

Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement in America

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Abstract. The black rights movement not only appeared in the 19th century and 1950s~1970s but also happened in recent years. The civil rights movement in the mid-1900s helped African Americans win their rights, which had been taken for centuries. This was considered the most significant progression of rights fighting in history. Besides the brief history of the civil right movement, this study also focuses on the famous and successful leader of the black rights movement, Martin Luther King, and the relationship between the movement itself and the Black Lives Matter movement. Two of these occurrences joined an extreme answer from the administration and these days experienced a few types of governmental correct. The duty of publishing was an important component in each of these positions. The Civil liberties Activity, BLM expressions are occurring every day sensitive.

Keywords: Civil rights movement; Martin Luther King Jr; Black Lives Matter movement.

1. Introduction

The mid-1950s noticed the encouragement of the tremendous scale of anti-ethnic separation and discrimination in the southern US. This so-called Civil rights movement was rooted in the Civil War a hundred years ago. The Fourteenth and fifteenth amendments of the United States established the fundamentals to liberate enslaved people. Still, battles to guarantee the protection of those rights continued for the century [1]. During the 1950s and 1960s, people attempted to change the social “wall of race” and gain justice for all Americans in a peaceful way. Even though significant legislation was made in the 1960s, America is still on the way to racial equality. Some movements striving for civil rights continue until today, marking American politics, society, and many aspects of the country.

2. The Civil Right Movements in the History of the United States

Civil rights were created in America through steady, nonstop efforts. Although the country claims to be established by some similar rights of justice and equity, plenty of citizens enjoyed privileges while others were deprived of essential freedom. Especially many “black” slaves did not have any relation to the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” brought by the Europeans before the establishment of the country [2]. On the contrary, both the Constitution and national laws allowed and protected slavery in the country, though the rights of freedom is written in Declaration of Independence. With the expansion of American territory, only a small percentage of Black Americans were free from the being slaves of the land owners. They primarily used nonviolent means to fight, but some violently rebelled against society [3].

Frederick Douglass became one of the most famous figures in activist activity. His desirous talks and diary produced persons’ awareness of the cruelty of the fight. When the court refused African American political independence claims in 1857, it evolved into an extreme disappointment for Black directors’ fights for equal rights, although their expanding aggression in their contest against discrimination and various styles of prejudice based on race. Dred Scott believes that the country’s establishing fathers trusted that Black human beings had some rights that a white person was obligated to respect [4].

Later with the command of President Lincoln, the slave states wanted to separation of the country, resulting in the beginning of Civil War in America. Lincoln originally had no goal of abolishing slavery. Nevertheless, they did not deny the choice to discipline the disobedient states. Because there was a great need for Black soldiers in the army, the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) was issued,

which liberated the enslaved people. Republican commanders ensured the acceptance of constitutional corrections to conclude serfdom in the 13th Amendment, and then it was guaranteed the voting rights and equality of people who were no longer enslaved people in the 14th Amendment and later in the 15th Amendment. Still, these constitutional rights protections were not enough, especially in the northern part of the country, and it would take almost a century [5]. Later to the 1960s of civil rights movement marked significant progress, but the problem of racialism continued until today.

Additionally, white regional officers surpassed other laws to boost racial segregation after federal militia were withdrawn from the South. The Supreme Court overlooked proof that the centers for African people were not as good as the ones designed for whites when it decided in 1896 that “separate but equal” facilities for African Americans were responsible for the 14th Amendment. The European and American colonial power over non-white people in Africa, Asia, and many other parts of the world went with the “principle of white supremacy”. Most non-white people in the world, like African people, were colonized or economically exploited, and the law did not recognize their essential rights. However, it should be noted that there was a long way to the civil status quo as we are used to nowadays. Not only the colored race but also women of all races did not have voting rights anywhere.

3. The Achievements of Martin Luther King Junior

The renowned civil rights activist was born into this kind of milieu. Martin Luther King Junior got the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 by his commitment to the civil rights movement. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a group to help nearby institutions for civil liberties movements in the South, was established in 1957 by King. Black people in the South were encouraged by King and many other related social groups, including SCLC, to present their dissatisfaction in nonviolent ways, such as sit-ins and voter registration drives [6]. By SCLC, King had a way of boosting ethnic concerns among the people in the country and the whole world. He traveled to India in 1959 to visit Jawaharlal Nehru when they debated Gandhi’s plans on noncompliance in a peaceful method. Then King was aligned with nonviolent protest, which could develop into a high-quality form for defeating bias and discrimination [7]. In 1963, King’s campaign, including himself, was imprisoned by the local policemen. In jail, he finished the structure of his nonviolent ideology in the “Letter from Birmingham Jail”, which later became so famous in civil rights history.

