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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS'  
STATUS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The object of the undergraduate thesis is to depict the most important events, which influenced the social status of African-Americans citizens in the twentieth century. Because of the context, the first part is dedicated to the epoch after the American Civil War and describes the development of laws, which were supposed to secure the freedom of former slaves. But they were circumvented by white racists, who could not accept the freedom of blacks and considered them inferior people. The second part deals with the first half of twentieth century, the era of World Wars. The United States was considered the new home by African-Americans and in spite of all suffering blacks desired to support their country. Initially, the laws prohibited blacks the membership in army but subsequently allowed them to serve during the wars. Finally, they belonged to the bravest soldiers. The inter-war era includes Harlem Renaissance, the intellectual and cultural black movement. The third part delineates life and Martin Luther King's influence on the society, his successes with non-violent way to make the politics to modificate laws, which decreased the discrimination, and gaining of the liberty and rights, which were common for whites. The fourth part concerns the events after King's death, when blacks could assert themselves in the society. They commenced to hold more important functions and break into top sports or films. The pinnacle was the gaining of presidential post.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. SLAVERY .....	3
2.1 The Beginning and Background .....	3
2.2 Revolts .....	5
2.3 Before the War .....	6
2.4 Freedom for Slaves .....	7
2.5 Ku-Klux-Klan .....	8
2.6 After the Civil War .....	9
3. 1900 – 1945 .....	12
3.1 NAACP .....	12
3.2 Blacks in WW I. ....	13
3.3 The Harlem Renaissance .....	15
3.4 World War II. ....	16
4. 50s AND 60s – MARTIN LUTHER KING´S CONTRIBUTION .....	18
4.1 Youth .....	18
4.2 Change in Education .....	20
4.3 Montgomery Bus Boycott .....	22
4.4 The Little Rock Nine .....	24
4.5 Difficulties .....	26
4.6 Child Support .....	27
4.7 Conquest of Washington .....	29
4.8 Selma .....	32
4.9 War in Vietnam and Death .....	34
5. POST KING ERA .....	36
6. CONCLUSION .....	39
7. WORK CITED PAGE .....	40
8. SUMMARY IN CZECH .....	45

## 1 - Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to chart the development of social and political status of African-American population in the history of the United States of America. Nevertheless, the research begins in After Civil War America for reasons of describing the conditions, in which black people fought for fulfilment of their promised rights. The thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments were not observed and the discrimination and segregation of African-Americans were more and more marked. Many white people still did not accept the freedom of freed blacks. They kept them from their rights and the matter of racism and discrimination extended for years. Regardless, blacks did not give it up and struggled for the equality.

Not only the white population but also the laws obstructed black people in their normal and full-valued lives. Many of whites changed laws and found ways how to preclude blacks vote, visit public facilities, travel, get a job and also wanted to make servants of them or as in case of Ku-Klux-Klan to smooth them out and establish the white society. However, blacks were able to continue in calling for the equality and managed to change laws. So again it was the justice what ruled in the case of social differences. But the constitution was as hourglass. It changed old laws which then were reversed by the state's ordinances. For example, when occurred changes in education and the education should be available for blacks in the same extent, was passed an enact, which supported the disunion of society and separated pupils into different schools. *Separate but Equal* was the motto of then policy, which sounds very hypocritically now.

At the time of World Wars, and in wars generally, blacks wanted to participate in the fight. Despite of all intrastate racial problems, African-Americans longed to show their patriotism, fight in favour of their home and serve the United States. But the laws banned it. White people probably did not want to be defended by in their belief inferior race. Later, the laws allowed the army to be partially of coloured people. Ironically, the black soldiers were the most successful warriors. Unfortunately, they gained respect in Europe, not in their home country, where they were considered as some encumbrance and treated as animals.

Probably the only possibility how to change the constitution was through non-violence. The critical situations and accidental conflicts led to arrests. Blacks were condemned and jailed and on the other hand whites were released and their maleficences were not punished, on the contrary, barred or swept under the carpet. So the only prospect was to change the laws from inside. This was managed by Martin Luther King, Jr., who became the strongest leader of the black community. He followed the non-violence philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and it helped him to advance. King's ability to convince people was



enormous and it was the first step to equality. He organized actions, during which people protested against the oppression. He was followed not by tens or hundreds people but by thousands and then by the majority of African-Americans. There were groups, who thought that the peaceful conversations and meetings with white representatives would lead to nothing. But as a proof this groups, which did not avoid using of violence, reached almost any success. On the other hand, Kings protests, marches and sit-ins did reach the destination. He managed to liberate the African-Americans by law. Whenever the promised changes were hindered or new ordainments returned the situation into the previous stage, King did not slackened and his protests. King and his followers were supported by many organizations, which secured the financial resources. Therefore King could travel all around the United States and recruit new members into organizations, new co-workers and many adherents. King built new society and pressed many laws, which improved the situation. It allowed African-Americans increasing amount of activities, which were standard for white people. The right to vote and participate in politics came into force and blacks progressed further and further up to the presidential post of United States.

## **2 - Slavery**

### **2.1 - The Beginning and Background**

Slavery had been known since antiquity, but in America appeared in the seventeenth century. By that time in Europe, it was disappearing. The first twenty black slaves were brought in 1619 by Dutch sailors to Jamestown (Tindall and Shi 64) and then the slavery started to develop in Chesapeake. Some of them were treated as servants and after a determinate period were free and gained farmland. In addition to several former slaves could hire white servants or have their own slaves. But then it changed. The colour of skin and paganism of blacks were the critical factors, which determined, who is the master and who is the slave. Successively, slavery became a habit and then even a law. Another matter was that the more the soil was taken over the more slaves, not servants, were needed, because there was no land for them, when they were dis-enthralled (Tindall and Shi 65). This made better conditions for their survival, not for their own self-realization. Slaves were a property of slave-holders. In those days, the society thought it is a great business system, which was recognised in 90% of colonised area. Blacks were considered as race predetermined to be controlled and so served to their masters as workers on cotton, cane or tobacco plantations. It also means that the master could do with his “property” anything he wanted (Aptheker 17). A mere whiff of rebellion was punished by various ways such as selling, whipping, stigmatization or any punishment, what the slaver made up. Slaves were divided into several groups according to their performance; higher performance was rewarded with higher rations. Unlike nowadays, this system preferred strong men instead of women, old people and children. Generally, the living standard was very low. Voyages from Africa lasted several weeks, slaves were tied and many of them died during the passage (Tindall and Shi 65). The workload was not equivalent with food, free time or space for living. Therefore slaves appropriated from their masters another food, milk and new clothes. But they did not consider it stealing, because they were working for them and needed it for survival. Unfortunately, slavers did not think so and cruelly punished slaves’ acts (Aptheker 16).

The outset of blacks’ hard life was not in America, but already in their homes in Africa, which was controlled by Portuguese Empire at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Here emerged a trade system with slaves. Not only European people hunted blacks, but also chieftains took a part. They were catching inhabitants of neighbouring tribes and selling them and sometimes did it even with their own people. Hundreds were caught in the middle of the continent and brought to Elmina, a port and a headquarters of Portuguese traders and exploiters. It meant for the relative majority to walk over the land up to 2000

kilometres with the minimum of food and water, fettered by chains, or tightened into yokes, to be prevented from escape. When they reached the port, were quartered in wooden huts, where waited for boats to America. But some people did not leave, because boats were not able to hold them all. Unfortunately, this people were not set free, they were murdered. There is known an incident in Lagos, where 900 people were put to death, because no ship came for them for three months. Those long days of waiting and uncertainty made blacks pray for slavery. The “lucky ones” were boarded to under deck, where were only forty square centimetres for a man, no hygiene was ensured and the only food were beans. Of course, that this conditions caused plenty of diseases. The most common were eyes problems. It happened very often, that slaves, who survived on the boat, were blind after the voyage.

Many people are not conscious of differences between Africans brought to America. We have to notice that they have come from all corners of African continent. It means numerous cultures, godhoods, religions, languages (Kongo, Mandingo, Igo) and habits (Tindall and Shi 65). In spite of it, they were perceived as one community. Nevertheless, during the slavery the blacks created entirely new deep rooted culture, which is forming until now. New expressions appeared, such as *Goober* – a peanut, but today is the word know as name for funny or odd person, *yam* - kind of potato, and banana. They also made out names for rivers – *Coosaw* (South Carolina), *Peedee* (South and North Carolina) or *Wando* (South Carolina) (Tindall and Shi 66). Admittedly the highest contribution was into music. Blacks have strong musical tradition, feel the rhythm well and have strong voices. Music helped them to facilitate the hard work and sad lives. It is connected abundantly to religion, which was a certain way how to escape from the terrible reality. With help of songs during their masses got into higher frame of mind. On this level they could transmit messages about hate and dislike for their masters. The original rituals and prayers come from African traditions and beliefs that mixed together with American habits. These ceremonies occurred secretly. The main prayer was for taking the burden off. Blacks believed that God will set them free from slavery and take them to the Promised Land. This prayers are kept until nowadays, people sing together and try to connect with God. This connection, which is described in James Arthur Baldwin’s novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, can be very intensive.

It is true, that the originally different Africans were mixed up in America, but the individual tribes had families, couples and friends. This was something, which helped them vastly. The presence of close relatives made everything a little bit easier. Initially, marriages were in the colonies banned, but later the slavers realized, the slaves will work better and reliably, if they allow them to start a family, but sometimes were this relations severed by

selling slaves (Tindall and Shi 66). Black women worked on fields and took a care about household too. Here appears a kind of paradox, black women were treated by black men better than white women by white men (Tindall and Shi 67).

