**Document A: Booker T. Washington (Modified)**

*Booker T. Washington was born a slave in 1856 and was nine years old when*

*slavery ended. He became the principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a*

*school designed to teach blacks industrial skills. Washington was a skillful*

*politician and speaker, and he won the support of whites in the North and South*

*who donated money to the school. On September 18, 1895, Booker T.*

*Washington spoke before a mostly white audience in Atlanta.*

Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our

freedom we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in

Congress or the state legislature was more attractive than starting a dairy

farm or garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days passed a friendly ship and sent out a

signal, “Water, water; we die of thirst!” The answer from the friendly ship at

once came back, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” A second time

the signal, “Water, water; send us water!” ran up from the distressed ship,

and was answered, “Cast down your bucket where you are” . . . .The

captain of the distressed **vessel** (ship), at last **heeding** (listening to) the

**injunction** (order), cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh,

sparkling water.

To those of my race I would say: “Cast down your bucket where you are”—

cast it down in making friends with the Southern white man, who is your

next-door neighbor. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce,

in domestic service. . . . No race can prosper till it learns that there is as

much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life

we must begin, and not at the top.

To those of the white race who look to foreign immigrants for the prosperity

of the South, I would repeat what I say to my own race, “Cast down your

bucket where you are.” Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes,

whose **fidelity** (loyalty) and love you have tested. . . . As we have proved

our loyalty to you in the past . . . so in the future, in our humble way, we

shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach. . . . 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.

***Source:*** *Excerpt from Booker T. Washington’s ‘Atlanta Compromise’ speech,*

*1895.*

**Document B: W.E.B. DuBois (Modified)**

*The most influential public critique of Booker T. Washington came in 1903 when*

*black leader and intellectual W.E.B. DuBois published an essay in his book,* The

Souls of Black Folk*. DuBois rejected Washington’s message and instead called*

*for political power, insistence on civil rights, and the higher education of African-*

*American youth. DuBois was born and raised a free man in Massachusetts and*

*was the first African American to earn a PhD from Harvard.*

The most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is

the rise of Mr. Booker T. Washington. His leadership began at the time

when Civil War memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of

astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and

hesitation overtook the freedmen’s sons. Mr. Washington came at the

psychological moment when whites were a little ashamed of having paid

so much attention to Negroes [during Reconstruction], and were

concentrating their energy on dollars.

Mr. Washington practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro

races. Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes

as men and American citizens. He asks that black people give up, at least

for the present, three things—

First, political power; Second, insistence on civil rights; Third, higher

education of Negro youth,

— and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the

accumulation of wealth, and the **pacifying** (calming down) of the South.

As a result of this tender of the **palm-branch** (peace offering), what has

been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The **disfranchisement** (taking away the right to vote) of the Negro; 2.

The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro; 3. The

steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the

Negro.

Mr. Washington’s doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and

South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro’s shoulders and

stand aside as critical **spectators** (onlookers); when in fact the burden

belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we do not

all work on righting these great wrongs.

***Source:*** *W. E. B. DuBois,* The Souls of Black Folk *(Chicago, 1903).*