

Relevant Unit Objectives

Module 2: Resistance and Self-Determination

This lesson addresses the following Essential Questions:

- What constituted an act of resistance of African Americans against the institution of slavery?
- Are some acts of resistance more effective than others?

Objectives of the Lesson

Aim

What choices were available to African Americans at the turn of the last century when facing racist America?

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the concept of "Black Nationalism".
- Understand how African Americans might consider Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement as a realistic choice
- Identify other leading figures in the history of black nationalism

Introduction

Up until the 1950's a sign that read "No Dogs, No Negroes, No Jews" might be found at the entrance to country clubs, restaurants, hotels, public swimming pools, and parks throughout America. Imagine seeing that sign at a restaurant or public park today. Can this happen today? Why or why not?

Instructional Procedures

Step One:

The Board of Education has found that there is overcrowding in the playground after school, and has passed a new rule saying that playgrounds are only for use by students whose house address number is odd (i.e., 1, 3, 15, etc.).

- How many of you have odd house numbers? How do you feel about this rule?
- How many of you have even house numbers? How do you feel about this rule?

Imagine for a moment that all of you live in houses with even house numbers. Brainstorm ways to deal with this rule. (To the teacher - students should come up with more than three types of responses. Try to group responses so that ultimately they reflect the following three categories: strategies of acceptance (avoid the playground), strategies of protest (challenge the rule), and strategies of separation (set up own playground). If student have not brainstormed at least one strategy in each of these groups, prompt them.
Is the School Board within its rights when its playgrounds don't serve all students?

Step Two:

The teacher distributes Handout 1, which contains a reading about Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois from Kenneth C. Davis.

Step Three:

The teacher may provide background information about Marcus Garvey found in middle/upper school MAAP lessons.

Distribute copies of Handout 2, which contains the text of "Return to Africa," an editorial written by Garvey in the Negro World in 1922. Ask students to answer the questions at the end of the handout.

Step Four:

| African American Thinker | Strategies of Acceptance | Strategies of Protest | Strategies of Separation |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Booker T. Washington | | | |
| W.E.B DuBois | | | |
| Marcus Garvey | | | |

- Which strategy did each thinker embrace?
- What does it say about America as a country if the way it treated people that were not White so long ago led to these three solutions, presented by Booker T. Washington, W.E. B. Dubois, and Marcus Garvey

Materials

Handout 1: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois from Kenneth C. Davis.

Handout2: "Return to Africa," by Marcus Garvey, The Negro World, 1922
(Source: http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blmarcus_garvey_africa.htm)

Handout 1: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois

What did prominent blacks think should be done about racial discrimination?

They couldn't agree. One popular black leader was Booker T. Washington (1856-1915). He was a former slave who went to school during Reconstruction and then became the first head of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, the nation's major industrial training school for blacks. Washington was a talented, commanding speaker. He said that blacks should get ahead by working hard and getting an education. He believed that if blacks could use these skills to gain economic equality, then they could move on to other forms of equal rights.

Many Americans admired and respected Booker T. Washington. But a few thought he accepted Jim Crow laws too easily. One was a man named W.E. B. DuBois (1868-1963). DuBois was the first black to earn a doctoral degree from Harvard University. He was an agitator, not a compromiser. DuBois wanted nothing less than full equality for blacks. He also worked for better treatment for immigrants and Jews and for the vote for women. In 1909 he co-founded the NAACP, which had both black and white members and became a major force in the fight for civil rights for blacks.

Kenneth C. Davis, *Don't Know Much About American History*, NY: HarperCollins
Children's Books, 2003: pp. 128 – 129

The Negro World

New York, Saturday, April 22, 1922

Fellow men of the Negro Race, Greeting:

For four and a half years the Universal Negro Improvement Association has been advocating the cause of Africa for the Africans -- that is, that the Negro peoples of the world should concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa.

When we started our propaganda toward this end several of the so-called intellectual Negroes who have been bamboozling the race for over half a century said that we were crazy, that the Negro peoples of the western world were not interested in Africa and could not live in Africa. One editor and leader went so far as to say at his Pan-African Congress that American Negroes could not live in Africa, because the climate was too hot. All kinds of arguments have been adduced by these Negro intellectuals against the colonization of Africa by the black race. Some said that the black man would ultimately work out his existence alongside of the white man in countries founded and established by the latter. Therefore, it was not necessary for Negroes to seek an independent nationality of their own. The old time stories of "Africa fever," "African bad climate," "African mosquitoes," "African savages," have been repeated by these "brainless intellectuals" of ours as a scare against our people in America and the West Indies taking a kindly interest in the new program of building a racial empire of our own in our Motherland.

A "Program" at Last?

Your obedient servant,

Marcus Garvey, President General

Universal Negro Improvement Association

New York, April 18, 1922

(Source: http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blmarcus_garvey_africa.htm)

Questions about "Return to Africa"

1. What does Garvey mean by "Africa for the Africans" (1st paragraph)?
2. In the second paragraph, Garvey writes of "the so-called intellectual Negroes who have been bamboozling the race for over half a century."
 - a. Can you identify which leaders he might be referring to?
 - b. Why does he hold these leaders in such contempt?
 - c. What does this language tell you about which groups of African Americans Garvey is trying to appeal to?