## **2.2 - Revolts**

Many slave-holders denied treating slaves badly. Their argument was that they do not treat them badly, slaves were their own property and it would be absurd to mistreat them (Aptheker 17). In fact, they all were given together and treated as animals. Many slaves raised up against their masters by refusing their stints and instead of it were damaging plants or tools. Escapes into wilderness were no exceptions during those rebellions. There were even some organized attempts to setting free, but all of them were suppressed very cruelly. Despite of that, rebellious slaves were very tenacious. The vast majority were killed, but those, who overpowered and survived, were punished much more. In 1739, the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina was fought off and participated slaves have been cut shorter by the head, which were then speared on milestones. After this incidents slaves resigned and had to reconcile with their social status (Tindall and Shi 65).

Since 1790 till 1860 the number of slaves has risen from 700 thousand to 4 millions. The accrual was caused mainly by natural increase, which was similar to increase of white people. In 1808, import of people from Africa was banned, so there was a little hint, that the slavery could end. Nevertheless, a cotton trade was increasing and so demand for slaves did not decrease, slaves were needed more and more (Tindall and Shi 446).

One of the most famous revolts happened in Southampton County, Virginia, on August 21, 1831, led by Nat Turner, a black supervisor and very religious man, educated in young age. Turner believed he was chosen by God to lead the insurgency, so he and his group started it with a slaughter of their master's family (search.eb.com). Then travelled from house to house and just with knives, axes or blunt weapons killed over fifty white people and freed black slaves. During the suppression much more blacks than whites were killed, some of them without considering, whether they were involved or not. This rebellion ended with 17 death penalties and 7 expulsions. Nat Turner was hiding until October 30, when he was caught and subsequently condemned. The execution took place on November 11 in Jerusalem, Virginia (who2.com).

### 2.3 – Before the War

Of course, it was not just these incidents, why people started to fight for black independence, but also they realized the whole situation was evil. The abolitionist fought noticeably at the beginning of nineteenth century. Their aim was to take blacks back to Africa, but many of them wanted to stay in America, because now it was home for them, nevertheless, in 1822 first free blacks were brought back to the black continent (Tindall and Shi 454). This movement supported people of two different opinions. One side really fought for the freedom, but the other considered this as an opportunity how to get rid of manumitted slaves, who could make troubles, and so on the contrary help the slavers. The movement was getting stronger and the slavery was successively slacking. In 1829, David Walker, American freeborn black, published *The Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, a document, in which called on slaves and their supporters to a rebellion, which should revenge all miseries during slavery.

For you must remember that we are men as well as they. God has been pleased to give us two eyes, two hands, two feet, and some sense in our heads as well as they. They have no more right to hold us in slavery than we have to hold them, we have just as much right, in the sight of God, to hold them and their children in slavery and wretchedness, as they have to hold us, and no more.

Another important person, who helped spreading the protests, was journalist William Lloyd Garrison. In Boston started publishing new newspaper *The Liberator*, where very sharply criticised the slavery and slow progress in forbidding it. Unfortunately, his copies spread just in north America and into southern parts almost did not reach. In 1832 founded with his followers New England Anti-Slavery Society, which joined to similar group from New York and so in 1833 arose American Anti-Slavery Society. This community spread ideas of co-equality to another states by magazines or seminars and searched for more organizers, who could help with informing of public. They worked till 1840. Garrison wanted to reform whole society, did not content himself with fight against the slavery, but also against corruption and for women's rights. It was too much tasks and the union ruined (Tindall and Shi 458).

For-slave-system adherents defended themselves by passages from Holy Bible. One of them was from Noah's Drunkenness. His grandson Canaan covered him with a blanket and Noah cursed Canaan because of seeing his nakedness. Canaan is considered as an ancestor of

blacks and this biblical incident, due to slavers, warranted to enslave blacks.

And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan ;a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant. (Genesis 9, 24 – 27)

People interpreted Bible in different ways, one part defended the slavery and the other was against. And so between 1843 an 1844 the American protestant church split into Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian. Two more arguments were quite logical. Freed blacks could not live together with whites without eruption of race war. The second one was white workers' fear of loosing work. Blacks were cheaper and more efficient.

#### **2.4 - Freedom for slaves**

Slavery was not just one of all problems, which lead to *American Civil War*, also known as *War Between the States*. But even duties, trade and connecting Missouri to southern Union played a big part. The war occurred in years 1861 - 1865 between northern anti-slavery Union states (California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin), where the slavery was being cancelled since 1790, and southern pro – slavery Confederacy (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia) (Tindall and Shi 509 - 512). Initially, the end of slavery was not the main aim of the war, they just strived to stop spreading of it. Abraham Lincoln, president of America since November 6, 1860, wanted in the first place reunify dilapidated Union and supposed, that the slaves' setting free will help. So he promised the freedom to them till January 1, 1863. This is beginning his Emancipation Proclamation:

That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, 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. (archives.gov)

Many blacks helped in the war; men as soldiers, women as nurses. The abolishing of slavery passed in 1865 and came into force by ratification on December 18, 1865, known as thirteenth amendment, which freed last slaves from long and cruel slavery.

## 2.5 - Ku-Klux-Klan

Ku-Klux-Klan, or KKK in abbreviation, is an extremist racist organization fighting for white America, against right to vote for blacks and against Republican Party. Blacks after Civil War could gain the majority of political power. During the history there are three Ku-Klux-Klans. The first was founded in May, 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee as a social club by veterans of Civil War. The name is derived from Greek word *kyklos*, which means a *circle* – they stood in a circle during the meetings and rituals. Because of sound, they created the alliterated name Ku-Klux-Klan (search.eb.com). Their aim was averting of emancipation of black people, which pursued mainly at night by burning houses or catching and killing blacks on outlying places. The organization was supposed to be secret, therefore the members, who primarily were members of Confederate Army, were enveloped in white robe with cone-shaped hood, which had just two gaps for eyes. Their symbol was white cross in red rounded field. In the south more and more groups, which joined this new phenomenon, were appearing (Bryant, Jonathan M.). In the organization surnamed White Brotherhood operated hierarchy. In descending order: Grand Imperial Wizard, Grand Magi, Grand Scribe, Grand Dragon, Grand Titan, Grand Giant, Grand Cyclops, Lictors and Ghouls (21444803.nhd.weebly.com).

The first visible act of violence occurred in Columbus, Georgia, on March 31, 1868, when George Ashburn, a Republican organizer was murdered. The Klansmen were riding horses at night and starting fires. They threatened Republicans and their voters, black people whipped without reasons. Murderers of black voters were not punished at all, police did not solve such cases. There are records about thousands dead or tortured people by KKK during its first existence. They managed to frighten too many people, so Democrats won the votes in 1870 and they fended off the “black danger”. Afterwards, the Klan was dismissed (Bryant, Jonathan M.).

The Klan was restored in 1915 due to “Thomas Dixon's book *The Clansman* (1905) and D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)” (search.eb.com). It was renewed

because of celebrating the KKK in the film. Colonel William J. Simmons established small community near Atlanta, which expanded after contribution of Edward Y. Clarke and Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler. This new Klan was as a tradition and memory of old society. They were also feared communism and immigrants from Europe. Within a years, they got four millions members. Their new sign was a burning cross, which used for intimidation. During the Great Depression the number of member lowered rapidly and the Klan almost disappeared, but then in fifties and sixties again re-emerged and fought against civil right acts (search.eb.com).

## **2.6 After the Civil War**

It is true, that many slaves got free, but they had no place where to live, no land and no money. They gained new rights, however, it was not so easy. The thirteenth amendment to United States Constitution consisting of two articles, which passed in December 6, 1865 in 27 states, banned the slavery. Slavery was only allowed as a punishment.

**Section 1.** 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.

**Section 2.** Congress shall have power to enforce these articles by appropriate legislation. (ushistory.org)

The supporters of non-slave society believed in identical rights for blacks and for whites. But as some politician envisaged, all states, which endorsed slavery, except Tennessee, thought out some contrivances, which handicapped the black population. Original motions by Lincoln and Johnson were circumvented with several loopholes. The laws differentiated slightly in each state, but the basics were same. Marriages became legal in case, that coloured people got married with coloured partner. Coloured and white marriages were illegal. Freedmen could own property, but for example in Mississippi could not have a farmland and in South Carolina city sites. As for courts, blacks could witness in cases in which they were somehow involved. It meant that the accused was black or in cases where the interest was about blacks' property. In several states blacks could testify even in proceedings related to whites and was possible for them to bring an action against. The sentences were harsher for them. The milder crimes resulted in flogging, or selling them to a white man for personal works, which was another way how to clear a minor crime, mostly vagrancy. Every year was



necessary to sign a new contract for a job. This contract contained wages and what exactly the jobsheet will be and had to be witnessed. Freemen worked for white masters, so the difference from slavery was not so marked. Employers worked for so long how the employer ordained, could not keep open house without a permission, had to stay quiet and ordered. When they escaped before expiration of the contract, they could be arrested and sent back by court order, on the other hand were protected against bad treatment by law. Nevertheless workers under 18 could be whipped to secure discipline (Tindall and Shi 563). In 1866 was suggested fourteenth amendment, which confirmed citizenship to “all persons born or naturalized in the United States” (fourteenth amendment, section one) without reference to colour. The amendment also embraced protection against “depriving 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.” (fourteenth amendment, section one). The amendment was ratified on July 9, 1868. Two years later, was the constitution supplemented by fifteenth amendment, which allowed to black males vote.

