the Confederates had won the Civil War".

Towards the first World War, African Americans moved in increasing numbers to northern cities. Meier (1969:274) mentions the desire to improve their economic wellbeing as the biggest single motivation for Blacks to move North. The conditions in the city ghettos, however, soon proved to be less than perfect. As the black population increased in northern cities, so did problems. An all too familiar obstacle for migrants from the South, segregation, caught up with them even in the North. In Harlem, New York City, for example, the clergyman of a white congregation said to African American members that they would not be welcomed any more, and that they would have to go to a black institution in the area. (Osofsky 1971:41). So much for loving thy neighbour.

To some black leaders WWI looked like an opportunity to prove the worth of the long oppressed race. They based their reasoning, for example, on the hope that if Blacks "shouldered their share of the war effort", white America could just realize "the incongruity of granting them equal opportunity to die but not to live". (Altschuler 1982:29.) This kind of optimism, however, was not rewarded, when after the war things went back to 'normal' and African Americans still found themselves at the bottom of the social ladder. (Altschuler 1982:30.)

By 1915, the year Booker T. Washington died, after the first fifty years of freedom, black Americans had thus not progressed very far from the bondage of slavery. The actual ball and chain had changed into 'the colour line', a phrase Du Bois used to use. As Smedley stated above (p.9), unlike class borders that could be crossed in this Land of Opportunity, racial barriers could not be crossed.

3 BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

3.1 Born a slave

Booker Taliaferro Washington was born on April 5 1856 in Franklin County, Virginia. His birthplace was at a small plantation near a little town of Hale's Ford. The immediate family consisted of his mother, Jane, his older brother, John, and a sister, Amanda. (Harlan ed. 1972a:9-11, 215-217; Harlan ed. 1972b:xxv.)

Washington's mother was a cook at the plantation. He thought very highly of her. She had to work hard but, according to Washington, was always able to provide a secure environment for her children. In *The Story of My Life and Work* he tells that the first time he ever realized they were slaves was when, one day while the children were still asleep, he heard his mother pray that some day she and the children could become free (Harlan ed. 1972a:9). After reading Booker T. Washington's autobiographies, taking into account that he obviously did not want to talk unrespectfully of his mother, it is quite obvious that Jane Washington really tried to guide her children to a 'righteous' way of living, or as Booker Washington himself puts it, "...the lessons in virtue and thrift which she instilled into me... will never leave me" (Harlan ed. 1972a:10).

Booker T. Washington never knew exactly who his father was. The only piece of information he heard was that his father was a white man from a nearby plantation (Harlan ed. 1972a:216). In his autobiography *Up From Slavery* Washington writes very little of his father, which is no surprise for the obvious want of information. However, what strikes the reader as odd is the tone in which Washington quite casually comments that he does not find any special fault in his father who had simply been "another unfortunate victim of the institution" that the nation had suffered under (Harlan ed. 1972a:216).

This conciliatory comment comes relatively early on in the autobiography and, in a way, it introduces the reader to Booker T. Washington's way of thinking. The pattern seems to remain unchanged in both *The Story of My Life and Work* and *Up From Slavery*. Washington does not want to condemn categorically the white

southerners and blame them for oppressing African Americans. He presents people as products of society and not vice versa. In his view social norms are like laws of nature put upon people regardless of their skin colour.

In other words, it could be argued that Booker Washington saw slavery more or less as a kind of unfortunate circumstance people of both colours found themselves under the influence of in the United States, especially in the South. He insists in *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed. 1972a:223) that the white man also suffered from slavery, since having to work became considered to be a symbol of inferiority. And so consequently, with no training, white people were left with no skills in everyday tasks. On the other hand, however, Booker T. Washington recalls some instances of extreme cruelty he witnessed as a boy. He mentions a whipping of an uncle of his as the memory that remained with him in connection with slavery. "As each blow touched his back the cry, 'Pray, master! Pray, master!' came from his lips..." (Harlan ed. 1972a:12.)

Booker Washington describes his childhood surroundings in the autobiography *Up From Slavery*. The cabin where his family lived was also the cookhouse of the plantation. It did not have windows, just openings which let the light inside and made it very cold in the winter. The cabin did not have a floor made of wood, only earth and inside there was a hole in the ground for sweet potatoes to be stored in. (Harlan ed. 1972a:216.) Very much like the cabin, everything else was poor and hard in little Booker's life. He describes one instance when he, during the Civil War, was given a new shirt. It was made of flax and was apparently very stiff and irritating to the skin before it became "broken in", as it were, in use. (Harlan ed. 1972a:11.)

As a boy at the plantation Booker accompanied white children to school every now and then. He was never allowed inside the school house, and when he asked his mother the reason for this, he was told that to learn by reading in a school was not allowed for a black child. Washington explained later that it was the notion of books containing something forbidden that excited him and made him swear to himself that he would not be satisfied till he found out what was in those books. (Harlan ed. 1972a:415-416.)

When African Americans got their freedom at the end of the Civil War, Booker, less than ten years old at the time, along with all the ex-slaves at the plantation, were read “the Emancipation Proclamation” by their former master. The moment of freedom was obviously a happy and long-awaited one, but also challenging. Booker T. Washington observed adults around him as they went back to the cabins after their freedom had officially been declared. “The great responsibility of being free, of having charge of themselves, of having to think and plan for themselves and their children, seemed to take possession of them.” (Harlan ed. 1972a: 224-225.)

Booker Washington’s mother had a husband who, during slavery, belonged to another plantation. He had apparently escaped during the Civil War and ended up in West Virginia. After Emancipation the Washington family started for Malden in Kanahwa Valley, West Virginia, to live with this man and start a new life as a free family. It took them many weeks to reach Malden which was a small town with salt furnaces as the main industry. (Harlan ed. 1972a:226-227.)

Although now officially free, by no means was life easy for Booker and his family. Opportunities for really improving their standard of living were non-existent. Jane Washington’s husband had secured work in the salt and coal industries of the area, and both Booker and his brother had to work too, despite their age (Harlan ed. 1972a:15).

Booker T. Washington’s desire to learn by reading books, the way he had seen white children do at the plantation, was still in his heart. At Malden that desire reached new heights when he saw a young black man read a newspaper aloud to a crowd of black people. In *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:15) Washington remembers having thought at the time that “if I could ever reach the point where I could read as this young man was doing, the acme of my ambition would be reached.”

A school was opened for coloured children at Malden. It was the first school for Blacks in that area. Booker Washington would have been more than willing to attend the school, but he could not convince his step-father to let him stop earning money in the salt furnace. Somehow, after a while, Booker managed to get the teacher of the school to teach him privately in the evenings after each day’s work

had been completed. After some time at this kind of night school he reached an agreement with his step-father. Booker would be allowed to go to school every morning at nine provided he still worked at the furnace a few hours, both before and after school. (Harlan ed. 1972a:229-230). However, to his disappointment, young Booker could not attend the day school with any great regularity. In fact, after some time, he had to resort to looking for a suitable teacher to teach him at nights, again having to spend days working. (Harlan ed. 1972a:233.)

While working in the coal mine, Booker T. Washington overheard two workers talk about an excellent school for African American people. The school was "The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute" at Hampton, Virginia. At once Booker Washington made up his mind to try and go to the Hampton Institute to study. (Harlan ed. 1972a:236.) In his autobiographies it is left quite unclear what it was exactly that made Washington so excited in the prospect of attending the Hampton Institute. At any rate, according to his explanation, he became almost obsessed with the idea of going to that school.

Booker T. Washington had to wait for about two years after hearing about the Hampton Institute for the first time before he could go there. During the major part of that time he worked in the household of Lewis Ruffner, who owned the salt furnace and the coal mine. Washington lived with the Ruffner family and worked in all kinds of tasks around the house. Mrs. Viola Ruffner was Washington's 'supervisor', and she was very strict about every possible detail. Further on in *Up From Slavery* Washington remembers Mrs. Ruffner with appreciation and values the lessons he learnt from her equal in importance with all other education he got in his life since. (Harlan ed. 1972a:236-237.)

Then, finally, in the latter part of 1872 Booker T. Washington left for Hampton, Virginia, with not much money or things to take with him. Hampton was about five hundred miles away from Malden. Washington could not pay for the entire journey at once. He travelled by train and stage coach and even walked before having to stop at Richmond, with less than a hundred miles to go. At Richmond Booker Washington spent some time and got a job helping to unload a cargo ship. With those little earnings he was able to complete his journey to Hampton and start what, in retrospect, was clearly one of the most important periods of his life. (Harlan

ed. 1972a:238-240.)

3.2 The Hampton experience

General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, son of educational missionaries, opened a manual labour school for African Americans at Hampton, Virginia, in 1868. He was the Freedmen's Bureau supervisor, and extremely prejudiced in matters of race. He supported the notion that the black race was helplessly deficient in character to ever learn, by themselves, to act or live in a civilized, 'white' manner. In Armstrong's mind the most important feature of education for Blacks was therefore manual labour. That was the backbone of the curriculum at the Hampton Institute, especially during the first year of the course. Armstrong tried to motivate African Americans by urging them to devote themselves to labour in order to "grow in character and purpose". (Spivey 1978:19-20.) Spivey (1978:22) goes on to argue that the underlying educational outlook of the Hampton Institute was to make the black population more useful and exploitable, as a labour force, for the white society, and at the same time show the African Americans their rightful place in white America.

When Washington reached Hampton he did not have money with which to pay for board or tuition. He managed to secure the position of janitor of the school and could therefore start his studying. (Harlan ed. 1972a:240-242.) Studying at Hampton was work in every sense of the word for Booker T. Washington. In addition to having to work to pay his board and tuition, the curriculum of the school, as was stated above, consisted largely of working. In his autobiographies Washington values the experience he got at Hampton as being of paramount importance in his growing up. The things that he mentions as important include formal norms or etiquette concerning, for instance, behaviour at meals and personal hygiene (Harlan ed. 1972a:244). It is obvious from Booker Washington's texts that he genuinely learned to see the white middle class society and its norms as the model for African Americans in their struggle towards better life.

At Hampton there were debating circles for the students. Booker T. Washington enjoyed them very much and no doubt learned in them important lessons in public speaking and formulating his opinions in an efficient form. (Harlan ed. 1972a:249.)

After the second study year at Hampton, Booker was able to return to Malden, for the first time after he had begun studying, for the summer vacation. During his stay his mother died. She had not been in good health even when Booker had left for Hampton two years earlier, but all the same, her death came as a shock and was definitely a hard blow to the family. (Harlan ed.1972a:238, 249-251.)

Booker T. Washington returned to Hampton, and in 1875 he graduated from the Institute. In the following autumn he went back to Malden and became the teacher of the same school he had attended as a boy. (Harlan ed. 1972a:23-24.) The next years Washington spent teaching. In 1878 he went to study at the Wayland Theological Seminary, in Washington D.C. He stayed eight months at the institution and could compare the more theoretical approach that this school had to the 'down-to-earth' policy of Hampton. In *Up From Slavery* he clearly states that while in the Wayland Seminary he thought that students from the Hampton Institute were better prepared to help the cause of African Americans in their elevation than students from more theoretical schools like the Wayland Seminary, who "knew more about Latin and Greek... but... [who] seemed to know less about life and its conditions as they would meet it at their homes."(Harlan ed.1972a:259-260.)

Booker T. Washington seemed quite determined, already at this early point in his career as an educator, to endorse industrial schooling and play down demands for purely academic education for African Americans. It should be noted, however, that although Washington implies having already made up his mind about the overriding benefits of industrial education very early on in his life, the aforementioned example about the Wayland Seminary appeared in *Up From Slavery* in 1901 when Washington had already been the principal of the Tuskegee Institute for two decades. Therefore it is quite obvious and also understandable for Washington to have presented his past experiences as a logical and dynamic progression towards the educational model he considered the best at the time. Furthermore, when reading his autobiographies, one gets the impression that he,

most of all, wanted to present a harmonious picture of his life. Almost everything seems to have worked out fine in the end. This leaves the reader with a responsibility to be careful in drawing conclusions.

In 1879 Samuel Armstrong invited Booker T. Washington to return to Hampton for post graduate studies and at the same time teach a night-class. Washington accepted the offer and started teaching students who worked up to ten hours during the day and then studied in the evening. After the first year as a teacher at Hampton, Washington was placed in charge of a group of Native American students who had been permitted to enter the school. (Harlan ed. 1972a:26-27,265.) According to Lindsey (1995:96) Washington had two things in mind in connection with educating Indians. Firstly, he wanted to be positive and encouraging towards this other race which, in his opinion, was capable of becoming 'civilized'. He hoped African Americans would show by their example that it was possible. Secondly, Washington wanted to show white people that accepting and supporting members of a different race could be the right way to educate them and that that education would not be wasted but would be beneficial for all.

Booker T. Washington's work as the teacher of the Indian class ended in 1881, when he was asked by Samuel Armstrong to go and start a school for coloured people in Tuskegee, Alabama (Harlan ed. 1972a:271). At Tuskegee Washington would begin his life work.

3.3 The Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute

In June of 1881 Booker T. Washington travelled to Tuskegee, at Macon County in Alabama. It was a small town with something around one thousand African Americans and the same number of whites. Washington went to Tuskegee with the expectation of finding there some kind of a building and proper equipment so that he could start teaching right away. To his disappointment this was not the case. Washington had to start looking for a suitable place for the school and, after a while, had to settle with a little cabin near a black Methodist church. The idea was that the church could also be used as a gathering room. (Harlan ed. 1972a:272-274.)

In addition to getting the school ready to be opened, Booker Washington spent the first month of his stay at Tuskegee travelling around Alabama. He wanted to learn how black people actually lived in the area and, at the same time, he took the opportunity to tell them about the new school he was opening. The conditions Washington found visiting black homes, especially in rural Alabama, were very poor. He found families, at times with relatives, living in small cabins with often hardly sufficient facilities for taking care of personal hygiene. Booker Washington felt that he had a huge task ahead of him in trying to help these people lift themselves from poverty. In *Up From Slavery* he once again underlines his faith in industrial education as the right means. "To take the children of such people as I had been among for a month, and each day give them a few hours of mere book education, I felt would be almost a waste of time." After the visit to the countryside Washington decided that the Tuskegee Institute would be opened July the fourth 1881. (Harlan ed. 1972a:274-278).

In the beginning there were thirty pupils, many of whom had been teaching in public schools and were thus already adults. Booker Washington noted to his delight that his students were very eager to learn. The number of students increased constantly and, after just some thirty days, there were close to fifty pupils to be taught at the Institute. During the second month of the term, Olivia A. Davidson came to Tuskegee to be the second teacher. She had also studied at Hampton, and was later to become Booker T. Washington's second wife. (Harlan ed. 1972a:280-281.)

At Tuskegee, Washington wanted to teach his students to be as independent as possible of the white society. His ambition from the beginning of the Institute was to have the students not only build the buildings but also make everything else needed at the school, as for instance furniture. In *Up From Slavery* in 1901, he gives an example of this. "I am glad to say that the industry of mattress-making...has been improved to such an extent that at the present time... [t]he mattresses that come out of the mattress-shop at Tuskegee are about as good as those bought in the average store." (Harlan ed. 1972a:307.) This comment clearly illustrates Washington's belief in making oneself indispensable to the society. In his address at a meeting of the Educational Association, in Madison Wisconsin at 1884, Booker T. Washington put this belief into a simple form, by stating that when the

black man knew how to make what white people wanted and must have, he would gain respect (Harlan ed. 1972a:321-322). Washington naturally based his point of views on his own experiences. He had struggled for an education and reached a position of which he could not have dreamed as a boy. Washington had, as an individual, played by the rules of white America, and succeeded. Now he advocated the same for the entire people of African Americans.

In the summer of 1882 Booker T. Washington married Fannie N. Smith. She was also of Malden and had graduated from The Hampton Institute. They had a daughter but the marriage was cut short by Mrs Washington's untimely death in May 1884. (Harlan ed. 1972a:34.) In 1885 Booker Washington was married to his first co-worker at Tuskegee, Olivia Davidson. After only four years of marriage Olivia Washington died. She and Booker T. Washington had two sons.(Harlan ed. 1972a:320.) Washington was to marry for the third time. In 1893 he married a Mississippi-born Margaret James Murray. She had graduated from the Fisk University, in Nashville Tennessee, and had worked as a teacher at Tuskegee already many years before marrying Booker Washington. At the time of the beginning of their married life, Margaret Murray Washington was "Lady Principal" of the Tuskegee Institute and she was an important figure in the running of the school. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century she was active, among other things, in arranging a discussion society for women on the school premises. (Harlan ed. 1972a:357.)

