
The History of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America

Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was arguably the most important thing to ever happen in the United States. This movement pushed for equality between whites and African Americans. Even though the Emancipation Proclamation was almost 100 years before this movement, the African American people still were nowhere close to having equality with white people. Many leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and others spent their lives trying to change America so they could experience freedom and equality that they were promised. They used civil disobedience and nonviolent protests to push this movement forward, and they were very successful and were able to bring about change for equality of the African American people.

The movement actually started early in the 1900s. Blacks and white liberals wanted to eliminate racial discrimination completely. They started groups like the NAACP, or National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in 1909 and the NUL, or National Urban League, in 1911. Efforts to help there African Americans were made during this time but nothing really had much effect until around the 1940s.

The 1940s saw much more effective efforts to bring about equality. The first real big push was in 1941, when Philip Randolph planned to march on Washington with thousands of other African American people. He threatened to do this unless President Roosevelt did something to help end racial discrimination, especially in regards to military and employment. Eventually, Roosevelt formed the Fair Employment Practices Committee, to look into these issues.

After WWII, President Truman saw that the racism in America contradicted the claims of America that they wanted to free the world from oppression. This realization caused the desegregation of armed forces as well as some federal laws to advance equality for African Americans.

The 1950s brought about the Supreme Court Case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The goal of this case was to bring about equality in education. Thurgood Marshall was the head of this case, which was funded by the NAACP. The outcome of the case ruled that public schools cannot be segregated. Many people have marked this as one of the most pivotal moments in the Civil Rights Movement.

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Shortly after this Supreme Court case, the NAACP led a large scale boycott of buses and other businesses that were owned by whites. This all started because of the arrest of Rosa Parks when she refused to obey the rules that blacks had to sit in the back of buses. This event made them continued to push for equality, but they did so on a whole different level than before, especially when white opposition started to get violent. The movement called for a leader, and Martin Luther King Jr. was the one put into that position. He was perfect for the job, and he called for nonviolent protest, which was the best thing he could of possibly have done to allow the movement to continue.

The 1960s saw organizations like the Congress of Racial Equality, or CORE, to be revived. As well as, other organizations started be formed, like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, to help the Civil Rights Movement. The nonviolent protests continued even though whites committed horrible acts of violence against those supporting the movement. For example, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968.

The Civil Rights Movement didn't achieve as much as it had hoped for during the 1960s. Many of the dreams that they had hoped for came about later in the century. However, the movement did change America forever, and today racial discrimination is almost nowhere to be found.

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