**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, colour, or previous condition of servitude.

**Section 2.** The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation. ([ushistory.org](http://ushistory.org))

However, this amendment was circumvented by several dodges created by individual states and making the vote for blacks impossible. The obstructions were poll taxes, literacy tests or the provision, that vote can only those people, who could vote before. Blacks were also averted by violence, when they wanted to register or vote. Because of it, blacks had almost no political power at all (Fisher, William).

To all under aged was set up apprenticeship. In 1881, the first black private university was founded in Alabama - Tuskegee University, under leadership of Booker T. Washington, one of the last blacks leaders and educators born in slavery era. Within his function, the university expanded, gained more buildings and qualified educators ([search.eb.com](http://search.eb.com)). Washington’s thoughts about reorganizing black community to raise the living standard and gaining the civil rights, was based on “education in the crafts and industrial skills and the cultivation of the virtues of patience, enterprise, and thrift” ([search.eb.com](http://search.eb.com)).

Changes appeared also in public transport. In 1890, railways in Louisiana had to provide different carriages for white and for coloured people. Attendance in carriage not of your colour was against the law. This new kind of transport was called “separate but equal” (Palmer 1876). African-Americans were against this act and decided to try, whether it does not collide with constitution. A group of New Orleans inhabitants formed Citizens' Committee and hired Albion Tourgée, an ex-judge and reformer as their advisor. They picked Homer Plessy, a man of “seven-eighths white and one-eighth African American” (search.eb.com), to travel in white car in Louisiana. He was asked to move to carriage for black people, but he did not. Subsequently Plessy was arrested for breaking Separate Car Act. He was tried in U.S. District Court, where Judge John H. Ferguson refused his arguments, that separating people in cars is against the constitution. Plessy did not surrender and asked Supreme Court for reinvestigation. He did not succeed again and so had to turn to U.S. Supreme Court. Here were all of his arguments, pointing out, that the act is in contradiction with thirteenth amendment, heard and the court announced that the judgement will be hand down next month. On May 18, 1896, Judge Henry Billings Brown proclaimed, that thirteenth amendment “secures only the legal equality of African Americans and whites, not their social equality” (search.eb.com). Another counter-argument was that whites are separated from blacks and it is the same principle. Plessy lost to the jury, which had voted seven to one against Plessy, and was condemn to twenty five dollars fine. This event led to the segregation over southern states in transport, public facilities, public places and institutions.

### 3 – 1900 - 1945

Since the end of slavery, many blacks were getting some education. At the beginning of the twentieth century, almost all of them were literate. However, the white people still could not reconcile with the situation, they still considered blacks as inferior. African-Americans were victims of incessant riots, lynching and racial motivated violence. Whenever any black was attending some significant event, got a flak. On October 16, 1901, president Theodore Roosevelt invited Booker T. Washington for a dinner to the White House. They were discussing southern politics behind closed doors. A big part of the nation denounced the president's invitation. There was planned one more meeting, but in the end it was just short morning visit (Stripes). People were shocked by the visit and many of them did not trust the president any more. "With our long-matured views on the subject of social intercourse between blacks and whites, the least we can say now is that we deplore the President's taste, and we distrust his wisdom" (qtd. in spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk). The objectors called for revenge proclaimed more and more violence to remind blacks, that they are not welcomed between free and *sui juris* people. South Carolina senator, Benjamin Tillman commented on the event: "The action of President Roosevelt in entertaining that nigger will necessitate our killing a thousand niggers in the South before they learn their place again" (Mackyntosh, Barry). But president Roosevelt also managed to upset blacks. In 1906 in Brownsville, Texas, a bartender was shot and a police officer wounded. Nobody knew, who did it, but because of acute situation between blacks and whites, the witness said, that the culprit was of black skin. Despite of white commanders' affirmation, that all black soldiers were in barracks, mayor made them investigate. Non of the black soldiers knew anything about the incident. Roosevelt thought it is an conspiracy and so discharged them all. The decision was re-evaluated in 1972, after proving innocence of soldiers (search.eb.com).

#### 3.1- NAACP

On the basis of The Atlanta Compromise, a philosophy propagated by Booker T. Washington published in 1895, people began to create associations, which should protect African-Americans and secure better living conditions. The Atlanta Compromise placed blacks into disadvantageous situation and strictly speaking supported whites opinions on blacks' second-rateness. Washington believed, that "vocational education, which gave blacks an opportunity for economic security, was more valuable to them than social advantages, higher education, or political office" (search.eb.com).

*Niagara Movement* emerged in February 1905, when a group of educated blacks, led

by W.E.B. Du Bois, met at Niagara Falls in Ontario, therefore the name of movement, and founded organization, which was based on contrast philosophy then *Atlanta Compromise*. Their aim was to destroy the discrimination and gain adequate status, be allowed to collect a property, have due process of law, be fully free and have an education (math.buffalo.edu). Unfortunately, this organization went down, because it had no strict leadership. However, members re-united in newly movement called *National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, NAACP*. In August 1908, during the NAACP launching, in Springfield, Illinois, occurred a race riot, which began with an attack on a black prisoner's transport. This incident degenerated into cruel fights, when white people were shooting blacks, burning houses and lynching people. Interesting is, that it happened in north part of USA, the part, which was less racist. This event caused an accrual of NAACP members, including white people, who were on the side of blacks. The official date of birth is February 12, 1909, when the first meeting should have occurred, but it was postponed on May 31. There was created, *National Negro Committee*. They planned their moves and after a year, on May 30, renamed the organization on National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. As a medium Du Bois commenced publishing a magazine called *The Crisis*, where were not just political articles, but also poems and cultural survey (Palmer 1581- 1582).

### **3.2 - Blacks in WW I.**

The main reason for participation of African-Americans in World War I. was to gain a respect from their white citizens. They considered themselves as full-valued Americans and if they country had to fight in war, they would help. In spite of all black history, they wanted to show their loyalty to United States and hoped that the war will help to change the intrastate situation.

At first, black men were refused by the army and were not allowed to join up. But when America entered the war to fight with Germany on April 6, 1917, realized, that army containing over a hundred thousands soldier will not be sufficient. Therefore on May 18 passed *Selective Service Act*, which allowed to recruit men of all colours and age between 21 and 31 years. After the end of war it was cancelled. They served in 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> infantry regiments and in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> cavalry regiments. After a week, the enlistment had to be stopped, because the capacity for black people was filled. They were heroes for their people. Registration during the recruitment had specific system. Blacks had to tear off a corner from their registration card and then were processed separately. Now, they were preferred, particularly in the southern states. For racists it was the best way how to get rid of coloured

people. Many whites were not allowed to join the army. Finally, blacks comprised thirteen percent of conscripted (Bryan).

Blacks could hold just some simple or second-rated positions in Navy and Coast Guard. But during the war they moved up to all possible jobs needed in the army. Almost all of them were used as a manpower. Blacks protested against it because they were there as soldiers, not as servants. Finally, the War Department established two new divisions – the 92<sup>nd</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup>, which took a part in combats. In May 1917, a very important turn occurred in the army. The leaders approved a officer-training camp for blacks in Fort Des Moines (international.loc.gov). They considered that black troops led by black officer will fulfil orders with bigger enthusiasm. The conditions for attending the camp was high school education and an entrance exam. Setting of the training was criticised by the War Department, but nobody knew, what to expect in Europe, so no changes were made. Despite all advances, black soldiers and also officers were not spared discrimination. Some of them had to sleep in tents, instead of barracks, had to eat outside or got just one clothe for couple of months and very often had to wear old Civil War uniforms. Workmen received the worst treatment. On the other hand, their struggle was rewarded with special premiums, so they worked as hard as possible.

The segregation and tense relations between soldiers caused problems. All mistakes and failures were ascribed to blacks. The 92<sup>nd</sup> Division was facing accusations of highly placed officers. On September 20, 1918, Argonne Forest, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division came to support American and French soldiers just at the moment, when the first attacked began. Frenchmen and Americans did not train together and it resulted in the failure of the action. But the guilt was on blacks and it took thirty years than they were stopped being labelled as badly prepared soldiers and purged. Subsequently, the whole division was transferred to milder area. Americans considered this mission not so difficult and were dissatisfied with fulfilling the order. But French allies thought in different way and rewarded “365th Infantry and 350th Machine Gun Battalion for their aggressiveness and bravery” (Bryan).

On November 10, Ferdinand Foch, French Field Marshal, needed support to create a bid pressure to German army. The 92<sup>nd</sup> Division was called and the attack claimed five hundreds of their lives.

The other black division, 93<sup>rd</sup>, was more lucky and successful as well. Exhausted France asked for more men and America provided the 93<sup>rd</sup> among others. They were under the command of France and experienced equal treatment. They were cooperating further and successfully held positions during German offensive. Thanks to their brave acts they have

been nicknamed *Harlem Hellfighters*. Corporal Henry Johnson and his friend “received the French Croix de Guerre for their gallantry” (Bryan). After fights the whole division was awarded with the same accolade.

On November, 1918, the peace was concluded. In Europe, were black soldiers celebrated heroes, who helped to win the war and hundreds of them were honoured. Unfortunately, the return home was very sad. Whites were afraid of blacks’ growing desire for equality and polite treatment, therefore riots and lynching, even to men in uniforms, were more and more frequent. After the war, in Chicago occurred over twenty riots during the summer, which is now labelled as *Red Summer*. Most of the actions were committed by the Ku-Klux-Klan members and part of the summer Police officers refused to arrest them. This caused more violence and in the end were 23 blacks and 15 whites dead (search.eb.com).

