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**African Americans and Racial Inequality in the United States:
The Unfinished Business
“A Socio-Historical Perspective”**

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Dedication

To my family.

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I would like to express my deep gratitude to my distinguished supervisor Professor Malika Sahel for her constant guidance and support. She deserves special praise for her insightful comments as well as precious recommendations. She is the true definition of a dedicated teacher, an insightful researcher, and a distinguished supervisor.

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Abstract

Among the domestic issues that shape controversy in American social history is the question of racial inequality. Although the latter has been the concern of many racial/ethnic groups in American society, blacks have been, and still are, the most disadvantaged group. The history of African Americans is a history of social degradation, economic exploitation, and political deprivation. For African Americans, the question of citizenship rights has always been tied to the question of race and racial order. The present thesis deals with the issue of African Americans and persistent racial inequality in the United States. The thesis addresses the issue in question from a socio-historical perspective. What makes of this research work significant is the fact that unlike other studies which focused on the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s as the end point of the road to equality, this thesis, on the contrary, looks at racial inequality facing African Americans in the United States as an unfinished business; as a persistent reality in U.S. society. It focuses on and explores the persistent reality of black-white racial inequality. This research work attempts to demonstrate that despite the significant progress made and the fact that the situation of African Americans today is undeniably much improved compared to the past, the journey to true racial equality has not been accomplished yet. Black-white racial inequality remains a persistent feature that still characterizes even twenty-first-century American society.

Key words: African Americans, blacks, persistent racial inequality, United States, Civil Rights Movement, American society.

Résumé

Parmi les problèmes intérieurs américains qui façonnent une controverse dans l'histoire sociale américaine se trouve la question de l'inégalité raciale. Bien que ce dernier ait été la préoccupation de nombreux groupes raciaux/ethniques dans la société américaine, les Noirs ont été et sont toujours le groupe le plus défavorisé. L'histoire des Afro-Américains est une histoire de dégradation sociale, d'exploitation économique et de privation des droits politiques. Pour les Afro-Américains, la question des droits de la citoyenneté a toujours été liée à la question de la race et de l'ordre racial. La présente thèse traite le sujet des Afro-Américains et l'inégalité raciale persistante aux États-Unis. La thèse aborde le sujet en question dans une perspective socio-historique. Ce qui rend ce travail de recherche significatif est le fait que contrairement à d'autres études qui se sont concentrées sur le mouvement des droits civiques des années 1950 et 1960 comme point final dans la route vers l'égalité, cette thèse, au contraire, examine les inégalités raciales auxquelles sont confrontés les Afro-Américains aux États-Unis comme une réalité persistante dans la société américaine. Il se concentre sur et explore la réalité persistante de l'inégalité raciale entre les Noirs et les Blancs américains. Ce travail de recherche tente de démontrer que malgré les progrès significatifs réalisés et malgré le fait que la situation des Afro-Américains d'aujourd'hui est indéniablement bien améliorée par rapport au passé, mais le chemin vers une véritable égalité raciale n'est pas encore atteint. L'inégalité raciale entre les Noirs et les Blancs persiste encore dans la société américaine même au 21^e siècle.

Mots-clés: Afro-américains, Noirs, inégalité raciale persistante, États-Unis, mouvement des droits civiques, société américaine.

ملخص

من بين القضايا الداخلية التي شكلت جدلا واسعا في التاريخ الاجتماعي للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية هي مسألة اللامساواة العرقية. على الرغم من أن هذه الأخيرة كانت مصدر قلق للعديد من المجموعات العرقية/الاثنية في المجتمع الأمريكي، إلا أن السود كانوا ولا يزالون المجموعة الأكثر تضررا. إن تاريخ الأمريكيين الأفارقة هو عبارة عن تاريخ مليء بالتدهور الاجتماعي والاستغلال الاقتصادي والحرمان السياسي. بالنسبة للأمريكيين الأفارقة، كانت مسألة حقوق المواطنة مرتبطة دائما بمسألة العرق والنظام العرقي. تتناول هذه الأطروحة قضية الأمريكيين الأفارقة واستمرارية اللامساواة العرقية في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. تناقش الأطروحة القضية المعنية بالدراسة من منظور اجتماعي تاريخي. ما يجعل هذا البحث مميزا هو أنه على عكس الدراسات الأخرى التي ركزت على حركة الحقوق المدنية في خمسينيات وستينيات القرن الماضي كنقطة نهاية الطريق إلى المساواة، فإن هذه الأطروحة، على العكس من ذلك، تنظر إلى اللامساواة العرقية التي تواجه الأمريكيين من أصل إفريقي في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية كحقيقة وواقع مستمر في المجتمع الأمريكي. تركز هذه الأطروحة على، وتستكشف، الواقع المستمر للامساواة العرقية بين السود والبيض. تحاول الأطروحة إثبات أنه على الرغم من التقدم الكبير الذي تم إحرازه وعلى الرغم من حقيقة أن وضع الأمريكيين الأفارقة اليوم قد تحسن كثيرا بلا شك مقارنة بالماضي، إلا أن الرحلة إلى المساواة العرقية الحقيقية لم تنته بعد. تبقى اللامساواة العرقية بين السود والبيض سمة مستمرة تميز المجتمع الأمريكي حتى في القرن الحادي والعشرين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأمريكيون الأفارقة، السود، اللامساواة العرقية المستمرة، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، حركة الحقوق المدنية، المجتمع الأمريكي.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- A.A.A.:** The Agricultural Adjustment Act
- A.A.F.:** Army Air Forces
- A.A.S.S.:** American Anti-Slavery Society
- A.C.L.U.:** American Civil Liberties Union
- A.F.L.:** American Federation of Labor
- A.J.C.:** American Jewish Committee
- A.M.A.:** American Missionary Association
- A.M.E.C.:** African Methodist Episcopal Church
- A.R.R.A.:** American Recovery and Reinforcement Act
- A.S.A.:** American Sociological Association
- B.C.N.T.C.:** Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company
- B.L.M.:** Black Lives Matter
- B.L.M.M.:** Black Lives Matter Movement
- B.L.S.:** Bureau of Labor Statistics
- B.N.O.B.C.:** Bring New Orleans Back Commission
- B.P.L.:** Below Poverty Line
- B.P.P.:** Black Panther Party
- B.R.F.A.L.:** Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands
- B.S.C.P.:** Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
- B.S.L.:** Black Star Line
- C.C.C.:** Civilian Conservation Corps

C.D.F.: Children's Defense Fund

C.O.R.E.: Congress of Racial Equality

C.W.A.: Civil Works Administration

D.C.V.L.: Dallas County Voters League

F.A.P.: Federal Art Project

F.E.M.A.: Federal Emergency Management Agency

F.E.P.C.: Fair Employment Practices Committee

F.E.R.A.: Federal Emergency Relief Administration

F.M.P.: Federal Music Project

F.R.B.: Federal Reserve Board

F.T.P.: Federal Theater Project

F.W.P.: Federal Writers' Project

G.D.P.: Gross Domestic Product

I.C.C.: Interstate Commerce Commission

J.F.K.: John Fitzgerald Kennedy

K.K.K.: Ku Klux Klan

L.C.F.O.: Lowndes County Freedom Organization

M.4.B.L.: Movement for Black Lives

M.I.A.: Montgomery Improvement Association

M.O.W.M.: March on Washington Movement

N.A.A.C.P.: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

N.A.A.C.P.-L.D.E.F.: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund (also known as **L.D.F.**)

N.A.A.W.P.: National Association for the Advancement of White People

N.A.C.C.D.: National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders

N.C.C.: National Council of Churches

N.D.A.C.: National Defense Advisory Committee

N.I.R.A.: National Industrial Recovery Act

N.L.R.A.: National Labor Relations Act

N.N.B.L.: National Negro Business League

N.O.I.: Nation of Islam

N.R.A.: National Recovery Administration

N.Y.A.: National Youth Administration

N.U.L.: National Urban League

N.Y.S.E.S.: New York State Employment Service

N.Y.U.L.: New York Urban League

O.A.A.U.: Organization for Afro-American Unity

O.P.H.R.: Olympic Project for Human Rights

P.W.A.: Public Works Administration

R.A.C.: Royal African Company

S.C.L.C.: Southern Christian Leadership Conference

S.N.C.C.: Students Nonviolent Coordination Committee

S.R.C.: Southern Regional Council

S.S.A.: Social Security Act

U.C.L.A.: University of California, Los Angeles

U.C.S.D.: University of California, San Diego

U.F.E.: United for a Fair Economy

U.N.I.A.: Universal Negro Improvement Association

U.S.: United States

U.S.A.: United States of America

U.S.A.A.F. or A.A.F.: United States Army Air Forces

U.S.C.B.: United States Census Bureau

U.S.D.E.: U.S. Department of Education

U.S.E.S.: United States Employment Service

vs.: versus

W.A.C.: Women's Army Corps

W.A.V.E.S.: Woman Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service

W.C.C.: White Citizens' Councils

W.E.B. Du Bois: William Edward Burghardt Du Bois

W.P.A.: Works Progress Administration

W.P.C.: Women's Political Council

W.W.I.: World War One

W.W.II.: World War Two

List of Tables

Table 1: African-American Population and Office Holding During Reconstruction in the States Subject to Congressional Reconstruction	p. 59
Table 2: The Spread of Disfranchisement, 1889-1908	p. 66
Table 3: Black Population Growth in Selected Northern Cities, 1910-1920	p. 86
Table 4: Average Annual Earnings of Farm Families by Race, 1936	p.108
Table 5: Median Family Income by Race and Family Status in Mobile and Atlanta	p. 110
Table 6: Median Income of Black Families Compared to the Median Income of White Families for Selected Cities, 1935-1936	p. 114

Table of Contents

Dedication	I
Acknowledgments	II
Abstract in English	III
Abstract in French	IV
Abstract in Arabic	V
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	VI
List of Tables	X
Table of Contents	XI
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Historical Background: From 1619 to the Eve of the Civil War	7
I-Origin of the Black Race in North America	8
II-Black Slavery Becomes a Legal Fact in Colonial America	11
III-The Revolution Rhetoric and Anti-Slavery Sentiment	14
VI-Rise of the Abolitionist Movement (1830s-1860s)	24
Chapter Two: From Slavery to Freedom	30
I-African Americans during the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation	31
II-African Americans during the Reconstruction Period	51
III-The Age of Booker T. Washington: Accommodation vs. Confrontation	64
Chapter Three: African Americans in the Era of the Two World Wars	81
I-The Great Black Migration to the North (1910s-1920s)	82
II-The Garvey Movement	89
III-African Americans during the Great Depression and the New Deal	102
VI-The Second World War Era and the Seeds of a Black Revolution	128

Chapter Four: African Americans and the Civil Rights Movement (1950s-1960s):	
Successes and Limitations	151
I-Catalysts of the Civil Rights Movement	153
II-The Nonviolent Fight for Racial Equality and Integration Intensifies	182
III-The Crusade against Segregation and Racial Inequality Gains Momentum	202
Chapter Five: The African American Experience from the Post-Civil Rights Era to the	
Present	220
I-The Rise of the Black Power Movement: From Nonviolence to Black Power	221
II- From the Assassination of Martin Luther King to the Close of the Twentieth Century...	241
III-The New Millennium and the Illusion of Equality: The Unfulfilled Dream	257
Conclusion	290
Works Cited	301
Appendices	316

Introduction

Introduction

Undoubtedly, one of the most flaming issues in American social history has been the question of race. In fact, social history of the United States has never been without it. This is partially because it was the fate of the U.S.A. to build a nation founded on the mixed heritages of many races. Arguably, and as many historians and sociologists assert, the race problematic has always been and remains one of the most intractable issues in the United States. Race continues to be considered, as it usually used to be, as a dilemma in American life. It has always been deeply woven into the very fabric of American society. Indeed, race relations constitute the most intractable social problem in the United States. This is especially true of the matter of racial equality between black and white Americans. Although racial inequality has been the concern of many racial groups in the American society, blacks have been, and still are, the most disadvantaged group. For African Americans, the question of citizenship rights has always been tied to the question of race and racial order.

African Americans, also known as Black Americans or Afro-Americans, make up one of the many racial/ethnic groups in the United States. They constitute the second largest minority group following the Hispanic/Latino population and the third largest racial/ethnic group behind whites and Latinos in the U.S. What makes of their experience unique in character as compared to the other racial/ethnic groups in the United States is the fact of their initial involuntary immigration to the new world and their subsequent enslavement. While the majority of other immigrant groups moved to the new world willingly in search of political freedom and/or better economic and social opportunities, the Black experience in America, however, was characterized by the involuntary nature of immigration and was based on economic exploitation, lack of social equality, and the denial of political freedom. This makes of the African American experience a case clearly distinguished from the cases of other racial/ethnic groups in the United States.

This study explores the issue of African Americans and persistent racial inequality in the United States. The study addresses the issue in question from a socio-historical perspective. It seeks to unveil the persistent nature of black-white racial inequality in the United States despite the changing status of African Americans over time and despite the significant progress achieved. In doing so, this research work attempts to demonstrate that the issue of African Americans and racial inequality in the United States is still an unfinished business. The thesis attempts to provide a modest contribution to a basic and better

understanding of the Black experience in America, hoping to incite more interest in it and encourage further future studies. The focus is on African Americans and not on any other racial group in the United States is because the case of the African American group is sufficiently distinctive both historically and sociologically compared to the other racial groups. This does not, of course, imply that the study of other racial and minority groups is of little scholarly interest. To the contrary, though the focus here is on African Americans, this research work attempts to offer insights with the hope that they will be useful for a broader study of racial inequality in the United States. Therefore the main question that the present thesis attempts to answer is: Has the African American journey to full and true racial equality been accomplished?

The choice of racial inequality in the United States with the focus on the African American community as the theme of this research work sprang from a number of factors. First, most of the theses in the field of American Studies, within the Algerian academic context, have focused on U.S. foreign policy neglecting the social aspect of American life within the United States itself. Second, although the issue of racial inequality in the United States with regards to the African American community has always been important, it has become a burning issue since the last few years taking into account the events that took place in America including the killing of George Floyd which sparked not just protests within the United States but demonstrations that reverberated around the world against America's racial injustice. This triggered a renewed interest in Black history among scholars around the world making of "racial inequality facing African Americans" a topic worth of being revisited. Now, the focus needs to be on the long struggle by African Americans not just for full but for true racial equality. Third, and most importantly, what makes of this research work significant is the fact that unlike other studies which focused on the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s as the end point of the road to equality, this thesis, on the contrary, looks at racial inequality facing African Americans in the United States as an unfinished business; as a persistent reality in U.S. society. It focuses on and explores the persistent reality of black-white racial inequality. This research work attempts to demonstrate that despite the significant progress made and the fact that the situation of African Americans today is undeniably much improved compared to the past, the journey to true racial equality has not been accomplished yet. Black-white racial inequality remains a persistent feature that still characterizes even 21st-century American society.

This thesis is composed of five chapters. The first one is devoted to a historical background of the issue in question. This chapter covers the period in African American history from 1619, the year that marked the arrival of the first recorded black Africans to the British North American colonies, to the eve of the American Civil War. The chapter attempts to demonstrate that black-white racial inequality in America existed since the days of indentured servitude, long before race-based Black slavery was legally established in the British North American colonies. It provides first an overview of the origin of the black race in North America. The chapter then moves on to deal with the legal establishment of the institution of Black slavery in colonial America. The third part of this chapter is devoted to “the Revolution rhetoric and anti-slavery sentiment”. It sheds light on the American Revolution which helped spread an anti-slavery sentiment that contributed to redefining the issue of slavery. In the end, the chapter tackles the rise of the Abolitionist Movement (1830s-1860s), a radical movement which started calling for the abolition of slavery.

The second chapter attempts to analyze the journey of African Americans from slavery to freedom. The first part of this chapter is devoted to an examination of the history of black people of African descent in the United States of America during the American Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation. This is necessary to fully comprehend the evolution of the issue of racial inequality towards this racial group in the United States. The second part of the chapter focuses on the situation of African Americans during the Reconstruction Period. The last part of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the situation of African Americans during the “Age of Booker T. Washington”. In this respect, the study of the debate “Accommodation vs. Confrontation” is inevitable.

The third chapter of the thesis examines the situation of African Americans in the era of the two World Wars. This is because the years between, and including, the two World Wars were a dynamic period in African American history and witnessed a rising quest for racial equality by Black Americans. This chapter deals first with the “Great Black Migration Movement to the North” (1910s-1920s) which resulted in a rapid growth of the black population of the Northern cities and changed totally the population distribution of black people in the United States. This massive demographic shift dramatically changed African American history economically, socially, culturally, and politically. African Americans found themselves confronted to new social, economic, and political challenges. The chapter then moves on to focus on the rise of the Garvey Movement which emerged in the urban North during the WWI era. After that, it examines the situation of African Americans during the

Great Depression and the New Deal. In the end, this chapter explores the situation of African Americans during the era of the Second World War. It focuses on the outbreak of World War II which created a crisis that provided African Americans with a context to protest racial discrimination and inequality and set the seeds of a black revolution. This part of the chapter attempts to demonstrate that the seeds of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s were already sown during the Second World War years.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the study of the situation of African Americans during the Civil Rights era (1950s-1960s). It explores the Civil Rights Movement and tackles its successes and limitations. This chapter starts first with an examination of the catalysts of the Civil Rights Movement. Then, it explains how the nonviolent fight for racial equality and integration intensified. In the end, it explores how the crusade against segregation and racial inequality gained momentum and culminated with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The fifth and last chapter of this research work deals with African American experience from the post-civil rights era to the present. It explores the situation of African Americans in contemporary American society. The first part of this chapter focuses on the rise of the Black Power Movement. It explains the shift from Nonviolence to Black Power. The second part deals with the period from the assassination of Martin Luther King to the close of the twentieth century. It explores the persistent nature of racial inequality in contemporary American society. In the end, this chapter tackles the challenges of the new millennium and the illusion of racial equality in 21st-century America. It attempts to answer the question whether the journey to true racial equality has been accomplished?

Although research work cannot go without analysis, this thesis is basically argumentative. It attempts to demonstrate that the problem of racial inequality facing African Americans in the United States is still an unfinished business. In doing so, the thesis seeks to demonstrate that black-white racial inequality remains a persistent feature that still characterizes even contemporary American society. In other words, the United States' journey on the road to true racial equality between its black and white citizens is far from over. Conducting this research work has relied on a series of materials both printed and electronic. The full list is at the end of the thesis under the title "Works Cited" and divided into primary and secondary sources. This thesis includes also a list of appendices placed at the very end of

the paper, after the works cited list. The appendices contain supplementary material that would help in a better and a more comprehensive understanding of the issue in question.

Chapter One:

Historical Background: From 1619 to the Eve of the Civil War

In 1619, a Dutch ship carrying human cargo of twenty black Africans landed at the shores of the colony Virginia, with the hopes of trading these African captives to Jamestown settlers in exchange for food and supplies. Slavery as an institution had not yet officially existed in the British North American colonies. The first group of Africans deported from their homeland to America were considered as indentured servants like many of their European counterparts. Later, most of these black servants were enslaved for life. Slavery, in fact, evolved gradually beginning with customs rather than laws, from indentured servitude to lifelong servitude. Virginia was the first colony where black indentured servants were quickly becoming enslaved. In July 1640, in Virginia, the black indentured servant John Punch was sentenced to lifetime servitude as punishment for having run away. The two other white indentured servants who ran away with John Punch were sentenced to lesser punishment. This case represented the shift from indentured servitude to lifelong servitude and made it clear that black indentured servants were quickly becoming enslaved in the colony of Virginia. In December 1641, Massachusetts became the first colony to legally recognize black slavery. The other colonies followed suit and eventually black slavery was legally established in all the colonies. By the 1750s, slavery became well entrenched in the social and mostly economic life of the colonists, especially in the South. Thus, identified as the peculiar institution. The American Revolution, however, helped spread an anti-slavery sentiment that contributed to redefining the issue of slavery. Consequently, many people especially in the North began calling for a gradual emancipation of black slaves. By the early 1830s, a radical movement started calling for the abolition of slavery. As opposed to gradual emancipation, its activists demanded immediate, complete, and uncompensated emancipation throughout the nation. The movement lasted until the end of the Civil War in 1865.

I- Origin of the Black Race in North America

Since the New World was discovered, many groups of people of different origins came to what is today called the United States of America voluntarily in search of freedom, equality of opportunity, and fortune except for black people who were introduced into the New World forcibly in shackles. Although some historians state that there were black Africans accompanying the early European explorers¹ of the Americas a hundred years before the landing of the first black African captives at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, the most fully

¹ For more information see Richard R. Wright, "Negro Companions of the Spanish Explorers." American Anthropologist, New Series Vol.4, No.2, 1902: pp. 217-228.

documented historical accounts² indicate that the arrival of the first recorded black Africans to the British North American colonies, that later became the United States, dates to 1619 when a group of twenty black Africans were landed at Jamestown, Virginia aboard a Dutch warship.³

At this time, the slave trade between Africa and the English colonies had not yet been established, and it is unlikely that these new comers became slaves upon their arrival. They were unfree but not slaves. In fact, these twenty black men and women were sold at auction not as slaves but as indentured servants. They were similarly listed as “servants” in the “census counts of 1623 and 1624”.⁴ Like the majority of the Europeans who arrived in the British colonies, during the first decades of the seventeenth century under the term of “indentured servitude”, they lost their freedom and labored for a master for a term of years. Initially, black servants were given the same opportunities for freedom dues as whites.⁵ It was not until the middle decades of the seventeenth century that masters in Virginia and its neighboring colony, Maryland, started to contend that African servants, unlike European ones, must serve for life.⁶ These early settlers and plantation owners soon realized that, unlike their white counterparts, black indentured servants were not only physically strong, but hardworking and servile; they could withstand very hard work for long hours under harsh and, at times, unbearable conditions with little or no objection. In this context, Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold wrote:

...black men seemed to enjoy a status similar to their white counterparts ... Over the decades, the region’s [Chesapeake] British population gradually came to assume that persons of African descent were inalterably alien. This sentiment did not become universal among the white poor during the colonial period. But it was a foundation for what historian Winthrop D. Jordan calls the “unthinking decision” among the British in the Chesapeake to establish **chattel**

² In fact, the first documented arrival of Africans to the colony of Virginia was recorded by John Rolfe in a letter he wrote to Sir Edwyn Sandys. In his letter, Rolfe casually describes the selling of “20 and odd Negroes” by “a Dutch man of Warr”, a ship probably engaged in piracy against the Spanish empire in the Caribbean. To check this letter, see: Rick Halpern and Enrico Dal Lago, eds. Slavery and Emancipation. Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002. P. 13.

³ Stanley Harrold, American Abolitionists. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2001. P. 14.

⁴ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. Sixth Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1988. P. 53.

⁵ At the beginning, the English colonists, unlike the Portuguese and the Spanish, had no model for slavery and the first few black servants they used were freed when they completed their term of indenture generally three to seven years, and even acquired pieces of land to work on.

⁶ Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 14.

slavery. In this form of slavery, Africans and people of African descent became their master's private property on a level with livestock.⁷

Although black and white indentured servants residing in the Chesapeake, during the first years of their arrival, had much in common and lived together and worked together, their English masters soon started to make distinctions between them on the basis of race. In fact, English colonists assumed from the beginning that Africans were generally inferior. The few black women who arrived in the Chesapeake, during those years, worked mainly in the tobacco plantations and/or fields with male servants, while most white women occupied domestic duties. Also, unlike white servants, their black counterparts usually did not have surnames, and early census reports registered them separately from whites. Anglican priests, although not those in England, insisted that people of African descent could not become Christians. Moreover, colonial authorities soon discouraged sexual contacts among blacks and whites. These distinctions indicate that the social status of black servants had not been the same as that of white servants.⁸ They, also, indicate that racial prejudice towards black people existed even before the institution of slavery was regularized and legalized.

During the next four decades, the massive demand for labor⁹, the rising prices of white indentured servants, together with the growing British control over the Atlantic slave trade¹⁰, made black slavery the predominant form of labor in Virginia and Maryland; as well as in the other British colonies to their south¹¹. In his book The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas, David Eltis notes that, "[a]t some point in the 1660s...the annual number of Africans arriving in the English Americas began to exceed the number of Europeans."¹² Attempts to hold black servants beyond the term of "indenture" culminated in the legal establishment of black slavery in the colonies. Blacks were easily distinguished because of their color and were believed to be an inferior race with a "heathen culture", facts that made it easier for whites to rationalize black slavery.

⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. The African American Odyssey. Fifth Edition. Combined Volume. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011. P. 64.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

⁹ Because the crops grown in the new colonies like tobacco were labor intensive.

¹⁰ For more information on British control over the Atlantic Slave Trade, refer to Kenneth Morgan. Slavery, Atlantic Slave Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, especially Chapter Four which examines the wealth generated by slavery, the plantation colonies and the wider Atlantic trading complex in relation to Britain's capital accumulation.

¹¹ Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

¹² David Eltis. The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. P. 195.

II- Black Slavery Becomes a Legal Fact in Colonial America

The first generation of black Africans in the Chesapeake area coexisted with a large number of white indentured servants. Until the 1630s, laws made little distinction between the categories of “unfree labor”. Starting in the 1630s, however, laws increasingly discriminated between the two. At the same time, a corresponding increase in racial barriers led to the passage of laws that discriminated against blacks. For instance, the 1630 statute forbade white men from having sexual relations with black women¹³. Whites determined not only that blacks would serve for life, but that slave status was to be passed from mother to child, and that all black people must be assumed to be slaves unless they could prove otherwise. The 1662 Act defined the status of black children according to the free or enslaved condition of the mothers regardless of who their fathers were. By the 1670s, the expression “negroe slaves”, which characterized the 1680 Act on Negroes Insurrection, had replaced the previously used expressions such as “negro servants” and “negars”¹⁴. In fact, this change in terminology reflected a drastic change in labor conditions; by 1640, Africans were legally enslaved for life.

In 1640, the first definite indication of outright enslavement appeared in the colony of Virginia. John Punch, a black indentured servant escaped from his master, Hugh Gwyn, along with two other white servants. Hugh Gwyn petitioned the Virginia Court, and the three servants were all captured, convicted, but were sentenced to different punishments. The two white servants, a Dutchman and a Scott, had their indentured contracts extended by four additional years,¹⁵ but the Court gave John Punch a much harsher sentence. The Court decided that “the third being a negro named John Punch shall serve his said master or his assigns for the time of his natural life here or else where.”¹⁶ So, while the white servants had their terms of servitude increased by few years, the black servant was enslaved for life, though the tactful use of terminology did not make it clear that the black servant became a “slave”. This is considered as the earliest legal documentation of slavery in the colony of Virginia. It marked racial disparity in the treatment of black servants and their white counterparts, but also the beginning of a change in Virginian courts’ way of treating blacks from a condition of

¹³ Rick Halpern and Enrico Dal Lago, eds. Slavery and Emancipation. Malden: U.S.A.: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd, 2002. P. 14

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ In fact, they were ordered to serve their masters for one additional year and then the colony for three more.

¹⁶ Winthrop D. Jordan. White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550,1812. Second Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012. P. 75.

indentured servitude to lifetime slavery. In fact, the case of John Punch was one of the early cases that made a racial distinction among indentured servants based on the color of their skin. The laws started to differentiate between the two races; the association of “servitude for natural life” with people of African descent started to be more and more common.

Yet, it was not until 1661, when Virginia passed a fugitive slave law –a law directed at white servants who run away with a black slave– that a clear reference to black slavery entered into the Virginia laws.¹⁷ The following year, the colony went one step further with the passage of the 1662 Act which legitimized black slavery and stipulated that the status of a black child would be determined by the status of their mother.¹⁸ If the mother was a slave, then her child was doomed to slavery for all of their life, regardless of the status of their father. This way, Virginia legally recognized black slavery as a “hereditary, lifelong condition.”¹⁹ Increasingly, harsh restrictive laws were passed by the Virginia colony over the next four decades, culminating in the Virginia Slave Codes of 1705.

As the labor intensive tobacco agriculture turned to be a very profitable and lucrative business in the southern colonies especially Virginia and Maryland, and because there was a noticeable decline in the supply of white indentured servants, black legal rights quickly worsened. In 1667, Virginia passed the 1667 Act which declared that “baptism of slaves did not exempt them from bondage”. Furthermore, the 1680 Act was passed subsequently in order to “prevent slave insurrections and punish runways”²⁰. Moreover, more laws were passed according to which enslaved Africans lost their ability to own property, to engage in business, to marry legally, and to move about freely. The other colonies followed suit²¹ and enacted similar laws that promoted the enslavement of black Africans, and that eventually ended with the legal establishment of black slavery in all of the colonies by the 1750s.

Although the largest percentages of African slaves were centered in the South where the main economic activity was agriculture, slavery did exist in the middle and Northern

¹⁷ Colonial Authority. <http://www.understandingrace.org/history/gov/colonial_authority.html>. Accessed: December 20, 2014.

¹⁸ This ran counter to English common law which assumed that a child’s status be derived from the father.

¹⁹ Kimberly Sambol-Tosco. “The Slave Experience: Legal Rights and Government.” Slavery and the Making of America. <<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/legal/history.html>>. Accessed: December 10, 2014.

²⁰ Rick Halpern and Enrico Dal Lago, eds., op. cit., p. 14.

²¹ The only colony to resist the onset of slavery in the South was Georgia, established as an Enlightened experiment and as a slavery-free English colony in 1733. Seventeen years after its foundation, however, in 1750 Georgia too yielded to the pressures of its own settlers and repealed the ban on African slavery.

colonies²². No northern or middle colony was without its slaves. In these colonies, black slaves were not needed mainly as agricultural workers. They were employed in a variety of other capacities including household servants, craftsmen, sailors, dock workers, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, coopers, blacksmiths, bakers, laundresses and in many other jobs. Very often, owners also hired out their skilled enslaved workers and got their wages in return. Whatever the case, black slaves were considered personal property that could be bought and sold freely as in the South. Black slaves, therefore, constituted a significant portion of their owners' overall wealth. Then, if all Southern plantation owners had a deeper economic investment in slaves, many Northern slave owners, too, had a significant part of their wealth linked to their ownership of slaves. Still, it is worth noting that, in the North, slavery was not widespread as it was in the South.²³

Given the importance of slaves to their plantation-based economies, Southern colonies made their slave laws quite more elaborate than those in the North. Although in the colonies to the north of Virginia and Maryland, black slavery never became the dominant form of labor, and though slaves there enjoyed better life conditions, still slave systems in both the Northern and the Southern colonies were quite similar until the end of the eighteenth century when Northern states started to abolish human bondage.²⁴

With the growing profitability of the slave trade and the free slave labor especially in the Southern colonies where slavery was in high demand, the number of black Africans who were forcibly shipped²⁵ to the New World noticeably increased over time. Africans, themselves, contributed to the proliferation of slavery in America. In their homeland, African tribes fought each other to provide captives for sale to European slave traders. The number of Africans who were deported to the New World continuously increased that by the mid seventeenth century, slavery was well established in the colonies, and by 1700 slaves had almost entirely replaced indentured servants. Free slave labor enabled the colonies to be so profitable to the mother country's economy that by 1672 king of England, Charles II, granted a charter to the large-scale English organization in the slave trade, the Royal African

²² The thirteen original colonies were grouped into three main geographic regions: the North Atlantic colonies including New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut; the Middle Atlantic colonies including New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware; and the South Atlantic colonies including Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

²³ Rosemarie Zagari. "Slavery in Colonial British North America." [Teaching History.org](http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/25577). <<http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/25577>>. Accessed: January 5, 2014.

²⁴ Stanley Harold, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁵ They were manacled and shipped in crowded and brutal conditions across the Atlantic Ocean mainly by the Dutch West India Company.

Company (R.A.C.), to transport human cargo from Africa to the Americas. The British parliament granted the company a monopoly over the slave trade between 1672 and 1696, a period during which the company flourished and so did the slave trade. This significant registered development in slave trade contributed, in fact, to a great extent to the increased population of African slaves in America. Although it is difficult to give accurate figures, but some sources revealed that by 1700 there were about 27,817 enslaved Africans in British North America. In 1740, they became 150,025, and by 1770 the number of slaves had grown to 462,000, about one fifth of the total population.²⁶ With plentiful land and slave labor available to grow lucrative crops like tobacco, rice and indigo, Southern planters prospered, and family-based tobacco plantations became the economic and social norm.²⁷ In his famous book American Slavery, an exploration of the slave experience in America, Peter Kolchin stated:

During the century and a half between the arrival of twenty blacks in Jamestown in 1619 and the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776, slavery [...] spread through all the English colonies that would soon become the United States [...]. It grew like cancer, at first slowly, almost imperceptibly, then inexorably, as colonists eager for material gain imported hundreds of thousands of Africans to toil in their fields. During the eighteenth century, slavery became entrenched as pervasive—and in many colonies central—component of the social order, the dark underside of the American dream.²⁸

In the above abstract, Peter Kolchin provided a detailed description of the way in which black slavery spread through the English colonies in North America till it became well entrenched in their social order. For him, it was the “dark underside of the American dream.”

III- The Revolution Rhetoric and Anti-Slavery Sentiment

By the mid eighteenth century, all the thirteen colonies were well established settlements. The growing profitability of these colonies to the economy of the mother country, led the British authorities to take measures in order to reinforce their control over these

²⁶ Africans in British North America. <<https://www.monticello.org/slavery-at-monticello/african-slavery-british-north-america/africans-british-north-america>>. Accessed: June 2, 2014.

²⁷ African Slavery in Colonial British North America. <<https://www.monticello.org/slavery-at-monticello/jsam-main-nav>>. Accessed: June 6, 2014.

²⁸ Peter Kolchin. American Slavery: 1679-1877. New York: Hill & Wang, 1993. PP. 3-4.

colonies and maintain their presence and authority there. Yet, growing tensions between British colonies in North America and their mother country would lead to a revolution known as the American Revolution (1775-1783), also known as the American Revolutionary War or the U.S. War of Independence.

For more than a decade before the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, tensions had been building between colonists and the British authorities. After the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), Great Britain, with an exhausted treasury, took measures to make the colonies share in the expenses of the war and contribute in the ruling of the territories acquired according to the treaty of Paris in 1763. These measures were taken to provide the mother country with more revenues out of the colonies; they were mainly the Sugar Act (1764), the Stamp Act (1765), the Townshend Acts (1767), and the Tea Act (1773). Gradually, opposition of the colonists to these acts increased according to the nature of each act, but ultimately developed into a sentiment of colonial hatred towards parliamentary authority.

In fact, continuous attempts by the British government to raise revenue by taxing the colonies was met with heated protest among the colonists who perceived these taxes as a threat to their traditional liberties as British subjects. Moreover, the colonists developed another argument: there should be no taxation without representation in Parliament. When colonial resistance finally contributed to the outbreak of violence in the Boston Massacre (1770) and the Boston Tea Party (1773), this outraged the British Parliament which decided to move beyond the policy of appeasement and opted for coercion. In 1774, a series of acts were passed, they were the Coercive Acts, also known as the Intolerable Acts to the colonists. Resistance escalated and the war eventually started with belligerents enjoying some advantages but facing other difficulties. Finally, France's entry into the war to the side of the colonists, now Americans, against the British tilted the balance of power in favor of the Americans. The French-American armies forced the defeated British army to surrender on October 19th, 1781. The ensuing Treaty of Paris signed on September 3rd, 1783, recognized the United States' independence as well as boundaries that stretched to the Mississippi River.

It is worth noting that dealing with the causes that led to the American Revolution is of a significant importance to this part of our research work. Understanding the causes of the American Revolution facilitates the understanding of how the revolutionary ideas of that time about "freedom", "liberty", and "equality" contributed to the redefining of the issue of slavery

and therefore contributed to the birth of an anti-slavery sentiment. It is equally important, as well, to note that the declaration of Independence that the Continental Congress adopted on July 4th, 1776, was drafted by a slaveholder in a slaveholding country. When Thomas Jefferson wrote that “all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” he was not, by the way, supporting black claims for freedom.²⁹ Men like Jefferson, members of the drafting committee³⁰, differentiated between the rights of white people of British ancestry and the lack of rights for black people.³¹

The consequences of the American Revolution on slavery in America, during that period of time in American history can, in fact, be discussed in terms of whether the revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality contributed to redefine the issue of slavery and therefore reshape black-white relations in the colonies—that later became states. Or whether the widespread ownership of slaves, in itself, had a significant impact on raising the colonists’ awareness on the kind of relationship they had with the British Crown. The fact is that both of these interpretations have some truth in them.

The widespread of ownership of African slaves in the colonies had significant implications on the relationship between the colonists and their mother country, especially with its new taxation policy. Since individuals in all the colonies, though more in the South than in the North, owned slaves, this experience had enormous emotional resonance on the colonists and helped turn them against their mother country. During the battles of the Revolutionary War, American patriots argued that the way the British parliament was taxing the colonies, without their consent, reduced the colonists to the status of slaves, they themselves owned.³² In fact, the colonists started comparing the acts passed by the British authorities, especially the Intolerable Acts, to the slave acts passed by the colonies themselves to subdue blacks and enslave them. Moreover, because, the colonists knew what slavery really meant, they feared that if no collective and organized action was to be taken against Great Britain, then they would undergo the same fate as black Africans in the New World; they would be enslaved.

²⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

³⁰ In June 1776, the Continental Congress appointed a five-man committee consisting of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston to draft a Declaration of Independence. The Committee of Five then chose Jefferson to author the declaration’s first draft.

³¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

³² Rosemarie Zagarri, *op. cit.*

Nevertheless, once the colonists started protesting against their own enslavement by the British Crown, it was very hard to deny the fundamental paradox that “slavery established: enslavement for black people and freedom for the white people”³³. In fact, the colonists were caught in a paradox: how could they despise one form of slavery and praise the advantages of another? How could they resent their lack of representation in Parliament and demand the same and equal rights as other British subjects and at the same time own black slaves and deny their rights? Was it just a question of race and skin color? Moreover, with the Declaration of Independence in 1776, blacks began to claim that the self-evident principles stated in the Declaration of Independence –of a new independent nation– logically applied as much to them as to the white population. This, in fact, forced white people to confront the contradiction between the new nation’s professed ideals and its reality. White citizens had, therefore, to choose between accepting the literal meaning of the Declaration of Independence which meant changing the structure of the American –slaveholding– society, or rejecting the revolutionary ideology that supported their claims for independence.³⁴

On their part, blacks who most of them had been born in America were expecting that white patriot leaders would realize that their revolutionary principles were totally incompatible with the institution of slavery.³⁵ In England, those who believed that Americans must submit to the British Crown pointed out the contradiction. London’s most famous writer, Samuel Johnson asked, “How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?”³⁶ Still, some white people in America did similar comments. In 1763, James Otis³⁷ of Massachusetts warned that “those who every day barter away other mens['] liberty, will soon care little for their own.”³⁸ Thomas Pain, whose “Common Sense” significantly rallied Americans to declare independence in 1776, asked them to consider “with what consistency, or decency they complain so loudly of attempts to enslave them, while they hold so many hundred thousands in slavery; and annually enslave many thousands more.”³⁹

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 92.

³⁵ One of the first martyrs to the cause of the American Independence from Great Britain was “Crispus Attucks”, a former slave who was killed by the British army during the Boston Massacre in 1770. During the Revolutionary War, about 5000 black soldiers and sailors fought on the American side.

³⁶ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op., cit. p. 93.

³⁷ James Otis (1725-1783) was a lawyer in colonial Massachusetts, a member of the Massachusetts provincial assembly, and one of the early advocates of the Patriot views against British policy that led to the American Revolution. James Otis was also a powerful voice against slavery.

³⁸ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 93.

³⁹ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 93.

Yet, awareness of this basic contradiction pushed white Americans to look at slavery from a new perspective. If they chose to continue to enslave black people, though they were, themselves, fighting for freedom, liberty, and equality, they had to develop new arguments to justify black slavery. It was at this time that “arguments about blacks’ inherent racial inferiority”⁴⁰ emerged to rationalize this institution of race-based and color-based slavery.

Nevertheless, during and right after the Revolution, many Americans in both the North and the South, but particularly in the North where slavery was relatively unimportant to the economy, took their revolutionary ideals seriously and concluded that slavery was an unjust human practice. To them, slavery was incompatible with the Christian ideas of equality and the values of an independent America. They began to link the oppression of black slaves to their own oppression by the British, and to draw parallels between the economic bondage that Great Britain tried to impose on its colonies in North America and the chattel bondage of black slaves in the same colonies, and to call for the abolition of slavery.

Yet, states in the North and the South did not handle the issue in the same way. In the North, almost every state passed laws or enacted provisions and judicial rulings that either eliminated slavery immediately or put it on the way to gradual extinction by freeing blacks after performing a certain amount of service or after reaching a specified age. In fact, these gradual emancipation laws were very slow to take effect, since many of them only freed the children of current slaves, and only when these children attained the age of twenty five years.

If in the North, laws prohibited slavery, the story in the South was somehow different. Given the fact that Southern states had a much deeper economic investment in black slavery and because their socio-economic life was totally based on this institution, they resisted all efforts to eliminate it within their borders. Although some, but not all, of the Southern states allowed slave owners to manumit their slaves if they wanted to, no Southern state passed a law that ended black slavery completely, either immediately or gradually.⁴¹ Still, in the South, there was a significant movement toward freeing some slaves, but that was mainly pushed by the decline in the profitability of the tobacco agriculture⁴² mainly in Virginia and its neighboring states. The decision to free black slaves in the South was, in effect, based on the prevailing economic situation rather than on a moral justification; the Southern states were

⁴⁰ Rosemarie Zagarri, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² By the late eighteenth century, the lands of the upper South that had been used to grow tobacco were nearly exhausted. In fact, the land was fast becoming infertile that farmers and plantation owners decided to diversify their crops to save the land.

facing an economic crisis and no longer needed a large number of slaves to perform the hard work. They were not inspired by the revolutionary ideas of the period. In this respect, Carl N. Degler says: “Caught in the contradiction between equality and slavery, the South chose slavery... For many Southerners the paradox of the Declaration of Independence [based on the self-evident principle, that all men are created equal] and slavery was sufficiently embarrassing for them to want to forget it.”⁴³ This new free black population took steps to create their own public institutions and used the word “African” to announce their distinctive pride and insistence on racial equality. The most known of these new institutions was the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.C.) founded by Richard Allen in Philadelphia.⁴⁴

After the end of the American Revolutionary War⁴⁵, however, the newly ratified U.S. Constitution tactically acknowledged the institution of black slavery counting each slave as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of taxation and representation in Congress. In Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, the framers wrote that: “Representatives and direct taxes should be appointed among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.”⁴⁶ If the language used tactically struggled to avoid mentioning “African slavery”, it was clearly understood that the people targeted here were black African slaves, and that was really a humiliation and degradation for the black race. In fact, the debate between free states and slave states over counting African slaves for the sake of federal representation was only solved after direct taxation of the states was also tied to the state population. This, in fact, meant that the compromise over the recognition of African slaves was the result of the states’ struggle over money and political power rather than a struggle over moral concerns.⁴⁷ Moreover Article IV, Section 2 of the United States

⁴³ Carl N. Degler. Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1984. PP. 193-194.

⁴⁴ “Revolutionary Changes and limitations: Slavery.” ushistory.org. <<http://www.ushistory.org/us/13d.asp>>. Accessed: January 6, 2014.

⁴⁵ Also known as the American War of Independence.

⁴⁶ “The Constitution of the United States.” <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html>. Accessed: February 20, 2014.

⁴⁷ Southern states wanted slaves to be counted for the sake of representation in the national government but not to be counted for purposes of taxation, while Northern States wanted just the opposite. The Three-Fifths Clause was a compromise which provided that a slave be counted as three-fifths of a free person in determining a state’s representation in the House of Representatives as well as in the electoral College. Similarly, slaves would be counted if Congress instituted a per capita tax.

Constitution further reinforced the institution of slavery by guaranteeing the right to repossess any “person held to service or labor”⁴⁸, which is again a clear euphemism for slavery.

In the late eighteenth century and right the beginning of the nineteenth century, all Northern states abolished slavery within their borders. In the huge South, the situation was, however, different. If some Southern slave holders, especially in the upper South, had decided to free certain black slaves, it was due to the decline in the tobacco mass-producing agriculture. But this movement of freeing blacks in the south was short-lived. A few years after Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin⁴⁹ in 1793, the device was widely copied, and the South moved from the large-scale production of tobacco to a large-scale production of cotton, a shift that revived the South’s dependence on slave labor. In fact, slavery was reborn, soon to flourish as never before. So, if the North was nearly free of slavery, the so-called “peculiar institution” remained vital to the South’s economy. Even when England banned the African slave trade in 1807, and when the U.S. Congress finally outlawed the African Slave trade in 1808, internal slave trade flourished, and the U.S. slave population almost tripled over the next five decades. By the mid nineteenth century, it reached nearly four million, with no less than half living in the cotton-producing states.

Even if enslaved Africans made some progress towards freedom, they still experienced setbacks in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. Under gradual emancipation laws in the Northern cities, blacks were forced to work for their owners for long periods of their lives before they would be set free. Meanwhile, a steadily growing free black population in the Northern cities contributed to white anxiety and heightened racial barriers and hatred. Consequently, race-riots broke out in U.S. cities, and in many areas where slavery had been abolished, state governments were passing new discriminatory laws.⁵⁰

Besides, the abolition of the African Slave Trade in 1808 had negative effects on slavery. Restrictive laws known as the “slave codes” were passed in the South, and involved a tight control over black slaves. These slaves were prohibited from learning to read and write, and their movement and behavior were strictly restrained, while rebellious slaves were severely punished. Meanwhile, there were few slave revolts in the South, but the most terrifying to white slave owners was the one led by Nat Turner in Southampton County,

⁴⁸ “The Constitution of the United States.”, op. cit.

⁴⁹ The cotton gin is a machine that quickly and easily separates the cotton fibers from their seeds.

⁵⁰ Kimberly Sambol-Tosco, op. cit.

Virginia, in the summer of 1831. The rebellion threw the slaveholding South into a panic, and then into a determined effort to reinforce the security of the slave system.⁵¹

Before being caught and then sentenced to death, Turner and his fellow insurgents had killed about 60 whites. Widespread fear of similar insurrections in the aftermath of the rebellion, led many Southern states to further strengthen their slave codes in order to further limit the education, movement, and assembly of all blacks both enslaved and free. These tightened slave codes were, in fact, intended to keep the Southern black population –slave and free– in a subservient position. In the South, free blacks were then just technically free. In his famous survey of the slave experience in America entitled American Slavery, 1619-1877, Peter Kolchin wrote, “Whenever they lived, free blacks faced hardship, persecution, and physical insecurity...in the deep South, free blacks were sometimes pressured into enslaving themselves to masters of their own choice.”

After the 1831 Nat Turner insurrection, white attitudes towards blacks, whether slave or free, worsened. Thomas Roderick Dew, a professor of political economy at William and Marry College in Virginia and a Southern apologist for slavery, emphasized the proslavery perspective of the debates that followed the Nat Turner insurrection of 1831. In 1832, Dew also published his essay “The Pro-slavery Argument,” in which he “provided an intellectual foundation for the racist assumptions that slaveholders used to justify the institution and practice of slaveholding.”⁵² For other U.S. Slavery enthusiasts, especially in the South, Turner’s rebellion was a golden argument that blacks were by nature an inherently inferior race requiring an institution like slavery to discipline them. In Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America, Carl N. Degler wrote:

Perhaps the most enduring monument to slavery and its effects upon blacks was the elaboration of the doctrine of Negro inferiority...this belief began as early as the seventeenth century; but during the last decade of the ante-bellum period, the doctrine was dressed up in pseudoscientific garb and elevated to the position of a principal argument in justification of a labor system the world’s morality had outgrown.⁵³

⁵¹ Howard Zinn. A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present. Third Edition. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2003. P. 174.

⁵² Junius P. Rodriguez, ed. Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 116.

⁵³ Carl N. Degler, op. cit., p. 188.

In a famous March 4th, 1858, speech, South Carolina Senator Henry Hammond argued that the institution of slavery benefited not only slave-owners but black slaves themselves. He declared:

In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill...Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. A race inferior to her own [that is society], but eminently qualified in temper, in vigor, in docility, in capacity to stand the climate, to answer all her purposes. We use them for our purpose, and call them slaves...our slaves are black, of another and inferior race. The status in which we have placed them is an elevation. They are elevated from the condition in which God first created them, by being made our slaves.⁵⁴

“The Negro races stand at the lowest point in the scale of human beings, and we know no moral or physical agencies which can redeem them from their degradation,” wrote Dr. J. C. Nott, the South’s leading ethnologist in the 1850s. “It is clear,” he concluded, “that they are incapable of self government, and that an attempt to improve their condition is warring against an immutable law of nature.”⁵⁵ Slavery’s boldest and learned apologist, publicist J. D. B. De Bow, contended that the physical differences between “Negro” and “Caucasian” people rendered them morally and politically different. The physical differences between the two races, he wrote, are so great “as to make what is wholesome and beneficial for the white man, as liberty, republican and free institutions, etc., not only unsuitable to the Negro race, but actually poisonous to its happiness.”⁵⁶ For Carl N. Degler, however, “the disabilities which slavery imposed made proof of black people’s inferiority deceptively easy. As a slave, the Negro was trained to be inferior; then this very inferiority was used to support the argument that he was incapable of improvement.”⁵⁷

If the above mentioned intellectual arguments were offered in defense of the institution of slavery, some of the strongest support by proslavery apologists came from scientists. The idea that arguments based on rational rooted in science could defend the

⁵⁴ Quoted in: James D. Torr, ed. *Slavery*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2004. P. 25.

⁵⁵ Quoted in: Carl N. Degler, op. cit., p. 188.

⁵⁶ Quoted in: Carl N. Degler, op. cit., pp. 188-189.

⁵⁷ Carl N. Degler, op. cit., p. 189.

institution of slavery was, in fact, a new argument first expressed in the United States during the antebellum era.⁵⁸ Many of the prevailing notions about race at that time were shaped by the Alabama physician Josiah Clark Nott who wrote: Connection between the Biblical and Physical History of Man in 1849, Types of Mankind in 1854, and Indigenous Races of the Earth in 1857. Trying to couch his defense of black slavery in the rationalism of science, Nott studied the physiological characteristics of the African race and concluded that it was the Africans' physical endurance and limited mental abilities that made them a race specially suited for slavery.⁵⁹ This most powerful argument in the southern defense of institution of slavery was based on the assumption of white superiority. Nott was, in fact, supporting the theory of the superior intelligence of the white race.⁶⁰

Using Nott's work as a foundation, other Southern proslavery apologists found it a fashion to use the language of science to strongly defend the institution of slavery. For instance, the Louisiana, physician Samuel A. Cartwright, published certain articles in the 1850s, in the New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal that focused on new findings about the ethnology of the black slave population in the Southern states. In his works, Cartwright tried to use science as a tool to disguise and defend his racist assumptions, and he began to use pseudoscience to make assumptions about the relative attributes of black slaves. Among other arguments, Cartwright argued that the tendency of slaves to run away from their masters was not a natural desire for human freedom but rather an illness that he named "drapetomania". In a similar deceiving fashion, "dysaesthesia aethiopica" was marked as the malady that caused "rascality" to manifest in certain slaves but not in others.⁶¹ All these medical arguments, led by Cartwright, were presented as proof of black inferiority. Actually, these most forceful arguments in the Southern defense of slavery were fundamentally based on the assumption of "white superiority".⁶²

In fact, both Nott and Cartwright misused the scientific research method to serve their own interests; to justify and strongly defend the institution of black slavery. Instead of letting scientific research guide them to an undetermined goal, which is the central objective of empiricism, both of these scientists, Nott and Cartwright, began, instead, with a predetermined goal first and then sought out only what they considered to be relevant

⁵⁸ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., pp. 116-117.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 117.

⁶⁰ Dale Edwyna Smith. "Proslavery Argument." Slavery in the United States: a Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 425.

⁶¹ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 117.

⁶² Dale Edwyna Smith, op. cit.

evidence supporting that goal. Their writings are considered more as a kind of “propaganda or boosterism than of true science”.⁶³

This is obvious that proslavery apologists, during the antebellum era in American history, mostly in the South, used all kinds of arguments they found available and appropriate to rationalize the institution of black slavery. Similarly, they considered any criticism of slavery as a threat to their strength, security and progress. In this respect, Junius p. Rodriguez pointed out:

Since the United States emerged from the thirteen British North American colonies, many believed that the cultural antecedents of greatness, which included slavery, were rooted within the young nation almost as a birthright. To proslavery apologists, any criticism of slavery was interpreted as a criticism of the American experiment with liberty and was designed to reduce the economic capacity of the new nation. To its defenders, any criticism of slavery was perceived as a disloyalty to the dreams and aspirations of the American founders. Freedom could not exist without slavery.⁶⁴

IV- Rise of the Abolitionist Movement (1830s-1860s)

With the decline of the tobacco mass production plantations in the South, and the mounting calls for emancipation of black slaves in the North, there emerged a general feeling that slavery would gradually pass away. Yet the invention of the cotton gin increased the South’s demand for slave labor and reinforced the region’s dependence on slavery for another time. By the 1830s, many Southerners had shifted from the argument: “Slavery is a necessary evil,” to “Slavery is a positive good.”⁶⁵ In his book Out of Our Past: The Forces that Shaped Modern America, Carl N. Degler wrote: “In the waning years of eighteenth century, the great Virginians had defended slavery only as an unwelcome inheritance from the past—necessary but evil...By the 1830s, the South was prepared to defend it as both necessary and good.”⁶⁶ Degler went further to quote John C. Calhoun⁶⁷ who declared, in his address to the U.S. Senate, on February 6th, 1837:

⁶³ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 117.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “Abolitionist Movement.” HistoryNet.com. <www.historynet.com/abolitionist-movement>. Accessed: January 5, 2014.

⁶⁶ Carl N. Degler, op. cit., p. 193.

⁶⁷ From 1811 until his death, in 1850 South Carolina’s statesman, John C. Calhoun served consecutively as

We of the South will not, cannot, surrender our institutions. To maintain the existing relations between the two races, inhabiting that section of the Union, is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both... Be it good or bad, it [that is slavery] has grown up with our society and institutions, and is so interwoven with them, that to destroy it would be to destroy us as a people. But let me not be understood as admitting, even by implication, that the existing relations between the two races in the slaveholding States is an evil:—far otherwise; I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be to both, and will continue to prove so if not disturbed by the fell spirit of abolition.⁶⁸

In fact, Calhoun had developed a prominent political and ideological defense of slavery. He proclaimed slavery to be a “positive good”. Reflecting the theory of the great ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle⁶⁹, Calhoun argued that in all human societies one class lives partially off the labor of another.⁷⁰ In his speech, Calhoun further stated, “I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good”⁷¹

Now, slavery was strongly associated with the South despite the mounting movement of gradual emancipation in the North. In this respect, Professor Peter J. Parish wrote in his book Slavery: the Many Faces of a Southern Institution:

...[T]he rising abolitionist movement in the North added moral strictures to the territorial restrictions on slavery...In 1830 slavery was flourishing as a labour system, a social institution and a device for control for one race by another. But slavery was also fragile and vulnerable. It was a sectional and no longer a national institution: it was exceptional—an unmistakably peculiar institution which set the South apart not only from the North but from almost the entire

Congressman, Secretary of War, Vice President, Senator, Secretary of State, and again as a Senator.

⁶⁸ Quoted in: James D. Torr, ed., op. cit., p. 24.

⁶⁹ In his classical work in political philosophy, “politics”, Aristotle wrote: “From the hour of their birth some are marked out for subjugation, others for rule.” Moreover, when he died in 322 BCE, Aristotle left an estate that included about fourteen domestic slaves.

⁷⁰ James D. Torr, ed., op. cit., p. 23.

⁷¹ John C. Calhoun’s speech (February 6, 1837); source: Robert C. Byrd. The Senate, 1789-1989: Classic Speeches, 1830-1993 (Volume III, Bicentennial Edition). Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994. P. 177.

Atlantic world; it was an uneasy institution, sensitive to outside attack and disturbed by uncertainties within.⁷²

By the early 1830s, a radical movement with the aim of abolishing slavery in the United States emerged and gained momentum in the Northern States. A series of developments about this time served, in effect, to discredit the already existing gradualist approaches to emancipation. As Southerners became more adamant in their way of defending slavery, antislavery activists became more radical and strident in their attacks on the institution. This radical approach to abolitionism is termed “immediatism” as opposed to “gradualism”⁷³. Its architects based their activism on the belief that slavery was a horrible sin, and demanded immediate, complete, and uncompensated emancipation throughout the nation. Its leadership included free blacks, white supporters, as well as women, and was typified by famous figures like William Lloyd Garrison, founder of the radical anti-slavery newspaper The Liberator⁷⁴; Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of the bestselling anti-slavery novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852); and famous orators such as Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Weld, and Angelina and Sarah Grimké, also known as the Grimké sisters. The movement started as early as the 1830s and lasted through the 1860s. “No Union with Slaveholders” was the abolitionists’ slogan.⁷⁵ To such reformers, slavery was a “moral cancer” consuming the spirit of America, as it was also an unacceptable injustice to blacks; and to achieve its eradication “no price was too costly, no pain too great.”⁷⁶ Junius P. Rodriguez wrote that, “the abolitionists of the 1830s perhaps best characterized by William Garrison, refused to be silenced or cowed by the opposition and vowed to fight unceasingly until the stain of slavery had been removed from the fabric of the nation.”⁷⁷

This combative and uncompromising approach of emancipation found leadership in William Lloyd Garrison, a young enthusiastic man from Massachusetts who united the heroism of a martyr with the crusading zeal of a demagogue. The first issue of his newspaper, The Liberator bore the statement: “I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population...On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or

⁷² Peter J. Parish. Slavery: The Many Faces of a Southern Institution. U.K.: Keele University Press, 1979. P. 12.

⁷³ Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds. Africana: the Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience. Volume One. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2004. P. 12.

⁷⁴ The first issue of the “Liberator” appeared in 1831.

⁷⁵ Carl N. Degler, op. cit., p. 199.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 131.

write with moderation...I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch AND I WILL BE HEARD.”⁷⁸

The American Anti-Slavery Society (A.A.S.S.) founded in 1833, and which was exclusively devoted to promoting immediate and entire emancipation without terms, became the single largest and most influential organization against black slavery up to the end of the Civil War.⁷⁹ Holding the argument that slavery was a national sin, not just a southern one, the society drew support from a variety of racial, social, and economic backgrounds and produced numerous books, newspapers and pamphlets as part of its endeavor to abolish slavery.⁸⁰

Perhaps nothing did more to deepen the strife between the North and South, and to confirm the determination of abolitionists to destroy the institution of slavery in the United States, than the Underground Railroad.⁸¹ In fact, its origin goes back to the eighteenth century. As early as the 1780s, free blacks and white antislavery enthusiasts from the North were helping fugitive slaves escape from the slave-holding Southern plantations to the North using a network known as the Underground Railroad, which, in fact, gained momentum in the 1830s as it helped thousands of black slaves reach freedom in the North. A success that helped reinforce abolitionist feelings in the North, but most of all accentuated sectional tensions on the issue of slavery, as it was time when pro-slavery Southerners became strongly convinced of their Northern countrymen’s determination to kill an institution that was particularly theirs.

In his book The Rise and Fall of Slavery in America, Louis Filler, a historian and a distinguished Professor of American Civilization at Antioch College, and author of several other books on slavery, discusses the significance of runaway slaves, as well as the fugitive slave law of 1793 designed to ensure their return to bondage, which was in the South a life sentence and a hereditary one. Filler states that while many slaves escaped from the South relying on their own plans and efforts, countless others received help from the Underground Railroad, a semi-secret network of free blacks and white abolitionists in the North and South who helped provide runaway black slaves with transportation and shelter along their way to freedom in the North. Filler also underlines the significant role of whites in the Underground

⁷⁸ Howard Cincotta, ed. An Outline of American History. Washington, D.C.: United States Information Agency. 1994. P. 153.

⁷⁹ The American Anti-Slavery Society was formally dissolved in 1870.

⁸⁰ Mark L. Kamrath. “American Anti-Slavery Society.” Slavery in the United States: a Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 161.

⁸¹ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 168.

Railroad, discussing how white participation in defying the system of slavery strengthened abolitionist sentiment throughout the North.⁸² Yet, it is worth noting that, at most, an average of two thousand slaves escaped annually between 1830 and 1860, relying on that most celebrated instrument—the Underground Railroad; and compared with the millions of blacks held in bondage, these runaways were both economically and numerically inconsequential.⁸³

Moreover, radical abolitionists were unsuccessful in their efforts to arouse a radical crusade against slavery despite their dynamism. Since slavery found sanction and legality in the U.S. Constitution, abolitionists like Garrison called it “a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.” After expressing such an overt contempt for the most respected of American symbols, “the abolitionists could not but fail in their attempt to galvanize the latent American belief in equality.”⁸⁴

Where these abolitionists failed, the Republican Party was notably successful. In his monumental study of the blacks’ experience in America, Gunnar Myrdal described what he called the American dilemma, the conflict between the traditional egalitarian creed and the actual treatment accorded to blacks; slavery.⁸⁵ Already in the 1850s, this moral conflict was dividing the nation against itself. In the South, the dilemma was resolved, or at least covered over, by denial of the principle of equality. In fact, caught in the contradiction between equality and slavery, the South chose slavery.⁸⁶ In the North, however, equality was increasingly accepted as “a moral imperative.”⁸⁷ The newly created Republican Party now incorporated the Declaration of Independence in its appeal to the American people. In 1858, Abraham Lincoln advised, “let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other—this race and that race, and the other race being inferior...Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people, throughout this land, until we shall once and more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.” And at another time, he declared, “...in relation to the principle that all men are created equal, let it be as nearly reached as we can.”⁸⁸

Though the Republicans seemed to have divergent political and economic ideas, it was obvious that they were all united in their opposition to the spread of slavery. But this is not to

⁸² James D. Torr, ed., op. cit., pp. 89-90.

⁸³ Carl N. Degler, op. cit., 183.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 200.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 201.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 193.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 201.

⁸⁸ Quoted in: Carl N. Degler, op. cit., 201.

say that they were abolitionists; very few Republicans, though they were opposed to slavery, believed in social equality for blacks. Lincoln, during the debates with Stephen A. Douglas in 1858, spoke for many of his fellow Republicans when he said that he was not in favor of “social” equality for black people. The “Negro,” he said, “is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns,” Lincoln added, “he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.”⁸⁹ Later in Charleston, in southern Illinois, Lincoln told his audience:

I will say, then, that I am not, nor ever, have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the ‘social’ and ‘political’ equality of the white and black races (applause); that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people... And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.⁹⁰

On this great issue of equality, radical abolitionists and Republicans differed. Although both were opposed to the institution of slavery, Republicans, unlike radical abolitionists, were not in favor of social and political equality for blacks. For them, equality had a broader meaning that they could claim to defend equality between the races but not to be in favor of social and political equality for blacks—it was time when another paradox about equality was looming on the horizon of the Americans’ life.

In fact, this disagreement over the issue of equality between white and black people was but a part of a long-standing controversy over the question of slavery that would divide the American nation and ultimately lead to the outbreak of America’s bloodiest and most divisive war, the Civil War. The following chapter will be devoted to an examination of the history of black people of African descent in the United States of America during the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation. This is necessary to fully comprehend the evolution of the issue of racial inequality towards this ethnic and racial group in the United States.

⁸⁹ Quoted in: Carl N. Degler, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁹⁰ Quoted in: Howard Zinn, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

Chapter Two:
From Slavery to Freedom

By 1850, the North and the South of the United States were totally different worlds; while the North encouraged industry, the South flourished with its large fertile agricultural lands. Since the American Revolution, the North and the South had, in fact, developed along distinct economic, social and cultural lines. In the North, the availability of power-driven machinery, introduced ever since the industrial revolution, multiplied the number of factories in the region. Consequently, cities grew with the coming of immigrants who were looking for new opportunities and jobs in the factories. The North became an industrial and manufacturing powerhouse deeply affected by the social reform movement, abolitionism. In the South, however, the situation was different; Eli Whitney's cotton gin revolutionized Southern agriculture and brought Southern economy back to life, after the decline of the tobacco agriculture. Actually, it gave cotton an unprecedented significance for the plantation owners and thereby strengthened the institution of black slavery than ever before in American history. The South, ever more self-protective and defensive of its slave system, became a cotton kingdom whose social and economic structures were founded on black slavery and whose citizens were opposed to the reformist ideologies of the abolitionist movement.

Yet, the West also witnessed a significant movement, the coming of pioneers whose aim was to find a second paradise allotted to them by Providence. Americans believed that it was their manifest destiny to overspread the American continent. This westward expansion movement, in effect, provided a larger stage for the growing conflict over slavery in America: the states which would be carved out of these lands would be free or slave states?

I- African Americans during the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation

It is true that, by the eve of the Civil War, the North and the South were totally different worlds at different levels, but the most important issue that really threatened to divide the nation was the issue of slavery. In fact, sectional tensions between the Northern and the Southern states, over the issue of slavery, were mounting over time and threatened to divide the nation into two sections. Different factors contributed to these tensions that ultimately led to the outbreak of the Civil War. "Perhaps no decade in the history of the United States has been so filled with tense and crucial moments as the ten years leading to the Civil War, and closely connected with the majority of these crises was the problem of

slavery,” wrote Robert William Fogel in his comprehensive book on slavery entitled Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and the Fall of American Slavery.¹

As early as 1820, and following Representative James Tallmadge’s restrictions² to admit Missouri into the Union, a hot debate over the federal government’s right to limit slavery in the case of Missouri’s application for statehood emerged. One of the central questions was whether or not the national legislator had the authority to regulate slavery. Northerners argued that the federal government had previously regulated slavery by referring to the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 as a precedent³. On the other hand, Southerners responded by arguing that slavery was purely a state institution and Congress could not regulate it. This debate was also characterized by Northern attacks on the institution of slavery and Southern defenses of it. Northerners criticized slavery as an unrepugnant institution and confirmed that this institution spoiled the Southern landscape and made of the cherished national values such as liberty an object of ridicule. On their part, Southern defenders of slavery counterattacked, providing readings from the national Constitution as well as the Declaration of Independence and defending the right of slave-owners to move with them their human property –black slaves– to the future state of Missouri.⁴

After months of heated debate, a compromise was reached. Henry Clay, a leading congressman, played a crucial role in reaching a two-part solution. It was the Missouri Compromise of 1820, according to which Missouri was admitted to the Union as a slave state; Maine as a free state; and all western territories north of Missouri’s southern border were to be free soil i.e. slavery, in the Louisiana Purchase, was limited to the latitude line 36°30'. Although the compromise aimed at maintaining an equal balance of power in Congress between free and slave states, it was able to calm down sectional conflicts only temporarily.

¹ Quoted in: James D. Torr, ed. Slavery. San Diego: Greenhaven Press. 2004. PP. 180.

² In the summer of 1818, the inhabitants of the Missouri slaveholding Territory applied to Congress for the right to form a state government and draft a state constitution. Henry Clay presented this petition in December 1818. In February 1819, Republican congressman from New York, James Tallmadge, introduced an amendment, an antislavery provision attached to the Missouri statehood bill, that prevented any further importation of slaves into Missouri and stipulated that all children born of slave parents after the admission of the state to the Union should be free upon reaching the age of twenty-five. In fact, the Tallmadge Amendment initiated the first sectional clash over slavery in the territories. Although the amendment proposed no changes concerning slaves already existing in Missouri, but it did absolutely provide a program that would gradually end up with the extinction of the institution of slavery in Missouri.

³ The Northwest Ordinance was adopted by the Confederation Congress on July 13, 1787. It established a government for the Northwest Territory, outlined the process for admitting a new state to the Union, and guaranteed that newly created states would be equal to the original thirteen states. the Northwest Ordinance also protected civil liberties and outlawed slavery in the new territories.

⁴ James C. Foley. “Missouri Compromise (1820).” Slavery in the United States: a Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 386.

In fact, the Missouri Compromise raised the crucial question of whether or not slavery would be allowed to expand into the Louisiana Territory that the United States had purchased from France in 1803. Although this territory was located west of the Mississippi River, the debate over the issue occurred in the nation's capital. Representatives and Senators from Northern and Southern states strongly disagreed over the critical issue of slavery in a vehement debate, the likes of which would not manifest again until the end of the 1840s and beginning of the 1850s.⁵ The heated opinions expressed during the debate over the question of Missouri exposed a growing antislavery sentiment in the North and a similarly growing commitment to slavery in the South. The resulting Missouri Compromise, in fact, taught the political generation of that time an important lesson; "that slavery had to be kept from becoming a topic of debate in Congress."⁶ By doing so, the Compromise left the question of slavery to a future generation of Americans.

In 1846, another significant piece of legislation that helped crystallize sectional conflicts over the extension of slavery between the North and the South that ultimately contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War was enacted, it was the Wilmot Proviso. Originally submitted as an amendment to the 1846 Army Appropriations Bill, the proviso aimed to prohibit slavery from the territories acquired from Mexico as a result of the Mexican War (1846-1848). In fact, on August 8th, 1846, just a few months after the Mexican War commenced, David Wilmot, a Democratic representative from Pennsylvania introduced the proviso. President James K. Polk, a democrat and a slave-owner from Tennessee, had sent Congress an appropriations bill asking for two million dollars to be used in negotiating a treaty with Mexico. David Wilmot offered an amendment to the bill.⁷ It stipulated that any territory acquired from Mexico should be free of slavery by stating that "as an express and fundamental condition of the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico...neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory."⁸

A strongly divided House of Representatives passed the measure, while the Senate defeated it. By focusing the antislavery debate, twenty six years after the Missouri Compromise was passed, the proviso set the terms of a national debate over slavery for the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jonathan Earle. "Wilmot Proviso." Slavery in the United States: a Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 517.

⁸ Quoted in: Jonathan Earle, op. cit., p. 517.

fifteen years preceding the Civil War. Moreover, the introduction of this measure initiated a new era of sectional politics in the United States: while almost all northern Democrats and all northern Whigs voted for the proviso, nearly all representatives from districts south of the Mason-Dixon Line and the Ohio River opposed it. This initial vote on the Wilmot Proviso was an obvious sign that the potential expansion of slavery was an explosive issue that divided both major political parties into distinct northern and southern wings.⁹

The Wilmot Proviso turned to be an unsuccessful resolution. In 1848, after the United States defeated Mexico and acquired the huge Mexican Cession territory in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed on February 2nd, 1848, some northern political leaders hoped that the 36°30' north latitude line boundary might be extended to the Pacific Ocean.¹⁰ Yet, by 1848, northern Democrats like Lewis Cass from Michigan and Stephen A. Douglass from Illinois believed that the solution of the slavery controversy could be attained best not by a line of demarcation, but rather by a pioneering new concept, which they called popular sovereignty. According to this new approach, the residents of a territory seeking statehood would be free to vote for or against slavery in a popular referendum.¹¹

In 1850, another tenuous compromise was negotiated. It was the Compromise of 1850 which emerged out of President Zachary Taylor's attempt to resolve the problem related to the territory acquired as a result of the Mexican War, as well as the issue of slavery's expansion in this land. When Taylor was inaugurated in 1849, four challenging issues faced the nation. First, the rush of thousands of miners to California qualified the territory to statehood, but its entry to the union as a free state would tilt the balance of power to the side of free states; a balance that had been maintained since 1820.¹² The second problem was raised by the unresolved status of the territory acquired from Mexico in the Southwest. The boundary between Texas and New Mexico Territory was also in dispute. The third problem was the existence of slavery as well as slave trading in the District of Columbia, the nation's capital. Fourth, proslavery Southerners criticized the loose federal enforcement of the Fugitive

⁹ Jonathan Earle, op. cit., p. 517.

¹⁰ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed. Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 476.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 476.

¹² Michael Washington. "Compromise of 1850." Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. PP. 240-241.

Slave Act of 1793 and called for a stricter act that would stop the protection provided to runaway slaves by northerners.¹³

President Taylor attempted to settle these issues but in vain. With disunion threatening the nation, the wise aged Senator of Kentucky, Henry Clay, who had averted a national crisis thirty years earlier by effecting the famous Missouri Compromise of 1820, offered another compromise that he hoped would solve the territorial crisis and the other debated issues between the two sections of the country. Clay's compromise, which he presented to Congress in January 1850 as a comprehensive bill, included the following key provisions: California would be admitted to the Union as a free state; the slave trade¹⁴ would be abolished in the District of Columbia; a stringent new federal Fugitive Slave Law would facilitate the capture and return of runaway slaves and impose heavy fines on people who help them; and in the territories of Utah and New Mexico, the status of slavery would be determined by popular sovereignty. When Clay's compromise of inseparable provisions came to a vote, opponents of the individual provisions defeated it. Aware of the fact that his bill as well as his health were at risk, Clay opted for retirement.¹⁵

It was Stephen Douglass of Illinois who assumed Clay's place in passing the compromise through Congress. Douglas formulated a new plan of introducing Clay's measures separately, to ensure positive votes for each of the separate clauses, which became known as the Compromise of 1850. The immediate response to the compromise was an enthusiastic welcome, but events soon revealed that the compromise settled nothing at all. Actually, it had only delayed a more serious sectional conflict. In the aftermath of the compromise, political parties seemed to divide more along sectional principles. Moreover, Northerners, in response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, reinforced their Underground Railroad efforts and passed personal liberty laws, which forbade the use of state officials and institutions in returning runaway slaves.¹⁶

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe published her famous antislavery novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin which helped thousands of Americans to the abolitionist cause. The work was intended, like other nineteenth-century abolitionist literature; to turn its readers against the unjust institution of black slavery. Yet, its success was unexpected but incomparable. In the United

¹³ Ibid., p. 240.

¹⁴ Slave trade but not slavery.

¹⁵ Michael Washington, op. cit., p. 240.

¹⁶ Ibid.

States alone, it sold about three million copies, becoming the American best-selling novel of 1852. Given its remarkable success, the novel was also translated into other languages, but above all it became the first U.S. book to be a European best-seller.¹⁷

The most inspiring force and primary stimulus for Stowe's novel was the Compromise of 1850, together with its Fugitive Slave Act, but letters from her friends also played a significant role. Stowe's sister-in-law, particularly, urged her to write about slavery, the major moral issue of the time. She said, "If I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what accursed thing slavery is."¹⁸ Stowe was also inspired by the slave narrative: The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself, written by Josiah Henson, and published in 1849. Moreover, Stowe had increasingly been driven to public as well as written comments on the injustices of the institution of slavery.¹⁹

Before writing Uncle Tom's Cabin, Stowe wrote mostly about the domestic sphere and sentimental love, subject matters that were considered suitable as topics for women's writings. Her successful work Uncle Tom's Cabin was to shift the techniques of a woman's novel to a new subject with which it had not been associated before, slavery. Her text focuses on the idea that African American slaves should be perceived and accordingly treated as equal human beings, who possessed, according to her, of a moral dignity often more than the white population. In the novel, Stowe's slaves suffer when their families are separated and their women exploited, and when they are whipped they endure pain but bleed. Throughout the novel, Stowe also reinforces the divine authority. For her, the institution of chattel slavery required a world without conscience, without God.²⁰

Uncle Tom's Cabin has been claimed to have altered the course of American history. It has also been claimed that Abraham Lincoln once referred to Harriet Beecher Stowe as the woman who started the American Civil war. In its day, Stowe's novel was praised by many writers like George Eliot, Fyodor Dostoevski, and George Sand. Recent studies have also considered the importance of the work and recognized its revolutionary nature in terms of

¹⁷ Jan Pilditch. "Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)." Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 486.

¹⁸ Quoted in: Jan Pilditch, op. cit., p. 486.

¹⁹ Jan Pilditch, op. cit., p. 486.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 486-487.

women's writings. Perhaps no other novel, before or since, has contributed so much to influence the thinking of an entire American generation.²¹

Historians have, in fact, differed over the sources of the uncompromising and urgent form of radical abolitionism that emerged in the United States after 1830, and which was associated mostly with William Lloyd Garrison. There is little doubt that Garrison's appeal to an immediate end to the institution of slavery (1831) mirrored the faith in human perfectibility that characterized nineteenth-century romanticism and the instrumentalist aspects of the Second Great Awakening (1790s-1830s). It is equally possible that slavery, and the worst that it can offer, outraged northern Victorian feelings about heart and home, particularly after Harriet Beecher Stowe published in 1852 her most famous and popular polemic, Uncle Tom's Cabin, which focused on the dark side of Southern life and portrayed slavery as a violation of the integrity of the family. Stowe's novel moved the issue of slavery to the heart of American politics; the slavery issue was pushed to the center of the nation's political agenda.²²

In the sixth edition of From Slavery to Freedom, an extensive study of the history of blacks in the United States, John Hope Franklin along with his co-author Alfred A. Moss, JR. went to say that,

[S]ince its publication, [*Uncle Tom's Cabin*] was soon dramatized in theatres throughout the North. Its story of abject cruelty on the part of masters and overseers, its description of the privation and suffering of slaves, and its complete condemnation of Southern civilization won countless thousands over to abolition and left Southern leaders busy denying the truth of the novel. The damage had been done, however, and when Southerners counted their losses from this one blow, they found them to be staggering indeed.²³

The "sectional truce" brought about by the Compromise of 1850 "was at an end", but as John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, JR. put it, "if it needed a legislative act to destroy it, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was precisely the thing."²⁴ Four years after the Compromise of 1850, the U.S. Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas introduced the bill organizing Kansas and Nebraska into territories.

²¹ Ibid., p. 487.

²² Richard A. Reiman. "Abolitionism in the United States." Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 152.

²³ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. Sixth Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1988. P. 178.

²⁴ Ibid.

Although all of this land lay north of the 36°30' latitude line specified in the Missouri Compromise of 1820 as the boundary between potential slave and free territory in the Louisiana Purchase lands, the Kansas-Nebraska Act did not close the territory to slavery. By explicitly repealing the Missouri Compromise which specifically excluded slavery from the region north of the latitude line 36°30', it left the question of slavery to be determined via popular sovereignty. This meant that whether or not slavery would be established in the territories in question; it would be determined by popular vote.

Running counter to the decision reached in the Missouri Compromise by allowing the possibility that slavery might be established in the lands north of the line 36°30' if that was the will expressed by the residents of the territories in question in a popular referendum, the Kansas-Nebraska Act reignited the largely sectional conflict and political debate over the question of slavery's expansion into the western territories and led the nation much closer to the Civil War.²⁵

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was unacceptable to those traditionalists who believed in, supported, and defended the institution of slavery ardently. The Act disconcerted many Northerners who considered the decision of the Missouri Compromise to be a long-standing agreement. In the slave-holding South, the Act was also energetically opposed. Still, others believed that the situation created by Senator Stephen Douglas was only to ensure that the transcontinental railroad would be built westward from Chicago. The problem was that any huge plan like this would require the consent and support of the Southerners, and would consequently involve the slavery issue. Although, in reality, Douglas had no personal stand on the issue of slavery, congressional nonintervention may have led rival factions into conflict known as Bleeding Kansas.²⁶

After the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed, proslavery and antislavery enthusiasts rushed to Kansas²⁷ in an attempt to influence the outcome of the first election to their side, an election that was held after the Act went into effect. When the final results revealed that proslavery settlers won the election, the charge of fraud was made by their anti-slavery opponents arguing that the results were falsified. When another election was held, proslavery settlers refused to vote. This resulted in the formation of two rival factions in the Kansas

²⁵ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 476.

²⁶ Torrance T. Stephens. "Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)." Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 357.

²⁷ They rushed into the Kansas Territory to establish homesteads so that they could participate in the referendum that would determine the status of slavery in the region.

legislature. This also led some historians to claim that the Civil War began as early as the time when proslavery and antislavery supporters went on a debate over whether land north of the latitude 36°30' should be slave or free territory.²⁸ In fact, it did not take long for the popular sovereignty campaign to become deadly as massacres erupted on both sides of the question, with antislavery and proslavery advocates resorting to violence in order to further their own ideology on the institution of slavery.²⁹

Moreover, conflicting views and feelings over the situation in Missouri and Kansas gave rise to violence even on the floor of the Senate. Fevered violence spilled over into the halls of Congress when on May 22nd, 1856, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner was beaten by Congressman Preston Brooks, from South Carolina, in the Senate Chamber after having given an antislavery speech that was strongly critical of Southern advocacy of slavery in Kansas. On this issue, Junius P. Rodriguez pointed out,

It was becoming increasingly difficult for the United States to bridge the chasm that divided the nation on the slavery question. Although few things in history are essentially inevitable, it seems that the nation had passed a point of no return after the episodic violence that marred the popular sovereignty campaign in Kansas...[T]o many it seemed that the time for compromise had passed and that other solutions would have to be found to settle the question of slavery and its place in American national life.³⁰

In the end, however, antislavery supporters in Kansas, who were a majority, won the election and a new constitution was drafted. President Franklin Pierce approved the new antislavery constitution, which eventually became law. Actually, both Kansas and Nebraska chose to be future free states.³¹

In the wake of the Kansas-Nebraska controversy, a new party took shape. In fact, the slavery issue had already split both the Whig and Democratic parties down sectional lines, leading northern Whigs and Democrats to take sides against their southern counterparts. Meanwhile, several political groups joined to found the Free Soil Party which was strongly opposed to the expansion of slavery. However, the most significant disintegration of the political parties came with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In response to the

²⁸ Torrance T. Stephens, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

²⁹ Junius P. Rodriguez, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Torrance T. Stephens, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

political discord caused by the passage of the Act, a group of disillusioned northern Democrats and northern Whigs, who left their parties, along with members of the Free Soil party met on July 06th, 1854, in Jackson, Michigan, and adopted a new party, the Republican Party.³² In fact, the earliest beginnings of the formation of this party can be traced back to the time of the debates over the proposed Kansas-Nebraska Bill, when a group of fifty dissatisfied Whigs, Free Soilers, and northern Democrats held their first meeting in Ripon, Wisconsin, to discuss the possibility of creating their own party, a new party that was opposed to the expansion of black slavery into any of the western territories.

Despite continuous attacks from antislavery supporters, proslavery Southerners still had a powerful voice in national politics, a power that was clearly reflected in the Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Dred Scott*. In March 1857, the Supreme Court heard the case of *Dred Scott v. Sanford*³³ which involved a Missouri slave who sued for his freedom on the grounds that he moved with his master into a free territory; he believed that living in a free territory made him a free man. Universally judged as the U.S. Supreme Court's worst decision, *Dred Scott v. Sanford* emerged at a time of deep political crisis. Renewed sectional conflicts and political debates over the extension of slavery in the territories were threatening the nation. In such an unstable political setting, the Supreme Court heard the first of two oral arguments in the *Dred Scott* case. In response to growing tensions, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, a former slaveholder from Maryland, intended to impose his own judicial solution to the problems caused by the extension of slavery.³⁴

The case centered on whether a black slave named Dred Scott became a free man by residing in free territory. The lawsuit arose from the travels of Dred Scott with his owner, Dr. John Emerson, an assistant surgeon in the U.S. army. Buying Scott in 1833, Emerson took him from Missouri to Illinois, a free state, where Emerson was stationed. Then Emerson was transferred, and he moved with him Scott, to Wisconsin territory, in what is today Minnesota. According to the Missouri Compromise of 1820, the Wisconsin Territory, later named the Iowa Territory, was free of slavery. During his stay there, Scott married Harriet Robinson, but subsequently followed his master to Minnesota. Emerson married Eliza Irene Sanford in 1838

³² Jason H. Silverman. "Civil War (1861-1865)." Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 225.

³³ In some sources, the case is entitled *Dred Scott v. Sandford* instead of "*Sanford*" because a clerk misspelled Sanford's name in the court records.

