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The Southern Education Board and the Race Issue in Public Education

By LOUIS R. HARLAN

WHEN THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION BOARD WAS CREATED in 1901 to direct a region-wide public school crusade, it at once encountered a powerful movement which had been accumulating force for a decade. Disfranchisement of Negroes in state after state was accompanied or followed by new segregation laws, discrimination of various sorts, and extralegal violence. Sometimes called the white supremacy movement, this current of extreme racialism enveloped all other movements in the region within its context, tingeing them with its attitudes and deflecting them from their original directions into its own stream. "These new antipathies are not defensive, but assertive and combative," Edgar Gardner Murphy noted at the time; "this popular temper is . . . frankly and ruthlessly destructive."¹ Southern progressivism could not avoid or evade the white supremacy issue, nor could Southern prohibitionism or the Southern education movement.

The Southern Education Board, with eleven Northern and fifteen Southern members in its thirteen-year history, was an intersectional partnership of moderate progressives, moderate in the North on the delicate racial and sectional issues, and progressive in the South in the limited sense that it offered education as a key to regional progress. In challenging racialism by good will, tact and hard work, the Board's efforts were a test of the efficacy of moderate progressivism in a field where the Radicals of Reconstruction had signally failed. The Northerners on the Board were from New York rather than Boston. Robert C. Ogden was

¹ Edgar Gardner Murphy, *The Basis of Ascendancy* (New York, 1909), 27.

manager of John Wanamaker's New York department store. George Foster Peabody, a Wall Street banker, and the young railroad president William H. Baldwin, Jr., had long been associated with Ogden as trustees of Negro industrial schools. These men financed the Board's modest budget, with help from Andrew Carnegie and the General Education Board. Walter Hines Page and Jabez L. M. Curry, Southerners transplanted in the North, served as intersectional diplomats. Booker T. Washington was the agent for Negroes, but did not attend the Board meetings. Most of the Southern members were college presidents. The veteran campaigners Charles D. McIver, Edwin A. Alderman, and Charles W. Dabney had been partners in the earlier North Carolina school crusade. Edgar Gardner Murphy, on the other hand, had attracted the philanthropists' attention by organizing an intersectional conference on Southern race questions at Montgomery, Alabama, May 8-10, 1900.² These were the chief policy-makers, though other Southerners were later added.

As Ogden explained the attitude of the philanthropists at a Southern gathering, "While we were originally interested in the South through negro education, our impulses have risen from negro education to the question of the entire burden of educational responsibility that you have throughout this entire section of the country."³ This change of perspective grew out of sober

² Washington met frequently with the Northerners, and spoke on the same platforms with the Southerners in the North and South, but did not attend the Board or Conference meetings. Ogden failed in an effort to get Washington on the program of the Conference for Education in the South. Robert C. Ogden to William H. Baldwin, Jr., May 27, 1903; Ogden to Oswald Garrison Villard, March 11, 1905; Ogden to the Rev. Samuel H. Bishop of New York City, March 27, 1906; in Robert C. Ogden Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). Unless otherwise indicated the Ogden Papers hereinafter cited are in the Library of Congress. Washington complained of this slight to Baldwin, January 22, 1904, Booker T. Washington Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). Unless cited otherwise the Washington Papers are in the Library of Congress. On Murphy's race conference, see Isabel C. Barrows, "The Montgomery Conference," in *Outlook* (New York, 1870-1935), LXV (May 19, 1900), 160-62; "The Montgomery Conference," in the *American Monthly Review of Reviews* (New York, 1890-1937), XXI (June 1900), 655-56; *Montgomery Advertiser*, January 11, 1900; Ogden to Walter Hines Page, April 5, 1900, in Walter Hines Page Papers (Houghton Library, Harvard University). A scholarly account of Murphy is Allen J. Going, "The Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy: His Ideas and Influence," in *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Garrison, N. Y., 1932-), XXV, (December 1956), 391-402.

