

Civil Rights And Black Power Movements

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Introduction

Civil Rights and Black Power Movements started in the United States of America in the year 1960s. These movements involved protests by black people who were against the unfair treatment that they had received since slavery abolition from white people. Various black freedom moves had been made; however, the blacks were not satisfied. To the core leaders in the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, the end of black people's apartheid did not mean freedom. Attending the same learning institution as the whites or eating together in a restaurant was not total freedom, whereas the black people lived in extreme poverty. As a result, the [civil rights activists](#) responded to this move as a joke that increased discrimination in the United States of America against poor black people. It is this opinion that the civil activists separated into two groups: those advocating for violence as a means of liberating the black people and those believing that the best way to bring any desired change in the lives of the blacks was through the use of peaceful negotiations[1].

The Civil Rights Movement The Non-Violent Approach

Many African-American populations concentrated in the South between the 1950s and 1960s. In these southern states, racial inequality was experienced^[2]. The 1954 Brown V. Board of Education had not stipulated some time limit. Education segregation continues until the 1960s. This was an overwhelming economic obstacle for African Americans. The young black people were motivated to get liberty. Black people in America had fought for civil rights since Emancipation, but they were not considered until when the Supreme Court's conclusion at the Brown V. Board of Education brought into light the African American plights to the sight of the nation as well as the world. The Civil Rights Movement started as an organized fight for the privileges as well as the basic human rights of every citizen in the United States of America. This movement changed into a mass famous movement. This movement included both whites and African Americans. It was composed of local, small, and countrywide organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)[3].

Social and Cultural Dimensions

These movements were mainly rooted in religion. The meetings were often conducted in the southern states, in the churches of the black people. This Civil Right Movement was a non-violent movement. It used non-violent protest as well as civil disobedience to attain their objectives. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. is one of the popular Civil Rights Movement leaders. Ruther was greatly inspired by Gandhi's non-violent struggle. Gandhi used this non-violent struggle to attain the Indian people's independence from the rule of the British colonies. The first example of this non-violent protest form is the 1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott. This illustrated that blacks had a right to movement and fair treatment in society. This boycott resulted in Rosa Parks's arrest. Rosa was arrested after she refused to lend a white seat to the bus^[4].

Arguments and Counterarguments

In 1960, the SNCC was formed in North Carolina because of the Greensboro sit-ins. At this time, the black students went to a hotel and requested to be served food in their native Woolworths. They were rejected and authorized to leave. However, these students remained seated until the restaurant closed^[5]. This action resulted in fifty-four same sit-ins in every southern state. This illustrated that black Americans had the right to use various restaurants in the country. The discrimination they faced needed to come to an end.

The 1961 Freedom Rides were protests against the public transportation segregation. Public transport segregation existed even though it had been declared unconstitutional in the past year. In these protests, six whites and seven African Americans in Washington boarded buses. The black people were severely punished and met with violence to the extent of jailing them. However, the actions motivated new Freedom Rides in the bus stations, train stations as well as airports across the states in the South ^[6].

Background and Context

The SCLC and Martin Luther King Jr. organized a huge rally in Birmingham, Alabama. This rally included sit-ins, a march of more than a thousand students from high school, and various boycotts. The march of the high school students was called the Children's Crusade. The peaceful movement reached its maximum protest later that summer. The SNCC was very instrumental in defending the rights of African Americans in peaceful ways. The bus ride illustrates that they had a right of movement. Some of this rides never ended well, however, their main agenda was not to fight or elicit any violence. They displayed the pride that the black people had in their lives. At the end of 1963, they organized a free ballot. This displayed the various discrimination that African Americans faced when it came to voting in the nation. At this period, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Southern Christian

Leadership Conference (SCLC and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) joined forces. This integrated movement organized a massive march in Washington^[7].

Effects and Implications

The main objective of this massive march was to influence Congress to adopt the Civil Rights Bill of President Kennedy. Over 200,000 people, both whites and blacks, assembled at the Lincoln Memorial. In this meeting, Martin Luther King presented his legendary speech “I Have a Dream.” The speech of Martin Luther became a national Text. It portrayed the difficulties and troubles that the organizers faced in marching forward. It was a complicated act to gather the religious and labor groups as well as civil rights leaders. As the name of this march implied, various compromises were made for the groups to come together. The “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” illustrated and emphasized the integrated purpose of this march and the objective that every leader had at that moment. The march on organizational leaders, as well as Washington organizers in 1963, which was initially called the Big Six, included Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, John Lewis, Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, and Philip Randolph. However these people came from various backgrounds as well as political interests, they focused much that the march had to be peaceful and non-violent.

Key Challenges

The Civil Rights Movement made numerous achievements. First, the judicial case victory in the Brown V. Board of Education nullified the “Separation but equality” legal action. It made segregation legally prohibited in the nation. Second, the 1964 [Civil Rights Act](#) was passed, which promoted discrimination in various public accommodations as employment practices. Third, the 1965 Voting Rights Act passages restore the freedom of voting to all people without discrimination. Finally, the 1968 Civil Rights Act stopped discrimination in rental housing or sale. Therefore, the Civil Rights movement was able to achieve its goals using non-violent methods. These achievements aided the African Americans to be treated fairly in the nation. The rights that the white people had were also given to the blacks. This enabled the blacks to use public accommodations, among other facilities. At the same time, the employment practices were fairly conducted in the nation. Not only did this movement attain the fair treatment of Africans, but it also ended the segregation act that justified discrimination in the nation^[8].

