

## **African Americans throughout history**

### **Introduction**

Right from the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, The African American population had formed a significant part of the whole American population. Although their numbers were increasing, they still continued being treated like slaves and being undermined by the white population. However, though they were treated in such a bad way, they still did manage to change America by the amount of work they were doing and therefore one cannot discuss the history of the United States and fail to mention the role played by the African American population.

In this paper I am going to look at the history of the African Americans right from the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the present day in America where we even have an African American President. By analyzing the main events that caused the African Americans to change their approach of things, you will find out that they have come a long way to be recognized and treated equally as any other member of the United States. As you will see in this paper, they freedom was not earned on a silver plate but rather by fighting for it by any means available to them.

### **The main thesis**

My main point will be to prove that indeed the African Americans were right in fighting for their rights in the ways that they used by outlining that had they used other ways, they would have been given those rights as the White were very reluctant in giving them the same rights they were enjoying.

### **Harlem Renaissance**

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Harlem was an event that started to take course during the end of the First World War up to around 1937 right before the Second World War. It was considered and is still considered to date as the movement that played the biggest role in influencing the change in African American culture where they started embracing the practice of creative arts. This movement was instrumental in laying a blue sprint for African Americans to start expressing themselves and the cultures of their people by writing literature works which were greatly acknowledged by their fellow African American citizens. This movement was first started to be noticed in Harlem District in New York City but soon after its commencement it started receiving more and more interests from the community of the learned African Americans. (Hutchinson George, 2013)

This movement was mainly caused by the massive migrations of the African American community from the Southern cities and into the northern cities where most of these people migrating were the soldiers returning from the world war. The migration was caused mainly due to the fact the north was more blessed in terms of many available job opportunities, better housing schemes and even improved security in these northern towns. However, as they continued to migrate to the northern cities, the White community started to feel the competition of resources and started fearing for the loss of the resources they were used to. Due to this fear, they in turn started planning attacks on the African Americans who were migrated in those cities so as to keep them away and keep the best resources only to themselves.

However this was a different time where there was the concept of a new Negro who would hit back if he was hit. (Hartt, R. L. (1921). Due to the development of this ideology, there were emergence of help organizations founded by the Blacks themselves to look into their affairs and help anyone who needed their help. Hartt continued in his articles saying after the emergence of

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such organizations, there was an increased urge by the Blacks to aggressively defend the African American community from the White attacks on them especially in the north.

After people saw the seriousness of the Blacks, some of the learned African Americans started writing magazines and even forming civil rights movements such as the Negro World a newspaper written by Marcus Garvey. Due to these and other developments, the African American community started feeling and having pride in their traditions and customs and would therefore not let anyone try to mess up with their customs by either attacking them or by undermining them in any way. Now every African American intellect was critically observing the progress of the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem was now acting as the capital for this movement where all the Black intellectuals who were interested with this movement (all the Blacks) met and even some started settling there.

By using this movement, the Blacks were therefore in the right track in pursuing the abolition of racial discrimination and embracing the policy of equal treatment to all American citizens.

### **Black power movement**

The black people power movement was one formed by the African American intellectuals who wanted to see their people deliberated and be treated equally just like the other United States citizens. This movement was mainly active from 1968 to 1980. This movement came to be a movement after during when the Blacks were staging a march in Mississippi where they were protesting against the Voting Rights Act of 1965 when Stokely Carmichael, a student at the time, started shouting the slogan of black power. This movement was mainly being followed up by the students who had the support of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

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This movement though started with a non-violent approach to the issue because of Martin Luther King's perspective, it soon started to use violence in making its demands known. This happened after the young Blacks started rejecting that approach citing that the non-violent approach was not effective. Under this movement, they African Americans were fighting for their civil and voting rights which they felt were not been handled as equally as those for the Whites. In the civil rights war, the Blacks wanted the African American women who were working given the same payments as all the others workers in the employment industry since these African Americans working women were the at the bottom of the pay list when compared to all the other workers. (1962)

At the center and the backbone of this movement was the Black Panther party which was founded Huey P. Newton among others. Though Newton was convicted for killing a policeman, they still influenced other Blacks to join in the movement and write inspiration books or even articles.

During these movement, the African Americans were mainly concentrating with the civil and voting rights of their communities unlike their predecessors who were fighting for their acceptance into the United States system by being treated equally like their Whites counterparts. Therefore the Blacks were in order to use the Black Power Movement in stopping the racial discriminations against them.