³⁴ Douglas S. Reed. "Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857)." Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 265.

during his short sojourn in Louisiana. In 1840, Mrs. Emerson, together with Dred and Harriet Scott, returned to St. Louis, Missouri, while her husband served in Florida. In fact, Emerson's duties lasted two years before he was honorably discharged. Coming back north, he was planning to establish his own private medical practice in Iowa, but unfortunately he died shortly after leaving the army.³⁵

Dred and Harriet Scott first filed suit for freedom against their new owner, Mrs. Emerson, in St. Louis in 1846, claiming that their travels and residence, on two occasions, in free territory had made of them free people. They supported their argument with examples of legal precedents that had existed in Missouri. In 1850, after an initial debate, a state judge declared Dred Scott and his wife free. By this time, Mrs. Emerson had left Missouri to Massachusetts, leaving her affairs in the care of her brother, John F. A. Sanford. Quickly Sanford appealed the ruling to Missouri's Supreme Court that overturned the decision of the lower court in 1852. Dissatisfied, Scott filed another suit, but this time in a federal court. Although Sanford's lawyers claimed that Scott, being a slave and not a Missouri citizen, had no standing to sue in a federal court, the judge, nevertheless, ruled that Scott had standing to sue. Yet, the jury was able to return a verdict against him.³⁶

Disappointed for yet another time, Scott appealed the verdict to the U.S. Supreme Court. In the *Dred Scott* case, the issues present before the Supreme Court were threefold: the case of Dred Scott's citizenship; the status of slaves living on free lands; and the constitutionality of federal laws prohibiting slavery in the territories. Obviously, Taney was not obliged to rule on all of three issues at the same time; he could have ruled on each issue separately as he could have narrowly interpreted these issues and limited his ruling just to Scott's standing to sue in a federal court. But Taney wanted, in fact, to impose a judicial solution on this intricate political problem. His hope was to resolve the constitutional status of slavery in all the territories by a decision in favor of Southern interests. By doing so, Taney not only solved too much but established the logical framework for the Civil War.³⁷

The Supreme Court's decision included a number of points. Roger Taney, first, declared that blacks were not citizens of the United States of America, nor could any state grant them U.S. citizenship. Taney claimed that blacks never had been U.S. citizens, nor could they ever become so. According to him, blacks, both free and slave were not part of the

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 265-266.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 266.

original popular sovereignty that established the United States of America. Taney wrote that, when the nation was at its founding only white people were citizens. In addition to that, individual states could not expand their own definitions and/or interpretations of the notion “citizenship” to include free blacks since “neutralization” was a responsibility of the federal government and not of individual states. Therefore, no black, whether free or slave, had standing to sue as a U.S. citizen in a federal court.³⁸ In this respect, Margot Minardi, an Assistant Professor of history and humanities at Reed College and author of Making Slavery History says, “Taney’s decision reinforced the status of blacks as a people without a history and as individuals who could not act in history. To him, the African American experience was a state of unvarying subjection.”³⁹

Normally, this ruling ended Dred Scott’s claim, but Taney, pushed by the need to resolve larger political issues related to the case of Dred Scott, continued. He ruled, second, that slavery was a property right guaranteed by the Constitution to U.S. citizens, and that Congress could not prohibit slavery in the territories, nor could territories exclude slave-owners. Consequently, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was declared unconstitutional since the Supreme Court ruled that slavery could effectively exist anywhere within the United States. In brief, all territories, since they were open to slavery, were slave territories. They were, Taney ruled, the common lands of the United States of America and therefore their state governments must recognize the property rights of all U.S. citizens, including slave-owners.⁴⁰

From the time of the American Revolution until 1857, the United States had existed with the principle that there were free states and slave states, but Taney’s decision in the *Dred Scott* case declared that property, including black slaves, could be taken with the owner anywhere, and that any state could be a slave state. By strongly defending the property rights of individuals and holding that black slaves were merely chattel property, Taney was confirming that people –whites of course– were free to own slaves anywhere in the nation. Although it is today universally considered as a poorly formulated judicial decision, Taney’s decision in the *Dred Scott* case, at the time of its making, was based on his hope that it would settle once and forever all the troublesome problems of slavery in the United States. It was his

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Margot Minardi. Making Slavery History: Abolitionism and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010. P. 162.

⁴⁰ Douglas S. Reed, op. cit., p. 266.

hope that the judicial branch would be able to speak where the executive and legislative branches had failed to act.⁴¹

At the political level, Roger Taney's decision drew on two significant impulses related to American political ideology; a doctrine of white racial superiority and a doctrine of a government with limited powers. The first dimension of Taney's decision is obvious; for him blacks had never been –nor could they ever become– U.S. citizens, but a kind of personal property that was not worthy of being treated in the same way like white U.S. citizens. The second dimension of his decision, however, deserves more attention. Taney argued that Congress could not deny through legislative action, personal property –including slaves– that was recognized as a legitimate right throughout much of the nation. Because congressional powers were limited, they could not be enlarged in scope without violating the Founding Fathers' first concern, the protection of liberty. A government with limited powers meant a government that protected the liberty of its subjects, but Taney distorted that doctrine by linking it with the defense and protection of the institution of slavery. If congressional powers were as limited as Taney claimed, a popular sovereignty committed to slavery at a state level certainly meant slavery at the national level.⁴²

Instead of settling the heated sectional debate on slavery and its potential spread into the western territories, the Supreme Court's decision –*Dred Scott decision*– escalated sectional hostility. As a matter of fact, Taney's ruling ignited fire in the North as it turned to be a major force that dramatically fueled the growth of the Republican Party and persuaded its members that the institution of slavery, in addition to being morally wrong, was an attack on the North and the cause of liberty. Rather than solving the contradiction between slavery and liberty, and the paradox that arose from their existence together⁴³, Taney's ruling pushed the nation into a bloody struggle to overturn the terms of that bitter decision.⁴⁴

With this definite proslavery ruling from the nation's highest court, abolitionists became convinced that only drastic measures would bring a final end to slavery. In turn, Southerners were convinced that the zeal of abolitionists would not stop until the total destruction of the institution. These fears were partially proved by John Brown's raid in 1859 on Harpers Ferry, Virginia—which is today in West Virginia. Brown was a zealous abolitionist

⁴¹ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 137.

⁴² Douglas S. Reed, op. cit., p. 267.

⁴³ Slavery for blacks and liberty for whites.

⁴⁴ Douglas S. Reed, op. cit., p. 267.

who planned to establish mountain stronghold where runaway slaves could take refuge and from which he and his men could organize and instigate slave insurrections. On October 16th, 1859, Brown and about twenty of his followers took over the town of Harper Ferry, capturing the federal arsenal of weapons that was stored there in an attempt to launch a revolt. Soon, these men were arrested by state and federal troops and the insurrection was put down. The incident horrified the South and convinced most of the Southerners that widespread armed conflict with antislavery forces was imminent.⁴⁵ According to John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, JR.,

The effect of this raid on the South was electrifying. It made slaveholders think that the abolitionists would stop at nothing to wipe out slavery. No one felt secure, because there were rumors of other insurrections to come, and widespread complaint that slaves were insolent because they knew their day of liberation was near. The whole South was put on semiwar footing, with troops drilling regularly as far as Georgia and with increasing demands for arms and ammunition by the militia commanders of most of states.⁴⁶

On December 2nd, 1859, John Brown was hanged, but not before he had dazzled the whole country by his notable words and behavior after his trial. He told a reporter of the New York Herald,

I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and wronged, that are as good as you and as precious in the sight of God. . . . You may dispose of me easily, but this question is still to be settled—the negro question—the end of that is not yet.⁴⁷

Upon hearing his sentence, John calmly replied, “Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say, let it be done.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ James D. Torr, ed., op. cit., p. 181.

⁴⁶ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 179.

⁴⁷ Quoted in: John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 179.

⁴⁸ Quoted in: John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 179.

Sectional animosity escalated, and the South reached the breaking point in November of 1860, when Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln, who advocated antislavery politics, was elected a president of the United States. The South saw this event as a threat to the existence of the peculiar institution, which was to them essential to maintaining the social and economic wellbeing of the Southern states. During his campaign, Lincoln had made the remark that “slavery was an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection necessary.”⁴⁹ Such kind of comments outraged Southerners who believed that a Lincoln administration, instead of tolerating and protecting the institution of slavery, would surely promote an abolitionist agenda that would attempt to put an end to slavery. After the official announcement that Lincoln was elected to the presidency, proslavery advocates, especially radical ones, in several of the Southern states began to consider the appropriate reaction, and secession from the Union seemed looming on the horizon.⁵⁰

Robert William Fogel in his book entitled Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery wrote, “It was the question of slavery...that brought the country to the impasse of 1860.” Then, Fogel further explained, “It was in an atmosphere of slavery that the weapons of waging the Civil War were sharpened. It was the question of slavery that sundered the sections and forced them to settle the question by a bloody war.”⁵¹ But it was the election of Lincoln which actually ignited the fuse that set off the explosion.⁵² In the same context, Carl N. Degler wrote: “For two decades the southern people had been growing in the conviction that their culture, entwined about the institution of Negro slavery, made a separate nation. The election of 1860 precipitated this feeling into secession from the Union.”⁵³

Sectional tensions ultimately divided the nation. Within weeks of the election results, the initial detonation occurred in South Carolina which declared itself out of the Union. On December 20th, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union. In February 1861, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas followed. Within three months, seven

⁴⁹ Quoted in: Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p.139.

⁵⁰ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 139.

⁵¹ Quoted in: James D. Torr, ed., op. cit., p. 181.

⁵² Joan R. Gundersen, and Marshall Smelser. American History at a Glance: From the Exploration of the New World to the Present. Fifth Edition. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994. P. 107.

⁵³ Carl N. Degler. Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1984. P. 205.

states⁵⁴ seceded to form the Confederate States of America; four more states⁵⁵ would follow after the Civil War began, they were Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

This wave of secession that characterized the winter of 1860-1861 took place during the final months of President James Buchanan's administration. At that time, Lincoln was the president-elect, who would not be inaugurated until March 4th, 1861, and there was evidently nothing that he could do to halt this movement of secession or to restore the Union. Actually, President Buchanan, who was still in office, made no real effort to confront the crisis directly, leaving the problem to his successor.⁵⁶ Although Buchanan mourned secession, he said the United States could do nothing about it.⁵⁷

On April 12th, 1861, Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. On the following day, Union Major Robert Anderson surrendered, and the Civil War started. While the South went to the war to protect slavery and Southern sovereignty, Lincoln's initial Union war aim was to preserve the Union, not to end slavery. In his inaugural address, Lincoln assured the Southerners that he did not intend to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists, but he denied the legality of secession which was to him a form of rebellion against the United States⁵⁸. As a matter of fact, Lincoln responded to the devastating attack on Fort Sumter by making a national call for 75000 volunteers on April 15th, 1861. These troops were expected to serve just for a period of three months, for Lincoln initially did not consider the situation as a war but rather as a rebellion, and as the president of the entire nation, he believed that he had the power to suppress the rebellion with force. Instead of crushing the rebellion, Lincoln's call for troops led to the secession of four additional states, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

At the beginning of the war, although Lincoln's antislavery views were well established, he did not want to interfere with the institution of slavery, and he even ordered his army generals to return all the slaves who tried to escape behind Union lines. Although fugitive slaves were at first returned to their owners, the confiscation acts of 1861-1862 stated that slaves who crossed the Union lines should be considered contraband of war and automatically freed. In fact, just the idea of considering humans –black slaves– as contraband

⁵⁴ States of the Deep South.

⁵⁵ States of the Upper South.

⁵⁶ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 139.

⁵⁷ Joan R. Gundersen, and Marshall Smelser, op. cit., p. 108.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 109.

of war that could be seized and kept, with the same justification the Union army could use to seize and keep any captured Confederate gun, rifle, or cannon, was in itself a degradation to the black race.⁵⁹

Yet, behind the Union line, fugitive slaves found life not as easy as they expected it to be; it was almost as harsh as that in the Southern plantations. Those who remained with the Union troops were treated differently from the whites. They worked with little and, at times, no compensation and lived in crowded camps with unsuitable shelter, food, and clothing. Those who moved into urban regions still faced poor living conditions including poverty, overcrowding, and infections. Fortunately, certain sources such as the Freedmen's aid societies and other missionary societies were helping these former slaves by providing them with supplies and educational opportunities. Gradually, the escaped slaves formed their own communities and began demanding for equal rights. Nevertheless, slaves who remained in the seceded states played a significant role in the Confederate war effort. Although many worked in factories, mines, and in home guard units, replacing white men who contributed in the war, others accompanied the Confederate army to help carry necessary supplies and construct forts.⁶⁰

As previously mentioned, the central Union's war aim at first was not to destroy slavery, but to protect and preserve the United States as a nation. Abolitionism became a war aim later on out of military necessity. Although Lincoln's original objective was to preserve the Union, he faced ongoing criticism from the part of abolitionists who wished this civil war to be a war to end slavery. Moreover, Lincoln faced another problem abroad as European nations seemed increasingly sympathetic to the claims of the South—that the Confederacy was fighting for its independence. For Europeans, that was a similar if not the same cause for which the thirteen colonies were fighting against their mother country, Great Britain. Fearing possible European economic or military intervention to the side of the South, Lincoln realized that freeing the slaves must become a war priority. But this was, still, a difficult decision for Lincoln. While he personally opposed slavery, he was never convinced that free blacks and whites could ever live together peacefully. In the end, emancipation turned to be the only option for Lincoln to silence his critics and preserve the Union.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Jason H. Silverman, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

Lincoln began secretly drafting the document that would order an end to slavery. He was worried about outside observers who might take his decision as a sign that the Union was losing the war after a series of Confederate victories.⁶² Yet, Union victory at the battle of Antietam, September 17th, 1862, represented one of those moments that alter history. This battle was a critical turning point in American history, for it provided Lincoln with the opportunity to announce his decision. On September 22nd, 1862, five days after this bloody battle, Lincoln issued a preliminary emancipation proclamation. In fact, Lincoln distinguished between his “personal wish” and his “official duty” as a President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. When he issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, it was a tactical military move, giving the Southern states, which had seceded from the Union, four months to stop rebelling, threatening to emancipate their slaves if they continued to fight, and promising to leave the institution of slavery totally untouched if these states stopped their rebellion and rejoined the Union.⁶³ In the final Emancipation Proclamation, which became law on January 1st, 1863, Lincoln ordered that all slaves in states under rebellion were free starting from that date; he declared,

...[S]laves within any State, or designed part of a State...in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.”⁶⁴

Thus, when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1st, 1863, it declared all slaves free in those areas still fighting against the Union, but said nothing about those slaves behind the Union lines or in the border states⁶⁵ which remained in the Union. As historian Richard Hofstadter put it, the Emancipation Proclamation “had all the moral

⁶² Ibid., p. 227.

⁶³ Zinn Howard. A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present. Third Edition. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2003. P. 191.

⁶⁴ Abraham Lincoln. “The Emancipation Proclamation.” The Civil War and Reconstruction: A Documentary Reader. Ed. Stanley Harrold. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. 2008. P. 155.

⁶⁵ In the context of the American Civil War, border states were slave states that did not declare a secession from the Union and did not join the Confederacy. To their north they bordered free states of the Union and to their south they bordered Confederate slave states. These states included: Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri. West Virginia, which separated from Virginia during the war, was also considered a border state (the area that would become West Virginia was formed on October 24th, 1861, when the western portion of Virginia chose to break away from the rest of the state instead of seceding).

grandeur of a bill of lading.”⁶⁶ This means that the best of what the Proclamation achieved was its propaganda value. About the same issue related to the Emancipation Proclamation, the London Spectator wrote concisely: “The principle is not that a human being cannot justly own another, but that he cannot own him unless he is loyal to the United States.”⁶⁷

For Lincoln, emancipating blacks was not the primary war aim but a necessary war measure. By declaring all black slaves, in the states in rebellion, free, the Emancipation Proclamation had the desired effect of creating confusion in the South and depriving the Confederacy of the core of its strength and much of its valuable labor force.⁶⁸ Technically, the proclamation did not free any slaves in the rebel states, because such a measure required a constitutional amendment. Symbolically, however, it had a very important impact on the northern war effort. The proclamation helped appease the long standing claims of the abolitionists and also prevented foreign intervention in the war by making it a war for the abolition of slavery rather than a Northern aggression against the Confederacy.⁶⁹ In short, it put international public opinion strongly on the Union side. In this respect, Tunde Adeleke wrote: “The proclamation transformed the war from a struggle to preserve the Union to a crusade for human freedom. It gave the Union cause a moral and humanitarian complexion, which generated worldwide support, and it established Lincoln’s reputation among blacks as “the Great Emancipator.”⁷⁰

Thus, the Emancipation Proclamation destroyed any possibility that Britain or France would offer diplomatic recognition to the Confederate government. Such a measure would have meant recognizing the Confederacy as a legitimate state equal in status and international law to the Union, and it would have obviously led to financial and military support for the South. Moreover, British leaders, who had previously considered recognizing the Confederacy, now refused to support a nation that relied on the institution of slavery while its opponent moved to destroy it. In this way, the Proclamation substantially weakened the Confederacy’s ability to prosecute the war. Even more significant, it undermined slavery in the Confederate States and contributed directly to their defeat.⁷¹ Moreover, although the

⁶⁶ Quoted in: Zinn Howard, op. cit., pp. 191-192.

⁶⁷ Quoted in: Zinn Howard, op. cit., p. 192.

⁶⁸ Lincoln had come to realize how vital slaves were to the South’s economy and war effort.

⁶⁹ Jason H. Silverman, op. cit., p. 227.

⁷⁰ Tunde Adeleke. “Emancipation Proclamation.” Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Rodriguez. California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007. P. 276.

⁷¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. The African-American Odyssey. Fifth Edition. Combined Volume. UPPER Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011. P. 276.

proclamation did not apply to those black slaves in the four border states⁷², or in areas occupied by Union troops, it did encourage these thousands of slaves, giving them hope that freedom was just one step ahead.⁷³ In effect, Lincoln's stirring words in the Emancipation Proclamation provided the best psychological weapon of the Civil War.

Military needs also seemed to suggest the necessity of broadening the Union War aims. Following the declaration of the Emancipation Proclamation, President Lincoln, as Commander-In-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, approved the enlistment of black soldiers in the Union army. Although many Union soldiers disagreed with Lincoln's decision, the need for more troops to reinforce the army was greater than racial prejudice. But accepting the enlistment of black soldiers in the Union army could not disguise the harsh reality of discrimination that black troops faced during the war. In fact, black soldiers were not treated on equal grounds like their white counterparts. At first black soldiers were denied the right to fight, but except when necessity did demand, they entered battles without adequate training, arms, and supplies. Until 1864, black soldiers received a pay that was lower than that of white soldiers and had far less advancement opportunities.⁷⁴

The enlistment of black troops in the Union Army could not, in fact, conceal the discrimination and hostility that black soldiers faced. Many Northerners did not accept the presence of black troops. White people tolerated black troops only on selfish grounds because they preferred that a black man would die fighting rather than a white man. In this context, a white Union soldier wrote, "a Negro can fall from a rebel shot as well as me or my friends, and better him than us." Moreover, black troops served in separate, all-black units. In 1863, the United States War Department established the Bureau of Colored Troops under General Order No. 143; and throughout the war, the Union Army remained segregated. Yet, officers of the black regiments were the only exceptions. Almost, all black troops had white officers, and many of these officers convinced that such service would discredit their military record, refused to command black troops. Other officers believed in the idea that black men could not even be trained for combat.⁷⁵ Despite discrimination, black soldiers played a pivotal role in the Union victory. For instance, about two hundred thousand black men, known for their bravery and skill, served in the Union armed forces, nearly ten percent of the total Union

⁷² Abraham Lincoln exempted the Border States from the proclamation because he did not want to tempt them into joining the Confederacy.

⁷³ Jason H. Silverman, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁷⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

enlistment. Of these two hundred thousand black soldiers, about one-third gave their lives for the cause of freedom.⁷⁶

When the Civil War ended, President Lincoln had met his primary goal of preserving the Union. He also achieved a second goal, one he had not initially intended, the end of slavery. In fact, Union victory in the war preserved the United States as one nation and ended the institution of slavery that had divided this nation from its beginning.⁷⁷ But, if the battle to achieve emancipation had been effected, the long ongoing struggle to achieve true freedom for the former black slaves was just beginning.⁷⁸ Moreover, both economic and political freedom for black people, though no longer slaves, had not yet been achieved neither in the South nor in the North.

After the conclusion of the American Civil War in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution officially abolished slavery throughout the United States of America. This amendment was passed by Congress on January 31st, 1865, and ratified by the states on December 6th, 1865. It declared that, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."⁷⁹ This would, in fact, be the first step on the long road to equality for African Americans. Yet, Abraham Lincoln would not live to see the painful process of the reconstruction that followed the Civil War.⁸⁰

II- African Americans during the Reconstruction Period

It was the Civil War which liberated the nation's slaves. During the war, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and following the war, the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution freed nearly four million black slaves. In addition, the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Amendments ensued⁸¹. Yet, the status of free blacks in the Post-Civil War South remained precarious, as new challenges would manifest during

⁷⁶ Jason H. Silverman, op. cit., p. 227.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 143.

⁷⁹ "13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History." Library of Congress, Virtual Programs & Services. <<https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/13thamendment.html>>. Accessed: December 10, 2015.

⁸⁰ Jason H. Silverman, op. cit., p. 227.

⁸¹ The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution are generally referred to as the trio of Civil War Amendments, but also referred to as the Reconstruction Amendments.

the Reconstruction period (1865-1877). In his article “Southern Labor and Reconstruction,” R. Tracy McKenzie⁸² wrote:

As black and white southerners took stock of their situation in the spring of 1865, one thing was abundantly clear to almost all of them: slavery was dead...Over the course of nearly 250 years, slavery had become inextricably intertwined with the fabric of everyday life all the way from Maryland to Texas. It was the central pillar of the region’s economy, social structure, and race relations. And yet in less than four years – a blink of an eye, historically speaking – it had been dealt a mortal blow from without and within. The history of labor and Reconstruction in the South is the story of a struggle among former slaves, former masters, and (for a brief period) representatives of the federal government to shape the social and economic meanings of emancipation.⁸³

Similarly, Peter Kolchin, in his exploration of the slaves experience in America, as displayed in his famous book American Slavery, argued that,

THE END OF THE [CIVIL] WAR left the slaves freed but their status otherwise undetermined. Precisely where and how they were to fit into a supposedly egalitarian system was the most pressing question to be resolved in the postwar “Reconstruction” of America—and especially Southern—society. This question...seemed intractable because no precedent existed to guide policymakers as they struggled with it. Never before having fought a civil war or turned a slave into a free-labor society, Americans vigorously debated how to proceed.⁸⁴

In fact, as both black and white people tried to find the perfect balance between freedom and security in post-Civil War America,” as John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, JR. put it: “democracy faced a new test.”⁸⁵ In his single-volume interpretation of American history, Out of Our Past, Carl N. Degler referred to the situation of blacks in the South, after the end of the

⁸² Tracy McKenzie a professor of History at Wheaton College, a specialist in Southern social and economic history, and author of many books in this field.

⁸³ R. Tracy McKenzie. “Southern Labor and Reconstruction.” A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction. Ed. Lacy K. Ford. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. P. 367.

⁸⁴ Peter Kolchin. American Slavery: 1679-1877. New York: Hill & Wang, 1993. P. 209.

⁸⁵ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 200.

Civil War, as being ambiguous. Degler explains: “In the South, the Negro’s ambiguous position was summed up in the fact that he was neither a slave nor a citizen.”⁸⁶

The long, painful process of rebuilding a united nation free of slavery began after the Civil War. And as John Hope Franklin and his co-author in From Slavery and freedom have put it: “In few periods of our [American] history has the whole fabric of American life been altered so drastically as during the Civil War and the period immediately following it.” The authors continue, “To be sure, there were the social and economic changes arising from the emancipation of 4 million slaves in the South, but these changes were so completely interwoven with the other consequences of the war as to make them wholly inseparable.”⁸⁷ So, if January 1st, 1865 represented a turning point in American history by providing a new birth of freedom for the United States, it soon became clear that the coming years of incipient freedom for blacks would pose many challenges to the American nation. Given nothing except freedom, the millions of former slaves would find it a difficult way to navigate the grounds of proscribed liberties in a nation that was still defining the full and exact meaning of freedom for all of its citizens.⁸⁸

In fact, the Reconstruction era, that followed the Civil War, was a period of disappointment and frustration for black people, as the new provisions of the Constitution were often ignored or violated, especially in the South. After the war, former slaves –now free men– were thrown largely on their own measly resources. Although freedom was for them a tremendous gift, but freedom alone was quite problematic. Most of these former slaves, particularly in the South, were illiterate, and did not have adequate skills or training necessary to get a job except the type of agricultural labor that most of them had performed during the days of slavery. As a matter of fact, many freedmen moved about hopelessly in search for work. Moreover, in addition to being landless and uprooted, many of the former slaves were made homeless when they were freed and asked to leave the plantations and farms where they had toiled as slaves. Homeless, jobless, and without income, many former slaves wandered helplessly and aimlessly throughout the South, and because of the vagrancy laws hastily enacted in the Southern states, many of these individuals were arrested and jailed.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Carl N. Degler, op. cit., p. 230.

⁸⁷ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 201.

⁸⁸ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 143.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 147.

Moreover, the Southern states enacted laws resembling the slave codes of the slave times. These Black Codes were developed throughout the former Confederacy as a means to restrict the opportunities that would be granted to the freed slaves. Reminiscent of those slave codes that prevailed in the plantations during the antebellum era, the Black Codes covered a number of measures ranging from where freedmen might live, what kind of work they might perform, and whether or not they could own arms. In some other cases, black codes involved some kind of community curfew that stipulated the latest hour of the day that freedmen might be permitted to walk the streets. Freedmen who violated any term of the Black Codes were jailed. Consequently, in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the number of black people incarcerated in southern jails substantially increased.⁹⁰ In this respect, Stanley Harrold wrote:

[B]lack southerners – with the support from northern black leaders, abolitionists, large segments of the Republican Party, and northern public opinion – pressed for citizenship [, while] most white southerners, led by former slaveholders, resisted these efforts. The former Confederate states passed Black Codes designed to keep African Americans on plantations in semi-slavery.⁹¹

In his famous survey of the slave experience in America, Peter Kolchin came up with two important conclusions. First, that pervasive white racism particularly in the South during the Reconstruction period reminded black people that “the new age remained a distant hope rather than a current reality”, and that racism which was a feature of the antebellum South, of course, was still a feature of the postbellum South, but “with emancipation it became far more virulent.” Second, that, “free blacks, especially those who asserted their equal rights, proved far more threatening than slaves to whites who took racial inferiority for granted.”⁹²

White southerners were really concerned with the fact that blacks had become free. They were outraged that these freed black people could claim the same legal and political rights they themselves possessed. Such a possibility seemed unacceptable to people convinced of the “absolute inferiority” of the black race. Benjamin F. Perry, appointed by President Andrew Johnson in 1865, as Provisional Governor of South Carolina captures the profundity of this racist conviction. Perry declared:

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 147.

⁹¹ Stanley Harrold, ed. The Civil War and Reconstruction: A Documentary Reader. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. P. 3.

⁹² Peter Kolchin, op. cit., pp. 234-235.

The African has been in all ages, a savage or a slave. God created him inferior to the white man in form, color and intellect, and no legislation or culture can make him his equal. . . . His hair, his form and features will not compete with the Caucasian race, and it is in vain to think of elevating him to the dignity of the white man. God created differences between the two races, and nothing can make him equal.⁹³

White landowners in the South faced a special situation in the aftermath of the Civil War. Freedom for the slaves represented a huge financial loss of enormous proportions for the slave-owning Southerners. Having lost the slave labor upon which the plantation system was based, these planters had to look for other people to work on these large agricultural lands. But, this was difficult since the South was economically depressed and the landowners lacked cash to pay the workers. Under such a situation, both the planters and the freedmen essentially needed one another, but they had to find the right means to bypass the social and economic boundaries that separated them.⁹⁴ But the problem was that former slaveowners were reluctant to accept the idea of a new free labor system in which they would negotiate labor conditions with black workers as being their equals. As Peter Kolchin put it: “The changed ground rules of the postbellum South fostered intensely competitive social relations as planters and freedpeople struggled over terms of labor.”⁹⁵ Having very little alternatives, these Southern landowners were obliged to accept the necessity of their dependence on former slaves, but they were determined to maximize their exploitation and control over black workers by creating a system as close to the institution of slavery as possible⁹⁶, or, as Stanley Harrold called it: a condition of “semi-slavery.”⁹⁷ On their part, the former slaves had relatively few non-farm job possibilities. Actually, these freedmen had “no other choice but to cast their lot with their former masters.”⁹⁸

As a consequence, a system of sharecropping came to existence. It was an economic contractual arrangement in which freedmen along with other poor white workers found themselves making labor contracts with Southern landowners who were looking for agricultural workers. Most of the sharecroppers were freedmen. Provided with a cabin on the plantation or estate, the freedman would farm a part of the owner’s land accepting just a

⁹³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

⁹⁴ Junius P. Rodriguez, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁹⁵ Peter Kolchin, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

⁹⁶ R. Tracy McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

⁹⁷ Stanley Harrold, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁹⁸ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., *op. cit.*, p. 212.

portion of the crops as his annual income while the largest portion of it would go directly to the landowner. In average, the landowner received “from one-half to three-quarters of the crop.”⁹⁹ Moreover, landowners even extended credits to the sharecroppers if they needed to buy supplies before the harvesting seasons, and these sharecroppers used their share of the harvested crops to pay off their debts in due time. Although this system helped former slaves make do with the new situation and survive as free people, it was, in most respects, an exploitative and regressive system under which freedmen were exploited to the advantage of the Southern landowners.¹⁰⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold captured this inequity:

Sharecropping lent itself to exploitation. By law, the verbal agreements were considered contracts. In any case, many sharecroppers were illiterate and could not have read written contracts. The landowner informed the sharecropper of the value of the product raised—typically cotton—and the value of the goods provided to the sharecropping family. Black farmers who disputed white landowners put themselves in peril. Although many sharecroppers knew the proprietor’s calculations were wrong. They could do nothing about it.¹⁰¹

Black sharecroppers were, in all ways, forced to accept the landowner’s word. As one Mississippi sharecropper –of course black– explained, “I have been living in this Delta thirty years, and I know that I have been robbed every year; but there is no use jumping out of the frying pan into the fire if we ask any questions we are cussed, and if we raise up we are shot, and that ends it.”¹⁰²

Fortunately, the federal Freedmen’s Bureau came to give these freedmen a helping hand. On March 3rd, 1865, Congress authorized the creation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (B.R.F.A.L.), a federal agency that provided the first public welfare program in the United States history. This governmental agency, which came to be known as the Freedmen’s Bureau, was basically designed to assist refugees and freedmen in their way of social and economic transition from slavery to freedom following the end of the war. This famous organization was placed under the control of the U.S. Army and the

⁹⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 369.

¹⁰⁰ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 149.

¹⁰¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 369

¹⁰² Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 339.

leadership of General Oliver O. Howard.¹⁰³ For R. Tracy McKenzie, “[r]epresentatives of the Freedmen’s Bureau, [this] temporary agency created by Congress in March 1865 to facilitate the freepersons’ transition from slavery to free labor, acted aggressively to suspend the most discriminatory provisions of the Black Codes.”¹⁰⁴ In the same context, Peter Kolchin wrote, “during its brief existence it [that is the Freedmen’s Bureau] distributed food to destitute blacks and whites, supervised the establishment of free-labor agriculture, and furnished much-needed financial assistance to set up schools for the ex-slaves.”¹⁰⁵

The Freedmen’s Bureau was instrumental in establishing a network of schools throughout the Southern states that provided education for the children of former slaves as well as poor whites and even established adult literacy programs. The different kinds of basic survival skills that were taught by the Freedmen’s Bureau were very essential to providing a helping hand that was really necessary for former slaves to survive and achieve success in their new lives in freedom. The Freedmen’s Bureau also founded a number of savings banks so that former slaves could establish a sense of economic independence, responsibility, and security in their new status under the realm of freedom. But, this program was met with opposition. Many Americans, considered the program as a controversial one because its mission and goals were contradictory with the self-help mentality that characterized American life, while others opposed the Freedmen’s Bureau just because of their blatantly racist claims. Besides, the program was never fully funded by the U.S. Congress; and consequently it was short-lived.¹⁰⁶

Furthermore, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was passed¹⁰⁷. It was enacted on April 9th, 1866, and became the first United States federal law to define citizenship¹⁰⁸ and assert that all citizens of the United States are equally protected by the law. But, it was mainly intended to protect the civil rights of people of African descent in the United States. This legislation was passed by Congress in 1865, but it was vetoed by President Andrew Johnson¹⁰⁹. Again, in 1866, Congress passed the same bill. Although it was vetoed for another time by Johnson, a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress overrode the president’s veto and the bill

¹⁰³ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁰⁴ R. Tracy McKenzie, op. cit., p. 368.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Kolchin., op. cit., p. 212.

¹⁰⁶ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁰⁷ The rise of black codes and the continuing intransigence of racist white southerners were the principal reasons Congress felt the necessity to act and implement new policies to protect the rights of the freedmen.

¹⁰⁸ Citizenship to all persons born in the United States except Indians.

¹⁰⁹ Vice President Andrew Johnson, a southern Democrat, assumed the presidency in April, 1865, upon the death of Abraham Lincoln.

became law. The Black Codes already passed in the Southern states were effectively nullified when Congress passed this act which defined the former slaves as U.S. citizens entitled to enjoy “full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property as is enjoyed by white citizens.”¹¹⁰ Moreover, the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on July 9th, 1868. The amendment granted citizenship to “all persons born or naturalized in the United States,” which included former slaves recently freed. In addition, it forbade states from denying any person “life, liberty or property, without due process of law” or to “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” By directly mentioning the role of states not just the national government, the Fourteenth Amendment significantly expanded the protection of civil rights by law to all citizens of the United States including blacks.¹¹¹ Eleven years after Chief Justice Roger Taney declared in the *Dred Scott* decision that blacks, whether free or slave, were “a subordinate and inferior class of beings” who had “no rights that white people were bound to respect,” the Fourteenth Amendment granted African Americans the same rights of citizenship that white Americans possessed.¹¹²

Blacks were also able to wield political power during the Reconstruction period, particularly in the South¹¹³. In fact, one of the significant accomplishments of the Reconstruction Era was that African American leaders emerged and proved that a formerly enslaved people could rise to outstanding and key positions in the United States. A number of elected officials, of African descent, in state governments across the South demonstrated the capacity of African Americans. At the national level, an important way in which blacks participated in politics was by election to Congress. Between 1869 and 1901, both Hiram Revels and Blanche K. Bruce served in the U.S. Senate representing the state of Mississippi. Beginning with Joseph Rainey in 1870 in South Carolina, fourteen other African American congressmen were elected to the House of Representatives. At the state level, the first and the best known example was Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback who served the state of Louisiana as its acting-governor after the former white governor, Henry C. Warmouth, was impeached and removed from office for election violations¹¹⁴. Yet, while six other black men served as Lieutenant governors, no black man was elected governor during the Reconstruction

¹¹⁰ Quoted in: R. Tracy McKenzie, op. cit., p. 368.

¹¹¹ “14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History.” [Library of Congress](https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/14thamendment.html). <<https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/14thamendment.html>>. Accessed: December 15, 2015.

¹¹² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 315.

¹¹³ In fact, it was in South Carolina that blacks wielded the greatest political influence.

¹¹⁴ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 149.

period. In the state houses of both Mississippi and South Carolina, a majority of the representatives were black. Jonathan J. Wright served seven years as a Supreme Court justice in South Carolina. Francis L. Cardozo served as South Carolina's secretary of state and subsequently as its treasurer. Four other black men served as state superintendents of education. During the Reconstruction era, about 112 black state senators and 683 black state representatives were elected. Similarly, there were five black mayors, forty-one black sheriffs, and thirty-one black coroners. Both Tallahassee, Florida, and Little Rock, Arkansas, had also black police chiefs.¹¹⁵ As the following table demonstrates, the number of African Americans who held office during the Reconstruction period differed from state to another:

Table 1: African-American Population and Office Holding During Reconstruction in the States Subject to Congressional Reconstruction

	African-American Population in 1870	African Americans as Percentage of Total Population	Number of African- American Officeholders during Reconstruction
South Carolina	415,814	58.9	314
Mississippi	444,201	53.6	226
Louisiana	364,210	50.1	210
North Carolina	391,650	36.5	180
Alabama	475,510	47.6	167
Georgia	545,142	46.0	108
Virginia	512,841	41.8	85
Florida	91,689	48.7	58
Arkansas	122,169	25.2	46
Texas	253,475	30.9	46
Tennessee	322,331	25.6	20

Source: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 328.

In addition, the federal government under Republican Domination tried to protect black voting rights and defend Republican state governments particularly in the South. On February 26th, 1869, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. On February 3rd, 1870, this Amendment was ratified. The amendment granted African American men the right to vote by declaring that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 327.

¹¹⁶ “15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History.” [Library of Congress](#).

Moreover, a number of schools designed to provide education for the children of former slaves were established in the South. Some of the first of these institutions were founded under the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau. Similarly, charitable organizations such as the American Missionary Association (A.M.A.), and philanthropic groups such as the Peabody Trust engaged enthusiastically in supporting the establishment of new schools in the former Confederacy that would help open new educational opportunities for freedmen. Besides, churches also played a crucial role in the social and cultural survival of the freed slaves. Many of these people found support in the African American churches.¹¹⁷ For Robert Cook, the church was a key institution in black life, and one of the principal sources of community building in the South during the Reconstruction Era.¹¹⁸ In his book, American Slavery, Peter Kolchin also emphasizes the significant role of black churches in the new lives of former slaves by stating that these religious institutions "served as focal points of the freedpeople's lives."¹¹⁹

Yet, despite witnessing an unprecedented degree of black participation in American political life during the Reconstruction era, this black political power was short-lived. The rebirth of white supremacy was accompanied by the rise of racist organizations. Freedmen often found themselves victimized by community-sanctioned violence. In many cases, this violence was carried out by insurgent groups belonging to racist organizations. The best examples of these were the Ku Klux Klan (K.K.K.) or the Knights of White Camellia that sought to maintain "white supremacy" in the South and oppose freedmen's rights both social and political.¹²⁰ In a book entitled White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (1971), and considered as an encyclopedic study of the origins, founding, and activities of the Ku Klux Kan in the Reconstruction South, Allen W. Trelease, author of the book, revealed that, in the areas where this secret organization operated, it created a sphere of terror that was directed primarily at black people –former slaves– whom they "whipped, shot, hanged, robbed, raped, and otherwise outraged."¹²¹ In fact, the overall objective of the organization was to restrain and subordinate the former black slaves, newly freed, and

<<https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/15thamendment.html>>. Accessed: June 7, 2016.

¹¹⁷ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 149.

¹¹⁸ Robert Cook. Civil War America: Making a Nation, 1848-1877. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2003. P. 247.

¹¹⁹ Peter Kolchin, op. cit., p. 222.

¹²⁰ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. c.it., p. 147.

¹²¹ Quoted in: Michael Perman. "The Politics of Reconstruction." A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction. Ed. Lacy K. Ford. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. P. 338.

therefore restore white supremacy¹²². But, attacks on freedmen were also carried out by spontaneous white mobs that carried their acts with impunity. This behavior of racial violence ranged from lynchings that took place during the silent nights to urban riots that occurred in Memphis, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana, with the tacit approval of police authorities. In addition, schools and churches that were working to provide help to the former slaves and to make easy their transition to freedom were often a target for arson.¹²³

While Allen W. Trelease focused just on the Ku Klux Klan, George C. Rable, in his work entitled But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction (1984) surveyed violence in the South during the entire period of Reconstruction and in its different forms. For Rable, white violence was not just an aspect of the Southern life during the Reconstruction era, but rather was an essential weapon in the resistance of Southern whites against the Reconstruction itself. For whites, violence was never far from their thoughts and emotions, as a means of repressing black assertiveness, even before the Reconstruction began. But later, it became central to restore white supremacy as well as to overthrow Reconstruction.¹²⁴

According to Rable, the violence that was initiated by whites after the Civil War can be divided into three phases. In the first phase, it manifested in the form of race riots that broke out in Memphis and New Orleans in 1866—as we have previously mentioned. These Southern whites used mob violence to repress African American demands for political rights and social equality. In the next phase, beginning in 1868, the Ku Klux Klan as the primary instrument in the resistance against the Reconstruction began to take hold. In the third and final phase, between 1874 and 1876, the “counter-revolution” of white Southerners against the Reconstruction reached its peak when the Democrats mobilized their state party organizations to organize intimidations and violence during the election campaigns.¹²⁵ As a matter of fact, in Alabama in 1874, in Mississippi in 1875, and in South Carolina in 1876, the Democratic Party organized intense white supremacy campaigns and, above all, used violence to intimidate the targeted Republican voters¹²⁶ and even their party candidates. This form of official and centralized violence was different from that carried out by the Ku Klux

¹²² Michael Perman, op. cit., p. 338.

¹²³ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 147.

¹²⁴ Quoted in: Michael Perman, op. cit., p. 338.

¹²⁵ White Southerners and especially Democrats did not tolerate both the presence of blacks in politics as well as white Republicans who accepted and encouraged black political involvement.

¹²⁶ Especially blacks. (About 80 percent of southern Republican voters were blacks in the late 1860s and early 1870s).

Klan organization, and it was more effective in sweeping away the last remaining Republican governments in those Southern states in which black population was really significant. As Rable claimed, violence was, therefore, a pivotal constituent in the overthrow of the Reconstruction.¹²⁷

In response to the white violence and “terrorism” that was taking hold in the South, Congress passed the Enforcement Acts in 1870 and 1871. The 1870 act prohibited masks and disguises¹²⁸ and protected the civil rights of U.S. citizens. On the other hand, the 1870 act, known as the Ku Klux Klan Act, made any attempt to interfere with a person’s right to vote, serve on a jury, hold office, or enjoy equal protection of the law, a federal offense. According to its terms, people accused of violating the act would be tried in federal courts. In cases of extreme violence, the act authorized the president to use the army and suspend the writ of habeas corpus¹²⁹

The Justice Department and Attorney General Amos T. Ackerman, armed with this new legislation, moved strenuously against the Klan. As a matter of fact, hundreds of Klansmen were arrested. For example, in Mississippi alone, there were about 700 arrests. If the federal government succeeded in reducing Klan violence temporarily, white Southerners were still convinced that white supremacy should prevail and the Republican governments overthrown. Although Klan violence did not overturn any state governments, it weakened blacks’ trust in the ability of these governments to protect them as U.S. citizens. At the same time, radical Republicans in Congress grew increasingly frustrated by the South’s and especially black people’s mounting demands, which they thought were consuming so much of their time and attention year after year. Sentiment in the North to continue support for the freedmen was becoming less and less. A mounting number of northern Republicans lost interest in civil rights issues and became increasingly involved in economic issues and concerned with winning elections. By the mid 1870s, most of the discussions in Congress were more discussions about patronage, railroads, tariffs, monetary policy, and other economic issues, than about blacks’ rights or about the future of the Southern states. Actually, many Republicans began questioning the necessity for more moral, political, and military support for African Americans in their quest for social and political equality. To them, blacks

¹²⁷ Michael Perman, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339.

¹²⁸ In reference to the members of insurgent groups belonging to racist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan whose members disguised themselves in long white robes and cone-shaped headgear in order to intimidate blacks as well as white Republicans.

¹²⁹ Habeas corpus is a writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into a court and not to be arrested and jailed unless lawful grounds are shown for their detention.

had demanded too much from the national government. Economic conditions also contributed to these changing attitudes. A financial crisis, known as the Panic of 1873, sent the country's economy into a long slump. Prices fell, unemployment raised, and many of the business and financial institutions were at risk. In 1874, the Democrats were able to capture a majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since 1860. The Democrats also took control of several Northern states.¹³⁰

Yet, before the Reconstruction ended, Congress made another step to protect African Americans from discrimination when it passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875. First introduced by one of Congress's great advocates for black civil rights, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, it was originally intended to outlaw discrimination based on race in public accommodations, including schools, churches, hotels, and transportation. The Republican controlled Senate approved the bill in 1874, but House Democrats, who were in a majority, held up passage, and it was not enacted until 1875 and then mostly as a memorial to Senator Charles Sumner who had died in 1874.¹³¹ In its final version, the act stipulated that "all persons . . . shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement."¹³² After its passage, however, no attempt was made to enforce its provisions, and the act eventually failed to have any lasting effect.¹³³

Reconstruction ended in violence and controversy. Democrats wanted Southern states restored to conservative white political rule. By 1875, Democrats had regained control over most of the former Confederate states except Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Democrats learned two important lessons. First, few African Americans would vote for the Democratic Party. Second, intimidation, terror, and violence would guarantee the outcome of elections to the side of Democrats in states where black and white voters were approximately equal.¹³⁴ Moreover, in failing to provide adequate economic security for former black slaves, the Reconstruction, as it ended, left these freedmen "no alternative but to

¹³⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-338.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

¹³² Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

¹³³ Moreover, in 1883 the Supreme Court declared the Act unconstitutional when Justice Joseph Bradley declared that the Fourteenth Amendment protected blacks from discrimination by states but not by private businesses.

¹³⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

submit to their old masters, a submission that made easier the efforts of Southern whites to overthrow Reconstruction and restore a system based on white supremacy.”¹³⁵

III- The Age of Booker T. Washington: Accommodation vs. Confrontation

After the Reconstruction period, black people started to be blatantly racially discriminated against, especially when the Democrats –Conservatives– appealed to a resentment of black people. Henry Grady¹³⁶, a prominent orator and editor of the Atlanta Constitution (1877) declared: “The supremacy of the white race of the South must be maintained forever, and the domination of the negro race resisted at all points and at all hazards—because the white race is the superior race. This is the declaration of no new truth. It has abided forever in the marrow of our bones, and shall run forever with the blood that feeds Anglo–Saxon hearts.”¹³⁷ Consequently white supremacy prevailed in the South where blacks were looked at as a threat to the white rule. In addition to trying to deprive blacks of their civil rights, their political rights were also violated. As early as the late 1870s, Southern Democrats worked enthusiastically to decline black political power. Intimidation and violence which were widespread during the Reconstruction continued in the 1880s and 1890s. Scared, terrified, or frustrated, many black people stopped voting. In some cases, white landowners intimidated black sharecroppers not to vote or to vote but for the landowner’s white candidate.¹³⁸ As John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, JR. explained,

After the Democrats returned to power in the South, they confronted the problem of finding way either to nullify the political strength of Negroes or to disfranchise them altogether. Complete disfranchisement by state legislations was viewed with some misgivings as long as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments remained a part of the fundamental law. Until it was feasible, the Democrats contented themselves with other methods [...] Intimidation continued on an extensive scale.[...] For many white Southerners [...] violence was still the surest means of keeping the Negroes politically impotent, and in

¹³⁵ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 223.

¹³⁶ Henry Grady is generally referred to in many references as “the Spokesman of the New South”, and his ideas about white supremacy were very influential during that period of American history.

¹³⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 352.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 356.

countless communities they were not allowed, under penalties of severe reprisals, to show their faces in town on election day.¹³⁹

Moreover, more militant and determined Southern Democrats were firm in their efforts to find some legal means to deprive blacks of their voting rights. Although the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1870, stated that the right of a person to vote could not be denied on “account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude”¹⁴⁰, a policy of disfranchisement started in the South. To deny blacks the right to vote, literacy tests and poll taxes were passed by the Southern states. But, white political leaders were worried about these legally acceptable barriers to voting which would similarly disfranchise many white voters. When these –literacy tests and poll taxes– proved insufficient, the grandfather clause was passed¹⁴¹.

In 1898, Louisiana added a new trick to disfranchisement of black voters. It was the grandfather clause, which stipulated that “only men who had been eligible to vote before 1867 –or whose father or grandfather had been eligible before that year– would be qualified to vote”. Since virtually no black men had been eligible to vote before 1867, because most blacks have just emerged from slavery and the Fifteenth Amendment had not yet come into existence, the new law immediately disfranchised almost all black voters. With the exception of Kentucky and West Virginia, each of the Southern states had enacted elaborate restrictions on black voting rights by the 1890s. Consequently, few black men continued to vote, while none were elected to office.¹⁴² The following table demonstrates the spread of disfranchisement of black voters using different restrictive strategies.

¹³⁹ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., *op. cit.*, p. 231.

¹⁴⁰ “15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History.”, *op. cit.*

¹⁴¹ A literacy test was used to test a person’s literacy degree before he could vote. It was designed to deprive blacks of their voting rights but unintentionally included a number of poor illiterate whites. Similarly, a poll tax was a payment which citizens had to make before they were allowed to vote. It excluded the poorest, most of them blacks, from exercising their Fifteenth Amendment rights. But since many poor whites were thereby disfranchised by the poll tax and literacy test the grandfather clause was inserted in the Southern state constitutions permitting the poor people to vote if their immediate ancestors had done so before 1867 i.e. a year before the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified and became law. Under this clause no blacks were qualified to vote.

¹⁴² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-358.

Table 2: The Spread of Disfranchisement, 1889-1908

	State	Strategies
1889	Florida	Poll tax
	Tennessee	Poll tax
1890	Mississippi	Poll tax, literary test, understanding clause
1891	Arkansas	Poll tax
1893,1901	Alabama	Poll tax, literary test, grandfather clause
1894,1895	South Carolina	Poll tax, literary test, understanding clause
1894,1902	Virginia	Poll tax, literary test, understanding clause
1897,1898	Louisiana	Poll tax, literary test, grandfather clause
1899,1900	North Carolina	Poll tax, literary test, grandfather clause
1902	Texas	Poll tax
1908	Georgia	Poll tax, literary test, understanding clause, grandfather clause

Source: David Goldfield et al. The American Journey. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004. P. 550.

In addition, the so-called Jim Crow Laws were also passed by the Southern states. These repressive anti-black laws which followed the Black Codes, that had previously restricted the civil rights and liberties of African Americans, were actually intended to separate blacks and whites in public areas and ultimately enforce racial segregation in the Southern States. Racial hatred increased as blacks were burned and lynched. Eventually, the Jim Crow Laws prevailed throughout most of the South. As Junius Rodriguez put it,

By the late nineteenth century, a code of strict racial segregation had descended upon the states of the former Confederacy as the so-called Jim Crow Laws were adopted and enforced. Designed to keep the races in separate spheres and to diminish the social, economic, and political opportunities that were available to African American citizens, these laws remained in place until the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁴³

The situation of blacks was, in fact, not much better than under slavery. The legacy of this race-based slavery in the United States continued to haunt the country long after its abolition. In the South, segregation against blacks became a reality, even sanctioned by law. In this respect, Junius Rodriguez further stated,

¹⁴³ Junius P. Rodriguez, ed., op. cit., p. 148

The path of slavery's demise was not well crafted in the United States, and much of the ill will created during the Reconstruction era served to create a racial divide in American society that has persisted into the modern era. Although the abolition of slavery was a noble achievement, the formation of a segregated society based on Jim Crow justice and institutional racism was an unfortunate consequence of emancipation and its aftermath.¹⁴⁴

In 1891, the Louisiana legislator required segregated trains within the state. But, black people challenged the new law in an attempt to demonstrate its absurdity with the help of a black man who was nearly undistinguishable from whites. In 1892, Homer A. Plessy, who was only “one-eighth black” purchased a first-class ticket and tried to ride on the coach intended for white passengers. Plessy was consequently arrested for violating the new law. In the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, lawyers argued that segregation deprived their client, Plessy, of equal protection of law guaranteed to him by the Fourteenth Amendment. In 1896, however, the Supreme Court, in an 8-to-1 decision, sanctioned Louisiana's segregating law. Justice Henry Brown ruled that the Louisiana's statute, simply because it required separation of the white and black races, did not deprive Plessy of his rights, nor did it suggest that he was inferior. It was the beginning of the “separate but equal doctrine”. Therefore, with the complicity of the Supreme Court, the Fourteenth Amendment no longer guaranteed for African Americans equal treatment under the law. After the *Plessy* decision, Southern states created an elaborate system of legally sanctioned racial segregation.¹⁴⁵

Jim Crow proceeded in an inexorable way throughout the South. Signs noting “black”, “white”, or “white only” appeared in railroad stations, auditoriums, theatres, restrooms, and other public facilities. White Southerners went further to keep the two races apart; even courtrooms used separate Bibles for black and white witnesses. Moreover, even if the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision required “separate but equal” facilities for black and white people, when facilities were made available to blacks, they were, in most of the cases, inferior compared to those intended for whites. Moreover, blacks were often offered no facilities at all, and were simply excluded.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, as memories of the Civil War faded away and the strife between white Northerners and Southerners dimmed, many Northern white people –who previously had

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁴⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold., op. cit., p. 359.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 359-360.

expressed their sympathy for former black slaves and haltered toward the Southern white rule— became less and less concerned with the South and its affairs, including the question segregation. They were increasingly preoccupied, however, with other striking issues of the time like the Frontier West and, most importantly, with the Industrial Revolution that was indeed transforming the American society especially in the North.¹⁴⁷ Although, by 1900, all of the Southern states, in new constitutions and new statutes, had written into law the disfranchisement and segregation of blacks, some Northern states did not allow blacks to vote either. As a New York Times editorial noted: “Northern men . . . no longer denounce the suppression of the Negro vote The necessity of it under the supreme law of self-preservation is candidly recognized.”¹⁴⁸ While not written into law in the North, racist thoughts and practices were there. In the Boston Transcript, September 25th, 1895, an item included:

A colored man who gives his name as Henry W. Turner was arrested last night on suspicion of being a highway robber. He was taken this morning to Black’s studio, where he had his picture taken for the “Rogue’s Gallery”. That angered him, and he made himself as disagreeable as he possibly could. Several times along the way to the photographer’s he resisted the police with all his might, and had to be clubbed.¹⁴⁹

Even in literature, blacks were attributed negative and/or inferior images. These images came mostly from postwar white Southern writers like Thomas Nelson Page, who in a novel entitled Red Rock referred to a black character as “a hyena in a cage,” “a reptile,” “a species of worm,” and as “a wild beast.”¹⁵⁰

At the turn of the century, lynchings were common as public events in the South. Often, hundreds of people witnessed these atrocious spectacles. Between 1889 and 1932, 3745 people were lynched in the United States. Most lynchings took place in the South, and blacks were usually the victims. For blacks, violence was usually a possibility in the South. In very rare cases, did a sheriff or police officer protect a potential black victim, and if protection took place, it was often not enough. Moreover, white lynchers were never arrested, tried, or convicted. Besides, prominent white community members frequently encouraged lynchings

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 352.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in: Howard Zinn, op. cit., p. 207.

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in: Howard Zinn, op. cit., p. 208.

¹⁵⁰ Howard Zinn, op. cit., p. 208.

and even engaged in lynch mobs. Surprisingly, white politicians, journalists, and even the clergymen seldom denounced those barbaric, savage, and hideous practices –lynchings– in public. Such mob brutality was a manifestation of white supremacy, particularly in the South. Blacks were beaten, murdered, and burned for insignificant and petty reasons, and at times for no reason at all. On their part, white Southerners justified lynching as a reaction to the raping of white women by black men. In fact, many lynchings involved no case of rape, and even when they did, black victims were often innocent. In the case of a white family which was murdered in Statesboro, Georgia, in 1904, Paul Reed and Will Cato were convicted of the crime. They were seized by a white mob that invaded the courtroom, and were burned alive in front of a huge crowd. Besides, white mobs often targeted black people who had achieved a certain economic success as well.¹⁵¹ Thomas Moss, a black man, who with two of his black friends, opened the People's Grocery Company in a black neighborhood in Memphis. When the store flourished, it competed with another grocery owned by a white man. After the latter had accused the three black men of conspiracy, black people organized a protest and violence erupted. The three men were imprisoned, but a white mob attacked the prison, lynched them, and even pillaged their store. Ida Wells Barnett, a newspaper editor and a friend of Moss, was grief-stricken.¹⁵² She, then, editor of the Free Speech, organized a boycott of white businesses and started writing against lynching.¹⁵³ She deemed the lynching of Moss and his partners as an “excuse to get rid of Negroes who were acquiring wealth and property and thus keep the [black] race terrorized and keep the nigger down.”¹⁵⁴ Since then, Ida Wells Barnett began a staunch lifelong crusade against lynching.

Like lynching, rape also demonstrated the domination of white people over the black men and women. Yet, rape was more common than lynching. White men routinely harassed and abused black women. In most of the cases, a black man could not simply protect a black woman. In doing so, he could be killed, as a clergyman from Alabama pointed out: White men on the highways and in their stores and on the trains will insult our women and we are powerless to resent it as it would only be an invitation for our lives to be taken.”¹⁵⁵ In this atmosphere, racial hatred grew more as blacks were burned and lynched. What blacks really needed at that time was to have devoted black leaders to speak for them and defend them.

¹⁵¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 362.

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 362-364.

¹⁵³ Kenneth Mostern. Autobiography and Black Identity Politics: Racialization in Twentieth-Century America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. P. 93.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 364.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 364.

Historical books reveal that Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois were the most prominent black leaders who helped their race against discrimination.

Booker T. Washington who became the nation's leading figure of industrial training, and one of the most significant people in American history, was born a slave in Western Virginia in 1856, as the son of Jane, an African-American slave who worked as a plantation cook. His father was an unknown white man. During his childhood, he learned to read and write at a local school. He also worked at saltworks, in coal mines, and as a houseboy for a famous white family. In 1872, at the age of sixteen, Washington entered Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia.¹⁵⁶ As a student, he was much influenced by Armstrong and his method of instruction as well as his curriculum. Washington, the student of the Hampton vocational institute, learnt the central message well: "if blacks were going to succeed in southern life, they had to learn to walk before they could run."¹⁵⁷ After graduating, he taught for two years at the same institute. In 1881, he founded the Tuskegee Institute, a black college in Alabama. The Tuskegee Institute was a major center of agricultural and industrial training for African American youths that reflected Washington's experience at Hampton and the influence of Armstrong.¹⁵⁸ In fact, one of Washington's central aims after leaving Hampton was to "nurture a culture of black enterprise that would provide a springboard for the [black] race's equal participation in American society."¹⁵⁹ Yet, as Hugh Brogan put it, "As first head of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama from 1881 onwards he [that is Washington] manifested apparent lack of interest in civil and political rights and a passionate concern with vocational training for blacks."¹⁶⁰

From his arrival at Tuskegee until his death in 1915, Washington worked enthusiastically to convince both white and black people that the most certain way for blacks to advance was by learning skills, and demonstrating their readiness to do manual labor. In his famous speech at the Cotton States Exhibition in Atlanta in 1895, he told his segregated audience, "No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in

¹⁵⁶ Hampton Normal and Agriculture Institute was founded in Virginia in 1868 and was directed for decades by a white missionary, Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Hampton trained a large number of African Americans and Native Americans to teach skills and embrace hard work, diligence, and Christian morality. Armstrong focused on learning trades like tailoring, carpentry, and sewing. But he gave little importance to critical or independent thinking. At the institute, learners were taught to conform to American middle-class values. Armstrong warned against the involvement of black peoples in politics and acquiesced to Jim Crow racial practices. (Source: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 384.)

¹⁵⁷ Robert Cook, op. cit., p. 254.

¹⁵⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 384.

¹⁵⁹ Robert Cook, op. cit., p. 254.

¹⁶⁰ Hugh Brogan. The Penguin History of the USA. Second Edition. London: Penguin Books, 2001. P. 372.

writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at top.”¹⁶¹ Washington believed that if blacks acquire skills, they would earn the respect of white Americans, without protest and without agitation. In fact, Washington was highly successful in gaining an important white support. Those white political leaders and philanthropists, who favored more vocational training rather than academic and liberal education of blacks, praised Washington’s message.¹⁶²

Not all blacks shared Washington’s focus on agricultural and industrial training at the expense of liberal arts including history, literature, philosophy, and languages. Critics of Washington viewed his program as being designed to train blacks for a purely subordinate role in society. Therefore, black leaders opposed to Washington began to emerge, and on top was William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. W.E.B. Du Bois was a Fisk-and Harvard-scholar who believed education went beyond simple training and the acquisition of skills. It involved the intellectual growth that would create wise men and therefore confront race problems.¹⁶³ For Du Bois, “The function of the Negro college, then, is clear, it must maintain standards of popular education, it must seek the social regeneration of the Negro, and it must help in the solution of problems of race contact and cooperation. And finally, beyond all this, it must develop men.”¹⁶⁴ Many of the private black colleges resisted the mere focus on mechanical and agricultural training. American Missionary Association schools also promoted the teaching of liberal arts. Henry L. Morehouse of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society insisted that the objective of education was to develop strong and independent minds. According to him, the gifted intellectuals, or the “talented tenth” as he called them in 1896, could lead black people forward i.e. to improvement and progress. Similarly, Du Bois stressed the urgent need for the best-educated 10 percent of the black population to foster the advance and progress of the black race.¹⁶⁵

In fact, Washington did not completely deny the importance of teaching liberal arts, but he absolutely believed that agricultural and industrial training was the basic foundation for progress. He therefore declared:

On such a foundation as this will grow habits of thrift, a love for work, economy, ownership of property, bank accounts. Out of it in the future will

¹⁶¹ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 385.

¹⁶² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 385.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 386.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 386.

¹⁶⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 386.

grow practical education, professional education, and positions of public responsibility. Out of it will grow moral and religious strength. Out of it will grow wealth from which alone can come leisure and the opportunity for the enjoyment of literature and the fine arts.¹⁶⁶

But Washington was wrong to believe that an education focused on economic progress would enable black people earn the respect of most white Americans. In fact, most white people preferred ignorant and unsuccessful blacks to educated and successful ones, as Du Bois clarified:

If my own city of Atlanta had offered it to-day the choice between 500 Negro college graduates—forceful, busy, ambitious men of property and self-respect—and 500 black cringing vagrants and criminals, the popular vote in favor of the criminals would be simply overwhelming. Why? Because they want Negro crime? No, not that they fear Negro crime less, but that they fear Negro ambition and success more. They can deal with crime by chain gang and lynch law, or at least they think they can, but the South can conceive neither machinery nor place for the educated, self-reliant, self-assertive black men.¹⁶⁷

To combat white racism and improve the economic situation of black people, educators like Booker T. Washington recommended the agricultural and industrial training for African Americans. However, critics like B.E.B. Du Bois emphasized the need to cultivate both the minds as well as the hands of black people in order to develop leaders capable of leading the black race to progress.¹⁶⁸ What, in fact, began as a disagreement among black leaders over the value of practical education became a passionate debate especially between Washington and Du Bois over the most effective strategy, accommodation or confrontation, for overcoming Jim Crow laws and the prevailing white supremacy.¹⁶⁹

At the dawn of the twentieth century, black and white people had completely different views on the future of the black race in America. Most white Americans believed black people were an inferior race capable of a few tasks beyond manual labor and normally entitled to only the most basic civil and political rights.¹⁷⁰ Black Americans resisted those assertions

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

¹⁶⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

¹⁷⁰ Social Darwinism led many Protestant white Americans to believe that other Americans could be ranked

and refused to accept the inferior status they had been attributed. Their leaders, although strident in their attempts to lead their race to progress, they, nevertheless, disagreed on how to secure the constitutional rights and material comfort that so many whites took for granted while almost all blacks were deprived of. Some, like Booker T. Washington and his followers, warned against protests and agitation as a means for the pursuit of civil rights and political power and focused on agricultural and mechanical training which would generate economic prosperity among black people.¹⁷¹ In fact, Washington addressed both white and black people. On one hand, he urged white Southerners to hire the masses of black laborers instead of the new immigrants which were according to him people with strange languages and habits. On the other hand, he urged Southern blacks to “cast down your bucket where you are”, that is to stay in the South, to work in order to improve their economic conditions, and to cease agitating for political and social rights.¹⁷²

It was Washington’s commitment to agricultural and industrial training which formed the basis for his approach to the problem of the race in the United States. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Washington was strongly convinced that blacks who had acquired and mastered skills at institutions for agricultural and mechanical training like Hampton and Tuskegee would be recognized as active contributors to the economy of the South. According to him, it was economic acceptance which would lead to social and political acceptance. At the opening ceremonies of the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta in 1895, the Tuskegee leader outlined his philosophy eloquently.¹⁷³ He told his segregated audience: “When it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man’s chance in the commercial world.”¹⁷⁴ He even added that black Americans should not expect too much and instead should accept menial jobs as a first step in their struggle for improvement. On the other hand, he told his white audience that the lives of black and white people in the South were historically interrelated and that black people were more loyal than those newly coming immigrants from outside the United States. Washington paradoxically reassured white people that cooperation between the two races for the sake of prosperity did not jeopardize segregation: “In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one

from superior to inferior on the basis of their race, nationality, and ethnicity. Blacks were invariably ranked at the bottom of this hierarchy. Black people were capable, so the reasoning went, of only a subordinate role in a complex and advanced society as it rushed into the twentieth century. (Source: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 383.)

¹⁷¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

¹⁷² Howard Zinn, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

¹⁷³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.”¹⁷⁵ Finally, Washington implied that black Americans need not protest because they were denied rights white Americans possessed. On September 18th, 1895, at the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exhibition, advised his fellow black men:

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extreme folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges.¹⁷⁶

Perhaps Washington believed this was a necessary tactic to ensure survival at a time when lynchings and burnings of black people were widespread throughout the South.¹⁷⁷ Washington was confident that as black people made economic progress, white people would acknowledge and concede them their rights. White Americans conceived Washington’s speech as moderate, reasonable, and praiseworthy. But not everyone was complementary about Washington’s speech.¹⁷⁸ The black editor of the Washington Bee, Calvin Chase, commented: “He [that is Washington] said something that was death to the Afro-American and elevating to white people.”¹⁷⁹ Bishop Henry M. Turner added that Washington “will have to live a long time to undo the harm he has done our race.”¹⁸⁰ Other black leaders also thought Booker T. Washington was wrong to advocate caution and moderation. John Hope, a young African American educator, a race leader, and a political activist from Georgia, who heard Washington’s Cotton Exposition speech, told his students at black college in Nashville, Tennessee:

If we are not striving for equality, in heaven’s name for what are we living? I regard it as cowardly and dishonest for any of our colored men to tell white people or colored people that we are not struggling for equality . . . Yes, my friends, I want equality. Nothing less. . . . Now catch your breath, for I am

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 414.

¹⁷⁷ Howard Zinn, op. cit., p. 208.

¹⁷⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 415-416.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 416

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 416.

going to use an adjective: I am going to say we demand social equality. . . . I am no wild beast, nor am I an unclean thing.¹⁸¹

In fact, Washington was a complex man. He had a peculiar ability to obtain a positive response from other people. He became very powerful, “the wizard of Tuskegee” as his assistant, Emmett J. Scott, called him. After his Atlanta speech, Washington’s influence escalated. He received wide and mostly positive coverage in many black newspapers. It is true that some of his popularity originated from admiration for his leadership, but he also paid for advertisements for Tuskegee, subsidized struggling black journalists, and even flattered black editors. Besides, Washington was also effective in dealing with prominent white philanthropists and businessmen. For example, William H. Baldwin, vice president of the Southern Railroad, was so impressed by Washington’s management of the Tuskegee Institute, that he accepted to serve as the chairman of Tuskegee’s board. Washington also gained support from the nation’s industrial elite including steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie and Julius Rosenwald, the head of Sears, Roebuck and Company. They trusted Washington’s policy and consulted him before contributing to black colleges or universities. On his part, Washington assured them of the wisdom of training black people in agricultural and industrial training which would help them reach self-sufficiency and become productive members of the Southern society.¹⁸²

Washington did not publically or directly challenge white supremacy. He was even willing to accept literacy and property qualifications for voting if they were enforced regardless of race. Washington founded the National Negro Business League (N.N.B.L.) in 1900 and served as its president until his death in 1915. The league brought together traders, retailers, bankers, and owners of small businesses. It also promoted business in the black community and brought together businessmen in order to exchange information and experiences.¹⁸³

Even before Washington became prominent, there were black leaders who favored a direct challenge to segregation and racial oppression. As Washington became more influential, opposition to his conciliatory stance on racial issues intensified. The Harvard-educated editor of the Boston Guardian, William Monroe Trotter attacked Washington as “the

¹⁸¹ Howard Zinn, op. cit., p. 210.

¹⁸² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 416.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 417.

Great Traitor,” “the Benedict Arnold of the Negro Race,” and “Pope Washington.”¹⁸⁴ At a meeting of the National Negro Business League in Boston in 1903, Trotter interrupted a speech by Washington, decidedly asking, “Are the rope and the torch all the race is to get under your leadership?”¹⁸⁵ Although Washington ignored him, the editor was arrested by the police for disorderly conduct, and spent one month in jail for what newspapers called the “Boston Riot”.¹⁸⁶

It was W.E.B. Du Bois who would eventually eclipse the influence and authority of the wizard of Tuskegee. In fact, Du Bois became the most influential black leader in America during the first half of the twentieth century. While slavery, poverty, and the industrial training program fostered at Hampton Institute had contributed to shaping the life and personality of Washington, Du Bois was born in the largely white town of Great Barrington, in Massachusetts, where he was raised. In this small community, he encountered little open racism. In fact, Du Bois developed a lifelong passion for knowledge. He graduated from Great Barrington High School, and then attended Fisk University in Nashville where he graduated at the age of 20. He was the first black man to get a Ph.D. in history at Harvard in 1895, and he even pursued additional graduate study in Germany. Du Bois was, perhaps, the greatest black scholar-activist in American history. He was an intellectual, at ease with words as well as ideas. He wrote two biographies, five novels, and sixteen nonfiction books. He was a bold activist strongly determined to confront disfranchisement, lynching, and Jim Crow. While Washington solicited the goodwill of white leaders and was comfortable with a gradual approach to eradicating white supremacy, Du Bois was impatient with white people who denied black rights, and similarly had little tolerance for black people who were reluctant to demand their full civil and political rights. Du Bois was aware of the fact that he and Washington came from different backgrounds:

I was born free. Washington was born a slave. He felt the lash of an overseer across his back. I was born in Massachusetts, he on a slave plantation in the South. My great-grandfather fought with the Colonial Army in New England in the American Revolution. I had a happy childhood and acceptance in the community. Washington’s childhood was hard. I had many more advantages:

¹⁸⁴ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 417.

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 417.

¹⁸⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 417.

Fisk University, Harvard, graduate years in Europe. Washington had little formal schooling.¹⁸⁷

Yet, Du Bois was not always critical of Washington. When the latter delivered his famous speech at the Cotton States Exhibition in 1885, Du Bois who was then a young Ph.D. teaching at Ohio's Wilberforce University, wrote to praise him: "Let me heartily congratulate you upon your phenomenal success at Atlanta—it was a word fitly spoken"¹⁸⁸ But in 1903, Du Bois, by then an Atlanta University Professor, published the famous *The Souls of Black Folk*. One of the major literary works of the twentieth century and a cornerstone in African American literary history, it contained the first formal attack on Washington, his leadership, and his philosophy.¹⁸⁹ So, in 1903, Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* commented on and criticized Washington's philosophy: "Mr. Washington distinctly 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 conciliation of the South."¹⁹⁰

In his famous and provocative essay , "Of Booker T. Washington and Others," Du Bois admitted it was painful to challenge a man so highly praised and admired like Washington, "One hesitates therefore, to criticise a life which beginning with so little, has done so much. And yet the time is come when one may speak in all sincerity and utter courtesy of the mistakes and shortcomings of Mr. Washington's career, as well as the triumphs."¹⁹¹ Then, Du Bois proceeded to attack Washington for failing to support and defend the civil and political rights of blacks as well as to stand up for higher education for these people. Du Bois found even more provoking Washington's readiness and willingness to compromise with the White South and his obvious agreement with white Southerners that black and white people were not equals: "Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission . . . and Mr. Washington's programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races."¹⁹² In concluding, Du Bois pointed out that he agreed with Washington on certain issues, but he so disagreed with him on other more significant issues that it was absolutely necessary to oppose Washington's position:

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

¹⁸⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 414.

¹⁹¹ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

¹⁹² Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up hands and strive with him. . . . But so far as Mr. Washington apologizes for injustice, North or South, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes higher training and ambition of our brighter minds,—so far as he, the South, or the North, does this,—we must unceasingly and firmly oppose them.¹⁹³

In fact Du Bois and his followers, as being opposed to Washington's philosophy of accommodation, advocated a direct confrontation of discrimination, disfranchisement, and Jim Crow. Du Bois announced in 1903 that the problem of race would be the century's critical issue: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men."¹⁹⁴ In their book From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, JR. wrote:

Du Bois did not approve of the manner in which Washington ignored or winked at the white South's reduction of the Negro's political and civil status. He believed that the extension of the palm branch to white Southerners had resulted in the disfranchisement of blacks and the legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority [...] Furthermore, he maintained that the counsel of silent submission to civic inferiority would surely sap the manhood of any race in the long run.¹⁹⁵

By this time, Washington was really worried that the opposition of Trotter, Du Bois and others would imperil the influx of funds from white philanthropists to black colleges and universities. In order to reconcile with black leaders who opposed him, Washington organized a meeting, which was actually funded by white philanthropists, at Carnegie Hall in New York in 1904. But, contrary to his expectations, Du Bois and other opponents of Washington came to the meeting with a determination to adopt a more radical agenda. When Du Bois realized that Washington and his supporters monopolized the proceedings, Du Bois left in disgust.¹⁹⁶

Du Bois was then joined by a small number of black intellectuals who all set out to organize a radical effort to secure the rights of African Americans. He was convinced that the

¹⁹³ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 414.

¹⁹⁵ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 249.

¹⁹⁶ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

progress of the black race was the responsibility of the black elite, the people he called the Talented Tenth, or the upper ten percent of African Americans. For Du Bois, education which promotes independent thinking was, therefore, the key:

Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work—it must teach Life. The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among people. No others can do this work, and Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.¹⁹⁷

In 1905, Du Bois made another step in his anti-Washington crusade. He, with a select group, met in Niagara Falls in Canada. The twenty nine delegates of the meeting insisted that black Americans would no longer accept the loss of their voting rights. They also called for an end to segregation. But, most importantly, they stressed that white people did not know what was best for the black race: “We repudiate the monstrous doctrine that the oppressor should be the sole authority as to the rights of the oppressed.”¹⁹⁸ The Niagara Movement that resulted from this meeting remained active for years.¹⁹⁹

Du Bois and other leaders also organized the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) in 1909. In addition to Du Bois, Ida Wells Barnett and Mary Church Terrell were the major black leaders most involved in forming the N.A.A.C.P. The latter was a militant organization devoted to racial justice and was determined that black American citizens should fully enjoy the civil and political rights the U.S. Constitution guaranteed to all citizens. The N.A.A.C.P. journal, the Crisis, became an effective means of propaganda for black rights. The N.A.A.C.P. won its first major legal case in 1915 when the Supreme Court, in *Guinn v. United States*, outlawed the grandfather clause, a constitutional devise used in the South to disfranchise blacks. But, literacy tests and poll taxes continued to disfranchise an important number of black citizens.²⁰⁰

Washington, who worked to undermine the power and authority of the Niagara Movement and the N.A.A.C.P., started losing support for his conservative strategy as the N.A.A.C.P. openly confronted racial discrimination. In 1915, Washington died. By 1920 the

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

¹⁹⁸ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 419.

¹⁹⁹ In 1908, the Niagara Movement virtually collapsed.

²⁰⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 420-421.

N.A.A.C.P., as it fought in the courts and legislatures, took the lead in the struggle for black civil rights.²⁰¹

As black men served in the First World War and as thousands of black people migrated from the South to the North of the United States, many white Americans felt the threat that African Americans were no longer content with their subordinate and isolated status in the American society as Washington had suggested they were. Consequently, as they attempted to prevent black people from assuming a more equitable role in the American society, some white people responded with violence in race riots. By 1920, and in the face of mounting white oppression, African Americans demonstrated that they would not accept economic subjugation and the denial of their rights.²⁰² The coming of the Second World War also played a role in providing African Americans with a context to protest racial discrimination. In fact, the years between, and including, the two World Wars were a dynamic period in African American history and witnessed a rising quest for racial equality by Black Americans. Therefore, the third chapter of this work will be devoted to an examination of the situation of African Americans in the era of the two World Wars.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 443.

²⁰² Ibid.

Chapter Three:
African Americans in the Era of the Two World Wars

The years preceding World War I witnessed the beginning of a slow but steady migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North of the United States. This was the beginning of phenomenon called the Great Migration. Throughout American History, wartime necessity has often opened new social and political horizons for marginalized groups, including African Americans. For instance, the most important effect of the First World War on African Americans was the mass movement of these people from the South to the North in search for higher wages and better social and political opportunities. This Great Migration movement resulted in a rapid growth of the black population of the Northern cities. This massive demographic shift dramatically changed African American history economically, socially, culturally, and politically. This migration movement changed totally the population distribution of black people in the United States. During the Great Migration, African Americans found themselves confronted to new social, economic, and political challenges. In addition, the First World War era marked a turning point in the social, economic and political aspects of African American history.

During the 1920s, the Garvey Movement emerged. It was influenced by the philosophy of Booker T. Washington and remains the largest organized sociopolitical race movement in African–American and even world history. African Americans, who had suffered from racial segregation before the Great Depression Era, still had to deal with it during the Depression which had a terrible impact on them. The New Deal Program came to ease the impact of the economic crisis on American citizens but African Americans did not benefit equally from its programs like did the whites. Then, the outbreak of the Second World War created a crisis which provided African Americans with a context to protest racial discrimination and set the seed of a black revolution.

I- The Great Black Migration to the North (1910s-1920s)

The twentieth century witnessed one of the most remarkable demographic events that took place in the United States. It was the mass movement of African American people out of the Southern states and into the Northern cities. This movement, which characterized the 1910s and the 1920s of the United States history, is called the “Great Migration”¹. It was

¹ The Great Migration refers to the mass movement of African Americans to the North of the United States between 1910 and 1920. This, in fact, is considered as the first wave of African American migration. Still, there was a second wave of African American migration in the years during and after the Second World War (1940-1970); but this is called “The Second Great Migration”. The latter was much larger and dissimilar in character than the initial Great Migration.

labeled by many historians “the black exodus” because of the huge number of black people who moved to the North during the Great Migration.

Ever since 1865, migration of African Americans to the North of the United States has always remained small, with nearly eight million blacks, about 90 percent of the total black population of the United States, still living in the rural South in 1900.² But starting from 1910, black people started moving in large numbers from the rural South to the urban North. This huge migration movement of blacks from the South to the Northern cities became significant after 1915 and took place in key Northern cities including Michigan, New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Pennsylvania³. Indeed, by the second decade of the twentieth century, this migration movement became a flood. Black people moved North for many reasons, but it is worth noting that these people were both pushed from the South and pulled toward the North. Although most historians agree on the fact that there was a desire among southern African Americans to live a better life in a new region, the most significant questions that should be asked are: 1-What forced and pushed African Americans to leave the South? 2- What induced and motivated African Americans to move to the North? In fact, it is necessary to consider those factors that motivated, forced, or pushed black people to leave the South as “push factors”, while those factors that attracted them to the North as their destination as “pull factors”.

The push resulted mainly from crop damage –between 1910 and 1920– caused by floods and by insects that resulted in disasters and worsened an already severe economic depression in Southern agriculture. In addition to flooding, it was mainly the boll weevil invasion of the Southern plantations which damaged cotton crops throughout the South. While floods devastated Alabama and Mississippi⁴, the boll weevil destroyed the whole cotton crops throughout the South.⁵ The boll weevil is an insect that feeds on cotton bolls and even cotton unopened flowers. In fact, it was native to central Mexico, but started migrating to the United States in the late nineteenth century; and by the late 1920s, it had devastated the whole cotton-growing plantations throughout the South. This infestation resulted in most of the black workers losing their jobs in the southern agriculture that was primarily based on cotton

² Benjamin J. Patterson. *Ethnic Groups USA*. United States of America: Xlibris Corporation, 2008. P. 215.

³ Dianna Klebanow, et al. *Urban Legacy: The Story of American's Cities*. New York: Mentor, 1977. PP. 298-313. Quoted in: Doug Gutknecht. “The Importance of Symbolic and Cultural Politics in the Marcus Garvey Movement.” *Mid-American Review of Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring 1982), p. 96. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23252748>>. Accessed: February 14, 2018.

⁴ This was in 1915.

⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 437.

production, and most of all led to the decline of the Cotton Kingdom. This forced blacks to leave the South for the North where new jobs opened up in new industries.

In addition, the prevailing Jim Crow and disfranchisement policies in the South pushed black people to migrate to the North where they thought they would escape discrimination and segregation. After the Civil War and the Reconstruction period, White supremacy was revived across the Southern states and the segregationist policies called “Jim Crow” soon became the law of the region.⁶ Many researchers assume that there was a desire among most, if not all, African Americans living in the South, during that period of time, for more political and social equality in the North.

Moreover, African Americans were exhausted because of the poor economic conditions they were restricted to in the South. Due to the Black Codes and to the sharecropping system which offered tiny economic opportunities for the Southern African Americans, the latter were forced to make their living working the land. Around 1916, for instance, the wage of a factory worker in the North was typically three times more than that of a black working on the land in the South⁷. Therefore, the North for them offered a place where they could improve their economic conditions and even seek and enjoy economic and social equality with their white counterparts.

The pull, however, resulted mostly from the industrialization of the North as well as the outbreak of the First World War. In fact, the emergence of World War One significantly changed the employment situation in the Northern cities. The war resulted in a labor shortage in Northern industry and manufacturing. By interrupting European immigration to the United States, the war resulted in an exclusion of a main source of cheap labor in the North—European immigrant labor. “The war itself drastically reduced the influx of European immigrants, dropping the totals from a 1911 high of 1.3 million to a 1918 low of 110 thousand”⁸. Moreover, factories in the North needed more workers since the United States was making profit from producing and supplying war material and other goods for the

⁶ “Great Migration.” History.com. <<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/great-migration>>. Accessed: February 15, 2016.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Allan H. Spear. Black Chicago, The Making of a Negro Ghetto. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1967. P. 131. Quoted in: Doug Gutknecht. “The Importance of Symbolic and Cultural Politics in the Marcus Garvey Movement.” Mid-American Review of Sociology, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring 1982), p. 96. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23252748>>. Accessed: February 14, 2018.

belligerent countries. Consequently, thousands of job opportunities became available in Northern industry which induced black workers to leave their homes in the South and seek their fortunes in the North. In addition, blacks were also seeking better educational opportunities for their children. Therefore, with the spread of information about opportunities in the North, there was more desire among Southern African Americans to head North looking for higher wages and better social conditions. In the light of all these conditions and circumstances, and especially the cessation of European immigration to the United States due to the war, blacks represented the cheapest alternative for labor force that was urged by the booming war-time Northern factories and industries which were trying to fulfill the growing demands caused by the war.

As industry was flourishing in the North, and thousands of jobs became available in meatpacking plants, railroads, steel mills, and even the automobile industry, Northern businessmen, who needed a cheap source of labor as a substitute for European immigrants, sent labor agents to attract and recruit black workers from the South. This was, in fact, the first way through which Southern blacks knew about the available and abundant economic opportunities in the North. Labor agents played the role of a link between employers representing Northern factories and companies and black workers in the South. The second way through which Southern black migrants were made aware of economic opportunities in the North was, however, through the black press. Black newspapers such as the Pittsburgh Courier and especially the widely read Chicago Defender encouraged blacks living in the South to move North⁹.

Personal letters and Black newspapers, like the Chicago Defender, spotlighted Southern brutality and violence, while praising city employment opportunities and political freedom.¹⁰ As a matter of fact, the Chicago Defender, this influential black newspaper, became one of the leading promoters of the Great Migration.¹¹ Through publishing stories of Southern black migrants who had found success in the North as well as advertising the advantages of the better wages and living conditions in the Northern cities, black newspapers aided, in fact, in what came to be known as the “migration fever”¹².

⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 437.

¹⁰ Allan H. Spear. Black Chicago, The Making of a Negro Ghetto. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1967. P. 134. Quoted in: Doug Gutknecht, op. cit., p. 96.

¹¹ Sabina G. Arora. The Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance. New York: Britannica Educational Publishing in association with The Rosen Educational Services, 2016. P. 11.