### **3.3 – The Harlem Renaissance**

World War I. held European immigrants, who have been coming to America because of work and sent to southern parts, where skilled workers were needed, in Europe. This immigrants took position and so the discriminated African-Americans had even lower chances to get a job. When the war erupted, new working posts emerged in north of America. It was necessary to supply the army with sufficient amount of needed products. Chicago offered plenty positions and blacks availed the opportunity and went to north. They also believed in better social conditions and a lower level of discrimination. Newspaper called *Chicago Defender* spread the message about the situation. Blacks did not hesitate and on a mass scale travelled into Chicago and other big cities such as New York, Buffalo, Boston and many others. This period between 1910 and 1940 (the years can not be determined exactly) is known as a *First Great Migration* (Grossman).

Blacks migrating to New York settled in Harlem quarter. This area was built for white middle and upper-middle class as a new, commodious and quite luxury part of city with sport and cultural background. However, the arrival of blacks changed the situation. They began to buy houses and churches and the black community settled in there. As the black citizenship spread and grow, new culture and intellectual life has formed. The biggest boom of culture was in 1920 known as New Negro Movement, named after Alan Lock’s anthology *The New Negro*. Negroes living out of United States spread the movement into Caribbean area and Paris.

The artists reflected reality around them – social stratus, discrimination, migration, World War I and also slavery, because they were grandsons and granddaughters of enslaved

people; these were topics of their works. Blacks wanted to separate from the white culture, create and develop their own, which is rooted in African countries. Thanks the migration, southern black blues and jazz were brought to the north. White people noticed new influences in music and gave a chance to blacks to break into show business. On January, 1934, jazz and swing Apollo Theatre was opened in New York and became one of the most famous theatres in USA of all. Here performed stars such as Ella Fitzgerald or several years later James Brown. Harlem Renaissance did not consider just musicians and dancers, but also writers and poets. Jean Toomer, Zora Neal Hurston, Rudolph Fisher were widely read authors. Young authors were publishing *Fire!!* a magazine with short novels, poems and other literal works.

The era of Harlem Renaissance ended in the middle of 1930'. The Great Depression had its influence, because NAACP and National Urban League, which sponsored the culture, did not have enough money to afford to continue with patronizing. On one hand, blacks became more educated, created great culture, which influences many people up to now, and in a part of white society surely rose. But on the other hand, the part respecting them was minimal. Riots and lynching, against which fought NAACP leader Walter Francis White since 1931, did not slacken, but on the contrary strengthen (blackhistory.com).

### **3.4 - World War II.**

When the war began in Europe in 1938, president F. D. Roosevelt ordered to start with preparation to war, despite of not being involved yet. Some people played it down, but the war industry got started. After the Great Depression, which caused high rate of unemployment, new blue-collar workers were needed. Lot of position were reserved for white people, frequently slightly over fifty percent. This kind of discrimination was not only in the south, but all over the United States. A. Philip Randolph, leader of organization for labour rights called *Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters*, intervened in January 1941. He threatened the president with a march in Washington attended by thousands of African-Americans.

The first meeting with Roosevelt did not solve anything. The second meeting, occurring six days before the planned action on June 25, 1941, produced results. The work discrimination has been banned and *Fair Employment Practice Committee*, FEPC, constituted. The FEPC was helping with improvement of working conditions during the whole war and broke several racial prejudices. Second Great Migration, which lasted until seventies, began and many blacks moved to cities, where they had better living condition generally. They had working opportunities, healthcare and above the southern average accommodations. Black population increased in San Francisco or Detroit and the natality exceeded the mortality. But whites

could not stand the black inrush and street fight were occurring again (Kersten 13-17).

As in the case of World War I, the African-Americans were refused to enter the army. The rumours of their bad performances still had certain weight. The aim of American Government was to create a united nation. There were even cases of cynicism and irony, as one woman said: "It couldn't be any worse for coloured people – it may and it may not. It ain't so good now." (qtd. in Kersten). Blacks were in war not only with Japan and Germany, but again with their own people. This situation formed into *Double V Campaign*, an effort to win the war conflict and also beat the discrimination. Despite of fighting in all American wars, blacks were included in army just imperceptibly. They were eager to show their patriotism again and with help of NAACP and National Urban League persuaded the government that they are able to fight. On September 27, 1940, were negotiated demands of African-Americans with president Roosevelt. Officers were people chosen on base of their abilities, not race, more blacks could attend training and were allowed to serve as a fighter pilots and attend the selection and grading of new members. The deal also concerned black women, who could serve as nurses in army hospitals – *Women's Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES)*. But some time later the desegregation rules were allowed, so the number of blacks in army stayed at nine percent. It made blacks angry and so Roosevelt created *Army Air Corps* just for blacks, let them to attend Tuskegee training, promoted Colonel Benjamin O. Davis to first African-American general and other blacks designated to higher positions. The desegregation remained, but blacks could serve also in rows of mariners. Still, the majority stayed in United States as workmen and experienced terrible working conditions (Kersten 13-17).

The Tuskegee black airman were set up of young men from whole America. They were accepted after physical and mental exams and most of them were academically educated. The *Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF)* graduated almost a thousand pilots between 1941 and 1946. Part of them served abroad in 99<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron or in 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group. They fought in Italy, France, Czechoslovakia and other European states against Germany. General Eisenhower awarded the 99<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron publicly ([tuskegeearmen.org](http://tuskegeearmen.org)).

Generally, blacks gained credit for their war performances, and also women were accepted better. Civil rights organizations gained many members during the war and even though the improvement of the status was not so marked, foundations for equality were laid.



## **4 – 50s and 60s - Martin Luther King's Contribution**

Period of fifties and sixties brought new hope for nation of blacks. Generally the rights of blacks became more and more discussed topic and blacks themselves made feats, which were bolder and more important for changing their status. This process of whole emancipation started to be more rapid. Afro-Americans gained a person, without whom their status would not change. A person who could lead the black nation, speak for it and be it's representative.

### **4.1 - Youth**

King, was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, as a second child of three. Firstly, his name was Michael after his father, but after six years the father changed names of both to Martin Luther as an honour to the famous protestant reformer from the sixteenth century. His father, Martin Luther King, Sr., led their black community in outskirts of Atlanta. As a kid grew on the farm. He endured derisions from white children quite well and learned to repay it. But what annoyed him more was an inequity, which black people had to stand every day. That was the reason, why he became a preacher. He had to study for that very hard, because his education was inadequate. After finishing school, he got a job as an assistant minister of Ebenezer Church. The minister was his father-in-law and after his death took over his post. King's mother, Alberta Christine Williams, worked as a teacher and after the wedding, in the first place, took a care about household and their children. She also, as the major part of King's family, devoted plenty of time to the church, where she played the organ. King, dubbed M.L., had also an older sister Willie Christine King and a younger brother Alfred Daniel Williams King (Faber and Faber 1 - 18).

For the first time, at the age of six, King discovered, that something is different. People spoke about him in an unsightly manner and children did not allow him to play with them. Of course, this first experience with the harsh reality made him very disconsolate. His parents had to explain why, but also assured him, that he is not inferior to anyone else. But his father absolutely disapproved the society's division. As described in Doris and Harold Fabers' book *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, when King's father wanted to buy shoes for his son, they sat to a stool in a shoe store, but the clerk asked them to move to another, because that bench was for white customers. Martin Luther King Senior refused to subordinate to this racist demand and with son left the store leaving the salesman without any trade. In spite of all inconveniences, disputes and because of his father's example, King did not use any violence.

The only black school in Atlanta, was the Booker T. Washington High School, which he attended since 1942. His results were rated as B+. The biggest talent he had, was for

speaking and his sister helped him to develop it. She commented: “He liked long words and he liked to use them”(qtd. in Faber and Faber 17 ). Also thanks to listening sermons, which he enjoyed very, young King could expand his vocabulary. M.L. partook in an oratorical contest, where he spoke about the constitution and it’s deficits relevant to disadvantaging of blacks. Here he won the first prize. After primary school passed the entrance exam to Morehouse College, which allowed black pupils to study there. But he had to work hard. These institutions did not give to students as much as the white ones. In the future wanted to study sociology, because then he could help his people get a better status. He also thought about medicine or law, but he knew for sure, that he do not want to follow his father and be a minister. However, when he for the first time travelled to the north, for a summer job, he could see so different rules for blacks, different surroundings in which blacks lived. They could visit whichever facilities and sit wherever they wanted. It was something, what southerners did not know. This recognition made him to think about being a minister, because it was great way, how to talk to the people and move them to fight for their rights. Very big influence upon King was his professors. One of the most important was George D. Kelsey from a department of religion, who helped him to realize, that sociology can be combined with spirituality. Another was Dr. Benjamin E. Mays with his open criticising of segregation. “During my senior year in college I finally decided to accept the challenge to enter the ministry. I came to see that God had placed a responsibility upon my shoulders and the more I tried to escape it the more frustrated I would become” (King).

Already at 18 he became a minister and his father’s assistant in Ebenezer Church. He had to study the Bible and pray more than he was used to. In 1948 he finished his secondary education and continued with studies at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. There was around a hundred students and just six were black but his white classmates were tolerant and friendly so blacks had no racial problems in the school. He tried to find a way how to be effectively helpful in the world’s improvement. During the lecture of Mordecai W. Johnson he discovered Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent fight against oppression. King commenced to read everything he could about Gandhi’s philosophy and decided that this is the exact way how to lead his battle. In 1951 King graduated and went to the Boston University for gaining a doctor of divinity degree (Faber and Faber).