³ Fourth Conference for Education in the South, *Proceedings* (Winston-Salem, N. C., 1901), 6.

thought about the significance of the white supremacy movement. As early as 1896 Ogden predicted that the ensuing ten years would cover the Negro's crisis, "and within that period it will be determined whether as a mass his race is to rise or fall in this country. I very much fear the fall."⁴ The new philanthropists were not as concerned about Negro civil rights as were the humanitarian radicals of an earlier generation.⁵ William H. Baldwin's hard-boiled philanthropy assumed that the Negro "will willingly fill the more menial positions, and do the heavy work, at less wages," leaving to whites "the more expert labor." Baldwin's advice to the Negro was quite specific: "avoid social questions; leave politics alone; continue to be patient; live moral lives; live simply; learn to work . . . know that it is a crime for any teacher, white or black, to educate the negro for positions which are not open to him."⁶

Though these philanthropists may have been complacent about an inferior status for Negroes, they were perturbed by the social and economic hindrances placed on Negroes by the dominant whites. After several experiments within the Negro community, they concluded that the key to Negro problems lay within the white community. There had to be a working compromise between the "best North" and the "best South."⁷ The "best North," in Ogden's scale of values, was men like himself, conservative business and professional people; the "best South" included educators and a remnant of upper-class paternalists, "a minority powerful to restrain if not always powerful to accomplish."⁸

If race prejudice was due to ignorance and economic competition, the philanthropists reasoned, then through public schools the whites might learn racial tolerance along with skills which

⁴ Ogden to George Foster Peabody, June 11, 1896, in Ogden Papers.

⁵ Ogden could say "Amen" to several stanzas of Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden," even in the presence of Negroes. Clipping from Philadelphia *North American*, June 21, 1901, in George S. Dickerman clipping books (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

⁶ William H. Baldwin, Jr., "The Present Problem of Negro Education, Industrial Education," in *Proceedings of the Second Capon Springs Conference for Christian Education in the South* (Washington, republished by the Southern Education Board, n. d.), 72, 74.

⁷ Ogden to Richard Watson Gilder (editor of the *Century*), February 25, 1903, in Ogden Papers.

⁸ Murphy, *Basis of Ascendancy*, 29. See also Fourth Conference for Education in the South, *Proceedings*, 5-6.

would widen their opportunities. An educational movement of constructive character, moving in a path parallel to the insistent white supremacy demands, could so harbor strength by avoiding direct clashes as to outdistance and check the rival force.

The regional approach of the Board is significant. A single, pervasive social institution, the public school, was the lever by which it hoped to move the region, to solve all of the other complex problems arising from Southern poverty, ignorance, and racial tension. The Board undoubtedly viewed the South as an underdeveloped region. Its task was to furnish technical assistance and a little money if the South would supply the educational enthusiasm and local leadership. Massive economic aid would have had to be federal aid, because of the sheer size of the school systems, and that was apparently out of the question after the Blair education bill was defeated in Congress in the eighties.

The Southern education movement began in 1901 with a Pullman-train journey of influential and philanthropic Northerners to North Carolina, the first of an annual series of such excursions at Ogden's expense, and a public meeting with its governor, Charles B. Aycock, and other members of the Conference for Education in the South. Just elected on a platform coupling Negro disfranchisement and universal education,⁹ Aycock represented the conservative wing of the white supremacy movement. A tacit bargain with him underlay the whole educational movement and dictated its tactical methods. The philanthropists acquiesced in disfranchisement and Jim Crow laws and undertook to promote their views in the North, while Aycock openly pledged that the schools of the disfranchised Negroes would have protection from hostile state legislation through the power and prestige of his high office.¹⁰

⁹ Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901* (Chapel Hill, 1951), 198-204, is a valuable supplement to earlier accounts of this campaign.

¹⁰ Raleigh *News and Observer*, May 21, 1901, January 9, 1903; Robert D. W. Connor and Clarence Poe, *The Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock* (New York, 1912), 132-35. Actually, Aycock did little to protect Negro school funds at the county and district levels, and, according to the state school superintendent, James Y. Joyner, less was spent on Negro rural schools in 1905 than in 1895. He is quoted in Thomas Jesse Jones, *Negro Education: A Study of the*