¹² "The Great Migration." Smithsonian American Art Museum. <americanexperience.si.edu/wp-

As blacks living in the South were made aware of the new opportunities that opened up in the Northern cities, the resulting increase in black migration to the North became really remarkable. In fact, all of the above mentioned factors –both push and pull– generally operated simultaneously leading to what many historians called the black exodus. Whether their motivation was economic, political, or social, huge numbers of African Americans streamed northward. Between 1915 and 1920, about a half-million black people moved to Northern cities, and between 750.000 and 1.000.000 left the South in the 1920s.¹³ This movement changed totally the rates of the black population growth of Northern cities. With more and more African Americans leaving the South, this did not only change the population distribution of black people in the United States, but also totally changed the percentages of the black population of major Northern cities as table 3 demonstrates:

Table 3: Black Population Growth in Selected Northern Cities, 1910-1920

	1910		1920		Percentage Increase
	Number	Percentage*	Number	Percentage*	
New York	91.709	1.9%	152.467	2.7%	66.3%
Chicago	44.103	2.0	109.458	4.1	148.2
Philadelphia	84.495	5.5	134.229	7.4	58.9
Detroit	5.741	1.2	40.838	4.1	611.3
St. Louis	43.960	6.4	69.854	9.0	58.9
Cleveland	8.448	1.5	34.451	4.3	307.8
Pittsburg	25.623	4.8	37.725	6.4	47.2
Cincinnati	19.739	5.4	30.079	7.5	53.2
Indianapolis	21.816	9.3	34.678	11.0	59.0
Newark	9.475	2.7	16.977	4.1	79.2
Kansas City	23.566	9.5	30.719	9.5	30.4
Columbus	12.739	7.0	22.181	9.4	74.1
Gary	383	2.3	5.299	9.6	1.283.6
Youngstown	1.936	2.4	6.662	5.0	244.1
Buffalo	1.773	4	4.511	9	154.4
Toledo	1.877	1.1	5.691	2.3	203.2
Akron	657	1.0	5.580	2.7	749.3

*“Percentage” refers to percentage of city’s population; “Percentage Increase” refers to growth of the black population. U.S. Department of Commerce.

Source: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 438.

content/uploads/2014/07/The-Great-Migration.pdf>. Accessed: February 25, 2016.

¹³ "World War I And The Great Migration." *History, Art & Archives*. <history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Essays/Temporary-Farewell/World-War-I-And-Great-Migration/>. Accessed: February 25, 2016.

In total, between 1910 and 1920, about 500,000 blacks left the South¹⁴. These people who fled from the South seeking better social and economic opportunities soon realized that they did not, in reality, escape segregation and discrimination. Even during their trip to the North, which was a long, grueling experience, black migrants were confronted with segregated waiting rooms at the bus stops, and were restricted to overcrowded and segregated train cars¹⁵. In the North, many black migrants who found jobs in factories, slaughterhouses, and foundries, were working under arduous conditions which were sometimes even dangerous. Female black migrants had also difficulty finding a job, promoting competition for domestic labor opportunities.¹⁶ All in all, most blacks were limited to low paid, humble jobs in the North. Then, although it was mentioned before that the average wage a factory worker could get in the North was much better than what a black could get working the land in the South, it is worth mentioning that the wage of a black factory worker in the North was much less than the wage another European immigrant or a white American would accept to get in the North. Again, this means that although the wages of black workers were much less than those of their white counterparts, blacks accepted these low wages just because they were higher than the wages they got in the South. This means that, in addition to regional wage differences between North and South, there were also race-based wage differences –based on the color of the skin– within the same region; and this is a kind of racism. Besides, if we try to draw parallels between the situation of blacks during the time of indentured servitude – colonial era– and their situation during the Great Migration movement, we can say that almost the same kind of discrimination was being practiced on black workers compared to their white counterparts.

History reveals that black men, during the Great Migration, were rarely offered jobs beyond menial labor. Generally, they held the least prestigious and lowest status jobs. In addition, except for limited opportunities in manufacturing during the war, black women were also restricted to domestic and janitorial jobs. Recalling the experience of her family, Marry Ellen Washington said: “In the 1920s my mother and five aunts migrated to Cleveland, Ohio, from Indianapolis and, in spite of their many talents, they found every door except the kitchen door closed to them.”¹⁷ Employed as domestics, these black women lived with the white families and worked for long hours.

¹⁴ Sabina G. Arora, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁵ "The Great Migration." Smithsonian American Art Museum, op. cit.

¹⁶ "Great Migration." History.com, op. cit.

¹⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 443.

In addition to competition for jobs, there was also competition for housing in increasingly crowded cities. Although segregation was not legalized throughout the North as it was in the South, racial prejudice was nonetheless widespread. Therefore, most black migrants who departed the South in order to escape the most blatant forms of Jim Crow and the injustices practiced by the judicial system of the Southern states found their destination – the North – was neither heaven nor the Promised Land. Blacks were centered in or confined to all-black neighborhoods that would later be called ghettos, including Cleveland’s East Side, Chicago’s South Side, Paradise Valley in Detroit, Harlem in New York City, and the Hill District of Pittsburgh. Moreover, white property owners resisted renting or selling houses to black people outside these all-black neighborhoods.¹⁸ Even after the Supreme Court declared in 1917 that racially based housing ordinances unconstitutional, certain covenants were enacted by some residential neighborhoods requiring property owners, of course white, to agree not to sell houses to black people. Besides, rents were rising even within segregated areas. These rising rents, along with the revival of the K.K.K. activities after 1915, worsened black-white relations not just in the North but across the whole country, and resulted in a growing hostility between the two races. In fact, the summer of 1919 began a period of interracial strife in the United States during the Great Migration era including a wave of race riots. The most serious of these was the Chicago Race Riot of 1919, which left about 38 people dead¹⁹, 537 injured²⁰, and nearly 1,000 black families homeless.²¹

The impact of the Great Migration on race relations in the North was then considerable. The huge waves of black migrants from the South produced an extraordinary growth in the black population of the North. As a consequence, many Northern whites grew increasingly uncomfortable with the new situation which was characterized by a shift in the racial balance already existing in the Northern cities. It was, in fact, this remarkable increase in the black population in the North which led to growing tensions between whites and blacks in the region. This growing number of blacks, which in certain cities even outnumbered the whites, was threatening to the white population and led to the worsening of race relations. The result was, then, clear: rising job and residential segregation. As racial tensions grew in the North, segregation became more and more pronounced. Therefore, many black migrants who had dreamed of higher wages and better social conditions realized that in the North they faced

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 438-440.

¹⁹ 23 black and 15 white.

²⁰ Two-thirds of the injured were black and one-third white.

²¹ Great Migration.” History.com, op. cit.

other patterns of discrimination other than those they had faced in the South. In the North, they were mainly living in overcrowded and run-down buildings, and were limited to low paid, humble jobs and the least remunerative positions compared to the whites. Therefore, migrating North was not a panacea for African Americans; what the Great Migration did, was, in fact, to transform Southern peasants into an urban proletariat²².

Although African Americans were suffering from different forms of discrimination and segregation in the North, but the economic and educational opportunities they enjoyed in the Northern cities were clearly greater than those in the rural South. In addition, in the North, black people were helped by certain organizations, the most famous being the National Urban League (N.U.L.).²³ In fact, the Great Migration marked the beginning of a new era of increased political activism among African Americans, who after being disenfranchised in the South found a new place for themselves in the Northern cities.²⁴ The National Urban League, which was founded in 1910, was initially concerned with aiding Southern black migrants who had moved into the Northern cities and providing new jobs for black people in industry.²⁵ Soon known simply as the Urban League, its goal was to mitigate conditions black people faced when they moved into large cities during the first decades of the twentieth century. The Urban League worked to improve living conditions including housing, medical care, and recreational facilities among black residents who lived in segregated neighborhoods in cities including New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Nashville, and Norfolk.²⁶

II- The Garvey Movement

When the First World War erupted, some African Americans opposed U.S. involvement in the war. African American socialists like A. Phillip Randolph and Chandler Owen argued that “the fight for democracy at home should precede the fight for it abroad.”²⁷ Yet, by the time the United States entered the war in April 1917, most African Americans supported the war effort. In fact, black Americans wanted to demonstrate their loyalty and

²² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op cit., p. 443.

²³ Sabina G. Arora, op. cit., p. 113.

²⁴ "Great Migration." [History.com](https://www.history.com), op. cit.

²⁵ Herman Mason, Jr. *Politics, Civil Rights, and Law in Black Atlanta, 1870-1970*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2000. P. 111.

²⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 423.

²⁷ Benjamin J. Patterson, op. cit., p. 215.

devotion to their country through military service. “If this is our country,” declared Du Bois, “then this is our war. We must fight it with every ounce of blood and treasure.”²⁸

However, following World War I, African Americans became discontented and disillusioned. The jobs they got during the war were all lost in the postwar recession. The K.K.K., which had been revived during the war, now launched a new wave of violence and terror against African Americans. Moreover, the mounting competition for jobs and housing often ended in bloody race riots such as those which characterized the Red Summer of 1919.²⁹ In the face of these troubles, a new African American was born during the 1920s –the New Negro– the proud, creative product of the American city. This development of race pride among African Americans in the United States was mainly stimulated by the black nationalist ideas of Marcus Garvey. In fact, it would be most difficult to understand the Garvey Movement or Garveyism in any of its principles and activities without having at least some knowledge about Marcus Garvey the man. Garvey, whose full name is Marcus Mosiah Aurelius Garvey, Jr., was born on August 17, 1887, in St. Ann’s Bay, on the island of Jamaica, British West Indies, of lower middle-class parents. His education was standard to his social class. He was exposed to tutors; he attended a grammar school and then a high school; and subsequently spent some time in a Jamaican college. Garvey was also directed into the printing trade at a certain time during his teens, and at the age of 20 he became a master printer.³⁰

About two years after leading an abortive printers’ strike in Kingston, Jamaica, Garvey traveled to Costa Rica in 1909, to survey and experience the living conditions of black people in the area. After visiting many Central and South American countries, Garvey was dispirited and discontented because of the exploitation of black people which he surveyed. After a brief return to Jamaica in 1912, Garvey traveled to London. In fact, it was in London that Garvey first knew about the writings of the founder of the Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington, who would have a deep influence on him. As a matter of fact, Garvey’s ideology and

²⁸ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op . cit., p. 430.

²⁹ Benjamin J. Patterson, op. cit., p. 215.

³⁰ Marcus Aurelius Garvey never published an autobiography nor has anyone else ever published a biography of him. For more information about his early life, the most authentic material could to be gathered from a publication by his second wife Amy J. Garvey entitled: Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey or Africa for the Africans. Vol.2, New York: Universal Publishing House, 1925. Another good but supplementary source of information on this period of Garvey’s life has been: Claude McKay’s Harlem: Negro Metropolis. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, inc., 1940. Quoted in: Robert Hughes Brisbane, Jr. “Some New Light on the Garvey Movement”. The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Jan., 1951), p. 56. The University of Chicago Press on Behalf of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2715777>>. Accessed: January 14, 2017.

economic philosophy based on the principle of black-self help, that will be discussed later in this chapter, can be ascribed to Booker T. Washington's teachings.³¹ In his work, Confrontation: Black and White, Lerone Bennett Jr. refers to the point stating that Garvey "saw himself as a conservator of Washington's values."³²

Marcus Garvey returned to Jamaica and founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) in Kingston in the summer of 1914 with the slogan "One God! One Aim! One Destiny!" If we can notice, the association's motto was short, simple, but stirring. The purpose of this new body was to unite all the black people of the world into one solid body and to establish a country and absolute government of their own.³³ The keystone of its programme was the establishment of industrial institutes for Jamaican blacks, following the model of those industrial educational institutions inspired by Booker T. Washington.³⁴ In fact, Garvey was supported by a Roman Catholic Bishop, the Mayor of Kingston, and the Governor of the Island. Yet, the black masses of the island were indifferent to his philosophy. Frustrated, Garvey decided to seek support among American blacks.³⁵

When he came to the United States in 1917, at a time when thousands of African Americans were migrating to cities in the North, Garvey established a branch of the association in the Harlem district of New York City.³⁶ According to Doug Gutknecht, Harlem was the "appropriate urban stage for Garvey to orchestrate his ideological system and mobilize the masses."³⁷ By 1919, the association –with a membership of several hundred thousand– had become the largest mass movement of African Americans in the nation's history.³⁸ All followers were called "Fellow-men of the Negro Race".³⁹ Although Garvey and

³¹ Milfred C. Fierce. "Economic Aspects of the Marcus Garvey Movement." The Black Scholar, Vol. 3, No. 7/8, The Black Leader (March-April 1972), p. 52. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41206341>>. Accessed: September 11, 2017.

³² Edmund David Cronon, Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955, p. 7. Quoted in: Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 52.

³³ Robert Hughes Brisbane, Jr. "Some New Light on the Garvey Movement". The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Jan., 1951), p. 57. The University of Chicago Press on Behalf of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2715777>>. Accessed: January 14, 2017.

³⁴ Edmund David Cronon, Black Moses. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968, p. 18. Quoted in: Martin O. Ijere. "W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey as Pan-Africanists : A study in Contrast." Présence Africaine. 1974/1 (N° 89), p. 199. <<http://www.cairn.info/revue-presence-africaine-1974-1-page-188.htm>>. Accessed: February 26, 2017.

³⁵ Martin O. Ijere. "W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey as Pan-Africanists: A study in Contrast." Présence Africaine. 1974/1 (N° 89), p. 199. <<http://www.cairn.info/revue-presence-africaine-1974-1-page-188.htm>>. Accessed: February 26, 2017.

³⁶ In some sources, it is stated that Marcus Garvey came to the United States in 1917; but in other sources, it is stated that it was in 1916.

³⁷ Doug Gutknecht, op. cit., p. 98.

³⁸ Benjamin J. Patterson, op. cit., p. 216.

the U.N.I.A. were frequently associated with the urban North, the U.N.I.A. also spread quickly through the rural South in the 1920s. The Garvey Movement was characterized by its appeal for the rediscovery of the black African heritage. Garvey urged African Americans to take pride in themselves as they restored their race to its previous greatness: “We must canonize our saints, create our own martyrs, and elevate to positions of fame and honor black men and women who have made their distinct contributions to our racial history.”⁴⁰ In December 1920, a New York periodical wrote of him: “The most striking new figure among American Negroes is Marcus Garvey. His significance lies in the fact that he embodies and directs a new spirit among Negroes. Whatever may happen to his grandiose schemes of finance and politics, he is the best point at which to study what is going inside the heads of ten million colored people in the United States.”⁴¹

To better understand the goals and activities of what is popularly known as the Garvey movement, it is worth discussing the conditions that paved the way for the emergence of such a movement in the United States. In fact, the social, economic, and political conditions that spurred Garveyism in U.S.A. are well documented. Right after the First World War, African Americans faced a harsh reality filled with tough challenges. The country was facing a deep economic depression, and unemployment was taking root. And because opportunities for employment were skinny, white people often took their frustrations out on blacks, who were competing with them for the scarce jobs that were available. Slum housing conditions were also unbearable. In addition, during the summer of 1919, race riots broke out in major cities and gave this period the name of the “Red Summer of 1919”. For whites, violence was, in fact, a tool to enforce the “second-class status” of blacks. Moreover, lynching was widespread, and in cases of crime when blacks were targeted, the police often turned a blind eye. Those black leaders, who had previously defended the idea that blacks had to fight side by side with whites during the First World War against a common enemy abroad, found it difficult to provide an explanation for the continuity of second-class status of blacks at home after the war. Black Americans, both physically and psychologically frustrated, realized that they had paid a heavy cost for a false belief—a belief in the “sincerity of the American legal system”.⁴² As John Henrik Clarke put it: “The broken promises of the postwar period had

³⁹ Martin O. Ijere, op. cit., p. 198

⁴⁰ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 456.

⁴¹ Truman H. Talley, “Marcus Garvey—Negro Moses ?” *World’s Work*, XLI (December, 1920), pp. 153-156. Quoted in: Robert Hughes Brisbane, Jr, op. cit., p. 58.

⁴² Otis B. Grant. “Social Justice Versus Social Equality: The Capitalistic Jurisprudence of Marcus Garvey.” *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Mar., 2003), pp. 490-491. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180876>>. Accessed:

produced wide-spread cynicism in the black population which had lost some of its belief in itself as a people.”⁴³ Moreover, during this post-war period, the “American Social Contract”, which embraced the doctrine of “equal justice under the law”, was violated by those who intended to use the law to keep black people far from enjoying the privileges of freedom.⁴⁴ The appearance of the Garvey movement was, therefore, significant for it came at an appropriate timing. Clarke stated:

The Garvey movement began to take effective roots in America when millions of Blacks had began to feel that they would never know full citizenship with dignity in this country where their ancestors had been brought against their will, and where they had contributed to the wealth and development of the country in spite of conditions of previous servitude. Against this background of broken promises and fading hope, Marcus Garvey began to build a world-wide black movement. This, the first black mass protest crusade in the history of the United States began to pose serious problems for white America.⁴⁵

For Clarke, Garvey came to the United States and began to build his movement at a time of great disillusionment and disappointment among African Americans who had pursued what is called “the American Dream” until they had to recognize that this dream was not made for them. They had also believed in the “American Promise”, and again realized that this promise was not made to them. It was Marcus Garvey who provided them with a new vision; a vision of a new dream, a new promise, and a new land. He was able to restore hope where and when hope had been lost.⁴⁶ Because Garvey promoted race pride among the people of his race and the revival of their African culture, his movement allowed its followers to escape from the frustrating reality of the post-war period into “the dreamland of high status and romantic culture”. In fact, Garvey did his share in imbuing black people with a feeling of race pride rather than inferiority.⁴⁷ Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. wrote of Garvey: “He is the only man that made Negroes not feel ashamed of their color.”⁴⁸ In his book, Marching Blacks, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. wrote: “Marcus Garvey was one of the greatest mass leaders of all

April 14, 2017 .

⁴³ John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.” The Black Scholar, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December 1973-January 1974), p. 18. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41065642>>. Accessed: April 14, 2017.

⁴⁴ Otis B. Grant, op. cit., p. 491.

⁴⁵ John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁷ Birgit Aron. “The Garvey Movement: Shadow and Substance.” Phylon (1940-1956), Vol. 8, No. 4 (4th Qtr., 1947), pp. 341-342. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/271744>> Accessed: April 14, 2017.

⁴⁸ Quoted in: John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 18.

time...[H]e brought to the Negro people for the first time a sense of pride in being black.”⁴⁹ Critics evaluating the significance of Garveyism generally noted Garvey’s ability to appeal to the common men among blacks. In fact, he supported the black man’s ego-consciousness like no other leader.⁵⁰

Garvey found a solution to the problem of the lack of true self-esteem and race pride among black people. He insisted that the black peoples’ inferiority complex was because of their reliance on and acceptance of foreign standards of beauty, that in a frustrating emulation of the whites, the black race was fatuously overlooking its own beauty and gifts. Therefore, Garvey believed that there was to be no more mockery and caricaturing of the black people as being the thick-lipped and kinky-haired persons. These were, in fact, nature’s badges for the African people and they had to be proud of these gifts. The beauties of “Negroid” characteristics were therefore constantly stressed by Garvey.⁵¹ To remind blacks of their past, Garvey also reconsidered the importance of ancient African civilizations. For many African Americans, it was for the first time that they heard of the glories of Ethiopia and Nubia and learned about the black population of Ancient Egypt.⁵² In this context, Garvey said: “when the great white race of today had no civilization of its own, when white men lived in caves and were counted as savage, this race of ours boasted a wonderful civilization on the banks of the Nile.”⁵³ In fact, Garvey incessantly spoke and wrote of what he considered the glorious African past.⁵⁴

Like John Clarke, Roi Ottley also believed that the appearance of the Garvey Movement came at an appropriate timing. In this context, in his book entitled New World A-Coming, Roi Ottley pointed out:

Garvey leaped into the ocean of black unhappiness at a most timely moment for a savior. He had witnessed the Negro’s disillusionment mount with the progress of the World War. Negro soldiers had suffered all forms of Jim-Crow, humiliation, discrimination, slander, and even violence at the hands of a white civilian population. After the war, there was a resurgence of Ku Klux Klan

⁴⁹ Quoted in: John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 18.

⁵⁰ Martin O. Ijere, op. cit., p. 202.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Robert Hughes Brisbane, Jr, op. cit., p. 59.

⁵³ Quoted in: Bob Blaisdell, ed. Selected Writings and Speeches of Marcus Garvey. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2004. P. 83.

⁵⁴ Martin O. Ijere, op. cit., p. 202.

influence; another decade of racial hatred and open lawlessness had set in, and Negroes again were prominent among the victims. Meanwhile, administration leaders were quite pointed in trying to persuade Negroes that in spite of their full participation in the war effort they could expect no changes in their traditional status in America.⁵⁵

Marcus Garvey succeeded in establishing and leading a black mass movement among American blacks at a time when other leaders were trying to and doubting that it could, in fact, be done. Garvey claimed that other black leaders fail because they refuse to “work and create for [their] own race that which the race could be able to take credit for.” In criticizing and denouncing black leaders, Garvey averred that they “would not think of repeating for their race the work of the [P]ilgrim [F]athers or the colonists who laid foundations of America.”⁵⁶ His advocacy of the concept of Black Power and the return of Africa to the Africans and people of African descent was at the center of his power.⁵⁷ To many blacks, it seemed good enough to die for the American cause during the First World War but the problem was that they were not equal citizens with the whites in a country they had died defending. The problem of this persistent blacks’ loyalty riled Garvey more than any other issue. Garvey demanded that if any black people’s blood had to be shed, it had to be for their freedom.⁵⁸ He thought that if a government could not guarantee, or grant freedom and equality of opportunity for its people, it did not deserve any support, at least, from those people who were being denied the previously mentioned rights. For Garvey, the best solution to end racial prejudice was to separate the races.⁵⁹ According to Birgit Aron, Garveyism firmly rejected miscegenation between the two races. Its goals were centered on the redemption of Africa as the national home for the black race and the revival of the African culture and heritage. In this context, Birgit Aron stated, “If the white man wanted white supremacy, Garvey wanted black supremacy in the black man’s supposedly rightful sphere — Africa. If a white person or group expounded ideas of racial equality and tolerance, these persons to him were merely deceiving the Negro.”⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Quoted in: John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 18.

⁵⁶ Marcus Garvey. “Aims and Objects of a Movement for a Solution of the Negro Problem.” New York: Universal Negro Improvement Association. 1924, P. 11. Quoted in: Otis B. Grant, op. cit., p. 492.

⁵⁷ Quoted in: John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁵⁸ John L. Graves. “The Social Ideas of Marcus Garvey.” *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1962), p 70. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2294548>>. Accessed: April 17, 2017.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

⁶⁰ Birgit Aron, op. cit., pp. 341-342.

Garvey believed that black people had to stop their fruitless beating upon the stone walls of the Western white race prejudice and look homeward to their home and mother country—Africa.⁶¹ He said in part: “We are striking homeward toward Africa to make her the big black republic”.⁶² “Race first” was the motto of Garveyism. This meant that the whites were excluded from membership of the U.N.I.A.. According to Garvey, “race first” would demonstrate as a strong and independent nation that was to be built on nationality—being purely African.⁶³ Faithful to his nationalistic roots, Garvey argued that “all the people are struggling to blast a way through the industrial monopoly of races and nations, but the Negro as a whole has failed to grasp its true significance and seems to delight in filling only that place created for him by the White man.”⁶⁴ Garvey believed that whites would never allow blacks to successfully gain equality, and therefore it was inefficient for blacks to seek such equality.⁶⁵ In North America, said Garvey, the black man lived “on the fringe of the civilization of others” and that if he remained there, in the end he would be “completely obliterated”⁶⁶.

Garvey asked, “Where is the Black man’s government? Where is his King and Kingdom? Where is his President, his country, his ambassadors, his Army, his Navy, his men of affairs?”⁶⁷ Garvey taught his fellow black men to dream big again. His message “Up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will”⁶⁸ was a call to the black man to develop a positive image of himself, to have confidence in himself and be proud of being black. By adopting a “mixture of Catholic and Christian ritual, African tribal lore, and official pageantry and titles”, Garvey taught his fellow black men to “dream of an emerging great race”⁶⁹. Dr. Doug Gutknecht, in his article “The Importance of Symbolic and Cultural Politics in the Marcus Garvey Movement,” analyses the situation by referring to a book entitled Black Moses written by Edmund David Chronon in 1955. Drawing a good comparison, Gutknecht

⁶¹ Robert Hughes Brisbane, Jr, op. cit., p. 57.

⁶² Benjamin E. Mays. Born to Rebel: An Autobiography. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2003. P. 306.

⁶³ Otis B. Grant, op. cit., pp. 493.

⁶⁴ Marcus Garvey. “Aims and Objects of a Movement for a Solution of the Negro Problem.” New York: Universal Negro Improvement Association. 1924, P. 10. Quoted in: Otis B. Grant, op. cit., p. 495.

⁶⁵ Otis B. Grant, op. cit., p. 496.

⁶⁶ Negro World, August 9, 1924. Quoted in Ben F. Rogers, “William E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, and Pan-Africa”. The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 40, No. 2 (April., 1955), p. 159. The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2715383>>. Accessed: October 30, 2017.

⁶⁷ John Henrik Clarke. Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa. New York: Vintage Books, 1974. P. 8.

⁶⁸ John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 19.

⁶⁹ Doug Gutknecht, op. cit., p. 99.

states that Chronon has appropriately chosen the title for his work because Marcus Garvey “addressed the oppressive conditions and prevailing cynicism of the postwar era with a religious fervor resembling Moses appeal to the children to Israel.”⁷⁰ Garvey was looked at as the Black Moses of his race. To many of his followers, Garvey was a Black Moses, blacks the Chosen People, and Africa the Promised Land.⁷¹ Franklin Frazier, one of America’s leading sociologists and most prominent African American sociologist of the 20th century noted “practical, ritualistic and utopian elements” in Marcus Garvey’s mass-based style: “He [Garvey] not only promised the despised Negro a paradise on earth, but he made the Negro an important person in his immediate environment. He invented honors and social distinctions and converted every social invention to his use in his effort to make his followers feel important.”⁷² For John Henry Clarke, Marcus Garvey’s popularity was universal. In this context, he said: “There was never a leader like him, before or since.”⁷³

Although both integrationists and nationalists were concerned about social equality, the nationalists, in particular, were aware of the fact that the whites continued to ignore the socio-historical significance of the economic exploitation of black people. Dismissing the “assimilation doctrine of racial equality”, Marcus Garvey confirmed that the whites would continue to be prejudiced against the black people, as follows: “Because as a race, [Blacks] have accomplished nothing; we have built no nation, no government; because we are dependent for our economic and political existence.”⁷⁴ Garvey asserted that “prejudice is the logical derivative of a race that is proud of its accomplishments.” For him, success is the outcome of a competitive feeling of superiority and of accomplishing something better than the others. He maintained that high achievers were better than low achievers and that people of the white race believed they were high achievers.⁷⁵ Accordingly, they –the whites– adopted the notion that “no matter how bad a failure a white man was, he was always better than a black man.”⁷⁶

Literature related to the Garvey Movement reveals that Garvey rejected the policy of integration on naturalistic grounds; however, it also reveals that he dismissed this policy

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Bruce J. Dierenfield and John White. A History of African-American Leadership. Third Edition. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2014. P. 104.

⁷² John Henrik Clarke. Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa, op. cit., p. 238.

⁷³ John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 17.

⁷⁴ Marcus Garvey. “Aims and Objects of a Movement for a Solution of the Negro Problem.”, op. cit., p. 18.

⁷⁵ Otis B. Grant, op. cit., pp. 491-492.

⁷⁶ John L. Graves, op. cit., p. 70.

because it restrained black business initiatives. In this sense, Garveyism was based on economic nationalism. Consequently, white oppression could not be eliminated without promoting black economic development. Therefore, Garveyites, who were self-reliant, rejected the idea that the whites had a responsibility or commitment to help black people in their struggle for equality.⁷⁷ Garvey was a political leader and his cultural program looked like the economic program of Booker T. Washington of establishing economic institutions for the sake of creating a self-sustaining black community.⁷⁸ He came to the United States a year after the death of Booker T. Washington founder of the Tuskegee Institute. Yet, Garvey had had correspondence with Washington previously and that was with the hope of securing some means in order to establish, in Jamaica, a school similar to the Tuskegee Institute of Alabama. Unfortunately Washington died before the two men could meet.⁷⁹

Garvey's major principle was building black economic power. Through the U.N.I.A., which was established in Jamaica in 1914 and brought to the United States later, he indented that black people should establish their own economic institutions through race enterprises like the Black Star Line and the Negro Factories Corporation. Once Garvey organized the U.N.I.A., he focused on establishing businesses of different kinds in the black communities throughout the United States which would employ black people both men and women, and therefore absorb unemployment, which would help attain local self-sufficiency among them.⁸⁰ Garvey declared: "We must prepare now by organizing ourselves all over the world, by building businesses, stores and factories to sustain our people and free ourselves."⁸¹

The most important aspect of Garveyism was Garvey's unprecedented appeal to the masses of black people who, although made significant contributions to the history of the United States, found themselves victims of poor social, economic, and political conditions—all the sons of a monster mother called Racism. Garvey's source of power came fundamentally from the urban ghettos and what made his movement different from the other movements was its appeal to the masses. These masses provided the U.N.I.A. with enviable support and

⁷⁷ Otis B. Grant, op. cit., p. 492.

⁷⁸ John Henrik Clarke. *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, op. cit., p. 6.

⁷⁹ John Henrik Clarke. "Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.", op. cit., p. 20.

⁸⁰ Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 50.

⁸¹ Speech delivered by Marcus Garvey; quoted in Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 50.

sustenance.⁸² It was Garvey who “gave them what they wanted, identification with something that makes them feel like somebody among white people who said they were nobody.”⁸³

Although black leaders like Du Bois frequently criticized Garvey for his chauvinism, narrowness, and demagogic strategies, his appeal was monumental. In fact, his followers overflowed his tabernacle Liberty Hut, which seats six thousand persons, every Sunday evening; and in 1921, he crowned himself president-general of the U.N.I.A.⁸⁴ Marcus Garvey’s plans for the self-determination of people of the black race are, in fact, outlined in the following excerpt from a speech “*Aims and Objects of Movement for Solution of Negro Problems*” issued by Garvey as President-General of the U.N.I.A., in 1924:

The Universal Negro Improvement Association is an organization among Negroes that is seeking to improve the conditions of the race, with the view of establishing a Nation in Africa where Negroes will be given the opportunity to develop by themselves, without creating the hatred and animosity that now exist in countries of the white race through Negroes rivaling them for the highest and best positions in government, politics, society and industry.⁸⁵

Garvey sought a separate state for African Americans. He did not defend the thesis that blacks could attain equality with the whites while living together. The solution for him was to go back to Africa, homeland of people of the black race. The reaction of Garvey to color prejudice and his attempt to look for a way to get over it and lead people of his race back to Africa, spiritually if not physically, was the all-consuming passion of his life. His magnificent and romantic movement appealed to black people of all the world and not just those living in the United States and directed their attention to the bright future in which they could reclaim and rebuild their African homeland and be proud of their African heritage.⁸⁶

Yet, the Garvey Movement never returned any black people to Africa.⁸⁷ Garvey, himself, was never able to set his foot on African soil. Still, he succeeded to transmit the message to African people all over the world about his fervent belief that “Africa was the

⁸² Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

⁸³ E. U. Essien-Udom, “Garvey and Garveyism.” In America’s Black Past, ed. by Erich Foner, New York: Harper and Row, 1970, p. 361. Quoted in: Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

⁸⁴ Doug Gutknecht, op. cit., pp. 100-102.

⁸⁵ Quoted in: John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 20.

⁸⁶ John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 20.

⁸⁷ Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 51.

home of civilization which had once been great and would be great again.”⁸⁸ Garvey’s words resonated inside Africa itself. The King of Swaziland⁸⁹ later told Mrs. Garvey that he heard of the names of only two blacks in the West. They were: Jack Johnson, the black boxer who was able to win against the white man Jim Jeffries, and Marcus Garvey who became a world figure.⁹⁰

Garvey, who was a strong believer in complete independence for blacks, focused on their economic independence. His economic program undoubtedly was intended to provide economic backing for American black masses. For Garvey, “the Negro must become independent of white capital and white employers if he wants salvation.”⁹¹ For him, self reliance and respect were axiomatic. He taught his followers, of course black, not to be dependent for their economic existence on the white people.⁹² He proclaimed: “A race that is solely dependent upon another race for its economic existence sooner or later dies. As we have in the past been living upon the mercies shown us by others, and by the chances obtainable and have suffered therefrom, so will we in the future suffer if an effort is not made now to build our own economic structure.”⁹³

Early in 1919, wanting to implement this strategy, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, proclaimed its plans to establish an all black steamship corporation which would connect black people not just those in the United States but from different parts of the world through commercial and industrial intercourse. This corporation was named the Black Star Line (B.S.L.).⁹⁴ Garvey claimed that the B.S.L. Corporation “represents to every black man, woman and child the opportunity to climb the great ladder of industrial and commercial progress”.⁹⁵ The aim of this company was recurrently communicated through the weekly newspaper, the Negro World, the propaganda tool of the U.N.I.A., which targeted black people as its audience: “[The] Black Star Line was organized for the industrial, commercial

⁸⁸ John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 23.

⁸⁹ On 19 April 2018, King Mswati III announced that the name of the Kingdom of Swaziland is changed to Kingdom of Eswatini. It is a landlocked country in Southern Africa and one of the smallest countries in this African continent.

⁹⁰ John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 23.

⁹¹ Roi Otteley. “New World A-Coming” in Black Nationalism in America, ed. John Bracey, Jr. et. Al., New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1970, p. 190. Quoted in: Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

⁹² Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 59.

⁹³ Amy Jacques-Garvey, Garvey and Garveyism. New York: MacMillan Company, 1970. P. 92. Quoted in: Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 59.

⁹⁴ Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 54.

⁹⁵ Martin O. Ijere, op. cit., p. 200.

and economic development of the race to carry out the program of U.N.I.A., that is to have ships to link up the Negro people of the world in commercial trade and in fraternities.”⁹⁶

This bold declaration to challenge white control over the maritime industry succeeded to achieve instant and widespread popularity among blacks. The idea of the steamship line was advocated at the U.N.I.A. meetings. During these mass meetings, seed money was also earnestly sought and quickly collected.⁹⁷ Simultaneously, powerful requests for funds were made in the Negro World: “You can help this great organization at this time financially and morally. Do not be stint yourself in supporting this great, worthy cause.”⁹⁸

The Black Star Line received its charter in June, 1919 from the State of Delaware. Having a capitalization of \$500,000, the B.S.L. offered shares of stock to black people at a par value of five dollars each. According to Marcus Garvey’s wife, Amy Jacques, the capital stock of the Black Star Line had been increased to ten million dollars between 1919 and 1921, more than one million of which had been used in purchasing and equipping ships for the company.⁹⁹ As a matter of fact, the B.S.L. purchased three steamships: Yarmouth, Kanawha, and Shadyside.¹⁰⁰ B.S.L. stock circulars announced: “Now is the time for the Negro to invest in the Black Star Line so that in the near future he may exert the same influence upon the world as the white man does today.”¹⁰¹

Soon after the formation of the all-black shipping company “the Black Star Line”, Garvey’s troubles with the courts started. Those charges and counter-charges relating to the Black Star Line were, in fact, the source of most of his problems and the cause for being convicted and sentenced to prison, and that was in 1923.¹⁰² The Garvey movement began to fragment and decline with Garvey’s imprisonment in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary in 1925, after the courts rejected his appeal on a mail fraud conviction. Officially, the basis of Garvey’s imprisonment involved the selling of stock in the B.L.S. for the purchasing of ships that at the time of purchase were not seaworthy. The federal government charged him with the

⁹⁶ Negro World, June 23, 1923, p. 1. Quoted in: Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 54.

⁹⁷ Milfred C. Fierce, op. cit., p. 54.

⁹⁸ Negro World, op. cit., p. 54.

⁹⁹ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. Sixth Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1988. P. 322.

¹⁰⁰ Clifton E. Marsh. The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000. P. 90.

¹⁰¹ Edmund David Cronon, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁰² John Henrik Clarke. “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years.”, op. cit., p. 21.

violation of Section 215 of the United States Criminal Code.¹⁰³ Technically, Garvey was convicted of “a conspiracy with one or more unknown and unmentioned conspirators in using the mail in a scheme to defraud”.¹⁰⁴ In fact, even after being convicted of mail fraud, Garvey was able to find new investors for another company called the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company (B.C.N.T.C.). Nevertheless, like the ill-fated B.S.L, its successor the B.C.N.T.C. also went on bankruptcy.¹⁰⁵

Garvey, who was charged with misusing the mails, was supposed to serve his five years sentence in prison; but, he was pardoned by President Calvin Coolidge in August 1927 and was immediately deported to Jamaica. The courts ordered Garvey’s deportation in an attempt to eliminate the influence he had on African Americans. In fact, in the United States, Garvey was, then, declared a *persona non grata*. The Garvey movement eventually declined. However, it is important to mention that during the high tide of the Garvey movement, the new pride in black and African things generated a drive on the part of the black press to replace the terms “colored men” by “black men” and “African Negroes” by “African Americans”. It should also be mentioned that thanks to his movement, Garvey managed to turn the attention of America’s black population homeward to their mother land, Africa. Yet, his most important accomplishment was to provide this racial group with the confidence and self-esteem needed in the long struggle for its historical quest for full integration in the American society.¹⁰⁶

III- African Americans during the Great Depression and the New Deal

The Great Depression was a drastic worldwide economic slump that characterized the 1930s, beginning in the United States of America. It was the deepest, longest, and most widespread and devastating depression of twentieth century world history. It started in the United States after a major fall in stock prices that began around September 24th, 1929, also known as Black Tuesday, and became worldwide news with the stock market crash of October 29th, 1929. It remains the worst financial disaster the modern world has ever witnessed.

In fact, the Federal Reserve Board (F.R.B.) adopted restrictive monetary measures as early as February 1929 with the aim of curtailing speculation on the stock exchange, leading

¹⁰³ Otis B. Grant, *op. cit.*, pp. 494.

¹⁰⁴ *U.S. v. Garvey*, 292 F. 591 (1925). Quoted in: Otis B. Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 494.

¹⁰⁵ Otis B. Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Hughes Brisbane, Jr, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

to an unexpected recession in the middle of the year 1929. But, the Great Depression as a phenomenon began with a dramatic collapse in the stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange on October 24th, 1929, known thenceforth as Black Thursday; still the Federal Reserve Board continued to raise rates after this date. The crash not only generated widespread panic among companies, corporations and individual investors, but it even placed extreme pressure on banks. Within a period of three years, stocks lost about 80 percent of their value and out of the total 25.000 country's banks about 11.000 banks became insolvent. In the same three-year period, the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.) fell from an index of 163 to an index of 115, while the rate of unemployment rose to 30 percent. All in all, the Great Depression was devastating for the United States. Owing to its scope, severity, and duration, it has been the object of study by many sociologists, economists, and historians in the United States.¹⁰⁷ American economist Nancy E. Rose described the serious conditions that characterized the 1930s in the United States as a result of the Great Depression:

Houses are boarded up and farms foreclosed as the owners fail to meet their mortgage payments, and apartments are scarce as people have no money for rent. . . . Panicked depositors are withdrawing their money from banks, which are failing one after the other, while barter is replacing cash transactions. Rising unemployment and falling incomes are leading to declining tax revenues, and in many towns teachers are out of work and children are out of school.¹⁰⁸

Likewise, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, an American distinguished professor of history interested in issues related to the sociology of race and ethnicity wrote in her book entitled To Ask for an equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression the following: "The Great Depression devastated the economy. Factories, stores, banks, mills, and business firms collapsed. . . . Three million people could not find jobs in January 1930, . . . That figure rose to more than 13.5 million three years later. Wages had fallen to roughly 60 percent of their pre-

¹⁰⁷ Mark Frezzo, "Great Depression (1929-1941)." The American Economy: Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Cynthia Clark Northrup. Santa Barbara: California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2003. P. 135.

¹⁰⁸ Nancy E. Rose. Put to work: Relief Programs in the Great Depression. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994. PP. 16-17.

Depression level.¹⁰⁹ On their part, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold considered the Depression as a cataclysm.¹¹⁰

Although it is important to study the consequences of this drastic economic downturn on the whole American society, but given the theme of the present thesis, this part of the chapter is confined to the study of the impact of the Great Depression just on African Americans. The situation of this racial and ethnic group during the New Deal is equally important to be analyzed in this part of the research work.

By the early 1930s, the United States was in the midst of the worst economic crisis in its history. This economic crisis affected all Americans including African Americans living in rural as well as urban areas whether in the North or the South. But the situation of black people was undoubtedly worse than that of the whites because the economic collapse hit them particularly hard. As Cheryl Lynn Greenberg put it:

The economic crisis affected everyone, . . . The federal government in 1930 estimated that 17 percent of the white population and 38 percent of the black population could not support themselves without assistance. Those figures soon worsened. African Americans were particularly hard hit, as white men took jobs formerly held by black men, and white women took the jobs of black women. A large proportion of the lucky few black Americans who had earlier managed to finance their own businesses or buy their own homes lost them.¹¹¹

African Americans represented a racial and ethnic group in the United States that arguably suffered the most from this economic crisis. In fact, the coming of the Great Depression exacerbated the already poor economic situation of African Americans. Even before 1929, the majority of African Americans lived in desperate conditions and suffered from overwhelming poverty. Although conditions had improved at a slow pace in the years following the emancipation, they could not reach the level enjoyed by the majority of white Americans, and even the level enjoyed by recent white immigrants. By the time of the Depression, compared with half of all the white families who owned homes, less than a quarter of African American families owned the houses they lived in. On the whole, African

¹⁰⁹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg. To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. P. 21.

¹¹⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 480.

¹¹¹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 21.

Americans earned less than whites, had higher rates of illiteracy, and were concentrated predominantly in the least desirable and worst-paying jobs.¹¹²

If prior to the Great Depression, blacks occupied mainly unskilled jobs, after the stock market crash of 1929, however, most of these low-paying, entry-level jobs were filled by whites who were in need to be employed. As a result, African American unemployment rates doubled or tripled those of whites. According to the Library of Congress, the rate of African American unemployment in 1932 soared to about 50 percent, which means that the economic situation –and evidently the social one as well– of African Americans during the Great Depression was seriously dire.¹¹³

The experiences of black workers during the Depression differed according to a number of factors including region, gender, employment level, and education, but most underwent approximately the same troubling path. Illnesses, hunger, and homelessness increased. The apartments that previously suited four members, might now house from eight to ten people as needy relatives and friends pooled their incomes and living arrangements just to keep a living. All in all, in the black communities across the nation, the Great Depression had arrived in a “fury”.¹¹⁴

For most of the African American population, which was about 11.8 million in 1930, the Great Depression had an immediate impact as race prejudice and discrimination intensified the economic consequences of agricultural and industrial collapse. As the Depression deepened and unemployment soared, African Americans were the first to be fired and the last to be hired and experienced unemployment at more than twice the rate of white workers. In some areas, 50 percent of the black workers were unemployed; still in others, the rate of unemployment reached 65 percent. All in all, in 1935, 30 percent of the African American population in the United States, which represented about 4 million people, were on relief. Even then, these black people received an average of weekly relief payment of about 9 dollars compared to 15 dollars for their white counterparts.¹¹⁵ In fact, when the federal government noted that, by 1934, 17 percent of white citizens could not support themselves,

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 1-2.

¹¹³ Christopher Klein. "Last Hired, First Fired: How the Great Depression Affected African Americans." History Stories. <<https://www.history.com/news/last-hired-first-fired-how-the-great-depression-affected-african-americans>>. Accessed: June 5, 2018.

¹¹⁴ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 22.

¹¹⁵ Neil A. Wynn. The African American Experience during WWII. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010. P.16.

the percentage for African Americans had soared to 38 percent in general. In Chicago, 40 percent of black Americans were unemployed; in Pittsburgh, 48 percent; in Harlem, 50 percent; in Philadelphia, 56 percent; and in Detroit, 60 percent. The percentages of unemployed blacks were even more important in the southern cities. For instance, in Atlanta, Georgia, 65 percent of African American workers needed public assistance, while in Norfolk, Virginia, 80 percent of African American workers had to apply for welfare.¹¹⁶

In an article entitled “The Negro Worker in the Depression,” Arthur M. Ross discusses the two main reasons behind the greater unemployment rates among the black population in the United States during the Depression Era. According to Ross, the greater unemployment among black people can be explained partly by their occupational status. This is related to their concentration in unskilled jobs, in personal and domestic services, and in certain industries; in addition to the decline of the small and unsteady black bourgeoisie during the Depression time. Yet, there is another remarkable explanation that Ross linked to black people’s racial status. Ross said that this important explanation based on racial status is related to the displacement of black workers by white workers who appropriated the jobs of blacks which they had previously considered below their dignity. This means that black workers faced greater competition for even the worst jobs. For Ross, this was accomplished at the initiative of white employers, by white workers themselves, by legislations, and in certain cases by lynching and other forms of violence, and in general by all the different tools of social pressure.¹¹⁷

William A. Sundstrom shares the same idea with Ross as he stresses the same important factors that lie behind the greater unemployment rates among black workers during the Depression. In his article “Last Hired, First Fired? Unemployment and Urban Black Workers During the Great Depression,” Sundstrom pointed out:

Throughout the Great Depression, the unemployment rates of blacks exceeded those of whites in urban areas of both North and South. Among men, this difference was largely due to racial difference in occupational status, whereas among women, unemployment rates were dramatically higher for blacks even within specific occupations. The occupational pattern of the unemployment gap

¹¹⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 481.

¹¹⁷ Arthur M. Ross. “The Negro Worker in the Depression.” *Social Forces*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (May, 1940), p. 551. Oxford University Press. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2570633>>. Accessed: June 15, 2018.

suggests that labor market discrimination played a role, especially in unskilled service jobs.¹¹⁸

For Sundstrom, the first class of explanation for the greater unemployment rates of black workers during the Depression Era focuses on differences in background characteristics between black and white workers. Since unemployment rates tend usually to be higher among the less skilled and less educated people, and since on the average black workers were less skilled and less educated than whites, this meant that black workers were likely to suffer more than their white counterparts from the harsh labor market dislocations of the Great Depression. In addition, in the North, the recent migration of many African Americans may also mean that they had short periods of experience in industry than the whites. The second class of explanation is related to the labor market discrimination. This means the unequal treatment of workers who are equally qualified. During the Depression, this manifested itself in the form of discriminatory employment policies. In addition, racist attitude which hardened during the Depression contributed to worsening the existing labor market discrimination. A number of contemporary analysts stressed that black workers were the last to be hired and the first to be fired even if they were equally qualified—compared to whites. A series of reports on black unemployment released by the National Urban League cited different reports of employers replacing black workers with unemployed whites.¹¹⁹ For instance, in one of the reports, it was stated: “So general is this practice that one is warranted in suspecting that it has been adopted as a method of relieving unemployment of whites without regard to the consequences upon Negroes.”¹²⁰

In addition, in its demands for equitable and fair employment practices at the level of local governments, the New York Urban League (N.Y.U.L.) had many attempts. In 1936, for example, the N.Y.U.L. criticized the New York State Employment Services (N.Y.S.E.S.) for yielding to employers’ racist attitudes and practices. Although the N.Y.S.E.S. placed what seemed to be an appropriate share of African American job seekers, it permitted employers to specify racial preferences; thereby reinforcing employer prejudice. As a consequence, the

¹¹⁸ William A. Sundstrom. “Last Hired, First Fired? Unemployment and Urban Black Workers During the Great Depression.” *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Jun., 1992), p. 415. Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Economic History Association . <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2123118>>. Accessed: June 15, 2018.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 420-421.

¹²⁰ National Urban League, “Unemployment Status of the Negroes,” p. 16. Quoted in: William A. Sundstrom, op. cit., p. 421.

N.Y.S.E.S. found employment for African Americans basically in domestic labor and personal service jobs.¹²¹

For a number of reasons, including racial discrimination and the different levels of debts, the impact of the Great Depression was undoubtedly greater on black farmers than on their white counterparts. After just one year of the Depression, estimates showed that the number of the black farm owners had fallen 5 percent and their total acreage by 10 percent. Moreover, the value of their farm lands had slumped by more than a third of their real value. By the end of the Depression period, the total number of black farmers who owned or managed their own farms had declined from a quarter of all black agricultural workers to less than 15 percent, while the percentage of white farm owners and managers rose to about half of all white farmers.¹²²

Southern black farming families gained less than whites. Ironically enough, not only did Georgia sharecroppers earn more money than black sharecroppers, but they earned even more than black farm owners themselves. On the other hand, in North Carolina, while black farm owners earned a bit more than white sharecroppers, they still trailed behind white farm owners as the following table demonstrates:

Table 4: Average Annual Earnings of Farm Families by Race, 1936

State	Black	White
Georgia		
Sharecroppers	\$422	\$583
Owners	\$533	\$794
North Carolina		
Sharecroppers	\$803	\$1,036
Owners	\$1,053	\$1,590

Source: Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 23.

These disparities in earnings existed throughout the South. In his research study of Depression Era black Americans, Thomas Woofter found out that in the 600 southern counties he studied, black cotton sharecroppers gained an annual income of \$295, compared

¹²¹ Touré F. Reed. Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial uplift, 1910-1950. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008. P. 111.

¹²² Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 22.

to \$417 for white sharecroppers. He also found that black wage farmers laboring on the cotton fields gained an average of \$175 a year compared with \$232 for their white counterparts. Such low earnings meant that these black families lived in terrible conditions. When despair led to crime, or when blacks were railroaded into false convictions and arrests, southern black convicts found themselves in worse situations. In some cases local white farm owners seeking very cheap labor paid these convict's fines in order to compel their labor as a repayment; this system was known as convict leasing.¹²³

In addition, natural disasters had their own contribution in hardening the living conditions in the South. Dust storm, droughts, and the poor adoption of soil conservation practices and methods led to considerable loss of fertile land in the Dust Bowl.¹²⁴ Moreover, the continued spread of the boll weevil that destroyed the cotton plantations and flooding in Louisiana, Mississippi Delta, North Carolina, and Texas destroyed the hopes of farmers. As a result, thousands of southern agricultural workers joined the exodus of migrants looking for better life conditions elsewhere. If some sought farm work opportunities elsewhere, the majority, whether heading North or remaining in the South, moved toward the speedily growing urban areas where they joined the already crowded black neighborhoods, strengthening poverty and deepening the hardships and competing with the old residents for the available jobs that were limited.¹²⁵

African Americans floated at the gloomy end of the destroyed southern economy. Blacks found themselves out of work, and because of continuing legal segregation policies and overt discrimination practices, even those who were still at work continued to experience degrading, constrained, and dangerous living conditions. They were aware of the fact that only the least desirable jobs were available to them but they had no other choice but to accept them just to keep a living. In South Carolina, where black people constituted about one half of the state's population, whites outnumbered blacks four to one in factories and mills; which means that unemployment rates were really greater for blacks. Throughout the South, groups of armed white workers intimidated and even threatened employers who hired African American workers, holding the argument that unemployed whites had to be hired first. In this

¹²³ Ibid., p. 24.

¹²⁴ The Dust Bowl is a term given to the drought-stricken Southern Plains region of the United States which was overwhelmed by severe dust storms during the dry period of the 1930s. The Dust Bowl intensified the crushing economic impacts of the Great Depression and made it even worse. It contributed to driving many of the Southern farming families on desperate migration in search of work and better living conditions. The Dust Bowl may also refer to the 1930s period itself. In the last case, the Dust Bowl is sometimes referred to as the "Dirty Thirties".

¹²⁵ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

context, the June 1931 Monthly Labor Review reported that replacing black workers with white workers was a prevalent practice at that time of the Depression.¹²⁶

In the South, skilled black workers were mostly employed in unskilled jobs. In 1930 only about 100,000 black workers, which represented from 3 to 4 of all black male workers, held skilled jobs. Within a period of six years, that tiny figure had declined to under 30,000. As a matter of fact, black unemployment rates whether in skilled or unskilled job areas skyrocketed during the Depression period. Between 1931 and 1932, black southern unemployment in urban areas increased from one third to one half. In addition, the incomes of black workers in southern cities continued to lag well behind those of their white counterparts. In Atlanta, for example, the average annual income of a black family in 1936 was about a third of that of a white family. The situation was almost identical in Mobile, where black families earned substantially less than white families as table 5 below demonstrates. These disparities persisted whether comparing households with one parent or with two parents. Surprisingly enough, black families with two parents, even if they were both skilled workers, earned substantially less than white families with only one parent.¹²⁷

Table 5: Median Family Income by Race and Family Status in Mobile and Atlanta

City	Two-Parent Families	Single-Parent Families
Mobile		
African American	\$481	\$301
White	\$1,419	\$784
Atlanta		
African American	\$632	\$332
White	\$1,876	\$940

Source: Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 26.

It is common knowledge that racial antagonism is usually intensified in periods of economic recession and distress. That was exactly the case during the Great Depression. In fact, the most noticeable eruption of racial economic antagonism as a sign of racial conflict during the Great Depression Era took place in the South. On February 16th, 1932, the United States Press reported that in Jacksonville, Florida, four hundred unemployed white men

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

marched through the streets in a violent demonstration aimed at driving Negroes from their jobs.¹²⁸ Another example was the night parades in Atlanta, Georgia, conducted by an organization known as the Black Shirts, whose members moved about the streets of the city carrying slogans such as “Employ white men and let Niggers go,” “Thousands of white families are starving to death. What is the reason?” and “Send Niggers back to the farms”. As white men and women were out of work, many white people, especially those living in the South, strictly opposed the employment of African American people and strongly supported this overtly racist climate.¹²⁹ According to the National Urban League report: “In many cities, chiefly in southern sections, this trend (displacement) has been accentuated by elected officials responding to the insistence of unemployed whites and reactionary Negro-baiting organizations. City employed . . . [workers] . . . have been discharged and replaced by hungry whites.”¹³⁰ In addition to the displacement of black workers by white ones, there was also an activity of municipal licensing and inspection ordinances especially in the South with the purpose of harassing and eliminating black self-employed workers including barbers, plumbers, and many other workers.¹³¹

In the same context, some northern white workers introduced new slogans like “No Jobs for Niggers until Every White Man Has a job” and “Niggers Back to the Cotton fields”. Since more than 75 percent of the African American population was still located in the South, declining prices of agricultural goods meant that black sharecroppers were further distressed. As the prices of cotton dropped from 18 to 6 cents per pound, landowners and banks drove black sharecroppers out the land and evicted them from their houses, and as a result their number declined by nearly one hundred thousand during the 1930s. To exacerbate the economic plight of Southern black families during the Depression decade, rising racial hatred generated intimidation and other forms of violence including lynching which although declined in the previous decade, the 1920s, now rose to about twenty in 1930 and twenty-four in 1933.¹³² As Hilton Butler wrote in The Nation, “Dust had been blown from the shotgun, the whip, and the noose, and Ku Klux practices were being resumed in the certainty that dead

¹²⁸ Arthur M. Ross, op. cit., p. 552.

¹²⁹ Frederica H. Barrow. “Forrester Blanchard Washington and His Advocacy for African Americans in the New Deal.” Social Work, Vol. 52, No. 3 (July 2007), pp. 204-205. Oxford University Press. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23721111>>. Accessed: December 22, 2018.

¹³⁰ “The Negro Population and National Recovery.” National Urban League. New York. 1937. P. 3. Quoted in: Arthur M. Ross, op. cit., p. 552.

¹³¹ Arthur M. Ross, op. cit., p. 552.

¹³² Neil A. Wynn, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

men tell no tales but create vacancies.”¹³³ The Commission on Interracial Cooperation concluded that lynching as a practice had become a tool not only of political exclusion but of economic exclusion as well.¹³⁴

It is important to point out that the displacement of black workers occurred mainly in the blacks’ jobs and not primarily in the newly created jobs that opened up in new industries held since the war. Most of the documentation that is available mentions porters, elevator operators, railroad laborers, housemaids, and waiters, and not coal, steel, automobile industries, although these huge industries were vulnerable to business contractions. In addition, employment contracts were more common in the conventional blacks’ jobs, in which there were more possibilities to shift from one worker to another without any problem. In these kinds of jobs, there was usually more proximity between the worker on one hand and the employer or the customer on the other hand, which made of these jobs more vulnerable to racial prejudice and the exercise of social pressure. In the coal, steel, and automobile industries, however, temporary layoffs were more common than full discharge. These industries belonged to industrial unions whose leaders believed, because of their experience, that cooperation with black workers was absolutely necessary and extremely important. But, the traditionally considered “Negro jobs” which were unskilled, unorganized, and unprotected jobs, were taken over by the hopeless whites very easily. This practice had, in fact, its own impact on the black community which adopted a campaign with the slogan “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work”. This motto had two interpretations: first, “buy where you can work”, and second, “don’t buy unless you are given a job”. The campaign itself had two phases. First, an endeavor to direct black purchasing power toward black enterprises. Second, the use of the boycott as a tool to force white employers to hire black workers.¹³⁵

If white men marched through the streets in violent demonstrations with the aim of driving blacks from their jobs like what happened in Jacksonville, Florida, black men also organized riots with the aim of maintaining their own jobs. In March, 1935, a spontaneous riot broke out in Harlem. In this riot, many thousand blacks marched along the streets of Harlem, after a rumored arrest and killing of a black boy for shoplifting. This uprising was explained in a number of ways: as a race riot, as a consequence of police brutality, as a result of high prices and high rents, unsatisfactory relief, decreased family incomes, and the strained years of unemployment and instability. But the most important explanation, according to the black

¹³³ Hilton Butler. “Murder for the Job.” *The Nation* 137 (July 12, 1933): p. 44.

¹³⁴ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 25.

¹³⁵ Arthur M. Ross, op. cit., p. 552.

press and the mayor's commission of inquiry, was the dissatisfaction of the black community of Harlem with the stores which depended on their purchases but refused to hire them.¹³⁶ This showed that blacks were not satisfied with an unstable and unsecure footing on the lowest rung of the occupational ladder.

If in the South, economic opportunities for black people were very limited, they were slightly better in the Northern and Western cities where discrimination was less blatant and not cherished by the law. In addition, the history of black activism showed that there were already certain mechanisms there to challenge the worst abuses. In 1936, the average income of a northern urban black family came to nearly two-thirds of that of a northern urban white family, but that was well above the southern ratio. Under such circumstances, leaving the South was an attractive option for African American families. Yet, even in the North, urban black workers, like their Southern counterparts, still suffered from many obstacles when it came to trying to keep their jobs during the Depression period. Given the collapse in production, the more industrialized North was evidently subject to higher levels of unemployment. For reasons of past and present discrimination, at every skill level, northern black workers endured more difficulties than northern white workers. Also, because of the long-standing preference of employers for white workers, even black workers who had lived in the region for several years lacked priority.¹³⁷

Moreover, old patterns of discrimination guaranteed that even in fair cutbacks, the majority of black workers lost their jobs earlier than the whites. In addition, a great percentage of skilled black workers in the North than in the South declared that they were either holding semiskilled or unskilled jobs or were unemployed. Therefore, racism continued to influence employment patterns. Being black reduced one's chances of finding a job. The rates of black unemployment remained high compared to white unemployment. African Americans claimed that they were usually the last to be hired and the first to be fired when employers chose their workers. This means that as in the South, underemployment and unemployment in the North also had a major impact on blacks' lives because of their persistent poverty and lower level of savings. A study on Philadelphia showed that only half of the black families between 1930 and 1932 did not have any savings at all. Researchers estimated that, on average, white unemployed families with savings and some credit could continue for about eight months at a regular standard of living, while black families could do so for only one month and a half.

¹³⁶ Report of the Subcommittee which investigated the Disturbance of March 19, Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem, New York, 1935. Quoted in: Arthur M. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

¹³⁷ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Therefore, black workers who found it difficult to make ends meet even when being employed felt the repercussions of unemployment not just more quickly but more dramatically as well.¹³⁸ On the whole, it could be said that almost the same forces that impoverished rural black Americans swept those in the urban areas further toward the economic margins as large groups of refugees from the farms headed to the cities and competed for the rarely available jobs as table 6 below shows:

Table 6: Median Income of Black Families Compared to the Median Income of White Families for Selected Cities, 1935-1936

City and Type of Family	Black	White	Black Income as a Percentage of White Income
Husband-Wife Families			
New York	\$980	\$1,930	51%
Chicago	\$726	\$1,687	43%
Columbus	\$831	\$1,622	51%
Atlanta	\$632	\$1,876	34%
Columbia	\$576	\$1,876	31%
Mobile	\$481	\$1,419	34%
Other Families			
Atlanta	\$332	\$940	35%
Columbia	\$254	\$1,403	18%
Mobile	\$301	\$784	38%

Source: Gunnar Myrdal. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc. 1944. Taken from: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 482.

As it was mentioned before, African American workers who succeeded in keeping their jobs or obtaining new jobs worked mostly in unskilled job categories and service fields, regardless of their education and work skills. In the Middle Atlantic and North Central states, the region of major industrial activity, less than 40 percent of male skilled workers reported that they held jobs that suited their skill level. In the city of New York, the Urban League and the New York State Employment Service (N.Y.S.E.S.) reported that while a quarter of the black job seekers in New York City were qualified for skilled or white-collar jobs, nearly 90 percent of the jobs available to them were in unskilled labor. Such enormous economic

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

pressures made northern black earnings for both professionals as well as blue-collar workers decline almost as those of their southern counterparts. This was partially the direct result of a general decline in wages especially of the vast majority of black workers who labored at jobs below their skills or training. In fact, the incomes of unskilled black workers fell to about a third of what they had been before the Depression period. As a result, several black families both in the North as well as in the South found themselves obliged to get low incomes that were considered by federal and local agencies a minimum standard of living.¹³⁹

On their part, black women confronted the same employment pressures like men. As the Depression intensified, many white women entered the labor force for the first time. They started competing with black women even for domestic jobs including housekeepers, cooks, and housemaids.¹⁴⁰ Generally, when black women lost their jobs, they were replaced by white women and not men. But, while white men would then accept unskilled jobs previously reserved for black men; few even crossed gender boundaries to accept jobs more commonly associated with women.¹⁴¹ This means that black women during the Depression Era suffered from a double economic segregation based on race as well as gender.

The despondency of these women meant that wages could drop to nearly nothing. In November 1935, the N.A.A.C.P.'s Crisis magazine published an article titled "The Bronx Slave Market" written by two black women, Marvell Cooke and Ella Baker. This article shed light on the exploitation of domestic workers. The authors chose such a title because working conditions were so dreadful. They described the situation of black women who were seeking domestic jobs in the city of New York and who stood on the street corners while white housewives bargained with them the lowest possible wages. But black women had no choice except of accepting the available jobs to feed their families even on fifteen or twenty cents an hour. Throughout the city, black domestic servants, of course female ones, reported that they earned between \$6 to \$10 a week. The wages of black domestics were almost similar and dreadful in all the cities studied. For instance, in the city of Birmingham in Alabama, over half of the total number of black domestic workers earned less than \$200 for a whole year of work and that was a pathetic situation. Not only did black women earn less than their white counterparts, but they earned even less than black men for work at the same occupations. For unskilled jobs, black women workers earned almost half as much as black men. Doing clerical work, black women earned just two thirds of what their male counterparts did. Similar income

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁴⁰ Joe William Trotter, Jr. From a Raw Deal to a New Deal? African Americans, 1929-1945. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1996. P. 25.

¹⁴¹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 30.

inequalities appeared at every employment level throughout the country. In addition to racial lines of employment, gender lines also continued to affect the employment mechanisms of black women. This means that, throughout the Depression period, race and gender compelled black women workers to carry a double burden, the result of double segregation.¹⁴²

In his book From a Raw Deal to a New Deal? African Americans, 1929-1945, Joe W. Trotter provided his perspective on the situation of working black women during the Depression Era. Trotter stated that in the Northern cities, because of unemployment and indigence, black women were forced into the notorious Depression Era “slave market”. Gathering on the sidewalks of the streets of major cities, these black women tried to offer their domestic services to white women who drove up their cars seeking domestic workers. Some of these white women were working-class women themselves and therefore offered starvation wages as little as \$5 for an entire week of work for full-time black household workers. Trotter also referred to observations of the practice in the Bronx, New York, by Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke who compared this practice to the treatment of black slaves in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin.¹⁴³ Baker and Cooke wrote:

Negro women, old and young—sometimes bedraggled, sometimes nearly dressed—but with the invariable paper bundle, waiting expectantly for Bronx housewives to buy their strength and energy for an hour, two hours, or even for a day at the munificent rate of fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, or if luck be with them, thirty cents an hour. . . . Fortunate indeed is she who gets the full hourly rate promised. Often her day’s slavery is rewarded with a single dollar bill or whatever her unscrupulous employer pleases to pay. More often, the clock is set back for an hour or more. Too often she is sent away without any pay at all.¹⁴⁴

So, what worsened the situation of black domestic workers who were being exploited was the fact that many employers cheated black women out of their wages and working hours. The work was certainly difficult. A young black woman named Millie Jones who worked for a white family for five dollars a week offered a detailed description of her work:

¹⁴² Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

¹⁴³ Joe William Trotter, Jr. From a Raw Deal to a New Deal? African Americans, 1929-1945, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in: Constance Rosenblum. Boulevard of Dreams: Heady Times, Heartbreak, and Hope along the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. New York: New York University Press, 2009. PP. 3-4.

Each and every week, believe it or not, I had to wash every one of those windows, . . . If that old hag found as much as the teeniest speck on any one of'em, sh'd make me do it over. I guess I would do anything rather than wash windows. On Mondays I washed and did as much of the ironing as I could. The rest waited over for Tuesday. There were two grown sons in the family and her husband. That meant that I would have at least twenty-one shirts to do every week. Yeah, and ten sheets and at least two blankets, besides. They all had to be done just so, too. Gosh, she was a particular woman.¹⁴⁵

All in all, the Depression era proved bleak for African American workers and their families as they had to struggle against the double burden of economic devastation on one hand, and racial discrimination and segregation on the other hand. Still predominantly restricted to the worst jobs that were offering the least wages, in addition to being the last hired and the first fired, black Americans experienced dramatic increases in the level of poverty and the rate of unemployment and suffered immensely from the ills these social and economic phenomena produced.¹⁴⁶

In the light of all the problems caused by the Great Depression, the presidential campaign of 1932 came as a crucial political campaign in American history for it marked sharp turns in the stream of events.¹⁴⁷ This presidential campaign was chiefly a debate over the causes that led to the Depression and potential solutions to end this catastrophe. Herbert Hoover, who was unlucky in entering the White House just eight months before the stock market crash, had strove tirelessly, but unfortunately ineffectively, to set the wheels of industry in motion again. His Democratic opponent Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the popular governor of New York during the economic crisis, claimed that the Great Depression was the result of the underlying weaknesses of the U.S. economic system and which had been accelerated and aggravated by the Republican policies during the 1920s. President Hoover responded by saying that the U.S. economy was basically sound but had been shaken by the reverberations of a worldwide depression whose cause could be traced back to the First World War. Behind Roosevelt's and Hoover's arguments lay a clear implication: Hoover had to depend mostly on a natural process of recovery, while Roosevelt was planning and ready to

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in: Joe William Trotter, Jr. From a Raw Deal to a New Deal? African Americans, 1929-1945., op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁴⁶ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

¹⁴⁷ Joan R. Gundersen, and Marshall Smelser. American History at a Glance: From the Exploration of the New World to the Present. Fifth Edition. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994. P. 196.

use the authority of the federal government for bold experimental solutions.¹⁴⁸ In his acceptance speech, Roosevelt promised “a New Deal”.¹⁴⁹ His optimistic campaign speeches were based on the analyses of both expert advisers and university professors known as the “Brain Trust”. His radio speeches also contributed to attract the attention of millions of Americans.¹⁵⁰

The election went to Franklin D. Roosevelt in a landslide victory. Roosevelt carried forty-two states.¹⁵¹ In fact, the election resulted in a smashing victory for Roosevelt, who won 22,800,000 votes to Hoover’s 15,700,000.¹⁵² The new president brought an air of optimism and confidence that quickly rallied the American people under the banner of his New Deal program. “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” declared Roosevelt in his inaugural address –delivered on March 4th, 1933– to the American nation.¹⁵³ The Congress assembled on March 9th, 1933 in the session that became known as “the hundred days”. It inaugurated the New Deal by enacting the “three R’s” referring to Relief, Recovery, and Reform programs.¹⁵⁴ In this respect, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg wrote:

Once in office, Roosevelt began fulfilling his program of a “New Deal” for the American people. Having no blueprint for restoring economic health, Roosevelt and his advisors instead launched a series of experimental federal programs aimed at helping the needy and reinvigorating the economy. This new alphabet soup of agencies sought to do many things at once: stabilize currency and banking; shore up existing businesses; aid and regulate the housing market; create new jobs for those who could not find any in private industry; and help the unemployed with distributions of clothing, food, and cash payments, called direct relief. Theoretically, all who were poor and all who sought jobs enjoyed equal access to these New Deal programs. As African

¹⁴⁸ Howard Cincotta, ed. *An Outline of American History*. Washington, D.C.: United States Information Agency. 1994. PP. 254-255.

¹⁴⁹ Joan R. Gundersen, and Marshall Smelser, op. cit., p. 196.

¹⁵⁰ The “Brain Trust” was a group of advisors to Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his first presidential campaign of 1932. The term was coined first by a journalist named John F. Kieran of the New York Times when he applied this term to refer to this group of experts. The “Brain Trust” presented Roosevelt with its thinking about on the economic and social problems facing the American nation as a result of the Great Depression and helped him consider the alternatives of public policy that would be open to the new president. This “Brain Trust” also contributed to suggestions and drafts for Roosevelt’s campaign speeches.

¹⁵¹ Joan R. Gundersen, and Marshall Smelser, op. cit., p. 196.

¹⁵² Howard Cincotta, ed., op. cit., p. 255.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 258.

¹⁵⁴ Joan R. Gundersen, and Marshall Smelser, op. cit., p. 197.

Americans were well represented among both groups, they were poised to benefit substantially.¹⁵⁵

In fact, even before Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, private charities, as a last resort, state and local governments were responsible for providing relief from economic distress. Yet, African Americans had a much harder time getting aid than white people and when they managed to get it they were given less. The devastating Depression made it impossible for the nation's charitable organizations to meet the needs of more than a small proportion of the millions of the hungry, homeless, and unemployed American citizens. On their part, state and local governments could not or would not provide increased welfare benefits or unemployment insurance to relieve the sufferings of those mostly vulnerable to economic distresses. Even when these local governments wanted to provide help for the needy people, the economic collapse so reduced tax receipts that it became almost impossible for agencies to provide relief.¹⁵⁶

So, in 1932, the third year of the Great Depression, when voters elected Roosevelt to the presidency, this demonstrated the country's loss of faith in the Republican Party and its economic policies and even philosophy. For the time being, however, African Americans still clung to the Republican banner. To counter the Depression, in his first term, Roosevelt inaugurated his New Deal, a multitude of programs that would shift the allegiance of African Americans to the Democratic Party. Initially, his programs continued old patterns of discrimination against African Americans, but in 1935 the New Deal was promoting profound social changes and providing more equal benefits.¹⁵⁷

During his first one hundred days in office, President Roosevelt introduced through Congress several new economic initiatives that became known as the first New Deal. Unlike his predecessor Hoover who relied on an already predetermined plan to combat the Depression, Roosevelt favored experimentation, tempered by political expediency, as the guide to federal action. With slight resistance, Congress passed Roosevelt's straggling and complex laws that aimed at reconditioning the nation's agricultural, financial, and industrial systems with the hope of restoring prosperity. At the same time, Roosevelt moved to combat the immediate sufferings of the unemployed people with great emergency federal relief efforts. In fact, a number of the first New Deal's programs benefited both white and black

¹⁵⁵ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁵⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

Americans, but the presence and power of the white southerners in the Democratic Party and the nearly absence of African-American political power in the South led many of these programs to be administered in an unfair way.¹⁵⁸

The Agricultural Adjustment Act (A.A.A.) was designed to protect farmers to provide them with subsidies in order to limit production with the aim of stabilizing prices. This program illustrates the key benefits as well as the problems African Americans experienced during the first New Deal. The theoretical underpinning of the A.A.A. was that reducing production would lead to an increase in the prices of agricultural goods. Therefore, farmers would be paid to grow less. This program also allowed sharecroppers and tenant farmers¹⁵⁹ to get part of the subsidies and enabled new rural relief agencies to provide supplementary income to the off-season wage workers. In fact, this program helped many African Americans, because it poured billions of dollars into the agricultural sector on which more than 4.5 million black Americans relied on for their living. The program was also designed to address the problems of those farmers, disproportionately black Americans, who heavily relied on cash crops like cotton. Statistics had shown that by 1929, three out of four African American farmers received at least 40 percent of their gross income from growing cotton, compared with two out of five white farmers. Therefore, the flow financial assistance from the A.A.A. did, at least for a short period of time, slow the migration of black people from farming areas. As a matter of fact, fewer quitted their farming lands during the first two years of the program than in the two years before it came into life. All in all, from a wider perspective, the first New Deal seems to have caused a deceleration in the rate at which blacks left their lands especially in the South. Indeed, during the 1930s only about 4.5 percent of African Americans abandoned farming, while about 8.6 percent did so during the 1920s.¹⁶⁰

Yet, contrary to protections written into the law, the A.A.A. was often administered in unfair and corrupt ways. In fact, local control of the A.A.A. was in the hands of the Extension Service and Country Agricultural Conservation Committees, which were supposed to represent all the farmers including African Americans. Nevertheless, the county agents were often the planters themselves –white of course–, and the committees reflected southern

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ A tenant farmer is one who resides on and farms a land owned by a landlord. In American history, tenant farming is an agricultural production system whereby farmers cultivate crops on rented lands. It was one of the two systems of agriculture that emerged in the South of the United States following the American Civil War; the other system was sharecropping.

¹⁶⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 489.

politics as a whole by favoring anti-black attitudes and policies that excluded African Americans. The latter were further disadvantaged by a unilateral system of bookkeeping which was more advantageous to the whites and unfair credit relations between landlords and tenant farmers. For instance, during the first two years of the A.A.A. African American farmers complained that white landlords seized and pocketed millions of dollars of benefit checks that were supposed to be forwarded to tenant farmers. In addition, to compound the jury, certain planters then expelled the sharecroppers and tenant farmers from their land.¹⁶¹ In this context, John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moses, Jr. stated:

While the farmers' cash benefits rose to billions of dollars under the AAA, many of the grants intended for Negro farmers were dissipated and misappropriated. Many landlords took advantage of the illiterate sharecroppers and tenants and kept the checks intended for them...Even after administrative rules were changed to provide for payments to be made directly to the tenants, many blacks suffered; for then white landlords would merely remove them from the land and receive the benefits themselves.¹⁶²

The experience of African Americans with the National Industrial Recovery Act (N.I.R.A.) reflected the same kind of problems they had with the A.A.A. The N.I.R.A. was intended to revive industry by allowing factories to collaborate in establishing codes of conduct in order to govern prices, wage levels, and employment policies, all of which to be supervised by the National Recovery Administration (N.R.A.). Although the N.R.A. supervised the drafting of the codes of conduct, it faced enormous resistance from white employers and unions in eliminating racial disparities in working conditions as well as in wage rates. Even when African American advocates won wage increases for occupations in which black workers predominated, the outcome was frequently a shift to white labor i.e. the displacement of black workers. These practices pushed some African American newspapers and organizations to declare that N.R.A. really advocated the "Negro Removal Agency" or "Negroes Robbed Again." To relieve many African American workers and advocates, the Supreme Court declared, in 1935, the N.I.R.A. to be unconstitutional.¹⁶³ In an article entitled, "Last Hired, First Fired? Unemployment and Urban Black Workers During the Great Depression," William A. Sundstrom referred to one class of explanation for the racial

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 489-490.

¹⁶² John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 352.

¹⁶³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 490.

unemployment gap and stated that the New Deal policies had an adverse impact on the employment opportunities available for the less skilled laborers, including African Americans. The minimum wage codes encouraged employers to replace black laborers with white laborers, who before the codes were unwilling to accept the market-clearing wages. An employer with a preference for white workers, faced with a mandatory and equal minimum wage for both blacks and whites, would automatically lay off blacks. Black critics of the N.R.A. referred to it as, among other labels, the “Negro Removal Act”.¹⁶⁴

The New Deal also created a number of national welfare programs including the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (F.E.R.A.), the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.), and the Civil Works Administration (C.W.A.), and the Public Works Administration (P.W.A.). Although administered in inadequate and unfair ways on the local levels, these programs were the only alternative left for African American people if they wanted to avoid starvation. Despite protests from the N.A.A.C.P., at least the California camps did institute segregation. For example, Dayton Jones of the F.E.R.A. in California designed a plan that ignored the C.C.C. regulations banning discrimination. On June 26th, 1935, and in a letter he wrote, Jones shared his ingenious proposal for effective internal segregation practices within the camps with W. Frank Persons, the C.C.C. director of selections.¹⁶⁵

The previously mentioned relief programs helped many African Americans through the worst times of the Great Depression. Yet, they also tended to be more helpful to white people than they were to black people. For instance, at its beginnings, the C.C.C. was a strictly segregated institution which had only about 5 percent of its slots going to African American youths during its first year. The C.C.C. regularly hired whites first and generally brought electricity and other services to white neighborhoods before black ones. Although the act that established the C.C.C. banned discrimination based on race, and despite the fact that the unemployment rate of black young men was twice that of whites, proportionally fewer black youths secured C.C.C. positions. Mississippi granted African Americans less than 2 percent of its C.C.C. positions, although it had a majority black population. Two counties within Georgia whose black populations exceeded 60 percent selected no black people at all. Similar patterns of employment discrimination emerged in rural Arkansas and Florida. When

¹⁶⁴ William A. Sundstrom, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

¹⁶⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

questioned, respective authorities replied that the local whites received the slots because they were the neediest.¹⁶⁶

In the same way, although the F.E.R.A. tended to be fairly administered in the Northern cities, it reached only few of the needy blacks in the South.¹⁶⁷ As Cheryl Lynn Greenberg wrote: “Despite federal guidelines, most local programs continued to discriminate on racial grounds, especially those in the South.”¹⁶⁸ For Greenberg, the F.E.R.A. represented a vivid example of rampant racial disparities. During its two years of operation, it spent \$4 billion, mainly through the distribution of direct financial aid to the needy. These payments were, on a routine basis, more generous to the whites, especially in the South. For example, in Houston, Texas, black families who were on relief got only three-fourths of what white families received. In Atlanta, Georgia, although the average white family got nearly \$33 in relief per month, the average black family had to rely on less than \$20 each month. In total, black rural families on relief in 1935 received about \$9 monthly while similar white families received nearly \$15. Such pay inequities were very common across the South. Ironically enough, officials explained that because African Americans had lower living standards compared with white Americans they required less money to meet their needs.¹⁶⁹

Thus, not only did African Americans suffer from pay disparities, but black applicants were also denied relief more often than did their white counterparts. In Mississippi, for example, although African Americans were a majority of Mississippi’s population, only 9 percent received any relief at all in 1932, compared with 14 percent of whites. In Birmingham, Alabama, officials regularly rejected black applicants on the basis that they were undeserving, although many private southern charitable organizations and soup kitchens refused to serve African Americans.¹⁷⁰

Yet, the first New Deal was not totally bleak for African Americans. In addition to the benefits that they gained from New Deal relief programs, –although administered unfairly and corruptly– African Americans also gained new influence and allies within the Roosevelt Administration during which there started an emerging consciousness among white liberals not only about the problems but also about the potential electoral power of black Americans.

¹⁶⁶ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁶⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

¹⁶⁸ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The latter found a powerful ally in First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt who had a commitment to racial justice. Not only did she arrange meetings for black leaders in the White House, but she also persuaded her husband to consider legislation for blacks' rights. Moreover, she challenged Jim Crow laws by refusing to sit in a racist white-only section in one of the meetings in the South. Furthermore, she wrote newspapers columns calling for "fair play and equal opportunity for Negro citizens."¹⁷¹ In this context, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg wrote:

The engagement of Eleanor Roosevelt in civil rights played a key role in improving the federal government's record on race. Using the public platform provided by her status as first lady, Mrs. Roosevelt took every opportunity to speak out on the issue. She called on her husband and Congress to improve New Deal programs with respect to race and to address discrimination, segregation, and lynching head on.¹⁷²

Other liberals joined Eleanor Roosevelt in her attempt to ensure racial justice and the appointment of African Americans throughout the government. In fact, in 1933, President Roosevelt assented to their request and appointed someone in his administration to ensure the fair treatment of African Americans. Similar efforts to allow black Americans into government positions were made by Eleanor Roosevelt and other administration officials such as secretary of Commerce Daniel Roper. The result was that the doors to government positions began opening for African Americans in an unprecedented way. A group of highly placed African American social scientists were linked in a network known as the Federal Council on Negro Affairs, also known as Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet". The leader of this body, which consisted basically of New Deal race specialists, was Mary Mcleod Bethune. This cadre of policy advisers pressured the president and the heads of the federal agencies to support and adopt color-blind policies and lobbied to improve the educational, social, and economic status of African Americans.¹⁷³ For Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, "the visibility of FDR's "Black Cabinet" of African Americans sent an important and inspirational message to all those looking for evidence that the government supported racial equality."¹⁷⁴ Yet, during his First New Deal, Roosevelt did little to directly address the issue of racial inequality in the United States. In this context, Greenberg stated:

¹⁷¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, pp. 490-491.

¹⁷² Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁷³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, pp. 491-492.

¹⁷⁴ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

President Roosevelt, who promised equality and opportunity for what he termed “the forgotten man,” and who was aware of the barriers facing black people, was nevertheless largely unwilling to challenge segregation and discrimination head on. In the “solid South,” long-serving Democratic elected officials supported white supremacy as well as the New Deal, and their seniority in Congress meant they controlled important committees. Roosevelt feared that taking on segregation would alienate them, which would in turn undermine his carefully constructed political coalition and jeopardize his legislative priorities. He was not willing to take the risk. As a result, Roosevelt did little in the first years of his presidency to enforce or even encourage civil rights provisions.¹⁷⁵

By late 1935, after a couple of years characterized by a slow recovery, a great deal of the first New Deal was in a state of mess. A major part of it had been invalidated by the Supreme Court, while a conservative backlash was emerging against the Roosevelt administration as a reaction, President Roosevelt opted for a second burst of legislation that came to be known as the second New Deal. It was marked by the passage of the Social Security Act (S.S.A.), the National Labor Relations Act (N.L.R.A.), the creation of the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.), and other measures much more radical than those he had established in 1933. For example, the N.L.R.A. helped unions get founded and grow. The S.S.A. provided the fundamentals of a social welfare system in addition to unemployment and retirement insurances. This new wave of laws, which became known as the second New Deal, survived legal challenges and fundamentally reshaped American political culture by strengthening the role of the federal government.¹⁷⁶

The leftward political shift in Roosevelt’s new policies helped him win the presidential elections of 1936 in a decisive victory. The Democratic Party began to win the votes of a large number of African Americans especially in the large cities of the North. The Great Migration had led tens of thousands of potential black voters to northern urban centers which were the traditional strongholds of the Democratic Party machines, like in Chicago. Blacks began to link political power with possibility of improving their condition especially economic ones. As a matter of fact, by the end of the 1930s, black urban voters accumulated remarkable influence in key states including Ohio, Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania. This

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁷⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 493.

potential consciousness among African Americans led to the election of a number of black state legislators in Illinois, Indiana, California, Kansas, Kentucky, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. In another sign of change, certain Democrats began supporting anti-lynching legislation. As an example, Congressman Mitchell delivered a strong speech that was printed in the Congressional Record in 1935 supporting President Roosevelt as an anti-lynching advocate. Mitchell declared: “No President has been more outspoken against the horrible crime of lynching than has Mr. Roosevelt. In speaking of lynching some time ago he characterized it as ‘collective murder’ and spoke of it as a crime which blackens the record of America.” Mitchell told black audiences, “Let me say again, the attitude of the administration at the White House is absolutely fair and without prejudice, insofar as the Negro citizenry is concerned.”¹⁷⁷

Therefore, the presidential elections of 1936 revealed that Roosevelt had, in fact, captured the allegiance of most African Americans. Yet, the increased participation of black people in the Democratic Party disturbed the white southern elite. Tension between white conservative Democrats and black Democrats erupted at the Democratic Party’s convention in Philadelphia. The seating of 32 black delegates outraged southern politicians. In addition, the selection of a black Baptist minister to open a session with a prayer infuriated South Carolina Senator Ellison D. Smith (known as “Cotton Ed”), who, accompanied by Mayor Burnet Maybank of Charleston in addition to a number of other delegates, marched off the floor, announcing that they were against any political organization that looked upon black people as political and social equals to them. Therefore, despite the rise of black Democrats, southern congressmen managed to exclude many African Americans from key government programs. For instance, they worked hard in order to deny the benefits of the S.S.A. and the N.L.R.A. to black domestic workers and agricultural laborers. Yet, these white southerners could not totally stop the tilt towards a fairer administration of New Deal programs or the resurgence of the push for equal rights which had been dormant since the end of the Reconstruction. The W.P.A. illustrated the changes that the second New Deal Programs and the increasing shift of blacks to the Democratic Party brought. The W.P.A. was administered far more fairly than were the first New Deal programs. The national government explicitly rejected racial discrimination and insisted that local administrators complied. Though far from being perfect, by 1939 the W.P.A. had provided assistance to nearly one million African American families on a far more unprejudiced basis than ever before. The same principle prevailed in the

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

W.P.A.'s four arts programs; the Federal Art Project (F.A.P.), the Federal Music Project (F.M.P.), the Federal Theater Project (F.T.P.), and the Federal Writers' Project (F.W.P.), which employed thousands of intellectuals, musicians, artists, and writers.¹⁷⁸

In his book Not Alms but Opportunity: the Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910-1950, Touré F. Reed stated that while Roosevelt's recovery programs promised a gentler and kinder society, the limits of Democratic politics considerably undermined the cause of racial equality in federal programs. Reed wrote about the issue:

Despite the president's pledge to run the New Deal with "absolute equality and fairness," discrimination in recovery agencies was rampant as Urban Leaguers and other civil rights leaders of the day noted, local control over the administration of federal programs resulted in significant disparities between blacks and whites in a range of initiatives, . . . The power wielded by southern Democrats in Congress likewise led to the exclusion of the majority of Afro-Americans from the purview of the Social Security and Fair Labor Standards Acts.¹⁷⁹

During the 1930s, the N.A.A.C.P. became a more dynamic and effective advocate of black civil rights. This biracial organization took the lead in pressing the national government to protect the rights of African Americans and abolish blatant forms of racism in government programs. Part of the reason for this new dynamism was the leadership of Walter White, who was an insistent voice of protest against racism and an ardent advocate and lobbyist for civil rights legislation and racial justice. In addition, throughout the 1930s, many African American people moved into leadership positions in the N.A.A.C.P. and joined its different branches. Still, it is important to mention that, the New Deal which had stimulated just some economic recovery for African Americans, did, more importantly, lay the basis for a powerful national state and a political coalition that, beginning with the Second World War, would challenge the nation's racial system.¹⁸⁰

So, if the Great Depression left African Americans stranded, New Deal programs provided them with inadequate needed economic assistance. They received not only less than they needed but disproportionately less than the whites. In addition, New Deal programs were

¹⁷⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 493-496.