In Boston M.L. with a help of his friend got to know his future wife Coretta Scott. She was born on a farm in Marion, Alabama, and her biggest interest was a music. After her elementary education she won a scholarship and began her studies at Boston’s Conservatory. First she did not want to become King’s wife, because she was not sure about the future with

a minister, but he pursued her and treated her well so she fell in love with him. King had direct concept of his future life and his life mission. She was worried a little, but then she decided to be with him. Some time took to convince King's father, because he had chosen him another bride. In the end they did it and Martin Luther King, Sr., himself married them on June 18, 1953. After the marriage, the Kings lived in Boston together in a small flat. Both of them were finishing their education. L.M. took a job during writing his thesis *A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman*. He was accepted to work in Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama., after his very successful trial speech. The inhabitants of the city were from a third blacks and from two thirds whites; unfortunately the white people considered the black ones as servants (Faber and Faber 34).

Unlike preachers in other churches, King was determined not to speak about way to heaven and life after death, but about reforming of their current lives. This reflects his first speech called *The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life*, in which King moans, that people are bounded by two dimensions – the length and the breadth. Length expresses an eagerness for own prosperity and breadth for prosperity of other people. But for a balanced life you need the third dimension - a height, which means a connection with God. Blacks needed to learn, how to love themselves, be proud of what they are. It was the first necessary step in their fight. In his sermons he used quotations of famous philosophers, repeated words and asked rhetorical questions, to which the listeners answered by various cries. This could make them to act. King's move to Montgomery at the time of *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* and he saw the opportunity for new beginning (Faber and Faber).

#### **4.2 - Change in Education**

During the fifties was more frequently fought against the race segregation in schools. Buildings for schooling black children were dilapidated, heating was broken, water very often did not flow and the capacity in this school became soon overcrowded. Initially, children were disadvantaged, because there was no school bus for them. Teachers took low salary, just a third of usual pay of white schools. This caused the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision from 1896, which allowed to educate blacks in separated schools and so emerged a motto *equal but separated*.

In 1951, thirteen parents, Oliver L. Brown, Darlene Brown, Lena Carper, Sadie Emmanuel, Marguerite Emerson, Shirley Fleming, Zelma Henderson, Shirley Hodison, Maude Lawton, Alma Lewis, Iona Richardson, and Lucinda Todd, of children from Topeka,

Kansas, began to fight against racial school segregation. They brought an action against a law *Topeka Board of Education*, a direction controlling the education system. This process was under way together with four another similar cases from South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware and Washington D.C.. The complaining parents and plaintiffs of other processes were supported by NAACP. The whole Topeka lawsuit is named after Oliver L. Brown, a local reverend and welder. Reasons were quite simple – he had a complete family, had no problems with law and was a men. His daughter, Linda Brown, had to travel to her school for one and half our. She walked several blocks for a bus station and the bus arrived to her black school early, so she was waiting outside for beginning of teaching (Palmer 349). But she could visit a white school, just seven blocks away from her homer if it were possible. Of course this was not the only case, the whole case related to many and many black children. They tried to enrol the children in the closest white school to their homes, but all requests were refused.

I remember going ... well. like I say we lived in an integrated neighborhood and I had all of these playmates of different nationalities. And so when I found out that day that I might be able to go to their school, I was just thrilled, you know. And I remember walking over to Sumner School with my dad that day and going up the steps of the school and the school looked so big to a smaller child. And I remember going inside and my dad spoke with someone and then he went into the inner office with the principal and they left me out ... to sit outside with the secretary. And while he was in the inner office, I could hear voices and hear his voice raised, you know, as the conversation went on. And then he immediately came out of the office, took me by the hand and we walked home from the school. I just couldn't understand what was happening because I was so sure that I was going to go to school with Mona and Guinevere, Wanda, and all of my playmates. (qtd in newlearningonline.com/)

In the court were justices, who wanted to cancel the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision but two Felix Frankfurter and Stanley F. Reed disagreed and thought, that the segregation will be profitable for Afro-Americans. In September 1953 Earl Warren became a new Chief Justice, a man, who had previous experiences with integrating communities into broad society. Another question was, whether the court was authorized to change the law. Warren had to wait, until Senate, compound of majority of Southerners, will confirm the power of changing

the decision. The Senate did it and Warren commenced with persuading all justices, because the decision had to be unanimous. He wanted to prevent protests from Southerners. His argument was, that segregation of Afro-Americans just proves inferiority of coloured people. Warren succeeded in convincing of Frankfurter and Reed and the law infringing the constitution could be changed. Despite the new law several states made another contrivances to circumvent it. However, on January 1956 all children were enrolled to the closest schools, but also could be in another, if they wanted (Craig and Stratton).

### **4.3 - Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Standard situation in public transport looked as follows: white people sat on front seats and blacks in back. New white passengers filled the bus from the front to back and black passengers contrariwise. When this two lines met, black people had to stand up and vacate the seats for the whites. Sometimes, blacks had to pay a ticket, leave the bus and go to back section by another door. There were several cases, when the driver left, before a black passenger could get in. One of the drivers, who did it, was James F. Blake. And exactly this happened to Rosa Parks. She promised herself, that she will not enter any bus driven by Blake (news.bbc.co.uk).

But on December 1, 1955, Rosa went home from work, when the line, in which she sat, had to stand up to make free seat for a white man. Then Parks realized, that the bus driver was James F. Blake. She refused to leave her seat, so Blake called a police and Parks was arrested. There are some speculations, whether she planned the protest, but when she was asked about it, she replied: "I was just plain tired, and my feet hurt" (qtd. in adl.org). She was in jail just two hours, her friend and president of the local NAACP chapter, E.D. Nixon, helped her. After that, King offered the Dexter Church for a meeting place, where should be their boycott discussed and organized. "Jo Ann Robinson and the members of the *Women's Political Council (WPC)* wrote" (stanford.edu) a leaflet with informations about the boycott.

Another 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. It is the second time since the Claudette Colvin case that a Negro woman has been arrested for the same thing. This has to be stopped. Negroes have rights too, for if Negroes did not ride the buses, they could not operate. Three-fourths of the riders are Negro, yet we are arrested, or have to stand over empty seats. If we do not do something to stop these arrests, they will continue. The next time it may be you, or your

daughter, or mother. This woman's case will come up on Monday. 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. You can afford to stay out of school for one day if you have no other way to go except by bus. You can also afford to stay out of town for one day. If you work, take a cab, or walk. But please, children and grown-ups, don't ride the bus at all on Monday. Please stay off all buses Monday. (stanford.edu)

The biggest problem was, how to let know all 50 000 black people in the city, how to spread leaflets with the message of upcoming boycott (Faber and Faber). One flyer was found by a white woman and she delivered it to newspaper to protest. It was printed to inform about it whites, but logically it could also read all black people, so they were helped by this paradox. The police commissioner issued, that on each bus stop will a patrol. This was another move from whites, which played into organizers' hand. Blacks, who would not want to support the action, went rather by foot, then by bus. No black was seen in any bus (Faber and Faber 40).

During next planning of following moves, the leaders founded a new organization called *Montgomery Improvement Association, MIA*. King was elected as a president of the organization by all of voting members "mainly because he had never been identified with leadership of any of the other black organizations" (Faber and Faber 44). Anybody, who wanted support blacks could join. They agreed a basic demands on the first meeting: "1. Bus operators must treat black passengers politely. 2. All passengers must be seated on a first-come, first-served basis. 3 Negro drivers should be employed on predominantly Negro routes" (Faber and Faber 45). But the delegation which went to meet leaders of Montgomery did not succeed. So the MIA approached next step. They established a car fleet, which stood in for buses. It was special public transport for blacks. Of course, 300 cars could not seat all black citizens, but those, who were not driven by cars, did not resume the buses, but continued in protest by walking. It had a very big financial impact on *National City Lines*, which carried on the Montgomery public transport. The car drivers charged 10 cents for each drive. It was the same price as for a bus drive. Based on this this events, the city ordered to fine every taxi driver, who will charge a ride under 45 cents (scribd.com). Unfortunately, all this effort ran not to any settlement, but to problems and threats. Kings family was threaten by phone and he was for arrested for the first time for speeding, although he did not exceeded the speed limit. But worse things happened. On January 30, 1956, white fighters threw a bomb into Kings house, when he was speaking in church. In the house was his wife and daughter. Luckily,

none of them were injured, however, the house was considerably damaged. King hurried home and when he found out, that both were all right, he spoke to the crowd around. He stated, that they will not fight with violence and assured himself, that his followers will press on, even if he failed. This his declaration probably forfended a very cruel revenge. Nevertheless, patrols were guarding the street, where Kings lived (Faber and Faber 47).

The boycott should continue, but officials found an old law, which banned boycotts. Therefore several participants were arrested, but because of world media's attention and skilfulness of lawyers, the participants were released and boycott could continue. MIA proliferated and the new office was established and King commenced to travel all around the country to gain more money for their actions by speaking. After several meetings with lawyers, King presented arguments to a judge and succeeded. The United States Supreme Court passed the law, which considered the segregation on buses unconstitutional. It took some time until the law came into force. On December 20, 1956, after 381 days, King officially ended the boycott and black passengers could travel by bus without any restrictions (Faber and Faber).

The Montgomery events brought a fame to King. Many magazines wrote about him, a young person, who moved from nowhere to the leader of blacks. In 1957, a photo of him appeared on the title page of Time. His next plan was to fight in Washington for more laws, which would stop another disadvantaging of Afro-Americans, and for the basic laws in the South, where the limitations were still significant. And again it was education, that put events into motion (Faber and Faber 53).