For a long time the story of the Tuskegee Institute was one of a constant search for possible investors, to help economically in raising new buildings on the school grounds. The ever increasing number of students also obviously necessitated the hiring of new teachers, which naturally required money (see Spencer 1955:69-70). Much of the money needed to run the institute had to be got directly from people who wanted to support the cause of educating African Americans. This meant that Booker Washington and the rest of the staff had to travel a lot, especially in the big cities in the North, to describe their work at Tuskegee and, quite simply, ask for money. Washington refused to call this activity begging or identify himself as a beggar. In *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed. 1972a:312), for example, he states as one of his principles concerning securing money from rich people to be that "the mere

making known of the facts regarding Tuskegee...has been more effective than outright begging. I think that the presentation of facts, on a high, dignified plane, is all the begging that most rich people care for." It is obvious that in order to get money from people Washington and the other teachers had to try and make as good an impression on them as possible. This meant that they had to think carefully what they said. Although Booker T. Washington did not want to be called a beggar, it goes without saying that while the Tuskegee staff were trying to secure the economic future of their institute, the saying 'beggars cannot be choosers' must have fitted them well.

No doubt, partly because of this positive, unthreatening image, and partly because of his obvious talent in public speaking, Booker Washington became a popular representative of African Americans. White audiences were usually satisfied with Washington's addresses. He did not want to make trouble, he wanted to make friends. Booker T. Washington was invited to speak in different meetings and, little by little, he made himself and his work at Tuskegee known throughout the country. The best known of Washington's addresses is the one he delivered at the opening of the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition in September 18 1895. That speech made Booker Washington a national figure.(Spencer 1955:87-88,98.)

In the Exposition there was to be a section introducing visitors to the achievements of African Americans after Emancipation. Booker T. Washington was asked to take control of the designing and erecting of the African Americans' building and the selection of exhibits in it. Washington declined the offer, explaining that his energy and attention were needed at Tuskegee. The Board of directors of the Exposition decided that, since African Americans had quite an important part in the Exposition, there should be a representative of the race giving an address in the opening ceremonies. Booker T. Washington was given an opportunity to prepare a speech for the occasion. Washington took the invitation very seriously. He acknowledged that it would be the first time an African American would be allowed to speak on "the same platform with white Southern men and women on any important National occasion." (Harlan ed. 1972a:325-326.)

The content of the address will be analyzed in more detail in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this paper. Suffice it to say here that Booker T. Washington wanted to

encourage both white Americans and African Americans to extend their hand to one another. He called for co-operation and tried to convince the Southern white population that they would find their black neighbours to be their most loyal and helpful friends. (Spencer 1955:100-101.)

Washington included a short poem, the writer of which is not indicated, in the address. These lines capture the essence of Booker T. Washington's ideology concerning the two groups of people living together in the Southern United States:

The laws of changeless justice bind
 Oppressor with oppressed;
 And close as sin and suffering joined
 We march to fate abreast. (Harlan ed. 1972a:332.)

The speech was well received by white Americans. In *Up From Slavery* Booker Washington concentrates on the favourable feedback he got for his words at Atlanta. He mentions that after sending a copy of the address to President Grover Cleveland, he got a very positive and encouraging reply from the President (Harlan ed. 1972a:335). Later, in a short paragraph, Washington speaks how some coloured people and newspapers began to get more critical of his address. He nonetheless keeps faithful to the optimistic tone of this autobiography when he, right after touching on the criticism, concludes that "later these reactionary ones seemed to have been won over to my way of believing and acting." (Harlan ed. 1972a:336.)

In reality the criticism was of a permanent kind. For instance, W.E.B. DuBois was very critical of the address which he, some five years later, named "The Atlanta Compromise". DuBois went so far in his opposition to Washington's opinions as to accuse the Tuskegeean of virtually accepting "the alleged inferiority" of African Americans. (Ducas ed. 1972:165,171.) Woodward (1983:227) claims that the speech was commonly considered to be an approval of the inferior status for African Americans.

The Atlanta address made Booker T. Washington the leading African American. He filled the void Frederick Douglass' death early the same year had left. Washington became an ever more popular public speaker and he was asked to speak and write articles across the country. He interpreted this success, and indeed the privilege of having been allowed to give a speech at the Exposition, as a

definite sign of progress in the position of African Americans. In *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed. 1972a:339) he comments the Atlanta Exposition by uttering his unwavering conviction that “there is something in human nature which we cannot blot out, which makes one man, in the end, recognize and reward merit in another, regardless of colour or race.”

When Booker T. Washington was travelling and had to be away from Tuskegee and his work there, which he estimated at the turn of the century to add up to approximately six months in the year, he kept a close contact to the staff of the institute. Washington had arranged that reports were sent to him wherever he happened to be. The reports gave him information about everything and anything that had something to do with the school. (Harlan ed. 1972a:353, 355.)

From extremely humble beginnings The Tuskegee Institute had become a school with a staff of over eighty and more than a thousand students. In 1898 the institute received its most famous visitor when the President of the United States William McKinley went to Tuskegee. This visit became a big event at Tuskegee. During that day the school was eventually visited by over six thousand people, and Booker T. Washington’s name and reputation became more and more widely known in the United States. (Harlan ed. 1972a:127, 129, 352, 382.)

Booker T. Washington made three trips to Europe. The first of these was in 1899 when he and his wife had a vacation travelling in mainland Europe and the British Isles. On his third visit in 1910, Washington decided that, instead of a simple vacation, he wanted to learn what the living conditions of the poorer classes were. (Spencer 1955:175; Harlan ed. 1972a:358-360,449.) In *My Larger Education* (Harlan ed. 1972a:452) in 1911 Washington explained that after having seen how, and in what conditions, the working class people in London lived, he had realized that despite oppression and prejudices, African Americans still had a good opportunity to fulfill their ambitions cultivating the land and living, as he put it, “in God’s open country”.

Back home again Booker Washington’s schedule was, as ever during his professional career, booked solid. Even diabetes Washington developed during the final years of his life, could not slow him down. (Spencer 1955:193.) In addition to his main work at Tuskegee, Booker Washington, among other things, attended

numerous meetings and gave speeches. All this meant of course that he had to travel all the time between Tuskegee and wherever he was to speak at or visit.

In the autumn of 1915 Booker T. Washington showed signs of exhaustion. His closest associates manage to persuade him to take a fortnight's break in September. After the relaxing two weeks Washington continued where he had left off. Towards the end of October, Booker Washington collapsed in New York and was taken to hospital. According to the doctors he was "suffering from complete nervous exhaustion and arteriosclerosis". When he was told that his condition was very serious and that he might not live very much longer, Washington wanted to return home. Against the doctor's advise, he took a train and travelled once more to Tuskegee. Booker T. Washington arrived there in the evening of November 13. He passed away the following morning, November 14 1915. (Spencer 1955:194.)

4 CRITICAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST WASHINGTON

According to Meier (1969:25) Booker T. Washington's Atlanta address, with which he acknowledged the leadership of black Americans in 1895, summed up the change in African American ideology from "political to economic action". Under Washington's ascendancy, Meier goes on, "self-help" and duties gained prominence over protest and rights. He concludes that Booker Washington's address expressed African American "accomodation to the social conditions implicit" in 1877 when the decade of Reconstruction had finally failed and become history.

In 1895, the year when Booker Washington became the leading African American after Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) became the first African American Ph.D. to graduate from Harvard. DuBois was to emerge as the most influential black thinker in the U.S. after the turn of the century when he, in 1903, wrote the book *The Souls of Black Folk* (Ducas ed. 1972:165.)

DuBois was critical of Booker T. Washington's leadership, and the Tuskegeean's policy. In *The Souls of Black Folk* he wrote a chapter about

Washington and in it he expressed his views on Washington's ideology. DuBois claimed that Booker Washington represented the old outlook of "adjustment and submission" in African American thought. He argued that Washington asked Blacks to surrender, at least temporarily, "political power... civil rights" and "higher education" for African American youth. DuBois further on explained that because of those three demands, Booker T. Washington faced "the triple paradox of his career". He argued that firstly, Washington was trying to make black American craftsmen entrepreneurs and proprietors, but that they could not possibly maintain their position if they were not allowed to vote. Secondly, according to DuBois, Washington's insistence on "thrift and self-respect" were in direct conflict with his advocacy for "silent submission to civic inferiority". Thirdly, DuBois attacked Washington's depreciation of higher learning for Blacks, showing that it was paradoxical for the Tuskegeean to do so because "neither the Negro common schools, nor Tuskegee itself, could remain open a day" without teachers who had been educated in black colleges. (Ducas ed. 1972: 165-166, 171-172.)

Later in *The Souls of Black Folk* W.E.B. DuBois stated that Booker T. Washington's policy implied three things. One, that the South's current approach towards African Americans was justifiable by the degradation of Blacks. Two, that improper schooling was to be blamed for African Americans' slow elevation; and three, that the further elevation of Blacks depended mainly on how much effort Blacks themselves were ready to put in. DuBois counter-argued these three assumption one by one, saying that firstly, the African Americans' position had mostly been caused by "slavery and race prejudice". Secondly, he continued, basic education had been slow because it had taken time to train African American teachers in higher institutions. Thirdly DuBois claimed that while African Americans had to struggle to lift themselves, they also needed the support of white Americans to succeed. Illustrative of the breach between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois is DuBois' comment in *The Souls of Black Folk* on the solution to the race problem: "We cannot settle this problem by diplomacy and suaveness, by 'policy' alone." (Ducas ed. 1972:175.)

In addition to DuBois, William Monroe Trotter was the most forthright critic of Booker Washington. Both DuBois and Trotter argued that by giving up the

struggle for civil rights and being happy with industrial education, African Americans “perpetuated their own servility”.(Altschuler 1982:25.) Trotter was the editor of the Boston Guardian which was the most famous anti-Tuskegee paper in the beginning of the 20th century. William M. Trotter accused Washington of being a “coward that... skulked all his life far from the field of combat”. He also called attention to the “remarkable piece of deception” on Washington’s part when, despite the Tuskegeean’s allegedly antipolitical outlook he, privately, had claimed to be a factor in the president’s African American appointments.(Meier 1969:174.)

Obviously because of Trotter’s influence, Boston became the most active centre of Booker T. Washington criticism. Chicago and Philadelphia were also significant concentrations of anti-Bookerite agitation in the North. Although protest attitudes were more common in the North, there was also protest against Washington in the South among African Americans. Notably in the more liberal, intellectual atmosphere of Richmond and Atlanta anti-Washington groups surfaced. In the latter of these cities, W.E.B. DuBois was the leading figure together with the President of the The Atlanta Baptist College, John Hope. (Meier:1969:175.)

Meier (1969:180-181) argues that considering “the power structure and the nature of race relations” at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was very improbable that the African American radicals could have been successful against Booker T. Washington with his white supporters. However, Washington’s position became increasingly unstable because of organizations like the Niagara Movement, which heavily decreased Washington’s influence in the Afro-American Council. In 1906 the president of the Council, Walters, stated, in a manner that must have shocked Booker Washington, that “it is nonsense for us to say Peace! Peace!, when there is no peace... We use diplomatic language and all kinds of subterfuges, but the fact remains that the enemy is trying to keep us down and we are determined to rise or die in the attempt”. In 1907 Washington was eventually left practically outside of the running of the Council, which then continued but failed to work in an organized fashion and there is in fact no evidence to show that it met anymore two years later. (Meier 1969:180-181.)

The continuation, as it were, of for example the Niagara Movement, was the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People, NAACP,

which was established in 1910. Meier (1969:182-184) argues that Booker T. Washington could probably have done nothing to prevent the success of the NAACP. The continuing worsening of conditions marked Washington's 'reign' and led to "ideological disillusionment with his program". Meier concludes that Washington's decreasing political influence, specifically after 1913, lessened the support other leading figures gave him and that his death "removed him entirely as an element in the power structure."

A more recent historian, Walker (1991:29-30), claims that after the Civil War, Booker T. Washington was the main representative among Blacks of the view that by resilient work African Americans could create "harmonious race relations and that there would be racial bonding along class lines". Walker defines this view as having been based on the premise that if Blacks "abandoned those cultural traits that distinguished them from whites they would be accepted by their oppressors." He states that Booker T. Washington's plan of "social rehabilitation was an exercise in blaming the victim". Walker argues that Washington made the mistake of depending on class interest to overcome prejudice. His optimism, Walker goes on, was unfounded because the South was totally committed to "white supremacy and no exceptions to this rule were to be made".

Further, Spencer, who wrote Booker Washington's biography, claims one of the failings in Washington's policy to have been that he put too much trust on his white neighbour's "enlightenment", which would have been vital for the success of the type of co-operation Booker T. Washington called for. (Spencer 1955:199.)

Walker (1991:32) continues that Washington's vision of African Americans rising in society and thus proving their worth could not work. He states that middle class African Americans epitomized what white Americans feared, namely Blacks "out of their place". Walker argues that Booker T. Washington did not realize that the programme he espoused was "perceived as subversive of a natural order". This 'natural order' assigned Blacks to be inferior or in bondage forever.

Although Booker T. Washington was criticized and certain aspects of his programme for the uplift of African Americans were opposed by several of his contemporaries, and though historians during the 20th century have detected weaknesses in the Tuskegeean's approach, he was, and still is, acknowledged as a

great leader. Even DuBois, in the aforementioned book in which he criticized Washington in 1903, acknowledged his leadership. DuBois (Ducas ed.1972:168) stated that Booker T. Washington stood as “the one recognized spokesman of his ten million fellows, and one of the most notable figures in a nation of seventy millions”.

Another interesting anecdote is the fact that Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican activist, was in contact with Booker T. Washington in 1915, and their plan was to meet in Alabama. Washington’s death, however, ruined those plans. Garvey had been impressed by the autobiography *Up From Slavery*, and in 1914 he worked at Jamaica to establish there an education system modelled by the Tuskegee Institute for black Jamaicans. (White 1991:6-7.)

Brawley (1921:306-307)states that Booker T. Washington gave hope to unlearned African American masses who really needed the Tuskegee type instruction to be able to manage in the treacherous post-Reconstruction reality, with for example the mortgage system tying the inexperienced farmer to the soil. As a further example Brawley mentions the National Negro Business League (of which more in chapter 6), created by Booker Washington in 1900, which gave a significant boost to the creation of for instance banks or industrial enterprises, particularly in the South. Brawley concludes that nobody could question the greatness of Booker T. Washington and “his very definite contribution”.(Brawley 1921:307; Meier 1969:118.)

Apparently to Washington’s credit, Meier (1969:103) claims that his publicly expressed outlook stayed remarkably unchanged all through his public career. The only alterations, in Meier’s view, were: firstly, Washington’s slightly more adjusting approach after 1895, and secondly, an increasing emphasis on “racial solidarity and economic chauvinism” at the beginning of the 20th century.

Without delving into Martin Luther King Jr’s philosophy or comparing his contribution to that of Booker T. Washington, it is noteworthy that King mentioned Washington in his speech at a mass meeting at the time of the Montgomery bus boycott. He urged African Americans not to become bitter despite the mistreatment they had experienced and, in relation to his non-violent campaign, reminded his audience of Booker T. Washington’s words: “‘...’Let no man pull you so low as to make you hate him.’” (Boulware 1969:246-247.)

5 EDUCATION FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN

What end are we seeking for in education?...Is the ability to master and converse in foreign languages; to travel through the wonderful intricacies of geometry and trigonometry education, or the end we seek for? No; they are but the means to an end... nor shall the end be reached till every passion, every appetite be controlled, every prejudice, all malice, all jealousy be banished from the heart, and every faculty of the mind be so governed that the united and harmonious action of body, mind and heart shall lead us up, till we live in that atmosphere where God dwells, and that love shall take such complete possession that it may be said of us, it was of him who was greatest of all, that we did no sin but went about doing good.