¹⁷⁹ Touré F. Reed, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

¹⁸⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 485-503.

administered at state and local levels where racial segregation and discrimination were still widely and systemically enforced. In fact, the New Deal did little to challenge the existing segregation and racial discrimination prevailing during the 1930s. This locked African Americans into a status of second-class citizens. In this respect, Greenberg wrote:

[T]he New Deal provided less of everything to black people than to white: less funding, fewer services, worse jobs, and a lower proportion of the needy served. By any objective measure African Americans were poorer, less well educated, more disadvantaged, and more desperate. They received not only less than they needed, but proportionately less than whites. The New Deal did not—perhaps could not—overcome the racism, both personal and structural, that kept black people locked into second-class citizenship.¹⁸¹

Therefore, as many historians stated it, the New Deal for African Americans was but a raw deal.

VI- The Second World War Era and the Seeds of a Black Revolution

Even before the United States entered WWII, race was obviously an international issue. African Americans were aware of developing international events and their racial significance. The black press was reporting on what was happening in Africa and India where Mahatma Gandhi was leading a number of peaceful protests against British colonial rule. But, the international event that most moved the African American community was the invasion of Ethiopia by the Italian forces under the leadership of Dictator Benito Mussolini in 1935. In fact, Ethiopia was of a special significance for African Americans as the only remaining independent African nation. As the clouds of a possible second world war started to gather over Europe and Asia, African Americans were conscious of the wider issues. Nevertheless, for many of them, the conflict in Europe was not their business. For them, it was a “white man’s war,” and as some justified, the American and European government had not intervened to defend Ethiopia. Above all, many African Americans questioned what a second world war would bring for them; then they answered: “Nothing!”¹⁸² The Chicago Defender

¹⁸¹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 64.

¹⁸² Neil A. Wynn, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

captured the frustrations of African Americans in an editorial, “Why die for democracy for some foreign country when we don’t even have it here?”¹⁸³

When Ethiopia was invaded by Mussolini in 1935, fraternal groups, black churches, and political organizations all launched protests. The response to the Ethiopian invasion also reflected another political strategy used by black activists during this decade in order to convince the white folks that racism is evil. After the Nazi Party of Adolph Hitler gained a strong foothold in the German Reichstag in 1932, and Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933, a number of protests including the one that took place in Norfolk explicitly linked the civil rights struggle of blacks inside the United States to the emerging struggle against Fascism abroad. Again, how could the American people who revolted against the unfair Nazi treatment of minority groups accept equally offensive American practices such as segregation, lynching, and the exclusion of African Americans from job opportunities or voting? Then, if it was wrong for the Nazis to segregate the Jews from German society and to ban them from jobs and universities or segregate them in dirty and overcrowded ghettos just because of their ancestry, similar kind of treatment of African American people –just because they were black– in the United States was equally wrong. If we change the word “Jew” to the word “Negro” or “black” there would be little to distinguish Nazi ideology abroad from that of Jim Crow at home. In fact, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in the year 1935 prompted a number of magazines including the Opportunity and The Crisis to shed light on the issue stating that the victimization of Ethiopians, of course Africans, was parallel to that of African Americans. In addition, Kristallnacht, the 1937 coordinated Nazi attack on German as well as Austrian Jewish businesses, provided similar observations. The obvious disparity between American condemnation of the European discrimination against certain minorities and America’s treatment of its own minorities, especially African Americans, became increasingly apparent and civil rights activists used it as an argument.¹⁸⁴

Having seen their expectations being shattered after the First World War, many African Americans were deeply suspicious of government propaganda encouraging military intervention in the Second World War. African Americans leaders defended an isolationist attitude; looking at the European struggle as “white-man’s war” in which African Americans had little or no part to play. African American newspapers emphasized the hypocrisy of white

¹⁸³ Quoted in: Joe William Trotter, Jr. “From a Raw Deal to a New Deal? 1929-1945.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880. Ed. Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005. P. 157.

¹⁸⁴ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

American people who criticized the racist policies of the Nazi regime of Germany outside the borders of the United States while practicing segregation and racial discrimination upon African American people inside the states.¹⁸⁵ According to the Richmond Planet: “We manage by erosion or denial of law to disfranchise a greater proportion of the American electorate on account of race and color than Hitler does on account of race and creed.”¹⁸⁶ In fact, African Americans not only questioned their role in this war, but they also equated Nazism and European imperialism with white supremacy in the United States. As the noted columnist George Schuyler, writing for the popular and nationally influential black newspaper, the Pittsburgh Courier, argued that black Americans had no stake in this international conflict, asking, “Why should Negroes fight for democracy abroad when they were refused democracy in every American activity except tax paying?”¹⁸⁷ In his book The African American Years, Gabriel Burns Stepto stated:

African Americans continued to protest aggressively against being asked to serve the cause of democracy in a military that sanctioned racial segregation and discrimination. In the light of Adolph Hitler’s racist, white supremacist, and anti-Semitic claims, the United States found its own racial policies—in civilian life and in the armed services—under increasing scrutiny from the international community. African Americans were being asked to share the burdens of war against Hitlerism and fascism, while they themselves were still denied freedom and equal opportunity at home.¹⁸⁸

Yet, after the Japanese military had bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, African Americans nevertheless answered the call to arms, with the conviction that their patriotism must reinforce their claim for full citizenship and equality in the American society.¹⁸⁹

According to Mathew C. Whitaker, America’s crusade to make the world safe for democracy and free people everywhere from racist dictators failed to reach millions of its own black citizens, who still lacked access to freedom and democracy themselves. Without any doubt, white supremacy and Jim Crow segregation thrived in the United States during the

¹⁸⁵ David Brown, and Clive Webb. Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2007. P. 251.

¹⁸⁶ Richmond Planet, 23 April 1938. Quoted in: David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 251.

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in: Nell Irvin Painter. Creating Black Americans: African-American History and its Meanings, 1916 to the Present. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2006. P. 222.

¹⁸⁸ Gabriel Burns Stepto. The African American Years: Chronologies of African American History and Experience. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2003. P. 297.

¹⁸⁹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 251.

war, but African Americans resisted their oppression at home even as they defended the nation abroad.¹⁹⁰ In fact, as the decade following the Depression approached and the war loomed closer, the American economic landscape started to change. Jobs, especially in the industrial sector, became more available. The U.S. government began investigations in training programs. Relief rolls also declined. Nevertheless, African Americans' struggle for equal opportunities, whites' resistance, and limited governmental response to racial issues continued. This meant more protests on the part of blacks and mounting violence from white supremacists.¹⁹¹ Although the war itself is beyond the scope of this research work, but a glance at the developments as the United States was preparing for war helps reveal how much African Americans had learned from this decade of political and economic struggles.

As the war began in Europe, as the American industrial production increased, and young able men to serve in the Armed Forces disappeared from workforce, the demand for labor force increased. Consequently, the number of people receiving government relief declined as unemployment rates plummeted and the average wages began to rise. As it was experienced during the economic expansion of the early twentieth century, black people along with other minority groups in the United States now benefited to a certain extent as job opportunities became more available and wages rose. With the expanding needs for labor force, black employment rates increased dramatically. This means that the number of African Americans on unemployment lists and relief rolls declined, but still it is important to mention that it was not as quickly as for the whites. But despite this fact, racial discrimination persisted both in private industry as well as in the military.¹⁹² Neil A. Wynn shows that African Americans' status in the American military corps was a reflection of their status in the American society in general. He wrote: "At the time of the outbreak of war in Europe, the situation of African Americans in the military reflected their status in society as a whole. In 1939, the army was segregated, and African Americans could serve only in four regular army units established after the Civil War."¹⁹³

According to military historian Bryan D. Booker, some African Americans were enthusiastic for black participation in the war, seeing the war as a way to improve their position within the American society. For instance, Army Sergeant James Tillman recalls that

¹⁹⁰ Matthew C. Whitaker. Peace Be Still: Modern Black America from World War II to Barack Obama. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. P. 9.

¹⁹¹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁹² Ibid., pp. 111-112.

¹⁹³ Neil A. Wynn, op. cit., p. 26.

while he and other African Americans faced many troubles, they were fighting for something of far greater importance, the end of racial segregation: “We were fighting for a greater cause, for our people. . . We were fighting for the flag and for our rights. We knew that this would be the beginning for breaking down segregation.”¹⁹⁴

Actually, the federal government facilitated the recruitment of African American soldiers through the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. In fact, this act authorized the enlistment and military instruction, without consideration because of race of all males between the ages of eighteen and thirty six. Yet, if black men could serve to defend their country, that was only at a segregated basis for the military maintained a strict policy of racial separation. African Americans, in reality, were subject to total exclusion from certain sections of the United States Armed Forces. For instance, the Air Corps, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard all rejected the admission of black servicemen. Likewise, the Navy excluded blacks from naval service, except as messmen. Black women were not an exception as racial quotas also limited the percentages of black female recruits. While 6000 black women joined the Women’s Army Corps (W.A.C.), only about 500 were able to serve as military nurses during the war and that was because of restrictions based on race.¹⁹⁵ In this respect, Alan M. Osur wrote about the situation of African Americans who joined the United States Army Air Forces (U.S.A.A.F. or A.A.F). He stated:

Though there were noticeable breakthroughs for blacks entering the Army Air Forces, the AAF remained reluctant to accept them and had made repeated attempts to restrict their progress. By April 1945, only one of 90 was an officer while 1/6th of the white force was commissioned. The AAF organized a vast majority into segregated service units performing more or less routine tasks about the bases . . . [A]lmost all blacks in the AAF served in segregated units and lived in segregated facilities.¹⁹⁶

Although the protests of civil rights leaders emphasized the discriminatory policies of the U.S. military, this did not discourage more than 1 million blacks from joining the U.S. military forces. Despite this contribution to the war effort, black servicemen, both male and female, faced persistent discrimination. Not only did the army maintain its discriminatory

¹⁹⁴ Bryan D. Booker. African Americans in the United States Army in World War II. NC: McFarland, 2012. P. 27.

¹⁹⁵ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 252.

¹⁹⁶ Alan M. Osur. Separate and Unequal: Race Relations in the AAF During World War II. United States of America: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2000. P. 17.

policies, but also restricted many African American soldiers to non-combat tasks. African American troops washed dirty laundry, built bridges, dug ditches, cooked and served meals, and, in short, performed almost every duty within the army except fighting. As late as the year 1943, out of every five African American servicemen, more than four remained stationed at home performing menial labor roles. In addition, African American servicemen also faced little chances of promotion through the military ranks. By 1945, African Americans represented less than two percent of all the army officers. On the other side, African American women who served in the armed forces faced both racism as well as sexual harassment from the part of white soldiers.¹⁹⁷

Above all, black soldiers suffered from further intimidation and abuse from white civilians. In addition to being obliged to travel to and from military bases abroad segregated streetcars and buses, and being denied access to many recreational facilities that their white counterparts enjoyed just because of considerations of race, black soldiers were not protected by their military uniforms from the intimidation, harassment, and abuse of white civilians. Tensions between black troops and local whites often developed into open conflicts. In April 1941, a group of whites bound and hanged a young black soldier, Private Felix Hall, near Fort Benning, Georgia. In January 1942, white police officers launched an unprovoked attack on black troops in Alexandria, Louisiana. This event incited a riot that resulted in the deaths of twenty-eight blacks and the arrest of more than three thousand others. Further racial disturbances erupted at different army bases across the South where black soldiers experienced the Jim Crow caste system.¹⁹⁸ In this context, Alan M. Osur wrote: “In the local communities, the fact that African Americans wore the uniforms as members of the Armed Forces did not alter the traditional racial attitudes of whites. And to a large extent, the War Department and AAF did little to protect blacks.”¹⁹⁹ In the same context, Maureen Honey wrote:

Aggravating these discriminatory practices were the numerous instances of violence against black soldiers at training camps, such as the shooting of a soldier by white police when he sat in the white section of a bus in Beaumont, Texas, or the killing of another soldier in Durham, North Carolina, by a white

¹⁹⁷ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

¹⁹⁹ Alan M. Osur, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

bus driver. In 1942, three soldiers based in Alexandria, Louisiana, were convicted of rape and sentenced to death.²⁰⁰

In fact, the buildup to WWII had begun in the late thirties of the 20th century. Each step led to an infusion of orders and money for war materiel to dormant or infant American industries. When the United States officially entered the war in December 1941, war production reached high levels. The opening of millions of new jobs resulted in a tremendous demand for labor force and dropped the unemployment rate to unimaginable levels. Yet, although the National Defense Advisory Committee (N.D.A.C.) urged employers to hire workers without regard to race or religion, the same discriminatory practices that had limited African American opportunities during the Depression decade persisted as the American nation moved toward the war. Especially in skilled and professional work areas, many contractors continued to hire only white people. They excluded black people even from training programs and maintained segregated workplaces. Discrimination also extended to the United States Employment Service (U.S.E.S.), whose southern branches systematically excluded all black people from vocational training as well as from job opportunities in skilled jobs. Even the National Defense Training Act, which contained a prohibition against racial discrimination, still favored and prioritized white applicants. This persistent unequal treatment provoked increasingly public protests from African Americans. These protests extended beyond mere words. Political coalitions that had formed to increase local job opportunities during the 1930s now enlarged their scope to include businesses elsewhere in the cities, municipal services, and other public facilities. For example, in St. Louis, like in New York, political action managed to guarantee black jobs in the gas, electric, and telephone companies. In addition, the N.A.A.C.P. managed to convince a number of hospitals in the North that had previously refused to hire black nurses and doctors to change their employment policies.²⁰¹

But, the most dramatic protest was, perhaps, the one that actually did not occur. In the spring of 1941 Socialist and labor leader A. Philip Randolph called for a meeting of black leaders at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem, Manhattan, New York city. His proposal was a mass protest march in Washington, D.C., to demand the integration of the military and the prohibition of racial discrimination in the defense industries. In fact, Randolph's proposal caught the imagination of all those who attended the meeting as he called for thousands to

²⁰⁰ Maureen Honey. *Bitter Fruit: African American Women in World War II*. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1999. P. 127.

²⁰¹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., pp. 112-114.

join the march. Although he had long been working in coalition with white civil rights leaders, Randolph insisted that this march needed to be made up wholly of black people. This would testify black people's resolve, ability, and power. It is important to state that Randolph called for an all-black movement not because he opposed interracial cooperation but because he wanted to highlight black power and unity. Desperate to maintain unity during a time of imminent war on one hand, and concerned with protecting America's image overseas if tens of thousands of African American demonstrators called attention to racial inequality within the United States on the other hand, President Franklin D. Roosevelt tried everything he could to persuade Randolph to cancel the march. When all pleas failed, President Roosevelt partially conceded to Randolph's demands. The President signed Executive Order 8802 on June 25th, 1941, and Randolph called off the march. The order prohibited discrimination based on race or religion in the U.S. defense industries. It also established a Fair Employment Practices Committee (F.E.P.C.) to monitor hiring practices.²⁰² In this respect, Robert Zieger said,

Executive Order 8802, issued on June 25, 1941, called for an end to discrimination in hiring and created the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) which, though only partially effective in advancing black employment rights, represented the first sustained federal intervention in the economy in behalf of African Americans since the end of Reconstruction.²⁰³

The march that never happened was the first planned demonstration that resulted in concrete change in governmental policy toward African Americans. Although Executive Order 8802 was the first major federal government response to racial inequality since the Reconstruction, it fell short of the movement's demands. It did not, for example, enforce the integration of the Armed Forces. In addition, given the limitations of the federal government's power to intervene in private businesses, the order applied only to those unions or companies receiving a government defense contract i.e. it applied only to those businesses involved directly with defense contracting. Likewise, the F.E.P.C. did not have any power to enforce the requirement on nondiscrimination in employment practices even in areas over which it had jurisdiction. In many southern areas, for instance, white segregationists dominated the War Labor Boards, which means that even if racial complaints came before them, they could not be resolved just because of considerations of race. As a result, many companies across the

²⁰² Ibid., p. 114.

²⁰³ Robert Zieger. *For Jobs and Freedom: Race and Labor in America since 1885*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014. PP. 123-124.

South still did not accept to hire black workers.²⁰⁴ For Paul Finkelman, the F.E.P.C. was an agency that lacked teeth. In addition to the fact that both the staff and the annual budget of the agency were small, the F.E.P.C. did not have the authority to subpoena, to impose fines, or to imprison those who disregarded its directives. Moreover, the agency could not regulate the hiring policies of private employers or the membership procedures of labor unions.²⁰⁵ Certain African American newspapers were skeptical about the F.E.P.C. The Cleveland Gazette, for instance, called the agency “teethless,” and the Philadelphia Tribune, by the same token, wondered how the F.E.P.C. would work without having enforcement powers.²⁰⁶

In their book Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights, David Brown and Clive Webb stated that the F.E.P.C. represented more of a symbolic than a material victory for African Americans. By failing to empower it with the appropriate enforcement mechanisms, the Roosevelt Administration undermined the agency from the beginning. In addition, the agency faced vehement hostility from the part of white southerners who looked at it as an attempt by the federal government to interfere in their political autonomy.²⁰⁷ Southern white conservatives resented it as they interpreted it as a federal challenge to their southern social customs and order. As Frank Dixon, the governor of Alabama declared, “the present emergency should not be used as a pretext to bring about the abolition of the color lines in the South.”²⁰⁸ Ultimately, and as David Brown and Clive Webb believed it, the F.E.P.C. did little to guarantee fair employment opportunities for African Americans. In fact, many southern blacks were too intimidated to file complaints against contractors in the defense industries. In addition, the F.E.P.C. upheld the position of the plaintiff in only a fifth of the cases it received. Even in these cases, its decisions were met with strong and sometimes with violent opposition. The strength of white southern resistance showed how virulent was the reaction of Southern whites and proved that their resistance to black economic progress was still persistent.²⁰⁹

But this problem was not restricted to the South but extended to the North. Many black workers filed complaints of discrimination against companies and unions in a number of

²⁰⁴ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

²⁰⁵ Paul Finkelman. Milestone Documents in African American History: Exploring the Essential Primary Sources. Dallas, Texas: Schlager Group, Inc., 2010. P. 1157.

²⁰⁶ Andrew Edmund Kersten. Race, Jobs, and the War: The FEPC in the Midwest, 1941-46. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2000. P. 18.

²⁰⁷ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 254.

²⁰⁸ Quoted in: Charles D. Chamberlain. Victory at Home: Manpower and Race in the American South during World War II. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2003. P. 57.

²⁰⁹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 255.

northern cities. In the first year of its operation, the F.E.P.C. received more than 6,000 complaints of discrimination. About 80 percent of these complaints came from African Americans. Entirely one-third came from African American women. All these inadequacies pushed Randolph to continue his efforts in a March on Washington Movement (M.O.W.M.). Its broad goals were the desegregation of the military and of public facilities, employment without discrimination based on race, full access to the ballot, and decolonization; something which would continue to influence and guide civil rights activists for decades to come.²¹⁰ According to David Brown and Clive Webb, the March on Washington Movement represented “the first occasion when the threat of direct action by African Americans had forced direct concessions from the federal government, a tactic that would be utilized to full effect by the civil rights movement during the 1960s.”²¹¹

In fact, it was the combination of black protest and military necessity that eventually resulted in some improvements in the conditions of African American servicemen, both male and female. For example, the Air Force authorized the training of black fighter pilots, although on segregated bases. Also, in 1944, the Navy banned restrictions on black men performing sea duties and allowed black women to join the Woman Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (W.A.V.E.S.). So, although there were certain improvements in the conditions of black servicemen, racism was still frequent. This persistence of racism within the military ranks nonetheless had an important influence in politicizing many African Americans, who became disillusioned because of the failure of the United States of America to honor its own democratic ideals.²¹²

Despite its shortcomings, Executive Order 8802 proved an economic gain for African Americans. In fact, it represented an economic turning point for them. The Government had acknowledged its responsibility to deal with discrimination in employment where it could, and, because of the mounting demand for war production, the order indeed affected thousands of companies, especially those dealing with shipyards and aircraft production. In addition, both the skill level and median income rose within the black community, and unemployment rates declined in the years leading up to Pearl Harbor, with even more improvements in the years to come. Also, the federal government met its commitment by hiring black workers directly. As a result, both the number of African American federal employees and the levels

²¹⁰ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

²¹¹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 253.

of their job classification improved. Certain limited change came within the Armed Forces, as the Air Force had opened a training school for black fighter pilots at Tuskegee and the Navy and Marines removed restrictions and began accepting black men for general service for the first time, albeit still on a segregated basis.²¹³

According to historian Robert Zieger, the Second World War had a crucial impact on African Americans employment rates in general. In this context, he stated:

Although employers were initially reluctant to hire blacks for war production work, by late 1944, at least 1.25 million African Americans were doing industrial work, a 150 percent increase over their numbers in 1940. Almost a quarter of these workers were women. The great majority of new industrial workers—both men and women—were hired to work in munitions and other production plants.²¹⁴

Robert Zieger argued that, “[t]he sheer need for labor was largely responsible for the opening of doors to black workers, but a pioneering presidential order issued in the spring of 1941 also played a role.” According to Zieger, Executive Order 8802, which was issued on June 25, 1941, “called for an end to discrimination in hiring and created the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) which, though only partially effective in advancing black employment rights, represented the first sustained federal intervention in the economy in behalf of African Americans since the end of Reconstruction.”²¹⁵

The economic impact of the rearmament effort was particularly striking for African Americans. The proportions of working African American people exploded in these years, and the opportunities for advancement improved markedly as blacks became a crucial source of labor. For African American women, who had traditionally been relegated to domestic jobs, this period opened up new opportunities as more attractive, better paying, and skilled jobs became available for them. In spite of the fact that white women had more chances to get skilled jobs easily and more quickly than their black counterparts, but in general the number of African American female industrial workers, skilled and unskilled, increased considerably.²¹⁶

²¹³ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

²¹⁴ Robert Zieger, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

²¹⁶ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

In fact, the enlistment of thousands of able-bodied white men in the U.S. Armed Forces created job shortages especially in the defense industries. The labor deficit became more serious because the demand for wartime production increased. Seizing the opportunities that opened up in industries, many African Americans decided to abandon the farms and plantations and look for new jobs in the factories. Some moved to certain urban areas within the South, including the cities of Mobile, Alabama and Norfolk, Virginia. Others left the South altogether, choosing to settle in northern and western states. Although black migration had remained steady since WWI, the number of African Americans leaving the South escalated considerably after 1941. During the Second World War, more than one million black people moved from the South of the United States to the North.²¹⁷ Yet, even in their new settlements, African Americans realized that they could not escape racial segregation even at a lower degree. In this respect, Matthew C. Whitaker pointed out,

Like World War I, World War II generated employment opportunities for blacks and stimulated another phase in what historians have labeled the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North and West. Masses of black migrants again flooded some of America's largest northern and western cities in search of the 'promised land,' only to find racial segregation, financial distress, and limited upward mobility. Even successful blacks were targeted by unhappy and racist whites who abhorred black competition in the workplace and did not welcome black people as neighbors.²¹⁸

The war also fostered increasing inter-racial, or to be better precise, bi-racial, cooperation between black activists and white liberals. On October 20th, 1942, African American leaders from across the Southern states met in Durham, North Carolina, in order to draft a statement on race relations. The signatories to this statement, that came to be known as the Durham Manifesto, declared that they were "fundamentally opposed to the principle and practice of compulsory segregation in our American society". Then, in April 1943, some white moderates met in Atlanta to issue a resolution approving the manifesto. This led to a meeting of black and white representatives in Richmond, Virginia, on June 16th, 1943. This meeting led not only to an additional statement endorsing the Durham Manifesto, but also the decision to set up an inter-racial organization, the Southern Regional Council (S.R.C.). Yet,

²¹⁷ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 253.

²¹⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker. Peace Be Still: Modern Black America from World War II to Barack Obama, op. cit., p. 4.

despite these developments, the relationship between black activists and white racial progressives remained provisional. Although those black leaders who signed the Durham Manifesto strongly denounced racial segregation, their need for the support of white moderates pushed them to add the caveat that it was “both sensible and timely” to focus on specific areas of racial discrimination rather than mounting a direct assault on Jim Crow as a system of segregation. In fact, most white moderates accepted the concept of the immutability of the system of segregation and attempted only to give greater practical meaning to the separate but equal doctrine. Their disinclination to federal interference in southern affairs and aversion to the more militant attitude of northern black leaders further confirmed and highlighted the tactical and ideological differences between themselves and African American activists.²¹⁹

Black civil rights activists tried every potent weapon in their battle to protect the rights of African Americans and enlarge their opportunities. In fact, they used every opportunity to build on their successes and make their case for full equality. On January 31st, 1942, right after the declaration of the war, James G. Thompson, a twenty-six-year-old African American from Wichita, Kansas, wrote a humble, patriotic, and assertive letter to the editor of the black-owned Pittsburgh Courier to express his feelings about the situation of African Americans who were willing to serve the U.S. in the battle against foreign enemies, and who were still being treated as second-class citizens at home during the war. Thompson asked, “Should I Sacrifice to Live ‘Half American’?” The Pittsburg Courier, which was one of the most widely circulated African American newspapers of its time, responded to Thompson’s letter by announcing a “Double V” campaign for double victory against tyranny and aggression abroad and victory over racial prejudice, segregation, and oppression at home. As the editors of the newspaper explained, “WE HAVE A STAKE IN THIS FIGHT WE ARE AMERICANS TOO!” What the campaign did was, in fact, very important.²²⁰ Not only did this “Double V” campaign gather black Americans together in support of racial equality within the United states, but provided them with the opportunity to feel engaged in a bigger struggle for freedom even outside the United States.

The “Double V” slogan designed by one of the largest black newspaper of the Second World War, the Pittsburgh Courier, urged two victories for America; victory against aggression abroad and victory against racism at home. The popular campaign spread quickly

²¹⁹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 257.

²²⁰ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 117.

across the nation. In many newspaper articles, in speeches, and in other public forums, African American leaders talked about the issue. They drew comparisons between the Nazis in Europe and the racist whites within America, drawing the attention of their audiences to the hypocrisy of a democratic country which was fighting for the freedom and democracy of people beyond its borders while denying these basic rights to its American citizens, of course African American ones. In fact, the obvious and horrific repercussions of racism in Europe demanded a rethinking of racial behaviors and practices in America. The “Double V” campaign went further linking the full participation of African American people in the war to the ultimate victory of the Allies. Accordingly, denying black people’s opportunities and basic rights violated the cause of the war, the spirit of the struggle, and the likelihood of the Allied nations’ victory.²²¹

The relationship between Nazism abroad and white supremacy, in the form of racism, in the United States began to attract even the attention of the white community. Like black civil rights activists, many white public figures also linked racial equality within the United States to the Allies’ ultimate victory abroad. In 1941, not less than one hundred white labor leaders along with Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clergy signed a declaration by the Committee on Negroes in Defense Industries that called for racial equality in order to preserve American democratic ideals and therefore further the war effort. Political figures and scholars, like Pearl Buck, Fiorello La Guardia, and Wendell Wilkie, joined their voices to the growing demand for racial justice, equality, and desegregation.²²²

It was clear then that it was the anti-Nazi rhetoric that spurred this liberal political action. Yet, the intellectual underpinnings about the negative effects and dangers of racism came mainly from the ongoing academic research of the time. Based on the new social scientific understandings about racial prejudice carried on by both black and white researchers during the 1930s, the American Council on Education in collaboration with the American Youth Commission began studies that addressed the effects of racism on human personality, and consequently published a series of research reports on racial inequality. Among the most important volumes in that series were, John Dollard’s and Allison Davis’s Children of Bondage: The Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South (1940) and Charles Johnson’s Growing Up in the Black Belt: Negro Youth in the Rural South (1941) that uncovered the relationship between racism and the loss of human potential. During the same

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

period, the American Jewish Committee (A.J.C.) focused its attention on funding socio-psychological studies that addressed racism and anti-Semitism, something that would continue for more than a decade.²²³

In fact, many of these works looked at racism basically from a personal point of view, of the racist. They asserted that racism was a psychological state and a mental illness that was not only dangerous for the individual himself but for the nation as a whole. Social scientists maintained that prejudice and racism were the outcomes of the racist frustrations of the individual and not attitudes inherent to all human beings, and that they were not the behaviors of the people whom the racist underestimated and hated produce them. Attributing responsibility for racism on white people was a huge step forward from those many earlier studies that defended the idea of black physical and intellectual inferiority. But since the focus was on the individual level, it predominantly failed to identify and acknowledge the structural elements of racism as a system, arguing, basically, that to change the racism of the American society was to change the white people's attitudes by teaching them open-mindedness and tolerance.²²⁴

The Supreme Court, with its decisions, also established a significant precedent for future political federal government action to promote African American civil rights. On June 3rd, 1946, the Supreme Court struck a huge blow against *de jure* segregation with its landmark ruling which stated that Virginia's state law enforcing segregation on interstate buses was unconstitutional in the case of *Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia*. In fact, the institutional support of the Supreme Court with its decisions strengthened the N.A.A.C.P. in its legal campaign against all aspects of racial segregation in the American public life. In 1954, less than ten years after the war, the Court would act as a catalyst for a new era of civil rights activism when it would rule that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The Second World War period was also characterized by the emergence of a "new brand of liberalism" that kept the issue of racial reform at the top of its political agenda. Northern liberals looked at racism that persisted throughout the South as an anachronism that threatened the American fundamental and basic values and ideals, including freedom, liberty, equality, and democracy. On that account, they wanted to restructure the South in their own image; an image of an idealized nation. In fact, they hoped to reintegrate black Americans into the democratic process of the American nation by ensuring the restoration of their

²²³ Ibid., p. 118.

²²⁴ Ibid.

political rights as American citizens. This support of Northern liberals would later prove crucial in the civil rights movements during the post-war period.²²⁵

The advances made by African American people during the Second World War period generated a new sense of optimism that the forces of racial progressivism could transform the South and dismantle racism. This kind of sentiment was expressed clearly by the Swedish economist and sociologist Gunnar Myrdal²²⁶ in his influential book An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy. Myrdal claimed that the Second World War had made white Americans more conscious of the contradiction existing between America's ideals of liberty and equality and the harsh reality of racial inequality existing within its borders²²⁷. In the end, he concluded that "This War [WWII] is crucial for the future of the Negro, and the Negro problem is crucial in the War. There is bound to be a redefinition of the Negro's status in America as the result of this War."²²⁸ In this respect, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg wrote: "Myrdal concluded that racial discrimination so deeply violated the American creed of equal opportunity that the nation could not bear the contradiction forever. Ultimately, he argued, white Americans would have to resolve this dilemma by either fulfilling the American promise for all or repudiating it entirely."²²⁹

Yet, there were many reasons to doubt Myrdal's liberal optimism. Tempering the possibility for political change was the reaction of Southern whites, who were concerned about the new militancy among black Americans, and who rejected increasing federal

²²⁵ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 258.

²²⁶ Gunnar Myrdal, in full Karl Gunnar Myrdal, is a Swedish economist and sociologist. He was born on December 6th, 1898, in Gustafs, Dalarna, Sweden. He is best known in the United States for his influential study on race relations that culminated in his famous book: An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy published in 1944 (with the assistance of Richard Sterner and Arnold Marshall Rose). The book tackled the issue of the contradiction between the America's ideal of equality and the harsh reality of racism against its African American citizens. In the book, Myrdal argued that the rampant racial discrimination existing in the United States not only contradicted America's founding principles, but also reduced its productivity and hampered its advancement. Cited in the Supreme Court's landmark decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) which outlawed racial segregation in public schools, the book greatly influenced perspectives on race relations in the United States and helped form the foundation for the civil rights movement that would be tackled in the following chapter. Thanks to this book, Myrdal gained an international reputation as a foe of inequality. In 1974, Myrdal was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics alongside Austrian economist Friedrich Hayek. Besides being an economist and a sociologist, Myrdal was also a politician. He was twice elected to Sweden's Parliament as a senator (1934-1936, 1942-1946), was Sweden's Minister of Commerce (1945-1947), and served as the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (1947-1957). Myrdal died in 1987, in Sweden, at the age of 88.

²²⁷ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 258.

²²⁸ Gunnar Myrdal. An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1944. P. 997.

²²⁹ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 119.

intervention in the state race issues and relations. The Southern white community's backlash frustrated the efforts of activists and reformers. At the level of the Senate, for example, revolts by Southern senators led to the defeat of an anti-poll tax bill in 1944, and the slashing of the budget of the F.E.P.C. by half in 1945. The strong determination of the racist white Southerners to counter reform in favor of African Americans resulted in a wave of repressive violence that pervaded the South right after the war. On February 25th, 1946, in Columbia²³⁰, Tennessee, the police arrested two African American people James Stephenson and his mother, Gladys Stephenson, following an altercation with a white store employee. For the local whites, the incident was a symptom of African Americans' new assertiveness. As a white mob gathered around the local courthouse, blacks gathered as well and armed themselves in defense of their neighborhood. When four of the white police officers, who were sent into the black section of the town, were shot, this resulted in the arrival of state highway patrolmen who, together with the local white residents, ransacked local stores and arrested more than one hundred African Americans. Matters intensified when Columbia policemen killed two black prisoners in custody. The Columbia Race Riot was a powerful reminder that, whatever advances African American people had made during the Second World War, the freedom and democracy for which they had fought and died abroad still eluded them in the United States.²³¹

When Gunnar Myrdal claimed that racial discrimination against African Americans deeply violated the American ideal of equal opportunity and that the American nation had to resolve this dilemma because it could not bear the contradiction forever, too few white Americans agreed with such antiracist arguments. Instead, the vast migration of black Americans to the growing industrial centers and their improved economic status, as results of wartime economic expansion and growth, deepened racial tensions and intensified white resistance to racial equality. This new black migration movement aggravated overcrowding, increased demands on housing, and exacerbated competition for jobs. Alongside their sense of optimism, African Americans grew more angry and frustrated, as the high expectations and potent prospects created by new job opportunities and wartime's rhetoric of equality clashed

²³⁰ In 1946, the city of Columbia contained about five thousand whites and three thousand blacks. Race relations in this city had often been tense, but racial violence decreased during World War II. In the post-war period, however, there were indications of possible future trouble.

²³¹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

with the existing realities of continued hardship, struggle, and disillusionment, all the results of continued discrimination.²³²

At the same time, many white working-class Americans, themselves struggling and frustrated, rejected the flow of what they considered threatening newcomers. Racist stereotypes generated by economic competition sometimes led to violent incidents. White residents of certain neighborhoods attacked any black family trying to move into their neighborhood and destroyed its possessions. For instance, in 1941, in Detroit, Michigan, white residents demanded that the new federal housing project known as the Sojourn Truth Housing Project, which was intended at first to house African Americans, to be a white project instead. When African American families prepared to move in at the end of February 1942, hundreds of furious and enraged white protesters gathered around the housing complex and a racial fight erupted. Although no one was killed, forty people were injured. The police arrested 220 people amongst whom 217 were black. Protests persisted until the National Guard finally mobilized at the end of April to provide and ensure protection for the black families. Yet, this incident proved to be only a prelude to the larger and more violent race riot that ensued the following year.²³³ This war's worst riot took place again in Detroit. On June 22nd, 1943, at Belle Isle Amusement Park, Detroit's main public recreation area along the banks of Detroit's River, conflict erupted between white and black people. As news of the fighting and rumors of rape and murder spread quickly, so did the conflict which spilled into the city. By the time order had been restored on June 24th, twenty blacks and nine whites were killed, and about seven hundred were hurt.²³⁴

Although World War II intensified activism and restored hope in African Americans, the war's ultimate impact on this black community in the United States was mixed. In this context Matthew C. Whitaker said:

The impact of America's involvement in World War II on African Americans is complex. On the one hand, the war ushered in a period of unprecedented progress in black employment, mobility, and professional activism. On the other hand, America's crusade in the name of freedom and democracy in World War II failed to reach millions of its black citizens at home. White

²³² Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ Andrew E. Kersten. "African Americans and World War II." *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring, 2002), p. 15. Oxford University Press on behalf of Organization of American Historians. <<http://www.jstor.com/stable/25163520>>. Accessed: December 21, 2018.

supremacy and racial discrimination flourished in the United States during the war.²³⁵

On the whole, the experience of wartime racial prejudice and discrimination contributed to raise rather than curb black aspirations. Many African Americans came through WWII with an increased racial consciousness. In fact, they were those blacks, who served in the military, who were most deeply aware of the contradiction of the double standards of a country that encouraged black Americans to fight and die in defense of freedom and democracy abroad, but denied them the same basic rights and freedoms within its borders. As had been the situation during the First World War, African American soldiers who served overseas also encountered societies that were racially more tolerant than the American society. France, for instance, welcomed African American soldiers as liberating heroes, tolerating social interaction between them and the white civilian population. Such an experience of equal treatment belied the concept that Jim Crow system represented the natural order of race relations and encouraged African American soldiers to push for reform when the war ended and they were back home.²³⁶

According to Vincent Harding, Robin C.G. Kelly, and Earl Lewis, the thousands of African American military men who returned home from the battlefields of the Second World War, were the ones who seemed most ready to demonstrate the truth of Adam Clayton Powell's statement that blacks were "ready to throw [themselves] into the struggle to make the dream of America become flesh and blood, bread and butter, freedom and equality." These people were determined to fight for civil rights and racial equality at home.²³⁷ A discharged army corporal from Alabama State spoke for the many of his black comrades in 1945 when he declared, "I spent four years in the army to free a bunch of Dutchmen and Frenchmen, and I'm hanged if I'm going to let the Alabama version of the German kick me around when I get home. No sirree-bob! I went into the Army a nigger; and I'm comin' out a man."²³⁸

²³⁵ Matthew C. Whitaker. Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. P. 63.

²³⁶ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., pp. 255-256.

²³⁷ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880. Ed. Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005. PP. 167-174.

²³⁸ Quoted in: Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 174.

Yet, in contrast to WWI, African Americans were less inclined to “close ranks” and delay the struggle for greater social, economic and political inclusion. In this context, Joe William Trotter, Jr. wrote, “African Americans refused to simply “close ranks” and postpone their own struggle for full citizenship and recognition of their rights at home.”²³⁹ “Negroes made the plunder of closing ranks and forgetting their grievances in the last war,” Randolph stated. “We are resolved that we will not make that plunder again.”²⁴⁰ The painful consciousness of the American dilemma, the result of the hypocrisy of the American war aims, pushed them to mobilize in huge numbers for their social rights and liberties during and after the Second World War. Walter White, spokesman for African Americans and Executive Secretary of the N.A.A.C.P., described this new political militancy in the title of a 1945 book as A Rising Wind.²⁴¹

News of the restlessness of black Americans on the home front triggered the anxieties of the racist white Southerners. Rumors spread that dissatisfied and frustrated African Americans were secretly conspiring and preparing to launch a racial rebellion against their employers. In Memphis, Tennessee, for example, white people were worried that black rebels were purchasing cartons filled with guns and ammunition from mail-order catalogues. Other rumors spread through the South that African American domestic servants were joining secret associations inspired by Mrs. Roosevelt, and known as Eleanor Clubs. These clubs allegedly plotted to liberate their black female members from domestic service in white households. As the rumors suggested, the motto of these clubs was “A white woman in every kitchen by 1943.” By the spring of 1942, the rumors of the Eleanor Clubs became so widespread and alarming. Despite the fact that the previous reports proved unfounded, but they demonstrated the mood of racial turmoil to which the Second World War gave rise.²⁴²

African Americans may not have been stockpiling arms, but they were mobilizing politically. Many supported the “Double V” campaign championed by the Pittsburgh Courier, and which called on blacks to fight for democracy not only abroad but at home as well. In addition, the N.A.A.C.P. also experienced a political renaissance. In the years between 1940 and 1945, the membership of the organization grew from 50,556 to 450,000, and the number of its branches from 355 to 1,073. Importantly, 75 percent of these new branches were

²³⁹ Joe William Trotter, Jr. “From a Raw Deal to a New Deal? 1929-1945.”, op. cit., p. 158.

²⁴⁰ Quoted in: Matthew C. Whitaker. Peace Be Still: Modern Black America from World War II to Barack Obama, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁴¹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 256.

²⁴² Ibid.

established in the South, which means that the organization had enlarged the scope of its support beyond its traditional base among middle-class urbanites of the North. Another interesting piece of information about the N.A.A.C.P. then was the fact that among the many African American veterans recruited by the organization during these years were future leaders of the civil rights movement that was to come. In fact, the level of black political mobilization inspired historian Richard M. Dalfiume to describe the Second World War as the “Forgotten Years of the Negro Revolution.”²⁴³

Stimulated by the democratic ideology of the war, African Americans began reexamining their position in the American society. Writing during the war, Gunnar Myrdal, who was conducting a study on race relations in America then, observed, “It cannot be doubted that the spirit of American Negroes in all classes is different today from what it was a generation ago.”²⁴⁴ Part of this new spirit was an increasing militancy, a greater readiness and willingness to protest loud and strong against the white supremacist rule. The war crisis provided black Americans with more reason, opportunity, and justification to protest.²⁴⁵ While few were as optimistic as Myrdal, who foresaw the inevitability of a “redefinition of the Negro’s status in America,” no one could deny that an important change had begun.²⁴⁶

For Myrdal, the Second World War was a stimulus to and a catalyst for a black revolution or protest, and he predicted the inevitability of a “redefinition of the Negro’s status in America as a result of this War.”²⁴⁷ Edward Franklin Frazier, one of the most prominent African American sociologists of the 20th century and the first black president of the American Sociological Association (A.S.A.) claimed that World War Two marked a point where “The Negro was no longer willing to accept discrimination in employment and in housing without protest.”²⁴⁸ In his book Crisis in Black and White, American journalist and author Charles E. Silberman stated that, the war was a “turning point” in American race relations, in which “the seeds of the protest movements of the 1950s and 1960s were sown.”²⁴⁹ For Jeffery Othele Mahan, the Second World War was a “unique era” in African

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Gunnar Myrdal, op. cit., p. 744.

²⁴⁵ Richard M. Dalfiume. “The “Forgotten Years” of the Negro Revolution.” The Journal of American History, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Jun., 1968), pp. 97-98. Oxford University Press on behalf of Organization of American Historians. <<http://www.jstor.com/stable/1894253>>. Accessed: December 21, 2018.

²⁴⁶ Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, op. cit., p. 121.

²⁴⁷ Gunnar Myrdal, op. cit., p. 997.

²⁴⁸ Quoted in: Richard M. Dalfiume, op. cit., p. 90.

²⁴⁹ Quoted in: Richard M. Dalfiume, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

American History, as this period “planted the seeds for the civil rights movement of the mid-20th century.”²⁵⁰

James Ciment thinks that the Second World War had a catalytic effect on racial relations in the American military and in American society at large. For him, the crusade against the racial superiority doctrines of Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany forced some white Americans to question the racial practices existing in their own country which was claiming itself to be the arsenal of democracy. Ciment believes that patriotism and military service contributed to a sense of pride in the African American community and galvanized their convictions that legal and political equality was their right as American citizens. In addition, the economic gains made by African Americans during the war years, as well as in the prosperous years that followed, created a sense of confidence to take on the challenge of political activism. Ciment concludes by saying that “the great civil rights movement of the postwar era was born on the battle battlefields, army bases, defense plants, and homefront of World War II.”²⁵¹ In fact, while a few scholars have indicated the importance of the war years in the black protest movement, the majority have failed to do so. Overlooking what happened before, most books dealing with the subject claim that a black revolution occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. Because of this neglect of the war years, this period of transition in American race relations include the forgotten years of the black revolution.²⁵²

It was the hypocrisy of the American war aims and the paradox resulting from fighting a world war for the defense of democracy abroad and against a totalitarian aggression by an enemy promoting a master race ideology, while upholding racial segregation and white supremacy at home, which made the American dilemma so obvious.²⁵³ In this regard, Donald W. Whisenhunt pointed out:

At the end of World War II, the United States stood preeminent in the world, but there was a characteristic of America that was not very flattering to forward-thinking Americans. Whereas the United States had fought to end totalitarian governments in Europe and Asia, government actions at home toward minorities were not something most Americans could praise.

²⁵⁰ Jeffery Othele Mahan. “World War II (Black Participation in).” *Encyclopedia of African American History*. Ed. Leslie M. Alexander and Walter C. Rucker. California: Facts on File, Inc., ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2010. P. 1112.

²⁵¹ James Ciment. *Atlas of African-American History*. Revised Edition. New York: Facts On File, Inc., An imprint of Infobase Publishing, 2007. P. 143.

²⁵² Richard M. Dalfiume, op. cit., p. 91.

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 106.

Whisenhunt then argued, “As the atrocities of the Holocaust became widely known, many Americans reevaluated the treatment of their own country’s minorities. To be sure, the treatment of African Americans and other minorities . . . was not something of which most Americans could be proud.” After that, Whisenhunt asked the question: “How could the United States hold itself up as a beacon to the rest of the world when its own minorities had second-class status?”²⁵⁴

The war crisis gave African Americans a unique opportunity to point out, for the whole world, the contradiction between the American creed and practice. The democratic ideology and rhetoric with which the war was fought triggered a sense of optimism, hope, and certainty in African Americans that the old patterns of race relations in the United States had to be destroyed forever. In part, these feelings of confidence were also the result of the mass militancy and increased race consciousness that developed during these years. When the expected white acquiescence in a new race structure did not eventuate, the ground was prepared for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s; the seeds were indeed sown during the Second World War years.²⁵⁵ As James Ciment put it, the Second World War benefited African Americans by birthing the Civil Rights era.²⁵⁶ In fact, the Civil Rights Movement was only a new chapter in the long struggle of African Americans for racial equality in America, and there were, of course, certain forces that made the opening for this new chapter.

²⁵⁴ Donald W. Whisenhunt, ed. Reading the Twentieth Century Documents in American History. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. PP. 191-192.

²⁵⁵ Richard M. Dalfiume, op. cit., p. 106.

²⁵⁶ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 143.

Chapter Four:
African Americans and the Civil Rights Movement (1950s-1960s):
Successes and Limitations

In the postwar years, black Americans grew increasingly dissatisfied. During the war years, they had challenged racial discrimination in the military services and in employment, and they had achieved limited gains. Large numbers of African Americans had left the rural areas of the Southern states and headed North where they hoped to find better life conditions and job opportunities in the cities. Yet, in the North they faced the harsh reality of the bad conditions in the crowded urban slums. When the war ended, black servicemen returned home intent on rejecting second-class citizenship. The rise of African American assertiveness played a major role. For most African Americans, time was then ripe to achieve racial equality.

Indeed, black Americans took matters into their hands. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) was resolved to overthrow the “separate but equal” doctrine established by the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* case in 1896, which stated that segregation of public facilities was constitutional as long as the facilities provided for both races were equal. That law had been used since then to sanction racial segregation in schools where facilities were frequently, if not at all times, unequal. The litigation arm of the N.A.A.C.P., led by Thurgood Marshall, began laying the basis for more challenges of racial segregation, especially in the field of public education.

In 1954, the Supreme Court finally struck down the “separate but equal” doctrine that it had defended since 1896. This “separate but equal” doctrine remained intact until the High Court handed down its unanimous decision in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case. The *Brown* ruling, which declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional, thrust the issue of racial segregation in public schools into the national spotlight. One year later, the Supreme Court issued a second *Brown* ruling known as *Brown II* demanding that school boards move with “all deliberate speed” to implement the 1954 decision. In fact, the Court’s *Brown* rulings incited reaction from Southern supremacists who resorted to intimidation, lynching, and other forms of violence to defy the process of school desegregation, and even resorted to massive resistance. White Citizens Councils were also created and the Southern Manifesto issued. Yet, the *Brown* decision gave impetus to the Civil Rights Movement that would emerge in the next years.

I- Catalysts of the Civil Rights Movement

The 1950s, for most white Americans, were an era of unprecedented economic growth that brought unparalleled prosperity, mass consumer culture, and the proliferation of a patriarchal business culture. Wealthy white Americans moved to the suburbs, and by 1960, about 52 percent of whites owned their own houses. This decade is remembered with nostalgia as an age of large and stable nuclear families, mothers and wives who stayed at home, and a society untroubled by social ills like juvenile delinquency, drugs, and crime. It was an era during which nightly television shows like the famous “Ozzie and Harriet” and “I Love Lucy” portrayed the theme of domestic tranquility. Yet, the situation was different for black Americans. The 1950s, for most African Americans, however, were far less joyful. In fact, the American society remained heavily segregated in housing, education, jobs, and income.¹ In this respect, James T. Patterson wrote:

[B]lack people in the South during the 1950s still struggled in a Jim Crow society that segregated everything from schools and buses to bathrooms, beaches, and drinking fountains. Despite campaigns by black activists for voting rights, only a token few black people in the Deep South states were permitted to register to vote. Daily humiliations continued to remind black people of their third-class status.²

Patterson then cited the example that white people never addressed African American men as “mister” but rather as “boy,” “George,” or “Jack.” Likewise, black women were called “Aunt” or were addressed by their first name, never as “Miss” or “Mrs.” Patterson gave another example of newspapers which rarely reported the names of black people but instead described them as “negro,” as in the headline: “a man and a woman were killed, and two negroes.” Patterson continued to state that white people did not shake hands with blacks or socialize with them on the streets.³

In the same respect, Matthew C. Whitaker stated that the period of the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, for most African Americans compared to white Americans, was a decade darkened by continued racial segregation, economic inequality, and episodes of intense

¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. The African-American Odyssey. Fifth Edition. Combined Volume. UPPER Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011. P. 573.

² James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1996. P. 381.

³ Ibid.

violence. The whole nation remained racially divided. In the Southern states, Jim Crow and white violence continued to disfranchise millions of black Americans. The majority of African Americans simply did not benefit equally from the postwar economic boom. Black residents of the urban areas that were densely populated were upset as they saw factory jobs grow scarce because the industrial economy that was based on manufacturing began shifting to being based on technology and services, something for which many black workers lacked adequate skills. In this new economy, African American workers, who were generally less mobile, less experienced, and less educated than their white counterparts, faced higher unemployment rates than did any other racial or ethnic minority in the United States. Even when black workers did make gains, they faced bitter resentment from white workers for the competition they tended to present. As living conditions within the densely populated urban communities deteriorated and racial discrimination persisted, black Americans refused to accept such circumstances, setting the stage and paving the way for an eruption of discontent, anger, dissatisfaction, and eventually for significant changes.⁴

Despite the important gains African Americans succeeded to make during the Second World War Era, Jim Crow still prevailed. Even with the Supreme Court's decision in the case *Smith v. Allwright* in 1944 which declared the white primary⁵ unconstitutional, and helped reenfranchise black voters in the states of Texas, Tennessee, and Florida, Jim Crow restrictions and the menace of white violence subjected millions of African Americans to a variety of voter registration restrictions and kept them from voting in the states of the Deep South. Also, although the Supreme Court's ruling in 1948, in the case of *Shelley v. Kramer*, outlawed racially restricted residential covenants that had permitted homeowners to refuse to sell or lease their property to black Americans was an important victory, white violence and new extralegal strategies still made housing integration only a distant dream, and made black-white residential segregation a major source of unequal opportunity for African Americans.⁶ In this context, James Patterson pointed out:

As earlier, no aspect of racism in America cut so deeply as housing discrimination. During the 1950s, what one scholar has called a "second

⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker. Peace Be Still: Modern Black America from World War II to Barack Obama. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. PP. 53-54.

⁵ White primaries were primary elections held in some Southern states in which only white voters were allowed to participate. The white primary was one method used by white Democrats to disenfranchise most black voters. The ultimate goal was to prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote and therefore keep them out of the political process; and in other words, limit blacks' political influence.

⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 573.

ghetto” arose in large northern cities such as Chicago. In the Windy City white politicians conspired with downtown businessmen and developers to prevent the central city business district from becoming “ringed by black migrants who were arriving from the South in record numbers. Exploiting federal funds for urban renewal, they declared downtown black neighborhoods to be “slums,” tore them down, and put up commercial buildings or housing for whites in their place.⁷

As Patterson put it, blacks were displaced into tumbledown neighborhoods, increasingly in housing projects that were restricted to an all-black public. For example, most of the 21,000 family units of public housing constructed in Chicago during the 1950s were built in already black areas of the city, thereby considerably increasing the density of African Americans in these regions. Blacks who sought to escape these dense all-black housing projects confronted, as in the past, harsh and in some cases vehement opposition from white property-owners elsewhere in the cities.⁸

More importantly, the majority of African Americans did not benefit equally from the economic boom of the 1950s which allowed so many white Americans to buy and own homes in the suburbs. African Americans who moved into the urban centers, where the number of factories and job opportunities was just beginning to decline, suffered a higher joblessness than any other segment of the American population. Moreover, white workers, fearing to lose their jobs, felt threatened by competition from unemployed African American workers.⁹ As in the past, white employers continuously discriminated against black Americans in hiring, salaries, and job advancement. As a matter of fact, unemployment was normally twice higher for blacks than for whites. Consequently, poverty swept 50 percent or more of African American people even during the economically good years of the mid-1950s.¹⁰ As urban neighborhoods deteriorated and living conditions worsened, conditions were ripe for a massive explosion.¹¹

In fact, many forces combined to ignite the Civil Rights Movement including ongoing social and demographic change; rising pressure from the N.A.A.C.P. and other advocates of racial desegregation; and the United States Supreme Court. Rights consciousness, which was

⁷ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., p 383.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 573.

¹⁰ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., pp. 381-382.

¹¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 573.

already rising in the 1940s, expanded to millions of African American people who were rapidly developing grander expectations in the 1950s. Responding to their aspirations, civil rights advocates in the N.A.A.C.P., which had grown significantly during the Second World War, multiplied their efforts against racial segregation.¹²

In 1954, with the Supreme Court's landmark decision in the case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, in which the justices ruled unanimously that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional, progress in the desegregation of American society moved from the military into the civilian sphere. In fact, it was the N.A.A.C.P.'s legal program of the 1920s and the 1930s which was to a large extent responsible for this significant victory. In 1940, the N.A.A.C.P. founded the Legal Defense and Educational Fund (N.A.A.C.P.-L.D.E.F.), also known as (L.D.F.), to attack the legal grounds of racial inequality in the American educational system. Subsequently, the N.A.A.C.P.-L.D.E.F. fought segregation and racial discrimination not just in education, but in housing, employment, and politics. During the first years of the organization's existence, attorneys for the fund managed to win impressive victories, including the Supreme Court's decision in *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) declaring white primaries unconstitutional, and *Shelley v. Kramer* (1948) outlawing racially restrictive housing covenants. The life and professional career of one of the N.A.A.C.P.-L.D.E.F. prominent lawyers, Constance Baker Motley¹³, best exemplifies the struggle that black professionals, whether men or women, devoted themselves to in order to fight racial and gender segregation as well as the coalescence of various forces that carried the seeds of the coming revolution.¹⁴

In the late 1940s, the N.A.A.C.P.-L.D.E.F.'s attack on racial inequality in graduate education provided the foundation for a full-scale assault on racial segregation. Yet, the organization would no longer be satisfied only to press for the fulfillment of the promise of the separate but equal educational facilities. In fact, in many cases, the facilities were separate but not equal. In 1948, the University of Oklahoma Law School refused to admit Ada Lois Sipuel just because she was black. In *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma*, the Supreme Court ruled, on January 12th, 1948, in favor of Sipuel. The Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Sipuel was entitled to legal education provided by the state and

¹² James T. Patterson. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, op. cit., pp. 385-386.

¹³ For more information about Constance Baker Motley as the only female attorney at the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the work she performed as a civil rights movement lawyer, see: Gary L. Ford Jr. *Constance Baker Motley: One Woman's Fight for Civil Rights and Equal Justice under Law*. Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2017.

¹⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 573.

that Oklahoma had to provide instruction for blacks equal to that of whites in conformity with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In another case, *Sweatt v. Painter*, which the Supreme Court decided in 1950, began when the state supported University of Texas Law School at Austin, which had denied Heman Marion Sweatt admission solely because he was black, attempted to circumvent orders of the court to admit Sweatt by creating a separate facility including three basement rooms, a small library, and a few instructors who would lecture him separately and alone. The court ruled that the university had deprived Sweatt of intangibles such as, the basic and essential components of a legal instruction, the unique opportunity for law students to discuss and exchange ideas and views with which the law is concerned with their peers and others with whom they would be associated in their future professional life.¹⁵

In fact, the Court mentioned certain intangible distinctions: “The University of Texas Law School possesses to a far greater degree those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school.”¹⁶ Acknowledging the existence of significant disparities in faculty and facilities, the Court cited the school’s prestige, the quality of the faculty, and the network of influential alumni. Therefore, excluding Sweet from such prerequisites would eventually place him in “an academic vacuum” and at a disadvantage in his future practice of law. Once more, the Court did not banish the *Plessy* precedent, but it was simply a short step further to announcing that segregation itself was inequality.¹⁷

On the same day the justices ruled in the *Sweat v. Painter* case, June 5th, 1950, they also ruled in the case of *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*. The court declared that the University of Oklahoma’s segregation of George W. McLaurin from the other white students attending the same Graduate School of Education was illegal. As a matter of fact, the University of Oklahoma had admitted McLaurin to its Graduate School of Education but made him sit in the hallway at the classroom door, study in an isolated part of the balcony of the library, and take his meals in a segregated part of the lunchroom. And when he finally gained a normal seat in the classroom, it was marked “reserved for colored.”¹⁸ Ruling for a unanimous Court on June 5th, Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson stated that, “the restriction placed

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 574.

¹⁶ David R. Goldfield. Black, White, and Southern Race Relations and Southern Culture: 1940 to the Present. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990. P. 59.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 574.

upon him [McLaurin] were such that he had been handicapped in his pursuit of effective graduate instruction. . . . Those who will come under his guidance and influence . . . will necessarily suffer to the extent that his training is unequal to that of his classmates. State-imposed restrictions which produce such inequalities cannot be sustained.”¹⁹ Hence, although the high Court had broadened the definition of what constituted inequality, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* precedent remained intact.²⁰

In the two aforementioned cases, the Supreme Court showed its readiness to reconsider and even challenge the “separate but equal” doctrine of racial segregation in public education established by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, and to redefine the meaning of the equal protection of the laws clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. A year later, after the *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* decisions, African American parents and lawyers filed suits in Delaware, Virginia, Kansas, South Carolina, and the District of Columbia asking the courts to extend the qualitative test of the *Sweatt* case to primary and secondary schools and to declare the “separate but equal” doctrine null and void in all the sectors of public education. In fact, the *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* cases were foundation stones for the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* that was to come four years later.²¹

In fact, the state and school districts that discriminated against African Americans tried to claim that the separate facilities used by black school children were equal to those used by their white counterparts. Yet, their case was absurd, especially in the Deep South states. In 1954, South Carolina, for instance, spent three times as much per pupil on its white schools as it did on black schools and 100 times as much on school transportation of white pupils. The value of a white school property was six times more than the value of a black school property. In Mississippi, schools were even more unequal.²²

In the late 1940s, the black parents who had children attending Scott’s branch School in Clarendon County, South Carolina, approached Roderick W. Elliot, the school board chairman, with a simple request for a school bus for black students. In fact, there were some 6,531 black students and only 2,375 white students enrolled in the county’s schools. Despite the fact that Clarendon had 30 school buses to transport white students to and from their schools, no one bus was available to black students. Some black schoolchildren had to walk

¹⁹ Quoted in: David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 59.

²⁰ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 59.

²¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 574-575.

²² James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., p. 387.

distances reaching 18 miles round-trip on a daily basis. Moreover, once they arrived, they entered buildings that were heated using wood stoves and lighted by kerosene lamps. And for a drink of water or to go to the toilet, it was necessary to go outdoors. By any reading of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, this was unconstitutional since the separate facilities were largely and obviously unequal. So, with the encouragement of African Methodist Episcopal pastor and schoolteacher Rev. Joseph Armstrong DeLaine, the parents of these children mustered the courage to request the school board for buses to carry their children from and to their school. But Eliot's reply was direct and short; he said that they did not have money to buy a bus for black children. In 1949 DeLaine went to the N.A.A.C.P. officials in Columbia, South Carolina, and Thurgood Marshall²³ was present there. On December 20th, 1950, Harry Briggs, a navy veteran, and twenty four other black residents of Clarendon County sued the school district. Therefore, the case *Briggs v. Elliott*, was the first legal challenge to elementary school segregation to originate in the South of the country.²⁴ The importance of the *Briggs v. Elliott* case lies in the fact that it provided the legal bedrock on which the entire set of the five legal cases that would force their way into the U.S. Supreme Court and become known collectively as *Brown v. Board of Education* was built.²⁵

The setting for this initial case was Charleston County, South Carolina, known for its strong resistance to any attempt at challenging or changing the brutal Southern traditions of the old order based on white supremacy.²⁶ With the assistance of the local N.A.A.C.P. director, the Reverend J.A. DeLaine, Briggs took Elliott to court in order to get a school bus for his children as well as the other black school children in Clarendon County. Then, with the encouragements of the N.A.A.C.P.'s national counsel Thurgood Marshall and federal district-court judge J. Waties Waring, Briggs altered the suit to challenge the precedent of *Plessy v. Ferguson*: whether segregation could be equal under any circumstances. It was, at that time, unlikely that the navy veteran would gain satisfaction in the lower courts that were staffed by local judges, and the hearing before the District Court for the District of South Carolina held

²³ Thurgood Marshall (Born on July 2nd, 1908, and died on January 24th, 1993) was an African American lawyer and civil rights activist who served as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from October 1967 to October 1991. Marshall was the first African American to serve on the nation's highest court. Prior to holding this position, Marshall, (as counsel for the N.A.A.C.P.,) successfully argued a number of cases before the Supreme Court including the famous case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in which the Supreme Court ended segregation in public schools.

²⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 575.

²⁵ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." *To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880*. Ed. Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005. P. 176.

²⁶ Ibid.

in Charleston in the spring of 1951, presided over by a panel of three judges, including Waring, concluded, as it was predicted, when the panel refused to support Briggs' petition.²⁷ Judge Waring, however, in a strong dissent used prescient words that foreshadowed the language that was to become part of the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* opinion three years later. As a matter of fact, Waring's dissent in the *Briggs v. Elliott* case was unequivocal: "Segregation in education can never produce equality and . . . is an evil that must be eradicated. . . . [A]ll of the legal guideposts, expert testimony, common sense and reason point unerringly to the conclusion that the system of segregation in education adopted and practiced in the state of South Carolina must go and must go now. Segregation is per se inequality."²⁸

Meanwhile, however, four other similar cases in different parts of the United States were advancing through the federal courts at roughly the same time. These would be combined into one single case that would decide the fate and future of the "separate but equal" doctrine. In fact, the Supreme Court merged these five cases together under the heading of one of them, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. In 1950, when an all-white Summer School in Topeka, Kansas, refused the admission of Linda Brown because she was black, her father, Oliver Brown, filed a lawsuit and testified in court that his eight-year-old daughter had to travel an hour and a half in order to attend the black elementary school while the Summer School was only seven blocks away but practiced racial exclusion of black school children. Linda became the "named plaintiff" in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in which the U.S. Supreme Court would declare laws mandating schools segregation unconstitutional.²⁹

The years of preparation and hardship came to fruition. Motley worked with a team of black lawyers and academics, a group of advisers including Louis Redding from Delaware; James Nabrit from Washington, D.C.; Robert Ming from Chicago; Psychologist Kenneth Clark from New York; and the famous historian John Hope Franklin to prepare the case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* and to argue it before the Supreme Court. In fact, Motley, Robert Carter, Jack Greenberg, and Marshall also got assistance from Spottswood Robinson and Oliver Hill of Virginia. They also read thoroughly a number of papers prepared

²⁷ By a vote of 2-1.

²⁸ Quoted in: David R. Goldfield, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

²⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold., op. cit., pp. 575-576.

by historians C. Vann Woodward and Alfred Kelly about the original equalitarian intentions of the Post-Civil War amendments as well as other legislations.³⁰

When arguments for the *Brown* case began on December 9th, 1952, the Supreme Court's chambers were crowded. Marshall, who was arguing on behalf of the black students from South Carolina, was logical, direct, and confident. He appealed to the Supreme Court to directly confront the *Plessy* decision that was based on white-supremacy dogmas, stating that “de jure segregation was arbitrary and capricious.” Marshall argued that *Plessy* ruling was “a legal aberration, the faulty conception of an era dominated by provincialism, by intense emotionalism in race relations, and by the preaching of a doctrine of racial superiority that contradicted the basic concept upon which our society was founded.” In addition, he evoked the idea that American people in the twentieth century had demonstrated, because of their experience of fighting two major World Wars in order to spread democracy in the world, that the racist fundamentals upon which *Plessy* decision was based clearly tend to safeguard not the strength of the American heritage but its weakness.³¹ In his argument, Marshall appealed to the Supreme Court to meet the “separate but equal” doctrine, established by the *Plessy* ruling, head on and declare it erroneous. Marshall argued:

It [*Plessy*] stands mirrored today as a legal aberration, the faulty conception of an era dominated by provincialism, by intense emotionalism in race relations . . . and by the preaching of a doctrine of racial superiority that contradicted the basic concept upon which our society was founded. Twentieth century America, fighting racism at home and abroad, has rejected the race views of *Plessy v. Ferguson* because we have come to the realization that such views obviously tend to preserve not the strength but the weakness of our heritage.³²

By this time, as Marshall made his argument, many other black intellectuals, academics, and social activists and their white allies had closed ranks to support the same cause.³³ The Court, however, remained divided as well as doubtful about its ability to enforce a decision mandating racial desegregation in public school systems. Yet, this delay turned to be a blessing. On September 30th, 1953, Earl Warren, the former Republican governor of California, was appointed by the newly elected President Dwight D. Eisenhower to fill the

³⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 575-576.

³¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

³² Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 576.

³³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 576.

vacancy left by the death of Chief Justice Fred Vinson. In fact, Warren worked very hard to persuade the justices to rule in favor of school desegregation.³⁴ In late 1953 and early 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren convinced the Court to support Marshall's stand. And on May 17th, 1954, the Court ruled unanimously in favor of the N.A.A.C.P. lawyers and their clients and decided that a segregation based solely on the race of people was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Warren declared:

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does. . . . To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to the status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. . . . We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.³⁵

In fact, Warren succeeded to bring colleagues into line, and on May 17th, 1954, Black Monday as his critics called it, the Supreme Court electrified the American nation by unanimously overturning *de jure* segregation in public education. Drawing on psychological theories raised by the plaintiffs³⁶, Warren added that racial segregation "generates a feeling of inferiority [among students] as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."³⁷ With its decision, the Supreme Court declared that the doctrine of "separate but equal" had no place in public schools. The Court determined that segregation based wholly upon race was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Racial segregation in public education was therefore abolished and the *Plessy* charade was dead. In this sense, the *Brown* ruling provided a potent precedent for future constitutional crises involving race issues.³⁸ In this respect, Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman stated: "Warren carefully framed the

³⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

³⁵ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

³⁶ The best-known plaintiff was the Reverend Oliver Brown, a welder in Topeka, Kansas, whose eight-year-old daughter Linda had to go to Negro school twenty-one blocks away when there was a white school only seven blocks from her house. His suit was joined by twelve other parents. They were Darlene Brown, Lena M. Carper, Sadie Emmanuel, Margerrite Emerson, Shirla Fleming, Andrew (Zelma) Henderson, Shirley Hodison, Richard (Maude) Lawton, Alma Lewis, Iona Richardson, Vivian Scales, and Lucinda Todd.

³⁷ Quoted in: James T. Patterson. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

³⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

opinion to apply to only one area, the legal segregation of children by race in primary and secondary public schools, the group most likely to win public sympathy as victims of racism.” Urofsky and Finkelman then added, “The [*Brown*] decision did not strike down all Jim Crow laws, nor did it declare all discriminatory statutes unconstitutional. Critics might predict that such would be the logical extension of *Brown*, but for the moment, the Court concerned itself only with education.”³⁹

The *Brown* decision was the first step in the long road that would eventually lead to the dismantling of the whole structure of Jim Crow laws that dominated most aspects of black life in the United States including employment, housing, education, marriage, movement, and even death and burial. The *Brown* decision, more than any other case, signaled “the emerging primacy of equality as a guide to constitutional decisions.”⁴⁰ According to David Goldfield, the *Brown* decision raised black people’s awareness. In his book entitled Black, White, and Southern Race Relations and Southern Culture: 1940 to the Present, Goldfield gave the example of Harvey Grant who recalls the experience of his insular childhood in Charleston, South Carolina, and how the *Brown* decision changed his life as an eleven-year-old boy in 1954: “I started to get curious about the whole thing about segregation and why it was unconstitutional. And then I started to see our society in a different light; blacks; whites, and why we do things. . . . I never questioned it before and then I started.” Grant went on to become, in the future, the first black student to enroll at Clemson University, then a successful architect, and was later elected as the first black mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina.⁴¹

For many other black people besides Grant, the *Brown* decision implicated that, in life, survival alone was not sufficient. Therefore, although the *Brown* ruling galvanized resistance among Southern white segregationists, it strengthened resolve and determination among Southern black Americans to take control of their own destiny.⁴² In fact, the *Brown* decision provided the foundation and much of the inspiration for the Civil Rights Movement. As James Oliver Horton argued, “The *Plessy* decision had paved the way for the system of racial segregation that defined southern society and helped to shape northern racial patterns for most of the twentieth century. Similarly, *Brown* was a crucial step in the increasingly effective

³⁹ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman. A March of Liberty: A Constitutional History of the United States, Volume II: From 1898 to the Present. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2012. P. 862.

⁴⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 576-577.

⁴¹ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

⁴² Ibid., p. 92.

Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.”⁴³ As the Court acknowledged, its *Brown* ruling signaled a major shift in the nation’s race issues.⁴⁴

Advocates of desegregation hailed the Supreme Court’s decision. For instance, The Chicago Defender, a leading black newspaper, stated that the *Brown* case was a “second emancipation proclamation . . . more important to our democracy than the atomic bomb or hydrogen bomb.” In fact, the Court’s decision, which overturned nearly six decades of legally sanctioned racial segregation, was hailed by a wide variety of public voices. It seemed, at least at that time, that segregated public schools could no longer hide behind the law. For different reasons, the *Brown* decision provided the moral legitimacy to the struggle for racial equality, not only in public education but also in the other aspects of life. Activists struggling for voting rights immediately multiplied their efforts, even in the Deep South states. Without the *Brown* case, the civil rights movement would not have followed the same path.⁴⁵ In this respect, Robert J. McKeever and Philip Davis stated:

[T]his decision in *Brown v Board of Education* signaled the end of the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ in American life. This had permitted states to pass laws which, in effect, created an apartheid system throughout the South and border states. Blacks and whites were separated in parks, restaurants, public transport, and indeed in virtually all aspects. However, separate facilities were never remotely equal, so that segregation was a graphic, daily reminder that whites considered blacks to be an inferior race.⁴⁶

McKeever and Davis argued that by putting an end to such *de jure* racial segregation, the *Brown* ruling marked the beginning of a new phase in American politics when African-American people would achieve full equality in law.⁴⁷ In the same respect, and in their book, A March of liberty, Melvin I. Urofsky and Paul Finkelman addressed the same issue and stated that the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* “sounded the death knell of legally enforced racial discrimination. The case did not mark the triumph of

⁴³ James Oliver Horton. Landmarks of African American History. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005. P. 174.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., pp. 389-390.

⁴⁶ Robert J. McKeever, and Philip Davies. Politics USA. Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2006. P. 291.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

equality, however, but merely the end of legally imposed inequality. *Brown* was only the first stage in a continuing campaign to end racism and discrimination in America.”⁴⁸

While widely hailed, the Court’s decision was also predictably and unsurprisingly harshly criticized. One day after the *Brown* decision was issued, the Washington Evening Star, for example, stated, “In effect, nine men have conducted that segregation in the public schools as a bad thing and have asserted the power to outlaw it.”⁴⁹ From the start there were also many racist responses to the *Brown* decision, especially from leading Southern politicians. Senator James Eastland of Mississippi in a speech on the Senate floor ten days after *Brown* decision attributed the decision to Communist influences stated that they were the Communists who were behind the Court’s ruling. “Everyone knows,” Eastland said, “that the Negroes did not themselves instigate the agitation against segregation. They were put up to it by radical busybodies who are intent upon overthrowing American institutions.” The Supreme Court, he continued, “has been indoctrinated and brainwashed by left-wing pressure groups.”⁵⁰ Governor James Byrnes of South Carolina once a Supreme Court justice himself, as well as Truman’s Secretary of State, proclaimed, “South Carolina will not now nor for some years to come mix white and colored children in our schools.”⁵¹

Herman Talmadge, Georgia’s arch-segregationist governor, charged that the Supreme Court had “usurped from the Congress and the people the power to amend the Constitution” and urged defiance: “[T]he people of Georgia,” he stated, “will not comply with the decision of the court.”⁵² Talmadge added, “I do not believe in Negroes and whites associating with each other socially or in our school systems, and as long as I am governor, it won’t happen.”⁵³ *Brown* also inspired Mississippi judge Tom Brady to write a book-length rebuke of the Court (in 1954), titled Black Monday⁵⁴. “Oh, high Priests of Washington,” Brady cried out in frenzy, “blow again and stronger upon the dying embers of racial hate. . . . The decision which you handed down on Black Monday has arrested and retarded the economic and political and, yes, the social status of the Negro in the South for at least one hundred years.”⁵⁵ Then, Brady soon went to the heart of the matter: “When a law transgresses the moral and

⁴⁸ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 851.

⁴⁹ Quoted in: Robert M. Lichtman. The Supreme Court and McCarthy-Era Repression: One Hundred Decisions. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2012. P. 75.

⁵⁰ Quoted in: Robert M. Lichtman, op. cit., p. 75.

⁵¹ Quoted in: James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., p. 392.

⁵² Quoted in: Robert M. Lichtman, op. cit., p. 75.

⁵³ Quoted in: James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., p. 392.

⁵⁴ The Supreme Court announced its decision on a Monday. (Source: David R. Goldfield, op. cit., pp. 75-76.)

⁵⁵ James W. Silver. Mississippi: The Closed Society. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012. P. 50.

ethnic sanctions and standards of the mores, invariably strife, bloodshed and revolution follow in the wake of its attempted enforcement.”⁵⁶ After that, Brady expressed his belief in white supremacy and his claims of the superiority of a pure Southern Anglo-Saxon identity, “The loveliest and the purest of God’s creatures, the nearest thing to an angelic being that treads this terrestrial ball is a well-bred, cultured Southern white woman or her blue-eyed, golden-haired little girl.”⁵⁷

Other Southern white leaders focused on the point that Chief Justice Warren cited a number of works, including Gunnar Myrdal’s landmark study of racism, An American Dilemma, and social scientist Kenneth B. Clark’s⁵⁸ highly controversial studies of negative self-image among black school children, in order to support his finding that segregation based on race psychologically harmed black school children. Although Warren himself later stated that “it was only a note,” but Southern white critics seized on it as proof that the Supreme Court had not interpreted law but rather had applied its own sociological views on a legal case. The fact of citing a foreigner, the Swede Gunnar Myrdal, raised Southern opposition views. For instance, Georgia’s state attorney general, Eugene Cook, denounced Myrdal just because black radical W.E.B. DuBois had been one of his teachers.⁵⁹ In the context of the reaction of the Southern white leaders to the *Brown* ruling, David R. Goldfield wrote, “By the time of the *Brown* decision in 1954, southern white leaders had already drawn the battle lines, so the decision was more a last straw than a preeminent cause of what followed.”⁶⁰

Leading Southern politicians like these drew heart from the tentative of the decision. The Supreme Court was silent in 1954 about how and when the orders of its ruling in the *Brown* case should be carried out. That was because Chief Justice Earl Warren and his fellow justices feared to proceed too far and too fast. If they had declared that school desegregation

⁵⁶ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 76.

⁵⁷ Charles Marsh. God’s Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997. P. 85.

⁵⁸ Kenneth Bancroft Clark is an African American psychologist and social scientist (1914-2005). He conducted a pioneering research about the impact of racial segregation on school children. He administered, along with his wife, Mamie Phipps Clark, the “doll test” to African American schoolchildren. The test involved presenting children with black and white dolls and asking them to select a favorite doll. In the segregated South, the black children preferred the white doll by a wide margin. Because virtually all chose the white dolls, this Clarke said indicated how segregated education lowered the self-esteem of black schoolchildren. Clark’s research demonstrated that black children in inferior, segregated schools had a negative self-image and generally performed poorly as a result. The Clarks were the first African Americans to obtain their doctoral degrees in psychology from Columbia University. The Clarks were influential to the Civil Rights Movement and their expertise allowed them to testify as expert witnesses in several school desegregation cases leading to the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

⁵⁹ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 863.

⁶⁰ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 63.

must be carried out without any delay, as they had done in the case of a Texas Law School in 1954, furious Southern opponents might have flouted them, hence undermining the Court's legitimacy. In addition, anti-*Brown* advocates took further heart from the President's attitudes. Dwight D. Eisenhower had grown up in a white world. There had been no black people in his home town, Abilene, Kansa, where he was brought up or at West Point, New York, where he won an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. He had risen in a Jim Crow segregated army and was against President Truman's order to desegregate the U.S. armed services in 1948. His friends were wealthy Southerners who often talked about the need to segregate the races. As President, Eisenhower did not like dealing with race issues and approached the issue of racial desegregation in public school systems very cautiously. When his Attorney General, Herbert Brownell, a liberal Republican, entered an amicus curiae brief on behalf of Oliver Brown and his fellow plaintiffs, Eisenhower did not stop him, but, at the same time, he was very careful not to be personally associated with it.⁶¹

At the time when the Supreme Court was considering the case in early 1954, Eisenhower invited Warren to dinner at the White House. John W. Davis, the attorney who was leading the legal defense team against desegregation, was also invited. After praising Davis as a great American, Eisenhower took the Chief Justice by the arm and, in a private way, explained to him the Southern viewpoint. Southern whites, Eisenhower said, "are not bad people. All they are concerned about is to see that their sweet little girls are not required to sit in school alongside some big overgrown Negro."⁶²

When the Supreme Court issued the *Brown* decision shortly after that, Eisenhower was upset. Being sure that the Court's ruling would make matters even worse; he became disenchanted with Warren, in a later date complaining that appointing him as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was the "biggest damn fool mistake" he ever had made. And when reporters demanded to know his opinion of and reaction to the Court's decision, he responded that he was duty-bound to accept it as President. But still he refused to endorse it anyway. "I think it makes no difference whether or not I endorse it," he stated. "What I say is the—the Constitution is as the Supreme Court interprets it; and I must conform to that and do my very

⁶¹ James T. Patterson. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, op. cit., pp. 392-393.

⁶² Quoted in: James T. Patterson. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2001. P. 81.

best to see that it is carried out in this country.” Yet, in reality, “very best” did not move Eisenhower to action.⁶³ He told a trusted speechwriter,

I am convinced that the Supreme Court decision set back progress in the South at least fifteen years. . . . It’s all very well to talk about school integration—if you remember that you may also be talking about social disintegration. Feelings are deep on this, especially where children are involved. . . . We can’t demand perfection in these moral things. All we can do is keep working toward a goal and keep it high. And the fellow who tries to tell me that you can do these things by FORCE is just plain NUTS.”⁶⁴

The president’s attitude towards the issue was at the same time morally obtuse and emboldening to anti-*Brown* agitators. Had he acclaimed the Supreme Court for its decision and made obvious his determination to enforce it, he would at least have pushed the Talmadges and the Eastlands more to a defensive stand. In addition, some of the more vehement Southern racist assaults that damaged race relations in the United States in the next few years might have also been avoided.⁶⁵

In their book, American Ethnicity: The Dynamics and Consequences of Discrimination, Adalberto Aguirre, Jr., and Jonathan H. Turner referred to Supreme Court’s decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of education of Topeka* (1954) and discussed the point that there was no fixed timetables for its implementation, and as a consequence school boards in the Southern states profited from the situation to find other ways to deny the court’s orders. Aguirre and Turner stated, “In rendering this landmark decision, however, the Supreme Court did not set a timetable for its implementation. Hence, local school boards dragged their feet, citing complexities and the need for additional time. Indeed, local officials routinely ignored court orders for desegregation.”⁶⁶

One year after the *Brown* decision, on May 31st, 1955, the Supreme Court issued a second *Brown* ruling. It was the *Brown v. Board of Education II*, also commonly known as *Brown II*, which addressed the practical process of desegregation in public schools. The Court, with its unanimous decision declared and emphasized that the states in the suits should

⁶³ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., pp. 393-394.

⁶⁴ James T. Patterson. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy, op. cit., p. 82.

⁶⁵ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., p. 394.

⁶⁶ Adalberto Aguirre, Jr., and Jonathan H. Turner. American Ethnicity: The Dynamics and Consequences of Discrimination. New York: McGraw-Hill, a Division of the McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2001. P. 87.

begin prompt compliance with the *Brown* ruling of 1954, instructing the states to begin desegregation plans with “all deliberate speed.”⁶⁷ James Patterson addressed the issue and stated that, “A year after *Brown*, in May 1955, the Court turned—as it had said it would—to the question of implementation. By then, however, resistance to *Brown* in the Deep South had spread widely. Moreover, it was becoming clear that the relocation of students posed complex and time-consuming problems.”⁶⁸ For these reasons, as Patterson put it, the Supreme Court again backed off from confrontation by declining to define an acceptable standard for desegregated schooling. The Court also declined to set a fixed and definite timetable for compliance. The Court’s implementation order, or *Brown II* as it was called, declared instead that segregated school systems must make a “prompt and reasonable start toward full compliance” and do so with “all deliberate speed.”⁶⁹

Carl Bode referred to the *Brown* case and stated that the Supreme Court’s first *Brown* ruling (1954) decided that just the fact of separating the two races in schools, regardless of the quality of the facilities and other tangible factors, made education unequal, and that the segregation of white and black children in public schools had a detrimental effect upon the black children. He stated, “In the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* the Supreme Court decided that the very act of separating the races made their education unequal. The reason: it made blacks feel inferior. Even if this inferiority might not be the result of any specific fact or act, it existed and so had to be abolished.” Bode also referred to the court’s second *Brown* ruling issued the following year. He stated, “Obviously this [integration] couldn’t be done overnight, but by the next year the court had decreed that integration must move ahead “with all deliberate speed.”⁷⁰ For Matthew C. Whitaker, *Brown II*, which addressed the speed and manner with which public schools should desegregate, came to mollify advocates of racial segregation and appease racial tensions which were then rising. The high court stressed that states should quickly comply with the 1954 *Brown* ruling which declared that the process of the desegregation of public school systems should be carried out with “all deliberate speed.”⁷¹

Many African Americans interpreted or wanted to interpret this to mean immediately and instantly, while Southern segregationists, of course white, hoped it to mean in a period of

⁶⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold., op. cit., p. 577.