#### **4.4 - The Little Rock Nine**

Under the new plan of desegregation, black students could enroll themselves to schools which were just for white students before. Unfortunately, in some cases appeared racial problems. At the beginning of new school year on September 4, 1957, nine students were not allowed to enter Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, one of the first southern states, which decided to support the desegregation. This school, as other involved in desegregation programme, was chosen "based upon criteria which measured excellence in areas such as grade average, graduation rates, and attendance" (Canaan). However, Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, Jefferson Thomas, Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Minnijean Brown, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Thelma Mothershed, and Melba Patillo could not enter the building, because of Arkansas governor Orval Faubus' plan for thwarting the incorporation. He put the *Arkansas National Guard* to the alert and deployed it around the

school, which justified as “the protection of citizens and property from potential violence by protestors, if the students were allowed to enter” (Canaan). This blockade lasted ten days. One of the students, Elizabeth Eckford, came late and had to stand the swearing crowd all alone and media, which were highly interested in the situation, televised the incident. From a state affair became a national business. President Dwight Eisenhower hauled Faubus over the coals and warned him not to meddle into rulings. However, the school was in a constant siege of protesting mob. Students stayed at home until September 23, when they were smuggled into the building by police officers through a side door. But when the crowd, compounded especially of white students’ parents, found out that the nine are in and participating the lessons, the officers had to escort them away. The city mayor, Woodrow Mays, had to ask President Eisenhower for help and he send troopers into Little Rock and federalized the Arkansas National Guard; it meant that Faubus was not in control of guard any more. “On Wednesday, September 25, 1957, the Little Rock Nine attended class under the protection of 1000 paratroopers from the "Screaming Eagles" of the 101st Airborne Division - U. S. Army” (Canaan). Students were also escorted within the building from class to class, because the white pupils did not accept them at all, on the contrary beat them, spat on them and variously insulted. But not everything the blacks bore. There is well-known incident, when Minnijean Brown threw a chilli bottle on a boy, who was insulting her regularly. This earned her a week suspension and subsequent row after being attacked by a purse suspended her for the rest of year. There are no records of punishments for white students. Minnijean then moved to New York, where she graduated at New Lincoln School. First, who from the Nine graduated, was Ernest Green whose commencement attended King in May 1958. But for next school year, Faubus closed all high school, because he intended to postpone the integration. He argued that integrated school could support a violence. It enabled studies to 3,665 students for 1958-1959 school year (thelostyear.com). Some of them had to travel daily long distances to their new schools, some could not find any and some moved out to another states. Teachers were forced to work in empty schools. There were some attempts to teach through television or to mediate private schools but both failed. After that, a referendum took place and the segregation was supported by majority. Schools were closed until summer, and when they were invited for novation, three members of board left as a protest against the segregation. They were dismissed alike 44 teachers for desegregation support too. Meanwhile, the whole society was in confusion. In the end the voters had to recall members of the board and they reopened schools for next year 1959 – 1960. Just two students of the nine went back – J. Thomas and C. Walls. After several years all of the nine got an university degrees (thelostyear.com).



#### 4.5 - Difficulties

Sometimes, King got into troubles by his acts. There were many white people, who disliked him and did not want to make anything easy for him. Several times he was arrested for a very small problems. In some cases, King refused to pay a fine and there is known one time when he should be have taken to a prison, but police rejected and paid the fine instead of him (Faber and Faber).

King devoted some time to writing books. His first was called *Stride toward the Freedom* and narrated the Montgomery Bus Boycott story. For publicity, King went on a tour, which should promote the sales and familiarise people with events of southern part of United States. Unfortunately, there was a black woman with a mental disturbance, who injured him very seriously. During his recovery, King had a time for planning. In 1959 he departed for India, because of his interest in Gandhi. He wanted to see his land and learn more about him and his life. There he met with Gandhi's ex co-workers. The journey made him more keen on the non-violence philosophy. He decided to "simplify his own life" (Faber and Faber 59) and had to give up some activities. In January 1960 he preached his last sermon in Montgomery Ebenezer Baptist Church and left for Atlanta, where he was the president of *Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)*. But the change was not so easy. After coming to Atlanta he was confronted by an allegations of embezzling money from MIA and SCLC. To Kings was evident, that it was an attempt to ruin him and his rank. It is almost unbelievable that he succeeded to prove his innocence before jury consisting of twelve white jurymen (Faber and Faber).

After that, King was persuaded to join new organization called *Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, SNCC* or *Snick*. This arose on the impulse of a refuse to serve four black students at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. It made young blacks angry and in protest they visited the lunch counter every day and demanded to be serviced. This kind of protest is known as a *sit-in*. Probably the most important happened on October 10, 1960. Seventy-five students accompanied by King, seated on several stores. All of them were arrested. After that, the major dealt with students and released them. They promised no more sit-ins and mayor negotiated desegregation in canteens. However, King was not released, because of his previous transgression – driving without valid driving license. He was in probation, but thought that it is related just to transport orders. King was sentenced to four month at Reidsville prison. This new spread very quickly all around the States. It was just before presidential election and a Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy, unlike his Republican opponent Richard M. Nixon, who did not comment on the event at all, availed

this opportunity and helped King. His brother, Robert Kennedy, negotiated a release of 2000 dollars. This move probably secured more voters for Kennedy, but it is not entirely confirmed. The victory was very tight. When King came back home, students welcomed him warmly and sang “We shall Overcome” (Faber and Faber).

#### **4.6 – Child Support**

King’s family was in constant danger. Now, King had four children. All of them were finding out the division of society and learned how to avoid unnecessary wrangles on the streets. Their family was famous and sometimes had to lie about who they really were. The worst was, that they could not understand the happenings properly and why was their father in jail, because they were too young. They saw this for the first time in Albany, Georgia, where King was arrested for demonstrating against desegregation. This action was beginning of several failures in King’s non-violent battle. One point of King’s leadership critique was the non-violent way in getting rights. Then FBI intervened into the fights. It consisted of white southerners in the lead with J. Edgar Hoover, placed in high political rank. Therefore King believed FBI is against blacks and Hoover thought that King and his followers are supporters of communism, one of the biggest enemies of United States. Generally the black fighters could not move on because of politics (Faber and Faber). Proof positive is James Meredith’s affair, when he was blocked to enter University of Mississippi, despite the law allowed him to study there. In the end, he had to be escorted by troopers to be able attend the lectures (britannica.com).

The centre of another protest moved to Birmingham, Alabama, which was probably the most pro-segregation city in those days. This was attended by election of new mayor, but two candidates claimed the victory, therefore was necessary to wait for decision of the court. The old council remained until the result. One of the new candidates was a police officer known as T. Eugene “Bull” Connor. He was a vocal racist. Initially, King was coordinating smaller protest from background, however, some participants were arrested. After they selected this new tactic, they thought that officials will do something, when lot of people will be able to go to prison. It happened after bigger march of around hundred and fifty blacks. When they had to be arrested, they knelt and started praying. In the jail, King was absolutely isolated. Even his lawyer was not allowed to visit him. King was allowed to phone after president Kennedy’s interfering. During this time, King wrote *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, a message to his people and critics. He explains why he is in Birmingham “I am in Birmingham because injustice is here” (qtd. in Wilson) and compares his mission to missions

of old predecessors.

Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns: and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom far beyond my own hometown. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid. (qtd. in Wilson)

King urges that it is high time to stop being tyrannized. The letter leaked out and was sent to the public. King and his friend Abernathy were imprisoned for eight days. Afterwards a new idea appeared in their minds. They wanted to use children for protest. They thought, that nobody will hurt them and if, there will be no difference from injuring them by segregation. Another plus was they could not be threatened by firing from their job as adults. Of course, this move brought vast amount of criticism, but it was a desperate situation now and the youngsters were eager to help and fight. On May 2, 1963, occurred first children march in Birmingham. There a thousand children shouted for freedom, but Connor arrested nine hundred of them and transported them to jail in school buses (Faber and Faber 74). Next day came two and a half thousands children to protest again. Police and fire fighters were ready for them with fire hoses and dogs. The procession was asked to turn and leave, but they stayed. So Connor gave an order to attack the crowd by water and dogs. All the terror was recorded and published. Based on this, Kennedy despatched the assistant of attorney general, Burke Marshall, who was supposed to help to solve the situation, to be negotiator between both sides. Children were persistent and marched every day in spite of their fear until May 5, when the praying crowd was facing another barricade. But this time none of Connor's underlings obeyed his order to take action and on May 7, the biggest protest yet in Birmingham took part. Several thousands of children got into the centre and "staged sit-ins" (Faber and Faber 77) in white stores. This demonstration did not avoid violence. Fire fighters streamed high pressured water into the crowd and blacks were throwing rocks. The deal was reached on May 10, which came into force within several weeks. The blacks could work as clerks, visit any lunch counter, use all fountains to drink and the prisoners were released. King was contended, but some blacks did not believe, that the deal will be fulfilled and on the other hand some whites said it is too much for them. The peace lasted for two days, then whites attacked blacks headquarters and home of King's brother. Some blacks wanted revenge, but

King announced no more protests. The situation resolved president Kennedy by placing troopers into the city. Their task was to stop the extremists, but it was not necessary any more (Faber and Faber 79). However, blacks were not allowed to work as policemen and businessmen circumvented new orders. King wanted to repeat actions in Birmingham, but A. Philips Randolph suggested a march on the capital city (Pilát 65).

