

SEPTEMBER • 1909

been spoken yet by any Southern man concerning conditions in the South.¹ I believe you will come to this conclusion yourself after you have read the book if you have not already done so. I shall be very glad to hear from you after you have read it, and if another and different word can be spoken in the Evening Post concerning it, I am sure it will help. Yours very truly,

Booker T. Washington

TLS Oswald Garrison Villard Papers MH.

¹ BTW's favorable response to *The Basis of Ascendancy* was presented in more detail and with lengthy quotations in his review article, "The Negro and the 'Solid' South," *Independent*, 67 (Nov. 25, 1909), 1195-99. He said the book's significance was "not so much the fact that it condemns and discredits the policy which would deny to the negro the opportunity to advance along the lines in which he has the capacity to do so, but because it shows the futility of it, and outlines a policy which is based upon mutual good will, and gives to both races an opportunity to share in the upbuilding of the new South" (p. 1195). BTW glossed over Murphy's assumption of white superiority, however, and seemed to acquiesce in Murphy's principal concern that whites justify their dominance by their benevolence. The article was reprinted in pamphlet form by the Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Negro Race.

From Edgar Gardner Murphy

New Haven, Conn. Sept. 3-09

My dear Mr. Washington: I thank you for your suggestion to Mr. Villard: it was most thoughtful and generous of you.

But I wrote at once to tell him that deeply as I valued his own personal friendship (he expressed to me his great mortification at the "review") I had no favors to ask of the Evening Post or the Nation. "The Present South" has taken its place in American letters in spite of their sneers; the Basis of Ascendancy will do the same. They simply hate the South, and anything they might say would probaby do quite as much harm as good. My intense indignation is due not to their fault-finding (I have stood *that* from many quarters all my life) but to the gratuitous personal aspersions of their opening sentences. I want nothing to do with that sort of journalism, and if they comment further on the book they must do so in justice to the *cause* and to *themselves*.