⁶⁸ James T. Patterson. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, op. cit., p. 395.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Carl Bode, ed. *American Perspectives: The United States in the Modern Age*. Washington D.C.: United States Information Agency, 1992. P. 180.

⁷¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 54.

long time, perhaps in the distant undefined future, or even never. In addition to the considerable resistance to the Supreme Court's decisions in the *Brown* case from the part of obvious segregationists; ominously, President Dwight D. Eisenhower seemed displeased with the Court's rulings and even refused to put the moral authority of his office behind their enforcement.⁷² In this respect, Matthew C. Whitaker wrote, "President Dwight D. Eisenhower supported racial segregation, objected to both rulings, and failed to deploy the power of his office to pressure states to adhere to the Court's mandate." Then he added, "In fact, Eisenhower pledged to James Byrnes, then governor of South Carolina, that he would be sure to "make haste slowly" in ensuring enforcement of the ruling."⁷³ After all, the decision fixed no time for compliance and left decisions in the hands of Southern school officials who condemned the ruling.⁷⁴ As Michael J. Klarman argued, "*Brown II* explicitly noted that school boards would retain "primary responsibility" for placing students, subject to judicial oversight. Thus, the burden of implementing *Brown II* lay with school board members." Most of these school board members, as Klarman argued, undoubtedly thought that *Brown* was wrongheaded, as did most white Southerners, and were inclined to delay and evade its orders as much as possible. Klarman continued, "Because *Brown II* supplied no clear mandate for action, it seemed to invite evasion, which made voluntary compliance politically difficult . . . For personal and political reasons, school board members resisted prompt and effective action toward desegregation."⁷⁵

Many Southern white political leaders continued to preach defiance. Governor Marvin Griffin of Georgia announced, "No matter how much the Supreme Court seeks to sugarcoat its bitter pill of tyranny, the people of Georgia and the South will not swallow it."⁷⁶ Georgia prepared to defy the decision. Herman Talmadge claimed "a line is drawn. The time has come when all must get on one side or the other."⁷⁷ The Richmond News Leader in Virginia editorialized about the decision:

⁷² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 577.

⁷³ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 54.

⁷⁴ James T. Patterson. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy , op. cit., p. 92.

⁷⁵ Michael J. Klarman. From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2004. PP. 349-350.

⁷⁶ James T. Patterson. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy , op. cit., p. 92.

⁷⁷ Quoted in: Jeff Roche. Restructured Resistance: The Sibley Commission and the Politics of Desegregation in Georgia. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2010. P. 28.

Yesterday's opinion of the Supreme Court ended nothing. And if it be said that the Court's opinion was conciliatory, we would reply that the South is no more of a mind to conciliate on Wednesday than it was on Tuesday. When the Court proposes that its social revolution be imposed upon the South "as soon as practicable," there are those of us who would respond that "as soon as practicable" means never at all.⁷⁸

Notwithstanding, in 1955 and early 1956, racial segregation in public schools proceeded without impediment in the states of Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Delaware, and Missouri. The Governor of the state of Alabama, Jim Folsom, however, declared that his state would obey the decisions of the courts, and even other moderate white Southern politicians recommended calm and worked to avoid a direct conflict with the federal government. Yet, white moderates soon realized that they were a minority, as extremist segregationists, resolved to maintain white supremacy whatever the cost, prepared to counter the Court's decisions. The extremists' rhetoric, although bordering on hysteria, found support among many white Americans. For instance, Jerry Falwell, a young pastor from the state of Virginia, stated that blacks were the descendents of Noah's son Ham and that they were destined to be perpetual servants because they were cursed by God.⁷⁹ Falwell, followed the lead of other segregationist and extremists when he declared in 1958 that *Brown v. Board of Education* was not in accordance with the will of God. In fact, Falwell took the warpath against the Supreme Court's decision, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, to desegregate public schools with a sermon titled, "*Segregation or Integration: Which?*" in which he declared, "If Chief Justice Warren and his associates had known God's word and had desired to do the Lord's will, I am quite confident that the 1954 decision would never have been made." Falwell preached, "The facilities should be separate. When God has drawn a line of distinction, we should not attempt to cross that line . . . The true Negro does not want integration . . . He realizes his potential is far better among his own race."⁸⁰

In 1955 a number of leading businessmen, white-collar professionals, and clergymen began founding, in almost all Southern cities, White Citizens' Councils (W.C.C.)⁸¹ with the

⁷⁸ Quoted in: James T. Patterson. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy, op. cit., p. 92.

⁷⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 577.

⁸⁰ Andrew Himes. The Sword of Lord: The Roots of Fundamentalism in an America, Family. Seattle, WA: Chiara Press, 2011. PP. 261-262.

⁸¹ White Citizens Councils were an associated network of white supremacist organizations.

aim of maintaining the Southern way of life based on white supremacy.⁸² In this context, Nell Irvin Painter stated, “In July, only two months after the *Brown* decision, White Citizens Councils, dedicated to segregation, began organizing in Mississippi. Several states created more or less secret agencies of government to preserve white supremacy and segregation. Painter gave the example of Mississippi’s Sovereignty Commission which used taxpayer money to prevent the process of desegregation through means of intimidation and harassment. He also talked about the state legislators of South Carolina and Alabama which made membership in the N.A.A.C.P. organization illegal. Painter concluded, “once again, antiblack violence increased, especially against African Americans who appeared likely to exercise their citizens’ and human rights.”⁸³ Matthew C. Whittaker argued that it was Eisenhower’s lackadaisical leadership that emboldened the segregationists. Political leaders, religious men, and local business leaders responded to *Brown* decision by organizing and supporting a multitude of efforts undermine the ruling. As a result, White Citizens Councils were established in numerous Southern cities to oppose desegregation and maintain the prevailing racial hierarchy of the Southern social structure by means of pressure, force, intimidation, violence, and terrorism.⁸⁴

In fact, these councils used their economic and political power to exert pressure on and intimidate African Americans who challenged racial segregations. For example, they fired certain black people from their jobs, drove them out of their homes, and denied them credit.⁸⁵ In this respect, David R. Goldfield said, “The councils applied systematic economic pressure on the parents of black children who sought to attend white schools. Composed of merchants, bankers, farmers, and politicians, these bodies controlled the economic (and hence political) life of the numerous small towns and cities of the Deep South.” These leaders, as Goldfield explained, denied provisions, credit, employment, and other services to black people, and their “purview extended far beyond school desegregation to include every aspect of racial etiquette, including suffrage.”⁸⁶ The White Citizens Councils, according to David R. Goldfield, became an epitome of the organized effort at conservative lawbreaking, especially in the Deep South states.⁸⁷ In the same context, James Patterson stated: “In mid-1956 the

⁸² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 577.

⁸³ Nell Irvin Painter. Creating Black Americans: African American History and its meaning, 1916 to the Present. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2006. PP. 244-245.

⁸⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 54.

⁸⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 577.

⁸⁶ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 82.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

Citizens Councils claimed 60,000 adherents in Alabama. By the end of the year they had attracted 85,000 members in Mississippi. Overall membership peaked in 1957, probably at around 250,000. Many thousands more sympathized with and applauded their efforts, which included virtually all forms of resistance.”⁸⁸ Publically, however, as Patterson contended, the councils focused mainly on economic intimidation. For example, black people who tried to practice their right to vote or considered the possibility of sending their children to schools intended for white students found out that they could not get mortgages or other forms of credit. Loans were also called in, and medical care and insurance were refused.⁸⁹

Robert Patterson, one of the founders of the White Citizens Councils, warned recurrently that if school integration occurred, “we’ll have violence and you know it,” as if he hoped that his words would become a self-fulfilling prophesy. Also, one speaker at a council rally that took place in December, 1954, in Selma, Alabama, vowed: “we intend to maintain segregation and do so without violence,” and he added, “but I know the first time a Negro tries to enter Parrish High School at Selma, or any other white school, blood will be spilled on the campus.” As James McBride Dabbs commented on such double-talk, “The part about violence is always said publicly . . . so that the lower-class whites know what is expected of them.”⁹⁰ About Council leaders, Lillian Smith was concerned, “they are a mob nevertheless. For they not only protect the rabble, and tolerate its violence, they *think in the same primitive mode*, they share the same irrational anxieties, they are *just as lawless in their own quiet way*, and they are dominated by the same ‘holy idea’ of white supremacy.”⁹¹

Meanwhile, many white politicians adopted the banner of massive resistance. For example, Mississippi Senator James O. Eastland compared the *Brown* decision to a “monstrous crime.” In a speech in Senatobia, Mississippi, on August 12th 1955, Eastland told his constituents, “You are not required to obey any court which passes out such a ruling. In fact, you are obliged to defy it!”⁹² Then in December of the same year, he spoke to the convention of Citizens Councils, which had been organized to oppose desegregation in schools.⁹³ In his speech, Eastland told the audience, which included the Mississippi governor,

⁸⁸ James T. Patterson. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy , op. cit., p. 98.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Quoted in: David R. Goldfield, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

⁹¹ Quoted in: David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 84.

⁹² Quoted in: Kay Mills. This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007. P. 32.

⁹³ Kay Mills, op. cit., p. 32.

a congressman, and an important number of state legislators, that “[t]he Supreme Court of the United States, in the false name of law and justice, has perpetrated a monstrous crime.” Then, he continued, “The anti-segregation decisions were dishonest decisions. They were dictated by political pressure groups bent upon the destruction of the American form of government and the mongrelization of the white race.”⁹⁴

The Virginia legislature closed all the public schools existing in Prince Edward County just to hinder integration. On May 12th, 1956, ninety six Southern congressmen⁹⁵ led by Senator Sam Ervin Jr. of North Carolina and Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina issued “The Southern Manifesto,” vowing the fight to defend and preserve racial segregation and the Southern way of life or in other words the sacred heritage of the South. The manifesto considered and denounced the *Brown* decisions as an “unwarranted exercise of power by the court, contrary to the Constitution.” The only Southern senators who refused⁹⁶ to sign the Southern Manifesto were Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas and Albert Gore Sr. of Tennessee.⁹⁷ In this context, James Patterson wrote: “This widely noted declaration [the Southern Manifesto] accused the Supreme Court of ‘clear abuse of judicial power.’ It promised to use ‘all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution and to prevent the use of force in its implementation.’”⁹⁸ In the same context, the New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis noted that “the true meaning of the Manifesto was to make defiance of the Supreme Court and the Constitution socially acceptable in the South—to give resistance to the law the approval of the Southern Establishment.”⁹⁹

In addition, after the *Brown* decision, the N.A.A.C.P. came under siege as the Southern states intended to destroy it. By 1957, nine Southern states had filed suit to wholly eradicate the organization. Some other states, claiming that the N.A.A.C.P. was part of a worldwide communist conspiracy, made membership unlawful. As a consequence the association lost 246 branches in the South and its membership declined from 128,716 to

⁹⁴ Quoted in: John C. Skipper. Showdown at the 1964 Democratic Convention: Lyndon Johnson, Mississippi and Civil Rights. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012. P. 24.

⁹⁵ Nineteen of the twenty-two Southern senators and seventy-seven of the 105 Southern representatives. It is also important to note that seventeen of the twenty-eight House members who refused to sign the Manifesto were from Texas, which had 13 percent of its whole population being black (having the smallest proportion of blacks than any Southern state then). The other Southern congressmen who resisted pressure to sign the Manifesto represented major urban centers like Miami and Nashville in the non-Deep Southern States including Florida, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

⁹⁶ In some other sources, it is stated that Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver also refused to sign the Manifesto.

⁹⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold., op. cit, p. 577.

⁹⁸ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., p. 398.

⁹⁹ Quoted in: David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 85.

79,677. Under these pressures, racial desegregation came to a grinding halt. By 1958, just thirteen school systems had been desegregated. One year later, by 1960, the total had risen to only seventeen. As a matter of fact, massive white resistance successfully managed to challenge the possibility of achieving change in public school systems through judicial action alone.¹⁰⁰ In this respect, Matthew C. Whittaker stated: “Seeking to lay blame, critics of *Brown* mercilessly attacked black southern organizations, particularly chapters of the NAACP, an organization that some white supremacists were now determined to destroy.”¹⁰¹

By 1957, as Whittaker explained, nine Southern states had filed suit with the basic aim of purging the South of the organization’s presence. A number of other states even made membership within the N.A.A.C.P. unlawful, alleging the group was linked to a global communist conspiracy. As a consequence, N.A.A.C.P. membership dropped from 128,716 during the mid-1940s to 79,677 in 1960s, a fact which forced the organization to close 246 of its chapters in Southern states. Whittaker then eloquently emphasized the consequences of massive white resistance on the process of public school integration in particular and on the civil rights struggle in general: “As a result, the integration of public schools became nothing more than an abstract notion throughout much of the South. Massive resistance called into question the power of the highest court of the land, and likewise cast doubt on the possibility that those who advocated for civil rights might ever secure justice solely through the legal process.”¹⁰² In the same respect, Azza Salama Layton observed that with growing Southern defiance of the Supreme Court decision, *Brown* turned out to be a double-edged sword: “International critics used it as proof that the country was not sincere in granting African Americans their rights of full citizenship and protection of the law. Southern white defiance became a test for the federal government as well as the effectiveness of the judicial system.”¹⁰³

Resistance to the Supreme Court’s decisions also took another form. “*Brown II*” further emboldened Southern white opponents of desegregation, some of whom turned to violence. The year 1955 witnessed eight of the eleven lynchings of black Americans that took place during the 1950s. In addition, other black people were killed just because they dared to assert their rights as American citizens. In Belzoni, Mississippi, for example, the Reverend

¹⁰⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold., op. cit., p. 577.

¹⁰¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Azza Salama Layton. *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. P. 118.

George Lee, a black man who registered to vote, was shot just because he insisted that his name had to be kept on the voting lists. Ironically, when evidence pointed to the sheriff, who was questioned about the bullets found in Lee's mouth, he replied, "May be, they're fillings from his teeth." And no arrest was made.¹⁰⁴ The local newspaper described the incident in the headline "Negro Leader Dies in Odd Accident."¹⁰⁵ A number of weeks later in Brookhaven, Mississippi, Lamar Smith, another black man, was shot dead in front of the county courthouse by a white man in broad daylight. He, also, was an African American who had presumed to vote. Again, no one was convicted of the crime.¹⁰⁶

White Southerners' brutal reaction to the growing assertiveness of African Americans found expression in a violent incident that took place in the summer of 1955. The incident involved the lynching of a fourteen-year-old African American boy from Chicago, an event that helped galvanize the emerging Civil Rights Movement. Emmett Till, a fun-loving, energetic teenager, had traveled from his home in Chicago to visit his relatives including his great-uncle, Mose Wright, in the town of Money, Mississippi. Although Till's mother warned him to be careful while down South, he did not fully understand the nature of Southern racial etiquette. Till entered Bryant's grocery store, and after buying a candy he said "Bye, baby" to Carolyn Bryant, the grocery owner's wife who was behind the counter, as he left. Till was unaware of the consequences of what he did and how far white supremacists would go to avenge this small violation of racial etiquette based on white supremacy. A few days later, and in the middle of the night, Bryant's husband and brother-in-law reached the house where Till was staying and kidnapped him at gunpoint. After being kidnapped, Till was brutally murdered. His body was, then, found in the Tallahatchie River tied to a cotton gin fan. He had been tortured before his murder. In spite of overwhelming and reasonable evidence and the courageous testimony of Till's Uncle, Mose Wright, and a number of other local blacks, an all-white jury acquitted the two white men who lynched Till. In 1956, the two murderers of Till sold their confession to Look magazine and gloated over their escape from punishment. Later, in 2004, new evidence revealed that ten white people may have been involved in the Till lynching.¹⁰⁷

Accused of transgressing the line of racial etiquette by speaking to a white woman in a Southern county store, Emmet Till paid the ultimate price. The lynching of Till and the

¹⁰⁴ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., p. 395.

¹⁰⁵ Nell Irvin Painter, op. cit., p. 245.

¹⁰⁶ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., p. 395.

¹⁰⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 577-578.

subsequent acquittal of his murderers mirrored the low regard in which African American life was held in the Jim Crow South and the extent to which white supremacists, especially in the Southern states, were determined to maintain and perpetuate the racial status quo. In this context, Nell Irving Painter stated, “He [Till] was never accused of having *done* anything that could be construed as illegal. But in jittery white supremacist Mississippi, merely speaking led to his kidnapping and brutal murder.”¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, the Till lynching helped shape the consciousness of a generation of young African American civil rights activists. To a certain extent, this was due to the efforts of Till’s mother, Mamie Bradley. Unwilling to let America forget this crime, she let her son’s body which was badly mangled displayed in an open casket for four days in Chicago. Till’s mutilated body was seen by thousands of mourners as nearly fifty thousand people attended his funeral. Thousands who mourned Till, paid their respects, and many committed themselves to combating the biased system that made such a crime possible. Bradley also moved around the nation speaking about her sorrow to groups on whom her grief had a huge impact.¹⁰⁹

Mamie Bradley asked, “Have you ever sent a loved son on a vacation and had him returned to you in a pine box, so horribly battered and water-logged that someone needs to tell you this sickening sight is your son—lynched?”¹¹⁰ In fact, she spoke to many groups around the nation who felt called by action by the brutal murder of her son. Myrlie Evers, who became one of the leading figures of the Civil Rights Movement, remembered her emotional state when she heard Bradley speak. She said, “I bled for Emmett Till’s mother,” she recalled. “I know when she came to Mississippi and appeared at the mass meetings how everyone poured out their hearts to her, went into their pockets when people had only two or three pennies, and grave.”¹¹¹

As a matter of fact, Till’s brutal murder and the subsequent acquittal of his slayers were “highly publicized in the national black press, providing fresh fuel for efforts to confront racial oppression in the South.”¹¹² In the context of the relationship between Till’s murder and the Civil Rights Movement, Matthew C. Whitaker wrote: “The extent to which many southern whites went to suppress the emerging confidence of black people became painfully clear in

¹⁰⁸ Nell Irvin Painter, op. cit., p. 245.

¹⁰⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 578-579.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in: Nell Irvin Painter, op. cit., p. 245.

¹¹¹ Quoted in: Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 56.

¹¹² Edward P. Morgan. “Rights, Power, and Equality: The Modern Civil Rights Movement.” Upon these Shores: Themes in the African-American Experience, 1600 to the Present. Ed. William R. Scott and William G. Shade. New York: Routledge, 2000. P. 201.

1955. That year, the brutal lynching of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till demonstrated white supremacists' continued desire to thwart racial progress." Whitaker asserted that, "Till's murder, however, also created shockwaves that helped ignite the burgeoning modern civil rights movement." Till's lynching and the courageous decision of his mother to share the brutality of his murder with the whole world marked a turning point in African American history. According to Whitaker, this brutal murder unveiled the unjust and brutal nature of American race relations for all to see, both inside the United States and abroad, and it helped forge the race consciousness of an entire generation of African American activists. Whitaker concluded: "Till's murder galvanized African Americans and their allies, and ushered in a new chapter in the struggle for black liberation and racial equality."¹¹³

In the same context, Aldon D. Morris argued, "The crime [Till's lynching] was extremely brutal, and it was a reminder to the Black community that whites would utilize all means, including murder, to uphold Jim Crow." Morris further argued, "The generation of young Blacks who would lead the student wing of the modern civil rights movement was coming of age precisely at the time of Till's lynching. This murder played an important role in radicalizing them."¹¹⁴ In the same context, Jim Ollhoff also argued, "The civil rights movement had many leaders and many events that gave it energy and drive. One of the most tragic events was the murder of a 14-year-old boy named Emmett Till. The horrifying event gave racial injustice a human face, and pushed more people across the nation to demand civil rights."¹¹⁵ Still, in the same context, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis stated that Till's mother, Mamie Till, helped to turn the tragedy of her son's lynching into a rallying point for the Civil Rights Movement.¹¹⁶

The intimidation and violence employed by Southern white racists, while took its harshest forms in Mississippi, spread all over the South between 1955 and 1956. By this period, the scattered outbursts of anger that had greeted *Brown* ruling in 1954 had swept much of the South. As a result massive white resistance ensued, involving more violent episodes. In February 1956, Autherine Lucy, a young African American woman, who enrolled as a student in the graduate School of Library Sciences at the University of Alabama, was almost lynched

¹¹³ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

¹¹⁴ Aldon D. Morris. "A Retrospective on the Civil Rights Movement: Political and Intellectual Landmarks." Annual Review of Sociology. Vol. 25 (1999), pp. 521-522. Annual Reviews. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/223515>>. Accessed: September 17, 2019.

¹¹⁵ Jim Ollhoff. The Civil Rights Movement. Edina, Minnesota: ABDO Publishing Company, 2011. P. 10.

¹¹⁶ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 180.

by some white students. Lucy had to flee but was later officially expelled from the institution. In the same year, in Birmingham, Alabama, the famous black singer and pianist Nat King Cole was attacked and beaten by a mob of racist white people when he sang before a segregated audience at a white-only concert in the city's auditorium. In the late summer of 1956, violent assaults erupted in Clinton, Tennessee, where mobs of a large number of local whites, terrorized black school children seeking to enter their schools. In fact, the Highway Patrol and the National Guard used armored personnel and tanks to quell the disturbance and desegregated the schools. Yet, cross-burnings, burning of black people's homes, as well as marches sponsored by the Ku Klux Klan disrupted the region for years to come. In 1956, furious white people also restrained blacks from applying and enrolling in the schools of Mansfield, Texas. Although the government sent in Texas Rangers so that order would be restored, but the local school boards removed blacks from the schools. In all of the cases mentioned here, the federal government did nothing, claiming that these matters were internal ones and it was up to the state and local authorities to handle them.¹¹⁷

During the 1950s, members of the Ku Klux Klan which expanded significantly provoked some of the violent activities.¹¹⁸ More extremist Southerners flocked to the Ku Klux Klan, raising its numbers to the highest level since the 1920s.¹¹⁹ Klansmen, as in the past, instigated episodes of intimidation, violence, and terror, including mob attacks, cross-burning, and even night-riding. Their claim was that they were extremely religious Christians devoted to preserve the Anglo-Saxon white race not only against the presence of black people but also of Jews, Catholics, and foreigners. One Klansman said in 1956, "The Ku Klux Klan is the only white Christian Protestant 100 American organization in America today." Another Klan speaker added, "We are gonna stay white, we are going to keep the nigger black, with the help of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."¹²⁰ Most of these violent Southern white racists and supremacist Klansmen hailed from the lower classes of the white American society. Often with a poor level of education and as poor as black people, they triggered hostility to blacks and a fierce Negrophobia with the aim of keeping African Americans in their place. Yet, intimidators of black people included more than the people of the lower classes of the white society. A great number of other people, more mainstream racists, including businessmen, lawyers, and bankers, openly identified with organizations like the Citizens Councils, which

¹¹⁷ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., pp. 396. 397.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 397.

¹¹⁹ James Ciment. Atlas of African-American History. Revised Edition. New York: Facts On File, Inc., An imprint of Infobase Publishing, 2007. P. 150.

¹²⁰ Quoted in: James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., p. 397.

were essential in establishing a quasi-respectable façade onto massive white resistance. Although they publicly deplored violence but they condoned a great deal of it and did not take any measures to bring offenders to justice. Indeed, they stood firm to perpetuate the Jim Crow system including racial segregation in public schools.¹²¹

Southern politicians stood four-square against public school desegregation and did their best to evade the implementation of the *Brown* ruling. Certain states cut off financial aid to desegregated schools, supplied tuition grants to white students who attended private all-white and segregated educational institution, disallowed licenses to teachers who tried to work at racially desegregated schools, and barred N.A.A.C.P. members from public employment opportunities. School officials were enabled to use the results of racially biased scholarships as well as psychological tests as standards for assigning students to racially segregated schools. In 1959, all public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia, were closed, providing children with home education.¹²² From 1954 to 1964, the states of the former Confederacy passed more than 450 laws to avoid the Court's ruling. Many of these states headed for a private school system; other states made plans to abandon the control of the state over individual schools districts, hence obliging blacks interested in desegregating schools to file separate lawsuits in separate individual districts, something which would weaken their cause; still other states designed certain criteria other than race as a system of placing students of different races into separate schools.¹²³ It could, therefore, be said that, easily the most effective resistance of Southern whites was at the state level using laws and state constitutional amendments with the aim of evading compliance with the *Brown* decision. Many of these white segregationists liked to say, "As long as we can legislate, we can segregate."¹²⁴

In the long run, the courts which proved vital to the quest for legal racial equality during the 1960s, stepped in to put an end to such ruses. Yet, it was a very long run that accelerated only in 1962. For example, in 1962, there was still no single black child who went to school with whites in Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina. Still, in 1964 less than 2 percent of black children attended racially mixed schools in eleven states of the former Confederacy. Even Southern colleges and universities were still rigidly segregated as many of

¹²¹ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., p. 397.

¹²² Ibid., p. 398.

¹²³ Jeff Roche, op. cit., p. 29.

¹²⁴ James T. Patterson. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy , op. cit., p. 99.

them excluded African Americans or accepted only a tiny number of them until the 1960s. In addition, only few black teachers were permitted to work in all-white or racially desegregated schools. Where dual systems continued to exist, inequalities in school funding and other resources remained large. In 1994, forty years after the *Brown* decision, Summerton, South Carolina was still an example of persistent racial segregation, as it had an all-black high school and an all-white town council. White children from the Summerton area went elsewhere to school. All this was related to the South, which Northern liberals criticized and scolded. But in the North where *de facto* school segregation¹²⁵ mirrored racially segregated and separate neighborhoods, Americans could barely claim to be color-blind.¹²⁶

In the above context, Nell Irvin Painter said, “In the South, where segregation had been entrenched in laws, white supremacist politicians mounted “massive resistance against desegregation.” However, as Painter continued, “In the North and West, where school segregation stemmed from segregated housing patterns, the creation of suburbs extended separation by race and economic class.”¹²⁷ In the Northern cities, *Brown* decision had nothing to say about *de facto* school segregation which often grew more noteworthy as African Americans continued to migrate to the region after 1954. Facts such as these indicated that decisions of the Supreme Court, by themselves could fail to bring major changes in the behavior of people within their communities, at least in the short run. In fact, much wider effort, involving congressional action was essential to force compliance with the law. On the other hand, massive white resistance denoted further how deeply persistent racial prejudice and institutionalized discrimination undermined the so-called egalitarian values and ideals of the nation. African Americans, who angrily resented Southern defiance of the *Brown* ruling, persisted in demanding a racially more egalitarian world. They would not wait for the courts and politicians to guarantee such a world for them; they would take action themselves.¹²⁸

According to David R. Goldfield, the legal process proved to be a tedious and uncertain means with which blacks could pursue equal civil rights. “Even if a case concluded successfully,” Goldfield stated, “whites could engage in delay or evasion to render decisions more symbolic than real. A specific incident or confrontation was necessary, more to rally

¹²⁵ *De facto* segregation is segregation existing in fact, but not in law, while *de jure* segregation is segregation enshrined in law.

¹²⁶ James T. Patterson. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, op. cit., p. 399.

¹²⁷ Nell Irvin Painter, op. cit., p. 244.

¹²⁸ James T. Patterson. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, op. cit., p. 399.

blacks than to impress whites.”¹²⁹ Earl Warren and his colleagues, in the mid- and late 1950s, were undeniably conscious of a final fact; that the courts by themselves could not considerably change the American society and the behavior of its people especially in the South. Well into the 1960s, desegregation litigation continued to face vehement opposition and very strong resistance from most Southern whites. Until 1963, it obtained little support from Congress. Often, liberally inclined judges stood alone and needed powerful allies to support them. Resistance to the mandatory court-ordered school desegregation proved that only a potent civil rights movement that involved and incorporated other political actors onto the stage could bring about the desired reforms that the Supreme Court had hoped to effectuate in 1954.¹³⁰

II- The Nonviolent Fight for Racial Equality and Integration Intensifies

During the 1950s, robust local communities which drew on the strength and courage of a cadre of highly devoted and determined leaders, served as the crucibles of the Civil Rights Movement. One of such communities was Montgomery.¹³¹ In fact, Montgomery was an unlikely venue for the beginning of a struggle for black civil rights that would eventually develop into a civil rights movement. This modest town was more than a place; it was a symbol. In this town, the Confederate States of America was born and Jefferson Davis inaugurated as its first and last president.¹³² With hindsight, we can see that Montgomery’s black community consisting of forty-five thousand black citizens were primed, ready to lead the United States into “a new era of black activism and racial progress.” Martin Luther King Jr., who had just moved to Montgomery with his wife, Coretta, arrived just at an appropriate time to play a pivotal role in this movement, and soon cast himself as well as the black freedom movement into the spotlight.¹³³ In this context, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis stated:

By the spring of 1954 King had accepted an invitation to the pastorate of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, the city known as “The Cradle of the Confederacy.” Montgomery was where Jefferson Davis has been sworn in as president of the pro-slavery states that seceded from the

¹²⁹ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 92.

¹³⁰ James T. Patterson. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy , op. cit., p. 117.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 93.

¹³³ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 56.

Union in 1861. By the time King began his official tenure as pastor of Dexter's middle-class congregation in September 1954, it was clear that the city's black population of close to fifty thousand was on the brink of a new time.¹³⁴

King was born on January 15th, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia and was raised there. He was the son of Martin Luther King Sr., a leading Baptist minister, and Alberta Williams King, whose father is the founder of Montgomery's Ebenezer Baptist Church. By the time, Martin Jr. was born, his father was serving at Ebenezer's Baptist Church as senior pastor. In fact, since a young age, Martin demonstrated tremendous promise as a highly intelligent child. At the age of fifteen, he entered Morehouse College, which was one of the most prestigious historically black colleges in the United States then. King had long believed his future was interrelated with the empowering and uplifting of black race and the church. At the age of eighteen, before his graduation with a BA in sociology, his father ordained him as a minister. Abstaining from future possible positions in the academy, law, or medicine, King devoted himself to the ministry. After his graduation from Morehouse and entering the ministry, he enrolled in the racially integrated Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. One of the most popular students, his rhetorical skills obviously blossomed, and his educators and peers were amazed at his eloquence and oratory skills. Usually, when he was asked how he was doing, King often replied that he was "cogitating with cosmic universe." But no one grasped the meaning of his words or if they really meant anything at all, though this helped promote King's reputation as a weird, if not thoughtful student. In 1951, King graduated from Crozer as valedictorian and received a full financial scholarship to earn a doctorate in philosophy at Boston University. With the belief that a PhD degree would help him merge his passion for academic life with the Christian ministry, he accepted this scholarship and moved to Boston.¹³⁵

On May 14th, 1954, Martin Luther King Jr. accepted the call to the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. In fact, Montgomery was of historical significance in relation to the race issue in America as it was the city in which Jefferson Davis was sworn in as president of the newly formed slaveholding republic, the Confederate States of America, in 1861. When King became the leader of Dexter's middle-class black congregation, Montgomery's black population was ready to make history. This movement did not, of

¹³⁴ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 179.

¹³⁵ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 56-58.

course, begin with the new pastor of the church; rather it grew out of a long history of strategizing and organizing among civil rights groups and black activists of the city. One of the most engaged and active black organizations in Montgomery, then, was the Women's Political Council (W.P.C.), an organization of black professional women formed, in 1946, with the aim to improve the situation of black citizens. The W.P.C. protested the unjust treatment that black citizens faced in the city, agitated against racial discrimination and segregation, and created voter registration drives.¹³⁶

The Reverend Ralph Abernathy, pastor of Montgomery's First Baptist Church, also played a critical role in the city's movement. Like many other young activists, he was unwilling and not ready to wait any longer for change. Instead, they wanted to immediately end Montgomery's racist environment.¹³⁷ Abernathy later recalled, "Many of the older clergy were in favor of sweeping social change, but they were willing for it to come about slowly, when white society was ready to accept it." He also remembered that some of the religious leaders had less patience, "Those of us in our twenties were less patient and less afraid of making trouble. . . . As we talked with one another, we began saying that we were willing to help tear down the old walls, even if it meant a genuine uprising."¹³⁸ After the Second World War, these activists and the organizations that rallied them developed many methods in order to unite and rally black citizens of Montgomery to fight the dominant white supremacist rule.¹³⁹

In a very short period of time, exactly four days after the *Brown* ruling was issued, Jo Ann Robinson¹⁴⁰ wrote in a letter addressed to the Mayor of Montgomery, W. A. Gayle, on behalf of the W.P.C., communicating objections of black citizens to the city's buses discriminatory policies.¹⁴¹ The W.P.C. was "very grateful" for their previous meeting, Robinson said, but the black community of the city was emphatic and urging that the bus situation be improved, and white officials had not to forget that about "three-fourths of the

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 60.

¹³⁸ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. We Changed the World: African Americans, 1945-1970. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1997. P. 39.

¹³⁹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 60.

¹⁴⁰ Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, the president of the W.P.C., was an Alabama State College professor whom King later tapped to head Dexter's Social and Political Action Committee.

¹⁴¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 60.

riders of these public conveniences are Negroes. If Negroes did not patronize them, they could not possibly operate.”¹⁴² Her letter continued:

There has been talk from twenty-five or more local organizations of planning a city-wide boycott of buses. We, sir, do not feel that forceful measures are necessary in bargaining for a convenience which is right for all bus passengers. We . . . believe that when this matter has been put before you and the commissioners, that agreeable terms can be met in a quiet and unostensible manner to the satisfaction of all concerned.¹⁴³

Mrs. Robinson concluded her letter with a call for action, warning the city council that a city-wide boycott of buses is being planned. Robinson wrote, “Please consider this plea, and if possible, act favorably upon it, for even now plans are being made to ride less, or not at all, on our buses. We do not want this.”¹⁴⁴

The mayor dismissed Robinson’s warning and the city buses remained segregated. However, African American attorneys and Montgomery’s N.A.A.C.P. branch planned a precedent-setting case in order to challenge and protest the segregated seating system of the Montgomery buses.¹⁴⁵ On March, 2nd, 1955, the fifteen-year-old black girl, Claudette Colvin, was arrested for refusing to yield her bus seat to a white woman. In fact, the W.P.C. and black attorneys were ready to use this incident to trigger and initiate the threatened bus boycott. Yet, the N.A.A.C.P.’s local chapter leader, E. D. Nixon, who also headed the Alabama chapter of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (B.S.C.P.), believed that Colvin, who was then pregnant and unmarried, would not probably arouse the requisite amount of sympathy and

¹⁴² David J. Garrow. Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. New York: Perennial Classics, 2004. P. 15.

¹⁴³ Quoted in: David J. Garrow, op. cit., p 15.

¹⁴⁴ Manning Marable, and Leith Mullings, eds. Let Nobody Turn Us Around: Voices of Resistance, Reform, and Renewal: An African American Anthology. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003. P. 377.

¹⁴⁵ Under the system of segregation used on the Montgomery buses, white people who boarded the bus took seats in the front rows, filling the bus toward the back. Black people who boarded the bus took seats in the back rows, filling the bus toward the front. Eventually, the two sections should meet, and the bus would be full. If other black people boarded the bus, they were required to stand. If another white person boarded the bus, then everyone in the back row nearest the front had to get up and stand, so that a new row for white people could be created. Often when boarding the buses, black people were required to pay at the front, get off, and reenter the bus through a separate door at the back. On some occasions bus drivers would drive away before black passengers were able to reboard the bus. The “back of the bus” seating rule was one of the most humiliating and widely and publicly known manifestations of legalized white supremacy and racial segregation and therefore racial inequality. In addition, since there were no black bus drivers, the black passengers usually encountered the rude and hostile white bus drivers who often called them with demeaning names.

respect that would serve as an effective symbol around which the boycott movement could be built. Nixon and other activists in Montgomery collectively agreed and decided to wait for another possibility; a more promising opportunity. Indeed, Montgomery's black civil rights activists got that opportunity and that was on December 1st, 1955. Rosa Parks, an inspirational African American woman who had already committed herself to civil rights activism and established herself as an opponent of racial segregation, seemed the right if not ideal symbol around which to mount a protest against segregated seating system of the city buses.¹⁴⁶ In this respect, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis stated, "[L]eaders like Robinson and Nixon . . . searched for a case that could be used to challenge the constitutionality of Montgomery's segregated seating. Their aim was to rally the black community to experiment with a brief boycott of the buses that would focus not only on the segregated seating but on the humiliating treatment." Harding, Kelley, and Lewis argued that "Colvin was not the test case they needed, but Nixon and the waiting WPC forces knew that someone else would eventually be pressed beyond the limit and would resist. Evicted in the early forties for sitting too far forward, Rosa Parks, who had long served as a freedom worker, provided the opportunity that Nixon and the WPC needed."¹⁴⁷

The modest and soft-spoken Rosa Parks, who was then forty-two years old, had already worked for about a decade as chapter secretary of the Montgomery branch of the N.A.A.C.P., led voter registration drives, and served as Adviser to the local N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council. As a veteran protester, Rosa Parks had even been thrown off the city segregated buses in the past as she chose to sit in the bus front sections that were reserved for white passengers. Because of that, her reputation was so established that many bus drivers in the city recognized her and refused to stop for her. Yet, although Parks had protested before by insisting to sit in the white sections in the front of the buses, she had not planned to initiate a mass protest when she boarded a bus on December 1st, 1951. In fact, her refusal to give up her seat to a white male passenger was a decision that she made on the spot.¹⁴⁸

Later, Rosa Parks emphasized that she had not planned to stir up the bus boycott that followed her arrest. She explained several times that she was thinking of the everyday trivialities when Blake, the white bus driver, ordered her to surrender her seat to a white passenger. When the driver became adamant, however, Parks determined to stand up for her

¹⁴⁶ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

¹⁴⁷ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 181.

¹⁴⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

right. She stated during a subsequent interview, “When I got on the bus that evening I wasn’t thinking about causing a revolution or anything of the kind.” She then explained, “But when that white driver stepped back towards us, when he waved his hand and ordered us up and out of our seats. . . I felt the meanness of every white driver I’d seen who’d been ugly to me and other black people through the years I’d known on the buses in Montgomery.” She concluded, “I felt a light suddenly shine through the darkness.”¹⁴⁹ As Parks later recalled, “I had no idea when I refused to give up my seat on that Montgomery bus that my small action would help put an end to the segregation laws in the South.”¹⁵⁰

Although Parks had not planned her determined protest, she later recalled that she had “a life history of being rebellious against being mistreated because of my color.” And that she had acted because the time had come “when I had been pushed as far as I could stand to be pushed. . . . I had decided that I would have to know once and for all what rights I had as a human being and a citizen.” Referring to her motives, Parks stated that she refused to obey the command of the bus driver to give up her seat “because I was so involved with the attempt to bring about freedom from this kind of thing.” She continued, “I felt just resigned to give what I could to protest against the way I was being treated, and felt that all of our meetings, trying to negotiate, bring about petitions before the authorities . . . really hadn’t done any good at all.”¹⁵¹

Rosa Parks felt compelled to refuse that day when she was asked to yield her seat to a white passenger; and as a result she was arrested because she violated Montgomery’s transportation codes. When asked by the arresting police officer why she had not obeyed the bus driver’s command, she answered, “I didn’t think I should have to. Why do you push us around?”¹⁵² Three months after her arrest, Mrs. Rosa Parks explained why she refused to obey the Montgomery city bus laws providing for segregation,

Well, in the first place, I had been working all day on the job. I was quite tired after spending a full day working. I handle and work on clothing that white people wear. That didn’t come in my mind but this is what I wanted to know: when and how would we ever determine our rights as human beings? . . . It just

¹⁴⁹ Katie Marsico. The Montgomery Bus Boycott: Milestone of the Civil Rights Movement (Perspectives On). New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, An Imprint of Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2012. PP. 12-13.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁵¹ Stewart Burns. Daybreak of Freedom: The Montgomery Bus Boycott. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997. PP. 8-9.

¹⁵² Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 62.

happened that the driver made a demand and I just didn't feel like obeying his demand. He called a policeman and I was arrested and placed in jail. . . .¹⁵³

In fact, news of Parks arrest spread quickly, galvanizing Montgomery's black community into action. Once he learnt that Parks was jailed, Nixon, using his home as collateral to post bail, secured her release. Then, he tried to persuade Parks to allow black activists to use her case to initiate a mass protest movement against segregation on Montgomery's bus system. Actually, Parks bravely agreed, despite her husband's concerns. Nixon promptly informed the other black leaders of the plan, including the head of the W.P.C., Jo Ann Robinson. Robinson in turn selected two of her students and assigned them a work, throughout the night of Rosa Park's arrest (December, 1st, 1954), making seventy-five thousand flyers to notify the rest of Montgomery's black citizens of Park's arrest and call on them to demonstrate their solidarity by boycotting the city buses. By the morning of December 2nd, less than one day after Park's arrest, Robinson had managed to organize about two hundred black volunteers to distribute the leaflets among the members of the black community of Montgomery.¹⁵⁴ The leaflets read, "Another Negro woman has been arrested and thrown in jail because she refused to get up out of her seat on the bus for a white person to sit down." The leaflets then warned, "This has to be stopped. Negroes have rights too, for if Negroes did not ride the buses, they could not operate . . . The next time it may be you or your daughter or mother." In the end, they asked black people to join the planned one day boycott, "We are therefore, asking every Negro to stay off the buses Monday in protest of the arrest and trial . . . Don't ride the buses to work, to town, to school, or anywhere on Monday."¹⁵⁵

On Monday, December 5th, 1955, not one black American in Montgomery rode the city buses. Motivated by this significant proof of the boycott's initial success, Nixon and the other black activists, who were planning the black boycott of the city's bus system, rapidly founded the Montgomery Improvement Association (M.I.A.) to guide and support the efforts of the protest. King, who was then twenty-six years old, was elected president of the association.¹⁵⁶ According to David R. Goldfield, M.I.A. "served as an umbrella organization for black groups in the city and as the distribution point for volunteers and donations." The

¹⁵³ Quoted in: Howard Zinn. A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present. Third Edition. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2003. P. 451.

¹⁵⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 62.

¹⁵⁵ Allison Crotzer Kimmel. The Montgomery Bus Boycott. Minnesota: Capstone Press, 2015. P. 17.

¹⁵⁶ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

M.I.A. also “functioned as a liaison to the white community to negotiate a settlement.”¹⁵⁷ Although King was only twenty-six years old and had lived in the Montgomery city for a relatively short period of time, black civil rights activists believed him to be the best man to fulfill this task. King, who was nominated the group’s president, later explained that the purpose of the M.I.A. was to “improve the general status of Montgomery, to improve race relations, and to uplift the general tenor of the community.”¹⁵⁸ The M.I.A. held a public mass meeting of the city’s black community on the evening of December 5th, at the Holt Street Baptist Church in a working-class area of Montgomery, in order to come out with a decision on the future direction of the bus boycott. The leadership of the young King gave shape to the M.I.A. meeting. King outlined the purpose of the boycott.¹⁵⁹ In fact, he “grounded his calculated yet passionate treatise in the fundamental American values of freedom and democracy, Judeo-Christian teachings of love and brotherhood, and the insurgent language of liberation and justice.”¹⁶⁰

King addressed the large crowd gathered at the meeting, “We are here this evening for serious business. We are here in a general sense because first and foremost we are American citizens and we are determined to apply our citizenship to the fullness of its meaning.” With an enthusiastic, highly charged, and attentive large audience listening on, King continued, “You know, my friends there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression.” King spoke also about the badly remembered experiences and indignities of Rosa Parks and other African American passengers who had been abused by the Montgomery bus drivers. He continued, “I want it to be known that we’re going to work with grim and bold determination to gain justice on the buses in this city.” He implored his attentive listeners that enough is enough, and that the right time had come to bring about change. He concluded with a race-conscious statement, “There lived a race of people, a black people, fleecy locks and black complexion, a people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights. And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilization.”¹⁶¹ King explained that he did not support the use of violence, saying “The only weapon that we have in our hands this evening is the weapon of protest.”¹⁶² He further asserted, “I want to say, that we are not here advocating violence. We have never done

¹⁵⁷ David R. Goldfield, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹⁵⁸ Katie Marsico, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-35.

¹⁵⁹ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Richard S. Reddie, *Martin Luther King Jr: History Maker*. Oxford: Lion Hudson plc., 2011. P. 52.

¹⁶² Allison Crotzer Kimmel, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

that.”¹⁶³ For King, the protest was not merely a protest over buses but over things that “go deep down into the archives of history.”¹⁶⁴

King’s exciting speech inspired the assembled black community. The excited, inspired crowd then overwhelmingly voted by acclamation for a continuation of the protest until the city buses would be desegregated; a boycott that was to last 381 days. On January 30th, 1956, shortly before the boycott came to an end, King with his family narrowly escaped when their home was bombed. This attack attracted the attention of major newspapers around the country to King and the Montgomery bus boycott movement. In the face of threatening and violent acts, blacks bravely endured and continued the boycott. When the boycott was initiated, over seventeen thousand black people participated in the protest movement, and by its end, King claimed that about forty-two thousand black people had taken to the city streets at one time or another protesting the discriminatory system of Montgomery’s buses. Although black men were more seen among the members of M.I.A., black women also played a crucial role in organizing and guiding the protest. Nearly all black women living in Montgomery refused to ride the city buses although most of them depended on these transportation means to go to work.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, many of these black women had to walk miles on a daily basis. Others developed a carpool system to help continue the boycott. Boycott leaders soon realized that if they wanted the protest to continue and the boycott to succeed for a prolonged period, they had to elaborate an organized alternative transportation system for Montgomery’s black population including men, women, and children. For this purpose, churches brought cars and station wagons, while funeral parlors permitted their drivers to use their hearses to transport black boycotters to and from their work places. The boycott organizers set pick-up and drop-off points on established routes throughout Montgomery city. As a consequence, the carpool system became an efficient alternative means of transportation for Montgomery’s black residents.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Quoted in: Donald W. Whisenhunt, ed. Reading the Twentieth Century Documents in American History. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. P. 199.

¹⁶⁴ Howard Zinn. A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present, op. cit., p. 451.

¹⁶⁵ In 1955, 40 percent of the residents of Alabama’s state capital, Montgomery were black. Like many black people living the South, a large number of black Montgomerians worked in domestic jobs, and because most of them did not earn enough to purchase a vehicle so they relied on buses to travel to and from work. Between 75 to 80 percent of city’s bus riders at that time were black domestic workers. (Source: Allison Crotzer Kimmel, op. cit., p. 6.)

¹⁶⁶ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 64

Anywhere, historians estimate that from 66 to 75 percent of the people who boarded the Montgomery City Lines in the early 1950s were African Americans.¹⁶⁷ In fact, at the time of the boycott, the Montgomery Bus Line was owned by National City Lines. When the spirit of the protest swept through the black community of Montgomery, which represented about 75 percent of the city's bus ridership, the boycott considerably damaged the profit margin of the bus company, eliminating 65 percent of its business compelling it to cancel routes, raise fares, and automatically fire many drivers.¹⁶⁸ In this context, Katie Marsico stated, "[T]he Montgomery City Lines experienced a sharp decline in business, with some company officials estimating about \$400 in daily losses."¹⁶⁹

As the boycott continued, Montgomery's white residents expressed their opposition differently. "This bunch of niggers aren't going to rule this city," Police Commissioner Clyde Sellers reportedly remarked to a number of his colleagues concerning M.I.A. leaders. "We're gon' watch 'em like hawks. They'll break the law, and we'll swoop down and put 'em behind bars. . . . There's a lot of mad white people all over town who are not going to stand for this mess. I tell you, we better not give 'em an inch."¹⁷⁰ When it became obvious that Montgomery's black community had no intentions of capitulation, white leaders resorted to intimidation as a means to perturb the boycott. The most noted case took place in February 1956, when the Montgomery grand jury accused, arrested, then released on bond about one hundred M.I.A. boycott leaders, among them were King, Abernathy, and Parks, and other African American ministers who participated in the protest movement.¹⁷¹

These black leaders were charged on the basis of a 1921 state statute that outlawed boycotts initiated without a "just cause." This meant that King and his fellow black ministers were indicted on conspiracy to disturb or obstruct the Montgomery busing system. Yet, instead of weakening the boycott leaders, such intimidation had the opposite effect to what it was intended, for it strengthened the determination of M.I.A. leaders and condensed the national media's coverage of King and the protest movement. As intimidation failed to reach the desired effects, white segregationists resorted to the use of violence by attempting to assassinate M.I.A. leaders Nixon, Abernathy, and the pastor of the Bethel Church in

¹⁶⁷ Katie Marsico, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

¹⁶⁸ Matthew C. Whitake, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁶⁹ Katie Marsico, op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁷¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 66.

Birmingham, Fred Shuttlesworth, by bombing their homes on January 30th and December 25th, 1956 and January 10th, 1957, respectively.¹⁷²

Intimidation failed to discourage black boycotters. Instead, threats and attacks simply encouraged them to redouble their efforts in order to reach their aim. The unwillingness of white business and political leaders to negotiate, along with the white supremacists violent attacks, persuaded M.I.A. leaders to pursue justice through litigation. After consulting with many local and national N.A.A.C.P. lawyers, M.I.A. initiated a legal suit to challenge the constitutionality of Montgomery's segregated bus system. With the *Gayle v. Browder* case (1956), the M.I.A. and N.A.A.C.P. went beyond their earlier goal for "a more humane form of segregation" to a new goal to totally eradicate segregation in Montgomery's public transportation system. At first, M.I.A.'s legal strategy succeeded as the federal district court ruled on June 4th, 1956, that Alabama's racial segregation laws for buses were unconstitutional. However, Montgomery's buses remained segregated as an appeal of the June ruling worked its way through the courts. When the bus boycott got close to its one-year anniversary, King and the other leaders were worried that their efforts might end in deadlock. Actually, in November 1956, Alabama state courts issued an order declaring carpools illegal. Yet, on November 13th, 1956, the Supreme Court affirmed the District Court's decision that Montgomery's segregated bus seating system was unconstitutional, ordering the city to end its discriminatory and segregationist practices in bus system.¹⁷³

On the night of the Supreme Court's ruling, a caravan of about forty cars carried Ku Klux Klan members through Montgomery's African American community in an attempt to intimidate and scare black residents of the city and remind them of their position in the social hierarchy. Having just secured a major legal victory against segregation, Montgomery's black residents were not intimidated. Rather, they stood firm in front of the Klan members, and some even waved. As a consequence, Klan members, who were confused, simply left.¹⁷⁴ As Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis explained, on the night when the Supreme Court announced its decision, "a caravan of forty cars of Klan members drove through the city's black neighborhoods. But no one ran into their houses. No one pulled down

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

the shades. Instead, many ‘New Negroes’ stood and watched calmly. Some even waved to the disconcerted white-robed visitors, and soon the visitors drove away.”¹⁷⁵

Davis R. Goldfield addressed the same point and stated that on the same night of the *Gayle* decision, “a fully robed contingent of the Ku Klux Klan in a procession of forty vehicles staged a ‘parade’ through Montgomery’s black neighborhoods.” This visit was an obvious warning to black people that they should not presume that a court ruling would affect the racial status quo in the states of the Deep South. Goldfield further explained: “Ordinarily, such a scene would have at least stirred uneasiness in the black community, but on this happy night, blacks greeted the Hooded Empire with applause and derisive laughter. The bewildered Klansmen sped off into the night.”¹⁷⁶

On December 20th, 1956, a mass meeting was held to officially call for the end of the boycott, and King, who became “an internationally known prophet of justice and peace, told the assembled crowd,

I’m not telling you something that I don’t live. [“That’s right!” a congregant shouted.] I’m aware of the fact that the Ku Klux Klan is riding in Montgomery. I’m aware of the fact that a week never passes that somebody’s not telling me to get out of town, or that I’m going to be killed next place I move. But I don’t have any guns in my pockets. I don’t have any guards on my side. But I have God of the Universe on my side. I’m serious about that. I can walk the streets of Montgomery without fear. I don’t worry about a thing. They can bomb my house. They can kill my body. But they can never kill the spirit of freedom that is in my people.¹⁷⁷

The morning of the next day, King, Abernathy, and a number of other M.I.A. black activists boarded the first desegregated bus in the state of Montgomery, a fact that announced the end of one phase of black peoples’ struggle for justice and equality and initiated a new one. In fact, the Montgomery bus boycott represented the first major victory of the Civil Right Movement.¹⁷⁸ In this respect, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis wrote, “The next morning a restrained but happy group, including King, Abernathy, and Smiley,

¹⁷⁵ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

¹⁷⁶ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

¹⁷⁷ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 69.

boarded the first desegregated bus, beginning a new phase of the long journey toward freedom and justice for all.”¹⁷⁹ In the same respect, Howard Zinn wrote, “Montgomery was the beginning. It forecast the style and mood of the vast protest movement that would sweep the South in the next ten years: emotional church meetings, Christian hymns adapted to current battles, references to lost American ideals, the commitment to non-violence, the willingness to struggle and sacrifice.”¹⁸⁰ The boycott was a victory of the Civil Rights Movement and it gave King the moral authority, which along with important media coverage of the event, made of this black activist arguably the most influential and recognized leader of the protest movement.¹⁸¹

When the Montgomery bus boycott ended, King declared, “Old Man Segregation is on his death bed.” King was, however, prompt to indicate that the struggle against racial segregation was far from being over and that blacks had to face the tragic fact that they were still far from racial equality since they were living in a segregated society. He said, “History has proven that social systems have a great last-minute breathing power, and the guardians of a status quo are always on hand with their oxygen tents to keep the old order alive.” Racial segregation persisted in America, King proclaimed, “in the South in its glaring and conspicuous forms [and] in the North in its hidden and subtle forms. But if democracy is to live, segregation must die.”¹⁸² King was insistent on the point that there was still something to be done if blacks wanted to succeed in their struggle to end racial segregation. He, and other black activists, therefore, turned their attention to the coming phase of the civil rights movement and its new challenges, including voter registration drives and the desegregation of educational institutions as well as places of public accommodation.¹⁸³ In this context, Gabriele J. Atchison and Mindy R. Weidman said, “After the success of the Montgomery bus boycott (1955-1956), African American leaders realized that it was time to seek more victories with regard to ending segregation and discrimination in all aspects of black life.”¹⁸⁴

Galvanized by the Montgomery bus boycott, many other black communities around the country created other activist organizations and began their own protests. But these

¹⁷⁹ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁸⁰ Howard Zinn. A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present, op. cit., p. 451.

¹⁸¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁸² Quoted in: Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁸³ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁸⁴ Gabriele J. Atchison and Mindy R. Weidman. “The Foundation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1957.” 50 Events that Shaped African American History: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic. Ed. Jamie J. Wilson. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2019. P. 404.

protests remained at the local level and were not affiliated with the N.A.A.C.P., or other national organizations. When the N.A.A.C.P. was legally banned from conducting any activity in the state of Alabama, African American residents of the state founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights in 1956. Students attending Florida A&M University also initiated another bus boycott in May 1956. This boycott got support from a local pastor and a civil rights organization known as the Tallahassee Inter-Civic Council. The preacher and civil rights activist, Charles Kenzie Steele, along with other black activists were, indeed, arrested in December 1956, because of their efforts to physically desegregate the buses by breaking the segregated seating rules and sitting in the “whites only” section of the bus. When King and other leaders knew of these protests, they resolved to establish a regional organization that would provide greater centralization and support to local communities. In January 1957, sixty black ministers and civil rights leaders met at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. In fact, King and Abernathy left this meeting prematurely in order to address the bombing of four black churches including the one which housed Abernathy’s congregation. The remaining attendees founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.), and chose King as its president. They also assigned him the task of drafting a “Statement to the South and Nation” that would link the civil rights movement with the black and other diasporas.¹⁸⁵ King wrote:

All over the world men are in revolt against social and political domination. The age old cry for freedom and human dignity takes on a significance never experienced before. For in a very real and impelling sense no man, no nation and no part of the universe is an island unto itself . . . Asia’s successive revolts against European imperialism, Africa’s present ferment of independence, Hungary’s death struggle against communism, and the determined drive of Negro Americans to become first class citizens are inextricably bound together. They are all vital factors in determining whether in the Twentieth Century mankind will crown its vast material gains with the achievement of liberty and justice for all, or whether it will commit suicide through lack of moral fibre.¹⁸⁶

Martin Luther King Jr. faced a blistering program as he solicited the nation to raise funds for the S.C.L.C. He declared that the S.C.L.C. was particularly important because it served as an umbrella organization, a centralized governing body, for local groups. Instead of

¹⁸⁵ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in: Stewart Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

seeking the membership of individuals, the organism supported local organizations, including the M.I.A. It also fostered the theory or doctrine of nonviolence and was concerned with how to put it into practice. In addition, it created citizenship schools in different local communities. The organization's campaign to guarantee voter registration, fight racial segregation, secure equality of employment opportunities, and struggle for adequate housing were affirmed by its focus on the doctrine of nonviolence and civil disobedience.¹⁸⁷

Although the S.C.L.C. also fought racial segregation in public transportation facilities throughout the Southern cities, its foremost focus became black voting rights.¹⁸⁸ As Gabriele J. Atchison and Mindy R. Weidman explained: "The SCLC led major political campaigns and ran leadership trainings and citizen schools that framed the struggle for black civil rights in moral terms. They joined local movements of voter registration protests throughout the South. The larger protests were in Albany, Georgia; Birmingham and Selma, Alabama; and St. Augustine, Florida."¹⁸⁹ In the same respect, David R. Goldfield wrote: "The SCLC was a distinctly southern organization, the first civil rights group with an exclusively regional cast, and a demonstrably Christian movement. The SCLC established freedom schools across the South, training individuals in nonviolent protest and preparing them for the conflicts of the 1960s."¹⁹⁰ However, the N.A.A.C.P. did not have much faith in the S.C.L.C.'s methods and was disinclined to redirect resources from major legal cases to defend S.C.L.C. protestors. It is true that the N.A.A.C.P. and the S.C.L.C. cooperated in certain cases, but the two organizations oftentimes differed in attitudes and strategies.¹⁹¹

During the time when the N.A.A.C.P. and the S.C.L.C. were waging their struggle against racial segregation, black civil rights activists from both organizations also worked hard to pressure the federal government to step up its commitment to black civil rights. Despite the lack of support for black civil rights from the part of President Eisenhower, he along with Representative Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, and Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives, pushed Congress and the American nation one step closer to a more just system through the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1957. The act created a six-member bipartisan commission known as the Commission on Civil Rights. The commission possessed the power to "investigate allegations that certain citizens are

¹⁸⁷ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁸⁹ Gabriele J. Atchison and Mindy R. Weidman, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

¹⁹⁰ David R. Goldfield, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹⁹¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

deprived of their right to vote” as well as to investigate other violations of the right to equal protection of the laws.¹⁹²

Besides, the act made it illegal for any individual to interfere with another individual’s right to vote, and it authorized the U.S. attorney general to prevent racist judges from interfering with black people’s attempts to vote by use of federal injunctions. In addition, the act mandated the appointment of an additional assistant attorney general as head of a new division of the Department of Justice devoted exactly to the enforcement of civil rights. Yet, the Civil Rights Division moved slowly and had slight direct impact on voting rights. During the first two years of the division’s life, it launched just three actions of enforcement, one each in Louisiana, Alabama, and Georgia. Ironically, although the percentage of voter registration among African Americans in the state of Mississippi was merely five percent, the division did not enforce voting rights in this state.¹⁹³

In the study of the Civil Rights Movement history, the S.C.L.C. is important because the activism in which this organization engaged laid the foundation for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The S.C.L.C.’s protests caused significant perturbations to the supremacist culture of the segregated South. Throughout the process of establishing the organization, Martin Luther King Jr. was convinced that the doctrine of nonviolence was going to be a useful and powerful tool in the hands of African Americans in their struggle for social justice and equality in the years to come.¹⁹⁴

After the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the African American civil rights struggle returned to the issue of public school desegregation. In 1955, the Supreme Court ordered that states must comply with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision “with all deliberate speed.” In 1957, efforts to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas resulted in events that led to the first battle in the Southern States over the federal rulings.¹⁹⁵ In this respect, Hugh Brogan stated: “The years of aggressive white reaction which followed the *Brown* decision saw a great many dramatic incidents, of which the best remembered is the attempted desegregation of the school system in Little Rock, Arkansas.”¹⁹⁶ In the same respect, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis stated, “Eventually, all the

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Gabrie’l J. Atchison and Mindy R. Weidman, op. cit., p. 405.

¹⁹⁵ Gabriel Burns Stepto. *The African American Years: Chronologies of African American History and Experience*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2003. P. 400.

¹⁹⁶ Hugh Brogan. *The Penguin History of the USA*. Second Edition. London: Penguin Books, 2001. P. 628.

possibilities and compliances of the post-Montgomery struggles for a desegregated nation seemed to gather around Little Rock's Central High."¹⁹⁷

Despite the fact that President Eisenhower was not especially interested in using the power of the presidency to support African American people in their struggle against racial segregation and discrimination and their fight for freedom and equality, the rebelliousness of governor of Arkansas, Orville Faubus, left him no choice but to act on behalf of integration. Faubus was determined to defy the *Brown* decision and maintain school segregation.¹⁹⁸ In fact, no racial controversy of Eisenhower's second term was more obvious than the confrontation over school desegregation in Little Rock in 1957 as events finally forced the President to act.

Little Rock was considered a city that was reasonably subject to the changes that were mounting in the South, and in 1954 it was the first city in a Southern state to respond in a positive way to the Supreme Court's decision in the *Brown* case. In a period of less than a week, after the decision was handed down, the Little Rock school board declared its intention to voluntarily desegregate its public schools, starting with the Central High School, an institution with an enrollment of approximately two thousand white students, located in a working-class white neighborhood. Yet, it was not until 1957 that the school board announced that it would actually begin its plan of the desegregation process on a somewhat limited level that fall.¹⁹⁹ According to the Little Rock High School Historic Site, it was stated:

On May 24, 1955, in Little Rock, Arkansas, the local school board adopted a plan for graduate integration, known as the Blossom Plan (also known as the Little Rock Phase Program). The plan called for desegregation to begin in the fall of 1957 at the City's Central High School, and filter down to the lower grades over the next six years. Under the plan, students would have been permitted to transfer from any school where their race was in the minority, thus ensuring that the black schools would remain racially segregated, because many people believed that few, if any, white students would opt to attend

¹⁹⁷ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 196.

¹⁹⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 584.

¹⁹⁹ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 196.

predominantly black schools. Federal courts upheld the Blossom Plan in response to a lawsuit by the N.A.A.C.P.²⁰⁰

On September 3rd, 1957, nine black youths, schooled in the philosophy of nonviolent resistance by local N.A.A.C.P. leaders, attempted to integrate Little Rock Central High School. At first, when the fifteen-year-old girl, Elizabeth Eckford, arrived, alone, at the campus at the intersection of 14th and Park Streets, she was faced by a mob made up of a group of angry white segregationists who tried to intimidate and terrorize her into going back. Although she tried to enter the front of the building, but that was in vain because she was ordered back to Park Street by National Guardsmen who were sent to the location by Orville Faubus to deny the nine African American teenagers entrance to the school and maintain order.²⁰¹ In this context, James Patterson said, “[T]he governor of Arkansas , Orval Faubus, demagogically commanded 270 National Guard troops to move in around Central High School on the day before school was set to open. The troops, he said disingenuously, were needed to maintain law and order at the school.” Yet, as Patterson continued, these National Guard troops were, in fact, there in order to “keep the nine black children assigned to Central High from entering.”²⁰²

In the same context, David R. Goldfield said, “The day before school opened, Faubus deployed the Arkansas National Guard around Central High School. At the time, it was unclear whether the maneuver was to protect the black children and discourage violence or to obstruct the desegregation process.” But, by the following day, “it was clear that the governor had thrown down the gauntlet and taken his stand with the segregationists.”²⁰³ Others among the “Little Rock Nine,”²⁰⁴ including Jefferson Thomas, Terrence Roberts, Ernest Green, Minnijean Brown, Carlotta Walls, Thelma Mothershed, and Gloria Ray, arrived at the school later in the afternoon and gathered at the 16th Street corner, where they with a number of local ministers, who were there to support them, were too turned away.²⁰⁵ Their ordeal was captured by television cameras and images of the event were sent to amazed and angry audiences all over the world.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 72.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., p. 414.

²⁰³ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 108.

²⁰⁴ The nine black students became known as the “Little Rock Nine,” or simply the “Nine.”

²⁰⁵ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

²⁰⁶ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., p. 414.

Eisenhower was now confronted with a possibility that he had only a few months earlier declared he could not imagine: the use of troops to enforce the desegregation process following the decisions of the federal courts.²⁰⁷ In this respect, Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman stated, “Eisenhower, who only two months earlier had said he could not envision any situation in which he would use federal troops, could no longer passively sit by and watch federal authority flouted.”²⁰⁸ In fact, Eisenhower tried to resolve the problem by conferring with the city’s mayor and even with Faubus himself. Meantime, the National Guard remained at Central High School, and the black schoolchildren stayed home. Faubus finally removed the National Guard from the school only after a federal court ordered him to.²⁰⁹ In this respect, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold wrote: “Faubus was determined to flout *Brown* and maintain school segregation. When a federal court order forced the governor to allow the children into the school, he simply withdrew the state guard and left the children to face a hate-filled mob.”²¹⁰

According to the National Park Service, “The Nine remained at home for more than two weeks, trying to keep up with their schoolwork as best they could, . . . Meanwhile, Faubus reluctantly removed the guardsmen from in front of the school, after a federal court directed him to stop interfering with its order.” On September 23rd, the nine black students entered the school for the first time, whereas furious crowd outside shouted, “two, four, six, eight / we ain’t gonna integrate!” Other members of the mob attacked black news reporters who were trying to cover the event and that was in full view of the local police. In fact, the white mob’s hysterical calls for resistance to school integration finally erupted into violence against black journalists. The historic site explains, “The Little Rock police, fearful that they could not control the increasingly unruly mob, removed the Nine later that morning.” The nine black students went back home again.²¹¹ In this respect, James T. Patterson stated: “The local police were clearly sympathetic to the [angry white] mob. . . . The mayor, frightened by the specter of large-scale violence, cabled the White House to ask urgently for the dispatch of federal troops. The black students were taken out of school and sent home, whereupon the mob slowly dispersed.”²¹²

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 870.

²⁰⁹ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., p. 414.

²¹⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 584.

²¹¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 73.

²¹² James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., pp. 414-415.

Despite the fact that the situation was really critical, but Eisenhower was still reluctant to make the step of sending in federal troops. Instead, the President denounced what he termed the “disgraceful occurrences” at Little Rock and ordered people to leave off and disperse. But, the following day, with black children still at their homes, 200 white people gathered at the school. The President, then carried out what his top aide, Sherman Adams, later declared was “a constitutional duty which was the most repugnant to him of all his acts in his eight years at the White House.”²¹³ Describing the mob’s actions as being “disgraceful,” President Eisenhower ordered “1,200 members of the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division, the ‘Screaming Eagles’ of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to the scene, and placed the Arkansas National Guard under federal control.”²¹⁴ In fact, federalizing the Arkansas National Guard meant removing it from Faubus’s command. In this respect, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis stated, “Eisenhower finally did what he pledged never to do: send federal troops to Little Rock “to aid in the execution of federal law,” he said to the nation. But he also sent more than a thousand riot-trained troops from the 101st Airborne Division to protect the right of nine citizens to make use of the opportunity that the Supreme Court had guaranteed to them.”²¹⁵

Yet, in issuing the orders, Eisenhower acted not as an advocate of school desegregation but as commander-in-chief. Because he was faced with Faubus’s defiance and with mounting violence, Eisenhower concluded with reluctance that he had no choice but to act. Actually, it was the first time since the Reconstruction that federal troops had been sent to the South to protect the civil rights of African American citizens.²¹⁶ Yet, it is still important to mention that Faubus’s use of state troops to resist a U.S. Supreme Court decision involving the implementation of school desegregation was carried out in front of national network television cameras, a fact that finally pushed Eisenhower to action.²¹⁷ In this context, James Ciment said: “The combination of public pressure resulting from the newscasts and Faubus’s challenge to federal authority forced a very reluctant president Dwight Eisenhower to act, nationalizing the National Guard and sending in an additional 1,000 federal troops, including

²¹³ Ibid., p. 415.

²¹⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 73.

²¹⁵ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 198.

²¹⁶ James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974, op. cit., p. 415.

²¹⁷ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 196.

the 101st Airborne Division, to integrate the school.”²¹⁸ In fact, the “Screaming Eagles” quelled the disturbance in Little Rock. On September 25th, 1957, the nine black students, with federal troops that were escorting them, were taken back to the school, got into the building, and passed their first full day of ordinary classes. As Melba Pattillo²¹⁹ later recalled, “After three full days inside Central, I know that integration is much bigger word than I thought.”²²⁰ As a matter of fact, the troops remained in Little Rock Central High School for the rest of the school year.

Yet, securing access to Little Rock Central High School was bittersweet. If the nine African American students successfully integrated the school legally, they could not integrate it socially. Inside the school, they were badly treated by the majority of their white schoolmates and even teachers. The Nine were intimidated, taunted, jeered, and at times beaten. After a few days of schooling, they had to be escorted by soldiers at all times, everywhere on the school campus. However, military guards could not follow them into the locker rooms and restrooms, where they were oftentimes ambushed, obliged to drink toilet water, and then beaten. All in all, during their year at Central High School, all of the Nine endured verbal and physical terrorization. On May 27th, 1958, Ernest Green became Central High School’s first black or African American graduate. The others were forced either to enroll in other schools or take correspondence classes the following year when voters decided on the option to close all of the four high schools in Little Rock in order to prevent further efforts of school desegregation.²²¹

Faubus, who was seeking fame, was reelected in 1958 and for three other terms after that. During the 1958-1959 academic year, he closed all the public schools in Little Rock rather than see desegregation a reality in the city. Other Southern white leaders, determined to perpetuate white supremacy and defy school desegregation, followed in his steps and swelled massive resistance throughout much of the Southern states in the late 1950s.²²² For instance, in Virginia, three cities and two counties shut down their public schools to prevent integration, and the General Assembly provided funds to found private schools. Consequently, the pace of the desegregation process slowed to a crawl.²²³ By 1960, several

²¹⁸ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 150.

²¹⁹ Melba Pattillo was one of the “Little Rock Nine”.

²²⁰ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 73.

²²¹ Ibid., pp. 73-74.

²²² James T. Patterson. Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974 , op. cit., pp. 415-416.

²²³ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 870.

Southern states had closed schools rather than integrate them.²²⁴ Six years after the *Brown* ruling, thousands of school districts across the South remained racially segregated, and emboldened Southern white politicians –resolved to maintain white supremacy and defy desegregation– loudly claimed that the decisions of the Supreme Court need not be obeyed as the law of the land.²²⁵

III- The Crusade against Segregation and Racial Inequality Gains Momentum

In the face of aggressive white resistance to integration, black civil rights activists continued to practice the doctrine of nonviolent civil disobedience in their struggle for desegregation. In fact, the demands of blacks were spreading out to touch almost every aspect of their segregated life. On February 1st, 1960, four black college students organized a sit-in at a “white only” lunch counter in a Woolworth’s store in Greensboro, North Carolina. Soon, the sit-in movement spread to other cities and towns throughout the South. In April 1960, about three hundred students meeting at a conference at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina formed the Students Nonviolent Coordination Committee (S.N.C.C.). This independent youth organization worked with other civil rights organizations such as S.C.L.C. and the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.)²²⁶ to fight racial inequality.²²⁷ In this context, Matthew C. Whitaker stated:

Throughout the nation, students soon began to protest discrimination. African American college students embraced and adapted the “sit-in” strategy. . . . By early 1960 sit-ins had taken the nation by storm, having become the tactic du jour for young, increasingly militant black activists. They quickened the civil rights movement, making it more direct and unmasking some of the most virulent manifestations of white supremacy before the watchful eyes of the entire nation.²²⁸

As journalist-scholar Taylor Branch commented: “Greensboro helped define the new decade.”²²⁹ In like fashion, Iwan Morgan observed: “The actions of [the four black college

²²⁴ David R. Goldfield, op. cit., p. 113.

²²⁵ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 870.

²²⁶ The Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) was founded in 1942 by an interracial group of students at the University of Chicago. C.O.R.E. pioneered the use of nonviolent direct action in black civil rights struggle in the 1940s before playing an important part in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

²²⁷ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 400.

²²⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 74.

²²⁹ Quoted in: Iwan Morgan. “The New Movement: The Student Sit-Ins in 1960.” From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The

students] generated a new wave of student protest by African Americans and their white sympathizers that would be of critical importance for the achievement of the civil rights revolution of the 1960s.”²³⁰

In fact, the sit-in strategy had already been practiced by sixteen-year-old Opal Ellis in Phoenix in 1945, and employed by black civil rights activists in Wichita, Kansas, in 1958. But, the sit-in campaigns most closely connected with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s began on February 1st, 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina.²³¹ On that day four black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College decided to desegregate local restaurants by sitting at a segregated lunch counter of Greensboro, North Carolina’s Woolworth five-and dime store. Although black people were welcome to spend their money at the store, they were not allowed to sit and eat at the lunch counter, and that was a clear and painful symbol of white supremacy.²³² The four African American students, Ezell Blair, Joseph McNeil, David Richmond, and Franklin McCain entered the store, bought goods, and sat at the “white-only” counter. When a white server asked them to leave the counter, they refused, still quiet, still polite.²³³ In this context, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis stated: “Monday morning, February 1, 1960, was the day they [the four black students] ‘did it.’ When they sat down and asked clearly for coffee and snacks and were told that they could not be served, they refused to get up from their seats. Like Rosa Parks, they believed that holding their seats was essential to affirming their dignity and their place as citizens.”²³⁴ As Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis put it, the central issue for these black students was not “the hamburgers or Cokes.” The issues were fairness, justice, equality, freedom, and above all human dignity. They were all driven by the strong desire to achieve the basic and major goal that Jim Crow must go.²³⁵

As a matter of fact, the four black students were surprised as police officers did not arrive and arrest them. The protesters remained seated until the store closed.²³⁶ Not only did they declare that they would stay until the store closed, but they said that they would come

Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Ed. Iwan Morgan, and Philip Davies. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2012. P. 1.

²³⁰ Iwan Morgan, op. cit., p. 1.

²³¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 74.

²³² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 584.

²³³ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 74.

²³⁴ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 203.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 202.

²³⁶ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 74.

back again the following day, and the days after, until they were served, and until all blacks could be served and their humanity and dignity properly recognized, at least at the lunch counter concerned.²³⁷ The action of the four black students electrified their fellow students, and following day, about two dozen black protesters joined them and gathered in Woolworth's lunch counter to stage another sit-in. Despite the fact that the second sit-in did not result in conflict or violence, but the protest itself attracted the local media for coverage. By the third day of the campaign, the protestors had set up the Student Executive Committee for Justice (S.E.C.J.) to coordinate protests. The S.E.C.J. synchronized protest efforts and contributed to an antisegregation march involving several thousand students. As the sit-in movement in Greensboro unfolded, black students began sitting in at segregated lunch counters throughout the country. By March 1st, sit-in campaigns were spreading in more than thirty cities in seven states.²³⁸ In this respect, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold stated: "Although they [the four black students] began the sit-in on their own, it quickly gained the support of the black community. Many people in the North and West—both black and white—also joined the campaign by picketing local stores of the national chains that approved of segregation in the South."²³⁹

In discussing the same issue, Iwan Morgan wrote: "[N]ews of the Greensboro protest immediately inspired similar demonstrations by students who emulated the original quartet in being peaceable, polite, and smartly attired. The sit-ins spread first to nearby Winston-Salem, Raleigh, and Durham and then to more distant North Carolina cities like Charlotte and Fayetteville." As a consequence, and as Morgan noted, within a short time, most of the major cities in the South had experienced sit-ins.²⁴⁰ In the same respect, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis observed: "By the middle of February 1960, the nation had begun to discover that "everybody" really meant *everybody* and not just the North Carolina students. Within weeks the sit-ins had become a powerful social movement, ranging across the South. . . . Television helped to spread what people called "sit-in fever" across the South."²⁴¹

²³⁷ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 203.

²³⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 74.

²³⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 585.

²⁴⁰ Iwan Morgan, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁴¹ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 205.

One of such student-led protests was launched in Nashville, Tennessee. The protest did result in the desegregation of local lunch counters in May 1960. Participants considered this campaign as a victory for their independent activism. Student sit-ins also spread in Atlanta. In March 1960, about two hundred black students representing the six historically black colleges of the city, staged sit-ins at local lunch counters. These students also established the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights and sought negotiations with the owners of the lunch counters concerned with the sit-ins. When negotiations failed, the students called for King's involvement with the hope that this would attract more attention to their cause. Actually, the Atlanta campaign broadened its scope of interest, now calling for the desegregation of all public facilities, the enforcement of black voting rights, and equal educational and employment opportunities.²⁴² In this regard, Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis pointed out, "[T]he students soon turned their attention to other forms of public accommodations as well. They created "wade-ins" at segregated public pools and beaches, "knee-ins" at churches, "read-ins" at public libraries, and "bowl-ins" and "skate-ins" at segregated recreation centers." Harding, Kelley, and Lewis further explained that usually, those students consolidated the above mentioned nonviolent "direct action" challenges with peaceful marches and picketing at local city halls, seeking negotiations with the white elected officials and demanding that these officials take responsibility and take action in order to change the existing segregation statutes.²⁴³

In the same context, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold stated that, "The Atlanta sit-in students broadened their campaign demands to include desegregation of all public facilities, black voting rights, and equal access to educational and employment opportunities. On September 27th, 1961, the Atlanta business and political elite gave in."²⁴⁴ In fact, the students-led campaigns lasted for more than a year before white and black leaders in the city decided to meet in order to negotiate the protest and the issue of segregation. After meeting, these leaders decided to desegregate the lunch counters and to begin the desegregation process of Atlanta's schools the next school year. Although the protesting students complained about the decision, they finally accepted the settlement.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

²⁴³ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 205.

²⁴⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 586.

²⁴⁵ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 75.

After the initial white surprise at the students-led sit-ins protests and campaigns that challenged the laws and traditions of racial segregation, resistance to the students' efforts and actions became very significant. In certain areas, it took the form of arrests by the local police. In some other situations, the angry, frightened, and resolved to perpetuate the old order based on white supremacy and control, white people often attacked the students. Sometimes, participants in the sit-ins were pulled from the lunch counter stools and were beaten. Yet, the students, determined not to allow themselves to be diverted from their basic purpose or from their nonviolent stand, chose consistently not to strike back at the white attackers.²⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, the impact of the sit-ins on the momentum of the major phase of the black freedom struggle known as the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s is significant. As the Southern Regional Council's Harold Fleming told a reporter, the *Brown* decision may have been the legal turning point, but the sit-ins "are the psychological turning point in race relations in the South. This is the first step to real change—when the whites realize that the Negroes just aren't having it any more."²⁴⁷ As David Brown and Clive Webb put it, "The sit-ins had a substantial impact on the struggle for racial equality."²⁴⁸ In the same context, Tim McNeese argued that the sit-in strategy represented one of the most important tools used against Southern segregation and which helped to speed up the wheel of social change needed to advance black civil rights.²⁴⁹

The sit-in movement paved the way for the "Freedom Rides" of 1961. In the spring of this year, to challenge and resist racial segregation on interstate buses, Freedom Rides in Alabama and Mississippi were organized by the Congress for Racial Equality under James Farmer, the organization's national director.²⁵⁰ Taking advantage of the effectiveness of student-led sit-in campaigns, an interracial group²⁵¹ of civil rights activists, led by James Farmer, executive director of C.O.R.E., coordinated Freedom Rides through the South. These Freedom Rides were intended to begin in Washington, D.C., on May 4th, 1961, in two buses

²⁴⁶ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 206.

²⁴⁷ George Lewis. "'Complicated Hospitality': The Impact of the Sit-Ins on the Ideology of Southern Segregationists." From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Ed. Iwan Morgan, and Philip Davies. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2012. P. 53.

²⁴⁸ David Brown, and Clive Webb. Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2007. P. 297.

²⁴⁹ Tim McNeese. The Civil Rights Movement: Striving for Justice. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, an imprint of Infobase Publishing, 2008. P. 84.

²⁵⁰ Jeff Wallenfeldt, ed. The Black Experience in America: From Civil Rights to the Present. New York: Britannica Educational Services, in Association with Rosen Educational Services, LLC., 2011. P. 21.

²⁵¹ The group included seven African Americans and six whites.

bound for New Orleans, Louisiana, following the example of the Journey of Reconciliation planned by the same organization in 1946 and responding to the Supreme Court's *Boynton v. Virginia* decision of 1960, which extended the court's 1946 ruling on interstate bus travels to include bus terminals, restrooms, and other public facilities associated with interstate travel. During these rides, activists rode interstate buses in interracial groups in order to test the enforcement of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Morgan v. the Commonwealth of Virginia* issued in 1946, which outlawed racial segregation in interstate bus travel. Participants in these rides soon realized that the *Morgan* decision went without being enforced, for they were arrested by the police in North Carolina. The Freedom Rides of 1961 followed the same strategy as the Journey of Reconciliation, as an interracial group of civil rights activists traveled on interstate buses to test the enforcement of the recent Supreme Court's ruling issued in 1960 in the case of *Boynton v. Virginia*, which reaffirmed the *Morgan* ruling.²⁵² As a matter of fact, the Freedom Rides of 1961 signaled the beginning of a period when the civil rights protest movement heightened in scale as well as in intensity.²⁵³

Yet, the 1961 Freedom Rides were quickly met by white violence in the South. On May 4th, 1961, and in the presence of white police officers, African American freedom rider John Lewis was savagely beaten when he tried to enter a white waiting room in the Greyhound bus terminal in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Also, on May 14th, upon stopping to change a slashed tire, a bus carrying freedom riders through Anniston, Alabama, was firebombed by an angry white mob. During the time when the terrified riders attempted to flee the flames in the bus, they were physically assaulted by the white mob.²⁵⁴ So, if the Freedom Riders encountered violence in South Carolina, in Alabama the reaction was much more severe. C.O.R.E. abandoned the Freedom Rides when it became clear that the police were offering no protection, and most of the activists left Alabama.²⁵⁵ Although the original riders were unable to find buses to carry them farther, another group of ten members, originating in Nashville and organized by the S.N.C.C., determined not to stop the protest, renewed the effort in an attempt to not let the idea die out.²⁵⁶

The new Freedom Riders traveled to Birmingham on May 20th to inspire and revive the rides and continue their journey to Montgomery. When they reached Montgomery, a white

²⁵² Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

²⁵³ Jeff Wallenfeldt, ed., op. cit., p. 35.

²⁵⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 81.

²⁵⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 587.