The public supported this movement. The Civil Rights movement gained massive support from both the whites and the blacks. They joined this movement because it used non-violence methods in solving the problems that the African- Americans were experiencing in their daily lives.

The Black Power Movement The Violent Approach

While the peaceful civil rights activists labored in bringing vital legislation such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, numerous activities were highly discontented with the slowness of this progression. In the same way, the Civil Rights Movement was working towards completing the racial inequalities, and so were the Black Power Movement's objectives. The primary distinction between the two movements was that the Black Power Movement was equipped with the violent means of attaining their objectives^[9].

The Black Power Movement proponents did not have one group. This proponent subdivided themselves into two primary groups. These groups included the nationalists as well as the pluralists. The pluralists included the people who believed in the integration of all people and all of them living peacefully together. On the other hand, the nationalists believed that the whites always dominated, and to bring the oppression of the African-Americans to an end, they had to separate themselves from the great American society. After separating from American society, they were to form their society without the white people. Many hoped for an African nation within the United States of America. Stokely Carmichael, the man who made the phrase "black power," began the movement as a pluralist but ended up being a nationalist^[10].

At the beginning of the 1960s, a section of the Black Power foundation had already been laid. In this period, Malcolm X preached black separatism as well as black supremacy. The main idea behind this foundation was that it was hard for African-Americans to advance in the white-dominated society. As a result, the African-Americans wanted their institutions that were run by themselves, the black people. They believed that there existed no revolution without violence. "You don't have a peaceful revolution. You don't have a turn-the-cheek revolution. There's no such thing as a non-violent revolution." This remained Malcolm's view until his last life year. This last year, he went back home with a trusting attitude toward the white Americans who were involved in fighting for various civil rights after a journey to Mecca^[11]. Malcolm X toiled not only to change the legislation but also to instill great pride in black people's legacy- this is the expression "Black is Beauty." Malcolm was later assassinated in the year 1995.

After a year of Malcolm X assassination, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale created the Black Panther Party. This party became one of the influential Black Power Movement groups. Huey and Bobby claimed that all of the non-violent movements had failed. They led various militant events against the ruling government. The group was based on Maoism, socialism, and Marxism-Leninism. They instigated an armed citizen patrol that examined the activities that the police were conducting. They used violence against the government that was ruling. The group argued that the poor individuals from both races needed to unite and fight against the rich people in society. This is because the rich people were the ones controlling the economy of the nation. They believed that a socialist revolution was the only thing to bring true change. They listed their demands in the Ten Point plan. The two were ready to use any means of violence to attain their demands^[12]. The Black Panther was motivated

to work toward achieving good conditions for black people. They also initiated numerous successful survival programs throughout the nation.

Legal and Policy Considerations

However, the ruling government considered the Black Panther Party as a threat to the country's security. Since the Panther members were incompetent in military activities, the government, through the COINTELPRO program, brought down this Panther group. Many of their members were assassinated. For instance, in 1971, numerous Panthers officials had to flee from the United States of America because of concerns from the police. In this year 1971, the arm of the black liberal killed police officers Rocco Laurie and Gregory Foster at 174 Avenue Comer B in the city of New York. Therefore, the authorities considered the Black Panther Party as a threat to the security of its people in the nation.

At the peak of the Black Panther Party movement, they had around ten thousand people in 1967. However, by the end of the year 1980, it had only 27 members. Nonetheless, these remaining members kept struggling for various civil rights in public as well as alive. This worked towards their understanding more about the existing distinction between the two races. However, this movement resulted in the death of many people. The white people were excluded in this Black people movement. They sought to be free from any interference or influence of the white people. However, this violent approach induced various dialogues that had an impact on achieving the fair treatment of black people in the United States of America[15].

It is evident that violence alone cannot bring civil rights. The Black Power movement resulted in violent activities. These activities did not alone lead to ways that brought the fair treatment of black people in the United States of America. However, it leads to various damages in the nation as well as deaths. Many people were assassinated as a result of this movement. The police also responded to these people negatively. Also, this approach was achieved less. Many people did not join it, probably because they feared the violent acts. At the same time, it is important to note that even non-violent acts can be fruitless, especially in cases where the oppressors, as well as the abusers, are not willing to listen to the other party. It is common, almost in every corner of the world, that the oppressors do not make any move to guarantee the oppressed their rights. It is the same case in the history of America. The government took a dialogue stand after the death of the two policemen in 1971. From this argument, we can conclude that in some situations, violence may be a necessary act. However, it cannot deliver civil rights. The best thing that violence can result in is necessitating dialogue and other nonviolent approaches. This is because when the abuser or oppressor feels threatened, they compromise their views and stand. Then, dialogues come, and later, the oppressed is liberated. However, violence should not be the first step to take, as the Civil Rights Movement demonstrated that non-violent approaches can be effective in attaining the civil rights of minority groups in society.