Ogden's guests, on their return to the North, indicated a complete surrender to white supremacy. "We have to get rid of our more or less vague idea that all men are created free and equal," announced editor Lyman Abbott of the *Outlook*.¹¹ The Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst preached at the Madison Square Presbyterian Church that "we learned to look upon matters more in the way in which the Southern mind regards them." Good Southerners advised the Negro to "keep quiet," said Parkhurst, who had been convinced that "the less the negro talks about his civic rights under the Constitution, particularly the right of suffrage . . . the sooner he will attain to all the rights that justly belong to him."¹² Walter Hines Page of *World's Work* admitted that race friction was getting worse, but thought it could not be "allayed . . . by anything whatsoever except the training of the inefficient and the ignorant." Page stressed a positive approach to the Southern problem. "The statesman-schoolmaster," he affirmed, "is the man to build our hopes on."¹³ These spokesmen for the philanthropic capitalist did not so much change Northern opinion as indicate its final capitulation to racialism. Others had already taken the same path to reunion, and racial discrimination was spreading in the North.

Seeking to cushion the shock of racialism and keep public education open as an avenue of Negro advancement, the philanthropists offered the Negro charity rather than full-fledged philanthropy. They were willing on the Negro's behalf to renounce some of his claims to equal status and opportunity. Not being Negroes themselves, they were probably not fully aware how disappointing such a compromise was to many Negroes, nor how vulnerable the complete loss of political power made the Negroes. And they fatally miscalculated in assuming that the upper-class wing of Southern racialism, because it spoke the language of conservatism, would be their effective partner in

Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States (United States Bureau of Education, *Bulletins*, 1916, Nos. 38 and 39 [2 vols., Washington, 1917]), I, 29.

¹¹ Clipping from *New York Journal*, May 24, 1901, in Dickerman clipping books.

¹² *New York World*, April 29, 1901.

¹³ "The Only Way to Allay Race-Friction," editorial in *World's Work* (New York, 1900-1932), VI (August 1903), 3720-21.

protecting Negroes. People who were disturbed by the collapse of the Reconstruction settlement undoubtedly sighed with relief that the Negro was keeping education as a solace and hope, and that all they needed to do to further Negro progress was to ride on Ogden's train to hear Southerners speak at educational conferences. But they were misled in this facile optimism.

The Southern Education Board members agreed that for the first two years, at least, "we would not emphasize the *negro* too much," according to Dabney, who ran the Board's propaganda bureau at Knoxville. "In the excited state of public sentiment," he wrote, "this was considered wisest."¹⁴ The Southern campaigners preached in general terms the education of all the people and fairness to Negroes. But as Alderman stated their position in a Northern magazine, the education "of one untaught white man to the point that knowledge and not prejudice will guide his conduct . . . is worth more to the black man himself than the education of ten Negroes."¹⁵ As Charles B. Aycock simplified the doctrine: "Education of the whites will provide education for the negroes."¹⁶ Exactly how this magic would work was never clear, but its Southern advocates insisted that education for Negroes was also essential. They said nothing about desegregation, and as little as possible about "separate but equal" education, a doctrine then popular only among constitutional lawyers.¹⁷

The Northerners took Dabney to task in 1903 for ignoring the Negro entirely in the propaganda he spread over the South. In Mississippi, for example, Negro education was not mentioned at a time when James K. Vardaman was trying to destroy the state's Negro school fund. "When I reminded them that a year ago all of them . . . were proclaiming the same principles and policies, I was greeted with silence or explanations," Dabney wrote home.

¹⁴ Charles W. Dabney to Charles L. Coon, August 27, 1903, in Charles W. Dabney Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

¹⁵ Quoted in Dumas Malone, *Edwin A. Alderman: A Biography* (New York, 1940), 145-46. Cf. Charles W. Dabney at Carnegie Hall, quoted in *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 11, 1903.

¹⁶ Charles B. Aycock interview, clipping from *Charlotte Observer*, April 26, 1901, in Dickerman clipping books.

¹⁷ The Southerners' stand on school segregation was rigid. Edgar Gardner Murphy, *Problems of the Present South* (New York, 1904; 2d ed., 1916), 37. Ogden told the editor of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* that he opposed desegregation. Ogden to W. Scott Copeland, February 24, 1905, in Ogden Papers.

“Recent events have re-excited them about the negro’s interests and put them to thinking how they can help to maintain them against the white aggressors.”¹⁸ Dabney considered resigning, but the other Southerners patched up the intersectional compromise again.