²⁵⁶ Jeff Wallenfeldt, ed., op. cit., p. 47.

mob of a thousand angry white people was awaiting them. There, the riders were severely beaten; all of them injured requiring hospitalization. The attack was widely televised and this helped strengthen the resolve of the freedom riders, and at the same time embarrassed U.S. government officials, who now realized that the conflict had become alarming. Consequently, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy dispatched four hundred federal marshals in order to restore law and order in Montgomery. On May 21st, Martin Luther King and Ralph Abernathy joined the conflict when 1,200 activists congregated in Abernathy's church to protect themselves from an angry white mob. The federal marshals averted further bloodshed by surrounding the church. John Patterson, governor of Alabama, ordered the National Guard and state troopers to protect those inside, only after federal marshals surrounded the building.²⁵⁷

Soon afterwards, James Farmer arrived to lead the Freedom Riders who were still gathered and willing to carry on to Jackson, Mississippi. As a matter of fact, law enforcement officials protected them from possible attacks until they arrived at their destination. Once they reached Jackson, however, police officers arrested the interracial riders because of the violation of a recently passed statute, a charge of which they were quickly convicted and fined \$200 each. The judge sentenced each person to three months of prison when the activists refused to pay. To further tyrannize them, Mississippi officials transferred the riders, who were about one hundred, to the Parchman penitentiary, where they were brutally beaten and abused. When other activists arrived at Jackson, they were arrested too, and sent to Parchman penitentiary, and forced to undergo the same bad conditions. By the end of summer, more than three hundred activists were sent to Parchman where they endured the worst possible conditions.²⁵⁸

On May 29th, President John F. Kennedy ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission (I.C.C.) to enforce even stricter regulations banning racial segregation in interstate travel.²⁵⁹ As historian Dwayne Mack argued, the national and international attention the Freedom Rides generated forced President Kennedy to pressure the I.C.C. to outlaw racial segregation in interstate travel. The new order went into effect across the nation on November 1st, 1961. Unlike its response to previous rulings of the Supreme Court, which white racists dismissed and defied, the I.C.C. promptly levied sanctions and penalties in case of any

²⁵⁷ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 82.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

²⁵⁹ Jeff Wallenfeldt, ed., op. cit., p. 47.

violation of its order. Not only did the Freedom Rides reveal the courage and strong determination of interracial civil rights activists and the promise of interracial cooperation, but also inspired Southern African Americans to view nonviolent civil disobedience as a legitimate strategy to ensure their ability in exercising their civil rights.²⁶⁰ Yet, as Matthew C. Whitaker argued, although the Freedom Rides demonstrated the commitment of African Americans to the struggle for positive change and reform, the black community was still dogged by *de jure* segregation, economic inequality, and the ferocity of white supremacists by the early 1960s. Whitaker argued that millions of black people, especially in the South, continued to suffer under the evils of the yoke of disenfranchisement and white mob rule.²⁶¹

As the nonviolent struggle for desegregation grew more important, the whole nation, not just the South, was forced to address the civil rights issue. In April 1963, Martin Luther King and the S.C.L.C. led a campaign with the aim to desegregate public accommodations in Birmingham, Alabama.²⁶² As James Ciment argued, “In 1963, King and the SCLC decided to turn their attention to Birmingham, Alabama’s largest city and one of the industrial centers of the South.”²⁶³ Fred Shuttlesworth, a local civil rights leader and minister of the city’s First Baptist Church, labeled Birmingham city “the most segregated city in the United States.”²⁶⁴ The large tightly segregated industrial city of Birmingham was chosen as the site for action because it was ripe for such a protest; and that was in part because its African American community suffered from police brutality as well as educational, social, and economic discrimination.²⁶⁵

Led by Eugene “Bull” Connor, city officials arrested King and harassed the other demonstrators using attack dogs, clubs, and fire hoses. Newspapers and television coverage of Birmingham’s violence shocked Americans across the nation and besmirched the United States’ image abroad.²⁶⁶ In this respect, Paula D. McClain and Steven C. Tauber said, “Birmingham police commissioner Eugene “Bull” Connor was determined to stop the civil rights demonstrators. As the protesters, including a great many Black schoolchildren and teenagers, marched, sang, and prayed, Connor and his forces turned on them with night sticks,

²⁶⁰ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 84.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 401.

²⁶³ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 163.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 590.

²⁶⁶ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 401.

snarling attack dogs, and high-pressure water hoses.”²⁶⁷ As a consequence, millions of television viewers around the world watched in horror at the images of the peaceful young demonstrators being blown off their feet by water hoses and attacked by dogs.²⁶⁸

In discussing the same point, Jim Ollhoff noted that “in May 1963, there was a peaceful march of black Americans in Birmingham. Commissioner of Public Safety Bull Conner tried to stop the march. He used fire hoses, clubs, and police dogs against the peaceful marchers.” Ollhoff stated that this was a defining moment in the Civil Rights Movement because of television coverage as Bull Conner’s brutal tactics were broadcast on news channels nationwide. Ollhoff then concluded: “People across the United States watched the stark images of hatred and violence of the segregationists. People, both white and black, once again saw segregation for what it was: injustice that came from hatred and ignorance.”²⁶⁹ In discussing the dilemma the United States was caught in, and the conflict between its democratic ideals and its racist politics, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold stated: “Between 1960 and 1963, the civil rights movement developed the techniques and organization that would finally bring America face-to-face with the conflict between its democratic ideals and the racism of its politics.” As these historians argued, “Day after day the movement squared off against the die-hard resistance of the white South and created a situation that demanded that the president and Congress take action.”²⁷⁰

The lingering image of Birmingham and the growing number of demonstrations and protests it stimulated across the South compelled action from President Kennedy. On June 11th, 1963, the President delivered his powerful speech on civil rights to the American nation:

We face . . . a moral crisis as a country and a people. It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk. It is a time to act in the Congress, in your state and local legislative body, and above all, in all our daily lives. A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution . . . peaceful and constructive for all.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Paula D. McClain, and Steven C. Tauber. American Government in Black and White: Diversity and Democracy. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. P. 370.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Jim Ollhoff, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁷⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 588.

²⁷¹ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 591.

In fact, President Kennedy announced his civil rights bill proposal; the strongest civil rights bill the nation had yet seen. But, despite the public's awareness of the existence of racial discrimination, the President could not gain sufficient support in Congress to counter the Southern bloc within his party. To demonstrate their support for the civil rights legislation proposed by Kennedy, a number of civil rights organizations, including S.C.L.C., N.A.A.C.P., C.O.R.E., S.N.C.C., and their leaders revived the idea of organizing a march on Washington that Philip Randolph had first proposed in 1941. Again, in 1962, Randolph and Bayard Rustin had proposed a march in order to protest black unemployment. Initially, their 1962 call for a protest received a listless response, but after Birmingham major civil rights organizations reconsidered the idea. As a reflection of renewed hope, Randolph called it a march for "Jobs and Freedom."²⁷²

Committed civil rights leaders continued to press their case, and at the March on Washington²⁷³ on August 28th, 1963, King presented his inspiring speech, "I Have a Dream."²⁷⁴ In fact, on that day, an interracial assembly of more than 200,000 people gathered at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, to demonstrate their commitment to equality for all races and to demand justice for all citizens under the law.²⁷⁵ Throughout the day they sang freedom songs and listened to speeches from civil rights leaders. The high point of the day speeches came with the impassioned speech of Martin Luther King who had emerged as a prominent spokesman for black civil rights. "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood," King proclaimed. "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed:

²⁷² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 591.

²⁷³ The March on Washington is also known as the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom".

²⁷⁴ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 401.

²⁷⁵ "I have a Dream Speech" was the address delivered by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King on August 28th, 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial in ceremonies connected with the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In his eloquent, emotionally charged speech, the prominent civil rights leader described his vision of freedom and equality for all Americans regardless of their race. "It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream." It was a dream that the descendents of slaves and slave owners would live in brotherhood and harmony, that freedom and justice would replace oppression and injustice, that all people would be judged on the basis of character not the color of their skin. King looked forward to the day when all Americans could join in the spiritual refrain: "Free at last. Free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last." After the march ended, President John F. Kennedy met with ten of the civil rights leaders. He then issued a statement hailing the demonstration as an advance in the cause of black civil rights and said he had been impressed by the "deep fervor and the quiet dignity" that the demonstrators had displayed. (Source: Susan Rosenfeld, ed. Encyclopedia of American Historical Documents. New York: Facts On File, Inc., an imprint of Infobase Publishing, 2004. P. 1600.)

«We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.»”, he stated.²⁷⁶ The crowd roared each time King used the refrain “I have a dream.”²⁷⁷

The American historian Harvard Sitkoff provided a thoughtful analysis of the power of King’s address at the March on Washington when he declared, “King’s message and majestic delivery made the day historic. At a time when most Americans did not perceive the injustice or the immorality of the nation’s racism, King depicted it at its most searing to the millions who watched on television and to the many more millions who had heard it on the radio or would see it excerpted on the evening news.” Sitkoff then argued, “At a time when the sight of black kids and white kids going to the same school inflamed racist mobs, he demanded an end to all barriers separating the races. . . . King confronted white America with the undeniable justice of African-American demands and succeeded in associating black rights with accepted values.”²⁷⁸ King organized his remarks along the structure and style of a sermon, the kind he had delivered at Sunday morning church service.²⁷⁹ As William T. Martin Riches argued, tens of millions of Northern American people watching on television news heard a young Baptist minister articulating African American demands for justice and equality in terms of the American Dream. That was a familiar theme to many who had heard King before but it came as a revelation to millions who had not.²⁸⁰

Yet, King’s words did not soothe the angry opposition of white Southerners. On September 15th, 1963, only two weeks after the March on Washington, the 16th St. Baptist Church in Birmingham, which had been the rallying center for the Civil Rights Movement during the previous five years, was bombed by a group of white supremacists who also killed four young black girls attending Sunday school classes; Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, and Carole Robertson. The event shook the American nation, and together with reaction to the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22nd, 1963, set the stage for change.²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ Quoted in: Donald W. Whisenhunt, ed., op. cit., p. 205.

²⁷⁷ Howard Cincotta, ed. An Outline of American History. Washington, D.C.: United States Information Agency. 1994. P. 319.

²⁷⁸ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 591-592.

²⁷⁹ Friedman, Michael J. Free at Last: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs, 2008. P. 44.

²⁸⁰ William T. Martin Riches. The Civil Rights Movement: Struggle and Resistance. New York: ST. MARTIN’S PRESS, INC., 1997. P. 74.

²⁸¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 592-593.

Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy's successor, lobbied hard to pass the civil rights legislation. Many civil rights leaders feared that Johnson, as a Southerner, would support Southern defiance. However, only four days after taking the oath of office, Johnson declared that he planned to support the civil rights bill as a memorial for Kennedy. Johnson, the master politician, skillfully succeeded to push the bill through Congress despite a filibuster²⁸² by its opponents.²⁸³ As James Ciment argued, "The rise to the presidency of Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson worried King and other civil rights leaders. Johnson was a Southerner, from Texas, and had shown little commitment to black issues in his long political career in the House and Senate." But, as Ciment still argued, "the new president surprised the African-American community. From the beginning, he put civil rights high on his agenda and told Congress that passage of the Civil Rights Act would serve as a memorial to the slain president."²⁸⁴ In this respect, Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman stated, "Few black leaders expected much of the new president. Since Lyndon Johnson was a Southerner and the likely Democratic presidential nominee in 1964, they doubted he would risk alienating Southern support by embracing civil rights. Johnson, however, was determined to be president of all people, and he proved an effective champion of the cause."²⁸⁵

In his first address before a joint session of Congress on November 27th, 1963, Lyndon Johnson stated simply and effectively: "We have talked long enough in this country about equal rights. We have talked for one hundred years or more. It is time to write the next chapter, and to write it in the book of law."²⁸⁶ He added, "I urge you . . . to enact a civil rights law so that we can move forward to eliminate from this Nation every trace of discrimination and oppression that is based upon race or color."²⁸⁷ Johnson told Congress: "No memorial oration or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill."²⁸⁸ With the help of Democrat Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota and Republican Everett Dirksen of Illinois, Johnson guided an expanded version of Kennedy's civil rights bill through both houses of Congress, broke a Southern filibuster, and signed it into law.²⁸⁹ Therefore, on July 2nd, 1964, one year after the March on Washington,

²⁸² It was a 75-day Senate filibuster.

²⁸³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 593.

²⁸⁴ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 167.

²⁸⁵ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 878.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 878-879.

²⁸⁷ Quoted in: Richard Panchyk. The Keys to American History: Understanding Our Most Important Historic Documents. Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Review Press, 2008. P. 213.

²⁸⁸ Howard Cincotta, ed., op. cit., p. 320.

²⁸⁹ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 879.

President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed racial discrimination in the area of public accommodations including restaurants, hotels, and all other public facilities.²⁹⁰

As a matter of fact, President Johnson used all his authority to persuade the Senate to limit debate over the civil rights bill and ultimately secured the passage of the sweeping 1964 Civil Rights Act.²⁹¹ The issue of legally mandated racial segregation in public facilities was now settled.²⁹² In fact, the Act included eleven titles covering areas of education, public accommodations, expanded powers of the attorney general, and voting rights. To promote desegregation, the Act also coordinated different federal agencies. Congress, using its commerce authority, outlawed discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants, gas stations, and soda fountains²⁹³, and required equal access to pools, stadiums, and parks. The Act also strengthened “the earlier voter registration protections, and established a sixth-grade education level as a presumption of literacy.”²⁹⁴

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 contained provisions to help eligible black voters to register, aggressive white resistance especially in the Deep South states had rendered them ineffective.²⁹⁵ As Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis argued, the new law did not remove or destroy all the barriers to voting that black people in the South still faced.²⁹⁶ In this context, Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman stated, “Although the 1964 Civil Rights Act had a profound impact in many areas, the section on voting rights was not fully effective, and hundreds of thousands of blacks remained disenfranchised.”²⁹⁷ In the state of Alabama, for example, at least 77 percent of black citizens were unable to vote. These black people’s cause was taken up by Amelia P. Boynton, an African American civil rights activist and a businesswoman in the state of Alabama, her husband Samuel William Boynton, and the Rev. Frederick Reese, who led the Dallas County Voters League (D.C.V.L.). These three, with others, were involved in campaigning for African Americans’ suffrage, and became active in black voting rights. Their struggle for black enfranchisement would help

²⁹⁰ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 401.

²⁹¹ Howard Cincotta, ed., op. cit., p. 320.

²⁹² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 593.

²⁹³ In American history, a soda fountain was a type of cafe where you can buy sodas to drink, ice creams, etc. The popularity of the soda fountains collapsed in the 1970s with the introduction of fast foods, commercial ice cream, and bottled soft drinks.

²⁹⁴ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 879.

²⁹⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 595.

²⁹⁶ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 237.

²⁹⁷ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 888.

pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As a matter of fact, Selma's sheriff, James G. Clark, worked to block the voter registration campaigns sponsored by the Boyntons, Reese, and a number of S.N.C.C. members. By 1964 less than 400 of the 15,000 eligible black voters had registered to vote in Dallas County. President Johnson denied requests to send federal marshals to protect voter registration workers in the county. The workers, who were seeking reinforcements, sent a call to Martin Luther King and S.C.L.C. When King arrived, he was arrested. In February 1965, during a peaceful voting rights march in neighboring Perry County, Jimmie Lee Jackson was fatally shot by an Alabama state trooper as he tried to protect his mother from being beaten by a state trooper. Jackson's murder attracted the national media.²⁹⁸ In fact, this act of violence, together with the sheriff's use of tear gas, whips, and clubs against the demonstrators attracted international attention.²⁹⁹

The crisis over black voting rights reached boiling point in the town of Selma, Alabama.³⁰⁰ S.C.L.C. announced its plans for a mass march from Selma to Montgomery³⁰¹ beginning on March 7th, 1965. Leaders of this march, which involved 600 protesters, were King; Hosea Williams; and John Lewis. When the protesters reached the Edmund Pettus Bridge, state troopers and Sheriff Clark's county police tear-gassed and beat them. Captured by television cameras, this battle became known as "Bloody Sunday." Seizing the timing, King and the civil rights activists rescheduled the march for March 9th. President Johnson urged King not to go through it. King knew that he needed the President's support to win strong voting rights legislation. But Selma's people and the many S.N.C.C. workers were not ready to cancel the march. Actually, when the day of the march came, about 1,500 peaceful protesters marched to the bridge singing "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round".³⁰² Viewing the event through mass media, millions of American citizens were shocked and international opinion was galvanized by the bloody episode that followed. Typical of media coverage of the event were those comments from the London Times:

²⁹⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 595.

²⁹⁹ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. Sixth Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1988. P. 451.

³⁰⁰ Bruce J. Dierenfield. The Civil Rights Movement. New York: Routledge, 2013. P. 112.

³⁰¹ Civil rights leaders knew that if blacks wished to achieve greater political and economic and even social equality, they would have to gain greater access to the ballot. In the spring of 1965, King organized a march from Selma, Alabama, to the state capital in Montgomery to protest the obstacles still facing African American voters in that state. Although black people made up about half of Alabama's population, they accounted for only 1 percent of the registered voters.

³⁰² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 595.

At least 67 Negroes were injured, some of them seriously, in Selma yesterday when state and local law enforcement officers waded into them with clubs, bullwhips, and ropes beneath a smoke-screen of tear gas as they set out for the state capitol of Montgomery as a protest over difficulties in registering for the vote.

Mr. John Lewis, the chairman of the student nonviolent co-ordinating committee, was in the hospital today with a possible fractured skull, and 17 other Negroes were detained with broken arms or legs or other injuries. One of Selma's doctors said the Good Samaritan Hospital looked last night as though there had been a moderate disaster, and a hospital official was quoted as saying there was a great deal of pain and suffering among the wounded, most of those injuries appeared to be the result of heavy blows.³⁰³

One week later, and on March 15th, President Johnson, in a televised speech to Congress, announced that he would submit voting rights legislation. The President electrified civil rights activists when he adopted the rallying slogan of the Civil Rights Movement "We shall overcome."³⁰⁴ Tim McNeese captured this atmosphere when he wrote: "[O]n March 15, President Johnson appeared on national television to talk to the American people about the event that had been taking place in Selma. He referred to them as 'an American tragedy.' He likened those involved in the marches and demonstrations to symbols of the American spirit."³⁰⁵ "Their cause must be our cause, too," Johnson declared. At the end of his address, the President used the Civil Rights Movement's most popular phrase: "We shall overcome."³⁰⁶

In the text of the President's speech was the long overdue acknowledgement that "in many places in this country men and women are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes." The President further asserted that: "No law we now have on the books . . . can ensure the right to vote when local officials are determined to deny it."³⁰⁷ Eventually, on August 4th, 1965 after four long months of contemplation by Congress, the voting rights bill

³⁰³ London Times, March 9, 1965. Quoted in: John Lewis, and Archie E. Allen. "Black Voter Registration Efforts in the South." Notre Dame Law Review, Vol. 48, No. 1. (10-1-1972), pp. 112-113. <<http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol48/iss1/6>>. Accessed: January 5, 2019.

³⁰⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 595.

³⁰⁵ Tim McNeese, op. cit., p. 124.

³⁰⁶ Quoted in: Tim McNeese, op. cit., p. 124.

³⁰⁷ Quoted in: John Lewis, and Archie E. Allen. "Black Voter Registration Efforts in the South.", op. cit., p. 113.

was finally passed, and was subsequently signed into law by the President.³⁰⁸ As Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman argued: “Utilizing all his famed persuasive skills, Johnson steered the 1965 Voting Rights Act through Congress and signed it into law.”³⁰⁹ As a matter of fact, the protests at Selma and the massive white reaction that followed spurred Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which the President signed on August 6th.³¹⁰ This act is “one of the most monumental laws in the entire history of American freedom,” said Johnson. “The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.”³¹¹ The measure authorized the federal government to appoint federal examiners to register voters who are eligible to vote but are not registered to vote where state and local officials made voter registration impossible. One year after passage of the act, 400,000 black people registered in the Deep South.³¹²

As Lawrence J. Hanks argued, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a milestone in the modern struggle for black equality.³¹³ Yet, the Southern states quickly challenged the Voting Rights Act. To be sure, Southern state legislators resisted the act and designed a variety of disenfranchisement devices and higher qualifications for candidates.³¹⁴ Because of the persistent practices of Southern local and state legislatures to prevent or reduce black voter registration and eventually voting among African Americans, the power of the Civil Right Act could only be measured by a strong federal commitment to enforcement. Thus, while the 1965 Civil Rights Act was the twentieth century’s most significant legislation dealing with the enfranchisement of the American black community, of course those blacks eligible to vote, its positive effects were still limited to a certain degree by the federal government’s reluctance to institute full enforcement of the act.³¹⁵

The challenges faced by the Civil Rights Movement emanated from what Martin Luther King called “evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society,” evils that reflected not only the legacy of the institution of slavery but also the perpetuation of that

³⁰⁸ John Lewis, and Archie E. Allen. “Black Voter Registration Efforts in the South.”, op. cit., p. 113.

³⁰⁹ Melvin I. Urofsky, and Paul Finkelman, op. cit., p. 889.

³¹⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 595.

³¹¹ Quoted in: Tim McNeese, op. cit., p. 130.

³¹² Howard Cincotta, ed., op. cit., p. 320.

³¹³ Lawrence J. Hanks. “The Quest for Black Equity: African-American Politics since the Voting Rights Act of 1965.” Upon these Shores: Themes in the African-American Experience, 1600 to the Present. Ed. William R. Scott and William G. Shade. New York: Routledge, 2000. P. 340.

³¹⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 597.

³¹⁵ John Lewis, and Archie E. Allen. “Black Voter Registration Efforts in the South.”, op. cit., p. 113.

legacy during subsequent generations by radicalized local and state policies that wove white privilege and supremacy deep into the fabric of American culture and institutions. Despite the movement's undeniable successes, those evils persisted and in some ways had been compounded.³¹⁶

As Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold argued, the Civil Rights Movement successes depended on many factors. The federal government intervened at critical and decisive moments to enact significant civil rights legislations, and protect the rule of law with the federal marshals and troops. For more than a decade, the victorious fighters of the Civil Rights Movement stormed the legal bulwarks of racial segregation. The uncompromising struggle by African Americans for justice and equality, their civil rights organizations, and the support of their white allies pressured and pushed officials in the three branches of the federal government to issue executive orders, deliver judicial rulings, and enact historic civil rights laws that dismantled *de jure* segregation in the South.³¹⁷

The victories of the Civil Rights era were far reaching, but as they were achieved, certain new issues emerged that would fissure the movement. As a matter of fact, the Civil Rights Movement had mostly and predominantly been focused on the South. African Americans living in the North already had many of the rights granted by the federal legislations of the era. Nevertheless, they still suffered from other forms of discrimination. Addressing their daily problems required new ways of thinking and different tactics and strategies.³¹⁸ As will be demonstrated in the first part of the following chapter, the African American struggle for justice and equality will undergo a major shift as new challenges would emerge.

³¹⁶ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (Mar., 2005), p. 1261. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3660172>>. Accessed: August 14, 2019.

³¹⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 597-598.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

Chapter Five:
**The African American Experience from the Post-Civil Rights Era
to the Present**

Despite the significant achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, African Americans did not emerge from the era fully integrated into the American society enjoying real and full equality with their white counterparts. In fact, the 1965 Civil Rights Act signaled both the high tide of Civil Rights Movement as well as the beginning of its decline. The post-civil rights era posed new problems and therefore created new challenges for the African American community. In 1968, with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., a powerful voice for black rights and racial equality in the United States was silenced. At the close of the twentieth century, African Americans still faced continuing challenges.

In 2008, Barack Obama took the oath of office to become the forty-fourth president of the United States and the first black or African American to serve in the nation's highest office. Obama's election represented a pivotal moment in the complex trajectory of race relations in the United States. But the question is: Did the election of Obama really signify a "post-racial" United States America? To put it in other words, did the election of Obama mean that the country had finally moved beyond its long history of racial tensions and divisions? During the second decade of the twenty-first century, and in the case of African Americans, racial inequality remained a contentious issue in American race relations.

I- The Rise of the Black Power Movement: From Nonviolence to Black Power

Scholars dealing with the African American struggle for racial equality tended to agree that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 marked the end of the Civil Rights Movement. Together, the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act fulfilled the promises of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. These Acts reversed a century of Jim Crow Laws, though it would take more time to finally end the practice of Southern racial segregation. But as these two bills symbolized the high tide of Civil Rights legislation, so too the Selma-Montgomery march represented the climax of nonviolent protest as the centerpiece of black struggle for civil rights. In a period of less than six months later and just five days after President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, violence erupted in the city of Los Angeles. The Watts Rebellion, also known as the Watts Riots, was a large series of riots that broke out on August 11th, 1965, in the predominantly black neighborhood of Watts in Los Angeles. These riots were born of a more subtle *de facto* segregation, that is segregation through practice rather than law, and were triggered by routine

police brutality. The Watts Riots signaled a new and more violent phase of black unrest, and one that was not limited to the South.¹

The Watts rebellion was the beginning of other uprisings that would sweep many cities in the North and Midwest. There were riots in the summer of 1966, but worse ones exploded in Newark and Detroit in 1967.² In this respect, Gabriel Burns Stepto argued, “Passage of the Voting Rights Act, while a clear victory, did not signal an end to tensions in the civil rights struggle. One week after President Johnson signed the voting legislation, riots broke out in Watts, California. During the summers of 1966 and 1967, violent disturbances occurred in cities across the country, including Chicago, Cleveland, Newark, and Detroit.” Stepto concluded: “The anger that fueled the riots forced the nation to address racial and economic inequality in America’s urban centers.”³ On July 29th, 1967, after the Newark and Detroit riots, President Johnson formed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (N.A.C.C.D.), also commonly known as the Kerner Commission, with Illinois Governor Otto Kerner as its chairman. This commission was intended to investigate the root causes of the violent disorders that had erupted in several U.S. cities, including Detroit, since 1965. The commission included two African American members, Republican Senator Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts, and executive director of the N.A.A.C.P. Roy Wilkins.⁴ In announcing the formation of the Kerner Commission to investigate the rioting that took place in major cities, and in providing an explanation for the reasons why he had established the commission, President Johnson observed,

The only genuine, long-range solution for what has happened lies in an attack—mounted at every level—upon the conditions that breed despair and violence. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. We should attack these conditions—not because we are frightened by conflict, but because we are fired by conscience. We should attack them because

¹ James Ciment. Atlas of African-American History. Revised Edition. New York: Facts On File, Inc., An imprint of Infobase Publishing, 2007. P. 172.

² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. The African-American Odyssey. Fifth Edition. Combined Volume. UPPER Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011. P. 615.

³ Gabriel Burns Stepto. The African American Years: Chronologies of African American History and Experience. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2003. P. 402.

⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 616.

there is simply no other way to achieve a decent and orderly society in America.⁵

By the end of 1967, the American nation seemed moving toward total racial polarization. In its final report, released on February 29th, 1968, after seven months of investigation, the Kerner Commission identified white racism as the underlying causative factor and the primary cause of the surge of the riots that had recently swept several major American cities,⁶ and warned that,

[America was] moving towards two societies, one white, one black—separate and unequal. . . . Negroes firmly believe that police brutality and harassment occur repeatedly in Negro neighborhoods. This belief is unquestionably one of the major reasons for intense Negro resentment against the police. . . . Physical abuse is only one source of aggravation in the ghetto. In nearly every city surveyed, the Commission heard complaints of harassment of interracial couples, dispersal of social street gatherings and the stopping of Negroes on foot or in cars without objective basis.⁷

Blaming “white racism” for the civil disorders and urban unrest, the report identified the basic ingredients of the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in the American society since the end of the Second World War:

Pervasive discrimination and segregation in employment, education, and housing . . . growing concentrations of impoverished Negroes in our major cities, creating a growing crisis of deteriorating facilities and services and unmet human needs. . . .

A new mood has sprung up among Negroes, particularly the young, in which self-esteem and enhanced racial pride are replacing apathy and submission to the “system.”⁸

⁵ Mark Robert Rank. One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2004. P. 119.

⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 616-618.

⁷ Ibid., p. 616.

⁸ Quoted in: Howard Zinn. A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present. Third Edition. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2003. P. 460.

The increasing complexities of the black civil rights struggle ended the unity that had existed in the movement's earlier years.⁹ "There is no more civil rights movement," S.C.L.C. critical strategist James Bevel announced to news reporters after the Selma Campaign. "President Johnson signed it out of existence when he signed the Voting Rights Bill."¹⁰ The Watts Riots that exploded in the Watts ghetto of Los Angeles on August 11th, 1965 revealed the complacency of civil rights activists like James Bevel. The Watts Riots represented the worst outbreak of urban unrest since World War II. In the wake of the riots, thirty-four people were dead, about four hundred were injured, and nearly four thousand were arrested. The riots pushed the freedom movement leaders to refocus the direction of their struggle. While civil rights activists had invested tremendous energy in their struggle to secure the basic and constitutional rights of black people in the South, the predicament of northern African Americans had been largely ignored. In contrast to the South, northern blacks did not face legal discrimination. Yet, racism was as pervasive in the North as it was in the South. Racial prejudice, both social and institutional, resulted in African Americans suffering pervasive unemployment, political neglect, and police insensitivity and brutality.¹¹

As Bruce J. Dierenfield put it, the Civil Rights Movement "cleansed the country of a great moral evil. But major problems in the ghettos remained because racism was often more intractable in the North than in the South. Unlike white immigrants who clawed their way to the suburbs, native-born blacks remained stuck in the ghetto."¹² In these crumbling ghettos, economic opportunity was but an illusion, as manufacturing firms moved to the suburbs and craft unions denied black people apprenticeships in well-paying positions. As a result, more blacks sank into poverty and destitution. Dierenfield then argued that blacks in the "seething ghetto had almost no chance of success. In these hellholes, blacks battled rat-infested apartments, an unemployment rate twice that of whites, praying welfare officials, soaring drug use, rampant gang violence, police harassment, inadequate mass transit, and condescending teachers in second-rate schools. Economic opportunity was an illusion." Dierenfield concluded, "When their anger could no longer be capped, blacks rioted in cities across America in the worst period of unrest since the Civil War."¹³ By the summer of 1965, the S.C.L.C. had already made certain plans to organize a northern campaign, but the Watts riots

⁹ Gabriel Burns Stepto, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

¹⁰ Quoted in: David Brown, and Clive Webb. Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2007. P. 320.

¹¹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-321.

¹² Bruce J. Dierenfield. The Civil Rights Movement. New York: Routledge, 2013. P. 127.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

accelerated Martin Luther King's decision to shift the direction of black protest from the South towards the disadvantaged inner cities in the North.¹⁴

In early 1966, King launched his northern campaign with the aim to eradicate slum living conditions and encourage open housing in the city of Chicago. Yet, the S.C.L.C. did not succeed to duplicate the success it had achieved in its crusade against racism in the South. The S.C.L.C.'s inability to gain and secure significant concessions from city authorities was caused by a number of factors including the opposition of Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley and the apathy and cynicism of ghetto blacks who did not respect the authority and leadership of the ministers who led the organization. In addition, racial discrimination which was not mandated by the law in the North, was also a less tangible issue than segregation, and therefore more difficult to dramatize. Following the Chicago campaign's failure, King realized that he was criticized from all parties. While whites and moderate black leaders censured him for his outspoken opposition to the Vietnam War, black radicals, on the contrary, accused him of being too timid.¹⁵ As Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis argued, "The Chicago campaign marked another failure for King. To compound matters, his increasing opposition to the Vietnam War drew fire from nearly every major older mainstream black leader in the country, who feared alienating the volatile president, and further distanced him from the Johnson administration."¹⁶ King realized the relationship between the war abroad; that in Vietnam, and the failure to wage a real war on poverty at home.¹⁷ He pointed out that while the United States was spending approximately five hundred thousand dollars to kill each enemy soldier while spent only thirty-five dollars a year to help a needy American in poverty. The more King criticized the war in Vietnam, the more isolated he became in mainstream civil rights circles.¹⁸ By the time King launched his public criticism of American foreign policy, voicing his own opposition to the Vietnam War, with a speech at the Riverside Church in New York on April 4th, 1967, the civil rights coalition had already started to decline.¹⁹

¹⁴ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 321.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880. Ed. Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005. P. 249.

¹⁷ Under President Lyndon Johnson, the federal government launched a "War on Poverty" as part of his overall vision of transforming America into a "Great Society."

¹⁸ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 249.

¹⁹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 321.

The growing complexities of black civil rights struggle ended the unity that had survived during the movement's earlier years.²⁰ Malcolm X and younger African American people questioned whether America would end the evil of racism without a struggle. A growing number of black Americans had little faith in or patience with American society and embraced an agenda of black nationalism or separatism. In the face of the white backlash against the gains achieved by the Civil Rights Movement, many African American leaders and scholars, including Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, advocated black power. The latter became the dominant ideology for many younger black activists. Martin Luther King remained ambivalent about the concept, preferring to define black power as "a temporary strategy for black solidarity in the struggle for an integrated society." A Philip Randolph, however, called black power "a menace to peace and prosperity." Randolph added, "No Negro who is fighting for civil rights can support black power, which is opposed to civil rights and integration." These conflicting ideologies outlined a generational shift in black freedom struggle, and the tensions existing between both helped to shape the key events of the post-civil rights movement era.²¹

Facing the fact that white Americans were increasingly disinclined to support the goals of the civil rights movement, many African Americans began looking for new and different approaches to their daily problems overwhelmed by racism. Men like Floyd McKissick of C.O.R.E. and Stokely Carmichael of S.N.C.C. became disillusioned, denouncing King's philosophy of nonviolence, his political moderation, and universalism. The differences between King's S.C.L.C. and Carmichael's S.N.C.C. grew with each dispute. In 1965, after the Selma-to-Montgomery march, Carmichael helped establish the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (L.C.F.O.), which became the first all-black political organization in the black freedom movement to adopt the symbol of the black panther. African American residents of northern and western cities also were impatient with the slow pace of progress. An increasingly growing number of young black churchmen reprimanded mainstream white religious groups for their complicity with racism, demanded reparations, and called for substantive power or leadership positions within the governing structures of the National Council of Churches (N.C.C.). Out of the interracial dispute and strain developed a black theology that criticized racism within white religious groups. Black liberation theology emphasized the importance of linking religion with political activism and social change. A

²⁰ Gabriel Burns Stepto, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

²¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 608.

growing number of young African Americans, together with many black religious leaders, upset because of the considerable political and economic inequalities between themselves and white Americans, became catalysts for an increasingly radical shift in the black freedom movement.²²

As Manuel G. Gonzales argued, in the late 1960s, a growing number of militant leaders, who were dissatisfied and frustrated with the apparently glacial pace of change, especially in northern urban ghettos, where King was influential, emerged from the African American community. Gonzales said that this group of young black militants included Stokely Carmichael, Bobby Seale, Huey P. Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, and the most charismatic of the new leaders, Malcolm X, who became the leading national spokesman for the Black Muslims. Labeling their movement “Black Power,” as Gonzales stated, these leaders of the Black Power movement called for permanent racial separation and advocated the use of violence.²³ Black nationalists sought to preserve and promote their separate identity as a people of African descent. With such slogans as “black power” and “black is beautiful,” they also sought to instill a sense of pride among blacks.²⁴

Malcolm X delineated the characteristics or critical elements of black nationalism. Manning Marable, Professor of Black Studies, defined the ideology, that is black nationalism, as a political and social tradition that includes certain characteristics:

- First, black nationalism advocates black cultural pride and the integrity of the group, which implicitly rejects racial integration.
- Second, it identifies with the cultures of Africa and advocates either immigrating there or maintaining extensive contacts with Africans.
- Third, black nationalism works toward the construction of all-black social institutions such as self-help agencies, schools, and religious organizations and support for group economic advancement, such as black cooperatives, “Buy Black” campaigns, and efforts to promote capital formation within the African-American community.

²² Ibid., p. 609.

²³ Manuel G. Gonzales. Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States. Third Edition. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019. P. 249.

²⁴ Jeff Wallenfeldt, ed. The Black Experience in America: From Civil Rights to the Present. New York: Britannica Educational Services, in Association with Rosen Educational Services, LLC., 2011. P. 43 .

- Finally, black nationalism advances political system and supports the development of all-black political organizations and protest formations.²⁵

Malcolm X, who became one of the most influential black leaders of the twentieth century, experienced extreme racism in his early years. Klansmen burned his family's home, and in 1938 when Malcolm was thirteen years old his father was murdered. Subsequently, his mother was transferred to a mental institution, the Kalamazoo State Hospital. Malcolm was sent to a juvenile detention home, and after the eighth grade he dropped out of school and moved to live with his sister in Boston. There, Malcolm became involved in the street life of drugs, burglary, and gambling. In 1946, he was arrested on charges of larceny and sentenced to a ten-year prison term.²⁶ During the six and a half years he spent in jail, he embraced the teachings of Elijah Muhammad of the Nation of Islam (N.O.I.), and renounced his last name "Little" which he considered a slave name and chose instead to replace it with "X" to signify his lost tribal name.²⁷ While in jail, Malcolm also educated himself in philosophy, religion, history, and literature. In 1952, he was paroled²⁸.

In June 1954, Malcolm became chief minister of Temple Number 7, in Harlem, New York. The forceful, articulate, and charismatic Malcolm did not believe in or advocate the philosophies of nonviolence and integration. He was the voice of the northern urban ghettos. He attracted the attention of many black people. His rejection of the goal of racial integration and King's message of redemption and reconciliation through nonviolence and brotherly love resonated with many younger civil rights activists disillusioned by the growing white violence and backlash.²⁹ In this respect, Matthew C. Whitaker argued, "His [Malcolm's] rejection of integration and "turning the other cheek"³⁰ resonated with Carmichael and his peers, allowing Malcolm to influence a younger generation of activists."³¹ "The day of nonviolent resistance

²⁵ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 609.

²⁶ On August 7th, 1952, Malcolm was released on parole into the custody of his oldest brother Wilfred who lived in Detroit.

²⁷ Malcolm dropped his last name, which his ancestors inherited from a slave owner in exchange for the letter "X". He replaced his last name with "X" to represent the unknown African name he would have had if his ancestors had not been kidnapped and enslaved. The letter represented his ignorance of his family's (tribal) original name which had been lost.

²⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker. Peace be Still: Modern Black America from World War II to Barack Obama. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. PP. 78-79.

²⁹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold., op. cit., pp. 609-610.

³⁰ "Turning the other cheek" is a phrase in Christian doctrine from the Sermon on the Mount That refers to responding to injury without revenge and allowing more injury. The statement is generally interpreted as commanding nonviolence on the part of the victim. Therefore "To turn the other cheek" generally means to not retaliate when one is wronged or injured.

³¹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 105.

is over,” Malcolm proclaimed. In 1964, he also argued, “Revolutions are never based upon love-your-enemy, and pray-for-those-who-spitefully-use-you. And revolutions are never waged by singing ‘We Shall Overcome.’ Revolutions are based on bloodshed.”³² He equated the philosophy of nonviolence with being defenseless against white racism and called nonviolence the “Philosophy of a fool.”³³ Malcolm wanted separation of the races not integration. He made fun of King’s famous speech “I have a dream,” stating, “While King was having a dream, the rest of us Negroes are having a nightmare.”³⁴

Malcolm clearly considered the need for a movement in the urban North, a movement that would focus on the problems of the poor blacks dwelling in urban ghettos and deal with urgent issues such as police brutality, crumbling schools, and high levels of unemployment. While advocating self-reliance, he also blames mainstream civil rights leaders for being “sellouts.” “The black masses,” he argued, “are tired of following these hand-picked Negro ‘leaders’ who sound like professional beggars, as they cry year after year for white America to accept us as first-class citizens.”³⁵ Speaking at the Hotel Theresa in late 1964 to a group of black students from Mississippi, Malcolm said: You’ll get freedom by letting your enemy know that you’ll do anything to get your freedom; then you’ll get it. It’s the only way you’ll get it. When you get that kind of attitude, they’ll label you as a ‘crazy Negro,’ or they’ll call you a ‘crazy nigger’—they don’t say Negro. Or they’ll call you an extremist or a subversive, or seditious, or a red or a radical.” Malcolm then concluded his statement with the emphatic assertion, “[b]ut when you stay radical long enough and get enough people to be like you, you’ll get your freedom.”³⁶ Through different speaking engagements, televised appearances, and by publishing Muhammad Speaks, the newspaper that became the N.O.I.’s official organ, Malcolm X quickly became a national public figure.³⁷

The growing popularity of Malcolm X generated tensions between himself and the leadership of the Nation of Islam. While Elijah Muhammad grew jealous of Malcolm’s success, Malcolm grew disillusioned with Elijah Muhammad’s disinclination to political

³² Quoted in: Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 105.

³³ Lydia Bjornlund. The Civil Rights Movement. San Diego, California: ReferencePoint Press, Inc., 2013. P. 64.

³⁴ Maureen Anderson, Anne Low, and Ian Keese. Retrospective: Year 11 Modern History. Milton, Qld: John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd, 2008. P. 140.

³⁵ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 241.

³⁶ Howard Zinn. Postwar America, 1945-1971. Massachusetts: South End Press, 2002. P. 210.

³⁷ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 79.

activism.³⁸ It was at this time that Malcolm's relations with the Nation of Islam dissolved. Elijah Muhammad, leader of the organization, suspended Malcolm from the Nation when he described the JFK assassination as an instance of "chickens coming home to roost," which meant that Kennedy was a victim of the same kind of violence that victimized African Americans.³⁹ The tensions, then, became publicly visible. Malcolm's point was that the federal government's inaction toward racist violence in the South had come back to strike the president.⁴⁰

Many other members of the N.O.I. were also jealous of Malcolm's growing popularity. In 1964, Malcolm broke with the N.O.I. and set up his own religious organization called the Muslim Mosque, Inc. During the same year, that is 1964, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca; an event that greatly influenced him. He, therefore, changed his name to El-Hajj El-Shabazz and established the Organization for Afro-American Unity (O.A.A.U.).⁴¹ He also repudiated the N.O.I. philosophy that every white person was literally a devil, and he worked to unify his message so that to work in parallel with the civil rights efforts in the South of the United States and anticolonialism in Africa. On February 14th, 1965, while he was speaking to an audience at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, Malcolm was assassinated. His murder shocked the African American community. The incident sent many black people into deep sorrow while others erupted in anger, leading street riots.⁴² Yet, the black nationalist rhetoric of Malcolm continued to influence and inspire many of the new advocates of Black Power.⁴³ In this respect, Vivienne Sanders wrote: "Malcolm inspired the new generation of black leaders such as SNCC's Stokely Carmichael and CORE's Floyd McKissick and the black power movement in general. He was the first really prominent advocate of separatism and what subsequently became known as black power during the great civil rights era."⁴⁴

Many people viewed Malcolm X as the "personification of black manhood." He was able to say things that most black people thought, but because of fear were unable to say. The famous African American actor, Ossie Davis, delivered an eulogy at the murdered leader's

³⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 610.

³⁹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 105.

⁴⁰ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 241.

⁴¹ The O.A.A.U. aimed to unite all people of African descent and to promote political, social, and economic independence for blacks.

⁴² Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 105.

⁴³ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 402.

⁴⁴ Vivienne Sanders. Access to History: Civil Rights in the USA, 1945-68. London: Hodder Education, Part of the Hachette Livre UK, 2008. P. 118.

funeral. Davis concluded the eulogy by describing Malcolm X as “African America’s shining black prince” who sacrificed his life “because he loved us so.” Despite the enormous overflow of affection and gratitude that most blacks demonstrated in the aftermath of his murder, most within the N.O.I., including the young Minister Louis Farrakhan, called him “a Benedict Arnold”⁴⁵ and a traitor. Most blacks, however, particularly young African Americans, espoused his militant advocacy of self-defense, and his work of “overturning systems” that deprived African Americans of their basic human rights, that marginalized and dehumanized them, helped radicalize other young African American leaders including Stokely Carmichael.⁴⁶ This younger cadre of activists were embracing new more radical ideas and tactics and argued that African Americans needed more than white allies; they needed power. Stokely Carmichael, later known as Kwame Ture, would emerge as the leading spokesman for militancy and nationalism within the S.N.C.C.⁴⁷

Stokely Carmichael was born on June 29th, 1941, in Port of Spain, Trinidad. His parents moved to the United States when he was only two years old. The young Carmichael was left in the care of his grandmother and two aunts, and he attended the Tranquility Boy’s School. At the age of eleven, he joined his family in New York City where he was raised. He then joined the High School of Science beginning in 1956. Subsequently, he enrolled at Howard University where he was educated, and he joined the S.N.C.C. in 1960. In fact, Carmichael participated in the sit-ins and Freedom Rides of the Civil Rights Movement.⁴⁸ Yet, as Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis argued, “Like many of his contemporaries, he [Carmichael] joined the Civil Rights movement but never fully embraced the philosophy of nonviolence.”⁴⁹ In 1964, he graduated from Howard. Together with other young S.N.C.C. organizers, Carmichael criticized the relationship between black civil rights activists and white liberals. Besides, he became disillusioned with nonviolence as a means of black protest. Carmichael, like the other young more militant black activists were greatly influenced by the radicalism of Malcolm X.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ The phrase "Benedict Arnold" is synonymous in American history with the word "traitor." As a person, Benedict Arnold was an American military officer who served the cause of the American Revolutionary War before allying with the British. His name became an epithet for traitor and is almost a synonym for treasonous behavior.

⁴⁶ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 104.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 239.

⁵⁰ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 104.

In May 1966, Stokely Carmichael became national chairman of S.N.C.C.⁵¹ Carmichael was elected to replace John Lewis as chairman of the organization. Such a change in the organization's leadership formalized a shift from moderate to militant activist ideology in the S.N.C.C.⁵² In this respect, Gabriel Burns Stepto argued: "In 1966, Stokely Carmichael took over the leadership of SNCC and announced a new, separatist approach."⁵³ In the same respect, Lydia Bjornlund argued, "Carmichael viewed nonviolence as a tactic rather than a philosophy, and when he became head of the SNCC in 1966, he began to call for a more aggressive approach. Rather than trying to integrate African Americans into white mainstream society, Carmichael believed that the black community should unite and take pride in their race and heritage." Bjornlund added, "Carmichael did not believe in asking whites for their freedom; he argued that they should *demand* it—taking it by force if need be."⁵⁴ "No man can give anybody his freedom," said Carmichael. "A man is born free."⁵⁵ In a speech, he delivered at the University of California, Berkley, in 1966, Carmichael declared, "Now, then, in order to understand white supremacy we must dismiss the fallacious notion that white people can give anybody their freedom. In order for America to really live a new society must be born. Racism must die. The economic exploitation by this country of non-white people must also die."⁵⁶

During the same year, Carmichael established the Lowndes County Freedom Organization which led a militant voter registration drive as well as marches on behalf of African American civil rights in the Deep South. The L.C.F.O. with an all-black membership adopted the symbol of the black panther with the belief that it conveyed power in the spirit of Malcolm X, who advocated self-defense instead of nonviolence as a reaction to violent white people.⁵⁷ Black voter registration continued in 1966, when black civil rights activist James Meredith launched his one-man journey known as the "March Against Fear" from Memphis,

⁵¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 610.

⁵² By this time, Carmichael had largely lost faith in the doctrine of nonviolent resistance that he and the S.N.C.C. had held before. As chairman of the organization, he turned it in a sharply radical direction. Because, by then, he had given up on the ideal of interracial collaboration, he expelled S.N.C.C.'s few white staffers, including Bob Zellner, the organization's first white field secretary, and who had been with the organization since its founding.

⁵³ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 402.

⁵⁴ Lydia Bjornlund, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

⁵⁵ Quoted in: Lydia Bjornlund, op. cit., p. 64.

⁵⁶ Quoted in: Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 133.

⁵⁷ According to Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis, the L.C.F.O. adopted the symbol of the black panther because, according to the organization's chairman, John Hulett, the panther will come out fighting for his life when cornered. (Source: Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 240.)

Tennessee, to Jackson, the Mississippi capital, in an attempt to inspire African Americans to register to vote without fear. James Meredith wanted to demonstrate that a black man could walk through Mississippi, the nation's most racially violent state without fear. Meredith intended it to be an inspiration for the black community to promote black voter registration and protest against ongoing discrimination in his home state.⁵⁸

Not long after the march began, James Meredith was shot and seriously injured by white racists. As a reaction, Carmichael and the S.N.C.C. joined with other organizations, including the S.C.L.C. with the goal of continuing the march. As civil rights activists made their way through Alabama, Carmichael popularized the slogan "Black Power." The motto quickly became the S.N.C.C.'s motivational and rallying maxim. As Carmichael declared, when addressing a crowd of marchers in Greenwood, Mississippi, "We been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothing'. What we gonna start saying is Black Power."⁵⁹ Carmichael, nevertheless, was careful to explain the meaning of black power:

[T]he concept of "black power" is not a recent or isolated phenomenon: It has grown out of the ferment of agitation and activity by different people and organizations in many black communities over the years. Our last year of work in Alabama added a new concrete possibility. In Lowndes County, for example, black power will mean that if a Negro is elected sheriff, he can end police brutality. If a black man is elected tax assessor, he can collect and channel funds for the building of better roads and schools serving black people—thus advancing the move from political power into the economic arena.⁶⁰

Carmichael further expounded,

In such areas as Lowndes, where black men have a majority, they will attempt to use it [black power] to exercise control. This is what they seek: control. Where Negroes lack a majority, black power means proper representation and sharing of control. It means the creation of

⁵⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁶⁰ This and the following quote are excerpts from Stokely Carmichael's "What We Want" speech that he delivered in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1966. While delivering his speech, Carmichael asked the crowd, "What do we want?," to which they replied, following the lead of Carmichael and his colleague, Willie Ricks, "black Power!" Broadcast by the media across the nation, this slogan, in almost overnight, replaced "We Shall Overcome" and "Freedom Now" as the black freedom movement's motto.

power bases from which black people can work to change statewide or nationwide patterns of oppression through pressure from strength—instead of weakness. Politically, black power means what it has always meant to SNCC: the coming-together of black people to elect representatives and *to force those representatives to speak to their needs*. It does not mean merely putting black faces into office.⁶¹

Critics accused Carmichael's work on behalf of Black Power as "reverse racism", while the S.N.C.C. chairman asserted that it fostered racial pride, positive self-identity, and independent economic and political power. By this time, the black freedom struggle had another, more disruptive issue, as disputes over integration versus separatism were mounting.⁶² As Vincent Harding, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis argued, "it quickly became clear during the summer of 1966 that the issue of Black Power would transform the movement in multiple ways. Tired and impatient with the slow pace of civil rights establishment, a new attitude overtook the movement: no more compromise, no more "deals" with white liberals . . . Out of bitter disappointment rose this new slogan."⁶³ As black civil rights leaders became more frustrated with the slow pace of progress, many of them questioned if it was appropriate that white people belonged to their organizations. By 1968, C.O.R.E. had followed suit of S.N.C.C. It dismissed all its white members, with the inevitable consequence of an important loss of financial resources. The two organizations began to decline, and by the end of the decade, the S.N.C.C. had virtually disappeared.⁶⁴

Martin Luther King had mixed feelings about black power as an ideology. King acclaimed its assertion of black economic and political empowerment, intellectual assertiveness, and cultural pride; but when black power degenerated into taunts against white people he rejected it arguing that it was "nihilistic philosophy born out of the conviction that the Negro can't win." He also opposed the ideology's "implicit and often explicit belief in black separatism" and the assumption that "there can be a separate Black road to power and fulfillment."⁶⁵ For King, Black Power was "an unfortunate choice of words,"⁶⁶ and a "slogan

⁶¹ Quoted in: Timothy Patrick McCarthy, and John McMillan, eds. The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition. New York: The New Press, 2003. P. 393. (Stokely Carmichael's "What We Want," was originally published in The New York Review of Books, Vol. 7, No. 4. September 22, 1966.)

⁶² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 611.

⁶³ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. "We Changed the World, 1945-1970." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 240.

⁶⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 611.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 611.

without a programme.”⁶⁷ In this context, James Ciment stated: “[M]any veteran civil rights leaders had mixed feelings about Black Power. King, for one, appreciated its emphasis on African pride but feared it would commit the ‘error of building a distrust for all white people’ and stray from the path of peaceful protest.”⁶⁸

Hubert G. Brown, or H. Rap Brown as he became known, succeeded Carmichael as chairman of the S.N.C.C. in May 1967. In fact, Brown heightened the radicalism of what became known as the black power movement by calling white people “honkies” and the police “pigs.” “Violence” he said, was “as American as apple pie.” Considered as one of the most radical of the new civil rights activists and the most militant leader the S.N.C.C. ever had, Brown told an audience he addressed, on August 1967, in Cambridge, Maryland, that “black folks built America and if America don’t come around, we’re going to burn America down.” A few hours later, a fire was set in the center of the city’s black community. While white firefighters refused to extinguish the blaze, the police accused Brown of stirring up a riot and charged him with committing arson. The S.N.C.C.’ leader fled the city after posting bail. Brown was not to blame for inciting the riot, and the charges against him were in the end dropped. As cities throughout the country were swept by similar violent outbreaks, many people began questioning the underlying causes of the anger and frustration that gave rise to these outbursts of violence. One did not have to think too deeply to find that the segregation, unemployment, poverty, distress, and hopelessness that dominated many black urban communities engendered ideal conditions that led to social unrest. Both the militancy and desperation that characterized these events reflected a corresponding change in the black freedom movement. The black power movement had, in fact, superseded the Civil Rights Movement both in visibility as well as in urgency. Indeed, laws had been changed to provide racial equality, but black militant groups wanted full social, economic, and political equality, and were unprepared and unwilling to wait.⁶⁹

By 1967, the number of radicalized advocates of black power had expanded markedly. Angela Yvonne Davis, who became an icon of black power and radicalism, played a significant role in the black power movement. Davis was born on January 26th, 1944 in Birmingham, Alabama. She was raised in the “Dynamite Hill” neighborhood, which was

⁶⁶ Vincent Harding, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Earl Lewis. “We Changed the World, 1945-1970.” To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880, op. cit., p. 240.

⁶⁷ Vivienne Sanders, op. cit., p. 122.

⁶⁸ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 177.

⁶⁹ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 107.

named so because it was bombed by Klansmen in an attempt to intimidate the African American residents and “keep them in their place.” Sallye Bell Davis, Angela’s mother, also was an active member of the local branch of the N.A.A.C.P. She earned a master’s degree from the University of California, San Diego (U.C.S.D.). Davis had become an advocate of black power during her years at U.C.S.D., a period during which the African American community and nation experienced important changes. It was a time when leading civil rights workers including H. Rap Brown were calling for revolution and an overall change in African American attitudes and in race relations in the United States. With the use of a militant and confrontational rhetoric, Carmichael and Brown stimulated militant grassroots organizing at the level of college campuses all over the United States. Congressman, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., joined them in their radical leadership. Powell’s support for the young, more militant, and radical activists, together with his efforts to object to his exclusion from Congress after he refused to pay a libel suit penalty, had induced many militant African Americans to speak out and become advocates of black power.⁷⁰

In addition, the escalation of war in Vietnam and the continuance of the military draft further promoted the era’s atmosphere of “antiauthoritarianism.” In fact, a great many African Americans were affected by the Vietnam War and the draft. Perhaps the most famous case was that of Muhammad Ali, who, then, was the heavyweight champion of the world in boxing. As a conscientious objector, Ali refused to be inducted into the armed forces. His refusal as well as his opposition to war itself reflected the convergence of black radicalism. Muhammad Ali was born on January 17th, 1942, in Louisville, Kentucky. His original birth name was Cassius Marcellus Clay. During the turbulent 1960s, Cassius Clay captivated America’s imagination, evoking many images of his athletic excellence and black militancy, factors among others that made of him an enduring legend. Immediately following the fight, in which he had defeated the mysterious and seemingly unbeatable Sonny Liston, and which had attracted the world’s attention in 1964, Cassius Clay surprised the world when declared publically that he had joined the N.O.I. and changed his name to Cassius X. Such a change reflected Cassius’s rejection of his last name which he considered a remnant of colonialism and his ancestors’ enslavement. The boxer was mentored by the black nationalist leader and N.O.I. chairman Malcolm X, and directed by Elijah Muhammad who soon gave him the name Muhammad Ali. Elijah Muhammad explained that the name Muhammad meant “worthy of all

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 109-110.

praise,” and that Ali meant “most high.”⁷¹ At that time, only a few journalists, most notably Howard Cosell, accepted his name change. The adoption of this name symbolized Ali’s new identity as a member of the N.O.I. and provoked hatred by white Americans.⁷²

Ali’s religious conversion, coupled with his increasing black nationalism, race consciousness, and boastful personality, soon eroded his unsolicited image as the “Golden Boy.” When he refused his induction into the armed services or to serve in the Vietnam War in 1966, he was labeled a “draft-dodger” by the U.S. government and millions of Americans. He announced: “I refuse to be inducted into the armed forces of the United States because I claim to be exempt as a minister of the religion of Islam [and because] I ain’t got nothing against them Vietcong.” When Ali made his statements about the Vietnam War, he did not make any direct link between it and issues related to race. When Carmichael appropriated his comments in order to rally African American opposition to the war, he, then, began to speak publically of the relationship between America’s involvement in Vietnam and white supremacy in the United States. Carmichael asked, “Why should black folks fight a war against yellow folks so that white folks can keep a land they stole from red folks? We’re not going to Vietnam. Ain’t no Vietcong ever called me nigger!” Such more contemplative comments of Carmichael resonated with Ali, who after hearing them, often told listeners and members of the media that “no Vietcong ever called me nigger” when pressed to provide explanations for his stand against the war. As a matter of fact, the radicalism of Muhammad Ali inspired other athletes to use sporting events as platforms to protest racial inequality on behalf of African Americans.⁷³

A group of Olympic athletes led by Harry Edwards, a San Jose State professor, who was a former athlete, founded the Olympic Project for Human Rights (O.P.H.R.). Recognizing the increasing number of black Americans both in collegiate as well as in professional sports, Edward believed that, if unified, these individuals could wield significant power. Motivated by Edward, African American athletes at San Jose State, declared their plan to boycott the school’s football team if university officials declined to impose punishments on fraternity and other university groups that practiced discrimination against people of color. In addition, the O.P.H.R. encouraged African American athletes to organize a boycott of the 1968 Olympics in the city of Mexico in an attempt to expose racial inequality black

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 110.

⁷² Richard O. Jones. Natural . . . The Beautiful ‘N’ Word: Breaking the Psychological Bondage of the American Standard of Beauty. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc, 2007. P. 181.

⁷³ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

Americans were facing in the United States. Lew Alcindor, who later became known as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the visible star of the University of California, Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.) baseball team, was one of those sports stars who declined to participate in the 1968 Olympics.⁷⁴

The most institutionalized form of the new black militancy that emerged during the late 1960s was the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in October 1966, in Oakland, California. The founders inspired the name of the party from the black panther symbol of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was based on a combination between black nationalist ideology and Marxist-Leninist doctrines. Working with white radicals, the Black Panthers hoped to lead the party into a revolutionary vanguard devoted to overthrow the capitalist society and put an end to police brutality. Stokely Carmichael, who had left the S.N.C.C., became the party's prime minister.⁷⁵ Eldridge Cleaver, the Black Panthers' minister of education helped frame the ideology of the party. Cleaver passed most of his youth in prison, where he became a follower of Malcolm X, and began his writings in the form of autobiographical essays that he would publish as Soul on Ice in 1968, the year the party shortened its name by dropping "Self-Defense", so its name became simply the Black Panther Party (B.P.P.). Cleaver maintained that all black people were victims of colonization, not just disenfranchised black Americans. Integration could not meet their needs; instead, like other colonized people, they had to liberate themselves. To achieve these ends, Cleaver wrote: "we believe that political and military machinery that does not exist now and has never existed must be created. We need functional machinery that is able to deal with these two interrelated sets of political dynamics which, strictly speaking, make up the total political situation on the North American continent."⁷⁶

According to Gabriel Burns Stepto, the Black Panther Party represented an even more militant radicalism than that advocated by Stokely Carmichael.⁷⁷ As James Ciment put it, the most serious challenge to King's integrationist nonviolent philosophy came from this radical new organization arising on the West Coast, the Black Panther Party.⁷⁸ Simon Wendt also stated that the Black Panther Party advocated the concept of armed militancy. Wendt argued

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

⁷⁵ That was just for a few months because Carmichael soon shifted his interest to Pan-Africanism. Carmichael then moved to Guinea in West Africa and changed his name to Kwame Ture.

⁷⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 612.

⁷⁷ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 402.

⁷⁸ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 177.

that, “the BBP, at least in their public statements, rejected nonviolence and elevated armed resistance to an alternative protest strategy.” For Wendt, the example of the Black Panthers suggests that “the advent of Black Power, at least in terms of armed self-defense, did mark a turning point in the black freedom struggle insofar as it introduced new protest strategies and actively reinterpreted the meaning of revolutionary violence for black liberation.”⁷⁹

The original purpose of the Black Panther Party was to patrol black ghettos in order to protect their black residents from acts of police brutality.⁸⁰ As Jamie J. Wilson put it, “Violent police brutality, hallmarks of many black urban communities of the late 1960s, determined the party’s initial black nationalist perspective and its political activity. Newton, as the party’s theoretician, saw black urban neighborhoods as colonies occupied by police force whose brutal surveillance were geared toward maintaining black exploitation.” Wilson argued, “This approach led the small group of activists to focus on armed community patrols of the police. Equipped with pistols, shotguns, and law books, Newton, Seale, and Bobby Hutton, the first member and treasurer of the organization, traversed the streets of Oakland to ensure that police officers did not violate residents’ rights.”⁸¹ The Black Panthers eventually evolved into a Marxist revolutionary group that called for the arming of all blacks, the exemption of blacks from the draft and from all sanctions of so-called white-America, the release of all blacks from prison, and the payment of compensation to blacks for past centuries of exploitation by white Americans. At its climax in the late 1960s, the party’s membership surpassed 2,000 and the organization had chapters in several major American cities. Yet, conflicts between Black Panthers and police in the late 1960s and early 1970s resulted to shoot-outs in California, Chicago, and New York.⁸² In April 1968, after a shoot-out with Oakland police, Cleaver and other Panthers were arrested. Cleaver escaped and fled into exile. While abroad, he abandoned his radicalism, and after his return to the United States in 1975, he became involved with the Republican Party and Fundamentalist Christianity.⁸³ As James J. Wilson put it, the Black Panther party’s zenith was, in fact, short-lived.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Simon Wendt. “The Roots of Black Power? Armed Resistance and the Radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement.” The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era. Ed. Peniel E. Joseph. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, LLC., 2006. P. 146.

⁸⁰ Jeff Wallenfelt, ed., op. cit., p. 43 .

⁸¹ Jamie J. Wilson. “Black Panther Party.” Encyclopedia of African American History. Ed. Leslie M. Alexander and Walter C. Rucker. California: Facts on File, Inc., ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2010. P. 658.

⁸² Jeff Wallenfelt, ed., op. cit., p. 43 .

⁸³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 612.

⁸⁴ Jamie J. Wilson. “Repression and Decline of the Black Panther Party.” Encyclopedia of African American History. Ed. Leslie M. Alexander and Walter C. Rucker. California: Facts on File, Inc., ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2010.

The black nationalism and the militancy of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael and the radicalism of the Black Panthers reflected the growing alienation and anger of the black community in the American impoverished inner cities. In 1965, for example, compared with only 7.8 percent of white households, 29.1 percent of black households lived below the poverty line. This Below Poverty Line (B.P.L.) black population was frustrated as it was facing a myriad of economic and social hardships. While there was a decline in the number of non-black Americans living in poverty from 38 million in 1959 to 32.7 million in 1965, the proportion of poor black people increased from 27.5 percent to 31 percent. In 1965, the rate of unemployed blacks was 8.5 percent, nearly twice the rate of unemployed whites which was about 4.3 percent. This means that the black-white unemployment gap was really significant.⁸⁵ This led psychologist Kenneth Clark to note, in 1967 that, “[t]he masses of Negroes are now starkly aware of the fact that recent civil rights victories benefited a very small percentage of middle-class Negroes while their predicament remained the same or worsened.”⁸⁶

In fact, Clark had a perceptive dissatisfaction with the effects of the Civil Rights Movement legislation. Agreeing with Clark’s stance, Martin Luther King had never been blind to limited achievements of the Civil Rights Movement. Before even setting foot in the city of Chicago, he acknowledged: “What little progress has been made—and that includes the Civil Rights Act—has applied primarily to the middle-class Negro. Among the masses, especially in the Northern ghettos, the situation remains about the same, and for some it is worse.”⁸⁷

This means that the passage of Civil Rights legislation did not resolve black-white disparities in income, housing, health care, and other fields, as it did not diminish inner-city black alienation. Since jobs moved to the suburbs to which inner-city black people could not travel or relocate, inner-city black neighborhoods became even poorer. In addition, the rates of school dropout soared and reached high levels, drug use and crime increased, and the already existing fragile family structures weakened. Such alarming conditions led militant

P. 661.

⁸⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 615.

⁸⁶ Quoted in: Sylvie Laurent. King and the Other America: The Poor People’s Campaign and the Quest for Economic Equality. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018. P. 221.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

groups like the Black Panthers to compare their disadvantaged neighborhoods to exploited colonies kept poor by repressive white political and economic institutions.⁸⁸

Black Power made a positive contribution to the African American struggle for racial equality. Its insistence on self-determination and community control led to the mobilization of urban black people, who secured the election of more blacks who would represent them in public offices, as was the case when Carl B. Stokes became the first African American mayor of a major U.S. city when he was elected Cleveland, Ohio, in November 1967. Black power also stimulated a new cultural aesthetic movement that highlighted the positive virtues of black history, customs, and skin color. However, the exclusion of white members from S.N.C.C. and C.O.R.E. resulted in a loss of financial resources of both organizations, a fact that rendered them incapable renewing direct-action campaigns. In addition, the reaction of white authorities further hindered black political protest. In the late 1960s, Southern authorities also made discriminatory use of the draft as a way of sending African American dissidents to fight in the War in Vietnam.⁸⁹

II- From the Assassination of Martin Luther King to the Close of the Twentieth Century

In the fall of 1967, Martin Luther King announced that he began planning for his most ambitious project, the nonviolent but integrated and militant Poor People's Project to be launched the spring of the following year. According to the plan, tens of thousands of the nation's poor and dispossessed would descend on Washington to focus national attention on the disadvantaged –not only blacks– in American society. King and the S.C.L.C. hoped to focus the nation's attention on economic inequality and poverty. Among other objectives, King and his associates demanded a federally supported guaranteed income policy. While planning the Poor People's Campaign, King declared his opposition to the War in Vietnam. King's statements that the American president was more concerned about winning the war in Vietnam than winning the "war against poverty" in the United States turned Johnson against him and even alienated him from a number of Johnson's black supporters. By 1968, King had become one of the most trenchant critics of the war in Vietnam. Yet, King would not live to lead the Poor People's Campaign. On April 4th, 1968, King was fatally shot by James Earl Ray, while he was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel at Memphis, Tennessee. An hour later, King was pronounced dead, after his arrival at St. Joseph Hospital. As a matter of

⁸⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 615.

⁸⁹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

fact, King's assassination unleashed a flow of civic rage in African American communities. Uprisings erupted in more than 125 cities. By April 11th, of the same year, 46 people were dead, 35,000 were wounded, and more than 20,000 were put under arrest.⁹⁰

Indeed, the assassination of King brought new urban outbreaks throughout the country.⁹¹ These riots demonstrated the extent of black frustration and anger.⁹² In this context, Hugh Brogan noted: "King was killed in Memphis, Tennessee, by a Southern white, James Earl Ray, who was driven on by the racial tensions which had poisoned Southern life for so long; so it can be said that he was martyred in the cause to which he had brought such great gifts and victories." Brogan provided a brief account of the incident and of what it generated, "When the news of the murder hit the nation, 125 cities rose in an unparalleled outbreak of rage, grief and prospect. It took 70,000 troops to suppress the rebellion; once more the people of the ghettos fought, looted and burned; in particular they erupted across Washington, doing immense damage both to the city and to race relations." Brogan ended his analysis with concluding that, "Riot, arson and looting are poor substitutes for a descent standard of living. This was soon so universally accepted that the poor black population began to sink back into apathy, even while the black middle class increased in numbers, prosperity and status."⁹³

Within days of King's assassination, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, in what seemed to many a late gesture of racial reconciliation. This act, which was proposed by Johnson a couple of years before, now prohibited discrimination the sales and rentals of housing and enabled the Justice Department with authority to bring suits against such discrimination.⁹⁴ In this context, David Brown and Clive Webb wrote: "The act was, in any case, a less than fitting tribute to the slain civil rights leader. Although in principle it outlawed housing discrimination, without adequate enforcement mechanisms the new law accomplished little."⁹⁵ And as William T. Martin Riches put it, although discrimination in buying or renting houses was made illegal, it was up to individuals to act.⁹⁶ King's assassination also promoted support for the S.C.L.C.'s faltering Poor People's Campaign. Actually, the campaign began in May when more than 2,000 demonstrators settled into a

⁹⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 622.

⁹¹ Howard Zinn. A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present, op. cit., p. 462.

⁹² Carl Bode, ed. American Perspectives : The United States in the Modern Age. Washington D.C.: United States Information Agency, 1992. P. 194.

⁹³ Hugh Brogan. The Penguin History of the USA. Second Edition. London: Penguin Books, 2001. PP. 643-644.

⁹⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 622.

⁹⁵ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 323.

⁹⁶ William T. Martin Riches. The Civil Rights Movement: Struggle and Resistance. New York: ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, INC., 1997. P. 96.

shantytown they called Resurrection City in Washington, D.C. For a period of more than a month, these demonstrators marched on a daily basis to federal offices and took part in a mass demonstration on June 19th. On June 24th, police evicted them, and the campaign ended.⁹⁷ All in all, as Sar A. Levitan, William B. Johnston, and Robert Taggart put it, “The progress of the 1960s has demonstrated that Martin Luther King’s vision is a realizable but still distant possibility.”⁹⁸

The next ten years brought no real spectacular gains. It began to be feared, as Hugh Brogan argued, that yet another century might run before African Americans get everything in the way of hope and happiness to which they were as much entitled as their more fortunate white-citizens.⁹⁹ It was not very astonishing that at the Howard University commencement ceremony in 1978, Thurgood Marshall, who once had been the N.A.A.C.P.’s chief legal counsel who had led for the plaintiff in the historic case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and who then became the first African American Justice of the Supreme Court, commented in the grimmest terms on African-American prospects:

Be careful of the people who say, ‘You’ve got it made. Take it easy. You don’t need any more help.’ Today we have reached the point where people say, ‘You’ve come a long way.’ But so have other people come a long way. Has the gap been getting smaller? No. It’s getting bigger. People say we’re better off today. Better off than, what? . . . Don’t listen to that myth that [inequality] can be solved . . . or that it has already been solved. Take it from me, it has not been solved.¹⁰⁰

Actually, the 1970s were a decade marked by recessions and economic instability. For many African Americans, this economic downturn was an experience similar to a depression. During the 1970s, while the gap between the incomes of the upper 20 percent of African Americans and their white counterparts decreased, the gap between black people at the bottom of the economic scale and their white counterparts widened. The poor black population was losing ground. Between 1970 and 1986, the percentage of black families with low incomes earning less than \$10,000 increased from 26.8 to 30.2 percent. Still, there were

⁹⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 622.

⁹⁸ Sar A. Levitan, William B. Johnston, and Robert Taggart. Still a Dream: The Changing Status of Blacks Since 1960. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975. P. 355.

⁹⁹ Hugh Brogan, op. cit., p. 644.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in: Hugh Brogan, op. cit., p. 644.

some improvements; but, in general, the relative economic status of African American workers did not improve.¹⁰¹

By the mid 1970s, a number of factors contributed to an increased sense of power on the part of African Americans. They held offices to which they could not, perhaps, have thought of aspiring only twenty years before. African Americans held appointive offices at every level of government, although they continued to stress that they were actually denied their full share of such positions. To many African Americans, the political power they enjoyed was a fact, and in due course of time the possible rewards would be considerable. Yet, the political power as well as the rewards could have been greater. For instance, in 1976, only 58.5 percent of all eligible African American voters were registered and only 48.7 percent actually voted. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, which destroyed legal barriers at the state and local levels that had prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote and, on a theoretical basis, opened the door of political power to all blacks, had not been successful in getting out the black vote. And groups such as the Voter Education Project did not have adequate funding to organize and launch a successful campaign to get African Americans to register and vote.¹⁰²

By 1977, more than two thousand black Americans held office in eleven southern states, while the number was only seventy-two in 1965. There were two Congressmen, ninety-five state representatives, eleven state senators, seventy-six mayors, 267 county commissioners, 824 city council members, 508 school board members, and eighteen sheriffs or chiefs of police. That was a considerable advance. But, taking into consideration the fact that blacks made up 20 percent of the South's total population, this meant that blacks still held less than 3 percent of the elective offices.¹⁰³ Analyzing the new situation in 1977, a New York Times reporter pointed out that even when black people held important city offices: "Whites almost always retain economic power."¹⁰⁴ For example, after Maynard Jackson, a black, became mayor of Atlanta, "the white business establishment continued to exert its influence."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 633.

¹⁰² John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. Sixth Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1988. P. 466.

¹⁰³ Howard Zinn. A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present, op. cit., p. 466.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in: Howard Zinn. A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present, op. cit., p. 466.

¹⁰⁵ Howard Zinn. A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present, op. cit., p. 466.

In addition, the problem of economic disadvantages of African Americans did not come to an end. Although it is true that in 1976 about 30 percent of all African American families earned \$15,000 or more, while only 2 percent were at that economic level in 1966, but in 1976 nearly 31 percent of all African Americans lived below the poverty line. Over this period of ten years, the unemployment rate for black people was continuously higher than for white people. In 1977, when the jobless rate for whites was 6.3 percent, it was 13.2 for blacks. Again, while it ranged from 40 to 55 percent for black youths, it was about 15 percent for white teenagers. Actually, within the decade of the 1970s, so many black families were unemployed and on welfare that it was quite probable that the nation would spawn a full generation of black people who had simply never worked to support and sustain themselves.¹⁰⁶ Howard Zinn argued that despite the new opportunities that opened up for a small number of black people, the median income of a black family in 1977 was only about 60 percent that of a white family. Black people were twice as likely as whites to die from diabetes; seven times to be victims of homicidal violence resulting from the pervasive poverty and despair of the ghettos. A New York Times report in early 1978 stated that “. . . the places that experienced urban riots in the 1960s have, with a few exceptions, changed little, and the conditions of poverty have spread in most cities.”¹⁰⁷

By the late 1970s, the use of racial quotas and minority set-asides resulted in court challenges of affirmative action¹⁰⁸ as a kind of “reverse discrimination” against whites. The first main challenge took place in 1978, in the case formally known as *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial quotas may not be used to reserve a specified number of places for applicants from minority groups if white applicants were denied a chance to compete for these places. In other words, the Court held that it was impermissible for states to establish racial quotas. Although the Court prohibited quota systems, it permitted colleges to use race as a criterion in the making of decisions concerning college admissions. In fact, the *Bakke* decision handed down by the

¹⁰⁶ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., pp. 467-468.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in: Howard Zinn. A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present, op. cit., p. 466.

¹⁰⁸ Affirmative action was initiated by the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson in order to improve opportunities for African Americans while civil rights legislation was dismantling the legal basis for racial discrimination and segregation. The federal government began to institute affirmative action policies under the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Subsequently, affirmative action was broadened to cover women and Native Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities and was extended to colleges and universities and state and federal agencies.

Supreme Court on July 28th, 1978, declared affirmative action constitutional but invalidated the use of racial quotas.¹⁰⁹

As part of the university's affirmative action program, the medical school at the University of California, Davis, had reserved 16 percent of its admission places for minority applicants. Allan Bakke, a white Californian who had, for two times, unsuccessfully applied for admission to the medical school, filed suit against the University. Bakke, who cited evidence that his test scores as well as his grades surpassed those of many minority students who had been admitted to the school, charged that he had encountered unfair "reverse discrimination" on the basis of race, which he argued was contrary to the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In its ruling, the Supreme Court agreed that the university's use of strict racial quotas was unconstitutional and ordered that Bakke be admitted to the medical school, but it also asserted that race could be used as one factor in the admission decisions of institutions of higher education.¹¹⁰

As James Ciment put it, the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* which decided that a quota system that set aside a certain specified number of places for minority students at the University of California at Davis School of Medicine was unconstitutional in principle and, in practice, it was against white applicants.¹¹¹ In this respect, Robert J. McKeever and Philip Davies stated: "[W]hen affirmative action took the form of preferences for ethnic minorities over white Americans and of statistical goals and quotas, opposition developed quickly. Opponents believe that affirmative action is simply reverse discrimination, but discrimination nonetheless." McKeever and Davies then concluded: "It therefore violates American values of individualism, formal equality and meritocracy. In basic terms, it is not 'fair'."¹¹²

According to James Ciment, President Richard Nixon (1969-1974) had no interest in promoting the Civil Rights agenda that was advanced by his Democratic predecessors, Kennedy and Johnson. The memos within the Nixon White House that were actually leaked to the press in 1971 used the term "benign neglect" as a description of the Nixon's administration's approach to the African American community in general and to the Civil

¹⁰⁹ Jeff Wallenfeldt, ed., op. cit., pp. 41-42 .

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 42-43 .

¹¹¹ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 193.

¹¹² Robert J. McKeever, and Philip Davies. *Politics USA*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2006. PP. 302-303.

Rights agenda specifically. Those social programs launched by the previous president, John Kennedy, in order to fight poverty, had their budgets cut under the Nixon Administration. In addition, Nixon also moved to appoint more conservative judges on the nation's courts. In the end, President Nixon also succeeded in moving the U.S. Supreme Court to the right, and his appointees, especially Chief Justice William Rehnquist, were generally antagonistic to expanding the role of the federal government in the enforcement of black civil rights. This policy would, in fact, accelerate during the Republican administrations of both Ronald Reagan and George Bush during the 1980s and early 1990s.¹¹³ As Gabriel Burns Stepto put it: "During the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan (b. 1911) and George H. W. Bush (b. 1924), African Americans encountered a somewhat bizarre catalog of policies that, while couched in seemingly innocuous language, did a great deal to freeze and even retard their progress."¹¹⁴

As those conservative justices appointed by Republican presidents, Ronald Reagan and George Bush, began to take their position on the bench of the Supreme Court during the 1980s and early 1990s, decisions further restricted the use of affirmative action. For example, in the 1986 ruling in the case of *Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education*, the Court rejected a plan that protected minority teachers against layoffs at the expense of white teachers with more seniority.¹¹⁵ Then, in 1989, the Supreme Court began to impose considerable restrictions on race-based affirmative action. In a number of legal cases that year, the court, in its decisions, gave greater weight to claims based on reverse discrimination arguments. The court outlawed the use of minority set-aside in cases where previous racial discrimination evidence could not be proved, and set limits on the use of racial preferences by individual states that were even stricter than those it applied to the federal government.¹¹⁶

In 1995, in the case of *Adarand Constructors v. Peña*, the court ruled that federal affirmative action programs were unconstitutional unless they fulfilled a "compelling governmental interest." In California, opposition to affirmative action programs culminated in the passage in 1996 of the California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209), which forbade all government agencies and institutions from providing preferential treatment to individuals on the basis of their race or sex. In 1997, the Supreme Court effectively upheld the constitutionality of Proposition 209 by refusing to hear a challenge to its opposition.

¹¹³ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 190.

¹¹⁴ Gabriel Burns Stepto, op. cit., p. 443.

¹¹⁵ James Ciment, op. cit., p. 193.

¹¹⁶ Jeff Wallenfeldt, ed., op. cit., p. 42

Legislative measure similar to Proposition 209 was thereafter proposed in other states and was passed in Washington in 1998. The Supreme Court also upheld a lower-court's decision that struck down as unconstitutional the affirmative action policy of the University of Texas, arguing in the case of *Hopwood v. University of Texas Law School*, in 1996, that there was no compelling state interest to warrant the use of race as a criterion in admission decisions. Subsequently, there were further legislative and electoral challenges to affirmative action programs in many parts of the United States.¹¹⁷

The economic situation of African Americans during the 1980s was not better. In a survey made in 1984 by the Gallup Poll and the Joint Center for Political Studies, 83 percent of the interviewed black people felt that "Reagan's policies have been harmful to blacks," and a massive 94 percent disagreed with the president's handling of the situation of the poor. The study concluded that the post war economic recovery has left many black people feeling like "spectators rather than as participants." With unemployment among African Americans rising to an alarming rate, they were apprehensive about their future economic situation. In 1982, the unemployment rate of blacks was 18.9 percent, more than twice that of whites which was 8.4 percent. Even when times were better, by 1985 the unemployment rate among black people was 16.3 percent while the unemployment rate among whites had declined to 6.2 percent. Meantime, the unemployment rate for black youths, aged 16 to 19 years, rose to more than 50 percent for the first time in the nation's history.¹¹⁸ In this respect, Robin D. G. Kelley explored the topic and stated: "By the time Reagan began his second term in 1985, the living conditions of poor and working-class blacks were worse than they had been at the height of the 1973-75 recession. In 1985, about one out of every three African Americans . . . lived below the poverty line, and the official black unemployment rates hovered around fifteen percent nationwide."¹¹⁹

Looking at earnings and income disparities, the picture was similarly gloomy. In the early 1980s, black workers earned less than white workers at different levels of classification, whether by education, age, sex or occupation. In The Myth of Black Progress, Alphonso Pinkney concluded that although the number of middle-class African Americans had

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 477.

¹¹⁹ Robin D.G. Kelley. "Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present." To Make Our World Anew: Volume Two: A History of African Americans since 1880. Ed. Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005. P. 297.

increased in recent years, there had been a remarkable growth in the black under-class.¹²⁰ In this respect, Donald G. Nieman stated: “Paradoxically, while some blacks were reaping the fruits of the Civil Rights movement and entering the middle class, unemployment and poverty rates among African Americans actually grew during the late 1970s and early 1980s.” Nieman further explained: “The nation’s inner cities contained a large black population beset by joblessness, poverty, single-parent families, low levels of educational achievement, crime, drugs, and despair.”¹²¹

In addition, during the 1980s, racist violence was clearly on the rise. The number of racially triggered attacks increased dramatically, many of which took place in college campuses. Between 1982 and 1989, the number of hate crime incidents reported annually in the United States rose threefold. Other manifestations pointing to a resurgence of racism in the 1980s involve the proliferation of white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. By the late 1970s, the Klan had tripled its membership and launched a nationwide intimidation campaign against black Americans.¹²²

White supremacist organizations, including the Ku Klux Klan, also gained influence in electoral politics. For instance, in 1980, Tom Metzger, the “Grand Dragon” of the Ku Klux Klan, accumulated enough votes to win the Democratic primary in southern California’s 43rd congressional district. In the same context, David Duke, an avowed white supremacist, former Klan member, and founder of the National Association for the Advancement of White People (N.A.A.W.P.), was elected as a Republican to the Louisiana House of Representatives. Although white supremacists and racists like Metzger and Duke were in the minority, their electoral wins marked a changed atmosphere in the eighties toward African Americans as well as other racial minorities in the United States.¹²³

In addition, beginning in the 1980s, Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam’s minister, became a potent source of racial divide in the United States. After Malcolm X’s break with Elijah Muhammad and his assassination in February 1965, Farrakhan became minister of

¹²⁰ John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR., op. cit., p. 477.

¹²¹ Donald G. Nieman. “After the Movement: African Americans and Civil Rights since 1910.” Upon these Shores: Themes in the African-American Experience, 1600 to the Present. Ed. William R. Scott and William G. Shade. New York: Routledge, 2000. P. 334.

¹²² Robin D.G. Kelley. “Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present.”, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 297.

Harlem Mosque No. 7 and Muhammad's national representative. In 1978, he became leader of the Nation.¹²⁴ Minister Farrakhan downplayed the struggle for political rights stating:

God wants us to build a new world order: A new world order based on peace, justice and equality. Where do we start? . . . Physical separation is greatly feared [by whites], and it is not now desired by the masses of black people, but America is not willing to give us eight or ten states, or even one state. Let's be reasonable. . . . If we cannot go back to Africa, and America will not give us a separate territory . . . we should use the blessings that we have received from our sojourn in America to do for ourselves what we have been asking the whites in this nation to do for us.¹²⁵

At the close of the twentieth century, such a strategy could only mean a return to the program of economic nationalism already advocated by Booker T. Washington a century earlier with its consequent downplaying of civil and political rights.¹²⁶

In the late 1990s, Farrakhan reached out to a larger number of African Americans. Actually, he called a Million Man March in Washington, D.C., which he framed as a "Holly Day of Atonement and Reconciliation . . . to reconcile our spiritual inner beings and to redirect our focus on developing our communities, strengthening our families, working to uphold and protect our civil and human rights, and empowering ourselves through the Spirit of God, more effective use of our dollars, and through the power of the vote."¹²⁷ The estimated 400,000 participants at the October 16th, 1995 march made it a symbolic success and generated positive media coverage even in the mainstream media. The march inspired many blacks to become more engaged with their communities and to speak out against racial oppression. Although many marchers did not support the Nation's program, the peaceful solidarity of the crowd gave them hope. Some of the goodwill vanished, however, when, about three months after the march, Farrakhan embarked on a "World Friendship Tour" to Africa and the Middle East. To the dismay of many, Farrakhan met with the leader of the military regime in Nigeria, General Sani Abacha. In the United States, Farrakhan's rhetoric

¹²⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 660.

¹²⁵ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 660.

¹²⁶ Ernest Allen, Jr. "Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Continuing Evolution of the Nation of Islam." The Farrakhan Factor: African-American Writers on Leadership, Nationhood, and Minister Louis Farrakhan. Ed. Amy Alexander. New York: Grove Press, 1998. P. 77.