- Booker T. Washington in 1888 (Harlan ed. 1972b:428,430)

5.1 A slow start

The initial steps towards general education for African Americans was the urge to convert slaves to Christianity. Especially active were the Quakers in the 18th century. In fact many of them also thought that, in addition to giving African Americans Christian training, slavery should be abolished. During the 1830s, however, slaveholders in the South took a firmer grip on their 'property'. They obviously feared education would encourage slaves to demand independence. (Clift et al. eds. 1962:34-36.) In general, in Southern education the emphasis was on well educated leaders, and the masses, Blacks but also whites to a considerable degree, were left pretty much without proper education (Boorstin 1965:217).

Laws to prevent slaves from acquiring reading and writing skills were passed. Right up to the end of slavery, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia had laws, that dated back to the 1830s, completely prohibiting attempts at teaching literacy to African Americans. (Kolchin 1994:129.)

After Emancipation, black Americans saw education as an important feature of their new, free life. It became a symbol of freedom, and at times entire families attended school together. (Kolchin 1994:221.) The Freedmen's Bureau was a federal organization established at the end of the Civil War to aid in the resettlement of freed African Americans. Most efficient the agency was in

education. It made major contributions to schools in the South providing books and other material as well as paying for moving costs for teachers from the North. First almost all of the teachers were white, however in 1870, the bureau could report that out of the total number of 3300 teachers, more than one third were African American. (Stewart 1976:195; McGary and Lawson 1992:64.)

After Reconstruction, segregation set in also in education. Separate schools usually resulted in decreasing funds for black education. In 1900, on average, states in the South spent on a white child almost twice the amount of money they spent to educate an African American child. Usually school terms lasted only a few months while congested little cabins or church houses had to be used as class rooms. Furthermore, a large number of pupils could only attend school irregularly. (Clift et al. eds. 1962:43-44.)

5.2 Industrial education

Industrial education model for educating African Americans was a movement that started already in the early 1800s. Booker T. Washington was a stern believer in industrial education, and he brought the trend into a climax when he, towards the end of the 19th century, became the bestknown spokesman for it. Meier (1969:85,99) furthermore states that in the 1880s industrial education became temporarily the leading ideology in American education. He goes on to argue that “Washington became great and powerful not because he initiated a trend, but because he expressed it so well.”

Booker Washington became the leader of black Americans after Frederick Douglass died in 1895. Interestingly enough, also Douglass had supported the industrial education model. Already in the mid-1800s Frederick Douglass had advocated economic progress to Blacks and making themselves, ie. those who were lucky to be freedmen at the time, valuable for the society as the means to elevate the race and achieve their rights as citizens. Douglass maintained that what was needed to accomplish this was “trade schools rather than liberal arts colleges”. (Meier 1969:85-87.) Rytönen (1993:100) states Douglass’ argument to have been

that after African Americans had received education in trades, and thereby “risen to a higher standard of living, higher education could be pursued”.

Meier (1969:85-86) argues that the definition of industrial education was fairly elusive “as to both its content and its purpose”. Different interpretations ranged from seeing it simply as a teaching methods with which to acquire straightforward manual abilities to including “technological and engineering schools” in the ‘industrial family’. What is more clear, however, is that industrial education was usually seen as a way to increase the mental discipline of students and to teach them to appreciate the “dignity of labor”. Meier (1969:86) points out an interesting paradox between competing interpretations of industrial education in the 19th century. He states that some viewed it as a way to help “the laboring classes to rise in the world”, while others claimed it to be, on the contrary, a way to adjust them to “their subordinate social role”. It was indeed this vagueness, Meier concludes, that enabled the term ‘industrial education’ to “serve so effectively as a platform for Negro education in the years before World War I”.

During the 1880s industrial schools, both white and black, became more and more fashionable in the influential circles in the U.S.A. For example the John F. Slater Fund, created in 1882, began to support black institutions with a vocational outlook. Obviously when it became apparent that industrial schools were better supported economically, many black schools introduced trades and farming in their courses.(Meier 1969:90.) Booker T. Washington opened the Tuskegee Institute in 1881 and, considering the above, it was obviously a good time for a school with emphasis on practical training. No doubt Washington steered the institute in the industrial direction because he thought it would that way become successful, but his point of views had actually been strongly influenced by his time at the Hampton Institute. Meier (1969:90) claims that some black schools “paid lip-service” to the industrial idea in order to get money, and that only some schools created programmes as effective and comprehensive as the ones at Tuskegee and Hampton.

5.3 The Hampton Institute

Booker T. Washington was educated at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. There, under the strict supervision of Samuel Chapman Armstrong (1839-1893), he learned to appreciate the 'Armstrong-style' education as the only proper way to help the African American. (see eg. Harlan ed. 1972a:21, 242-243.) Samuel Armstrong's parents were educational missionaries. In the 1840s the family moved to Hawaii, where the father, Richard started teaching the Natives. His opinion of the Hawaiians, and of all non-white peoples for that matter, was purely racist. He taught the native children that Hawaiians were inferior to white people. Education that in Richard Armstrong's view was needed was one that would "instill in the Hawaiians the virtues of hard work and Christian morality". (Spivey 1978:18.)

Samuel Armstrong adopted his parents' views, and in 1868 he opened the Hampton Institute. His starting point was the principle that Blacks "were their own worse enemy". According to Armstrong, a large number of black Americans were "shiftless... lazy... grossly immoral." He wanted to try and improve their character, and labour was to be the guiding light in the remaking of the African American. Armstrong claimed that "manual labor schooling provided the highest likelihood of 'civilizing'" the black man. On the foundation of work the "ideal character" would be built and eventually the race dilemma be resolved. (Spivey 1978:19-20; Lindsey 1995:107.)

Samuel Chapman Armstrong was apparently a very charismatic man. Every account Booker T. Washington, for instance, gave of him seems to applaud Armstrong and lend him an air of almost super-human abilities. In Washington's autobiography *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed. 1972a:242-244) he praises Armstrong, on the one hand, as a hugely influential and impressive leader: "One might have removed from Hampton all the buildings, class-rooms, teachers, and industries, and given the men and women there the opportunity of coming into daily contact with General Armstrong, and that alone would have been a liberal education." On the other hand, Booker Washington characterizes Armstrong as having been very unselfish. "[H]e was... of that Christlike body of men and women who went into the Negro schools at the close of the war by the hundreds to assist in lifting up my

race.” Washington goes on to tell that near the end of his life Samuel Armstrong spent two months at Washington’s home at Tuskegee and, although already then paralyzed, Armstrong still worked for the same cause he had devoted his life to.

In a newspaper *The Daily Republican*, in 1875 in Springfield (Harlan ed. 1972b:66), there was a lengthy story of a party of white visitors to the Hampton Institute. The writer complimented the school for its “civilizing, industrial, moral and religious influences” on the students. Without those influences, the article went on, the “vices and vicious antecedents” of African Americans, namely “ignorance, idleness, licentiousness, [and] intemperance” would cause the ruin of the race.

Although this article is very paternalistic and prejudiced, it was obviously written in a fairly positive tone towards the Hampton Institute and black education in general. The function of the text was no doubt to present the work that was being done at Hampton, and that way try and make it, as well as other similar institutions, more known and supported among white Americans. Therefore the writer painted a picture of an inferior race, that needed the help of the superior one. In other words what was implied was that African Americans were so helpless alone that they were actually unable to threaten the position of the majority and so white Americans would only show their greatness if they were to help Blacks for instance by giving them instruction in institutions like the Hampton.

Spivey (1978:21) states that Samuel Armstrong saw education for African Americans also from a lot more cynical and selfish viewpoint than simply helping an ignorant race. Armstrong understood that black labour, as a remnant of slavery, underlined the wealth of the nation. For instance, railways in the South and the tobacco industry were, to a large extent, created by the exploitation of the African American. Armstrong believed very strongly in the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race and, Spivey goes on to claim, reached the conclusion that the black race existed for the sole purpose of forming the labouring classes. In 1874 he expressed the purpose of the Hampton Institute not to be the making of skillful academics, because the South needed instead “stalwart men and women”. Also Northern industries found Hampton graduates to be just what was needed. For some time the North received a large number of African Americans trained at the institute. In the 1890s Armstrong, however, began to see that the South was losing its invaluable

labour force, and he started to suggest to Blacks that they should remain in the South where the black worker would be freer than in the North, where unions controlled workers. (Spivey 1978:21-23.)

Especially in the first year of course at Hampton, students mostly worked outside the school room in variety of unskilled tasks. The actual class room activity was restricted to a couple of hours in the evenings. (Spivey 1978:20.) In a catalogue for the study year of 1874-75 at the Hampton Institute (Harlan ed. 1972b:37), the basic principles for the studying arrangements were stated. Students who were more than eighteen years old had to pay one half of the monthly ten dollar fee in cash and the rest was to be made up by working for the institute. Students who were eighteen or under paid a fee of six dollars.

Working was also a part of the curriculum at Hampton. In the catalogue mentioned above, the function of physical work was clearly stated: "Labor is required of all for purposes of discipline and instruction." Hampton graduates were thought to go and teach the skills they had acquired as well as to spread the 'civilization' they had received to Blacks at their home towns and villages. In the aforementioned catalogue it was estimated that at least 95 per cent of the graduates would become teachers. (Harlan ed. 1972b:25,37.)

An African American lawyer T. McCants Stewart visited the Hampton Institute in 1883, and put his impressions of the school onto paper. He described what he saw when touring the different departments, like the class where shoes were being made or the dress-making class for girls. Mr. Stewart explained that after seeing the excellent work that was being done at Hampton, he thought he would like to have his own sons attend the institute. They would learn a trade and "grow strong in the love for work". He continued that in case his sons would have "the capacity and desire to qualify for a 'top round in the ladder'", there would be "time enough to think of Harvard and Yale and Edinburgh..." (Fishel and Quarles 1967:319-320.)

5.3 Booker T. Washington on education

In 1909 in *The Story of the Negro* (Harlan ed. 1972a:416), Booker Washington told that as a young boy he had heard people say that African Americans could not be educated the same way white people were being taught at school, and that money and effort used in ordinary schooling for Blacks would consequently be wasted. Booker T. Washington wrote that these remarks had made him swear to himself that he would do the uttermost in his power to show the world that African Americans were capable of getting an education and of using it. Further on in *The Story of the Negro* Washington pondered whether he would have been so keen to get an education in the first place, had he not heard such degrading estimates of the learning ability of African Americans.

Booker Washington's outlook on education was essentially one of self-help. He saw difficulties as a challenge and wanted black Americans to pick up the gauntlet and win the respect of white America. In a speech in 1888 at Montgomery before the Alabama State Teachers' Association (Harlan ed. 1972b:430-432) Booker Washington explained that in general education should entail three levels of development: intellectual, spiritual and physical. Without any one of these aspects education would not be effective in fitting students "for great responsibilities and successful work". In the biography *Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in American life* (1955:52-53) Spencer states Booker Washington to have explained that industrial training should be coupled with "thorough academic and religious training". Washington also described the Tuskegee Institute as a school giving "integrated training of the head, heart and hand". Spencer continues that on a more practical level the Tuskegeean advocated education of "a strictly utilitarian nature" that would teach the African American current methods in farming and trades. That would be the only way for him "to integrate himself successfully into the economy of his region."

In 1886 Booker Washington gave a speech (Harlan ed. 1972b:309) in which he described an event that had made this integrating, at least partially, a reality at Tuskegee. He told that at the beginning of the school some whites of the area had opposed having a black school in the county. The Tuskegee Institute

started to manufacture bricks as student labour, and as the community had not had a brickyard before, the school began to improve its image among the white citizens, as it were. Now anyone who needed bricks to build anything could get them close by, instead of bringing them far away like they had been forced to do before. Washington continued that when people found out about the useful industry the school was involved in, they became more interested in the institute, and also black education in general. This is a good example of the way Booker T. Washington thought African Americans should be educated, and on what the focus, in his opinion should be.

In the Montgomery speech mentioned above, in 1888, Washington called for concentrating on one specific subject properly, and not teaching black Americans a little of everything. He said that “[t]he jacks-at-all-trades are too numerous”. Training should fit the student “to do one thing well”, because when he learned to do something better than anyone in his area, his skills would be demanded. Washington claimed that too often education for African Americans had “failed to produce special men for special work.”(Harlan ed. 1972b:433.)

In 1903 in an essay *Industrial Education for the Negro* (Fishel and Quarles 1967:364-365), Booker T. Washington started by stating that “[f]or two hundred and fifty years... the redemption of the Negro was being prepared through industrial development”. While not in any terms accepting slavery, Washington claimed that in a way every Southern plantation had been an industrial school. The training slavery had given black Americans, Washington continued, had however been inadequate in that it had lacked training of the mental side of people.

Mental training should therefore be one aspect of education. However, as Meier (1969:103-104) states, Booker Washington blamed African Americans for forgetting the practical skills they had possessed during slavery. Washington claimed that, when the Civil War had ended, Blacks had practically had the monopoly on the Southern labour market. He wanted industrial schooling to help black Americans re-take their hold of the work market. If that failed it would economically be the end of the African American. Should industrial education succeed in this undertaking it would help the race rise into equality.

In the essay *Industrial Education for the Negro* (Fishel and Quarles 1967:365-366), Washington explained that industrial education was not meant to teach African Americans to work the way they had been working in slavery. Washington stated his conception of the education in question to be that it consists of teaching black Americans “how not to work” by teaching them to have the nature, like “air, steam, water... and electricity” work for them. Booker Washington claimed that industrial education was the foundation on which the future of the race could have been built. From that foundation, he concluded, would eventually come prosperity which was an unavoidable stage towards “the opportunity for the enjoyment of literature and the fine arts”.

In his biography Spencer (1955:51) states that Washington wanted African Americans to crush the stereotypical image of Blacks, which had been created in slavery, by the “inculcation of a new set of values in keeping with accepted American tradition”. In 1882 (Harlan ed. 1972b:192), for example, Washington named basic household skills as something that had to be actively taught to African American girls. He stated that if the normal black girl “does not learn how to properly keep house while at school she will never learn it”. Booker Washington’s goal was obviously to make Blacks ‘proper Americans’ in compliance with the white, or European, tradition and what was needed, in his mind, to accomplish that was much more than just academic training.

Consequently, Booker Washington criticized the post Civil-War African American policy in education. In *Industrial Education for the Negro* he gave an example of how, often when visiting black homes in the South, he had met people able to “converse intelligently upon abstruse subjects”, but unable to prepare proper meals and, as a consequence, having to contend with “poorly cooked”, simple dishes day after day. (Fishel and Quarles 1967:365-366.) Booker Washington also disliked the status abstract education seemed to give educated African Americans when they returned to ‘their folks’. “If they ‘could speak a few words in some strange tongue’, it made their parents proud and happy”; when they got education it seemed to raise them to a superior level and thus move them further from reality. Furthermore, Washington detected room for improvement in the conduct of many an African American teacher. Too often they “yielded to the temptation ‘to keep everything

connected with education in a sort of twilight realm of the mysterious and supernatural”“(Spencer 1955:54.)

Booker Washington’s basic educational philosophy was therefore always to try and connect the class room studies with problems in actual life. In an article *What I’m Trying to Do* (Ducas ed. 1972:162-163) in 1913 he told the following story as an example of bringing “real life” into the school room. A little time after having moved to Tuskegee, Washington had been asked to visit a school. While listening the teacher teach her pupils “the art of embroidery in the most up-to-date and approved fashion”, Washington had noticed that the children’s clothes had not been in a good shape, some needing buttons and so on. Booker Washington had asked the teacher if she would change that particular class so that the emphasis would be on the maintenance of everyday clothes. So, consequently, the pupils had learned to look after their clothes by, for instance, sewing new buttons where they had fallen off. This way, Washington concluded, in addition to the children also the parents of the pupils learned to appreciate education as something really valuable in improving their standard of living. (Ducas ed. 1972:162-163.)

What Booker T. Washington tried urgently to convince African Americans of, also in connection with education, was that they should start “at the bottom”. Like the above ‘button story’ illustrates, he saw it to be imperative that first African Americans, as a whole, learned to perform tasks related to their everyday existence, in agriculture, home and so forth. Washington felt strongly that there were no short cuts to the elevation of a race. He believed that every race must travel the same road to be developed. (Ducas ed. 1972:157.) In 1882 in a speech for the Alabama State Teachers’ Association (Harlan ed. 1972b:194-195) Washington mentioned the first Europeans to land on the shores of New England as examples of this development. He explained that first they had become “the masters of the soil” and then, little by little, they had “built up a civilization which is a beacon light to the world”. As has been stated above, Booker Washington saw resilient industriousness in any occupation as the foundation for the lifting up of African Americans. In the speech just mentioned he eloquently presented a motivation for this belief: “...if the foundation of the building be weak it matters little how much we paint and decorate the walls, the weakness still remains”.