Spokesmen for Negro schools watched from the sidelines with attitudes fluctuating between suspicion and hope. “The fact that it is controlled by Mr. Ogden & Peabody will make it necessary to devote much thought to Negro as well as white education,” Principal Hollis B. Frissell of Hampton assured Booker T. Washington in the first year.¹⁹ But Negro college graduates and some Northern liberals were alienated by the fact that the Northern members, who sat on all of the leading philanthropic boards interested in the South, channeled these funds into Negro industrial institutes and white colleges. And Washington himself wrote privately that the Southern educational campaign meant “almost nothing so far as the Negro schools are concerned.” He charged that “the Southern members . . . do not put themselves on record in a straight and frank manner as much as they should.”²⁰

One might expect the General Education Board, with its millions, prestige and relative independence, to balance the caution of the Southern campaigners with its own boldness. But Wallace Buttrick, its executive secretary, was equally cautious and perhaps a bit frightened by the emotional timbre of Southern racialism. After a grass-roots conference in the South with North Carolina county school superintendents, Buttrick decided that equal treatment for Negroes would make whites cold toward philanthropy. “As a matter of absolute justice they ought to participate proportionately with the whites,” he said in a confidential report. “But we are confronted ‘with a condition and not a theory.’ . . . We shall err and invite defeat, if, in the present state of public sentiment, we demand too much from the white people of the South.”²¹

¹⁸ Dabney to Coon, August 27, 1903; Peabody to Dabney, October 7, 1903, in Dabney Papers.

¹⁹ Hollis B. Frissell to Washington, November 9, 1901, in Washington Papers.

²⁰ Washington to Ogden, July 18, 1906, with copies also to Peabody, Buttrick, and Frissell, *ibid.*

²¹ Wallace Buttrick, “Educational Conditions and Needs of North Carolina,”

Ogden restrained his own sincere impulse to speak up for Negro education partly from loyalty to his vulnerable Southern allies. He was constantly aware of the danger that the whites might divide educational tax funds so that Negro schools would receive only the returns from Negro taxes, and his Southern friends convinced him that if this question were submitted to Southern voters, the demagogues would win. "For these men to openly attack you," warned Murphy, "would not only be 'unpleasant' but would 'drive to cover' men . . . on whom we—and the negro—*must* depend for fairness and patriotism." "I feel 'like a dog' to have to say these things," Murphy protested, "but I *know* our people."²² The philanthropists assumed that Southern sensitivity would permit discussion of racial issues only by Southerners. But they might well have risked their timid millions, and the added capital of good will so painstakingly accumulated by intersectional conciliation, in bold leadership on the Negro's behalf in ventures their Southern colleagues could not risk. They decided instead to intensify their original efforts for general popular education.²³ Such action had much to be said for it, but as far as Negro education was concerned it was simply evasion. The real dilemma of the public school campaigns was that white educational sentiment, as it grew, increased the temptation to take the Negro's share of school funds. Educational promoters were tempted to promise taxpayers a fiscal saving through racial discrimination.²⁴ The philanthropists, seeking Southern allies against the demagogues who exploited lower-class prejudices, actually joined forces with the upper-class conservatives who quietly administered school discrimination.

confidential report to the General Education Board, January 27, 1904, in Southern Education Board Miscellaneous Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

²² Murphy to Ogden, April 8, 1904, in Ogden Papers. "So many of the officials of the Southern Board are identified with state institutions that it has been difficult to do much without embarrassing them (even the University of Virginia is almost absolutely at the mercy of every passing Legislature). . . ." Murphy to Washington, March 29, 1908, in Washington Papers.

²³ Ogden to Peabody, March 23, 1906, in Ogden Papers; Ogden to Page, March 31, 1906, in George S. Dickerman Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

²⁴ For example, see R. F. Beasley (Monroe, N. C.) to Eugene C. Brooks (secretary of the North Carolina Educational Campaign Committee, Raleigh), September 9, 1903, in James Yarkin Joyner Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

"Within the saving limits of established principles," said Ogden, "I strive to be, in this Southern Education matter, all things to all men that peace may in the future reign throughout the length and breadth of our land."²⁵ He sometimes went to great lengths to promote intersectional harmony. He appeared at the New York Union League Club to scotch a proposal to reduce Southern congressional representation as a reprisal for disfranchisement.²⁶ Avoiding visits to Negro colleges²⁷ and warning friends against accepting professorships there,²⁸ he advised Negro leaders to employ "concession, moderation and patience."²⁹ The editors and public figures who accompanied him southward were counseled to be as "wise as serpents" and as "gentle as doves."³⁰ "I pursue my own course quietly," he wrote a liberal Southerner, "always, however, adapting myself to the standards of the environment in which I may be found."³¹ But adaptation to the environment of Southern racialism weakened the philanthropists' position as guardians of Negro interests.