#### **4.7 - Conquest of Washington**

This new plan, for which Randolph desired to realize for twenty years, seemed to King as a good idea, they could attack peoples' feelings and conscience. This action, which attended a quarter of million blacks, headed Bayard Rustin, an activist of Civil Rights Movement and skilful organiser, and a team, which he put together. Two thousand buses were needed for transporting people into the town. The bringing in began already four days before the march. A guess for the attendance was around a hundred thousand participants and for the transport the financial sources of NAACP were utilized. In Washington, D.C. preparations started too. Stores selling alcohol and bars had to be closed in order for blacks not to get drunk, hospitals reinforced the staff and several culture and sport actions were cancelled. (crmvet.org) Several thousand police members, National Guard and soldiers were ready for na action when necessary. On August 28, 1963, a quarter of million crowd of black people but also of white, assembled at the Washington Monument and with King in the lead set out towards Lincoln Memorial. Freedom and better employment opportunities were the aim of this march. Here are *The 10 Demands of the March on Washington*:

- 1.** Comprehensive and effective civil rights legislation from the present Congress—without compromise or filibuster—to guarantee all Americans: Access to all public accommodations Decent housing, Adequate and integrated education, The right to vote
- 2.** Withholding of Federal funds from all programs in which discrimination exists.
- 3.** Desegregation of all school districts in 1963.
- 4.** Enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment—reducing Congressional representation of states where citizens are disfranchised.
- 5.** A new Executive Order banning discrimination in all housing supported by federal funds.
- 6.** Authority for the Attorney General to institute injunctive suits when any Constitutional right is violated.
- 7.** A massive federal program to train and place all unemployed workers—Negro and white—on meaningful and dignified jobs at decent wages.

**8.** A national minimum wage act that will give all Americans a decent standard of living. (Government surveys show that anything less than \$2.00 an hour fails to do this.) [The minimum wage at the time of the march is \$1.15/hour.] **9.** A broadened Fair Labour Standards Act to include all areas of employment which are presently excluded. **10.** A federal Fair Employment Practices Act barring discrimination by federal, state, and municipal governments, and by employers, contractors, employment agencies, and trade unions. (crmvvet.org)

Although the blacks had a support by president Kennedy, several speakers, namely John Lewis, criticized politics, because of their insufficient steps to changes in laws. At the Lincoln Memorial King made probably his most famous speech – *I Have a Dream*, which recapitulates the black history and encourages African-Americans not to surrender and hold on into the successful end of their struggle (Faber and Faber 83). Every speaker had seven minutes for his address, but King overrun the limit and on at-that- moment advice of Mahalia Jackson (thebreakthrough.org), a singer who stood behind him during his speech and then sang on the action, King added more words, a passage, which was not initially in his prepared text, the I Have a Dream passage:

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. (King, Jr., Martin Luther)

King dreams about the end of their struggle. He expresses deep human feelings, desires and wishes for equivalence. This was the point, the aim of people's emotions and conscience, on which they wanted to attack.

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 red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a

table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, 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. This is the faith with which I return to the South. 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. (King, Jr., Martin Luther)

Many people were impressed by the action, which was on a live broadcast. Much more than a half of nation was for cancelling the segregation. But also many whites, whose visions about non-black world were disappearing, resorted to a violence again. In Birmingham, a bomb was planted under the stairs of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, a meeting place for civil rights leaders. On September 15, 1963, Denise McNair (11), Addie Mae Collins (14), Carole Robertson (14) and Cynthia Wesley (14) died after detonation of dynamite. At first, a suspicious was Governor of Alabama, George Wallace, because of his claiming that keeping segregation will need “few first-class funerals” (english.illinois.edu). But Robert Chambliss, a member of Ku-Klux-Klan, was labeled by a witness as the assassin. He was arrested not only for the murder, but also for illegal keeping of dynamite. However, the court ascertained him innocent and released him just with a fine for the dynamite. The culprit was unknown until November 1977, when new Attorney general of Alabama, Bill Baxley requested re-opening of the case. It was found out, that lot of evidence against Chambliss was not used during the trial in 1963 and now was sufficient to convict him of the

bomb attack. He was put into life imprisonment and died eight years later. On May 17, 2000, the FBI came out with a fact Chambliss was not the only perpetrator. He and his accomplices Herman Cash, Thomas Blanton and Bobby Cherry implemented the action as a Ku-Klux-Klan group called Cahaba Boys (english.illinois.edu).

One more problem appeared. On November 22, 1963, 35<sup>th</sup> president of United States, supporter of desegregation and Civil Right Movement, John F. Kennedy was assassinated during his trip to Texas. Newly elected president, Lyndon B. Johnson, cancelled all barriers preventing blacks from right to vote. Black were supposed to elect their own representatives, who will solve all black problems. Johnson did not consider the social question. Blacks wanted to have a better status immediately, but there was a fact, they were not adequately educated. Therefore they could not be employed in qualified positions and could not reach higher living standards. Regardless, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed by Johnson on July 2, was the most important document in black history since the end of slavery. Blacks gain voting right, which was not ruled out by contrivances about being unprivileged or inferior and testing blacks. The desegregation was banned in work, public places, accommodation, facilities and education. The document prevents discrimination by government and its branches. This success culminated by awarding King by Nobel Prize for peace on December 10, 1964. After the presentation in Oslo, King claimed, that the prize is not just for him, but for the whole movement. The money split between organizations fighting for rights.

#### **4.8 - Selma**

In several southern states, the voting right still did not come into force. The government made an effort to calm down people by mass observations asking people, who has the highest credit in civil rights movement and tried to divert attention from the acts and spin out the legal force. But King was flatly against this tactic. His aim was to keep people on alert and still remind that their rights are not valid. The first march in Alabama, state chosen for the demonstrations, because it was led by one of the biggest racists, governor George Wallace, occurred in Marion on February 18, 1965. There was shot one of the participants, Jimmy Lee Jackson. King did not participate the Marion march, but then joined and led another following demonstrations. Day after the Jimmy Lee Jackson's funeral King went to talk with president, but he did not guaranteed any intervention (Pilát 78).

SCLC and SNCC exhorted residents of Black Belt, an area in Alabama, to join a march planned on March 7. George Wallace forbade the action and ordered his troopers to obviate the march. Six hundreds people attended the protest led by Hosea Williams and John

Lewis. When they reached Edmund Pettus Bridge met troopers, deputies and policemen on horses. The crowd started to pray and were ordered to leave. Subsequently, the police attacked them by nightsticks and tear gas. Over sixty people were injured and leader John Lewis lost his life. This march is known as Bloody Sunday. Two days later, King convened another march, which was attended by two and a half thousands people. When they reach the Pettus Bridge, another blockade of troopers awaited them. When they asked them to disperse, King obeyed. But this did not like SNCC, who wanted to continue to Montgomery. King avoided the violent crushing of the multitude, but at night, three white ministers supporting blacks were attacked by Elmer L. Cook, W. Stanley Hoggle and N. O'Neal Hoggle, extreme segregationists. Reverend James Reeb did not survived the brutal attack and died in the hospital of the injuries. The perpetrators were acquitted by all-white jury in December (Thornton).

The third march from Selma to Montgomery, distanced about eighty kilometres, was scheduled into five days and demonstrators were carefully chosen. People, who were imprisoned for the civil right acts were preferred (Pilát 81). Eight thousands people were guarded by two thousands troopers, which were there on the order of president Johnson, who had to intervene now, because the state of Alabama could not secure the safety of demonstrators. First three days was the crowd divided into several groups, because groups exceeding three hundreds people were not allowed to march the roads. The fourth day reached four-way highway where they could march all together. The fifth day King spoke to thirty thousands concourse in front of residence of governor Wallace, who did not admit the delegation. After the disbandment, one of white drivers taking blacks back home, Viola Gregg Liuzzo, was shot by three members of Ku Klux Klan Collie Leroy Wilkins, Eugene Thomas, and William O. Eaton. They were convicted of the murder in December 1965 (Pilát 83). Finally, on August 6, 1965, president Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which ratified the Fifteenth Amendment. However, the fightings continued for another six days (Faber and Faber). King was celebrated for his credits and SNCC resented the Kings fame (Thornton).

Then King paid attention to the northern part of states, because poverty was swelling. Therefore, he moved to Chicago with his family and co-worker Ralph Abernathy, where they lived in the ghetto. This was protest against the poverty and moral support for poor people. Reactions on their marches were even worse then in south and so King had to cancel several actions because of the safety. On June 6, 1966, he left Chicago to continue with march against the racism organised by James Meredith, a first black student at Mississippi University and Civil Rights Leader. After the beginning of the march, Meredith was shot and wounded. After



this, a part of the black protesters separated from the non-violent politics and established new branch of black movement called Black Power, which did not rejected use of force, when necessary (Faber and Faber 107). Subsequently, King returned to Chicago, where wanted to continue with his previous effort. On July 10, 1966, nailed his demands on the entrance of city hall in front of thousands people, as his precursor Martin Luther. But Mayor Richard J. Daley refused to comply with the demands (Faber and Faber 108).

#### **4.9 - War in Vietnam and Death**

King's attitude to the Vietnam War was contradictory at first. As a believer of non-violence politics disagreed with the war. He considered the American Government as the biggest violence maker. But on the other hand, he could not ask for help from the government, if he will lash out at it. In the end, King decided to oppose the war. However, NAACP and *Congress of Racial Equality* (CORE) supported the war not to damage the reputation at people. But then people take a stand against the war. King's biggest reason to fight against the war was the poverty in black ghettos. Money needed for improvement of black's living condition were flowing into war. He also saw a connection between rights and peace. On April 15, 1967, people assembled in New York and marched to United Nations Plaza. King demanded halting of war in Vietnam and criticised president Johnson. King's word had a weight and people hated war more and more as did King. The growing mistrust of President Johnson made him not to candidate for second session (Pilát 116).