In his famous 'Atlanta Compromise' Booker T. Washington directed his words to both African Americans and white Americans. He thanked white America, especially Northern philanthropists, for supporting black education. To members of his own race Washington told that "[n]o race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem". He explained that the biggest danger for African Americans was that they might overlook the reality that the majority of Blacks would have to live by the products of their own hands. Washington also underlined that black Americans would improve their condition as they learned to distinguish between the 'substantial' and the 'superficial'. (Harlan ed. 1972a:331,333.) The above opinions from the Atlanta speech illustrate Booker Washington's educational philosophy. Obviously the difference between the substantial and the superficial is very close to that between higher, more theoretical on the one hand, and industrial, more practical education on the other.

Making education touch everyday life by teaching skills needed in farming, cooking etc. seems reasonable enough. In this respect Booker T. Washington's arguments can hardly be challenged. In fact, some of his critics, for instance W.E.B. DuBois, agreed with Washington on the need to have at least some industrial education for black Americans.(see eg. Fishel and Quarles 1967:367.) Booker Washington, however on his part, does not seem to have answered very clearly to his critics' demand for higher education in order for example to prepare teachers to teach in all kinds of schools, industrial and others. In 1903 Washington stated that he would not restrict African Americans to industrial pursuits, but at the same time he underlined that the foundation for higher pursuits would have to be laid by industrial schooling (Fishel and Quarles 1967:365).

Booker T. Washington wrote in 1911 in *My Larger Education* (Harlan ed. 1972a:427-428) that his black critics were mostly graduates from Northern colleges who did not really understand the Southern conditions, since for the most part they had only gained knowledge from books. Washington usually answered the criticism against industrial education with statements like the one above. He would quickly dismiss the critics as naive and ignorant of the realities in the South. He went quite far in his paternalistic tone, explaining that these young African Americans had only studied abstract subjects and going on to rather casually explain, in *My Larger*

Education, that “[w]hen I meet ... such unfortunate and misguided young men... I cannot but feel the most profound sympathy for them... they are not wholly to blame for their condition”.

Booker T. Washington’s reaction to higher, more abstract, education for African Americans was vague. Like Meier (1969:104) says, Washington denied that he tried to belittle the importance of more theoretical education, and that his children as a matter of fact benefited from it. In any case, Booker Washington saw no other way than practical training to improve black American masses’ position in the American society.

In 1888, in the aforementioned speech at Montgomery (Harlan ed. 1972b:432), Booker T. Washington admitted that the best possible training would be one that would give students “the broadest and most complete knowledge of the arts, sciences, and literature of all the civilized nations”. He went on, however, to rationalize that since there was not enough money or time to accomplish this ideal, a choice had to be made. Therefore, in Washington’s opinion, the emphasis had to be placed on educating students in subjects that would be important in practice for them. This speech is one of the rare moments, in the sources used here, when Booker T. Washington stated clearly his stand on higher education. Usually he seems to have more or less evaded the question by, for example, telling stories of young African Americans, who had been eagerly studying classical languages or European history, and eventually had ended up with a lot of unrelated, detailed knowledge they never needed and could not use.(see eg. Harlan ed. 1972a:428.)

After reading Booker T. Washington’s texts in relation to his opinions on education, it becomes apparent that Washington seems to have guarded, almost jealously, his conviction towards teaching trades to Blacks. There can be seen at least two reasons that might explain why this was the case.

Firstly, one gets the impression that somehow Booker Washington did not want to compromise the ideology he had developed on education, not even by engaging in a thorough discussion on the pros and cons of different educational emphases. A cynic might even argue that Washington did not want to risk the compromise he had made with the white South by making another with his Northern critics.

Secondly, as Booker T. Washington became more and more successful and famous an educator towards the end of the 19th century and his Tuskegee Institute had grown year by year, he had become known and appreciated in the philanthropic circles in the North. Thus he had received handsome funds from them to keep the institute going and growing. Washington's success offers another explanation for the unwavering espousal of his chosen educational policy. This explanation could be found in Washington interpreting his, and Tuskegee's, success as indicative of the correctness of the policy. It has to be remembered that Booker Washington stated, in *Up From Slavery* in 1901 (Harlan ed. 1972a:338-339), this time concerning political rights, that African Americans should not force their way into the free exercise of these rights, but that it should be the society, ie. white America, that acknowledges African Americans' rights and makes them true parts of the nation. Therefore it is easy to see how Washington undoubtedly interpreted the economic success of industrial schools, like Hampton and Tuskegee, to mean that the white America was sincere in its support and that the support would eventually lead to equal rights. So, to Washington, it would have seemed foolish to 'bite the hand that feeds'. Booker Washington's conviction appears to have been based on the belief that any kind of agitation would have been wrong, because it could only have yielded temporary results in the race question. Meier (1969:98) states that Washington saw "the function of industrial education as a platform of compromise between the white North, the white South, and the Negro", in other words a compromise that secured the co-operation of white Americans.

5.5 The Tuskegee Institute

In February 1881 in Montgomery Alabama, the General Assembly of Alabama passed a statute to establish a school at Tuskegee to educate African American teachers. It was enacted that a 2000-dollar annual grant would be given for "the maintenance and support of the school". Tuition was to be free for the students on the condition that they pledged themselves for a two years' engagement teaching in a public school at Alabama after they had graduated. The commissioners of the

institute contacted Samuel Armstrong at Hampton in May 1881. They asked him to recommend a suitable person, presumably a white man, to take charge of the school. Armstrong replied that Booker T. Washington, who was teaching at Hampton at the time, was “[t]he only man I can suggest... clear headed, modest, sensible, polite and a thorough teacher and superior man”, and that “I know of no white man who would do better.”(Harlan ed. 1972a:271; Harlan ed. 1972b:107-108,127.) In *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed. 1972a:271) Booker Washington tells that the commissioners’ reply to Armstrong was, in essence, “Booker T. Washington will suit us. Send him at once.” As was described in some detail earlier (in section 3.3), Booker T. Washington went to Tuskegee in June 1881, and July 4th was the date for the opening of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute.

In July 14th 1881, in an article for the Hampton Institute newspaper *The Southern Workman* (Harlan ed. 1972b:141), Booker T. Washington stated that to succeed an institution like the Tuskegee needed to operate on a ‘boarding school’ basis. That would be an effective, if not the only, means to teach young African Americans those “correct habits” without which they would not have the knowledge that was needed to take care of their bodies and to develop their character and the training would therefore be incomplete. In the same article he also stressed that a school for coloured youths must offer the students a possibility to pay for their board by working, simply because the majority of families sending their children to school were not able to pay the money required. That way also, Washington claimed, the students would “learn the true dignity of labor”.

In December 1881, some five months after the opening of the school, Booker Washington wrote to *the Southern Workman* (Harlan ed. 1972b:159-161) and explained that the farm that had been purchased for the institute to be permanently located at, after school activities had initially been conducted in very poor conditions, was now completely paid for. Washington wrote that the plan was to start cultivating the land when the weather permitted. That way the students would be helped in that they would be able to earn money and learn farming. Booker Washington was sorry to report that many a student had had to stop attending the institute for lack of money, and that that was probably the thing that most slowed down the progress of Southern education.

It is obvious that Washington got the model for the Tuskegee Institute straight from Hampton. The basic philosophies, as well as the everyday routines of the two schools reminded each other very much. Of course this is no surprise, since in addition to Washington having successfully studied at Hampton, it was indeed Samuel Armstrong who had strongly influenced in Washington's getting to be the one to start the Tuskegee Institute. He had, no doubt, become convinced that the promising young man would continue in his foot steps.

Like Armstrong at Hampton, Booker T. Washington was extremely strict in the running of the Tuskegee Institute. The daily programme was planned and executed with military-like precision. In his autobiography *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:53) Washington presents the schedule of a typical day at the institute in 1886. The entire day, from the "rising bell" at five o'clock in the morning to the "retiring bell" at half past nine in the evening, was divided into periods of varying lengths. As the institute was a boarding school, cleaning of the rooms, for example, was an integral part of the daily routine for students, with proper inspections to make sure of the results. It does not take but a glance at the time table of the ordinary day at Tuskegee to see that the idea was indeed to instill thrift and industriousness in the students, and in so doing make them models for African Americans to follow.

The Tuskegee Institute was a school with a dual character to it. On the one hand, it was an industrial school teaching basic manual skills. On the other hand, it was an institute giving students knowledge in more theoretical areas. In a catalogue of the institute in 1882 (Harlan ed.1972b:169-172) the basic framework of the academic subjects for each of the four years it took students to complete the course, is presented. The English language, mathematics, geometry, vocal music and gymnastics feature in the curriculum during each of the four study years. During the first three years also history was taught. In the last two years the students were introduced to the literature of American and British writers. For the fourth year there are some interesting titles for subjects in the catalogue, as for instance: "zoology and botany", and "chemistry and mineralogy".

It may perhaps be argued that Booker T. Washington wanted to give an impressive presentation of the young institute by stating the subjects taught in such

a formal manner in the catalogue. After all, at the beginning the school premises had been very modest indeed. However, the list of courses shows clearly that the Tuskegee Institute was very much a school offering comprehensive instruction in a variety of subjects. Spencer (1955:81-82) comments on the more theoretical side of the Tuskegee curriculum by stating that each lesson had a direct link to the every day reality. This would motivate students to see the point in trying to learn the information in question. In the carpentry class, for example, students worked out mathematical problems concerning how to use wood economically when cutting it into required lengths. Booker T. Washington summed up this approach: “An ounce of application... is worth a ton of abstraction.”(Spencer 1955:82.)

The institute was undoubtedly one of the 'flag ships' of industrial education. However, taking into account the above, it cannot have been the aforementioned curriculum that made it 'industrial'. In a summary it might be said that the arrangements for students to pay their board by working; the promotion of the 'dignity of labour' mainly through industrial departments at the school; the basic outlook on society and how black and white Americans should live together, in other words that African Americans should try and find their position by producing something white Americans needed; as well as Washington's demand that every student took part in manual labour, as for instance in erecting new buildings on the school grounds were all features of the Tuskegee Institute that made it 'industrial'.

However, Booker Washington did require all pupils to take part in both the practical and the theoretical side of the curriculum. His opinion was that either one would be inadequate on its own.(Spencer 1955:64-65.) In 1901 (Harlan ed.1972a:381-382) Washington commented on the industrial programme of the Tuskegee Institute. He explained that there were in all nearly thirty industrial units, giving students competence for a variety of employments. He stated that the demand for Tuskegee graduates was so big that they could not supply nearly as many skilled people as they were asked to. Booker Washington distinguished three goals the industrial programme of Tuskegee had. Firstly, to educate students to be able to work in tasks that were to be done in the South at the time or, like he himself put it: “to be able to do the thing which the world wants done”. Secondly, all

graduates were to “have enough skill, coupled with intelligence and moral character”, for them to manage economically; and thirdly, the aim was to give students the feeling that “labour is dignified and beautiful”.

Horace M. Bond has stated the goals of the Tuskegee Institute to have been:

1) the development of attitudes and habits of industry and honesty in, and the disciplining of raw, country youth through institutionalized activities; 2) the development of specific skills in definite crafts and occupations; and 3) the preparation of teachers for the public and private schools of the South who might, through spreading the gospel of thrift, industry, and racial conciliation, aid in constructing a firm economic foundation upon which the future aspiration of the race might stand. (Clift et al. eds. 1962:64)

The first of these goals, “the correct habits” as Washington himself called them above, was obviously reached, first of all, with the strictly planned and executed schedule, in which practically every activity during the day was rationally planned and placed in its ‘slot’. Secondly, in *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed.1972a:31) Booker T. Washington states that many students who came from very poor conditions wanted to get an education in order to be able to do away with manual labour: “They had the feeling that to work with the hands was not conducive to being of the highest type of lady or gentleman.” Washington continues that his objective was to change that feeling into appreciation for intelligent labour.

The second objective was met by practical training in the skills needed. As was stated above, Booker Washington held it to be of paramount importance that education, first and foremost, was related to problems and challenges in the everyday life. In *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed.1972a:294) he tells how right from the start he made up his mind that, in addition to the farming and household tasks, the students would have to build the new buildings for the institute. Although, he goes on, he knew that at first the quality would not be very high, he felt that the lessons students would learn in “civilization, self-help, and self-reliance... would more than compensate for any lack of comfort or fine finish”.

The third goal in Bond’s list was obviously the preparation of teachers who would be the key factors in developing the character of African Americans. Booker T. Washington wanted Tuskegee graduates to be models for African Americans. He wanted to send students back to their home towns to teach black people there the

skills they had learned, just like he himself had returned to Malden to teach after having graduated from Hampton.

The federal, as well as the state support for black education was modest in the 19th century. In Booker Washington's biography Spencer (1955:69-70) mentions that the biggest difficulty in running the school in the early days was to secure the money needed. He argues that the state appropriation was not even enough for the teachers' wages, and the constant increase in the number of students made it a necessity for the staff and students alike to try to come up with ways to raise money. After a while Booker T. Washington turned to the industrial North and East for bigger donations. In *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed. 1972a:309-311) Washington tells how Samuel Armstrong introduced him to influential people in the North. Armstrong asked Washington to accompany himself on a tour of meetings in big northern cities. Both Armstrong and Washington gave speeches during a one-month tour. This was the first of many visits North Booker T. Washington made in order to find donors for the Tuskegee Institute.

With remarkable resilience Booker Washington led his students and staff through the hard initial years of economic uncertainty. The Tuskegee Institute grew and expanded, and at the end of the 19th century on the school grounds there were forty buildings, of which most had been built by student labour, over a thousand students and a staff of nearly a hundred. In a very characteristic way Booker Washington commented in 1901 that when old students visited Tuskegee they were actually happy that the beginning had been so hard. It had been a good experience which had been "a slow and natural process of growth." (Harlan ed. 1972a:295,301,352,382.)

It is easy to see the analogy between the life of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute. Washington became a success and he made Tuskegee a success. In fact he said himself once that reading the history of the Tuskegee Institute would be the same as reading his life story (Spencer 1955:68). One of the most important reasons for him to be so successful in his life, apart from the obvious talent, had to be the fact that his attitude seems to have always been positive. Booker Washington considered the hardships African Americans had faced to have been beneficial for them in the long run. In *My Larger Education*

(Harlan ed. 1972a:419) in 1911 he said that "the progress which the Negro has made within less than half a century in the matter of learning to read and write the English language has been due in large part to the fact that, in slavery, this knowledge was forbidden him."

The above quotation illustrates well the basic worldview of Booker T. Washington. It is obvious that by demanding a lot from himself and his students he was able to succeed. However, what seems more complicated a question is whether the disparaging of the past of African Americans would have any negative effects in the long run. Although it is often advisable to let bygones be bygones, human slavery and the totally inhumane treatment of Blacks in general, could not possibly have been just forgotten or seen in a positive light, without running the risk of further complications. Especially, when the structure of the American society had not changed all that much from the slavery times at the turn of the century.

In *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed.1972a:321) Booker T. Washington's comment offers some insight into his reasoning, as far as the positive outlook is concerned. Washington explains that he had early learned that the conversion of individuals by assaulting them was usually unsuccessful, and that it was "more often accomplished by giving credit for all the praiseworthy actions ..." Washington goes on, as if to set the record straight, to state that he has not failed to criticize the wrong doings of Southerners, and that furthermore, he has found there to be "a large element in the South that is quick to respond to straightforward, honest criticism of any wrong policy."

Booker T. Washington knew how to promote the Tuskegee Institute. In addition to his, and the rest of the staff's, visits North to raise funds by raising people's consciousness of the institute, Washington was fluent in arranging public relations events at Tuskegee. The annual "Tuskegee commencement exercises", for instance, draw nearly ten thousand visitors and were therefore an excellent chance for Washington to present the school and the ideology behind it (Spencer 1955:114).