It was clear by 1906 that racialism continued to dominate Southern affairs. The Northerners and Murphy held a caucus,³² and at the next Board meeting Peabody broached the topic of a special campaign for Negro education. The Southern members tried to delay action. "We should avoid anything like a crusade," said Alderman; "guard against going into it with heat."

²⁵ Ogden to Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, March 30, 1904, copy in Dabney Papers.

²⁶ Ogden was denounced for this by Negro leaders. He explained his motives at length in Ogden to Peabody, April 10, 1903; Ogden to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, June 25, 1904, in Ogden Papers.

²⁷ Ogden was particularly careful to avoid contact with Berea College. William G. Frost to George S. Dickerman, April 7, 1906, in miscellaneous Ogden Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina); Ogden to Buttrick, April 13, 1906, in Ogden Papers (Library of Congress). Baldwin disagreed with Ogden's cautious policy of refusing invitations to visit Negro colleges en route to his annual conferences. Ogden to Baldwin, April 12, 1904, in Ogden Papers.

²⁸ Ogden to Julius D. Dreher (Selwood, S. C.), March 26, 1906, in Ogden Papers.

²⁹ Ogden to Rev. Teunis S. Hamilton (Howard University), March 23, 1903, Ogden to Helen M. Ludlow (Hampton Institute), June 15, 1905, *ibid.*

³⁰ Ogden to James E. Russell (Dean of Teachers College, Columbia University), March 27, 1906; Ogden to Charles D. McIver, January 27, 1903, *ibid.*

³¹ Ogden to Dreher, March 26, 1906, *ibid.*

³² Minutes of informal conference at the Union League Club, New York, April 25, 1906, in Albert P. Bourland Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

When Peabody replied that it was "about time for a crusade of the right kind," Alderman rejoined: "Southern men have shied from this subject. It has been touching a sore tooth. . . . We want now to influence public sentiment: stop being silent, but be wise; go forward, but with forethought, not so spectacularly as to set back the movement."³³ This discussion made clear the Board's dilemma, that a crusade for Negro education would jeopardize the crusade for white education. Yielding reluctantly to the superior power of the white supremacy movement, the Board continued its strong efforts for a middle path between equalitarianism and racialism, and resigned itself by default to the growth of separate and unequal schools.

Pressed from the South by an opposition led by the *Manufacturers' Record*, organ of industry in the South, Page told a Southern newspaper reporter: "You will find when the wood pile is turned over not a nigger, but an uneducated white boy." "There is a man," he said, "and it is the man we want to reach."³⁴ Ogden himself yielded to the temptation to describe his movement as "almost exclusively in white interest."³⁵ Believing that commerce and education could go hand in hand, Ogden was sincerely puzzled by the attacks from the New South. His guests were being called "picturesque junketers," "Pullman car philanthropists," and "the swell-belly parade."³⁶ The conciliatory methods may have won over some moderate Southerners, but the language of the opposition press could hardly have been stronger if the movement had been bolder.

The Southern attacks did not conceal the movement's conservatism from the more doctrinaire liberals. Ogden's characteristic methods seemed to Oswald Garrison Villard of the *Nation* "too complacent and too conciliatory; as if there was some lack of the fiery indignation of the reformer."³⁷ Negro leaders who shared Villard's distrust of the philanthropists and their allies

³³ Minutes of Southern Education Board meeting, August 6-8, 1906, in Ogden Papers.

³⁴ Columbia (S. C.) *State*, April 24, 1903.

³⁵ Ogden to George W. Boyd (passenger agent of Pennsylvania Railroad), February 27, 1904, in Ogden Papers.

³⁶ Charleston (S. C.) *News and Courier*, editorial, March 13, 1905.

