Comparing Booker T. & W. E. B.

**Booker T. Washington**
1856, born a slave in Virginia
Educated at the Hampton Institute, Virginia
Taught at Hampton
Founded Tuskegee Institute, Alabama; industrial and normal school; served as its Principal
Proposed The Compromise of 1895: Atlanta Compromise Speech (given at the Cotton States and International Exposition to a large white audience… the first African American to speak to such a large southern, white audience about the racial issue)
Advised presidents, worked with whites and blacks, nationally recognized leader of Blacks
1901, published *Up From Slavery*
1915, died (his last years focused on asserting his approach and criticizing Du Bois approach)

**W.E.B. Du Bois**
1868, born free in Massachusetts
Graduated from Fisk, then Ph.D. in history from Harvard in 1895
Conducted sociological studies of blacks in the south
Professor of economics and history at Atlanta University
1903, published *The Souls of Black Folk*
1905, founded the Niagara Movement
1909, one of the founders the NAACP
Editor of *The Crisis* (NAACP journal)
1910s, challenged eugenics and encouraged racial intermixing
1940s, FBI identified him as a socialist
1950, led Peace Information Center in NY (FBI said it was a front for Communism), ran for senator of NY (American Labor Party, received 4% of the votes), put on trial as a communist and acquitted
1959, passport revoked by U.S. and received Lenin Peace Prize in USSR
1963, died at 95 in Ghana where he had become a citizen after renouncing his American citizenship and joining the Communist Party out of bitterness

**The Problem:**
With deteriorating status for Blacks, reduction of civil rights post-reconstruction, discrimination, white supremacy, racism, violence…

**HOW could the black population gain respect and true citizenship?**

**The Proposed Solutions:**

1. Immediate solution through forced acceptance of second class status (mainly white supremacists)
2. Immediate solution by returning former slaves to Africa (only a small group advocated this)
3. **GRADUAL ECONOMIC PLAN** – Booker T. Washington
4. **GRADUAL POLITICAL PLAN** – W.E.B. Du Bois
GRADUAL ECONOMIC PLAN – Booker T. Washington

Peaceful, gradual steps toward political power and social equality by first gaining economic opportunity and wealth… while proving their importance to the economy (majority approach 1895–1915). In general… whites were comfortable with this plan, many philanthropists funded education and provided jobs, many saw it as a way to reach peace between the races. Others disliked it because it seemed to designate Blacks permanently to an inferior status.

a. Accept/Accommodate what is acceptable to whites:
   i. Segregation/"Separate but Equal"
      - Accepted ruling Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896, just wanted education provided for blacks
      - "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."
   ii. Discrimination/Racism
      - Accepted racism as a current reality and urged blacks to “trust” white paternalism
      - Claimed blacks must “earn” opportunity rather than claim to be equal or claim to deserve it
b. Focused on helping/encouraging blacks gain vocational skills and jobs, to save money, and buy property
c. THE COMPROMISE… Urged whites to hire blacks and provide education… in exchange for blacks giving up their fight for civil rights and suffrage… Urged blacks to seek economic independence and respect of white population
   i. Up From Slavery → rags to riches story, popular theme of the era, reinforced approach
   ii. Acted politically on behalf of blacks, but urged the black population not to get political (not to protest, for example)
   iii. Expressed thankfulness to the white population for each gain in black opportunity
   iv. Blamed negroes for their situation… they must change their behavior in order to improve their life, focus on getting an education rather than protesting…helping themselves rather than blaming whites for their misfortune, stop fighting for right to vote and instead seek jobs

GRADUAL POLITICAL PLAN – W.E.B. Du Bois

Fight for the right to vote and civil rights… once that is gained, then economic opportunity would follow (small group at first, but gained momentum later in the 1900s)

At first, Du Bois supported Washington’s approach. He said his Compromise Speech was “a word rightly spoken.” But, later he changed his mind… saying “It startled the nation to hear a Negro advocating such a program after many decades of bitter complaint; it startled and won the applause of the South, it interested and won the admiration of the North; and after a confused murmur of protest, it silenced if it did not convert the Negroes themselves.”

a. Wanted more blacks to gain a liberal arts education… to much focus on vocation
b. The Souls of Black Folk urged blacks to stand against Washington’s accommodationist approach
   i. He believed that Washington’s policies had directly or indirectly resulted in three trends:
      - the disfranchisement of the Negro,
      - the legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro,
      - steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.
c. Demanded for all black citizens
   1) the right to vote now,
   2) civic equality now, and
   3) liberal arts education of Negro youth according to ability.
d. Asserted the “talented tenth” of the black community (liberal/college educated elite) would rise up and lead blacks to true opportunity and cultural elevation by protesting disenfranchisement, which they began to do with the Niagara Movement (dissolved in 1910 due to lack of funding)
e. NAACP formed by radical whites and blacks following race riot in Springfield, IL. The goal was to remove legal barriers to the enforcement of the 14th and 15th Amendments and to end segregation
f. 1932, supported birth control movement and encouraged blacks to have fewer children and focus on raising “quality” not “quantity”

Both men believed eventual equality would occur, they just had differing approaches and philosophies.