In December 1898 The President of the United States, Mr. McKinley, visited the Tuskegee Institute (Spencer 1955:114). The visit was obviously a big event for the school and for Tuskegee. In *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan

ed. 1972a:129-132) Booker T. Washington presents the speech the President delivered at Tuskegee. Mr. McKinley complemented the institute for having been such a success. Of Booker Washington he said that Washington had “won a worthy reputation as one of the great leaders of his race...” President McKinley acknowledged that the Tuskegee Institute played an important role in “sowing the seeds of good citizenship.” At Tuskegee, he continued, “the practical... is associated with the academic, which encourages both learning and industry.” The President went on to argue in more general terms that, in the United States, the opportunity for general education were better than anywhere else in the world. Regardless of the colour of the skin, he stated, every one was able to get educated. The theme that covered a relatively long section of the speech was “integrity and industry”. President McKinley obviously directed his words to African Americans when he assured that ‘integrity and industry’ “are indispensable to success... invincible... the only keys to open with certainty the door of opportunity to struggling manhood.”

The President’s words, and the visit of course, were no doubt a sure sign for Booker Washington of the ultimate approval of his policy. In less than twenty years he had created, practically from nothing, an institute of which he, or anyone else involved, had not even dared to dream. When he had come to Tuskegee for the first time to start the school, the enormity of the task had stunned him. He had realized that a lot of white people still did not believe in the ability of African Americans to learn in a school let alone manage one.(Harlan ed.1972a:278,419.)

Now the President of the United States had acknowledged the effort that had been put in the work, and thereby the Tuskegee Institute and Washington had been permanently located on the map. Booker Washington himself brings up the effect the presidential visit had on the white population of Tuskegee by stating that they had eagerly taken part in preparing the town for the visit, for example by decorating the streets. This way the white Tuskegeans had become more and more interested, and also involved, in what the African Americans of the town were doing. (Harlan ed.1972a:134.)

By the beginning of the 20th century the Tuskegee Institute had become a factor in the ‘black cause’ and even the critics of Booker T. Washington and his policy could not disregard its achievements. In 1904 a rather inexperienced teacher

from Massachusetts came to Tuskegee. He had been quite critical of Washington to begin with, but changed his mind rather comprehensively when he saw how the school operated. Especially impressive for him were the “advanced courses [that were] equivalent to any high school courses...”(Spencer 1955:178-179.)

Although Booker T. Washington became a very influential leader of African Americans, with leverage for instance in the presidential appointments of black Americans (see chapter 7 below), his heart, as Spencer (1955:178) states, remained at Tuskegee. Booker Washington often said that his primary task was The Tuskegee Institute. For instance, prior to his Atlanta speech, he was asked to be the “Chief Commissioner” of the African American exhibits in the Atlanta Exposition. In his autobiography (Harlan ed.1972a:69) Washington explains that he declined the offer because his responsibilities at Tuskegee would not stretch to allow him to “give the time and thought... that the position demanded.” Booker T. Washington’s industriousness was one of the crucial factors in the success of the Tuskegee Institute. He showed by example the way, to both the staff and students. He demanded a lot from himself and also from others. This method to success proved costly to Booker Washington. He was unable to relax which was not helped by the economic worries concerning the institute which still haunted him because improving the school demanded constantly new funds. Washington wore himself out travelling from Tuskegee to different events concerning African Americans in general and Tuskegee in particular. (see eg. Spencer 1955:193.)

6 THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR

This chapter will obviously deal with issues closely related to those in the previous one. Booker T. Washington’s educational philosophy was aimed at producing certain kinds of professionals for certain occupations. His views on work reflected the opinions he had on the general elevation of African Americans. Washington saw both education and work as dynamic stages in the development of a race. They

would evolve as the race developed, and the ultimate, albeit perhaps distant, stage would bring equality.

As was mentioned in chapter 5 above, Booker T. Washington held that slavery had equipped African Americans with valuable skills. He felt that black Americans had begun to lose those skills after Emancipation through over-enthusiastic and unrealistic cravings for life without manual labour. In 1884 in a speech (Harlan ed.1972b:260) Washington stated that “[t]he blacksmiths, carpenters, brickmasons, and tanners, who learned their trades in slavery, are dying out, and slavery having taught the colored boy that labor is a disgrace, few of their places are being filled.” In 1903 (Fishel and Quarles 1967:366) he wrote that in slavery the African American had been forced to work and when he was a free man he had to learn how to work. In other words, Booker Washington urged black Americans, as a whole, to ‘look no further’, but to stick to the basic occupations. That way, patience as the guiding light, African Americans would rise in society’s ladder.

In a newspaper article *What I Am Trying to Do* in 1913 (Ducas ed. 1972:157) Booker Washington explained that what was needed was understanding that all work was valuable. He stated as one of his aims to have been to convince the educated African American “that it was just as honorable and dignified for him to use his education in the field, the shop, the kitchen, or the laundry as to use it in teaching school or preaching the gospel.”

In the spring of 1882 Washington, the young principal at the time of the young Tuskegee Institute, gave a speech (Harlan ed. 1972b:194) in which he analyzed the current labour situation in the United States, comparing the South with the North and West. Booker Washington argued that the Northerners’ competition had shut black Americans out of jobs, and that the constant influx of skilled Europeans westward made it hard for Blacks to succeed in the west. He continued to state that the hold African Americans had in the Southern labour market was not simply the result of greater skills but that it was caused by the want of competition.

In *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed.1972a:105) in 1900 Booker T. Washington expressed his fear about the further loss of position in the ‘labour contest’ by saying that too often Northern white Americans were replacing for instance African American blacksmiths or carpenters. He saw the way out of this

development to be that African Americans learned “to do the tasks about our door in a thorough manner; to do a common thing in an uncommon manner; to be sure that nobody could improve on our work.”

In 1888 in the opening address before the State Teachers’ Association of Alabama (Harlan ed. 1972b:433434) Booker T. Washington stated that never before had the “call” for people capable of producing practical things been so loud. He went on to define the ‘call’ by mentioning a number of professions ranging from a farmer to a teacher, and argued that people of every one of these occupations had to be able to make real, tangible results in order for them to be chosen for the jobs. In other words, as in education, so too in work, Booker Washington always emphasized the practical aspect. The results had to be self-explanatory which, to him, moved them from the realm of prejudice. In time, anyone doing something effectively, regardless of the colour of the skin, would be credited.

In his famous Atlanta address (Harlan ed.1972a:332) Booker T. Washington told the white South not to forsake African Americans in the labour issue. Unlike “those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits” who were now replacing Blacks also in the South, Washington reminded, African Americans were familiar to the white South. Their “fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides.” Washington promised that just like in days gone by when Blacks had ‘been there’ for white Southerners

in nursing your children, watching by the sick-bed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defence of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one.
(Harlan ed. 1972a:332)

In more concrete terms, he stated that when properly given the chance and encouragement African Americans “will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories.” (Harlan ed. 1972a:332.) In this very conciliatory tone Booker Washington clearly tried to secure the co-operation of white Americans which in his mind was the only way forward, as opposed to laying down demands possibly in conflict with the interests of the white majority.

Booker T. Washington based his advocacy for straightforward occupations on a strong belief in the 'colour blindness' of material considerations. In other words, as he wrote in *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed.1972a:297): "there is something in human nature which always makes an individual recognize and reward merit, no matter under what colour of skin merit is found." Washington evidently believed that good reputation in simple things would, by necessity, lead to more complicated tasks. A few lines after the above quotation in *Up From Slavery* he gave an example of this belief in his eloquent way. Booker Washington told a story of an imaginary man who entered a community and was ready to teach the inhabitants different aspects of the Greek language. As it so happened they did not need Greek, but they could have used bricks and wagons etc. instead. Washington concluded his story by assuring that if this man could have supplied the material things the community urgently needed, it would before too long have led "to a demand for the first product", ie. the abstract skill of this man. What, in Washington's mind, would obviously have been gained in the process would have been respect from the community and thereby, in the end, equal rights and privileges.

Although Booker Washington emphasized the opportunity African Americans had in specializing first in the more simple manual occupations, he did not categorically dismiss higher ambitions. In 1884 in a speech (Harlan ed.1972b: 257-258), while stating his conviction that "[h]armony will come in proportion as the black man gets something that the white man wants..." He admitted that the 'something' could be either "of brains or of material". This comment could be argued to show that Booker Washington had the end result, ie. equality, primarily in mind, as opposed to stubbornly promoting a certain mode of labour for African Americans just for the sake of it or to please white Americans.

Booker T. Washington saw one of the problems hindering African Americans' elevation to be ignorance. In 1886 in a speech before the Unitarian National Conference (Harlan ed.1972b:310-311) he said that after Emancipation white Americans had left Blacks on their own without arranging proper education or other opportunities for them. As a whole, he stated, the lowly position of African Americans was not caused by their unwillingness to work, although, he added, some whites had so argued. The trouble, in Washington's opinion, was that black

Americans did “not know what to do with the results of their labor”. He concluded that “[t]he cursed mortgage and rent systems rob them of nearly half their earnings”.

In the same speech (Harlan ed.1972b:311) Booker T. Washington presented a solution to the problem he had just highlighted. He told of a young woman who had graduated from the Tuskegee Institute. She had gone to teach African Americans in a community which did not promise a lot for black people living there. Within a year, Washington went on, the people had got some hold of their lives. The young teacher had managed to direct their activities in a productive direction. They had learned to use work for their own benefit.

This proposal for the solution to the problem echoes strongly the ‘self-help’ ideology of the post Civil War America. It goes also well together with Washington’s idea of African Americans’ economic success as a way to good race relations. Meier (1969:42), for example, claims that the years right after Reconstruction saw a growing interest on economic issues, linked with self-help and solidarity among African Americans, as a remedy to the race dilemma. Meier continues that it was thought that Blacks “would gain the respect of white men and thus be accorded their rights as citizens” by acquiring “wealth and morality”. In Washington’s mind the way for Blacks to gain wealth and morality was to start at the bottom, to also accept work that might remind many of them of slavery, and turn that work into good things. The fact that white Americans might be pleased to see Blacks contented with simple occupations was not a reason for Booker Washington to get alarmed. On the contrary, he saw it as an opportunity to be taken. In 1903 (Fishel and Quarles 1967:366) Washington wrote, for instance, that there were still people who doubted African Americans’ ability to perform the more demanding tasks of a civilized society. That doubt, he claimed, could not be influenced by theoretical reasoning; what was needed were concrete results which no one could possibly disregard.

6.1 The Captains of Industry and the Knights of Labor

Meier (1969:103-104) claims that basically Booker T. Washington had his eyes set on a future society where African Americans would be economically equal to their white fellow citizens. He says that Washington aimed at creating “a substantial propertied class of landowners and businessmen”. These “captains of industry” would play an important role in paving the way for the elevation of the race. Washington reasoned that when the day would be in sight that material prosperity would be commonly associated also with the black American, things would really begin to change for the better for African Americans. This obviously meant that Blacks would have to be successful in the labour competition with white Americans. Meier goes on to state that Washington considered it only “proper that Negroes would have to measure up to American standards of morality and material prosperity if they were to succeed in the Social Darwinist race of life”(Meier 1969:103).

Washington apparently wanted black Americans to beat, or at least to match, white Americans in their own game. Again it is easy to recognize, as with educational issues, how Washington more or less set his own life as a model for the whole race of African Americans. He had risen, against great odds, from extreme poverty and gained a position in society that, in some respects, even many white Americans could not have reached. Booker T. Washington would simply not believe that the same elevation, with the same means, ie. self sacrifice, thrift etc, would not be possible for Blacks as a whole.

The difference between Washington’s career and the model he advocated, as far as details go, was that his model emphasized the importance Blacks owning land in the countryside and their concentrating on farming. Agriculture was to be the main occupation for African Americans. With the gospel of wealth in mind, Washington urged Blacks to get farmlands and cultivate them, and he had a vision in his head of a respected, independent black yeomanry.(Meier 1969:105.)

Washington was purely ‘Southern’ in his opinion of the importance of agriculture for African Americans. Osofsky (1971:27) states that most white Southerners also thought that Blacks were best suited for farming. However, he goes on, white Americans were basically just concerned about the economic future of

the South.

With the above in mind, it could be argued that in Booker T. Washington's vision the first African Americans to 'get there', the 'captains of industry', would serve as examples of the ability of their race for white Americans. The flip side of the same coin would be black teachers, with their 'civilizing' education received at institutions like the Tuskegee, who would act as examples of the right way to live for black Americans. This duality seems to have been a feature of Booker Washington's agenda for lifting up the African American. To put it differently: on the one hand, he knew that Blacks were capable of meeting the challenges of white America, they just needed some time to adjust to them. And on the other hand, as was stated above, Booker T. Washington believed very strongly that, in the end, 'credit goes where credit is due'.

Wiener (1978:45) writes that when, right after the Civil War, there was talk, and also some action, of redistributing seized lands in the South to freedmen, the white planters became anxious for the prospect of losing their economic prosperity. A Southern newspaper summed up the white Southern fears in 1866 by stating that independent black farmers would start cultivating what they chose to and stop producing cotton, and that as a consequence "[t]heir labor will become unavailable for those products which the world especially needs". The newspaper's argument is rather transparent. It is true that the South was dependent of its black labour, but to argue that the economy could not survive the extended freedom of African Americans was simply an attempt to disguise the selfish aspirations of ex-slaveowners to protect their own interests.

It might be said that Booker T. Washington was overoptimistic, even naive, to actually believe that African Americans would be given a chance 'to show their metal' on even terms in agriculture, or in any other occupation. Wiener (1978:72) states that after the turmoil of the Reconstruction, "the planter regimes" regained control and power in the South. He continues that when the planters had established their ascendancy anew they did not care much either for more mechanized methods of farming or for rationalization in the techniques to improve efficiency. As a result, he concludes, in 1900, when agriculture in the North was going through technologically revolutionary changes, sharecroppers in the South

still “relied on hand tools and mule power”. All in all therefore, it seems quite impossible for the black tenant farmer to have climbed up from the farm to challenge the position of the planter, to eventually become a ‘captain of industry’.

The agricultural life in the South after the Reconstruction did not offer much optimism for the African American. Many, especially younger Blacks, moved North because they began to realize that their lives would be wasted on the farm. They had seen their parents work the land all their lives and end up with nothing more than hopes for a better tomorrow. At the turn of the 20th century, the ‘new African American’ was ready to move to the cities in the North and did not feel attached to the soil anymore.(Osofsky 1971:24.)

Life in the North, however, did not fulfill the aspirations of Blacks. In New York City, for instance, Osofsky (1971:34) claims, most of those who had come to start a better life ended up in the slums. He, nevertheless, argues that regardless of the rough conditions, “the North did offer a measure of self-respect and the possibility for future advancement that was generally denied the Negro in the South”.

All in all, even in the North the real future advancement was not very obvious for African Americans. Small wages for long days working in dismal conditions was the usual experience for them. The awful reality in factories and mines prompted the creation of labour unions. The other big group of workers, immigrants, were relatively active in organized labour issues, while African Americans were often excluded from unions or segregated into local branches. (Dinnerstein et al. 1990 2nd ed.:153-156.)

One of the labour unions that accepted African American members was the Knights of Labor. First started in 1869 as a small league of workers in the garment industry, it was to expand in the 1880s, but eventually lost its power already before the end of the century. Booker T. Washington had been a member of the Knights of Labor for some years when he had been living in West Virginia. During his professional career he, however, usually opposed unions seeing them as additional stumbling blocks for black Americans in their elevation. Washington remembered how back in West Virginia, in the coal mines, he had seen miners start losing their savings when labour unions had got hold of their affairs. (Spencer 1955:116-117;

Wiebe 1967:66,69; Meier 1969:46,104.)

In the 'Atlanta Compromise' Booker Washington urged white Southerners not to forget African Americans when looking for people to work in the South. He reminded them that Blacks had worked tirelessly for the South "without strikes and labour wars".(Harlan ed. 1972a:332.) In fact, Dinnerstein (et al. 1990 2nd ed.:156) claims that in many industries African Americans were hired only to break strikes, obviously in an effort to weaken the power of labour unions.

6.2 The National Negro Business League

In the segregated reality, self-help became an inviting chance for Blacks to try and plow the way forward. In the summer of 1900 the National Negro Business League met for the first time. Organized mainly by Booker T. Washington it was to spread the Tuskegeean's philosophy to ever widening black audience all over the United States.(Harlan ed. 1972a:180.) In *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:180) Booker Washington comments the beginning of the league by saying that it seemed that there should be an organization that would gather "successful colored men and women who are engaged in business and industrial enterprises". Washington continues that the objective was to have these people share experiences and exchange suggestions in order to improve their chances to succeed and also to encourage them to start local branches of the league in their home towns.