³⁷ "Robert C. Ogden," editorial by Villard, in *Nation* (New York, 1865-), XCVII (August 14, 1913), 139; editorial in *New York Evening Post*, August 7, 1913.

formed in 1906 the militant Niagara Movement, out of which grew the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a protest group with a long-range objective of full democratic equality with whites.³⁸ Warned by Hollis B. Frissell that the new movement stressed "the rights rather than the duties of the colored people," the philanthropists received it with cold silence and expressed private disapproval.³⁹ Washington, whose leadership was challenged, went further. Maintaining an unmistakably hostile public silence,⁴⁰ he privately ordered his assistant, "Telegraph . . . newspaper men that you can absolutely trust to ignore [the] Niagra [*sic*] movement."⁴¹ His efforts at suppression extended to buying up hostile Negro newspapers.⁴²

³⁸ Jack Abramowitz, "Origins of the NAACP," in *Social Education* (Crawfordsville, Ind., 1937-), XV (January 1951), 21-23. See also W. E. Burghardt DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York, 1940), 89-92; Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (New York, 1953), 176-83; Helen M. Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt: Pioneer of the Color Line* (Chapel Hill, 1952), 206; Gunnar Myrdal and assistants, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (2 vols., New York, 1944), II, 819-36.

³⁹ Frissell to Peabody, October 9, 24, 1906, in Hollis B. Frissell letterbooks (Hampton Institute, Virginia); Peabody to William E. Burghardt DuBois, August 26, 1911; DuBois to Peabody, August 28, 1911, in Ogden Miscellaneous Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress); Ogden to Peabody, January 5, 1904; Ogden to Kelly Miller (Howard University), September 28, 1903; Peabody to Ogden, September 1, 1911 (in Samuel C. Mitchell, MS. biography of Ogden), in Ogden Papers; DuBois to Peabody, December 28, 1905, quoted in Herbert Aptheker (ed.), *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* (New York, 1951), 881-83.

⁴⁰ Washington's public remark that "a hungry race cannot live upon 'principles'" was in reference to educational policy rather than public affairs, but perhaps it reveals his frame of reference. E. Davidson Washington (ed.), *Selected Speeches of Booker T. Washington* (Garden City, New York, 1932), 203. On Washington as a racial leader see C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913: A History of the South*, vol. IX (Baton Rouge, 1951), 350-68; Oliver C. Cox, "The Leadership of Booker T. Washington," in *Social Forces* (Chapel Hill, 1922-), XXX (October, 1951), 91-97; Samuel R. Spencer, Jr., *Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in American Life* (Boston, 1955), 87-143. After his generous article, "A University Education for Negroes," in *Independent* (New York and Boston, 1848-1928), LXVIII (March 24, 1910), 613-18, Washington wrote to Robert R. Moton on March 24, 1910: "This matter of explaining and defending these so-called higher institutions makes me tired." Washington Papers.

⁴¹ Washington to Emmett J. Scott, telegram from New York, July 17 [1905 or 1906?]; Washington to Scott, July 27, 1905, in Washington Papers. The spelling error was probably that of a Southern white telegrapher.

⁴² Abramowitz, "Origins of the NAACP," 23; August Meier, "Booker T. Washington and the Negro Press: With Special Reference to the *Colored American Magazine*," in *Journal of Negro History* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1916-), XXXVIII (January 1953), 67-90, based on research in the Washington Papers.

Washington's own racial policy was failing tragically at the time he was trying to prevent alternative policies. His own school and his Southern supporters were under attack.⁴³ Southern officials were giving Negro schools a smaller and smaller proportion of tax funds. The General Education Board refused to aid Negro high schools,⁴⁴ and the Peabody Fund was dissolved without giving Negro schools a proportionate share of the principal.⁴⁵ Even in education, the traditional touchstone of Negro advancement, the conservative Negro leader had little to conserve, as he made clear at a gathering of Southern professors in 1915. "We are trying," he said, "to instil into the Negro mind that if education does not make the Negro humble, simple, and of service to the community, then it will not be encouraged."⁴⁶

Perhaps the Southern Education Board can better be judged on the basis of general trends in the South than on its discreet utterances. There really was a Southern educational awakening between 1900 and the first World War. Annual expenditures for education quadrupled, kept well ahead of the rise in property values, and acted as a springboard for further increases in the next decade. Though other improvements did not always keep pace with physical expansion, and though the lag behind non-Southern schools continued, Southern whites had better schools and more books, necessities of life in a state of civilization.⁴⁷ The

⁴³ Washington to Dabney, February 10, 1903; Washington to Peabody, July 18, 27, 1907; W. N. Sheats (former state superintendent, Gainesville, Florida) to Buttrick, May 25, 1904, copy sent to Baldwin and thence to Washington, in Washington Papers; Ogden to Frederic L. Moore (Washington, D. C.), February 9, 1903, in Ogden Papers.