There were also other factors that led to the African Americans being treated as American citizens and just like the White enjoying the same rights as those that were being enjoyed by the other American citizens. These factors included the following:

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## **NAACP**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is considered to be the oldest civil rights organization having being formed in the year 1909. The main that this organization came to be of existence was so that it could fight for the equal treatment of all Americans and especially the African American since it was formed at a time when the Blacks were being treated so unfairly by the Whites. The main area it sort to champion was in the civil rights area. This was an encouraged organization since its leadership worked with both the Whites and the Blacks in trying to ensure that there was equality among all the citizens of the United States.

This organization was very much helpful in solving the inequality issues and therefore ensuring that everyone had equal civil and voting rights.

### **World War II integration.**

Since most of the soldiers sent to war were from the African American community, they were greatly exposed to other people from other countries. During this world war they were able to meet and mingle with other soldiers and during these exchange of words, they got to learn it was possible to defeat the Whites and that every human being deserved to be treated with respect and that all should be treated equally without being biased to anyone just because of their skin color. The African American soldiers being exposed to this experiences, they were able to acquire such skills like leadership, an important skill when you are trying convince people to fight for their rights. After the World War II, the soldiers came back all fired up and wanting to receive the same treatment as the Whites. The soldiers that were fortunate enough to come back from the war came and started holding conventions explaining to their fellow men that it was possible to

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defeat the White and in the long run get the same civil and voting rights as they did. Also after the war, there the formation of the United Nation which was a global organization championing for the equal treatment of all human beings. (Hill, R. 2011)

### **I have a dream speech**

I have a dream speech given by Martin Luther King in August 1963 was a big milestone in achieving equality among the Blacks. In his speech he addressed the importance of eradicating racism in the United States. He insists that even after slave trade ended one hundred years ago there is still racial discrimination all over the country. Martin Luther King in his speech urged the Blacks that it was time to rise from the dark and fight for their rights in their quest to end the racial injustices that were being experienced by the Blacks.

This speech served as a wakeup call for all the African Americans to start fighting for their deliberation so that they too would enjoy the benefits of being an American citizen. This speech in itself supports my argument that the Blacks fought for their deliberation and that they deserved to be treated just like any other American citizen.

### **Black Panthers**

There was a party formed to champion the interests of the Blacks and it was generally referred to as the Black Panther Party. Its leadership being of mainly students it was bound to be radical. It became so radical that even at some time it was referred to as the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States by the then FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover. This party encouraged more and more Black people to speak out about the injustices that they had to go through in their day to day activities for example in 1968, Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver wrote his autobiography in

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which he inspired many African American youths not to remain silent but rather speak out and fight for what they believed in. Another example was in 1970 when Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton wrote a book whose title was Black Power where they explained everything about the Black Panther Party and also explained the black power movement which they participated in.

By writing these, books they were able to influence a greater number of the blacks to fight for their rights and ensure that racial discrimination was over and done with. These party is therefore influential in supporting thesis that the Blacks fought for their deliberation which they deserved to have been handed without fighting so hard a long time ago.

### **Barrack Obama**

Barrack Obama has been a celebration and an accomplishment of the fights the African American people had to go through just so the racial discrimination could be abolished. Barrack Obama being the first African American President of the United States, it is in self an achievement for the blacks who have to be patient and persevere many injustices done to them in the past. Barrack Obama shows the present state of the life of the Blacks in this country. He proves that it is now possible for everyone to do what they want without being limited by the color of their skin.

This shows how much the country has changed over the last two centuries indicated that it is now a free country where everyone has the same rights as everyone else. The Blacks can now vote as it was evident when Obama won the election since he got most of the Blacks cast votes. By virtue of having an African American President United States has accomplished the goal of

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eradicating racial discrimination though it is still present in some areas but in very minimal standards.

It is therefore correct to say that the African Americans were right in fighting for their rights the way they did as it would not have been handed to them had they used other means.

### **Conclusion**

Following the conclusion of each factor that it was right for the African Americans to fight for their rights it is therefore a complete support for my thesis and we can therefore confirm that it was indeed right for the Blacks to fight for their rights as it was not been handed to them yet it was time that they started enjoying the full benefits of being an American citizen considering the amount of work they were doing for their country. It is therefore not wrong that some of the African Americans became a little violent in fighting for their rights so that they could have the same rights like any other American citizen.

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