In *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:181-182) Washington explains that it was a positive surprise to the organizers of the first National Negro Business league meeting that so many African Americans had reacted to the invitation to take part. Another thing he mentions as an encouraging feature of the meeting was that everyone present wanted to concentrate on concrete things that would be of permanent good for them as well as the entire race. In other words, as the biographer Spencer (1955:124) states "a sober, practical atmosphere prevailed; politics and protest had no place in the meeting."

Further on in *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:187-189) there is a newspaper article from Boston about the first meeting of the league. The

reporter wrote how he had entered the meet expecting to find the “Negro dandy” who “put his pay on his back” wearing a “tall silk hat and... [a] flashy suit”. To his amazement he found the “business Negro” who “put his pay in the bank”, and “who would sacrifice to-day’s indulgence for to-morrow’s independence”. The writer explained that after having expected active criticism against whites’ injustices from the delegates, he had been pleased not to have heard any. He was happy to “see how brave the Negro could be and how patient.”

The National Negro Business League became an important organization in advocating self-help as well as solidarity among African Americans. In 1906 1200 people attended its meeting at Atlanta. The league and its success strengthened Booker T. Washington’s influence in black urban communities. He had created organizations and services for the rural South at Tuskegee already before. For instance, in 1892 the yearly “Tuskegee Negro Conferences” were started for the purpose of offering African Americans an opportunity to get together to discuss problems they faced in their everyday lives. The National Negro Business League was a logical extension to Booker Washington’s previous work with various organizations. The result of the league was that Washington’s ideology and thereby influence were spread all over the African American communities in the United States during the last fifteen years of his life. (Spencer 1955:118-119,123-124; Meier 1969:124.)

7 “SEPARATE AS THE FINGERS”

7.1 Political activity

Booker T. Washington always emphasized the importance of economic development instead of being active in politics for African Americans. In 1895 in the famous Atlanta speech (Harlan ed. 1972a:331-333) he stated that right after Emancipation often “[a] seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate

or industrial skill” and “that the political convention or stump speaking had more attractions than starting a dairy farm or truck garden”. In the speech Booker Washington characterized that initial interest in politics as having been caused by ignorance and inexperience and that the basic fault had been that “we began at the top instead of at the bottom”. He acknowledged the importance of Blacks getting all privileges written in the law, but it was vital, he went on, “that we be prepared for the exercise of these privileges”.

Meier (1969:101) argues that, in the Atlanta address, “Washington’s generalized references to justice and progress and uplift... allowed the white South to assume that justice could be achieved without granting Negroes political and civil rights”. Meier goes on, however, to claim that when Booker Washington talked about starting ‘at the bottom’, he must have had a vision in his mind of African Americans one day ‘getting to the top’. Booker T. Washington’s ‘Atlanta Compromise’, in Meier’s opinion, could therefore be interpreted having included “ultimate goals more advanced than white Southerners could possibly [have] support[ed]”.

Booker T. Washington thought it important that the African American stayed in the South. Because of that he felt that the only way forward was co-operation between white and black people there, also in politics. In 1884 Washington spoke in Madison, Wisconsin, before the National Educational Association (Harlan ed. 1972b:257-258) and touched on the issue of political activity among Blacks. He said that too often black Southerners had supported the Republican party simply because it had been successful in the North. Booker Washington considered such actions out of principle harmful to the development of good relations between the races. He furthermore reasoned that since black Southerners lived a long way from the North, and their living conditions were very different from those in the North, they ought to turn their political interests into developing the South with their white neighbours.

7.1.1 Governmental appointments

In *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:104) in 1900 Booker Washington stated clearly that he had always thought that, just like the white American, the African American had a right to aim for posts in politics but that, he continued, “in our present condition we will be more sure of laying a foundation that will result in permanent political recognition in the future by giving attention,...to education, business and industry, than merely by seeking political office”.

In 1911 in *My Larger Education* (Harlan ed. 1972a:437-438) Washington explained his cynicism towards the overwhelming desire to land a political office as a result of seeing how politics had changed many a trustworthy man into a person lacking “mental and moral balance”. He hastened to add, however, that this bad effect of political offices did not limit itself to the black race. It was the same with white Americans.

In 1896, after McKinley had been elected President of the United States, there was discussion in the American press about giving Booker T. Washington a place in the new President’s cabinet. *The Washington Post* initiated the discussion by suggesting in its editorial that “the post of Secretary of Agriculture”, for instance, could be suitable for the Tuskegeean. The editorial argued that Mr. McKinley’s victory in the election had been secured by his African American supporters, and for this reason the black race would deserve “at least one cabinet position”. Booker T. Washington’s reaction to these speculations was an open declaration that he would not welcome a political office that would turn his immediate attention away from his work at Tuskegee. (Spencer 1955:106-107; Harlan ed. 1972a:102-104.)

After McKinley’s death in 1901, his Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt became President. As one of the first things in office he contacted Booker T. Washington, regretting that he had to postpone the trip that he had been planning, ie. a visit to the South including Tuskegee. He invited Washington instead to visit him, because he wanted to “talk over the question of possible appointments in the South...”(Spencer 1955:133.)

Under Roosevelt’s administration Booker T. Washington became the arbitrator of African Americans’ federal appointments, and in some cases he was

approached by the President about a white candidate as well. Washington gained a position of great influence among black Americans with his connection with the President. He was regularly contacted at Tuskegee by black politicians who were hoping to feature in his list of possible names for a federal position. President Roosevelt mentioned in 1903 that all his black appointees had been recommended to him by Booker T. Washington.(Meier 1969:112.)

Spencer (1955:135) states that Roosevelt heard Washington's view on the whole issue of Southern politics, and not just concerning African American appointments. Meier (1969:112) writes that Washington's opinion was sought by Mr. Roosevelt also on the President's speeches and announcements to Congress. In 1901 Booker T. Washington was asked by Theodore Roosevelt to meet him in the White House to discuss matters concerning the South. The meeting was rather an informal occasion over dinner at the White House. The American society, especially the Southern, was not however ready for such an act from their President. The fact that an African American was allowed to the White House to conduct business with the President was seen as risking the continuation of segregational policy. (Spencer 1955:132-134; Harlan ed. 1972a: 443.)

In *My Larger Education* (Harlan ed. 1972a:444) in 1911 Booker Washington explained that he could not have foreseen the negative press the incident received. He felt sure that the accusations of President Roosevelt having planned the dinner to bring "about the social intermingling of the two races" were not founded. To spend the dinner and some hours after it in discussion over matters of mutual interest to both Mr. Roosevelt and himself, Washington argued, had simply been a matter of the President arranging his time table effectively. Besides, he concluded: "I had taken tea with Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle;...I had dined in the same room with President McKinley at Chicago at the Peace-jubilee dinner..."

Theodore Roosevelt's successor, William Taft, declared that he was not going to give Southern Blacks offices if whites opposed the appointments. African Americans position deteriorated during Taft's administration. In Washington even some federal posts became segregated. (Meier 1969: 165.) Nevertheless in 1911 Booker T. Washington wrote in his characteristically positive tone that in appointments "President Taft happily has followed the same [Roosevelt's] policy".

To the criticism that Roosevelt and especially Taft appointed too few African Americans to important positions Washington replied that both of them had attempted, first and foremost, to choose “men of the highest character in order that the younger generation of coloured people might see that men of conspicuous ability and conspicuous purity of character are recognized in politics as in other walks of life”.(Harlan ed.1972a:442.)

In 1912 Woodrow Wilson followed Taft as the President of the United States. Chances for African Americans to increase their influence in the running of the country became even more remote than under Taft’s administration. Executive nominations became all but non-existent and segregation in Washington increased.(Meier 1969:165.) The disappointment for Blacks was all the more poignant because in his campaign Wilson had specifically promised African Americans that if he was elected the President, they would see improvements in their condition. Consequently many Blacks had voted for Wilson only to become disillusioned with the reality of his administration. (Boulware 1969:20-21.)

7.1.2 The franchise

Before the Civil War Americans, both Northern and Southern, had prided themselves in the democratic voting systems they had. In those days ‘democratic’ only meant, nearly exclusively, white men. After Emancipation, the majority of adult African American men in the South had the first opportunity in their lives to vote. The voting procedures were protected by federal soldiers. Therefore, paradoxically, after the Civil War for a short period of time, politically, Northern Blacks were in a worse position than their Southern counterparts. In the North conditions remained relatively unchanged and so, consequently, the franchise stayed out of reach for African Americans there.(Lawson 1976:1-2.)

In 1870 the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was meant to secure the black suffrage in both the North and the South. The Amendment did not actually give the vote to anybody, but it banned any state from using race as a reason to disfranchise anyone otherwise qualified to vote. This left states pretty much on

their own to interpret the final effects of the Amendment. In the North white Americans accepted the black franchise, but in the South the Amendment proved to be inadequate in protecting the political rights of African Americans.(Lawson 1976:3-4.)

In the South the Reconstruction-style governments were being replaced by conservative Southern ones. In 1877 President Hayes ordered federal troops to be moved from Southern buildings open to public, which of course meant that the protection the black suffrage had enjoyed was in real danger. The disfranchisement of the African American got quickly under way in the South, this time in disguise. It was possible for the Southern states to follow the letter of the Fifteenth Amendment and at the same time completely ignore its spirit. Different means to deprive Blacks of the vote were created. For instance, in 1890 in Mississippi, the combination of the poll-tax and the reading and understanding test had a devastating effect on the African Americans of the state. Out of the 147 000 Blacks old enough to vote only 8615 were allowed to get registered for the vote. The same dramatic drop in the number of black voters happened in many Southern states. Among others Louisiana altered its constitution in 1900 after which only 5000 African Americans could vote in that state. Two years earlier that number had been 130 000. It goes without saying that since the election officials had the power to assess the ability of the voters, they often gave the white Americans the benefit of the doubt and administered stricter criteria towards African Americans. Eventually all states in the South revised their constitutions in the twenty years from 1890 and 1910. For decades to come black Americans, as a whole, were rather effectively shut out of their chance to influence the running of the Southern society. (Brawley 1921:287, 289-290; Lawson 1976:11,14,18.)

In *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed.1972a:340) in 1901 Booker T. Washington stated that he believed in universal suffrage, but that many a Southern state's "peculiar conditions" justified the "protection of the ballot", at least temporarily, by requiring voters to possess either some education or property, or both. He wanted to make his point clear, however, that any such requirements should be applied equally to both races. Washington stated, in no uncertain terms, that he did not approve of any state making "a law that permits an ignorant and poverty-stricken white man to

vote, and prevents a black man in the same condition from voting.” He continued to justify his opinion, obviously now aiming his words at white readers, and explained that if white Southerners unjustly denied the African American the vote, it would in time turn against themselves. He told that “the white man who begins by cheating a Negro out of his ballot soon learns to cheat a white man out of his...”

Booker Washington clearly believed, as he stated in 1901 (Harlan ed.1972a:338-339), that “[t]he opportunity to freely exercise... political rights will not come in any large degree through outside or artificial forcing, but will be accorded to the Negro by the Southern white people themselves...” Therefore he urged African Americans to be patient in regard to their political aspirations, and work patiently in gathering property, education and moral character which would eventually secure their full participation in political matters.

Lawson (1976:14) argues that Booker Washington “was essentially an elitist who did not believe that the majority of either race was intelligent enough to cast ballots”. Meier (1969:109) states that Washington’s argument in favour of franchise restrictions was that they were necessary in order to “rid the South of ignorant and corrupt government...” Spencer (1955:127) writes in Booker T. Washington’s biography that, in the face of the different methods to disfranchise the African American, Washington feared that a total ban for Blacks to vote might become a reality. Therefore, as if to salvage what was salvagable of the Fifteenth Amendment, he tried to be diplomatic, as ever, in his public statements. Spencer claims that Washington wanted to keep the door open for Black Americans, believing strongly that education could, in the end, make most members of the race full citizens also in this respect. Booker T. Washington felt hopeful so long as the franchise criteria remained, at least in theory, based on the abilities of the individual voters. Spencer states Washington’s goal primarily to have been “to keep the suffrage for the individual Negro who by any reasonable standard could prove himself worthy of exercising his political rights”.

In public Booker T. Washington was playing down the importance of political activity. Behind the scenes, however, it was a different story altogether. Meier (1969:110-111) writes that secretly Washington was highly involved, for instance, in trying to stop disfranchisement. Among other things, in 1899, he fought

a bill in Georgia and raised money to attack voting provisions in Louisiana in 1900. Washington was also involved in legal action against disfranchisement. For instance in 1903 and 1904 he was "deeply involved in testing the Alabama disfranchisement laws in the federal courts". Illustrative of Washington's involvement in fighting racial discrimination in this case was that his secretary E. Scott and a New York lawyer W. Smith reported about the cases to Washington under assumed names. The Tuskegeean remained thus in the background in the literal sense of the word.

Spencer (1955:130) states that Booker Washington's statements in private prove that often when prejudice and oppression was apparent to Washington, he could, as he had said it once himself, "hardly keep still". He arranged, for example, a strongly critical letter condemning disfranchisement to be "planted" in papers in Boston under a false identity.

Quite obviously Booker T. Washington reasoned that if he had taken up an active, more openly uncompromising role in, for instance, criticizing disfranchisement he would have lost the 'smoke screen' his current image provided him. Had he lost his good relations with white Americans, he would have been less capable of working for the benefit of his own race. This compromise in Booker Washington's approach resulted in, as Lawson (1976:14) claims, white Americans to incorrectly mix "his brand of gradualism with an admission that Negroes could never expect more than second-class citizenship". Meier (1969:111) argues that while Washington's "public ambiguities permitted Southern whites to think that he accepted disfranchisement... through the same ambiguities and by private communications he tried to keep Negroes thinking otherwise".

All in all, Booker T. Washington had a dual character to his political outlook, as Meier (1969:114) sums up: "in spite of his strictures against political activity he was a powerful politician in his own right".

7.2 Social integration versus segregation

In 1895 at the Atlanta Exposition in his address, Booker T. Washington, as has become apparent above, touched on a wide range of issues concerning the relations between white and black Americans. Of social relations 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 mutual progress". Further on in the speech, he added that "[t]he wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that... the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of... constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing". (Harlan ed. 1972a: 332-333.)

Already in 1884 in a speech (Harlan ed. 1972b: 257) Booker Washington stated that harmony between the races would come when the African American got something the white American wanted. He believed that when a black man is, for example, the most efficient farmer in his community the white farmer will come to get advise from him. Furthermore, Washington concluded, "they will sit down on the same train, in the same coach and on the same seat..." This example of the black farmer earning the respect of the white society and thereby gaining equality and integration was a common one in Booker T. Washington's repertoire. In addition to the 1884 speech, he repeated it at least twice, in effect word for word, in speeches he made in 1886 and 1888. (Harlan ed. 1972b: 309,502.)

In the aforementioned 1884 speech he expressed his opinion to be that "the reforms in the South are to come from within". He said that "Southern people have a good deal of human nature" but it would not be wise for people in Washington to demand an immediate alteration to the old Southern customs. Therefore, Washington continued, it would not be advisable to forcefully and immediately demand "one railroad coach, one hotel, and one schoolhouse for ex-master and ex-slave." (Harlan ed. 1972b:259.)

Meier (1969:116) claims that Booker T. Washington stressed the African American's "duties rather than [his] rights... his opportunities rather than his difficulties", and accentuated "means rather than ends". He goes on to argue that Washington had "a profound faith in the goodness of the Southern whites", in any

case of the representatives of the “better class”, and that the Tuskegeean “appealed more to the self-interest of the whites- their economic and moral good- than to their sense of justice”. A good example of this is the statement Washington wrote in 1885 in a newspaper (Harlan ed. 1972b:270) about the unequal treatment of Blacks in Alabama trains. He stated at the beginning of this otherwise rather openly critical text by saying that “I wish to say a few words from a purely business standpoint. It is not a subject with which to mix social equality or anything bordering on it.”

In Booker Washington’s biography, Spencer (1955:105) claims that Washington’s Atlanta address in 1895 aided in establishing “the ‘separate but equal’ principle as the yardstick in American race relations for half a century or more”. Spencer explains that Washington’s words were understood to mean that African Americans would welcome that principle.