King wrote a decalogue appointed to the Vietnam War. He as an experienced leader and speaker, picked up the problems and organized the war against the war. His aim was to march on Washington with poor people, to show a part of consequences of the war. They wanted to camp at the Congress and be there until they provide money for the poor. There was an opinion, that demanded amount was unreal. In fact, it was a third of expanses on war. Also Stockley Carmichael, a leader of Black Power, promised the attendance in the march with assurance of non-violent behaviour. This had to promise each participant. They were selected from fifteen areas of whole States, this time not only poor blacks, but also Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Native Americans. King himself set out to the selection at came to Memphis, Tennessee, where the protest against the poverty were under way. King joined the protesting blacks and planned a march on April 8. Unfortunately, King could not finished his work, because on April 4 , 1968, he was assassinated on the balcony of his Lorraine motel room number 306 (Pilát 121).

America panicked. Blacks lost their biggest leader and whites were afraid of

retribution.

For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and distrust at the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I can only say that I feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man. But we have to make an effort in the United States, we have to make an effort to understand, to go beyond these rather difficult times. (famousquotes.me.uk)

However, a couple of month after this Robert F. Kennedy's speech, was the speaker murdered by a black man. The whole world condoled to Americans. But African-Americans started the riots in Washington in the evening. Mayor Walter Washington proclaimed curfew, but it had no effect. Blacks were beating the whites all over the city and destroy the capitals. Police had to arrest hundreds of people. The same situation was occurring in whole United States. On April 8, people marched in Memphis. It was the march, which was King preparing, but now it turned into mourning march. Coretta King called upon people to continue on King's non-violent way of fighting and asked them not to use it after his death. The burial passed on April 9 in Atlanta. His murderer, James Earl Ray, was caught on June 8, 1968 and confessed the crime March 10, 1969. After the trial was sentenced to 99 years in prison, from which he escaped in 1977, but police caught him three days later and sent him back (Pilát). In 1983, president Ronald Regan, signed holiday legislation, which declared every third Monday of January since 1986 a Day of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Romero).

## 5 - Post King Era

Although the maelstrom after King's death did not cease, the events were not so important as during King's era. Still another court proceeded, new organizations were founded and the laws were supplemented by new amendments. The question of education had to be resolved in another court known as *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* or as *North Carolina State Board of Education v. Swann* from the year of 1971. Some schools led by whites, suitable for desegregation, were just closed and replaced into white peripheral quarters, where was not the risk of black student's attendance (encyclopedia.com). Based on this, the court launched busing, a system called "Finger Plan" in which "black students in grades one through four would be bused from the inner city to predominantly white schools in the suburbs, while white students in the fifth and sixth grades would be bused to predominantly black schools in Charlotte"(encyclopedia.com). It meant transporting children from quarter to quarter. This "controversial decision" (encyclopedia.com) of federal court was valid until 1999, when the attendance in schools were removed back into your neighbouring school. Also reverse discrimination appeared in American educational system. A white man Allan Bakke applied twice for medical studies on University of California. He was not accepted, but coloured students with lower academic score were. The university has reserved sixteen places for them (law.cornell.edu). This was at variance with Fourteenth Amendment, which said that "no person shall on the ground of race or color be excluded from participating in any program receiving federal financial assistance" (law.cornell.edu). In 1978, Bakke turned to the court, which ordered to accept him. His case was judged individually, but the court also decided, that the race can be one of the factors of accepting students in the future. In 1971 was established organization called *People United to Serve Humanity (PUSH)* in Chicago by reverend Jesse J. Jackson. The organization participated in improvement of "economic conditions of black communities" (rainbowpush.org) and social and political situation. *PUSH* organized several campaigns, broadcast and concentrated on young people in schools. African-Americans were getting into big league politics. The biggest success achieved Shirley Chisholm. At first, in 1968, became the first African-American woman elected to Congress. She cooperated with Civil Right Movements and criticised the Vietnam War. Thanks to that win the voters over and in 1970 was elected to her second term. Two years later announced her candidacy for the post of president USA as the first women and first Afro-American person ever.

I stand before you today as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States. I am not the candidate of black America, although I am black and proud. I am not the candidate of the women's movement of this country, although I am a woman, and I am equally proud of that. I am not the candidate of any political bosses or special interests. I am the candidate of the people. (qtd. in essortment.com)

She did not win, but obtained “151 of delegate’s votes”(essortment.com). Generally, her career was very successful. Not only she broke into politics as an Afro-American, but also as a woman. The women movements fighting for equality expanded in the twentieth century and Chisholm contributed to it with co-founding of *National Organization for Women - NOW* (essortment.com). Since 1976, every February is published magazine *Black History Month*, according to annual tradition, when each president marks the February as a month of Black History. It reflects successes and achievements of black nation. Its roots goes to 1915, when Carter G. Woodson and Jesse E. Moorland founded the *Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH)*. This organization was searching for achievements of blacks and promoted them. Now, the magazine is published not only in America, but also in Canada and Great Britain. In the eighties, African-Americans took a part in important world events and culture was influenced substantially. More and more blacks intervene the politics. Guion Bluford became the first African-American in space. In films appeared topics discussing the racism in army and shows with black began to broadcast, for example *The Cosby Show*. In music excelled Michael Jackson with his album *Thriller*, and Alice walker obtained the Pulitzer Prize for her novel *The Colour Purple*.

On October 16, 1995, an enormous assemblage occurred on National Mall, Washington D.C., and with the number of participants overtook the King’s one organised in 1963. Therefore it is called *The Million Man March*. It was organized by Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam’s leader. However, the aim of the action was not a promotion of Islam, but promotion of black people. They become respected by the majority of whites and this action also should encourage the blacks to another successes. Between appearing speakers were Rosa Parks, Jesse Jackson or Benjamin Chavis, representatives of different organizations (Jones). At the end of the meeting, people made a promise en masse, in which pledged they will love their relatives and themselves, be useful to public, will never use violence, will not offend women, will avoid drugs and will support their culture and exponents

(africawithin.com). The meeting brought two positives. One and a half millions of new voter registered and number of African-American children' adoption increased rapidly.

## 6 - Conclusion

This undergraduate thesis charted and pinpointed the most relevant events up to the end of the twentieth century. African-Americans managed to extricate from the lowest status. They struggled almost a hundred and fifty years to be free, equal, and have the same rights as white people. Vast amount of whites did everything to stop them, but the black perseverance was incredible. During all the years died thousands of African-Americans. Although, they were brought to America as slaves from Africa, black people considered themselves American. After several generations refused to go back to Africa and stayed in the United States of America. White people treated them dreadfully and still they wanted to support their country and stay. They hoped that white will realize their loyalty and nationalism and change laws. Unfortunately, blacks did not gain any respect from white people even after the Wars. They served with great enthusiasm and fought in the same wars, for the same purpose as their white fellow citizens, who then repudiated to respect them.

In black community, there were many noticeable and outstanding personalities, but if it were not for Martin Luther King, Jr., the status of African-Americans would not change so rapidly. His contributed by his leadership and immense sense of empathy. He was convinced it was his mission to reverse the society and change laws. With use of non-violence policy achieved more successes than any extremist group with killing and blackmailing. His influence was so huge, that after his assassination people continued in his work. Thanks to him, America realized, that blacks are people too and they deserve the same rights without regard to colour of skin or the origin. Inasmuch as the United States is one of the most prominent worldwide nations, African-Americans got through to the influential positions in government. On November 4, 2008, Barack Obama won the presidential election and became first African-American President of United States ever. Before, blacks were not much better than slaves, something less than animal, but today is a black man one of the most powerful men in the world. However, the racism remains very sensitive topic in America.

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## 8 - SUMMARY IN CZECH

Cílem bakalářské práce je popsat události a vývoj sociálního postavení černošského obyvatelstva v Americe během dvacátého století. Z důvodu souvislostí se práce v první části zabývá obdobím od Americké občanské války do začátku dvacátého století, kde mapuje vývoj zákonů, které měly zaručit černošům svobodu a práva, ale byly neustále obcházeny bílými rasisty, kteří se nesmířili se svobodou bývalých otroků a podle nich lidí podřadné, černé, barvy pleti. Druhá část je věnována první polovině dvacátého století, době dvou světových válek a obdobím mezi nimi. Afroameričané považovali Spojené státy za svůj domov a přes všechny útrapy a utlačování jejich komunity se chtěli zapojit do bojů za svoji vlast. Zprvu jim ti zákony nedovolovaly, ale nakonec vláda ustoupila a na dobu válek umožnila přijetí Afroameričanů do armády. Nakonec se ukázali jako jedni z nejstatečnějších bojovníků vůbec. Období mezi válkami je popisováno z hlediska Harlemské renesance, kulturního a intelektuálního hnutí černošů. Ve třetí části je popsán život a vliv Martina Luthera Kinga na společnost a to, jak dokázal nenásilnými způsoby přimět politiky ke změnám v zákonech, díky kterým nebyl černošský lid tolik diskriminován, a získával svobody a práva, která byla pro bílou společnost naprostou samozřejmostí. Čtvrtá část práce se zabývá vývojem událostí po Kingově smrti, kdy se černoši mohli více prosadit a uplatnit ve společnosti. Začali pronikat na vyšší místa, dostávat se do vysoké politiky, vrcholového sportu nebo do filmů. Vrcholem bylo získání prezidentského křesla pro Afroameričana.