⁴⁴ Washington to Buttrick, July 23, 1909; Washington to Ogden, October 18, 1909; Buttrick to Washington, June 18, 1910, in Washington Papers; Walter H. Page to Buttrick, February 23, 1910, Buttrick to Page, February 26, 1910, in Walter Hines Page Papers (Houghton Library, Harvard University). And [Abraham Flexner and Frank P. Bachman], *The General Education Board: An Account of Its Activities, 1902-1914* (New York, 1915), 155-57, 203, 209, shows that that foundation disbursed \$3,052,625 to Southern white colleges, \$555,781.13 to Negro industrial institutes, and \$140,000 to Negro colleges in the twelve-year period.

⁴⁵ Washington to Samuel A. Green, January 21, 1904, January 21, 1913, September 15, 1914, in Peabody Education Fund Papers (George Peabody College for Teachers).

⁴⁶ [William M. Hunley, secretary], *Minutes of the University Commission on Southern Race Questions* (n. p., n. d.), 29. Washington spoke at the fifth meeting, May 5-7, 1915, at Montgomery, Alabama, and Tuskegee Institute.

⁴⁷ The expenditures for thirteen Southern states (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi,

Southern Education Board played an important part in the work which brought about this public school expansion.

On the other hand, the Board's efforts seem to have had almost no effect on the Negro schools. Nor did the Board brake or deflect the course of racialism. "Passionate and rapidly developing enthusiasm for white education is bearing sharply and adversely upon the opportunities of the negro," the sensitive Murphy noted. "There is not only no chance to help the situation of the negro educationally, but it is steadily growing worse, and their schools, upon every sort of pretext, are being hampered and impoverished where they are not actually abandoned."⁴⁸ Marked financial discrimination against the already conveniently segregated Negro schools apparently developed from a conjunction of motives: increased white desire for education, white racial hostility, and efforts of taxpayers to limit taxation. It is misleading to think of the dual system of education as a financial burden when the two systems were grossly unequal. Discrimination against Negro schools represented a fiscal saving and was a basis for compromise between taxpayer and tax-layer. The educational campaigns themselves drove the wedge of inequality between the two systems. Discrimination varied from place to place, but it was almost universal, flagrant, and increasing. In South Carolina, for example, in 1900 the white child of school age received about \$5.75 for every dollar expended per Negro child, whereas in 1915 the ratio was about \$12.37 to one dollar.⁴⁹ By other measurements such as school property, transportation,

Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma) were \$20,833,135 in 1900 and \$82,772,095 in 1915. The amount for Oklahoma as a territory is included in the 1900 total. United States Bureau of Education, *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1899-1900* (2 vols., Washington, 1901), I, lxxvii; United States Bureau of Education, *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ended June 30, 1917* (2 vols., Washington, 1917), II, 53. The latter volume contains educational statistics for 1914-1915, because Congress failed to appropriate to the bureau a sufficient sum for earlier publication.

⁴⁸ Murphy to Buttrick, November 14, 1907, in Southern Education Board Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

⁴⁹ United States Bureau of Education, *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1899-1900*, II, 2503; *ibid.*, 1917, II, 17; *Thirty-Second Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education of the State of South Carolina, 1900* (Columbia, 1901), 253; *Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education of the State of South Carolina, 1915* (Columbia, 1916), 310.

attendance, pupils per teacher, and high school opportunities, the contrast was even more striking.

Educational reform within the context of racialism partook of racialism, whatever may be the long-range effect of expanded education on white attitudes. Discrimination in education was a cancerous growth out of reform. The Southern Education Board's sympathetic and gentle approach to the race issue in Southern public education lacked moral firmness and was therefore weakened by compromise.