Meier (1969:108) argues that Booker Washington did not accept segregation in public transportation before 1895. In 1894, he states, Washington urged African Americans to boycott streetcars that had just been segregated, in order to make segregation economically undesirable for white America. After 1895, Meier goes on, Booker T. Washington thought that separation was acceptable as long as the facilities were equal. According to Meier it was not until after Washington’s death that he, or a ghostwriter, in the posthumous *My View of Segregation Laws*, openly condemned segregation. In this text Washington wrote that every case of segregation had widened the divide between white and black Americans, and that the fact that African Americans “did not constantly express their embitterment, was no proof that they did not feel it”.

Meier’s claim above that Booker Washington opposed segregation in transportation before 1895, not accepting it even on the condition of equal facilities, cannot be supported by Washington’s speech before the National Educational Association (Harlan ed. 1972b:259) which has been discussed above, in Madison, Wisconsin in 1884. In the speech Washington explained how, in Alabama, African Americans had had to pay the same amount of money as white Americans to travel by train, and still they had had “to ride in the smoking car”. A group of leading African Americans, Washington did not confirm whether he had been among them,

had complained of the issue to the railway commissioners. The commissioners, Washington stated, had immediately decreed that within a month the facilities would have to be 'separate but equal'. In the speech Booker Washington seemed to welcome segregation on the condition that it did not bring with it inequality. It might be argued that in 1884 he still optimistically believed in the possibility of combining separation with equality.

Nevertheless Booker T. Washington did voice his opinion against unjust segregation. In 1885 he wrote to *The Montgomery Advertiser* (Harlan ed. 1972b: 270-271) and complained once again about unequal segregation in Alabama trains. Obviously the above solution to Alabama train segregation in 1884 had eventually failed. Washington clearly stated the sub-standard conditions African Americans had to travel under, despite having paid a full fee. He brought up the lack of common sense in treating paying customers badly. Washington tried to appeal to the economic interest of white Americans when he said that "[t]his unjust practice toward the negro[sic] cuts off thousands of dollars worth of negro[sic] travel every year..." Further on in the text Washington offered two solutions to the problem.

Firstly he said that if the officials would not have Blacks ride in the same car with whites, then they should provide African Americans with a "separate one just as good in every particular..." If this was done, Washington promised, there would be no complaints.(Harlan ed. 1972b:272.)

The second solution Booker Washington suggested was to sell black Americans tickets with lowered prices. That would have been, he said, "in keeping with the laws of honest trade". Booker T. Washington ended his statement by a somewhat conciliatory note, explaining that he understood that "customs that were years in forming cannot be blotted out in a day". He, however, remained stern and expressed his belief that white Southerners were ready "for the righting of this wrong". The last sentence in the text was similar to the famous words Washington would utter at Atlanta ten years later. After assuring that the two races would be living together in the South, he concluded his statement writing: "We can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand for maintaining the right". (Harlan ed. 1972b: 272-273.)

Spencer (1955:190-191) states that, later on in his life, Washington grew more cynical of Southern customs of racial segregation. Especially disturbing to him was to see injustice in public schooling. Obviously Booker Washington's patience began to run out when he witnessed the imbalance between funds for white and black education. In 1884 the Tuskegeean had still been optimistic and pleased with the distribution of funds Alabama made between black and white education. In a speech at Madison, Wisconsin (Harlan ed. 1972b:259) in July 1884, he was happy to acknowledge that out of the annual state appropriation for education, nearly half went to the education of African Americans, and that for the first time he had not heard "of any distinction being made between the races by any state officer in the distribution of this fund". Things were different, however, when in 1905 Booker T. Washington stated that "[a]s no color line is drawn in the courts in the matter of punishing crime,... neither should any color line be drawn in the opportunity to get education in the public schools"(Spencer 1955:190-191).

Spencer (1955:190-191) claims that the change in Booker Washington's attitude towards discrimination in general sharpened when he became older. He cites an occasion in Tampa when Washington refused to begin his speech until the line of sheets separating the white section of the audience from the black was taken down. Spencer tells that Washington had been "visibly annoyed" and had insisted that the sheets come down, which then happened and the speech could begin. Further on Spencer (1955:191) writes of a speech at Battle Creek in 1914, in which Booker T. Washington quite openly attacked segregation in housing. He told the audience that neither Blacks nor whites were helped by shutting African Americans "off in certain segregated parts of American cities". According to Spencer, Washington went even further and declared that "every thoughtful Negro' resented a segregated system, because his people never got equal health facilities, lighting, cleanliness, police protection, or the use of public services like libraries and hospitals"; and all this inequality despite the fact that "they were compelled to pay taxes on the same basis as the whites".

The above two incidents present a side of Washington which, by all accounts, was not common in his repertoire. Meier (1969:115-116) claims that Washington worked secretly against inequality and publicly opposed various critical

black groups, notwithstanding that their eventual goals were exactly the same as his. Meier goes on to argue that Booker Washington was concerned about the effects his critics' open protests might have on his "power and prestige", but did not mind "militance and agitation in the newspapers that supported him". Meier concludes by denying that Booker T. Washington's tactics would necessarily prove that he was either a hypocrite or insincere. He brings up the analogy between Washington's own career and his programme for the elevation of African Americans: "So thoroughly and inextricably bound together in Washington's mind were his program... and his own personal career, that he genuinely thought that he and only he was in the best position to advance the interests of the race."

In Meier's opinion (1969:116) Booker T. Washington's ultimate objective was full integration and full rights as citizens. His approach, however, masked that objective in a way that sounded satisfactory to the powerful 'circles' that did not care for or were against the realization of that ideal. Meier states furthermore that Washington most probably really thought that, through African Americans' assimilation to "American middle-class standards, prejudice would diminish and the barriers of discrimination would crumble". Meier goes on (1969:117) that the vagueness, the mask if you like, was instrumental to Washington's success. Blacks who favoured him valued his 'loose' expressions about eventual goals, whereas conservative whites from the South were inclined to interpret his statements as an "acceptance of disfranchisement and segregation".

Based on Meier's claim one might venture to argue that there can be seen certain similarities between Booker T. Washington's tactics and those of the late 20th century politician. Firstly, Washington seems to have used media, newspapers at the time, in an effective way. He had a substantial influence on black press and could affect their policies. Secondly, his public statements left room for various possible interpretations and a lot of people, on either side of the 'divide', could apparently find his approach satisfactory. Booker Washington was careful not to talk himself 'into a corner', an ability which seems to be very much in demand for people 'in high places' past and present.

Black opposition to Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee philosophy was nevertheless real, and Washington's leadership was being questioned more and

more vigorously. He took the threat to his position seriously. Publicly he had been successful with white Americans and did not want to change that state of affairs. He naturally also wanted to keep getting the black support he enjoyed. In January of 1904 Washington arranged a secret conference in New York for leading African Americans in order to reach an agreement between himself and the more radical Blacks. The meeting established "The Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race", which was to operate for many years, mainly publishing pamphlets on "self-help and economic achievement" in true Tuskegee spirit, but also some on voting or how to get to a jury. The first meeting in 1904 resulted in the leaders present agreeing on the importance of Blacks staying in Southern states, of the franchise, of active opposition to inequality in, for example, transportation and of the need for both academic and industrial education for African Americans.(Meier 1969:177-178.)

The smooth road did not, however, last very long for the committee. For instance DuBois pulled out quite quickly because he thought the committee's chairman, Washington, dictated the policy too much. DuBois was to organize the Niagara Movement in 1905 for people not preferring the Tuskegee philosophy. In 1910, a new organization, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP, was established. Most of the Niagara Movement's and of the similar Constitution League's members moved to the NAACP. (Spencer 1955:157; Meier 1969:177-178,182.)

Booker T. Washington was more satisfied with the policy of the National Urban League (NUL) than with that of the more radical NAACP. NUL was established soon after NAACP and its initial goal was to help Southern African Americans in the difficulties they faced trying to familiarize themselves with living in northern cities and working there (Kirby 1980:99). The league's board consisted mainly of conservative white and black Americans, including Booker Washington, and rather predictably the motto of the league was "Not Alms, but Opportunity" (Meier 1969:134). After Booker T. Washington's times, in the 1920s, Kirby (1980:99) states that the organization reinforced its activities in trying to get employers to choose African American workers, but its success in trying to "integrate white capitalism" was only limited.

One year after Booker T. Washington's death, in 1916, NAACP's president, Joel Spingarn, sponsored a conference close to Amenia, New York. The conference brought together varying opinions and approaches in the African American issue. The goal was to advance racial concord and leave "old factional alignments" behind.(Spencer 1955:195; Meier 1969:184.) Spencer (1955:195-196) states that the overtly stated objective of the conference was the "complete and unqualified integration of the Negro into American society". Spencer goes on to claim that Booker Washington had had the same goal, but that when he had realized there was not much the African American could have done at the time to effectively stop oppression, Washington had turned his emphasis on what he deemed attainable and rational. By stressing the importance of vocational education, Spencer (1955:197) continues, Washington "highlighted the fact that economic progress offered a means to full integration no less important than political means, and that the two complemented each other".

In Spencer's opinion, Booker T. Washington's policy did have its weaknesses. One of the more accurate criticisms against the Tuskegeean's leadership, he says, was that Washington had a monopoly in the African American issue. His powerful position hindered people with differing visions from working productively according to their views. The nature of Booker Washington's programme and "his method of carrying it out kept him from emphasizing complete integration forcefully or in sufficiently specific terms..."(Spencer 1955:199.)

7.3 Human rights

In this section an attempt will be made to present Booker T. Washington's opinions about a more basic level of human existence, as it were. To put it another way, issues dealt with here are beyond the compounds of personal preferences in politics, economic life or other such 'superficialities'; in a nut shell: 'some things are simply wrong'. The sub-heading "Human rights" encompasses therefore, for instance, the matter of lynching which was all too prominent a feature in the United States during Booker Washington's ascendancy.

One finds it very hard to comprehend and impossible to accept that anything, be it greed, fear, or the lust for power, could make any group of people lose their 'humanity' in relation to another group of people. And still this was exactly the case in the United States, especially in the South. Booker T. Washington wrote in 1909 in *The Story of the Negro* (Harlan ed. 1972a:410) a rather fitting comment against the basic characteristics of racism: "as my observation and experience of human life have widened, I have learned to doubt the wisdom of laying down any general rules that fix for all times the status of any people, or determine in advance the progress they are able or likely to make..."

In the years after the Reconstruction, lynching began to increase, as did other forms of racial prejudice. Lynching was supposedly practised for "the protection of white womanhood". In reality, however, almost any kind of controversy which forced an African American to "defend himself against a white man might result in a lynching, and possibly in a burning". 3500 people were lynched between 1885 and 1915, of which most were Southern Blacks.(Brawley:1921:294-295.)

Meier (1969:108-109) claims that Booker T. Washington did not express his views on lynching very often, but that when he voiced his opinion, his words were heard and recognized. In Meier's opinion, Washington's emphasis was usually placed in describing the harmful effect of lynching on white Americans' "moral fiber" or on the economic situation and the South's reputation. Nevertheless Booker Washington did also react strongly and straightforwardly against lynching. Meier (1969:109) cites a press statement Washington made in 1904 in which he said that:

'Within the lastfortnight, three members of my race have been burned at the stake; one of them was a woman. No one... was charged with any crime even remotely connected with the abuse of a white woman... There is no shadow of excuse for departure from legal methods in the cases of individuals accused of murder.'

Some years earlier, in 1899, Booker T. Washington was on a vacation in Europe, when, 'back home', a wave of lynchings exploded. Washington postponed making any public comments on the issue until he had returned to the United States. When he returned, he made an extensively circulated statement, aiming his words primarily to white Southerners.(Spencer 1955:129.) In *The Story of My Life and*

Work (Harlan ed. 1972a:149-150) Washington includes this statement. In it he wrote that the South had asked the North to leave African Americans' rights and protection to be dealt with by Southerners themselves. The Southern wish had been granted and now, Washington went on, "[t]he world is waiting and watching to see" how she would exercise this "sacred trust".

Booker Washington continued his statement and explained, proving his point by statistics, that although lynching had been instituted to punish violence against womencheck, in reality it was not by any means used "for one crime alone". He stated that during the previous year 127 people had been lynched in the U. S. 61 of the cases had been for murder, 13 for allegeded murder, 6 for stealing and so on. Further on Washington took the year 1892 as an additional example and declared that, in that year out of the 241 people lynched, 184 had been accused of other crimes than attacks on women.(Harlan ed. 1972a:150-151.)

Booker T. Washington seems to have been quite careful not to start his statement by concentrating too much on the black race and its suffering. Like the paragraph above shows, he first attacked the myth that lynching was a punishment only for one type of crime. He did, however, slip in, if you like, a statistic of the racial distribution of the lynch victims amidst the above break down of the number of lynchings. Washington mentioned that out of the 127 victims, 102 had been Blacks, 23 whites and two Native Americans. A little later he explained a little more openly that during the previous spring, in a single week, 13 African Americans who had allegedly murdered people or burned houses had been lynched and that in none of the cases "were the men allowed to go before a court so that their innocence or guilt might [have] be[en] proven". (Harlan ed. 1972a:150-151.)

Booker T. Washington continued by asking what the end of the growing 'popularity' of lynching would be. He said that every such incident drove hundreds of African Americans away from the Southern farmlands, where their agricultural contribution could continue to be of valuable service to the nation. Washington stated clearly that lynching did not prevent crime. He urged white Americans not to "disregard the teachings of the civilized world for eighteen hundred years, that the only way to punish crime is by law...When we leave this dictum", Washington concluded, "chaos begins". He furthermore reasoned that if the current laws were

not thought to be adequate in punishing crime, they should be changed. He continued that history showed that “where law is most strictly enforced is the least crime; where people take the administration of law into their own hands is the most crime.” Therefore, he summed up the plea he was making, punishment should be decided “by lawfully constituted authority”. (Harlan ed. 1972a:151-152.)

Booker Washington tried to appeal to white Americans by turning the focus onto the effects of lynching on their morality. He claimed that the activity “injures, hardens and blunts the moral sensibilities of the young and tender manhood of the South.” To illustrate this point, Washington, in his impressively eloquent way, told of an incident he had witnessed. He said he would always remember a “remark by a little nine-year-old white boy, with blue eyes and flaxen hair”. The boy had seen a lynching and was telling about it to his mother: “I have seen a man hanged; now I wish I could see one burned.” Booker T. Washington concluded this story explicitly: “Rather than to hear such a remark from one my little boys, I would prefer seeing him laid in his grave.” (Harlan ed. 1972a:152.)

Booker Washington went on stating that in addition to that of white Southerners, also African Americans had a responsibility in the matter of preventing lynching. He argued that Blacks committed too much crime. He explained that much of that crime was the result of young African Americans being idle. Washington insisted that “every parent, teacher and minister of the gospel, should teach with unusual emphasis morality and obedience to the law.” He wanted “the criminal and vicious element of the race [to] have at all times our most severe condemnation”, and “a strict line [to] be drawn between the virtuous and the criminal.”(Harlan ed. 1972a:153.)

Booker Washington ended the whole statement in a characteristically positive note. He emphasized firstly African Americans’ duty and possibility to “work out our own salvation right here in the South”. He continued that it would be achieved by making “ourselves intelligent, industrious, economical and virtuous, of value to the community in which we live”. Secondly, Washington underlined the co-operation between white and black Americans. The final sentence of the text brings this, at times rather candid statement, to a conciliatory end: “With the best white people and the best black people standing together, in favor of law and order

and justice, I believe that the safety and happiness of both races will be made secure.” (Harlan ed.1972a:153-154.)

Some two years after the above statement about lynching Booker T. Washington, in *Up From Slavery* (Harlan ed. 1972a:254-255), commented on the notorious Ku Klux Klan. He said that it had been in the peak of its activities when he had lived at Malden. The mob had terrorized the black community, burning schools and churches and killing black Americans. Washington wrote that the “‘Ku Klux’ period” had been the “darkest part of the Reconstruction days”. He had, for instance, seen a vicious fight between groups of white and black people at Malden with “not far from a hundred persons engaged on each side...” Washington continued that while watching the struggle he had felt that the future would be hopeless for African Americans in the United States. He stated however, right after this somber memory from the Reconstruction period, that a big change had taken place since those days. No more, he said, were there such an organization as the Ku Klux Klan in Southern states, “and the fact that such ever existed is almost forgotten by both races”. Washington went on, expressing his belief in the change for the better, and claimed that the South did not have many places where “public sentiment would permit such organizations to exist”. (Harlan ed. 1972a:255.)