¹²⁷ Quoted in: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 661.

made news, but he failed to frame a coherent strategy to overcome or solve the ongoing social problems facing African Americans.¹²⁸

During the 1990s, although many African American families narrowed the income gap, but their average wealth figures remained lagging far behind those of white families. This was, in fact, partly due to the long heritage of persistent poverty during which most African Americans accumulated little property or fortune to hand on to their children. In addition, the proliferation of crime, during the 1980s and 1990s, and a shift in national policies toward aggressive policing and harsher sentencing led to a dramatic increase in the incarceration rates of black men. Incarceration became an increasingly common experience for poor young African American men, heightening the barriers and obstacles to advancement they already faced.¹²⁹ In this context, James Ciment stated: “One result of the country’s failure to live up to the ideals of the civil rights era was continued racial conflict in the mid-1970s through the mid-1990s, the hostility stemming from both black frustration and nonblack racism.”¹³⁰

In the field of public facilities, although race-based discrimination in public accommodations was prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, since 1990 black customers and employees have filed suits against many nationally known restaurants for racial discrimination. For example, in 1991, a group of African American college students successfully sued an International House of Pancakes in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for refusing to seat them as customers. The black students were told that the restaurant was closed, while white customers were allowed in. The most famous case involved Denny’s restaurants. After the U.S. Department of Justice found out a pattern of discriminatory behavior in the Denny’s chain in 1993, Denny’s corporate executives agreed to provide its employees with special training programs in non-discriminatory behavior and to cover more ethnic minority in its advertising activities. However, despite these attempts to change its corporate behavior, Denny’s continued to practice discrimination against its African American customers.¹³¹

A notorious example of apparent racism against African Americans during the 1990s occurred in the case of Rodney King in 1991. In March of that year, Rodney King, an African American, was stopped in his car by the Los Angeles police on suspicion of drink-driving.

¹²⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 661.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 646-649.

¹³⁰ James Ciment, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

¹³¹ Robin D.G. Kelley. “Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present.”, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-319.

The police officers' claim was that King refused to obey police orders and that they were therefore obliged to use "managed force" upon him. By coincidence, however, a bystander filmed the police actions on an amateur video that was broadcast on national television. What the videotape showed was the repeated beating and kicking of King while he was lying on the ground or trying to get up. The four white police officers were charged with King's assault. For the African American community, the savage beating of King by the police was deplorable but not unusual for the Los Angeles Police Department had a particularly bad reputation for racism. What truly caused resentment among the black community was the police officers' trial. At first, the defense managed successfully to move the trial out of Los Angeles to the overwhelmingly white Simi Valley area. In fact, this was an attempt to make sure that the number of blacks on the jury would be minimal and, in the end, there were actually none. The jury consisted of ten whites, one Hispanic, and one Asian American. Then, despite what seemed to many people an irrefutable evidence of the use of unjustifiable evidence upon King on the amateur video, the jury found the police officers not guilty on all charges.¹³²

Once the verdict was announced in April 1992, black people took to the streets and consequently riots erupted in Los Angeles and other cities across the country. The outcome of this explosion of violence was over 40 people dead, 2,000 wounded, more than 5,000 arrested. In the Rodney King case, a single episode of racism released all the underlying racial tensions in American society. For most African Americans, the police, the court system, as well as the jury members had all obviously acted from racist motives. Besides, they linked the individual unjust treatment of Rodney King to the generally discriminatory nature of the American society as a whole. This in turn brought out what remained the fundamental divide between black and white people in the United States at that time. According to a Washington Post-ABC News poll, differing but still clear majorities of both black people, 90 percent, and white people, 60 percent, believed that the four white police officers should have been found guilty and that the federal authorities should have brought further charges against them. Yet, when asked whether the Rodney King case "shows that blacks cannot get justice in this country", only 25 percent of white people agreed, compared with 75 percent of blacks. Again, faced with the same evidence, black and white people still drew opposed conclusions about the significance of the race factor in American life.¹³³

¹³² Robert J. McKeever, and Philip Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

In 1994, two years after the Los Angeles Riots, unemployment rates were still very high and job opportunities very scarce. What happened in Los Angeles was a kind of crossroads for the United States for it called into question the point that race relations in this country could be viewed as “black and white.” it also confirmed the extent of desperation in the cities and that was generated by the new global economy. The time when jobs were available, even if they were within the category of low-paid jobs, is now over. Now the American inner city was populated by unemployed men and women who were less optimistic about their chances of living the American Dream or who had lost hope in living the American Dream. While most kept pushing on, a handful turned to the underground economy, the illegal trade in stolen goods and drugs. As a matter of fact, in certain neighborhoods, that is all that was left. Meantime, the police dealt with the problem by placing virtually every black person under siege.¹³⁴

In December 1995, three white soldiers from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, were cruising the streets of nearby Fayetteville searching for blacks to harass. In a short time, they came across African American residents Michael James and Jackie Burden who were taking an evening walk. An argument ensued that ended with the killing of James and Burden. The resulting investigation of the murder revealed that two of the white soldiers, Malcolm Wright and James Burmeister, were members of a small group of skinheads at Fort Bragg who admired Adolf Hitler and endorsed racist ideology. News reports and public reactions to the murder considered the pair of neo-Nazis as ignorant and irrational people whose racial views and beliefs were far outside the mainstream. In the wake of the murder, typical comments made by local residents were like, “I never thought we had that kind of hatred still in our midst” and “I thought it was over.” As a matter of fact, no one pondered whether there might be something in the current configuration of the American society that could lead some people to conclude that black Americans were second-class citizens not worthy of enjoying the same equal rights as their white counterparts.¹³⁵

Three decades after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, the social structure was still formed in a way that promoted assumptions of black inferiority, and those people who held the same kind of racist views as those expressed by Wright and Burmeister had only to look around them to find evidence that appeared to confirm their racist beliefs. Different

¹³⁴ Robin D.G. Kelley. “Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present.”, op. cit., p. 333.

¹³⁵ Greta de Jong. *Invisible Enemy: The African American Freedom Struggle after 1965*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. P. 53.

forms of individual racism and institutional obstacles continued to influence African American people's chances of acquiring adequate education and decent housing, in turn shaping their economic prospects. In the nation's inner cities and rural black communities, the crisis conditions only worsened as policy makers cut back on antipoverty programs. Therefore, the war on poverty was replaced by national leaders with a war on crime that drove surplus workers to prison instead of the labor market. The racial biases that lay behind these processes were invisible to most American citizens, leading many observers to come to the conclusion that the problems of African Americans could not be the consequence of racism. In her book Invisible Enemy: The African American Freedom Struggle after 1965, Greta de Jong described "the invisible racism of the post-civil rights era" as "a system without signs." Most white American citizens ascribed the crisis conditions in African American communities to cultural defects that prevented black residents from advancing economically rather than political decisions that prolonged black disadvantages.¹³⁶ For Greta de Jong, although massive white retaliation and other means of suppressing the black struggle for equality diminished after the 1960s, the invisible forms of racism of the post-civil rights period posed their own problems.¹³⁷

For black Americans, gaining access to white schools did not end the struggle for equal education. As a matter of fact, "tracking", or the practice of grouping students even within the same school into separate classes according to academic ability, increased after the mid-1960s and in many cases seemed intended to maintain racial segregation within supposedly integrated schools. A number of researchers who analyzed the use of the tracking in schools throughout the American nation in the 1990s came to the conclusion that the placement of students into separate classes was related more closely to the factor of race than to academic ability. Regardless of achievement test scores and other measures of achievement, black and Latino students were more likely to be grouped in remedial classes while many white students of average abilities were placed in honors or "gifted" classes just because of the intervention of their parents. Black civil rights activists attempted to challenge this kind of practices but without much success. Although evidence showed that the practice of tracking resulted in unjustifiable disparities in education, but the courts deferred to the claims of school administrators that tracking contributed to enhancing instructional efficiency

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 77.

and helped to stop white flight. Therefore, in-school segregation remained a persistent feature of American schools throughout the late 20th century.¹³⁸

Another more subtle example contributes to demonstrate how the racial divide between blacks and whites affects political perceptions in the United States. Congress had enacted legislation imposing mandatory prison sentences for the act of drug dealing. But, dealers in crack cocaine were punished much more harshly than those who deal with cocaine powder. Someone convicted of dealing with more than 50g of crack cocaine must be sentenced to at least ten years in prison while a dealer in cocaine powder must be found with over 5,000g before the same mandatory minimum sentence is imposed on him. The basic justification offered for this distinction was the fact that dealing in crack typically involved greater and more serious violence than dealing in cocaine powder.¹³⁹

Outwardly, there is no race perspective on this issue. The U.S. Sentencing Commission, however, reported to Congress in 1995 that the law disadvantages black Americans. It resulted in figures which gave support to the popular view that cocaine powder is a drug used by “yuppie” whites¹⁴⁰, while crack cocaine is almost exclusively the drug used by black ghetto youths. Whereas there is doubtlessly a disparate racial impact here, it is far less obvious that there is any discriminatory intent, as the same sentencing standards apply to people convicted of dealing in crack cocaine regardless of their race. However, it may be asked, would Congress, an overwhelmingly and predominately white body, have passed such a legislation if its effect was to treat white people more severely than black people? To put it another way, was Congress in part motivated by race considerations, be them conscious or unconscious? In 1997, in the case *Edward v. United States*, the U.S. Supreme Court in a unanimous decision agreed to let the law stand.¹⁴¹ Yet, lawyers for the black crack dealer involved in the case argued: “There is perception among African Americans that there is no more unequal treatment by the criminal justice system than in the crack v. powder cocaine racially-biased federal sentencing provisions.”¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. 90-91.

¹³⁹ Robert J. McKeever, and Philip Davies, op. cit., p. 297.

¹⁴⁰ Yuppie, also: yuppy: (informal, often disapproving) a young professional person who lives in a city and earns a lot of money that they spend on expensive and fashionable things. Origin: Formed from the first letters of the words ‘young urban professional’. (Source: A. S. Hornby. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English. Sixth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. PP. 1506-1507.)

¹⁴¹ Robert J. McKeever, and Philip Davies, op. cit., p. 297.

¹⁴² Washington Post, 15 April 1997. (Quoted in: Robert J. McKeever, and Philip Davies, op. cit., p. 297.)

As the American nation neared the end of the twentieth century, the Indian summer of the Civil Rights Movement seemed to be over. The 1960s' victories were really significant achievements, ending state-imposed racial segregation and disfranchisement that had for a long time made of the nation's promise of equality a mockery. Yet, the past centuries of slavery, racial segregation and discrimination, and disempowerment had left many African American people without adequate education, skills, experience, social connections, and, in certain cases, hope to enjoy the civil rights movement's fruits. At the time the Civil Rights Movement destroyed the legal barriers and obstacles to African American advancement, the deindustrialization of the American economy considerably minimized economic opportunities for people without skills, education, or professional training.¹⁴³ Moreover, although racism generally took more subtle forms, it remained a reality of American life after the civil rights era. By the 1990s, a powerful reaction had developed, dividing the nation along racial lines, and threatening again to deny African Americans the full and equal enjoyment of the civil rights guaranteed to every American citizen.¹⁴⁴

As Greta de Jong, author of Invisible Enemy: The African American Freedom Struggle after 1965, explained, the racist social order created during the Jim Crow era remained in place at the close of the twentieth century, but now without the segregation signs. At the tail end of the twentieth century, most African American families still lived in neighborhoods that were predominantly black. The problem is that the consequences of this segregation extended well beyond the minimal social interaction between white and black people. Sociologists Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton who carried out a study of the separate and unequal geographical spaces that American citizens occupied during the 1990s and observed that, "Barriers to spatial mobility are barriers to social mobility, and where one lives determines a variety of salient factors that affect individual well-being: the quality of schooling, the value of housing, exposure to crime, the quality of public services, and the character of children's peers."¹⁴⁵ This means that failure to address the problem of segregated housing was a key factor in the persistence of racial inequality in the post-Civil Rights period. In addition, studies conducted in the 1990s demonstrated that African American applicants

¹⁴³ The drift of businesses to the suburbs put many jobs beyond the reach of inner-city blacks who lived in the urban ghettos. More importantly, the decline of the steel, automobile, and other basic industries during the 1970s and early 1980s denied unskilled and unskilled black people access to jobs that paid well and offered hope of economic mobility. New jobs opened mainly in the service industries, where those workers without adequate skills could expect to earn low wages and live close to or even below poverty line.

¹⁴⁴ Donald G. Nieman. "After the Movement: African Americans and Civil Rights since 1910.", op. cit., p. 338.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in: Greta de Jong, op. cit., p. 56.

were twice as likely to be denied home loans compared with white people who had the same qualifications. The major difficulty blacks faced in securing conventional home loans made them easy targets for subprime lenders who proposed more lenient acceptance criteria for subprime¹⁴⁶ mortgage loans but at the same time imposed higher interest rates. As during the Jim Crow era, African American families found decent housing difficult to acquire, and if made available for them they paid more for it than white families.¹⁴⁷

Thomas C. Holt, a Professor of American and African American History at the University of Chicago, thinks that racism still “permeates every institution, every pore of everyday life. Justice in our courts, earnings on our jobs, whether we have a job at all, the quality of our life, the means and timing of our death—all form the stacked deck every child born black must take up to play the game of life.” Referring to the racial wrongs, Holt stated: “To later generations these wrongs—and the need for collective efforts to right them—will be as clear as the wrongs of slavery were to those born after 1865, or of segregation to those born after 1964.”¹⁴⁸ Both the lingering effects of past racial discrimination as well as policies implemented after the 1960s contributed to the racial disparities. Although without overt racism experienced in earlier times, the nation’s black community still suffered more than white people in the new form of economy that emerged in the late 20th century. Black Americans were disproportionally represented among the unskilled and less-educated whose economic prospects suffered accordingly. In an era that generated severe economic hardships and distress for many American citizens, the already disadvantaged African Americans, however, sustained an unequal share of the pain.¹⁴⁹ But the question that imposes itself is: Would racial inequality towards African Americans persist in the new millennium? To put it another way: Will the color line remain a problem in twenty-first century America?

III- The New Millennium and the Illusion of Equality: The Unfulfilled Dream

Having waited so long for the legal approval of their equality to other American citizens, the black American population remained disadvantaged as compared to the average American population on most social and political indices. In 2002, more than 21 percent of

¹⁴⁶ The term “subprime” refers to a category of loans used to buy, improve, or refinance homes that are offered to borrowers who, because of their poor or blemished credit histories, do not typically qualify for mortgage loans at the “prime,” or lowest available, rate. In exchange for the loans, subprime borrowers are asked to pay higher interest rates, points, and fees and are often subject to prepayment penalties.

¹⁴⁷ Greta de Jong, op. cit., pp. 56-58.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas C. Holt. The Problem of Race in the Twenty-First Century. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000. P. 121.

¹⁴⁹ Greta de Jong, op. cit., p. 55.

the African American adults had less than a full high school education, representing about twice the rate of white adults with an equal educational background. In the same year, the rate of unemployed black people was double that for whites. This ratio of disadvantage had, in fact, been relatively consistent for many years. Disadvantage also emerged in a number of other ways. In 2001, 23 percent of black Americans lived below the poverty threshold, compared with 12 percent of the whole U.S. population.¹⁵⁰ According to James Ciment, lower black income levels are directly associated with the type of jobs black Americans perform. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, blacks are less likely than whites to hold professional or managerial occupations, where salary tends to be equal to or exceed the U.S. median. For instance, in 2005, while fully 34.7 percent of the total population were engaged in managerial or professional jobs, only 8.1 percent of African Americans worked in this job category. At the other end of the job ladder, African Americans were more likely to be working in the low-wage, low-skill service sector (23.1 percent) compared to whites (15 percent). As a result, a far greater proportion of African American families than white ones lived in poverty, though the situation improved slightly between 1980 and 2005.¹⁵¹

Yet, it is important to note that on some measures, the racial order of the post-civil rights era was not as strictly oppressive as that of earlier times, and that gaps across racial and ethnic groups have diminished. For instance, educational and economic opportunities were more available than in the past and many African Americans experienced notable social mobility as a consequence. The rate of high school graduation for black students grew significantly, from 20 percent in 1960 to 81 percent in 2006. Within the same period, the percentage of blacks who held college degrees increased from 3 percent to 19 percent. In the same way, the 3 percent of black families with annual incomes over \$75,000 in 1970 rose to 17 percent by 2006. In the meantime, the rate of black poverty was cut in half, decreasing from 51 percent to 25 percent. Also, forty out of every 1,000 black infants born in 1965 actually died before reaching the age of one year compared with only 14 in 2005. In the same period, life expectancy for black Americans rose from 64 to 73 years.¹⁵² In the context of the race issue in America by the early twenty-first century, Maureen Anderson, Anne Low, and Ian Keese stated: “By the early twenty-first century, overt racism had become unacceptable and African Americans played increasingly significant roles in all aspects of US life. African American, Lieutenant-General Colin Powel was the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from

¹⁵⁰ Robert J. McKeever, and Philip Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁵¹ James Ciment, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹⁵² Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

1989 to 1993. In 2001, he became US Secretary of State.” Maureen Anderson, Anne Low, and Ian Keese continued: “His successor, in 2005, was Condoleeza Rice, an African American born in Birmingham, Alabama, who had previously held the position of National Security Adviser.¹⁵³

However, despite these advances, the experiences of African Americans continued to differ considerably from those of the whites. In the four decades after 1965, the rate of unemployed blacks consistently remained more than twice the rate for white workers. In 2005, about 25 percent of black Americans were poor compared with less than 11 percent of white Americans. More than one-third of white families had annual incomes over \$75,000 compared with less than one-fifth of black families. In fact, when other financial assets as well as earnings were taken into consideration, the economic divide was even larger suggesting that economic inequality still existed in the early twenty-first century. Actually, white Americans had a median net worth of \$140,700, more than five times the \$24,800 reported for black Americans.¹⁵⁴ In this respect, Matthew C. Whitaker pointed out:

Though real progress had been made, much work remained to be done to close the earning gap between black and white families. African Americans still lagged far behind their white counterparts in income and assets. This disparity was largely due to the legacy of slavery and racial discrimination and the entrenched poverty that legacy generated.¹⁵⁵

Also, African Americans were less likely than white Americans to complete college degrees and more likely to lack health insurance. In addition, the infant mortality rate for black babies was still more than twice the rate for white ones.¹⁵⁶ In this respect, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold stated: “[M]any African Americans made great strides in overcoming the economic and educational disadvantages that plagued their ancestors. Partially as a result of this progress, they are also living longer, healthier lives. Yet the disparities between the levels of wealth, schooling, and health of African Americans and the white majority, although narrowed, have persisted.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Maureen Anderson, Anne Low, and Ian Keese, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹⁵⁴ Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁵⁵ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

¹⁵⁶ Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁵⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 645.

In the context of the continued existence of racial inequality in the United States even by the dawn of the twenty-first century, Robin D. G. Kelley stated that the dawn of the new millennium was characterized “less by triumph and more by the continuing legacy of police violence, riots, discrimination, and poverty. In April of 2001, Cincinnati became the next Los Angeles after police officers fatally shot Timothy Thomas, a nineteen-year-old African American, in the predominantly black neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine.”¹⁵⁸ The murder of Timothy Thomas ignited unrest and sparked a massive insurrection in Over-the-Rhine and in other regions of Cincinnati that forced the City Mayor to impose a state of emergency and compelled the governor to send in National Guard troops. According to Kelley, “Thomas’s death was just the tip of the iceberg. He was the fifteenth black man killed by police since 1995, and the fourth to die since November of 2000.”¹⁵⁹

Although significant advances were made by the dawn of the new millennium, many African Americans still encountered serious problems. Even the most successful African Americans, who benefited from the advantages that the Civil Rights and Black Power movements brought, “struggled with the uncertainty and stress related to isolated acts of racial violence, subtle displays of prejudice and racial profiling, and restricted prospects for socioeconomic progress as they endeavored to ascend to the apex of their fields and occupations.”¹⁶⁰ Rickey Hill noted that: “Race has been and remains the most intractable problem in the United States. . . . While *de jure* racial segregation no longer exists, there remain obvious *de facto* practices of racial constraints in institutional life in America.” Hill then argued: “After a long, arduous, and protracted struggle against racial segregation and for inclusion, black people do enjoy and exercise some measure of citizenship rights. However, it must be observed that, in the early twenty-first century, such exercise is still constrained by race and racial determinants on the extent and limits of freedom and access.”¹⁶¹

Although many African Americans had risen into the middle class and enjoyed greater and relative increases in income by the turn of the new millennium, many still remained stuck in poverty. During the George W. Bush’s presidency, the poverty rate for African Americans rose to 24.5 percent. As a matter of fact, most poor African Americans remained trapped in inner-city neighborhoods inflicted by gang violence, criminal activity, drug abuse, and

¹⁵⁸ Robin D.G. Kelley. “Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present.”, op. cit., p. 337.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 247.

¹⁶¹ Rickey Hill. “The Race Problematic and the Narrative of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Election of Barack Obama.” Barack Obama and African American Empowerment: The Rise of Black America’s New Leadership. ED. Manning Marable, and Kristen Clarke. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. PP. 133-135.

HIV/AIDS. In the urban poor communities where so many of the young blacks lived, they experienced less educational and other opportunities that might help them improve their situation and escape poverty. For example, the number of 18- and 19-year-old African Americans who were either not at school or did not have a job was more than twice compared to the number of their white counterparts with the same conditions. In fact, the high poverty rate in the African American community affected black children. In 2008, more than 55 percent of all blacks under the age of 18 lived in single-parent families, in general with their mother. Partially because of this, most black children lived in families at or near the poverty level. Many, if not most of the black single-parent families which were generally headed by females faced many unfavorable conditions including insufficient public assistance, inadequate housing, inferior schools, and low incomes. Such conditions could badly influence children even for the rest of their lives, thereby perpetuating poverty from generation to another.¹⁶²

Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund (C.D.F.) captured the situation of the disadvantaged black children when she said: "Black Children are disproportionately denied a fair chance and are disproportionately poor. An unlevel playing field from birth contributes to many poor black children getting pulled into the cradle-to-prison-to-death pipeline that we must dismantle if the clock of racial justice and social progress is to not turn backwards."¹⁶³ Black poverty, along with a discriminatory criminal justice system, contributed to a rise in the rate of African Americans in U.S. prisons during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Between 1972 and 2005, the number of black male prisoners increased more than 500 percent to over 2 million. By 2004, 818,000 black men were incarcerated, on parole, or in other ways involved in the prison system, compared to only 630,700 white men.¹⁶⁴

An important natural event ruthlessly exposed the persistent reality of black poverty in the United States during the first decade of the new millennium. On August 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the U.S. Gulf Coast with storm wind speeds of 220 kilometers per hour. Katrina resulted in widespread devastation to the communities within Louisiana and Mississippi. In fact, the most sweeping destruction and damage took place in New Orleans, where flooding drowned about 80 percent of the city's surface area. Despite the fact that the city of New

¹⁶² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 647-648.

¹⁶³ Berteau Joisil. Dream Builders, Dream Killers: Voice of an Immigrant from Haiti. USA: Xlibris Corporation, 2010. P. 203.

¹⁶⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 244.

Orleans is situated below sea level which makes of it more vulnerable than most when it comes to storm surges and flooding and therefore at constant risk of natural disasters, city authorities took no measures as plans for the evacuation of those people who had no transportation means. As a result, after the hurricane hit, thousands of poor inhabitants, many of them African American, found themselves trapped.¹⁶⁵ In this context, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold wrote: “The plan to evacuate New Orleans if a major hurricane threatened the city ignored the fact that most of its poor residents, who were overwhelmingly black, lacked the means to flee.”¹⁶⁶

In addition, agencies charged with providing disaster relief were slow to act, and as Greta de Jong put it: “Relief agencies took far too long to get food, water, and medical assistance to citizens after the wind and rain subsided. Dozens of people who lived through the storm perished before help arrived in the days that followed.”¹⁶⁷ In fact, most of these people were black. In this respect, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold said: “New Orleans had been a black-majority city almost since its founding by the French in 1718. . . . What suddenly became apparent to the nation and the world after Katrina struck was that most of the people trapped in New Orleans—abandoned, drowning, rendered homeless, starving, and destitute—were poor and black.”¹⁶⁸ In the same respect, James Ciment said: “Because the vast majority of the New Orleans poor were black,¹⁶⁹ the hurricane also highlighted a continuing racial divide. Television news reports showed predominantly poor, black residents of the city left stranded, waiting endlessly for government assistance that for some never came.”¹⁷⁰

At first, incompetence rather than racism appeared to have determined the slow reaction of federal authorities to the natural disaster. The response to Hurricane Katrina nevertheless revealed the constant and interwoven problems of class and race that affect urban communities including New Orleans. Three decades of deindustrialization and white flight to the suburbs had created a large underclass of poor African Americans centered in deteriorated inner-city neighborhoods.¹⁷¹ As Greta de Jong put it: “It took a major natural disaster that laid

¹⁶⁵ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-327.

¹⁶⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 690.

¹⁶⁷ Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁶⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 690.

¹⁶⁹ The New Orleans population was 67 percent black before Katrina.

¹⁷⁰ James Ciment, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

¹⁷¹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

bare persistent injustices to shake the nation out of its post-racial dream.”¹⁷² The reaction of media tools to the crisis generated by the hurricane also demonstrated the persistent racial stereotyping of black Americans. As desperate black residents of the area started to loot stores looking for supplies, the press portrayed them as “pathological criminals.” In addition, the disaster generated by Katrina also revealed how black people were still suffering from lack of political representation. Black Americans had a little voice in the recovery program. As a consequence, they found themselves facing recommendations from organizations like the Bring New Orleans Back Commission (B.N.O.B.C.) which recommended that black neighborhoods in New Orleans should be bulldozed rather than restored and rebuilt.¹⁷³

Barbara Arnwine, the President and Executive Director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law¹⁷⁴, noted that for many American citizens, “Katrina provided their first look at the face of poverty and race in this country. The storm and its devastating aftermath forced Americans to witness first-hand a deadly combination of racism, racial disparities, racial insensitivity, poverty, and governmental incompetence.”¹⁷⁵ The Katrina disaster reminded the African American community of “how precarious life remained for those trapped in poverty and perched at the intersection of race, class, and gender in America.”¹⁷⁶ In the context of the hidden cost of being African American and in trying to explain the indirect consequences Hurricane Katrina on the African American community, Matthew C. Whitaker stated: “The human catastrophe that played out in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was a sharp reminder to black Americans that despite signs of progress and change, their hold on expanding influence and upward mobility remained tenuous.” Whitaker then argued, “Indeed, for millions of poor African Americans, the vulnerability, poverty, and maltreatment associated with racism, sexism, and classism continued to lock them into a vicious cycle of dislocation and want.”¹⁷⁷

Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath revealed all the intricate ways in which racism remained deeply embedded in the contemporary American society. New Orleans was a segregated city with a population of 68 percent African American and 23 percent poor. As a matter of fact, the median household income of \$31,369 was almost \$15,000 lower than the national average. Within the city of New Orleans low-income people lived in modest houses

¹⁷² Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁷³ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

¹⁷⁴ The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is simply known as the Lawyers’ Committee.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in: Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁶ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 694.

¹⁷⁷ Matthew C. Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

and public housing projects in the areas most vulnerable to flooding while middle- and upper-class residents lived in more preferable neighborhoods located on higher grounds. When the mayor of New Orleans issued a mandatory evacuation order on August 28th, most residents of the city, who were able to drive their cars hundreds of miles to reach hotels where they could keep safe, were largely white. However, those poorer citizens who did not own cars or lacked money to pay for gas, bus fares, and accommodation, remained behind. Most of these desperate people were black. The income and spatial disparities that existed in the city of New Orleans meant that African Americans made up the largest percentage of people who could not get out and were, as a result, either drowned or deserted.¹⁷⁸

After the storm, the widely held perceptions and stereotypes of black people as being dependent, unintelligent, and criminal affected relief efforts as well as media coverage of the crisis. A number of commentators attributed the failure of victims to evacuate to black people's inherent qualities of lack of initiative and lack of self-reliance. Some journalists reported unsubstantiated rumors that violence, rape, and drug use were widespread in the buildings where people took shelter, although many of these reports later proved to be false. In addition, cable news programs frequently showed the same picture of the same few people carrying shoes, clothes, food, and even other things from stores. As attorney Ishmael Muhammad¹⁷⁹ put it: "To the major media, black people seeking and finding food from abandoned stores were looters, while whites doing the same were identified as having found food." Fearing violence, aid workers refused to go into black neighborhoods in order to rescue trapped people. In addition, law enforcement officers and national guard troops were given directions to patrol white neighborhoods and ordered to shoot looters instead of providing help for people in flood-hit areas. Moreover, police and white residents in some of the city's white suburbs barricaded their communities in order to prevent those blacks who were seeking refuge from entering the area. At an open-air camp on an interstate highway, soldiers held thousands of people affected by the hurricane while they waited for buses to evacuate them out of the city. According to Leah Hodges, a New Orleans citizen and evacuee, these soldiers gave permission for white people to leave first, did not provide help for the sick and the elderly people, and threatened to shoot people who requested medical assistance. Hodges stated, "They were all about detention, as if it were Iraq, like we were foreigners and they

¹⁷⁸ Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁹ Ishmael Muhammad was a staff attorney for the Advancement Project, a political action group committed to racial justice with its national office in Washington D.C.

were fighting a war. . . . As a hurricane survivor, I and my family were detained, not rescued.”¹⁸⁰

With nowhere else to go and no private means of transport with which to get there, thousands of New Orleans’s black residents made their way to the Louisiana Superdome and the Convention Center, where they found miserable conditions including poor sanitation, inadequate food, water, and electricity. As a result, violence erupted, generating chaos. As bad as Katrina proved to be, its aftermath was even worse. Although President Bush had to cut short his vacation and flow over the devastated city, he did not actually visit New Orleans until September 2nd. That day, the president praised Michael Brown, the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) for his work saying: “you’re doing a heck of a job.” Yet, because it was already obvious that the F.E.M.A.’s response as well as Brown’s performance were ineffective, the president’s words outraged the nation in general and the African American community in particular. Under relentless criticism, Brown was forced to resign from his post as head of the federal disaster relief agency on September 12th. Kanye West, the famous black American hip-hop rapper departed from a nationally televised program to raise funds for Hurricane Katrina displaced victims to charge that “George Bush does not care about black people.”¹⁸¹ On September 3rd, 2005, Kanye West gave voice to the anger of many African Americans during a telethon or a live television appeal for Red Cross donations. Dispensing with his scripted comments, he railed against the Bush administration’s slow response and the news media coverage of the crisis.¹⁸² “I hate the way they portray us in the media,” Kanye West protested. “You see a black family, it says, ‘They’re looting.’ You see a white family, it says, ‘They’re looking for food.’” Ignoring his flustered cohost, West proclaimed, “George Bush doesn’t care about black people!”¹⁸³

In the political field, an important event also demonstrated that southern blacks could still be the victims of political chicanery in the new millennium; it was the presidential election of 2000. Before the election, Katherine Harris, Florida’s Secretary of State, ordered the removal from the voting rolls of more than 75,000 listed names of citizens identified as convicted felons, and thus prohibited from voting under state law. Yet, the company which was hired to compile the list made thousands of errors. A 54 percent of the people illegally disfranchised were African American. Black residents of the state of Florida still encountered

¹⁸⁰ Greta de Jong, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

¹⁸¹ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 690.

¹⁸² James Ciment, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

¹⁸³ Quoted in: James Ciment, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

many other obstacles on the election day, including police roadblocks that prevented them from getting access to voting centers, the late arrival of a number of ballot papers and the rejection of others considered spoiled.¹⁸⁴ In explaining this situation, Darlene C. Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold stated: “African Americans reported serious discrimination and interference with their voting in Florida. A lawsuit in Jacksonville, Florida, claimed that many votes were thrown out as ‘undervotes’ or ‘overvotes,’ especially in the four districts with the highest concentration of African Americans in the state.” The historians then argued: “Indeed, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found that tens of thousands of African Americans were disfranchised in Florida.”¹⁸⁵ In a draft report, the commission declared, “African American voting districts were disproportionately hindered by antiquated and error-prone equipment like the punch card ballot system.” This meant that more black and low-income voters, who tended to vote Democratic, had their ballots invalidated.¹⁸⁶

In the same context, Robin D. G. Kelley said: “Events in Florida during the closely contested 2000 presidential race between Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore taught black voters that, despite the 15th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, their voting rights are not completely protected.” Kelley provided an explanation for this stating, “Employing an 1868 statute denying convicted felons the right to vote, Florida’s Secretary of State Katherine Harris issued a “purge” list of some 57,700 alleged felons to registrars containing many egregious errors, including the names of black citizens who had never committed a crime, received clemency, or had their record expunged.” Kelley then concluded, “All in all, due to an array of technical problems, the state ended up discarding nearly 200,000 voters, most of which were from counties with black population.”¹⁸⁷ Florida was the key to the election. George W. Bush, the Republic candidate defeated his Democratic opponent Al Gore in Florida by a margin of only 537 votes and became the president-elect.¹⁸⁸ The Republican state administration was then accused by Civil Rights leaders of intentionally targeting black Americans and Hispanics because they vote overwhelmingly for the Democrats. Despite the fact that the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department did not find evidence of racial discrimination, the N.A.A.C.P. filed a class action complaint against

¹⁸⁴ David Brown, and Clive Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-329.

¹⁸⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *op. cit.*, p. 686.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Robin D.G. Kelley. “Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present.”, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

¹⁸⁸ In the hotly contested 2000 presidential election, the outcome hung on one state: Florida. In the end, Bush was declared the winner in Florida by fewer than 600 votes, which gave him a four-vote majority in the Electoral College.

Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris that resulted in an agreement to re-process the list of individuals removed from Florida voting rolls.¹⁸⁹

The suppression of the African American vote, whether deliberate or unintended, was not limited to Florida. In the 2000 presidential elections, about 1.9 million ballots cast were considered spoiled by election officials, and were therefore not counted. According to research from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and the Harvard University Law School Civil Rights Project, approximately 50 percent of these ballots were cast by black Americans. These ballots were rejected and deemed invalid because of machine malfunction, stray marks by the voter's pen on the ballot, or in a few cases, because voters wrote in Al Gore instead of checking the box. Other incidents of discrimination and voter intimidation continued to occur. In Louisiana in 2002, black Americans were given flyers telling voters that they could go to the polls on December 10th, three days after the date set for the Senate runoff election. More recently, independent investigators and the Civil Rights Commission reported a number of cases of African American voter suppression and intimidation.¹⁹⁰ In addition, African Americans remain underrepresented within the electoral structure of power and decision-making relative to their share of the total population. Making about 11 percent of voting-age Americans, blacks comprised less than 2 percent of the total number of elected office holders in the United States in 2009.¹⁹¹

Despite the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has declared racial profiling unconstitutional, commentators believe that it is still used by many police forces. Statistics confirm this claim. For example, according to the Dallas Morning News, in 2006, 36 percent of drivers pulled over by Dallas police were African American, although blacks make up only 26 percent of the city's total population. Likewise, in 2005, police in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, pulled over a disproportionately high proportion of black motorists which accounted for 24 percent of all cars stopped, despite the fact that only 13.9 percent of the county's population is African American. In both cases, in Dallas as well as in Anne Arundel County, police denied any deliberate policies of racial profiling. Still, critics argue that unofficial techniques of racial profiling often exist, in some cases on the initiative of the

¹⁸⁹ David Brown, and Clive Webb, op. cit., p. 329.

¹⁹⁰ Robin D.G. Kelley. "Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present.", op. cit., pp. 338-339.

¹⁹¹ Steven F. Lawson. "Still Running for Freedom: Barack Obama and the Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement." From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Ed. Iwan Morgan, and Philip Davies. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2012. P. 173.

individual police officers. Persons so targeted point out to their supposed offense as “driving while black.”¹⁹²

Racial disparities were also noticeable in criminal sentencing, raising suspicion of racial bias in the justice system. For instance, U.S. federal drug laws much stricter for persons convicted of dealing in crack cocaine than those dealing in powdered cocaine. Someone convicted of possessing more than 500 grams of powdered cocaine receives a five-year mandatory minimum sentence prison while the same minimum sentence applies to someone possessing just 5 grams of crack cocaine. Based on a 2005 study carried by the U.S. Sentencing Commission, black American drug offenders were 20 percent more likely to be sentenced to prison than white drug offenders. African Americans were also more likely to receive far longer jail sentences.¹⁹³

In the context of racial disparities in American incarceration, Christopher Muller said: “Of all the facets of American racial inequality studied by social scientists, racial disparity in incarceration has proved one of the most difficult to explain.”¹⁹⁴ And as Rogers M. Smith and Desmond King put it: “By 2005, black men were incarcerated at a rate of 4,682 per 100,000, compared with 709 per 100,000 for white men; and black women were incarcerated at a rate of 347 per 100,000, compared with 88 per 100,000 for white women.”¹⁹⁵ These were, in fact, worrying statistics.

In the field of education, racial disparities still persisted even by the first decade of the 21st century. In his book, Ghosts of Jim Crow: Ending Racism in Post-Racial America, F. Michael Higginbotham tackled the issue and stated that “the educational system is less racist today than it was under Jim Crow. No longer are black children taught a different curriculum, no longer are books designed for whites only, and no longer are college and professional schools off limits for most blacks. Yet, racial division and inequality in schools continues and is getting worse.”¹⁹⁶ Whether the comparison is at the level of grade point averages, test scores, or placement in advanced classes, the disparity between blacks and whites is large.

¹⁹² James Ciment, op. cit., p. 218.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Christopher Muller. “Northward Migration and the Rise of Racial Disparity in American Incarceration, 1880—1950.” American Journal of Sociology. Vol. 118, No. 2 (September 2012), p. 282. The University of Chicago Press. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/666384>>. Accessed: January 17, 2020.

¹⁹⁵ Rogers M. Smith, and Desmond King. “Barack Obama’s Election and America’s Racial Orders.” Obama at the Crossroads: Politics, Markets, and the Battle for America’s Future. Ed. Lawrence R. Jacobs, and Desmond King. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2012. P. 156.

¹⁹⁶ F. Michael Higginbotham. Ghosts of Jim Crow: Ending Racism in Post-Racial America. New York: New York University Press, 2013. P. 147.

According to the 2005 Census Report, it was revealed that only 17 percent of blacks at the age of 25 and over had a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2008, it was reported that less than 5 percent of blacks were master's or doctoral degree holders.¹⁹⁷

Moreover, little had changed in relation to funding discrepancies in the country's public schools. During Jim Crow era, funding for black schools was sometimes as less as ten times that of white schools. Three decades after Jim Crow ended, the differences in funding were still significant. By the dawn of the new millennium, black people were still victimized by a school funding system that created inequality in a system of *de facto* segregation. However, "resegregation" tells only part of the whole story. More than 50 percent of the students attending heavily segregated black schools live at or even below the poverty line. Since public schools were funded through local property taxes, this means that the disproportionate poverty rates among black communities limited the programs and other services that most black schools could provide. As a result, new textbooks, college-prep courses, and classes in physical education, music, and art were, for the most part, unavailable in schools that were both poor and at the same time segregated. According to a study published in 2008, resources varied significantly across schools according to income level and race of students in attendance. This study revealed that schools in the highest poverty areas tended to be in the worst physical conditions and suffered the most overcrowding. In addition, the percentage of classrooms wired for Internet service in predominantly black schools was 21 percent below the rate for predominantly white schools.¹⁹⁸

Furthermore, highly segregated poor schools in most cases lack experienced teachers. Studied prove that schools which serve low-income and black students usually have the highest percentages of noncredential and inexperienced instructors, a fact which evidently has a significant influence on the quality of instruction provided to the students in attendance. A report released by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S.D.E.), showed that Maryland elementary schools in wealthy areas had 94.8 percent of classes taught by highly qualified teachers, while schools in poor districts had only 66.2 percent of their classes being taught by highly qualified teachers, making a gap of 28.6 percent. The gap between rich and disadvantaged secondary schools was 25.6 percent. Such disadvantages may explain why white students perform better than black students on national reading, science, and math tests and are in general more likely to graduate from high school and attend college. Statistics

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 150-151.

showed that the average gap in graduation percentages between black and white students in 2006 was about 18 percent. The figures are even more shocking at the level of graduate schools, with black men earning 2.1 percent and black women earning 4.4 percent of all the doctoral degrees awarded in 2008 at American universities. The bleak reality is that some five decades after the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed segregation in public schools, the majority of black students remained in all-black or predominantly black schools. In 2004, New York *Newsday* entitled its fifty-year retrospective on *Brown* “Still Separate, Still Unequal,” and concluding that “[t]he dream of the racially harmonious world that *Brown* inspired in 1954 has dissolved in the cold daylight of racism, troubled schools, [and] white flight.” In 2005, that sentiment was repeated by Gary Orfield, of the Civil Rights Project, asking how the United States could celebrate “a victory over segregation at a time when schools across the nation are becoming increasingly segregated.”¹⁹⁹

In respect to the health gap, although African Americans had made considerable progress toward living longer, healthier lives, but they still suffered from disease prevalence and mortality for major illnesses. In 1970, life expectancy for black men was 60 years and for black women 68.3 years. By 2009, the figures had risen to 69.5 and 76.5 years, respectively. Although improvements in the health care provided for black people were to some extent responsible for these increases, but higher rates of infant mortality and a large increase in the number of deaths from diseases kept them well below the 75.7-year life span for white men and 80.8 years for white women.²⁰⁰ According to James Ciment, there are a number of factors that help explain why black-American health indices lag far behind those of whites. First and perhaps foremost is the factor of poverty. In 2004, for example, while 14.3 percent of white children below the age of 18 years lived in poverty, the percentage for black youths was 34 percent. Ciment argued that poverty and lack of access to stable employment also mean less health care coverage. Comparing the situation of the health care coverage of black and white Americans, Ciment stated that African Americans were less likely to have visited a doctor’s office over a year period than whites, while they were more likely to see a doctor in an emergency room. Moreover, young African American children between the ages of 19 and 25 months lagged behind their white counterparts in receiving vaccinations. This health gap

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 151-152.

²⁰⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 650.

leaves millions of black children vulnerable to prevalent diseases; the most common of these include tuberculosis, measles, hepatitis B, and diphtheria, among others.²⁰¹

By the first decade of the twenty-first century, cancer and HIV/AIDS were among the greatest threats to the health of African Americans. Black men were more likely than white men to develop cancer and die from the disease within a period of five years after diagnosis, which means that relative survival was lower in black than white men. Black females, on the contrary, had a lower incidence of cancer than did white females, but the death rate among those black females who did get the disease was higher than the death rate among white females with the same disease. This complicated disease, cancer, is caused by varied causes. Among the African American community, some of the higher rate of cancer incidence had a relationship with health-risk behaviors widespread among all impoverished people such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, obesity, and ignorance of adequate health care. A lack of access to insurance or quality health care heightens the impact of these risky behaviors. In addition, African Americans were more likely to be diagnosed with HIV/AIDS than any other section in the U.S. population.²⁰²

According to The Covenant with Black America, a collection of essays by prominent scholars and activists that was published in 2006, “African Americans are 13 percent of the nation’s population and account for 56 percent annually of new HIV infections. A quarter of these infections are among people under 25 years of age.”²⁰³ Among the persons newly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, 63 percent were black females. Despite the gains achieved by the African American community, HIV/AIDS continued to limit black Americans’ opportunities to live healthy lives.²⁰⁴ In 2008, African Americans had the highest rates of HIV and AIDS infections of all racial groups in the United States. In this respect, Matthew C. Whitaker wrote: “Despite medical advances which have significantly reduced HIV-related death rates, these rates are still much higher for blacks than for any other group in America.”²⁰⁵

In addition to the spread of HIV/AIDS in the United States, another specific issue attracted the attention of the African American community by the early twenty-first century; it was the issue of reparations for slavery.²⁰⁶ In 2000, this issue intensified and received

²⁰¹ James Ciment, op. cit., pp. 220-221.

²⁰² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 650.

²⁰³ Quoted in: Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 245.

²⁰⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 245.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 221.

²⁰⁶ In 1969, in his “Black Manifesto,” civil rights leader and writer James Foreman called on America’s churches

widespread national attention when Randall Robinson, an African American writer and political activist, published The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks. Robinson believed that because Jews and Japanese Americans have been remunerated for the indignities and horrors they endured during the Second World War, African Americans were also due a sort of compensation in the form of financial indemnification for slavery. Robinson insisted on the fact that many African Americans still suffer from the scars of slavery in terms of insufficient educational opportunities, poor housing conditions, and problems of inadequate health care. Robinson insisted that reparations would remedy the effects of such racial inequalities.²⁰⁷ According to Robinson, “white Americans can make reparations for slavery and the century of de jure racial discrimination that followed with monetary restitution, educational programs, and the kinds of equal opportunities that will ensure the social and economic success of all citizens.” He bluntly told his readers that, “white America owes blacks for the free labor they rendered and the state-sanctioned suffering they experienced, which to this day continues to relegate some black people to poverty, insufficient health care, substandard housing, and unequal educational opportunities.”²⁰⁸

Other leaders joined their voices to the call for monetary reparations or recompense for slavery. Molefi Asante, professor at Temple University, supported Robinson’s stand, but insisted that the federal government should issue long-term financial packages which include “educational, health care, land or property grants, and a combination of such grants” as targeted recompense for slavery and Jim Crow system. Yet, some prominent conservative black journalists totally rejected the notion of reparations considering it as an unrealistic solution to the legacy of slavery and white supremacy in the United States. Juan Williams of Fox News, William Raspberry of the Washington Post, and John McWhorter, a linguist and cultural critic, repudiated the idea altogether. Instead, Raspberry favored more investment and increased appropriations in education within African American communities, “not because of

and synagogues to collect \$500 million as “a beginning of the reparations due us as a people who have been exploited and degraded, brutalized, killed, and persecuted.” Even though Foreman’s call was widely publicized, churches did not make serious efforts to respond to his demand. In 1973, Boris Bittker, a Yale Law School professor influenced by Forman, raised the topic again and argued in The Case for Black Reparations that slavery and the persistence of government sanctioned racial discrimination justified a program of compensation for African Americans. Since 1993, black Democratic Congressman John Conyers from Detroit had introduced a bill in every session of Congress not to pay for reparations but to create a federal commission whose role is to investigate slavery and the legacy of racial discrimination. Yet, the bill never came to the floor of the House for a vote.

²⁰⁷ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 687-688.

²⁰⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 222.

debts owed to or incurred by our ancestors, but because America needs its citizens to be educated and productive.”²⁰⁹

Despite the fact that the federal government did not take steps to address the issue of reparations for slavery, other individuals and organizations continued to pursue the issue. In 2004, for instance, Ruth Simmons, president of Brown University and the first African American woman to lead an Ivy League institution established a committee to investigate Brown’s historic ties to money secured from the slave trade and to ascertain the possibility that the university might pay reparations. Moreover, in her 2005 book My Face Is Black Is True, Mary Frances Berry related the life of Callie House, an ex-slave who had called for reparations for American slavery back in 1899. “If the Government had the right to free us,” House contended, “she had a right to make some provision for us and since she did not make it soon after Emancipation she ought to make it now.” The fight for reparations for slavery endures as many African Americans lobby the U.S. Congress and corporations for a systemic acknowledgment of the legacy of slavery and white supremacy and the need for indemnification and compensation.²¹⁰

Barack Obama’s background, together with his dignified manner and poise, made him a unique personality.²¹¹ As Paul Finkelman put it: “Obama’s background is both unusual and in some ways quintessentially American.”²¹² Obama was born on August 4th, 1961, in Honolulu Hawaii. His personal history captures the complexity of identity in contemporary American society. Obama’s father, Barack Obama Sr., was a black African immigrant from the Nyanza Province of Kenya who married Ann Dunham, a white American woman from Wichita, Kansas. In fact, Obama’s parents were students at the University of Hawaii. When his father left his family in Hawaii in order to further his studies at Harvard, Barack, who was then only two years old, and his mother moved with her family. In 1964, the couple divorced and, in 1967, his mother married Lolo Soetoro, a man from Indonesia, and the family relocated to Jakarta. Later, when Obama was ten years old, he returned with his mother to Hawaii, where

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 222-223.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 223.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 228.

²¹² Paul Finkelman. “Barack Hussein Obama: An Inspiration of Hope, an Agent for Change.” African Americans and the Presidency: The Road to the White House. Ed. Bruce A. Glasrud, and Cary D. Wintz. New York: Routledge, An Imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2010. P. 207.

he lived with his maternal grandparents and completed high school and graduated with honors in 1979.²¹³

It was in the prestigious Punahou Academy in Hawaii, where Obama, as one of only three black students, was enrolled and completed high school, that he first experienced racism and the difficulties associated with the state of being a black American in the United States. In his autobiography, Dreams from My Father: A story of Race and Inheritance, published in 1995, Obama wrote about his struggle to cope with the ways in which society viewed, and oftentimes ridiculed, his mixed-race heritage.²¹⁴ In this respect, Johnny Bernard Hill said: “Growing up in Hawaii and Indonesia, Obama was shielded from many of the insidious structural realities of racism in America. Although he experienced racial language and perhaps even the attitudes of white racist family members, he was protected by his white mother and grandparents from an otherwise treacherous racist world.” Hill then argued: “Certainly racism was present in Hawaii and other parts of the world, but it comes with a different face and intensity in the South and many northern ghettos. Blacks in the South and northern ghettos were naked in the face of public ridicule, rejection, and outright racial violence.” According to Hill, “By and large, Obama experienced a privileged existence compared to most blacks. He attended the finest schools, traveled the world, and was allowed entrance to spaces often reserved for ‘whites only.’ Those few blacks who are skeptical about Obama have good reason. His lived journey does not exactly mirror that of most blacks.”²¹⁵

After high school, Obama entered Occidental College in Los Angeles for two years and then moved to Columbia University in New York City, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in political science in 1983. In 1988, he enrolled in Harvard University Law School, where he was elected the first African American editor of the Harvard Law Review and graduated magna cum laude in 1991. Obama then returned to Chicago to work as a civil rights attorney for the firm of Miner, Barnhill, and Galland while teaching part-time at the University of Chicago Law School. After Obama married Michelle La Vaughn Robinson in October 1992, the couple moved to the South Side neighborhood of Kenwood. His work as a community organizer and activist strengthened his interest in politics and inspired him to run for and win an Illinois state senate seat as a Democrat in 1996.²¹⁶ In 2004, Obama was elected

²¹³ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., p. 692.

²¹⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 228-229.

²¹⁵ Johnny Bernard Hill. The First Black President: Barack Obama, Race, Politics, and the American Dream. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. PP. 8-9.

²¹⁶ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 229-230.

to the U.S. Senate. Prior to this victory, Obama rose to national prominence as the result of speaking at the July 2004 Democratic National Convention when he delivered his famous keynote speech “The Audacity of Hope,”²¹⁷ in which he declared, “There is not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America—there’s the United States of America.”²¹⁸ As Michael Tesler and David O. Sears put it, from the moment Obama entered the national spotlight he had been considered as “the perfect antidote to America’s corrosive racial politics.” This Illinois state legislator, who was then campaigning to become a member in the U.S. Senate, rose to prominence in the American political sphere as the keynote speaker at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. His address speech was an almost universally acclaimed address that promptly changed him from a little-known politician at the state level to “America’s newest hope for a post-racial political future.”²¹⁹

In their book, Obama’s Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream of a Post-Racial America, Michael Tesler and David O. Sears stated that Obama remained faithful to his unifying campaign speeches throughout his first two years in the U.S. Senate. In the racially loaded aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Obama’s self-imposed role as builder of a racial bridge was obviously on display. A great majority of black Americans believed that the federal government response to the catastrophic devastation caused by the hurricane in New Orleans would have been faster if most of Katrina’s victims had been white Americans. Similar accusations were made by famous black political leaders such as Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson. However, Obama’s criticism of the federal response was expressed in “race-neutral” language. While he described the Bush administration’s “incompetence” as being “color-blind”, he believed that it revealed a lack of apathy for poor inner-city inhabitants who happen to be disproportionately black. In another September 2005 interview, Senator Obama used a similar class-based tone, stating, “It is way too simplistic to just say this administration doesn’t care about black people. I think it is entirely accurate to say that this administration’s policies don’t take into account the plight of poor communities and this is a tragic reflection of that indifference.” For Michael Tesler and David O. Sears, this “universalistic race-neutral criticism was classic Obama”.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Steven F. Lawson, op. cit., p. 177.

²¹⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 213.

²¹⁹ Michael Tesler, and David O. Sears. Obama’s Race: The 2008 Election and the Dream for a Post-Racial America. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010. P. 1.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

Except for his Katrina comments, Obama remained silent during his first year as a member in the U.S. Senate. In fact, he spent much of that time writing his book, The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream, which was published in 2006. The book's seventh chapter entitled "Race" reiterated his 2004 keynote speech's hope in "a vision of America finally freed from the past of Jim Crow and slavery, Japanese internment camps and Mexican braceros, workplace tensions and cultural conflict." Yet, the book also cautioned those who explained his keynote speech as the watershed to a post-racial America not to overlook the nation's glaring inequalities. He likewise supported the restricted use of affirmative action in favor of black Americans, while stressing "universal", as opposed to "race-oriented" or "race-specific", governmental programs because both of them are "good policy" and "good politics". The race issue is an unmatched minefield in American politics. Obama's keynote speech, his criticism of the federal response to Hurricane Katrina, and his "Race" chapter in The Audacity of Hope, all expressed his rugged terrain, though in a masterful manner that was not especially alienating to one any side of the nation's most polarizing issues including race. There was no doubt that if Senator Obama had an intention to run for the presidency he would run a similar "race-neutral" campaign. His distinctive ability to move beyond the race issue led many political commentators to consider him as the first truly suitable black candidate for a major party's nomination. As a matter of fact, Obama's reluctance to involve race as a major issue in his presidential campaign was already clear the day he formally announced his intention in seeking the Democratic nomination. Obama's strategists resisted all temptations to run a more race-conscious campaign. Most of his top staffers considered his ambiguity on race matters as an asset. And as Evan Thomas of the Newsweek (2009) wrote about the racial strategy of Obama's campaign which was based on a race-neutral approach that, "If black voters want to claim him as the black candidate, fine. If voters wanted to see him as biracial or post-racial, that was fine too."²²¹

The 2008 presidential election was unlike any other in American history. Barack Obama accepted the nomination as the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party on August 28th, 2008. In his acceptance speech, Obama promised if elected to usher in a new era. During the presidential election campaign, the differences between the one-term Illinois Senator Barack Obama and the multitermed Arizona Senator John McCain soon became apparent. Yet, to be sure, both candidates used similar language about change and hope. Obama won the three televised debates between the presidential candidates. The Democratic

²²¹ Ibid., pp. 2-5.

presidential candidate, demonstrated maturity, brilliant analytical capacities, and mastery of issues related to war, health care reform, energy independence, education, and global warming. On November 4th, 2008, more than 120 million Americans voted. Among these, about 67 million voted for Obama. For many Americans, the victory of Obama was a signal that “race” or “blackness” was no longer an insuperable barrier to the highest political office in the United States. On election night, Obama stood in Grant Park in Chicago, Illinois, and told the World, “If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.” The electoral college registered the extent of the Obama victory. Obama received 367 electoral votes, and McCain 173. Concerning African American voters, Obama received an unprecedented 95 percent of the black vote. On January 20th, 2008, before the two million who gathered on the National Mall in Washington and before a global televised audience of billions, Obama took the oath of office to become the forty-fourth president of the United States and the first black or African American to serve in the nation’s highest office.²²²

In this respect, Lydia Bjornlund stated: “Obama’s election can, in many ways, be considered the ultimate legacy of the civil rights movement. It demonstrated just how far the United States has come since the era of Jim Crow laws.” Bjornlund observed that: “In just fifty years, the nation has transitioned from keeping African Americans on the bottom of the social order to electing an African American to what some say is the most powerful position in the world.”²²³ According to Kristin A. Lane and John T. Jost, Obama’s election was “understandably heralded as a pivotal moment in the complex, sometimes calamitous trajectory of race relations in the United States.”²²⁴ With his election as the United States’ first black or African American president, many people believed that the country had finally moved beyond its long history of racial tensions and divisions. On the day of Obama’s historic election, New York Times headline proclaimed: “Obama Elected as Racial Barrier Falls.”²²⁵ As Rickey Hill put it: “Some will argue that Obama’s victory will mean an end to black grievance. Others will argue that a revolution has occurred and the color line has ended.

²²² Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, op. cit., pp. 691-694.

²²³ Lydia Bjornlund, op. cit., p. 70.

²²⁴ Kristin A. Lane, and John T. Jost. “Black Man in the White House: Ideology and Implicit Racial Bias in the Age of Obama.” The Obamas and a (Post) Racial America? Ed. Gregory S. Parks, and Matthew W. Hughey. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2011. P. 48.

²²⁵ Leslie Ashburn-Nardo, Robert W. Livingston, and Joshua Waytz. “Implicit Bias: A Better Metric for Racial Progress?” The Obamas and a (Post) Racial America? Ed. Gregory S. Parks, and Matthew W. Hughey. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2011. P. 30.

And still others will declare that Martin Luther King's narrative has been manifested and that his dream is now a reality."²²⁶ A number of commentators suggested that the outcome of the 2008 presidential elections was evidence that Americans were living in a "postracial America" or at least that they were rapidly moving in that direction.²²⁷

To some observers, the election of Obama signaled the beginning of a new "post-racial" era in which the United States was beyond racism. In November 2009, a Google search for "Obama" and "post-racial" (or "post racial" or "postracial") displayed more than 400,000 search results. A number of commentators observed: "We are supposed to be living in post-racial times." and "For many people in America, Obama's election ushered in a post-racial era that was expected to push race to the back burner of our national consciousness". But for Kristin A. Lane and John T. Jost, conclusions such as these were probably "hubristic from the start."²²⁸ Given the reality of the United States' tumultuous racial past, especially the fact that it was only four decades before Obama's election that the icon of the nation's dream or hope for racial equality, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated, it is perhaps quite easy to understand why many perceived the election of Obama to signify a "post-racial" United States. Only few could have imagined that there would ever come a day when a non-white, and particularly a black or African American candidate would be elected to the highest office in the country. To many, such a historic event surely meant that Americans had put their racial prejudices behind them. Yet, it is important to note that not everyone was optimistic about the United States' racial progress.²²⁹

President Obama's historic campaign, election, and notable inaugural address led many people question whether he would keep the same level of passion and success throughout the period of his presidency. In addition, prospect of racial progress, resolution, and the elimination of the factor of race as a social construct also loomed over the first two years of Obama's office. Beyond the racial symbolism of America's first black president were several political crises, including wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a great financial recession,

²²⁶ Rickey Hill, op. cit., p. 146.

²²⁷ Thierry Devos. "The Role of Race in American Politics: Lessons learned from the 2008 Presidential Election." The Obamas and a (Post) Racial America? Ed. Gregory S. Parks, and Matthew W. Hughey. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2011. P. 218.

²²⁸ Kristin A. Lane, and John T. Jost, op. cit., p. 48.

²²⁹ Leslie Ashburn-Nardo, Robert W. Livingston, and Joshua Waytz, op. cit., p. 31.

and many other global emergencies. Yet, despite these perplexing problems, the race issue continued to play a role in shaping the administration's first two years.²³⁰

On February 13th, 2009, President Obama passed the American Recovery and Reinforcement Act (A.R.R.A.), a form of fiscal stimulus legislation. The act appropriated \$260 billion in relief for American families affected by the economic recession, including a popular tax relief payment of \$400 for individuals and \$800 for families. It involved many of the key points Obama had promoted during his presidential campaign, and it saved the financial system from the edge of collapse. However, on February 18th, a New York Post cartoon portraying two police officers shooting a chimpanzee generated yet another debate about Obama and the issue of race in America. One of the cartoon officers declared: "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill." The cartoon commentary satirized the recent passage of the fiscal stimulus bill by President Obama along with tales of a chimpanzee from Connecticut who had mauled an innocent victim. The cartoon sparked a debate over race and drew fire from critics who said it evoked historically racist images. Critics claimed that the cartoon chimpanzee signified a cartoon caricature of the President and exploited hot anxiety that Obama's personal triumph would in the end lead to violence. Prominent black political and cultural activists, including Spike Lee and Al Sharpton, called for boycotting the New York Post. This denunciation led the newspaper to issue an apology. Obama made a choice not to involve himself in this matter. He believed that he should be more prudent when to deliver race speeches. Meanwhile, the newspaper's apology cagily drew distinctions between people who could be offended by the cartoon caricature and racial opportunities.²³¹

The debate over the New York Post cartoon underlined the evolving yet static nature of race relations in the age of Obama. Expectations that Obama's election would lead to a post-racial America clashed with a national history marked by racial suspicions, anxieties, and fear. Peniel Joseph argued that for black Americans, "the implicit equation of the nation's first black president with a chimp evoked painful memories of a not-too-distant past where blacks, regardless of their social standing, were compared to animals. During Reconstruction and continuing into the long period of Jim Crow, blacks were caricaturized as brutes, beasts, and savages who were unworthy of citizenship." Joseph further explained: "Far from being cultural artifacts from a buried racial past, such depictions of black Americans persisted well

²³⁰ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 286.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 287.

into the twentieth century, when civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. were characterized as coons and the NAACP was referred to as ‘planet of apes.’” Joseph then concluded: “More than simply painful reminders of the past, these dehumanizing portrayals of blacks remain part of the nation’s racial imagination.”²³²

Joseph pointed out that, the same day that the New York Post’s alleged portrayal of President Obama as a chimpanzee was issued, Attorney General Eric Holder delivered a notable speech at the Department of Justice in commemoration of Black History Month. Holder, America’s African American Attorney General, suggested that “to get to the heart of this country one must examine its racial soul.” Despite America’s multiethnic and multicultural makeup, its citizens remained “a nation of cowards” with regard to the question of race, too frightened of the results of racial frankness. Holder talked about the significant Civil Rights achievements made since the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in the *Brown* case (1954), but nonetheless admitted that the United States “has still not come to grips with its racial past,” and that this disinclination was a reflection of a historic reluctance to deal openly with race matters. Holder suggested that Black History Month should be an occasion used to inspire national discussion about issues of race, particularly because racial segregation remained part of everyday life. Despite an extensive analysis of the impact that slavery, Jim Crow system, and civil rights protests had in transforming American democracy, Holder argued that African American history furnished a context to rethink America’s racial boundaries as it advanced toward a more multicultural future. The debate over the Post cartoon and Holder’s speech illustrates persistent restrictions on the national dialogue around race matters. If the Obama age promised to bring in a more complex, nuanced, and sophisticated dialogue about race relations in America, the reality was different.²³³ As Thomas J. Sugrue put it: “Obama represents the paradox of race in early twenty-first-century America. . . . He also captures the ambiguities of a racial order that denies racism yet is rife with racial inequality.”²³⁴

Obama seldom made civil rights speeches or dealt with issues related to the burdens of racism unless events pushed him to do so.²³⁵ In the context of Obama’s “race lite” stand, political scientist Daniel Gillion has found that in the first half of his term, President Obama

²³² Peniel E. Joseph. Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama. New York: BasicBooks, A Member of the Perseus Books Group, 2010. PP. 220-221.

²³³ Ibid., pp. 221-222.

²³⁴ Thomas J. Sugrue. Not even Past: Barack Obama and the Burden of Race. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010. P. 136.

²³⁵ Steven F. Lawson, op. cit., p. 183.

said less about race matters than any U.S. president since 1961.²³⁶ The president did not tackle with any urgency what really remains to be done in connection with reducing racial inequality. Instead, in the process of pursuing social and economic reforms such as health care he recast the African American freedom struggle into “an American freedom struggle.” Whether representing the needs of disadvantaged black Americans in universalistic instead of racially particularistic contexts will be successful has yet to be demonstrated. In fact, the initial results were disappointing. Polls revealed that the election of Obama as president made black Americans feel better about their status, but the reality of their living conditions was very different. For instance, during the hard times of his first three years in office, the already existing economic gap between black and white Americans widened, and black unemployment, poverty, and home foreclosures reached their highest levels since 2000.²³⁷

Unexpectedly, even when the United States first black president moved into the White House, debates over race and housing heightened in what many thought and wished to be a “postracial” America. By the year 2009, no one could deny that black Americans were experiencing hardships from subprime mortgages to a greater degree than white Americans and were likely to suffer more. United for a Fair Economy (U.F.E.), an organization insisting on race-conscious policies, claimed that the distribution of subprime loans among racial and ethnic groups in the United States in 2004 was 53.9 percent for whites and 20.1 percent for blacks. Compared with white Americans, African Americans were disproportionately higher holders of subprime mortgages as 54.7 percent of loans were held by blacks compared with only 17.2 percent for whites.²³⁸

In 2007 the N.A.A.C.P. filed its first of a number of lawsuits in a federal district court in Los Angeles, claiming that some California lenders had violated the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1968 Fair Housing Act, and other federal laws. Then, in 2009, the N.A.A.C.P. filed other lawsuits against Wells Fargo Bank and Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc., and two H.S.B.C. Holdings subsidiaries, H.S.B.C. Mortgage Corp U.S.A. and H.S.B.C. Bank U.S.A., accusing them with deliberately and unfairly guiding black Americans into costly subprime loans. In Memphis, former Wells Fargo loan officers provided affidavits for that city’s suit against the company for steering them to focus on black neighborhoods and to sell African Americans

²³⁶ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America. Fourth Edition. Lanham: Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2014. P. 265.

²³⁷ Steven F. Lawson, op. cit., p. 183.

²³⁸ Desmond S. King, and Rogers M. Smith. Still a House Divided: Race and Politics in Obama’s America. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011. PP. 137-139.

more expensive mortgages even when they qualified for prime loans. In fact, the N.A.A.C.P. lawsuits sought to have records made public in order to unveil the wrongdoing, rather than to reclaim monetary compensation. Yet, it was not only members of the race-conscious alliance who raised such concerns. One of the nonprofit organizations calculated the loss to black household wealth acquired by subprime foreclosures to be massive, between \$71 and \$92 billion in the period from 2000 to 2008.²³⁹

In a book entitled Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America, published in 2014, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva devoted a whole chapter to race matters in the age of Obama. In this chapter titled “Race Matters in Obamerica: The Sweet (but Deadly) Enchantment of Color Blindness in Black Face,” Bonilla-Silva explained what he considered the “miracle” that took place in 2008 and its continuation in 2012 referring to the election and reelection of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States. His explanation run counter to those who believed that Obama’s victories marked the “end of racism” and the dawn of a new era of “no more excuses” for non-white people. He asserted that Obama’s ascension to the presidency as part and parcel of the new form of racism that had existed in the United States since the early 1970s; the decade following the Civil Rights era. As Bonilla-Silva put it: “We have seen the rise of a few, carefully chosen minorities who are willing to propound a happy version of the American story, and the elevation of these minority politicians as ‘evidence’ that America has overcome.” According to Bonilla-Silva, “This fairy tale is the most popular way to explain American racial politics, despite the depressing statistics telling a different story about what it meant to be a minority in America in 2011.”²⁴⁰

In 1946, George Orwell wrote: “to see what is in front of one’s nose needs constant struggle.” Bonilla-Silva believes that in the 2008 election, American citizens did not see what was in front of their noses but saw what they wanted and yearned to see. While African Americans and other people of color saw in Obama the realization of the “impossible dream,” white Americans, on the other hand, saw in him the assertion of their belief that the United States is indeed a “color-blind” nation. But the truth cannot be avoided, and social analysts know the fact that since the late 1970s, racial progress in America has stagnated and, in many fields, regressed. The proof for such a stand is, as the title of a report of the early 1990s put it, “clear and convincing.” All socioeconomic indices show serious racial gaps and disparities in

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 139.

²⁴⁰ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, op. cit., p. 256.

income, occupational standing, wealth, housing, and educational opportunities. In Racism without Racists, Bonilla-Silva addressed these persistent inequalities as well as some of the economic disparities as documented for 2008, the year of Obama's election. All the statistics cited, unless otherwise specified, come from the report "State of the Dream: The Silent Depression," a useful report in the form of a compendium of information from sources including the United States Census Bureau (U.S.C.B.) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (B.L.S.):

- The black unemployment rate in 2008 was 11.9 percent. Among young black males aged sixteen to nineteen, unemployment was 32.8 percent. (Unemployment for whites in 2008 was 5.8 percent.) The median household income of blacks was \$38,269, while the median household income of whites was \$61,280.
- Blacks had poverty rate of 24 percent compared to a 10 percent poverty rate for whites.
- People of color were more likely to be poor (24.5 percent), remain poor (54 percent), and move back into poverty from any income class status than their white counterparts.
- Nearly 30 percent of blacks had zero or negative worth, versus 15 percent of whites.

In addition, relying on data from the "State of Black America 2009" report by the Urban League, Earl Graves Jr., from Black Enterprise magazine, reported the following on the wealth disparity:

- Nationally, the typical African American family in 2008 possessed less than 10 percent of the net worth of the average white family. Almost 30 percent of black families had zero or negative net worth. And far fewer blacks than whites benefit from inherited wealth or assets.
- Only 18 percent of people of color had retirement accounts, compared to 43.4 percent of their white counterparts.
- On *average*, people of color had 8 cents for every dollar of white wealth.²⁴¹

According to the available statistics, blacks did not make up for the gaps in employment, income, and wealth. As a matter of fact, they actually fell further behind whites under Obama's presidency. In the month prior to the 2012 presidential elections, according to

²⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 256-257.

data from the B.L.S., the total unemployment rate was at 7.9 percent. While the unemployment rate for whites was at 6.6 percent, blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to be unemployed experiencing a higher unemployment rate of 14.3 percent. This increasing racial disparity is also clearly visible in statistics about poverty. Black median income decreased to \$32,229 in 2011, with a loss of \$6,000 or 18 percent of the 2008 income. While the incomes of whites also decreased by a notable amount, on average, they still gained about \$20,000 more than black people.²⁴²

These statistics are alarming signs of the worsening economic well-being of black people. This racial inequality was actually the result of the continuing significance or persistence of racial segregation. Scholars have documented the persistence of racial discrimination in the housing and labor markets and have revealed the coexistence of both old-fashioned as well as subtle “smiling discrimination.” Yet, racial discrimination was not just about employment and housing; it affected nearly almost all areas of the lives of people of color. In the “new America” that presumably began with the election of Obama, racism has remained in place and, perhaps, is becoming a more challenging obstacle. The apparent blessing of having a black man in the white house was likely to turn into a curse for black and brown people in the United States. Bonilla-Silva reviewed Obama’s policies in the first half of his presidency, and showed how Americans had been delivered “the same old politics in a new package,” or to put it another way, the old perfume in a new bottle.²⁴³

Since taking office, Obama maintained a universalist position towards race matters. Bonilla-Silva predicted that because of the president’s “lite” stand on the issue of race in the United States and his “post-racial persona and appeal,” he was not going to adopt any concrete and significant policies in order to ameliorate racial inequality. What is referred to as Obama’s middle-ground position on race can be viewed in the seventh chapter of his book, The Audacity of Hope. What was Obama’s solution in order to deal with racial inequality? The answer was: “An emphasis on universal, as opposed to race-specific, programs,” which Obama believes “isn’t just good policy; it’s also good politics.” In fact, Obama’s first term had been remarkable for its lack of race-oriented policies. The president’s inaction had been especially apparent on the question of black unemployment. Despite the acuteness of the problem, Obama declared in 2009 that he could not adopt a policy that is specifically directed

²⁴² Ibid., p. 258

²⁴³ Ibid., pp. 258-259.

at helping black people find jobs: “I can’t pass laws that say I’m just helping black folks. I’m president of the entire United States.” When the Congressional Black Caucus criticized him for not doing enough for black people in this sector, Obama famously answered: “take off your bedroom slippers. . . . Stop complaining, stop grumbling, stop crying.” To those who accused him of not taking an aggressive stance on race, Obama replied: “I’m not the president of black America,” And he added, “I’m the president of the United States of America.” Perhaps, President Obama’s single initiative that directly targeted black Americans, conveniently declared months before the 2012 presidential elections, is in the field of education. While improving racial disparities in education is a commendable goal, the initiative in question seemed ironically intended to allow Obama to point to this program as helping black Americans, while announced with “little fanfare and little funding” in order to not attract the attention of the white community.²⁴⁴

In his book Ghosts of Jim Crow: Ending Racism in Post-Racial America, which was published in 2013, F. Michael Higginbotham contended that those who claim the election of Obama, as the nation’s first black president, is proof that racial discrimination no longer exists in the United States are “preaching a very damaging notion.” He said, “Not only we are far from a post-racial America, but we will diverge even further from such an ideal if people falsely claim that equal opportunities are already being afforded to all blacks. Disparities and divisions in education, housing, the criminal justice system, economic, and politics must be addressed directly.”²⁴⁵ By the same token, Joseph F. Healey, in a book entitled Diversity and Society: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, and precisely in a part of this book titled, “African Americans from Segregation to Modern Institutional Discrimination and Modern Racism,” asked the question: Does the Election of President Obama Mean that America Is Postracial? In trying to answer this question, Healey stated that Obama’s election to the presidency in 2008 led many people to conclude that the United States had finally decisively rejected racism and had become a “postracial” nation, or a society in which the race factor was finally irrelevant. On the other hand, as Healey stated, other people cautioned that the reports of the demise of racism were extremely exaggerated and that the triumph of one black person had little relevance or significance for the improvement of the situation of the African American community in particular or for the other minority groups in general. After addressing the issue, Healey concluded that the American society was far from being postracial. For Healey,

²⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 276-278.

²⁴⁵ F. Michael Higginbotham, op. cit., p. 146.

the most detrimental to the argument that the United States became a postracial nation, is the fact that the racial gaps that had existed when Barack Obama took office have in fact persisted and may have even grown larger.²⁴⁶

In her book entitled Making All Black Lives Matter: Remaining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century, Barbara Ransby tackled the issue of Obama's election as the country's first African American president and the prospect of a postracial America and stated: "While the symbolism was powerful, having a Black man in the White House as president did not change the material reality for some thirteen million Black people living in the United States—a reality that included economic inequality, the epidemic of mass incarceration, and various forms of unchecked state violence."²⁴⁷ As Matthew C. Whitaker put it: "[Obama's] rise to power, however, is not the final chapter in African American history, nor does it eradicate the many problems that confront modern black America. The African American struggle endures, and the fight to fulfill and maintain America's promise for freedom and justice for *all* continues."²⁴⁸ The protest and transformative justice movement that emerged under the motto of the Black Lives Matter Movement (B.L.M.M.), and later the Movement for Black Lives (M.4.B.L.), rejected "representative politics as a stand-in for substantive change" in the life conditions of black people. The Uprising that took place in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri, was not the start of that fight but it was a pivot. In fact, Black Lives Matter (B.L.M.) began as a social media hashtag in 2013, that is during Obama's second term in office, in response to state and vigilante violence against blacks, triggered by the vigilante murder of the unarmed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, in 2012, and the acquittal of his murderer, George Zimmerman.²⁴⁹

#Black Lives Matter was brought to national attention in 2014 around an incident involving the police shooting and killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. When 18-year-old Michael Brown was shot and killed by a Ferguson police officer; Brown's body was left lying in the street for four hours after he was shot without providing him with medical aid or care. The ensuing riots by African Americans in the city revealed "a pattern of exploitation and police violence black residents face on a constant basis."²⁵⁰ As Peter C. Myers put it:

²⁴⁶ Joseph F. Healey. Diversity and Society: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender. California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014. PP. 220-222.

²⁴⁷ Barbara Ransby. Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018. P. 2.

²⁴⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, op. cit., p. 305.

²⁴⁹ Barbara Ransby, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

²⁵⁰ Paul Kivel. Uprooting Racism: How White People can Work for Racial Justice. Canada: New Society

“Black Lives Matter began in 2013 as a protest hashtag on Twitter after George Zimmerman was acquitted in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin.” Myers explained: “After a Ferguson, Missouri, police officer shot and killed Michael Brown in August 2014, the energy that had gathered through social media surged into the streets. In Ferguson, protests verging on riots extended over several days, and a litany of comparable incidents subsequently occasioned hundreds more protests in cities across the United States.” The hashtag, as Peter C. Myers stated, soon developed into “a full-fledged protest movement. . . . Its primary motivation, according to the original Black Lives Matter website, is the “extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes.””²⁵¹ Between 2013 and 2017, tens of thousands of people took part in Black Lives Matter protests and marches in one way or another. In the same period, the term “Black Lives Matter” was tweeted over a hundred thousand times per day.²⁵²

In 2020, and in a three-month span, three black Americans were fatally shot. On February 23rd, Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed 25-year-old black man, was chased and gunned down while jogging in Georgia by two white men. Then, on March 13th, another incident took place. Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old African American woman, who had been asleep in bed, was shot and killed by Louisville, Kentucky police during a botched no-knock raid. Later and on May 25th, George Floyd, a 46-year old black man died after being pinned to the ground by a Minneapolis police officer with his knee pressed into Floyd’s neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. The killings resulted in protests across the American nation against racial injustice. They also fueled global demonstrations supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement.²⁵³

The contemporary situation of African Americans can be looked at from two perspectives; is the glass half empty or half full? It is true that the average situation of the African American community has improved significantly during the last five decades in almost all areas of life. However, it is also important to note that racial progress has stopped well short of equality. As an assessment of the contemporary situation, we might focus on the improved situation of the group which means that the glass is half full, or the current challenges that remain existing before full racial equality and justice are achieved which means that the glass is half empty. Arguably, the most sensible view and the most reasonable approach is to recognize that in many ways the general picture of racial progress is different

Publishers., 2017. PP. 196-197.

²⁵¹ Peter C. Myers. “The Mind of Black Lives Matter.” *National Affairs*. No. 32 (Summer 2017). <<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-mind-of-the-black-lives-matter>>. Accessed: June 16, 2020.

²⁵² Barbara Ransby, op. cit., p. 1.

²⁵³ “Black History: Timeline of the Post-Civil Rights Era.” <<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history-timeline-post-civil-rights>>. Accessed: June 11, 2020.

rather than better, and that a high percentage of black Americans have exchanged rural peasantry with urban poverty and today face a mixture of tremendous and deep-rooted problems. The situation of the African American community is interwoven with the plight of the cities and the changing nature of the labor force. The relative poverty and powerlessness of black Americans has persisted long after other groups have achieved equality and acceptance within the American society. Black people were enslaved in order to meet the demands of an agrarian economy for labor force, became a rural peasantry under the rule of Jim Crow segregation, then were excluded from the opportunities made available by early industrialization, and today remain largely excluded from the better job opportunities open in the emerging postindustrial economy.²⁵⁴

Since the heady days of the 1960s, progress toward racial equality has decelerated considerably, and in many fields earlier advances seem despairingly stagnated. According to public opinion polls, there is little support or sympathy for the cause of black Americans. If traditional racial prejudice has declined, this was only to be replaced by modern forms of racism. In the court of public opinion, black Americans are frequently held responsible for their own predicament. As a consequence, biological racism has been replaced by racial apathy and indifference toward racial inequality or by blaming the victims as relatively new but expanding forms of racial prejudice. Certainly, in acknowledging the challenges that remain, one should not underestimate the real improvements that African Americans have achieved. In comparison with their forefathers during the Jim Crow era, African Americans today are on the average more prosperous and more politically powerful, and some are even among the most revered of current American popular heroes. This is when we look at the glass being half full. Yet, the improvements in median income and education and the story of the glittering success of the few does not reflect the real lives of the majority who still face an array of problems that may well grow worse as the United States moves further into the postindustrial era. Unemployment, poverty, a failing educational system, housing segregation, subtle forms of racism, and continuing racial discrimination continue to be inevitable realities for millions of African Americans. In many black neighborhoods, drug abuse, violence, crime, inadequate health care, malnutrition, and a tangle of other factors exacerbate these problems. Again, this is when we look at the glass being half empty.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Joseph F. Healey, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

The situation of African Americans in the first decades of the twenty-first century might be characterized by racial inequality. The problems that remain are less apparent or obvious than those of the previous eras. As Joseph Healey put it: “Urban poverty, modern institutional discrimination, and modern racism are less dramatic and more difficult to measure than an overseer’s whip, a lynch mob, or a sign that says ‘Whites Only,’ but they can be just as real and just as deadly in their consequences.”²⁵⁶ And as Rickey Hill put it: “The race problematic remains an active variable in the thinking and practices that define and shape human and social relations in twenty-first-century America. Race is always just beneath the surface in public discourse.” Hill continued, “Racism and racial domination continue to operate in subtle and glaring ways to make clear that there is a dominant white group and class that maintain and benefit from the racial order.” According to Hill, “The social practices are quite evident today in the ways in which black people are being criminalized, overrepresented at the lower end of the income and occupation hierarchies, and underrepresented in positions of economic and political power, while institutionalized racism remains a powerful determinant of black life chances.”²⁵⁷ In 2018, writing for the American Civil Liberties Union (A.C.L.U.), Jeffery Robinson, Deputy Legal Director and Director of the Trone Center for Justice and Equality, stated, “50 Years After MLK’s Assassination, We Remain Two Societies, ‘Separate and Unequal’”²⁵⁸

Although the situation of the African American community today is obviously much improved compared to the past, but the journey to full and true racial equality has not been accomplished yet. Despite the fact that the average situation of African Americans has improved significantly since the middle decade of the twentieth century in almost every area of social life, black-white racial inequality has remained a persistent feature in contemporary American society. Even twenty-first-century American society inherited the unfinished agenda of black-white racial equality. Race-based slavery was abolished in 1865, *de jure* segregation was outlawed in 1954, African Americans’ citizenship and voting rights were affirmed in 1964 and 1965, white supremacy however is still alive and racial inequality still persistent. Racial inequality is still a serious problem today, but a different kind of problem than it was before the 1950s and 1960s.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 223.

²⁵⁷ Rickey Hill, op. cit., p. 136.

²⁵⁸ Jeffery Robinson. “50 Years After MLK’s Assassination, We Remain Two Societies, ‘Separate and Unequal’.” <<https://www.aclunc.org/blog/50-years-after-mlk-s-assassination-we-remain-two-societies-separate-and-unequal>>. Accessed: February 04, 2020.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Black-white racial inequality in what is today the United States of America existed since 1619, the year when a group of twenty black Africans were landed at Jamestown, Virginia aboard a Dutch warship. Despite the fact that this first group of black Africans who were deported from their homeland to America were considered indentured servants like many of their white European counterparts, and although black and white indentured servants often worked side by side, plantation owners tended to treat them differently. Laws separating the black and white races slowly took their way into the colonies. At first, that was in a subtle way, then more apparent distinctions were made in how African and European indentured servants were being treated by plantation owners. In addition, plantation owners also encouraged racial hatred between their black and white indentured servants. These distinctions indicate that the social status of black servants had not been the same as that of their white counterparts. They also indicate that racial prejudice towards blacks existed even before the institution of slavery was regularized and legalized.

It should be underlined that the racial inequalities created during the colonial period would influence the founding of the American nation. The seeds of the feelings of white supremacy and black inferiority were already sown during this period. As blacks were increasingly associated with hard labor and servile status, the belief that Europeans were superior emerged. At that time, slavery as an institution had not yet officially existed in the British North American colonies. Slavery, in fact, evolved gradually beginning with customs rather than laws, from indentured servitude to lifelong servitude.

The importance of black slaves to plantation-based economies led the Southern colonies to make their slave laws quite more elaborate than those in the North. Although in the colonies to the north of Virginia and Maryland, black slavery never became the dominant form of labor, and though black slaves there enjoyed better life conditions, still slave systems in both the Northern and the Southern colonies were quite similar until the end of the eighteenth century when Northern States started to abolish human bondage that was based on race. For blacks, whether they were in the North or in the South, the era of slavery was an era marked not only by racial inequality but by racial oppression. During the slavery era, black people were not considered as human beings but as personal property that could be bought, sold, or inherited. As slaves, blacks were not just treated as being not equal to the white people but were totally robbed of their humanity.

With the Declaration of Independence in 1776, blacks began to claim that the self-evident principles stated in the Declaration of Independence, of a new independent nation, logically applied to them as much as to the white population. Blacks, who most of them had been born in America, were expecting that white patriot leaders would realize that their revolutionary principles were totally incompatible with the institution of black slavery. Although the American Revolution promised to bring freedom and justice for all, the war was, in fact, fought to bring freedom to the country but not to the slave community. The American Revolution, therefore, generated a great American paradox: a land of freedom and equality based on slavery. This forced white people to confront the contradiction between the new nation's professed ideals and its reality. White citizens had to choose between accepting the literal meaning of the Declaration of Independence which meant changing the structure of the American slaveholding society, or rejecting the revolutionary ideology that supported their claims for independence. Awareness of this basic contradiction pushed white Americans to look at slavery from a new perspective. If they choose to continue to enslave black people, though they were themselves fighting for freedom, liberty, and equality, they had to develop new arguments to justify black slavery. It was at this time that arguments about blacks' inherent racial inferiority emerged in order to rationalize this race-based or color-based slavery.