King and various civil liberties activists planned the historical event near the Birmingham campaign. On August 28, 1963 more than two hundred thousand people gathered near the Lincoln Memorial. Civil liberties activists talked, accompanying King’s “I have a Dream” to demand fairness for each human. The march marked a significant impact in history, and in 1964 it was passed the Civil Rights Act [8].

In 1965, King oversaw a campaign to register black voters in Selma, Alabama. Later it turned out to be a march in which state police used batons and tear gas to turn the demonstrators back forcibly. Unfortunately, the peaceful march became violent and more than 50 civil liberties, who were demonstrating their rights, were hurt and sent to the hospital. March 7 became known as “Bloody Sunday” [9].

Two days later, King led a second march, and to the surprise, he instructed his followers to kneel and pray instead of continuing to confront. This is an expression of King’s leading principle of peace. However, it is precisely because of the peaceful option rather than confrontations with the local police. King lost the support of many young activists who were not satisfied with his caution. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed.

Later on March 21, 1965, King led another march. By estimates, there were 3,000 and 8,000 protestors at the beginning of the protest, and with time going on, over 25,000 people joined the protest. King delivered the famous “How Long, Not Long” speech.

King received harsh criticism and was frequently unpopular because of his beliefs. A Harris survey carried out at the time of his murder in 1968 showed that around 25% of white Americans and 52% of Black Americans approved of him, while many other people started to apprehend the importance of King's accomplishments within the decades following his assassination. All over the USA started out renaming streets and landmarks in his honor, and soon there was a drive to make it a federal excursion in his birth month of January.

The first celebrating Day of Martin Luther King, Jr. occurred in January 1986 after President Ronald Reagan subsequently signed to set the holiday into law in 1983, without the deny from Southern lawmakers. King's writings, ideas, and principles of racial justice and methods to fight for equality maintain to inspire the following movements until today.

King not only fought for the civil rights of "the black", but he also took part in many social spheres beneficial for human welfare. He first voiced worries about a nuclear conflict in 1957 when he agreed to signed in The New York Times to call for the world to stop nuclear experiments at once. Later that year, while questioned about his idea of a nuclear weapon, King related them to all battle styles and was sure that they had to be outlawed globally. In an interview with Ebony magazine, King stated that "a full-scale nuclear struggle could be disastrous." "The entire eradication of war should be the primary goal of all nations."

King was opposed to the tragedy happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. What the United States authorities had done years before to finish the War officially stroke the heart of many people, including the social activist King. This was regarded as part of his campaign for peace and nuclear disarmament. Hiroshima is the only foreign city outside America to celebrate the Day of Martin Luther King.

4. The Modern Civil Rights Movements

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement currently has received popularity. Because of the similar method of message, techniques, and power, the Civil Rights movement is frequently contrasted with the BLM movement in the media.

The Civil Rights movement changed into a social movement that grew out of and encompassed many different actions. The movement sought federal citizenship rights for African-Americans and ended racial discrimination against them. BLM is a global activity that opposes violence against African-Americans and has its roots inside the local communities.

George Zimmerman was charged with the shoot the African-American Trayvon Martin, a teen who was dead in the incident. Then the BLM movement turned into commenced by adopting the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media. Due to its public protests in 2014 following the deaths of two African minorities by the police, the movement won a reputation on a country-wide stage. The movement focuses on bringing freedom and justice to all African American lives [10].

Both the BLM movement nowadays and Civil Rights movement during the 1960s had some similarities. They all gained a response from the authority and afterward experienced some forms of governmental change. The media played an essential role in those events [11]. Therefore, society's consideration of ethnic issues was widely raised through the media. All the society, from the mass to the President, pay attention to serious racialism, and related governmental reforms are taken into action. Different from the 1960s, BLM activists are more reactive. Rather than massive protests, BLM movements prefer demonstrations typically occurring in response to some form of racial injustice. Taking these characters into consideration, BLM protests, to some extent, cannot be predicted, in accordance with analysts' claim that many places have the ideal social conditions for enormous protests.

5. Summary

The civil rights movement in the middle of 20th century helped African Americans to win the rights that had been taken from them for hundreds of years. The movement fighting for black rights appeared in the 1950s, which was considered the most extensive progression of rights fighting in history. The movements of Martin Luther King in the 1960s and the BLM movement shared many similarities: popularities in the media, strategies and power of the movement, and most importantly, the violent response from the government. Racial justice is still a work required in the development of the United States.

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