In the South the convict-lease-system was a practice with which African Americans were severaly abused. Brawley (1921:292-293) states that after the Civil War, Southern legislation “made severe provisions with reference to vagrancy”, and as a result, Blacks would be arrested for any imaginative excuse and their labour as convicts “leased to landowners or other business men”. Brawley argues that the practice was at its worst when the landowner was given full “charge of the custody and discipline of the convicts, and even of their medical or surgical care”.

Booker T. Washington wrote in the Hampton Institute newspaper *The Southern Workman* in February 1886 (Harlan ed. 1972b:296-297) about the convict-lease-system and its failings. First he started by arguing in general terms that during the time a prisoner is confined “there are no forces at work that tend to make him a better man when released, but rather a worse one”. For this fact alone, Washington claimed, there should be changes made in Southern prisons. Then he moved on to the main issue of the text. He told of cases where African American convicts had

suffered and even lost their lives while working in inhumanely cruel conditions. Booker Washington reminded the reader that in the South the weather had been cold during that winter. Then he quoted an Atlanta newspaper article telling of an African American whose feet had “rotted off... caused by his being worked in the county chain-gang all the winter without shoes”. Washington went on citing incidents where convicts had been made to work without proper clothing and who therefore had ended up in very poor physical condition. He concluded his statement arguing that the examples he had highlighted were common more or less in nearly all prisons in the South. Booker T. Washington ended the article, once again, in a positive note. He acknowledged that every better Southern newspaper was beginning to criticize the extremely bad treatment of prisoners.

All in all, Booker T. Washington's public statements, whether they were about political activity, integration or even basic human rights, had the air of circumspection about them. He could also be clear in his condemnation, as was the case when he, for instance, talked about lynching or the treatment of black prisoners. Nevertheless, in Meier's (1969:110) opinion it was Washington's accommodating outlook that “one is most impressed by”. Spencer (1955:130-131) explains that Booker Washington believed that eventually “moderation and conciliation” would be more beneficial than “extreme utterances”. Spencer goes on to mention a speech at the Chicago Peace Jubilee at the close of the Spanish-American war, as a prime example of the fact how Booker T. Washington was “continually walking a tight rope in the South” as far as his public statements were concerned.

The speech caused widespread protest in the Southern press. In the address Washington praised the African American soldier who had not complained about the hard conditions in the battle field, but instead had offered to “replace the white soldier when heat and malaria began to decimate the ranks of the white regiment, and to occupy at the same time the post of greatest danger”. He urged his listeners to make up their minds whether “a race that is thus willing to die for its country should not be given the highest opportunity to live for its country”.(Harlan ed. 1972a:121.)

Spencer (1955:131) states that the controversial part of the speech was Washington's claim that: “We have succeeded in every conflict, except the effort to

conquer ourselves in the blotting out of racial prejudices” (Harlan ed. 1972a:121). Spencer shows how some three years earlier, at the Atlanta Exposition, Washington had used almost identical words “in a blotting out of...”, barring the last word, which had been ‘animosities’ at Atlanta and in Chicago it was ‘prejudices’. Spencer goes on that Southern editors were furious when Booker Washington had continued: “Until we thus conquer ourselves, I make no empty statement when I say that we shall have a cancer gnawing at the heart of the republic that shall one day prove as dangerous as an attack with an army without or within”.(Spencer 1955:131; Harlan ed. 1972a:121.)

In *The Story Of My Life and Work* Booker T. Washington, after giving the Chicago speech in full, explained that in Chicago the reaction to his words had been favourable. Then he said that one part of the speech had apparently been miscomprehended by Southern papers. Washington continued that after some weeks of rather strong criticism he was asked by a Birmingham paper to explain his statement, which he then did in a letter to the editor of the paper. In the letter Booker Washington explained his Chicago speech to have been about “racial prejudice... in ‘commercial and civil’” not in social relations. He went on to claim that in his addresses he very rarely referred to the issues of prejudice, because he realized it to be “something to be lived down, not talked down”. Not unusually, Washington concluded his ‘explanation’ by repeating once again that “the salvation of the Negro in this country will be in his cultivation of habits of thrift, economy, honesty, the acquiring of education, Christian character, property and industrial skill”. (Harlan ed. 1972a:122-125.)

Spencer’s above reference to ‘walking a tight rope’ apparently describes Booker T. Washington’s career rather accurately. He felt he had to maintain his relations with white Southerners even if it meant, as it did, that he had to be more than diplomatic in his statements and actions. Spencer (1955:131) states that Washington wrote on the matter of prejudices that it did “not pay to disturb” them but that it was wisest to “let sleeping dogs lie”.

8 CONCLUSION

It was a very long road from being a boy at the plantation in Virginia to being invited to dine with the President of the United States at the White House. It was the road Booker T. Washington travelled. Washington's career is a brilliant tribute to the 'American Dream' - ideal. Against overwhelming odds he managed to educate himself and create a flourishing institute that became a model for numerous similar schools. Booker T. Washington was able to adjust to the often unreasonable demands he faced by positively turning his energies into solving the problems he found in his way.

He could of course very well have chosen other strategies in his life. He could have surrendered under the inhumane Southern 'customs', that were largely re-instated after the promise of the Reconstruction became diluted, and just assumed a low profile existence, simply dragging along in futile helpless bitterness for the rest of his life. Or he could have joined the radical African Americans and in that way been able to channel his energies into constructive action. Booker T. Washington did not, however, do either of those things. Instead he took the difficulties as challenges, not really criticizing them but dealing with them like a slalom skier who has to go around each gate placed on the piste in order to reach the finish line.

Booker Washington did not acknowledge bitterness as a potentially useful feeling. In fact, it seems that he underestimated the importance and inevitability of people's feelings. He often urged Blacks not to dwell on their misfortunes but to concentrate, in a practical way, on their possibilities to turn the disadvantages into advantages. In 1911 in *My Larger Education* (Harlan ed. 1972a:418-419), for instance, Booker T. Washington explained that just like in a steam engine the steam has to be directed into the desired direction, so too with the uplift of the African American. He stated that when black Americans had met injustice and adversities they had "invariably tended to get up more steam". When that steam, Washington continued, had "merely spent itself in fruitless agitation and hot air", no good had resulted from it.

This does not necessarily have to mean that Booker T. Washington ignored African Americans' emotional scars left by slavery and racism in general. It could be argued that he considered it impossible to immediately change American society, especially in the South, into a totally equal one. To Washington the Emancipation had been a momentous leap in the direction of equality. Obviously he did not believe that other such leaps would be possible so, relatively, soon after the end of slavery. Booker Washington saw it best to try and secure the freedom African Americans had got, and in no way was he willing to risk it by, as he himself put it, 'artificial forcing'. To use another comparison from the field of sports, Booker T. Washington did not mind letting the white Americans keep the possession of the ball, so long as the African American was in the team. There would come a time when the black American would be a goal scorer alongside his white team mate.

So, Booker T. Washington's chosen strategy was to recommend to black Americans the same philosophy that had opened a better life for him. In other words, he wanted African Americans to succeed collectively just like he had succeeded as an individual. He realized that not everyone, by any means, would become as successful as he was, but the basic outlook he called for Blacks as a whole, was the same.

Booker T. Washington thought that the majority of African Americans, especially in the rural Southern areas, lacked the skills and knowledge that was needed to compete successfully with white Americans. Slavery had abused them as labour force and left them without proper 'civilization' and with a deep dislike for simple, manual labour. Booker Washington wanted to change those things by the kind of education he arranged for Blacks at Tuskegee. He thought that the more radical African Americans' insistence on equal opportunities for higher black education was out of place. In Washington's mind it was first vital to teach the masses of black Americans the importance of for instance personal hygiene and more modern methods of farming than to worry about their opportunities to learn Greek or Latin or the history of Europe.

Quite a few times in the sources used in this paper, Booker Washington stated that he did not want to confine the black race totally to simple, down-to-earth occupations. What is also interesting is that Washington's critics seem to have

agreed, up to a point, with him on the need to have just the kind of industrial education that Tuskegee and similar institutions offered. Yet Booker T. Washington was, by a growing number of critics, accused of perpetuating the lowly position of the African American. Washington was quick to retort that his critics were usually unable to deal with real, concrete things, because they had learned only theoretical 'book knowledge' which had not qualified them to decide what Southern Blacks needed or did not need.

Booker Washington saw the black race to be in a natural phase of development. Every race was supposed to develop along similar lines. The difference between Washington's and his critics' points was that the Tuskegeean genuinely believed that it would be possible for African Americans to climb in society if they first learned the skills needed and determinately worked their way upward. His adversaries, on the contrary, claimed that that possibility was a myth, that the colour line could not be crossed, and therefore it was the white America's turn to make concessions and adjustments.

It is obvious that Booker T. Washington's success as a public figure was largely based on his educational undertakings. Industrial education for Blacks became supported by white America and logically Washington interpreted that as a sign that it would be the correct way to proceed, it was not 'artificial forcing'. By protecting industrial education Washington protected his own position. By distancing himself from the 'radicals', Booker Washington signalled to his white supporters that there would be no risk for them to continue supporting him and the Tuskegee Institute. Washington's approach could perhaps be classed as conscious cynicism in order to remain in power. Nevertheless, he obviously saw himself as the spearhead of the struggle of African Americans, and his career as a symbol of the potential of the race. In other words Washington seems to have been sincere, albeit with somewhat dictatorish overtones.

As far as education is concerned, the answer to the initial hypothesis in this paper remains somewhat elusive. In the sources used Booker T. Washington always emphasized the importance of industrial education as the only proper foundation on which African Americans could build their future. He, however, firmly denied that he was categorically against academic education. One of the rare statements in

which Washington presented a clear argument on different educational emphases was the speech mentioned above (p. 41). In the speech he stated that the best possible education would teach Blacks complete knowledge of all civilized nations. He then reasoned that the lack of money and time, however, prevented the realization of that ideal.

Therefore one conclusion to be drawn could be that Booker T. Washington believed that in time the opportunity for proper academic education for all African Americans would, and should, become a reality. As a preparation for that he advocated training that taught Blacks skills and habits that were needed to live in the white American society. Unlike his critics, Booker Washington believed that skin colour would not matter, provided firstly that African Americans learned those skills and habits, and secondly that white Americans learned that Blacks had acquired them.

Another conclusion is that Booker T. Washington reacted to the challenges against his views on education as if his own person were under attack. He saw his career as an indivisible part of himself and perhaps this was a weakness in Washington's ideology. He defended it as if his own honour were at stake and seems to have been unable to compromise with African Americans on educational issues in the same way as he compromised with whites on others.

With the help of hindsight, it is easy to argue that Booker T. Washington was too optimistic and that his critics were right with their realism. Nevertheless it is to be remembered that Washington's educational model did help a lot of rural Blacks to use more efficient farming methods etc.

Obviously Booker T. Washington's views on work were closely related to those he had on education. He tried to instill the 'labour is dignified'-motto into every African American's mind. Again, Washington had faith in the white Americans' common sense. He believed that when Blacks would become useful to their community, for instance by their skillful labour, they would inevitably be respected by their white neighbours. As in education, Booker Washington did not acknowledge the 'colour line' as a permanent thing. Therefore he welcomed the simple, menial occupations as a starting point for Blacks on their way to equality.

Similarly to educational issues, it is rather obvious to conclude now, at the end of the 20th century, that Booker Washington was unrealistically confident in assuming that work would be something which would make the social upward mobility of African Americans acceptable in the United States. Spencer (1955:198) claims that Washington failed to forecast the developments that took place in the 20th century labour market. Firstly, Spencer argues that “mass-production jobs of the assembly line” did not need the skilled workers or small businessmen Washington’s programme ‘produced’. Secondly, Washington’s future vision of agriculture turned out to be less than accurate. Mechanized farming would not find use for the extensive agrarian labour force that Washington, as Spencer puts it: “had considered as a constant in the economic equation”.

On politics Booker Washington did not exactly practice as he preached. Publicly he belittled the significance of political activity. Privately he was quite active, up to the presidential level, especially in his relationship with Theodore Roosevelt. As Washington’s opinions on the franchise restrictions show, he thought that to engage in politics one ought to be rather well educated. The common man, no matter of what colour, had better leave politics alone. Booker Washington opposed unjust disfranchisement and, remaining loyal to his principles, urged white Southerners to recognize the harm injustice in this matter did to their own morals. Publicly he did not believe in forceful agitation for equal suffrage. Behind the scenes, however, in court cases etc, Washington acted tirelessly against one-sided disfranchisement.

In principle, Booker T. Washington accepted segregation on the condition that separated facilities would be equal. When reality indicated that separation in practice meant unequal facilities, Washington opposed segregation. He obviously felt especially strongly the effects of the imbalance between funds for white and black education. Later on in his life he became more cynical of the Southern ‘custom’ of segregation.

There were two incidents during Booker T. Washington’s career as the spokesman for the African Americans that illustrate the degree of sensibility his position demanded. The first of these was his address at the celebrations for the Spanish-American war in 1898 (see p. 78). In it Washington’s choice of words

proved controversial. He used the word 'prejudice' to describe the problems Blacks were facing in the South. The Southern press attacked Washington and he felt he had to explain, in effect apologize, his indiscretion. The second 'close call' happened in 1901 when Booker T. Washington visited the White House and discussed Southern matters with the President (see p. 62). Again newspapers reacted strongly and Washington received another reminder of his 'proper place'.

So, with the end of segregation nowhere in sight, Booker T. Washington felt that he would be of help to the 'cause' only if he took seriously the limits put to his position. Although quite apparently he considered full integration to be the ultimate goal, for the time being he chose to settle with less. Booker Washington's policy was based on white Americans voluntarily 'seeing the light', and therefore the only leverage he had to make a difference was his ability to entice white Americans to give African Americans their rights. Spencer (1955:200) argues that to criticize Washington's "methods is to make the facile assumption that he had some choice in the matter".

Booker T. Washington rather rarely took up the issue of lynching and other such ultimate inhumanities. He naturally condemned those activities, once again trying to influence white Americans by appealing to their own self-interest. Washington did not stomp his feet and openly confront the white Southerners. He seems to have judged the African American to have been almost like an outlaw, and he appears to have feared that at any moment the situation might have erupted into a conflict between white and black Americans. If that had happened in a large scale, it is easy to guess which side would have emerged victorious.

It is no doubt true that without definite action no real changes take place in a society, just like Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his famous letter from the Birmingham jail in 1963:

Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. (Ducas ed. 1972: 285.)

King had been arrested for arranging boycotts against segregation. What is poignant is that this happened almost a century after Booker T. Washington tried to keep his optimistic visions alive. (Ducas ed. 1972:277.)

Although Booker T. Washington apparently miscalculated the extent to which the white South was prepared to yield and extend its hand towards African Americans, it might be only fair also to consider the potential consequences if Washington had begun to challenge forcefully the white majority. He would probably have lost his strategic position as the 'middleman' between African Americans and white Americans. It is justified to claim that Booker T. Washington's efforts indeed were worth more to the elevation of black Americans when he managed to remain in cordial relations with the white America. The compromise aspect of his ascendancy could be seen as an inevitable by-product of that position.

Booker T. Washington was determined to keep on the middle of the road, in effect serving two masters, despite the controversy it caused. In 1900, in the last page of his autobiography *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:206) he recounts his career pondering over the building blocks of success. He argues that the vital ingredient of lasting success is always hard work, and that "luck" is just different name for it. Washington goes on to state that anyone is capable of succeeding if they are "willing to toil when others are resting... work while others are sleeping... put forth the severest effort when there is no one to see or applaud."

By all accounts Booker T. Washington was willing to do just that. He worked and never, at least publicly, gave in to desperation. He refused to stop believing in the human being, in the 'universal humanity' that would eventually soften the hearts of white America into accepting integrated, equal brotherhood of man. In the last sentence of *The Story of My Life and Work* (Harlan ed. 1972a:206) Booker T. Washington sums up the autobiography and it is also a fitting remark on his life and work: "...I have attempted in a small degree, at least, to subdue my own personal feeling... and I hope that some permanent good will result from my effort."

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