Nevertheless, during and right after the American Revolution, many Americans particularly in the North where slavery was relatively unimportant to the economy, took their revolutionary ideals seriously and concluded that slavery was an unjust human practice. Yet, Northern and Southern states did not handle the issue in the same way. In the North, almost every state passed laws or enacted provisions and judicial rulings that either eliminated slavery immediately or put it on the way to gradual extinction by freeing blacks after reaching a specified age or after performing a certain amount of service. Yet, these gradual emancipation laws were very slow to take effect. In the South, however, the situation was different. Because of the importance of slavery to the Southern economy and because the socio-economic life in the South was totally based on this institution, Southern states resisted all efforts to eliminate it within their borders. Although some of the Southern states permitted slave owners to manumit their black slaves if they wanted to, no Southern state passed a law that ended slavery completely, either immediately or gradually.

In the late eighteenth century and right the beginning of the nineteenth century, all Northern states abolished black slavery within their borders. The new free black population

took steps to create their own public institutions and used the term “African” to announce their distinctive pride and insistence on racial equality. Still, even if enslaved Africans made some progress towards freedom, they still experienced setbacks in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. Under gradual emancipation laws in the Northern cities, blacks were forced to work for their owners for long periods of their lives before they would be freed. Meanwhile, the steadily growing free black population in the North contributed to white anxiety and intensified racial barriers and hatred. As a consequence, race-riots broke out in a number of U.S. cities, and in many areas where the institution of slavery had been abolished, state governments were passing new discriminatory laws.

In the South, restrictive laws known as the “slave codes” were passed. These laws involved a strict control over black slaves. Meanwhile, few slave revolts broke out in the South, and the most terrifying was the one led by Nat Turner in 1831. The rebellion threw the slaveholding South into a panic, and then into a determined effort to reinforce the security of the slave system. These tightened slave codes were, in fact, intended to keep the Southern black population, whether slave or free, in a subservient position. In the South, free blacks were then just technically free. After Nat Turner’s insurrection, white attitudes towards blacks, whether slave or free, worsened. There also emerged pro-slavery arguments, following the insurrection, in order to justify the institution and practice of slaveholding.

Despite the fact that Republicans seemed to have divergent political and economic ideas, it was obvious that they were all united in their opposition to the spread of the institution of slavery. But this is not to mean that they were abolitionists. Very few Republicans, despite their opposition to slavery, believed in social equality between the black and white races. It was on this great issue of racial equality that radical abolitionists and Republicans differed. Notwithstanding that both were opposed to slavery, Republicans, unlike radical abolitionists, were not in favor of social and political equality for black people. Equality for them had a broader meaning that they could claim to defend equality between the two races but not to be in favor of social and political equality for black people. By this time another paradox about the issue of equality in American society was looming on the horizon.

This disagreement over the issue of equality between black and white people was but a part of the long-standing controversy over the question of slavery that divided the American nation and ultimately led to the outbreak of the American Civil War. At the beginning of the war, although Lincoln’s antislavery views were well established, he did not want to interfere

with the controversial institution of slavery. He even ordered his army generals to return all black slaves who tried to escape behind Union lines. Although, at first, fugitive slaves were returned to their owners, but the confiscation acts of 1861-1862 stated that slaves who crossed the Union lines should be considered contraband of war and automatically freed. In fact, just the idea of considering human beings –black slaves– as contraband of war that could be seized and kept, with the same justification the Union army could use to seize and keep any captured Confederate gun, rifle, or cannon, was in itself a degradation to the black race. Yet, behind the Union lines, fugitive slaves found life not as easy as they expected it to be. It was almost as harsh as in the Southern plantations.

As Commander-In-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, Lincoln approved the enlistment of blacks in the Union army. That was born of the need for more troops to reinforce the army. Yet, accepting the enlistment of black soldiers could not disguise the harsh reality of discrimination that black troops faced during the war. In fact, black soldiers were not treated on equal grounds like their white counterparts. Still, despite the different forms of discrimination and hostility that black soldiers faced, they played a pivotal role in the Union Victory. When the Civil War came to an end, Lincoln met his primary goal of preserving the Union. He also achieved a second goal, one he had not initially intended, the end of the institution of slavery. After the conclusion of the war, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed. The amendment officially abolished slavery throughout the United States. Yet, it is important to mention that the adoption of this amendment meant the abolition of slavery, but did not mean the end of racial inequality. This represented just the first step on the long road to equality for African Americans.

After the Thirteenth Amendment, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution ensued. Yet, the status of free blacks in the Post-Civil War era remained precarious, as new challenges manifested during the Reconstruction period. The latter was a period of disappointment and frustration for black people, as the new provisions of the Constitution were often ignored or violated, especially in the South. The newly freed blacks were thrown largely on their own meagre resources. Moreover, the Southern states enacted laws resembling the slave codes. This means that pervasive white racism which was a feature of the antebellum South remained a feature of the postbellum South. White Southerners were concerned with the fact that blacks had become free. They were outraged that these freed black people could claim the same rights they themselves possessed. Such a possibility seemed unacceptable to people convinced of the “inferiority” of the black race.

However, the Black Codes already passed in the Southern States were effectively nullified when the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was passed. The act defined former slaves as U.S. citizens entitled to enjoy “full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property as is enjoyed by white citizens.” In addition, the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1868) granted citizenship to “all persons born or naturalized in the United States,” which included former slaves recently freed. Moreover, the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1870) granted African American men the right to vote. During the Reconstruction era, blacks were also able to wield political power, particularly in the South. Yet, this black political power was short-lived. The rebirth of white supremacy was accompanied by the rise of racist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of White Camellia which sought to maintain white supremacy in the South and oppose freedmen’s social and political rights. As it ended, the Reconstruction also failed to provide adequate economic security for former black slaves.

In fact, after the Reconstruction period, blacks started to be blatantly racially discriminated against. White supremacy prevailed in the South where blacks were looked at as a threat to the white rule. In addition to trying to deprive blacks of their civil rights, their political rights were also violated. As early as the late 1870s, Southern Democrats worked enthusiastically to decline black political power. Intimidation and violence which were widespread during the Reconstruction continued in the 1880s and 1890s. More militant and determined Southern Democrats were firm in their efforts to find some legal means to deprive blacks of their voting rights. Although the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution stated that the right of a person to vote could not be denied on account of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude”, a policy of disfranchisement started in the South. To deny African Americans the right to vote, literacy tests and poll taxes were passed by the Southern states. When these provided insufficient, the grandfather clause was passed.

By the late nineteenth century, African Americans struggled against a rising tide of white supremacy and enforced racial separation when a set of strict racial segregation laws known as Jim Crow Laws were adopted and enforced in the Southern states. Both the pre-Civil War era slave codes and the post-Civil War era Black codes paved the way for the Jim Crow laws. These local and state laws were intended to keep the two races in separate spheres. They also placed social, economic, and political restraints on African Americans with the aim of keeping them in a subordinate status. Racial hatred increased as black people were burned and lynched. In fact, the situation of blacks was not much better than under slavery.

The legacy of this race-based slavery continued to haunt the country long after its abolition. In the South, segregation against African Americans became a reality, even sanctioned by the law. For example, with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, which stated that the "separate but equal" doctrine did not violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, racial segregation became institutionalized. After the *Plessy* decision, Southern states created an elaborate system of legally sanctioned racial segregation. The "separate but equal" doctrine remained in place for nearly six decades until the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954 resulted in the court overturning the *Plessy* decision. Jim Crow proceeded in an inexorable way throughout the South. The Jim Crow laws remained in place until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s emerged.

During the Great Migration movement to the North (1910s-1920s), African Americans found themselves confronted to new social, economic, and political challenges. Racial tensions grew in the North, and as a result racial segregation became more and more pronounced. Many black migrants who had dreamed of higher wages and better social conditions realized that in the North they faced other patterns of discrimination other than those they had faced in the South. In the North, they were mainly living in overcrowded and run-down buildings, and were limited to low paid, humble jobs and the least remunerative positions compared to the whites. Therefore, migrating North was not a panacea for African Americans; what the Great Migration did, was, in fact, to transform Southern peasants into an urban proletariat. The Great Migration also began a new era of political activism among African Americans, who after being disenfranchised in the South found a new place for themselves in the Northern cities.

During the Great Depression era, the situation of African Americans was undoubtedly worse than that of the whites because the economic collapse hit them particularly hard. This economic crisis exacerbated the already poor situation of African Americans. In fact, the Depression era proved bleak for black workers and their families as they had to struggle against the double burden of economic devastation on one hand, and racial discrimination and segregation on the other. Still predominantly restricted to the worst jobs that were offering the least wages, in addition to being the last hired and the first fired, African Americans experienced dramatic increases in the rate of unemployment as well as the level of poverty and suffered dramatically from the ills these social and economic phenomena generated. Nevertheless, if the Great Depression left African Americans stranded, New Deal programs provided them with inadequate needed economic assistance. They received not only less than

they needed but disproportionately less than whites. New Deal programs were administered at local and state levels where racial discrimination was still widely and systematically enforced. In fact, the New Deal did little to change the existing racial discrimination and segregation that was prevailing during the 1930s. This locked African Americans into a status of second-class citizens. For African Americans, the New Deal was but a raw deal for they did not benefit equally from its programs compared to the whites.

The outbreak of the Second World War created a crisis which provided African Americans with a context to protest racial discrimination and set the seeds of a black revolution. The war crisis provided black Americans with reason, opportunity, and justification to protest. During the war period, African Americans lived persistent experiences of racial inequality. Even the army was segregated. The experiences of wartime racial prejudice and discrimination contributed to raise rather than curb black aspirations. Many African Americans came through the war with an increased racial consciousness. The war crisis provided African Americans with a unique opportunity to point out, for the whole world, the contradiction between the American creed and practice; between America's ideals of democracy and equality abroad and the harsh reality of racial inequality existing within its borders. The democratic ideology and rhetoric with which the war was fought triggered a sense of optimism, hope, and certainty in African Americans that the old patterns of race relations in American society had to be destroyed forever. In part, these feelings of confidence were also the result of the mass militancy and increased race consciousness that developed during the war years. Patriotism and military service also contributed to a sense of pride in the African American community and galvanized their convictions that legal and political equality was their right as American citizens. When the expected white acquiescence in a new race structure did not eventuate, the ground was prepared for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The seeds of the movement were indeed sown during the Second World War years.

In the postwar years, African Americans became more assertive in their demands for racial equality within the American society. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s then ensued. During the war years, African Americans had challenged racial discrimination in the military services and in employment, and had achieved limited gains. At the end of the war, they were unwilling to give up such minimal gains. In addition, when the war ended, blacks were rejecting the status of second-class citizenship. The period of the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, for most African Americans compared to white Americans, was a

decade darkened by continued racial segregation, economic inequality, and episodes of intense violence. As Jim Crow was still prevailing, the whole nation remained racially divided. In addition, the majority of African Americans did not benefit equally from the postwar economic boom. For African Americans, time was ripe to fight racial segregation and achieve racial equality.

During the 1950s, African Americans' nonviolent fight for racial equality and integration in the American society intensified. A huge surge of activism took place to reverse segregation and achieve racial equality. Direct nonviolent action achieved its first major success with the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The success of the boycott led to a 1956 Supreme Court decision declaring that Montgomery's segregated bus seating system was unconstitutional. In fact, the Montgomery Bus Boycott represented the first major victory of the Civil Rights Movement. However, as a reaction, on the night of the Supreme Court's ruling, a caravan of about forty cars carried Ku Klux Klan members through Montgomery's African American community in an attempt to intimidate and scare black residents of the city and remind them of their position in the social hierarchy.

As the nonviolent struggle for desegregation grew more important, the crusade against segregation and racial inequality gained momentum. In 1963, Martin Luther King and the S.C.L.C. run a community-wide nonviolent direct action campaign with the aim to desegregate public accommodations in Birmingham, Alabama. As a reaction to the Birmingham campaign, city officials led by Eugene "Bull" Connor arrested King and harassed the other demonstrators using attack dogs, clubs, and fire hoses. Newspapers and television coverage of Birmingham's violence shocked Americans across the nation and besmirched the United States' image abroad.

The Civil Rights Movement faced challenges that emanated from what Martin Luther King called "evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society," evils that reflected not only the legacy of the institution of race-based slavery but also the perpetuation of that legacy during subsequent generations by radicalized local and state policies that wove white privilege and supremacy deep into the fabric of American culture and institutions. Despite the movement's undeniable successes, those evils persisted and in some ways had been compounded. As the victories of the civil rights era were achieved, certain new issues emerged that would fissure the movement. As a matter of fact, the Civil Rights Movement had mostly and predominantly been focused on the South. African Americans living in the

North already had many of their rights as American citizens granted by the federal legislations of the era. Nevertheless, they still suffered from other forms of discrimination. Addressing their daily problems required new ways of thinking and different tactics and strategies. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, then, proved to be but a chapter in the long struggle of African Americans for full and true racial equality in the American society.

Despite the successes and significant achievements of Civil Rights Movement, including but not limited the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, new challenges emerged in the urban ghettos of the Northern cities. African Americans did not emerge from the civil right era fully integrated into the American society enjoying real and full equality with their white counterparts. In fact, the 1965 Civil Rights Act signaled both the high tide of Civil Rights Movement as well as the beginning of its decline. The post-civil rights era posed new problems and therefore created new challenges for the African American community. As a result, a new form of activism emerged; it was Black Power.

The late 1960s witnessed violent disturbances in a number of the predominantly African American cities. The most serious ones took place in the Watts ghetto in Los Angeles in 1965, and Newark and Detroit in 1967. These riots were born of a more subtle *de facto* segregation, and were triggered by routine police brutality. By the end of 1967, the American nation seemed moving toward total racial polarization. In its final report, released on February 29th, 1968, the Kerner Commission identified white racism as the underlying causative factor and the primary cause of the surge of the riots that had swept several major American cities, and warned that America was moving towards two societies, one white, one black; separate and unequal.

With the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, a powerful voice for black rights and racial equality in the United States was silenced. Within days of King's assassination, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was passed in what seemed to many a late gesture of racial reconciliation. This act prohibited discrimination in the sales and rentals of housing and enabled the Justice Department with authority to bring suits against such discrimination. Although in principle it outlawed housing discrimination, without adequate enforcement mechanisms, the new law accomplished little. Indeed, during the following decades racial inequality remained a reality. It was still existing between black and white Americans. During these decades, African Americans continued to live persistent experiences of racial inequality in the form of disparities in education, housing, employment, health care, and a

wide range of other social domains. For many African Americans, that was a new form of second-class citizenship. At the close of the twentieth century, African Americans still experienced the burden of racial inequality.

At the dawn of the new millennium, the African American population remained disadvantaged as compared to the average American population on most social and political indices. Events in Florida during the presidential election of 2000 demonstrated that southern blacks could still be the victims of political chicanery in the new millennium. Then, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina came to unveil the harsh reality of racial inequality in the United States. Katrina and its aftermath revealed all the intricate ways in which racism remained deeply embedded in contemporary American society. Besides, because of continued racial inequalities, the dream of a post-racial America during the presidency of Barack Obama turned to be a myth rather than a reality. In twenty-first-century America, racial inequality remains a contentious issue in American race relations. The journey to true racial equality has not been accomplished yet. The Kerner Commission was right when it predicted in 1968 that the American nation was moving toward two societies, one black and one white, separate and unequal.

Despite the changing status of black people in America over time from indentured servants, to slaves, to free people, and then to full American citizens under the law, racial inequality remained a persistent feature in African American life. The dream of a post-racial American society in the new millennium turned to be an illusion. The glittering success of the few African Americans does not reflect the harsh reality of the majority. A vast majority of African Americans still suffer from persistent inequalities in education, jobs, housing, health care, and a wide range of other social fields. Contemporary racial inequality is the shadow of past centuries of color-based slavery and Jim Crow system. Although chattel slavery was abolished in 1865, *de jure* segregation was outlawed in 1954, African Americans' citizenship and voting rights were affirmed in 1964 and 1965, but white supremacy is still alive and racial inequality is still persistent even in twenty-first-century American society. The full realization of true black-white racial equality has not been achieved yet. Racial inequality, with specific focus on African Americans, remains America's great dilemma; a dilemma based on the color-line problem.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

The Constitution of the United States of America

(With Clauses Pertaining to the Status of African Americans Highlighted)

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I

Section 1. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. 1. The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States, and the electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature.

2. No person shall be a representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen

3. Representatives and direct taxes¹ shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons.²

The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each State shall have at least one representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to choose three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New York six, New

¹ See the Sixteenth Amendment.

² See the Fourteenth Amendment.

Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

4. When vacancies happen in the representation from any State, the executive authority thereof shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.

5. The House of Representatives shall choose their speaker and other officers; and shall have the sole power of impeachment.

Section 3. 1. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each state, chosen by the legislature thereof,³ for six years; and each senator shall have one vote.

2. Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes. The seats of the senators of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second year, of the second class at the expiration of the fourth year, and of the third class at the expiration of the sixth year, so that one third may be chosen every second year; and if vacancies happen by resignation, or otherwise, during the recess of the legislature of any State, the executive thereof may make temporary appointments until the next meeting of the legislature, which shall then fill such vacancies.⁴

3. No person shall be a senator who shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

4. The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided.

5. The Senate shall choose their other officers, and also a president pro tempore, in the absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the office of the President of the United States

6. The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the president of the United States is tried,

³ See the Seventeenth Amendment.

⁴ See the Seventeenth Amendment.

the chief justice shall preside: and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two thirds of the members present.

7. Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States: but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment, according to law.

Section 4. 1. The times, places, and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing senators.

2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 5. 1. Each House shall be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members, and a majority of each shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner, and under such penalties as each House may provide.

2. Each House may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two thirds, expel a member.

3. Each House shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either house on any question shall, at the desire of one fifth of those present, be entered on the journal.

4. Neither House, during the session of Congress, shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

Section 6. 1. The senators and representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases, except treason, felony, and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning

from the same; and for any speech or debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other place.

2. No senator or representative shall, during the time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil office under the authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the emoluments whereof shall have been increased, during such time; and no person holding any office under the United States shall be a member of either House during his continuance in office.

Section 7. 1. All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may purpose or concur with amendments as on other bills.

2. Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a law, be presented to the President of the United States; if he approves he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his objections, to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the objections at large on their journal, and proceed to consider it. If after such reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a law. But in all such cases the votes of both Houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the persons voting for and against the bill shall be entered on the journal of each House respectively. If any bill shall not be returned by the President within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law, in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their adjournment prevent its return, in which case it shall not be a law.

3. Every order, resolution, or vote to which the concurrence of the Senate and the House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the same shall take effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the rules and limitations prescribed in the case of a bill.

Section 8. The Congress shall have the power

1. To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

2. To borrow money on the credit of the United States;

3. To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes;

4. To establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States;

5. To coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures;

6. To provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States;

7. To establish post offices and post roads;

8. To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries;

9. To constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

10. To define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offenses against the law of nations;

11. To declare war, grant letters of marquee and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water;

12. To raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years;

13. To provide and maintain a navy;

14. To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;

15. To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions;

16. To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

17. To exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings; and

18. To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or any department or officer thereof.

Section 9. 1. The migration or importation of such persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person.

2. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.

3. No bill of attainder or ex post facto law shall be passed.

4. No capitation, or other direct, tax shall be laid, unless in proportion to the census or enumeration herein-before directed to be taken.⁵

5. No tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any State.

⁵ See the Sixteenth Amendment.

6. No preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one State over those of another: nor shall vessels bound to, or from, one State be obliged to enter, clear, or pay duties in another.

7. No money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law; and a regular statement and account of the receipt and expenditures of all public money shall be published from time to time.

8. No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States: and no person holding any office of profit or trust under them, shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign State.

Section 10. 1. No State shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation; grant letters of marquee and reprisal: coin money; emit bills of credit; make any thing but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts; pass any bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility.

2. No state, without the consent of the Congress, lay any imposts or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection laws: and the net produce of all duties and imposts laid by any State on imports or exports, shall be for the use of the treasury of the United States; and all such laws shall be subject to the revision and control of the Congress.

3. No State shall, without the consent of the Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops, or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another State, or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay.

Article II

Section 1. 1. The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same term, be elected, as follows:

2. Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the

State may be entitled in the Congress: but no senator or representative, or person holding any office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

The electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each; which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the president of the Senate. The president of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the President, in such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority; and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose by ballot one of them for President: and if no person have a majority, then from the five highest on the list the said House shall in like manner choose the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each State having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two thirds of the States, and a majority of all the States shall be necessary to a choice. In every case after the choice of the President, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them by ballot the Vice President.⁶

3. The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors, and the day on which they shall give their votes; which day shall be the same throughout the United States.

4. No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States, at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to the office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty-five years, and been fourteen years a resident within the United States.

5. In case of the removal of the President from office, or of his death, resignation, or inability to charge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by law provide for the case of removal, death, resignation, or inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what shall then act as President,

⁶ See the Twelfth Amendment.

and such officer shall act accordingly until the disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

6. The President shall, at stated times, receive for his services a compensation which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other emolument from the United States, or any of them.

7. Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation:—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of president of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section 2. 1. The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several States, when called into the actual service of he United States; he may require the opinion in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments, upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices, and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.

2. He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two thirds of the senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law; but the Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the courts of laws, or in the heads of departments.

3. The President shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by grating commissions which shall expire at the end of their next session.

Section 3. He shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other

public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and shall commission all the officers of the United States.

Section 4. The President, Vice President, and all civil officers of the United States, shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

Article III

Section 1. The judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The judges, both of the Supreme and inferior courts, shall hold their offices during good behavior, and shall, at stated times, receive for their services, a compensation, which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office.

Section 2. 1. The judicial power shall extend to all cases, in law and equity, arising under this Constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made, or which shall be made, under their authority,—to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction;—to controversies to which the United States shall be a party;⁷—to controversies between two or more States;—between a State and citizens of another State;—between citizens of different States;—between citizens of the same State claiming lands under grants of different States, and between a State, or the citizens thereof, and foreign States, citizens or subjects.

2. In all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, and those in which a State shall be party, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction. In all the other cases before mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions, and under such regulations as the Congress shall make.

3. The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury: and such trial shall be held in the State where the said crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the trial shall be such place or places as the Congress may by law have directed.

Section 3. (1) Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be

⁷ See the Eleventh Amendment.

convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court.

2. The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment of treason, but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood, or forfeiture except during the life of the person attained.

Article IV

Section 1. Full faith and credit shall be given in each State to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the manner in which such acts, records and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof.

Section 2. 1. The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.⁸

2. A person charged in any State with treason, felony, or other crime, who shall flee from justice, and be found in another State, shall on demand of the executive authority of the State from which he fled, be delivered up to be removed to the State having jurisdiction of the crime.

3. No person held to service or labor in one State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.⁹

Section 3. 1. New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State, nor any State be formed by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States, without the consent of the legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

2. The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or any particular State.

⁸ See the Fourteenth Amendment, Sec. 1.

⁹ See the Thirteenth Amendment.

Section 4. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened) against domestic violence.

Article V

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which in either case shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress: Provided that no amendment which may be made prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any manner affect the first and fourth clauses in the ninth section of the first article; and that no State, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.

Article VI

1. All debts contracted and engagements entered into, before the adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.¹⁰

2. This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any thing in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

3. The senators and representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several State legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

¹⁰ See the Fourteenth Amendment, Sec. 4.

Article VII

The ratification of the conventions of nine States shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the same

Done in Convention by the unanimous consent of the States present the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven, and of the independence of the United States of America the twelfth. In witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names.

Articles in addition to, and amendment of, the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth article of the original Constitution.

Amendment I [First Ten Amendments Ratified December 15, 1791]

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Amendment XI [January 8, 1798]

The judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by citizens of another State, or by citizens or subjects of any foreign State.

Amendment XII [September 25, 1804]

The electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by ballot for President and Vice President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same State with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots, the person voted for as Vice President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President and of all persons voted for as Vice President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate;—The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted;—The person having the great number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each State having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two thirds of the States, and a majority of all the States shall be necessary to a choice. And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice President shall act as President, as in the case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President. The person having the greatest votes as Vice President shall be the Vice President if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice President of the United States.

Amendment XIII [December 18, 1865]

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIV [July 28, 1868]

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. Representatives shall be appointed among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a State, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participating in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation there shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3. No person shall be a senator or representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by vote of two thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing

insurrection or rebellion; shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations, and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Amendment XV [March 30, 1870]

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XVI [February 25, 1913]

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

Amendment XVII [May 31, 1913]

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature.

When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, That the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

Amendment XVIII¹¹ [January 29, 1919]

After one year from the ratification of this article, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is thereby prohibited.

The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by Congress.

Amendment XIX [August 26, 1920]

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XX [January 23, 1933]

Section 1. The terms of the President and Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

Section 2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 3. If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of president, the President-elect shall have died, the Vice President-elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President-elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President-elect shall act as president until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President-elect nor a Vice President-elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall

¹¹ Repealed by the Twenty-first Amendment.

then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

Section 4. The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom, the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

Section 5. Section 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

Section 6. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.

Amendment XXI [December 5, 1933]

Section 1. The Eighteenth Article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

Section 2. The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission thereof to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XXII [March 1, 1951]

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once.

But this article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding

the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XXIII [March 29, 1961]

Section 1. The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the States, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXIV [January 23, 1964]

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXV [February 10, 1967]

Section 1. In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.

Section 2. Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority of both Houses of Congress.

Section 3. Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

Section 4. Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

Amendment XXVI [June 30, 1971]

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States who are eighteen years of age or older to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXVII¹² [May 7, 1992]

No law, varying the compensation for services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

Source: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. The African American Odyssey. Fifth Edition. Combined Volume. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011. PP. A-3-A-12.

¹² James Madison proposed this amendment in 1789 together with the ten amendments that were adopted as the Bill of Rights, but it failed to win ratification at the time. Congress, however, had set no deadline for its ratification, and over the years—particularly in the 1980s and 1990s—many states voted to add it to the Constitution. With the ratification of Michigan in 1992 it passed the threshold of the States required for adoption, but because the process took more than 200 years, its validity remains in doubt.

Appendix 2:

A Timeline of Events Leading to the American Civil War and the Formal Abolition of Slavery in the United States

- 1619 First group of African Blacks arrive in North America.
- 1793 The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney.
- 1820 The Missouri Compromise passed.
- 1846 The Wilmot Proviso introduced.
- 1850 The Compromise of 1850 passed.
- 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin", published.
- 1854 The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed.
- 1854 The Republican Party founded
- 1856 Bleeding Kansas.
- 1857 The Dred Scott decision made by the Supreme Court.
- 1859 John Brown's raid on Harper Ferry.
- 1860 Abraham Lincoln elected President of the United States.
- 1860 South Carolina seceded from the Union.
- 1861 Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, and Texas seceded.
- 1861 The Confederate States of America formed.
- 1861 Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, South Carolina—The Civil War began.
- 1862 Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation issued.
- 1863 Final Emancipation Proclamation declared.
- 1865 The Civil War concluded.

1865 The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified—Slavery abolished.

Appendix 3:

The Emancipation Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas on the 22d day of September, A. D. 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

That on the 1st day of January, A. D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

That the Executive will on the 1st day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such States shall have participated shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States.

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this 1st day of January, A. D. 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are and henceforward shall be free, and that the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that in all cases when allowed they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment and mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 1st day of January, A. D. 1863,
and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

Source: John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. Sixth Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1988. PP. 532-533.

Appendix 4:

To Ask for an Equal Chance

Although the New Deal promised aid to all who needed it, racist local administrators and traditional patterns of discrimination limited dramatically the level of support African Americans received. The imbalance was particularly pronounced in the South, although it operated everywhere. Few African Americans had any recourse if their local program administrator rejected their request for aid. They knew no one with power to overrule these decisions, and if they complained they risked provoking local whites into violent retaliation.

Thousands, however, tried a different approach, and wrote to New Deal agency heads in Washington, D. C., or to President Roosevelt or his wife. For the first time since Reconstruction, the federal government was paying attention to poor people and to black people. And so, for the first time, African Americans believed they had a friend in government. While few of the thousands of letters addressed to the Roosevelts or New Deal administrators received personal answers, the descriptions they contained offer a vivid and intimate window into the lives of these neediest of Americans and the blatant racism they encountered. They also reveal the letter writers' pride and willingness to work; no one was seeking handouts. Rather, these writers considered themselves hardworking and worthy citizens who deserved help. What follows is a tiny sampling of letters sent by black women during the Depression years. Notice the difference between the individual pleas of the southern letter writers and the more political appeal of the writer from the North. The late dates of the last two letters remind us that not all the Depression's hardship eased with the coming of war.

Millen, Ga.

February 4, 1935

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Extensive Service

Dear Friends,

I am a widow woman with seven head of children, and I live on my place with a plenty of help. All are good workers and I wants to farm. I has no mule, no wagon, no feed,

no grocery, and these woman and men that is controlling the Civil Work for the Government won't help me.

... I wants to ask you all to please help me make a crop this year and let me hear from you ... Yours for business.

Mosel Brinson

P.S. These poor white people that lives around me wants the colored people to work for them for nothing and if you won't do that they goes down to the relief office and tell the woman, "don't help the colored people, we will give them plenty of work to do but they won't work." ... Now I am living on my own land and I am got a plenty of children to make a farm, and all I wants is a chance, and I am not in debt. I wants a mule and feed, and gear and plows, and a little groceries and guano. Please help a poor widow woman one year. Please help me to get a start, I will try to keep it.

New Orleans, La.

April 18, 1941

Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt

Dear Mrs.

I am a Negro girl of 25 yrs. I'm sick. I been sick 4 months. I'm in need of food and closes. I don't have any relative at all so help me. I hope I'm not asking so much of you but I hop you would help me, Mrs. Roosevelt. I'm righting to you this morning I don't have food for the day. I gose to the hospital. The dr say all my sickes is from not having food.

I was working on the NYA ... 10 month. They laid me off because I was sick and didn't give me nothing to live off after tune me off I'm rooming with a old lade she don't have a husband. She give me food when she have it but she don't have it all the time. I own her 5 month rent right now If I don't be able to pay her in 2 week she going to put me out. I don't have nobody to go to for help and no where to go what I going to do if she put me out.

Could you do something for me help me to fine something. Tell me what to do if you could give me some to do ... any where I will do it. I will take a day job are a night job

anything. Please help me. You can see I'm in need of help Mrs. Roosevelt. Will you please help me I can live much longer without food. Have lot of micine to take I do take it but it wont do me any good without food and if the lady put me out I just no I will die ... please wright at once as soon as you can

Thank you. Your kindes will never be forgoting.

Yours sincerely.

Mabel Gilvert

Please do some thing foe me at once any thing. Pleas anywhere pleas.

Woodland Park Bitely, Mich.

April 23, 1941

President Roosevelt

Dear Sir:

We are the colored woman Democrat club. We are sending in a plea for help for our people of our community. Our men are out of work and have ben for something.

We can't get any Welfare help unless we sign our homes over to the welfare. We do not want to be beggers. Our men would work if they could only get work to do. We have helped in every way we could to help make your third election a success. We have some hard things to undergo during the time we were campaigning but the victory was well worth the pain

We here in this community are having a tuff way to go just now. There were a lay off just after Jan. and our men were laid off. Any time anything happens like this our group are always the first ones to get the first blow. We have tried to get work. We are sending our plea to you feeling sure you will and can help us in our needy condition. We aren't getting a fair deal. Some of our boys are being drafted for service for our country and here we are in a free land are not aloud to work and make a living for their wives and childrens. You are the Father of this country and a Father are suppose to look out for all his children so we are depending on you.

From the Colored Womens Democrat Club. We are hoping to hear from you soon.

Yours truly

Lutensia Dillard

Source: Cheryl Lynn Greenberg. To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression.
Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. PP. 144-146.

Appendix 5:

To End Employment Discrimination

When World War II began, the U.S. was not yet a combatant. Still, President Roosevelt indirectly declared war on the Axis powers by Proclaiming that America was the “arsenal of democracy.” The resulting expansion of military expansion revived the U.S. economy and ended the Depression. It did not end for African Americans, however, who continued to suffer from racism and discrimination. They were once again “last hired.” Black leaders, determined to increase employment opportunities for black workers, met in 1941 at Harlem’s Hotel Theresa. They agreed to demand that the government enforce equal access to employment and integrate the Armed Forces. Labor leader A. Philip Randolph threatened to bring thousands of black protesters to Washington, D.C., in a “March on Washington” if the president did not yield to these demands.

As Roosevelt struggled to generate support for the war effort, he concluded that any public protest would undercut his assertions that the nation was united against Fascism. Roosevelt sent his wife, Eleanor, and Mayor Fiorello La Guardia of New York, both strong advocates of black civil rights, to try to persuade Randolph to call off the March. When they failed, the president issued Executive Order 8802 in June 1941. The order met some, but not all, of the group’s demands. It prohibited discrimination by any employer receiving a government contract, but the mechanisms for enforcement were weak. Nor did Roosevelt integrate the Armed Forces. In response Randolph called off the march, but urged African Americans to continue their struggle until the full agenda of the March on Washington was fulfilled. Roosevelt’s executive order prohibited discrimination in any industry receiving government defense contracts and established the Committee on Fair Employment Practice to monitor compliance. In a 1942 article, Randolph explains the ongoing mission of the March on Washington Movement to extend the antidiscriminatory measures of the executive order and expand integration into all areas of public and civic life. Notice that Randolph called for an all-black movement—not because he opposed interracial cooperation, but to highlight black power and public unity.

Executive Order 8802: Prohibition of Discrimination in the Defense Industry (1941)

Reaffirming Policy of Full Participation in the Defense Program by All Persons, Regardless of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin, and Directing Certain Action in Furtherance of Said Policy.

WHEREAS it is the policy of the united states to encourage full participation in the national defense program by all citizens of the Unites States, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin, in the firm belief that the democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders; and

WHEREAS there is evidence that the available and needed workers have been barred from employment in industries engaged in defense production solely because of considerations of race, creed, color, or national origin, to the detriment of workers' morale and of national unity:

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes, and as a prerequisite to the successful conduct of our national defense production effort, I do hereby reaffirm the policy of the United States that there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or governments because of r ace, creed, color, or national origin, and I do hereby declare that it is the duty of employers and of labor organizations, in furtherance of said policy and of this order, to provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin;

And it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. All departments and agencies of the Government of the United States concerned with vocational and training programs for defense production shall take special measures appropriate to assure that such programs are administered without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin;
2. All contracting agencies of the Government of the United States shall include in all defense contracts hereafter negotiated by them a provision obligating the contractor not to discriminate against any worker because of race, creed, color, or national origin;
3. There is established in the Office of Production Management a Committee on Fair Employment Practice, which shall consist of a chairman and four other members to be appointed by the President The Committee shall receive and investigate

complaints of discrimination in violation of the provisions of this order and shall take appropriate steps to redress grievances which it finds to be valid. The Committee shall also recommend to the several departments and agencies of the Government of the United States and to the President all measures which may be deemed by it necessary or proper to effectuate the provisions of this order.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The White House,

June 25, 1941.

Source: Cheryl Lynn Greenberg. To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. PP. 165-167.

Appendix 6:

Brown v. Board of Education*

Mr. Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the Court

These cases come to us from the States of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. They are premised on different facts and different local conditions, but a common legal question justifies their consideration together in this consolidated opinion.

In each of these cases, minors of the Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis. In each instance, they had been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. This segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called “separate but equal” doctrine announced by this Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U. S. 537. Under that doctrine, equality of treatment is accorded when the races are provided substantially equal facilities, even though these facilities be separate. In the Delaware case, the Supreme Court of Delaware adhered to that Doctrine, but ordered that the plaintiffs be admitted to the white school because of their superiority to the Negro schools.

The plaintiffs contended that segregated public schools are not “equal” and cannot be made “equal,” and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws. Because of the obvious importance of the question presented, the Court took jurisdiction. Argument was heard in the 1952 Term, and reargument was heard this Term on certain questions propounded by the Court. . . .

In approaching this problem, we cannot turn the clock back to 1868 when the Amendment was adopted, or even to 1896 when *Plessy v. Ferguson* was written. We must consider public education in the light of its full development and its present place in American life through the Nation. Only in this way can it be determined if segregation in public schools deprives these plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws.

* The Supreme Court’s school desegregation decision, delivered May 17, 1954.

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does. . . .

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Because these are class actions, because of the wide applicability of this decision, and because of the great variety of local conditions, the formulation of decrees in these cases presents problems of considerable complexity. On reargument, the consideration of appropriate relief was necessarily subordinated to the primary question—the constitutionality of segregation in public education. We have now announced that segregation is a denial of the equal protection of the laws.

Source: John Hope Franklin, and Alfred A. Moss, JR. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. Sixth Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1988. PP. 536-537.

Appendix 7:

The March on Washington Movement: “Why Should We March?”

Though I have found no Negroes who want to see the United Nations lose this war, I have found many who, before the war ends, want to see the stuffing knocked out of white supremacy and of empire over subject peoples. American Negroes, involved as we are in the general issues of the conflict, are confronted not with a choice but with the challenge both to win democracy for ourselves at home and to help win the war for democracy the world over. . . .

For if the war for democracy is not won abroad, the fight for democracy cannot be won at home. If this war cannot be won for the white peoples, it will not be won for the darker races.

Conversely, if freedom and equality are not vouchsafed for the peoples of color, the war for democracy will not be won. Unless this double-barreled thesis is accepted and applied, the darker races will never wholeheartedly fight for the victory of the United Nations. That is why those familiar with the thinking of the American Negro have sensed his lack of enthusiasm. . . .

That is why questions are being raised by Negroes in church, labor union and fraternal society; in poolroom, barbershop, schoolroom, hospital, hairdressing parlor; on college campus, railroad, and bus. One can hear such questions asked as these: What have Negroes to fight for? What's the difference between Hitler and that "cracker" Talmadge of Georgia? Why has man got to be Jim Crowed to die for democracy? If you haven't got democracy yourself, how can you carry it to somebody else?

What are the reasons for this state of mind? The answer is: discrimination, segregation, Jim Crow. . . . Vested political interests in race prejudice are so deeply entrenched that to them winning the war against Hitler is secondary to preventing Negroes from winning democracy for themselves. . . . While labor, business, and farm are subjected to ceilings and floors and not allowed to carry on as usual, these interests trade in the dangerous business of race hate as usual.

When the defense program began and billions of taxpayers' money were appropriated for guns, ships, tanks, and bombs, Negroes presented themselves for work only to be given the cold shoulder. North as well as South, and despite their qualifications, Negroes were denied skilled employment. Not until their wrath and indignation took the form of a proposed protest march on Washington, scheduled for July 1, 1941, did things begin to move in the form of defense jobs for Negroes. The march was postponed by the timely issuance . . . of the famous Executive Order No. 8802 by President Roosevelt. But this order and the president's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, established thereunder, have as yet only scratched the surface by way of eliminating discriminations on account of race or color in war industry. Both management and labor unions in too many places and in too many ways are still drawing the color line.

It is to meet this situation squarely with direct action that the March on Washington Movement launched its present program of protest mass meetings. Twenty thousand were in attendance at Madison Square Garden, June 16; sixteen thousand in the Coliseum in Chicago, June 26; nine thousand in the City Auditorium of St. Louis, August 14. Meetings of such magnitude were unprecedented among Negroes. The vast throngs were drawn from all walks and levels of Negro life—businessmen, teachers, laundry workers, Pullman porters, waiters, and red capes; preachers, crapshooters, and social workers; jitterbugs and Ph.D.'s. They came and sat in silence, thinking, applauding only when they considered the truth was told, when they felt strongly that something was going to be done about it.

The March on Washington Movement is essentially a movement of the people. It is all Negro and pro-Negro, but not for that reason anti-white or anti-Semitic, or anti-Catholic, or anti-foreign, or anti-labor. Its major weapon is the non-violent demonstration of Negro mass power. Negro leadership has united back of its drive for jobs and justice. "Whether Negroes should march on Washington, and if so, when?" will be the focus of a forthcoming national conference. For the plan of a protest march has not been abandoned. Its purpose would be to demonstrate that American Negroes are in deadly earnest, and all out for their full rights. No power on earth can cause them today to abandon their fight to wipe out every vestige of second class citizenship and the dual standards that plague them.

A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess. To trample on these rights of both Negroes and poor whites in such a commonplace in the South

that it takes readily to anti-social, anti-labor, anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic propaganda. . . . Oppression of the Negroes in the United States, like suppression of the Jews in Germany, may open the way for a fascist dictatorship.

By fighting for their rights now, American Negroes are helping to make America a moral and spiritual arsenal of democracy. Their fight against the poll tax, against lynch law, segregation and Jim Crow, their fight for economic, political and social equality, thus becomes part of the global war for freedom.

Program of the March on Washington Movement

1. We demand, in the interest of national unity, the abrogation of every law which makes a distinction in treatment between citizens based on religion, creed, color, or national origin. This means an end to Jim Crow in education, in housing, in transportation and in every other social, economic, and political privilege; and especially, we demand, in the capital of the nation, an end to all segregation in public places and in public institutions.
2. We demand legislation to enforce the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments guaranteeing that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, so that the full weight of the national government may be used for the protection of life and thereby may end the disgrace of lynching.
3. We demand the enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and the enactment of the Pepper Poll Tax bill so that all barriers in the exercise of suffrage are eliminated.
4. We demand that the abolition of segregation and discrimination in the army, navy, marine corps, air corps, and all other branches of national defense.
5. We demand an end to discrimination in jobs and job training. Further, we demand that the F.E.P.C. be made a permanent administrative agency of the U.S. Government and that it be given power to enforce its decisions based on its findings.
6. We demand that federal funds be withheld from any agency which practices discrimination in the use of such funds.
7. We demand colored and minority group representation on all administrative agencies so that these groups may have recognition of their democratic right to participate in formulating policies.

8. We demand representation for the colored and minority racial groups on all missions, political and technical, which will be sent to the peace conference so that the interests of all people everywhere may be fully recognized and justly provided for in the post-war settlement.

Source: A. Philip Randolph, "Why Should We March?" Survey Graphic 31, no. 11 (November 1942): 488-89.
Taken from: Cheryl Lynn Greenberg. To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. PP. 167-170.

Appendix 8:

Declaration of Constitutional Principles: The Southern Manifesto, 12 March 1956

Although the Southern Manifesto's sentiment for nullification was hardly new, the document did record the opposition of 101 southern representatives and senators to Brown, and legitimated additional resistance.

. . . This unwarranted exercise of power by the Court, contrary to the Constitution, is creating chaos and confusion in the States principally affected. It is destroying the amicable relations between the white and Negro races that have been created through 90 years of patient effort by the good people of both races. It has planted hatred and suspicion where there has been heretofore friendship and understanding.

Without regard to the consent of the governed, outside agitators are threatening immediate and revolutionary changes in our public-school systems. If done, this is certain to destroy the system of public education in some of the States.

With the gravest concern for the explosive and dangerous condition created by this decision and inflamed by outside meddlers:

We reaffirm our reliance on the Constitution as the fundamental law of the land.

We decry the Supreme Court's encroachments on rights reserved to the States and to the people, contrary to established law, and to the Constitution.

We commend the motives of those States which have declared the intention to resist forced integration by any lawful means.

We appeal to the States and people who are not directly affected by these decisions to consider the constitutional principles involved against the time when they too, on issues vital to them, may be the victims of judicial encroachment.

Even though we constitute a minority in the present Congress, we have full faith that a majority of the American people believe in the dual system of government which has enabled us to achieve our greatness and will in time demand that the reserved rights of the States and of the people be made secure against judicial usurpation.

We pledge ourselves to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution and to prevent the use of force in its implementation. . . .

Source: 'Declaration of Constitutional Principles,' *Congressional Record*, 84th Congress, 2nd sess., vol. 102, pt. 4, 12 March 1956, p. 4460. Taken from: Bruce J. Dierenfield. The Civil Rights Movement. New York: Routledge, 2013. P. 141.

Appendix 9:

“I Have a Dream”

A high point of the civil rights movement came in 1963 when a mass march on Washington, D. C., to promote the civil rights bill was peaceful and attracted more people than anyone had expected. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke once again and delivered one of his most famous speeches. It was a galvanizing moment for the movement and the nation.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. . . .

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children. . . .

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back. . . .

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have *a dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of “interposition” and “nullification”—one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have *a dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; “and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.”

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray

together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day—this will be the day when all of God’s children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim’s pride,

From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous sloped of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholic, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

Source: Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream” delivered August 28, 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C., King Papers. Reprinted by arrangement with the Heirs to the Estate of Martin Luther King Jr., c/o Writers House as agent for the proprietor New York, NY. Copyright 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; copyright renewed 1991 Coretta Scott King. Taken from: Donald W. Whisenhunt, ed. Reading the Twentieth Century Documents in American History. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. PP. 203-206.

Appendix 10:

Key Provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

An Act

To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that this Act may be cited as the “Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

Title I—Voting Rights

Section 101 . . . (2) No person acting under color of law shall—

(A) In determining whether any individual is qualified under State law or laws to vote in any Federal election, apply any standard, practice, or procedure different from the standards, practices, or procedures applied under such law or laws to other individuals within the same county, parish, or similar political subdivision who have been found by State officials to be qualified to vote;

(B) deny the right of any individual to vote in any Federal election because of an error or omission on any record or paper relating to any application, registration, or other act requisite to voting, if such error or omission is not material in determining whether such individual is qualified under State law to vote in such election;

(C) employ any literacy test as a qualification for voting in any Federal election unless (i) such test is administered to each individual and is conducted wholly in writing, and (ii) a certified copy of the test and of the answers given by the individual is furnished to him within twenty-five days of the submission of his request made within the period of time during which

records and papers are required to be retained and preserved pursuant to title III of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 (42 U.S.C. 1974-74e; 74 Stat.88): Provided, however, That the Attorney General may enter into agreements with appropriate State or local authorities that preparation, conduct, and maintenance of such tests in accordance with the provisions of applicable State or local law, including such special provisions as are necessary in the preparation, conduct, and maintenance of such tests for persons who are blind or otherwise physically handicapped, meet the purposes of this subparagraph and constitute compliance therewith.

Title II—Injunctive Relief against Discrimination in Places of Public Accommodation

Section 201. (a) All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.

(b) Each of the following establishments which serves the public is a place of public accommodation within the meaning of this title if its operations affect commerce, or if discrimination or segregation by it is supported by Senate action:

- (1) any inn, hotel, motel, or other establishment which provides lodging to transient guests, other than an establishment located within a building which contains not more than five rooms for rent or hire and which is actually occupied by the proprietor of such establishment as his residence;
- (2) any restaurant, cafeteria, lunchroom, lunch counter, soda fountain, or other facility principally engaged in selling food for consumption on the premises, including , but not limited to, any such facility located on the premises of any retail establishment; or any gasoline station;
- (3) any motion picture house, theater, concert hall, sports arena, stadium or other place of exhibition or entertainment;
- (4) any establishment (A) (i) which is physically located within the premises of any establishment otherwise covered by this subsection, or (ii) within the premises of which is physically located any such covered establishment, and (B) which holds itself out as serving patrons of such covered establishment. . . .

(d) Discrimination or segregation by an establishment is supposed by State action within the meaning of this title if such discrimination or segregation

(1) is carried on under color of any law, statute, ordinance, or regulation; or

(2) is carried on under color of any custom or usage required or enforced by officials of the State or political subdivision thereof: or

(3) is required by action of the State or political sub-division thereof. . . .

Section 202. All persons shall be entitled to be free, at any establishment or place, from discrimination or segregation of any kind on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin, if such discrimination is or purports to be required by any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, rule, or order of a State or any agency or political subdivision thereof.

Section 203. No person shall (a) withhold, deny, or attempt to withhold or deny, or deprive or attempt to deprive, any person of any right or privilege secured by section 201 or 202, or (b) intimidate, threaten, or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person with the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by section 201 or 202, or (c) punish or attempt to punish any person for exercising or attempting to exercise any right or privilege secured by section 201 or 202.

Section 204. (a) Whenever any person has engaged or there are reasonable grounds to believe that any person is about to engage in any act or practice prohibited by section 203, a civil action for preventive relief, including an application for a permanent or temporary injunction, restraining order, or other order, may be instituted by the person aggrieved and, upon timely application, the court may, in its discretion, permit the Attorney General to intervene in such civil action if he certifies that the case is of general public importance. Upon application by the complainant and in such circumstances as the court may deem just, the court may appoint an attorney for such complainant and may authorize the commencement of the civil action without the payment of fees, costs, or security. . . .

Section 206. (a) Whenever the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that any person or group of persons is engaged in a pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of any of the rights secured by this title, and that the pattern or practice is of such a nature and is intended to deny the full exercise of the rights herein described, the Attorney

General may bring a civil action in the appropriate district court of the United States by filing with it a complaint

- (1) signed by him (or in his absence the Acting Attorney General),
- (2) setting forth facts pertaining to such pattern or practice, and
- (3) requesting such preventive relief, including an application for a permanent or temporary injunction, restraining order or other order against the person or persons responsible for such pattern or practice, as he deems necessary to insure the full enjoyment of the rights herein described

Title III—Desegregation of Public Facilities

Section 301. (a) Whenever the Attorney General receives a complaint in writing signed by an individual to the effect that he is being deprived of or threatened with the loss of his right to the equal protection of the laws, on account of his race, color, religion, or national origin, by being denied equal utilization of any public facility which is owned, operated, or managed by or on behalf of any State or subdivision thereof, other than a public school or public college as defined in section 401 of title IV hereof, and the Attorney General believes the complaint is meritorious and certifies that the signer or signers of such complaint are unable, in his judgment, to initiate and maintain appropriate legal proceedings for relief and that the institution of an action will materially further the orderly progress of desegregation in public facilities, the Attorney General is authorized to institute for or in the name of the United States a civil action in any appropriate district court of the United States against such parties and for such relief as may be appropriate. And such court shall have and shall exercise jurisdiction of proceedings instituted pursuant to this section. The Attorney General may implead as defendants such additional parties as are or become necessary to the grant of effective relief hereunder. . . .

Title IV—Desegregation of Public Education

Section 401. As used in this title—. . . .

“Desegregation” means the assignment of students to public schools and within such schools without regard to their race, color, religion, or national origin, but “desegregation” shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance

Survey and Report of Educational Opportunities

Section 402. The Commissioner shall conduct a survey and make a report to the President and the Congress, within two years of the enactment of this title, concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States, its territories and possessions, and the District of Columbia. . . .

Title V—Commission on Civil Rights . . .

Duties of the Commission

Section 104. (a) The Commission shall—

- (1) investigate allegations in writing under oath or affirmation that certain citizens of the United States are being deprived of their right to vote and have that vote counted by reason of their color, race, religion, or national origin; which writing, under oath or affirmation, shall set forth the facts upon which such belief or beliefs are based:
- (2) study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion or national origin or in the administration of justice:
- (3) appraise the laws and policies of the Federal Government with respect to denials of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion or national origin or in the administration of justice;
- (4) serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to denials of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, or national origin, including but not limited to the fields of voting, education, housing, employment, the use of public facilities and transportation, or in the administration of justice;
- (5) investigate allegations, made in writing and under oath or affirmation, that citizens of the United States are unlawfully being accorded or denied the right to vote, or to have their votes properly counted, in any election of presidential electors, Members of the United States Senate, or of the House of Representatives, as a result of any patterns or practice of fraud or discrimination in the conduct of such election; . . .

Title VI—Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

Section 601. No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Section 602. Each Federal department and agency which is empowered to extend Federal financial assistance to any program or activity, by way of grant, loan, or contract other than a contract of insurance or guaranty, is authorized and directed to effectuate the provisions of section 601 with respect to such program or activity by issuing rules, regulations, or orders of general applicability which shall be consistent with achievement of the objectives of the statute authorizing the financial assistance in connection with which the action is taken. No such rule, regulation, or order shall become effective unless and until approved by the President. Compliance with any requirement adopted pursuant to this section may be effected

(1) by the termination of or refusal to grant or to continue assistance under such program or activity to any recipient as to whom there has been an express finding on the record, after opportunity for hearing, of a failure to comply with such requirement, but such termination or refusal shall be limited to the particular political entity, or part thereof, or other recipient as to whom such a finding has been made and, shall be limited in its effect to the particular program, or part thereof, in which such non-compliance has been so found, or

(2) by any other means authorized by law:

Provided, however, that no such action shall be taken until the department or agency concerned has advised the appropriate person or persons of the failure to comply with the requirement and has determined that compliance cannot be secured by voluntary means. In the case of any action termination, or refusing to grant or continue, assistance because of failure to comply with a requirement imposed pursuant to this section, the head of the federal department or agency shall file with the committees of the House and Senate having legislative jurisdiction over the program or activity involved a full written report of the circumstances and the grounds for such action. No such action shall become effective until thirty days have elapsed after the filing of such report. . . .

Title VII—Equal Employment Opportunity . . .

Discrimination Because of race, Color, Religion, Sex, or National Origin

Section 703. (a) it shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer—

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

(b) it shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer for employment, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of his race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or to classify or refer for employment any individual on the basis of his race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

(c) it shall be an unlawful employment practice for a labor organization—

(1) to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of his race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify its membership, or to classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities, or would limit such employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee or as an applicant for employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

(3) to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of this section.

(d) It shall be an unlawful employment practice for any employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining, including on-the-job training programs to discriminate against any individual

because of his race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in admission to, or employment in, any program established to provide apprenticeship or other training. . . .

Other Unlawful Employment Practices

Section 704. (a). It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to discriminate against any of his employees or applicants for employment, for an employment agency to discriminate against any individual, or for a labor organization to discriminate against any member thereof or applicant for membership, because he has opposed any practice made an unlawful employment practice by this title, or because he has made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this title.

(b) It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer, labor organization, or employment agency to print or publish or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement relating to employment by such an employer or membership in or any classification or referral for employment by such a labor organization, or relating to any classification or referral for employment by such an employment agency, indicating any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination, based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, except that such a notice or advertisement may indicate a preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on religion, sex, or national origin when religion, sex, or national origin is a bona fide occupational qualification for employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Section 705. (a). There is hereby created a commission to be known as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which shall be composed of five members, not more than three of whom shall be members of the same political party, who shall be appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. One of the original members shall be appointed for a term of one year, one for a term of two years, one for a term of three years, one for a term of four years, and one for a term of five years, beginning from the date of enactment of this title, but their successors shall be appointed for terms of five years each, except that any individual chosen to fill a vacancy shall be appointed only for the unexpired term of the member whom he shall succeed. The President shall designate one member to serve as Chairman of the Commission, and one member to serve as Vice Chairman. The Chairman shall be responsible on behalf of the Commission for the administrative operations

of the Commission, and shall appoint, in accordance with the civil service laws, such officers, agents, attorneys, and employees as it deems necessary to assist it in the performance of its functions and to fix their compensation in accordance with Classification Act of 1949, as amended. . . .

Title VIII—Registration and Voting Statistics

Section 801. The Secretary of Commerce shall promptly conduct a survey to compile registration and voting statistics in such geographic areas as may be recommended by the Commission on Civil Rights.

Such a survey and compilation shall, to the extent recommended by the Commission on Civil Rights, only include a count of persons of voting age by race, color, and national origin, and determination of the extent to which such persons are registered to vote, and have voted in any statewide primary or general election in which the Members of the United States House of Representatives are nominated or elected, since January 1, 1960. Such information shall also be collected and compiled in connection with the Nineteenth Decennial Census, and at such other times as the Congress may prescribe. The provisions of section 9 and chapter 7 of title 13, United States Code, shall apply to any survey, collection, or compilation of registration and voting statistics carried out under this title: Provided, however, that no person shall be compelled to disclose his race, color, national origin, or questioned about his political party affiliation, how he voted, or the reasons therefore, nor shall any penalty be imposed for his failure or refusal to make such disclosure. Every person interrogated orally, by written survey or questionnaire or by any other means with respect to such information shall be fully advised with respect to his right to fail or refuse to furnish such information.

Lyndon B. Johnson July 2, 1964.

Source: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. The African American Odyssey. Fifth Edition. Combined Volume. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011. PP. A-14-A-18.

Appendix 11:

Key Provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

An Act

To enforce the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act shall be known as the “Voting Rights Act of 1965.”

Section 2. No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.

Section 3. (a) Whenever the Attorney General institutes a proceeding under any statute to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment in any State or political subdivision the court shall authorize the appointment of Federal examiners by the United States Civil Service Commission in accordance with section 6 to serve for such period of time and for such political sub-divisions as the court shall determine is appropriate to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment

(1) as part of any interlocutory order if the court determines that the appointment of such examiners is necessary to enforce such guarantees or (2) as part of any final judgment if the court finds that violations of the fifteenth amendment justifying equitable relief have occurred in such State or subdivision: Provided, That the court need not authorize the appointment of examiners if any incidents of denial or abridgement of the right to vote on account of race or color (1) have been few in number and have been promptly and effectively corrected by State or local action, (2) the continuing effect of such incidents has been eliminated, and (3) there is no reasonable probability of their recurrence in the future.

(b) If in a proceeding instituted by the Attorney General under any statute to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment in any State or political subdivision the court finds that a test or device has been used for the purpose or with the effect of denying or abridging

the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color, it shall suspend the use of tests and devices in such State or political subdivisions as the court shall determine is appropriate and for such period as it deems necessary. . . .

Section 4. (a) To assure that the right of citizens of the United States to vote is not denied or abridged on account of race or color, no citizen shall be denied the right to vote in any Federal, State, or local election because of his failure to comply with any test or device in any State with respect to which the determinations have been made under subsection (b). . . .

(b) The provisions of subsequent subsection (a) shall apply in any State or in any political subdivision of a state which (1) the Attorney General determines maintained on November 1, 1964, any test or device, and with respect to which (2) the Director of the Census determines that less than 50 per centum of the persons of voting age residing therein were registered on November 1, 1964, or that less than 50 per centum of such persons voted in the presidential election of November 1964. . . .

(c) The phrase “test or device” shall mean any requirement that a person as a prerequisite for voting or registration of voting (1) demonstrate the ability to read, write, understand, or interpret any matter, (2) demonstrate any educational achievement or his knowledge of any particular subject, (3) possess good moral character, or (4) prove his qualifications by the voucher of registered voters or members of any other class. . . .

Section 6. Whenever (a) a court has authorized the appointment of examiners pursuant to the provisions of section 3 (a) unless a declaratory judgment has been rendered under section 4 (a), the Attorney General certifies with respect to any political subdivision named in, or included within the scope of, determinations made under section 4 (b) that (1) he has received complaints in writing from twenty or more residents of such political subdivision alleging that they have been denied the right to vote under color of law on account of race or color, and that he believes such complaints to be meritorious, or (2) that in his judgment (considering, among other factors, whether the ratio of nonwhite persons to white persons registered to vote within such subdivision appears to him to be reasonably attributable to violations of the fifteenth amendment or whether substantial evidence exists that bona fide efforts are being made within such subdivision to comply with the fifteenth amendment), the appointment of examiners is otherwise necessary to enforce the guarantees of the fifteenth amendment, the Civil Service, Commission shall appoint as many examiners for such subdivision as it may deem appropriate to prepare and maintain lists of persons eligible to

vote I Federal, State, and local elections. . . . Examiners and hearing officers shall have the power to administer oaths. . . .

Lyndon B. Johnson August 6, 1965.

Source: Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. The African American Odyssey. Fifth Edition. Combined Volume. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011. PP. A-19-A-20.

Appendix 12:

Black Panthers' Founding Document, October 1966

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party as a militant community-based organization to deal with the problems in northern ghettos.

We had seen Watts rise up the previous year. We had seen how the police attacked the Watts community after causing the trouble in the first place. We had seen Martin Luther King come to Watts in an effort to calm the people, and we had seen his philosophy of nonviolence rejected. Black people had been taught nonviolence; it was deep in us. What good, however, was nonviolence when police were determined to rule by force? . . . We had seen all this, and we recognized that the rising consciousness of Black people was almost at the point of explosion. . . .

Out of this need sprang the Black Panther Party. Bobby [Seale] and I finally had no choice but to form an organization that would involve the lower-class brothers. . . .

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
...
2. We want full employment for our people. . . .
3. We want an end to the robbery by the capitalists of our Black Community. . . .
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings. . . .
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American Society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in present-day society. . . .
6. We want all Black all Black men to be exempt from military service. . . .
7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of Black people.
...
8. We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails. . . .
9. We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States. . . .

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the Black colony in which only Black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of Black people as to their national destiny.

Source: *Black Panther*, 5 July 1969. Taken from: Bruce J. Dierenfield. The Civil Rights Movement. New York: Routledge, 2013. PP. 155-156.

Appendix 13:

Kerner Commission Report

In the wake of riots that continued after the Watts outbreak, President Lyndon Johnson formed a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in July 1967. The commission's 1968 report, informally known as the Kerner Report, concluded that the nation was "moving toward societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal." Unless conditions were remedied, the commission warned, the country faced a "system of 'apartheid'" in its major cities. The report delivered an indictment of "white society" for isolating and neglecting African Americans and urged legislation to promote racial integration and to enrich slums—primarily through the creation of jobs, job training programs, and decent housing. President Johnson, however, rejected the recommendations. In April 1968, one month after the release of the Kerner Report, rioting broke out in more than 100 cities following the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The summer of 1967 again brought racial disorders to American cities, and with them shock, fear and bewilderment to the nation.

The worst came during a two-week period in July, first in Newark and then in Detroit. Each set off a chain reaction in neighboring communities.

On July 28, 1967, the President of the United States established this Commission and directed us to answer three basic questions:

What happened? Why did it happen? What can be done to prevent it from happening again?

To respond to these questions, we have undertaken a broad range of studies and investigations. We have visited the riot cities; we have heard many witnesses; we have sought the counsel of experts across the country.

This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.

Reaction to last summer's disorders has quickened the movement and deepened the division. Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American.

This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible. Our principal task is to define that choice and to press for national resolution.

To pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values.

The alternative is not blind repression or capitulation to lawlessness. It is the realization of common opportunities for all within a single society.

This alternative will require a commitment to national action—compassionate, massive and sustained, backed by the resources of the most powerful and the richest nation on this earth. From every American it will require new attitudes, new understandings, and, above all, new will.

The vital needs of the nation must be met; hard choices must be made, and, if necessary, new taxes enacted.

Violence cannot build a better society. Disruption and disorder nourish repression, not justice. They strike at the freedom of every citizen. The community cannot—it will not—tolerate coercion and mob rule.

Violence and destruction must be ended—in the streets of the ghetto and in the lives of people.

Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans.

What white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.

It is time to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation. It is time to adopt strategies for action that will produce quick and visible progress. It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens—urban and rural, white and black, Spanish-surname, American Indian, and every minority group.

Our recommendations embrace three basic principles:

To mount programs on a scale equal to the dimension of the problems;

To aim these programs for high impact in the immediate future in order to close the gap between promise and performance;

To undertake new initiatives and experiments that can change the system of failure and frustration that now dominates the ghetto and weakens our society.

These programs will require unprecedented levels of funding and performance, but they neither probe deeper nor demand more than the problems which called them forth. There can be no higher priority for national action and no higher claim on the nation's conscience. . .

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Source: United States. Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 1-2. Taken from: Donald W. Whisenhunt, ed. Reading the Twentieth Century Documents in American History. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. PP. 221-223.

Appendix 14:

Fair Housing Act (1968)

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, otherwise known as the Fair Housing Act, outlaws discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin in the financing, sale, and rental of housing. Congress has since expanded the protections and enforcement of this law with respect to sex, disability, and family status through subsequent legislation.

An act to prescribe penalties for certain acts of violence or intimidation, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America Congress assembled, . . .

Title VIII—Fair Housing

POLICY

SEC. 801. It is the policy of the United States to provide, within constitutional limitations, for fair housing throughout the United States. . . .

DISCRIMINATION IN THE SALE OR RENTAL OF HOUSING

SEC. 804. As made applicable by section 803 of this title and except as exempted by sections 803 (b) and 807 of this title, it shall be unlawful—

(a) To refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, or national origin.

(b) To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of race, color, religion, or national origin.

(c) To make, print, or publish, or cause to be made, printed, or published any notice, statement, or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling that

indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination.

(d) To represent to any person because of race, color, religion, or national origin that any dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when such dwelling is in fact so available.

(e) For profit, to induce or attempt to induce any person to sell or rent any dwelling by representations regarding the entry or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of a particular race, color, religion, or national origin.

DISCRIMINATION IN THE FINANCING OF HOUSING

SEC. 805. After December 31, 1968, it shall be unlawful for any bank, building and loan association, insurance company or other corporation, association, firm or enterprise whose business consists in whole or in part in the making of commercial real estate loans, to deny a loan or other financial assistance to a person applying therefore the purpose of purchasing, constructing, improving, repairing, or maintaining a dwelling, or to discriminate against him in the fixing of the amount, interest rate, duration, or other terms and conditions of such loan or other financial assistance, because of the race, color, religion, or national origin of such person or of any person associated with him in connection with such loan or other financial assistance. . . .

DISCRIMINATION IN PROVISION OF BROKERAGE SERVICES

SEC. 806. After December 31, 1968, it shall be unlawful to deny any person access to or membership or participation in any multiple-listing service, real estate brokers' organization or other service, organization, or facility relating to the business of selling or renting dwellings, or to discriminate against him in the terms or conditions of such access, membership, or participation, on account of race, color, religion, or national origin. . . .

INTERFERENCE, COERCION, OR INTIMIDATION

SEC 817. It shall be unlawful to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person in the exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of his having exercised or enjoyed, or on account of his having aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of, any right

granted or protected by section 803, 804, 805, or 806. This section may be enforced by appropriate civil action.

Source: Matthew C. Whitaker. Peace Be Still: Modern Black America from World War II to Barack Obama. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. PP. 321-322.

Appendix 15:

“A More Perfect Union”

Barack Obama’s speech on race in America, Constitution Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 18, 2008.

“We the people, in order to form a more perfect union...” Two hundred twenty-one years ago, in a hall that still stands across the street, a group of men gathered and, with these simple words, launched America’s improbable experiment in democracy. Farmers and scholars, statesmen and patriots who had traveled across an ocean to escape tyranny and persecution finally made real their declaration of independence at a Philadelphia convention that lasted through the spring of 1787. The document they produced was eventually signed but ultimately unfinished. It was stained by this nation’s original sin of slavery, a question that divided the colonies and brought the convention to a stalemate until the founders chose to allow the slave trade to continue for at least twenty more years, and to leave any final resolution to future generations.

Of course, the answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution—a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty and justice and a union that could be and should be perfected over time. And yet words on a parchment would not be enough to deliver slaves from bondage, or provide men and women of every color and creed their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States. What would be needed were Americans in successive generations who were willing to do their part—through protests and struggles, on the streets and in the courts, through a civil war and civil disobedience, and always at great risk—to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time.

This was one of the tasks we set forth at the beginning of this presidential campaign—to continue the long march of those who came before us, a march for a more just, more equal, more free, more caring, and more prosperous America. I chose to run for president at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together, unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may

have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction—toward a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

This belief comes from my unyielding faith in the decency and generosity of the American people. But it also comes from my own story. I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a white grandfather who survived a Depression to serve in Patton's Army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas. I've gone to some of the best schools in America and lived in one of the World's poorest nations. I am married to a black American who carries within her the blood of slaves and slave owners—an inheritance we pass on to our two precious daughters. I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

It's a story that hasn't made me the most conventional of candidates. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts—that out of many, we are truly one. Throughout the first year of this campaign, against all predictions to the contrary, we saw how hungry the American people were for this message of unity. Despite the temptation to view my candidacy through a purely racial lens, we won commanding victories in states with some of the whitest populations in the country. In South Carolina, where the Confederate flag still flies, we built a powerful coalition of African Americans and white Americans. This is not to say that race has not been an issue in this campaign. At various stages in the campaign, some commentators have deemed me either “too black” or “not black enough.” We saw racial tensions bubble to the surface during the week before the South Carolina primary. The press has scoured every single exit poll for the latest evidence of racial polarization, not just in terms of white and black, but black and brown as well. And yet, it has only been in the last couple of weeks that the discussion of race in this campaign has taken a particularly divisive turn.

On one end of the spectrum, we've heard the implication that my candidacy is somehow an exercise in affirmative action; that it's based solely on the desire of wide-eyed liberals to purchase racial reconciliation on the cheap. On the other end, we've heard my former pastor, Jeremiah Wright, use incendiary language to express views that have the

potential not only to widen the racial divide, but views that denigrate both the greatness and goodness of our nation, and that rightly offend white and black alike. I have condemned, in unequivocal terms, the statements of Reverend Wright that have caused such controversy and, in some cases, pain. For some, nagging questions remain. Did I know him to be an occasionally fierce critic of American domestic and foreign policy? Of course. Did I ever hear him make remarks that could be considered controversial while I sat in the church? Yes, Did I strongly disagree with many of his political views? Absolutely—just as I’m sure many of you have heard remarks from your pastors, priests, or rabbis with which you strongly disagreed.

But the remarks that have caused this recent firestorm weren’t simply controversial. They weren’t simply a religious leader’s efforts to speak out against perceived injustice. Instead, they expressed a profoundly distorted view of this country—a view that sees white racism as endemic, and that elevates what is wrong with America above all that we know is right with America; a view that sees the conflicts in the Middle East as rooted primarily in the actions of stalwart allies like Israel, instead of emanating from the perverse and hateful ideologies of radical Islam. As such, Reverend Wright’s comments were not only wrong but divisive, divisive at a time when we need unity; racially charged at a time when we need to come together to solve a set of monumental problems—two wars, a terrorist threat, a falling economy, a chronic health care crisis and potentially devastating climate change—problems that are neither black or white or Latino or Asian, but rather problems that confront us all.

Given my background, my politics, and my professed values and ideals, there will no doubt be those for whom my statements of condemnation are not enough. Why associate myself with Reverend Wright in the first place, they may ask? Why not join another church? And I confess that if all that I knew of Reverend Wright were the snippets of those sermons that have run in an endless loop on the television sets and YouTube, or if Trinity United Church of Christ conformed to the caricatures being peddled by some commentators, there is no doubt that would react in much the same way. But the truth is, that isn’t all that I know of the man. The man I met more than twenty years ago is a man who helped introduce me to my Christian faith, a man who spoke to me about our obligations to love one another, to care for the sick and lift up the poor. He is a man who served his country as United States Marine; who has studied and lectured at some of the finest universities and seminaries in the country, and who for over thirty years has led a church that serves the community by doing God’s work here on Earth—by housing the homeless, ministering to the needy, providing day care

services and scholarships and prison ministries, and reaching out to those suffering from HIV/AIDS.

In my first book, *Dreams From My Father*, I described the experience of my first service at Trinity: “People began to shout, to rise from their seats and clap and cry out, a forceful wind carrying the reverend’s voice up into the rafters. And in that single note—hope!—I heard something else: At the foot of that cross, inside the thousands of churches across the city, I imagined the stories of ordinary black people merging with the stories of David and Goliath, Moses and Pharaoh, the Christians in the lion’s den, Ezekiel’s field of dry bones. Those stories—of survival and freedom and hope—became our stories, my story. The blood that spilled was our blood, the tears our tears, until this black church, on this bright day, seemed once more a vessel carrying the story of a people into future generations and into a larger world. Our trials and triumphs became at once unique and universal, black and more than black. In chronicling our journey, the stories and songs gave us a meaning to reclaim memories that we didn’t need to feel shame about—memories that all people might study and cherish, and with which we could start to rebuild.”

That has been my experience at Trinity. Like other predominantly black churches across the country, Trinity embodies the black community in its entirety—the doctor and the welfare mom, the model student and the former gang-banger. Like other black churches, Trinity’s services are full of raucous laughter and sometimes bawdy humor. They are full of dancing and clapping and screaming and shouting that may seem jarring to the untrained ear. The church contains in full the kindness and cruelty, the fierce intelligence and the shocking ignorance, the struggles and successes, the love and, yes, the bitterness and biases that make up the black experience in America. And this helps explain, perhaps, my relationship with Reverend Wright. As imperfect as he may be, he has been like family to me. He strengthened my faith, officiated my wedding, and baptized my children. Not once in my conversations with him have I heard him talk about any ethnic group in derogatory terms, or treat whites with whom he interacted with anything but courtesy and respect. He contains within him the contradictions—the good and the bad—of the community that he has served diligently for so many years.

I can no more disown him than I can disown the black community. I can no more disown him than I can disown my white grandmother—a woman who helped raise me, a woman who sacrificed again and again for me, a woman who loves me as much as she loves

anything in this world, but a woman who once confessed her fear of black men who passed her by on the street, and who on more than one occasion has uttered racial or ethnic stereotypes that made me cringe. These people are a part of me. And they are part of America, this country that I love. Some will see this as an attempt to justify or excuse comments that are simply inexcusable. I can assure you it is not. I suppose the politically safe thing to do would be to move on from this episode and just hope that it fades into the woodwork. We can dismiss Reverend Wright as a crank or a demagogue, just as some have dismissed Geraldine Ferraro, in the aftermath of her recent statements, as harboring some-seated bias.

But race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore right now. We would be making the same mistake that Reverend Wright made in his offending sermons about America—to simplify and stereotype and amplify the negative to the point that it distorts reality. The fact is that the comments that have been made and the issues that have surfaced over the last few weeks reflects the complexities of race in this country that we’ve never really worked through—a part of our union that we have not yet made perfect. And if we walk away now, if we simply retreat into our respective corners, we will never be able to come together and solve challenges like health care or education or the need to find good jobs for every American. Understanding this reality requires a reminder of how we arrived at this point. As William Faulkner once wrote, “The past isn’t dead and buried. In fact, it isn’t even past.” We do not need to recite here the history of racial injustice in this country. But we do need to remind ourselves that so many of the disparities that exist between the African American community and the larger American community today can be traced directly to inequalities passed on from an earlier generation that suffered under the brutal legacy of slavery and Jim Crow.

Segregated schools were and are inferior schools; we still haven’t fixed them, fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*. And the inferior education they provide, then and now, helps explain the pervasive achievement gap between today’s black and white students. Legalized discrimination—where blacks were prevented, often through violence, from owning property, or loans were not granted to African American business owners, or black homeowners could not access FHA mortgages, or blacks were excluded from unions or the police force or the fire department—meant that black families could not amass any meaningful wealth to bequeath to future generations. That history helps explain the wealth and income gap between blacks and whites, and the concentrated pockets of poverty that persist in so many of today’s urban and rural communities.

A lack of economic opportunity among black men and the shame and frustration that came from not being able to provide for one's family contributed to the erosion of black families—a problem that welfare policies for many years may have worsened. And the lack of basic services in so many urban black neighborhoods—parks for kids to play in, police walking the beat, regular garbage pickup, building code enforcement—all helped create a cycle of violence, blight and neglect that continues to haunt us. This is the reality in which Reverend Wright and other African Americans of his generation grew up. They came of age in the late '50s and early '60s, a time when segregation was still the law of the land and opportunity was systematically constricted. What's remarkable is not how many failed in the face of discrimination, but how many men and women overcame the odds; how many were able to make a way out of no way, for those like me who would come after them.

For all those who scratched and clawed their way to get a piece of the American Dream, there were many who didn't make it—those who were ultimately defeated, in one way or another, by discrimination. That legacy of defeat was passed on to future generations—those young men and, increasingly, young women who we see standing on street corners or languishing in our prisons, without hope or prospects for the future. Even for those blacks who did make it, questions of race and racism continue to define their worldview in fundamental ways. For the men and women of Reverend Wright's generations, the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor has the anger and the bitterness of those years. That anger may not get expressed in public, in front of white coworkers or white friends. But it does find voice in the barbershop or the beauty shop or around the kitchen table. At times, that anger is exploited by politicians, to gin up votes along racial lines, or to make up for a politician's own failings.

And occasionally it finds voice in the church on Sunday morning, in the pulpit and in the pews. The fact that so many people are surprised to hear that anger in some of Reverend Wright's sermons simply reminds us of the old truism that the most segregated hour of American life occurs on Sunday morning. That anger is not always productive; indeed, all too often it distracts attention from solving real problems; it keeps us from squarely facing our own complicity within the African American community in our condition, and prevents the African American community from forging the alliances it needs to bring about real change. But the anger is real; it is powerful. And to simply wish it away, to condemn it without understanding its roots, only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between the races.

In fact, a similar anger exists within segments of the white community. Most working- and middle-class white Americans don't feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race. Their experience is the immigrant experience—as far as they're concerned, no one handed them anything. They built it from scratch. They've worked hard all their lives, many times only to see their jobs shipped overseas or their pensions dumped after a lifetime of labor. They are anxious about their futures, and they feel their dreams slipping away. And in an era of stagnant wages and global competition, opportunity comes to be seen as a zero-sum game, in which your dreams come at my expense. So when they are told to bus their children to school across town; when they hear an African American is getting an advantage in landing a good job or a spot in a good college because of an injustice that they themselves never committed: when they're told that their fears about crime in urban neighborhoods are somehow prejudiced, resentment builds over time.

Like the anger within the black community, these resentments aren't always expressed in polite company. But they have helped shape the political landscape for at least a generation. Anger over welfare and affirmative action helped forge the Reagan Coalition. Politicians routinely exploited fears of crime for their own electoral ends. Talk show hosts and conservative commentators built entire careers unmasking bogus claims of racism while dismissing legitimate discussions of racial injustice and inequality as mere political correctness or reverse racism.

Just as black anger often proved counterproductive, so have these white resentments distracted attention from the real culprits of the middle class squeeze—a corporate culture rife with inside dealing, questionable accounting practices and short-term greed; a Washington dominated by lobbyists and special interests; economic policies that favor the few over the many. And yet, to wish away the resentments of white Americans, to label them as misguided or even racist, without recognizing they are grounded in legitimate concerns—this too widens the racial divide and blocks the path to understanding. This is where we are right now. It's a racial stalemate we've been stuck in for years. Contrary to the claims of some of my critics, black and white, I have never been so naïve as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy—particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own.

But I have asserted a firm conviction—a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people—that, working together, we can move beyond some of our old

racial wounds, and in fact we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union. For the African American community, that path means embracing the burdens of our past without becoming victims of our past. It means continuing to insist on a full measure of justice in every aspect of American life. But it also means binding our particular grievances—for better health care and better schools and better jobs—to the larger aspirations of all Americans: the white woman struggling to break the glass ceiling, the white man who has been laid off, the immigrant trying to feed his family. And it means taking full responsibility for our own lives—by demanding more from our fathers, and spending more time with our children, and reading to them, and teaching them that while they may face challenges and discrimination in their own lives, they must never succumb to despair or cynicism; they must always believe that they can write their own destiny. Ironically, this quintessentially American—and yes, conservative—notion of self-help found frequent expression in Reverend Wright’s sermons. But what my former pastor too often failed to understand is that embarking on a program of self-help also requires a belief that society can change.

The profound mistake of Reverend Wright’s sermons is not that he spoke about racism in our society. It’s that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress had been made; as if this country—a country that has made it possible for one of his own members to run for the highest office in the land and build a coalition of white and black, Latino and Asian, rich and poor, young and old—is still irrevocably bound to a tragic past. But what we know—what we have seen—is that America can change. That is the true genius of this nation. What we have already achieved gives us hope—the audacity to hope—for what we can and must achieve tomorrow.

In the white community, the path to a more perfect union means acknowledging that what ails the African American community does not just exist in the minds of black people; that the legacy of discrimination—and current incidents of discrimination, while less overt than in the past—are real and must be addressed, not just with words, but with deeds, by investing in our schools and our communities; by enforcing our civil rights laws and ensuring fairness in our criminal justice system; by providing this generation with ladders of opportunity that were unavailable for previous generations. It requires all Americans to realize that your dreams do not have to come at the expense of my dreams; that investing in the health, welfare and education of black and brown and white children will ultimately help all of America prosper.

In the end, then, what is called for is nothing more and nothing less than what all the world's great religious demand—that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Let us be our brother's keeper, scripture tells us. Let us be our sister's keeper. Let us find that common stake we all have in one another, and let our politics reflect that spirit as well. For we have a choice in this country. We can accept a politics that breeds division and conflict and cynicism. We can tackle race only as spectacle—as we did in the O.J. trial—or in the wake of tragedy—as we did in the aftermath of Katrina—or as fodder for the nightly news. We can play Reverend Wright's sermons on every channel, every day and talk about them from now until the election, and make the only question in this campaign whether or not the American people think that I somehow believe or sympathize with his most offensive words. We can pounce on some gaffe by a Hillary supporter as evidence that she's playing the race, card, or we can speculate on whether white men will all flock to John McCain in the general election regardless of his policies.

We can do that. But if we do, I can tell you that in the next election, we'll be talking about some other distraction. And then another one. And then another one. And nothing will change. That is one option. Or, at this moment, in this election, we can come together and say, "Not this time." This time, we want to talk about the crumbling schools that are stealing the future of black children and white children and Asian children and Hispanic children and Native American children. This time, we want to reject the cynicism that tells us that these kids can't learn; that those kids who don't look like us are somebody else's problem. The children of America are not those kids, they our kids, and we will not let them fall behind in a twenty-first-century economy. Not this time. This time we want to talk about how the lines in the emergency room are filled with whites and blacks and Hispanics who do not have health care, who don't have the power on their own to overcome the special interests in Washington, but who can take them on if we do it together.

This time, we want to talk about the shuttered mills that once provided a decent life for men and women of every race, and the homes for sale that once belonged to Americans from every religion, every region, every walk of life. This time, we want to talk about the fact that the real problem is not that someone who doesn't look like you might take your job; it's that the corporation you work for will ship it overseas for nothing more than a profit. This time we want to talk about the men and women of every color and creed who serve together and fight together and bleed together under the same proud flag. We want to talk about how to bring them home from a war that should have never been authorized and should have never been

waged. And we want to talk about how we'll show our patriotism by caring for them and their families, and giving them the benefits that they earned. I would not be running for President if I didn't believe with all my heart that this is what the vast majority of Americans want for this country. This union may never be perfect, but generation after generation has shown that it can always be perfect. And today, whenever I find myself feeling doubtful or cynical about this possibility, what gives me the most hope is the next generation—the young people whose attitudes and beliefs and openness to change have already made history in this election.

There is one story in particular that I'd like to leave you with today—a story I told when I had the great honor of speaking on Dr. King's birthday at his home church, Ebenezer Baptist, in Atlanta. There is a young, twenty-three-year-old white woman named Ashley Baia who organized for our campaign in Florence, South Carolina. She had been working to organize a mostly African American community since the beginning of this campaign, and one day she was at a roundtable discussion where everyone went around telling their story and why they were there. And Ashley said that when she was nine years old, her mother got cancer. And because she had to miss days of work, she was let go and lost her health care. They had to file for bankruptcy, and that's when Ashley decided that she had to do something to help her mom. She knew that food was one of their most expensive costs, and so Ashley convinced her mother that what she really liked and really wanted to eat more than anything else was mustard and relish sandwiches—because that was the cheapest way to eat. That's the mind of a nine-year-old.

She did this for a year until her mom got better. So she told everyone at the roundtable that the reason she joined our campaign was so that she could help the millions of other children in the country who want and need to help their parents, too. Now, Ashley might have made a different choice. Perhaps somebody told her along the way that the source of her mother's problems were blacks who were on welfare and too lazy to work, or Hispanics who were coming into the country illegally. But she didn't. She sought out allies in her fight against injustice. Anyway, Ashley finishes her story and then goes around the room and asks everyone else why they're supporting the campaign. They all have different stories and different reasons. Many bring up a specific issue. And finally they come to this elderly black man who's been sitting there quietly the entire time. And Ashley asks him why he's there. And he does not bring up a specific issue. He does not say that he was there because of Barack Obama. He simply says to everyone in the room, "I am here because of Ashley."

“I’m here because of Ashley.” By itself, that single moment of recognition between that young white girl and that old black man is not enough. It is not enough to give health care to the sick, or jobs to the jobless, or education to our children. But it is where we start. It is where our union grows stronger. And as so many generations have come to realize over the course of the 221 years since a band of patriots signed that document right here in Philadelphia, that is where the perfection begins.

Source: Matthew C. Whitaker. Peace Be Still: Modern Black America from World War II to Barack Obama. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. PP. 323-332.