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HISTORY OF USA**

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HISTORY OF USA**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a čerpala jen z uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2013

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Děkuji vedoucí práce Mgr. Kamile Velkoborské, Ph.D. Speciální
dík patří Davidu Franklinovi M.A. za odbornou pomoc, konzultace a rady.

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1 INTRODUCTION

My bachelor thesis deals with the topic that has been discussed over the centuries by many generations of people and it is still considered very controversial. The main objective of this thesis is to precisely elaborate description of African-Americans' economic, political and especially social situation since the end of slavery until the 21st century. This carefully worked-out research will enable me to make a comparison of perception of African-Americans in particular periods of our history influenced by opinions of people of different race coming from various social backgrounds.

I started to be interested in African-Americans during my studies at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. I passed some courses focused on African-Americans' history and I found it very attractive and useful for me. I began reading some texts dealing with this topic and I decided to compare how the African-Americans were regarded in the past, which historical events influenced their lives, how they are perceived nowadays, how their position, needs and demands in contemporary society are different from those in the past.

My bachelor thesis is divided into two main chapters and several additional parts. History of African-Americans since the abolition of slavery until 21st century will be presented in the first part. Here I will primarily focus on the explanation of problems arising around race question. Next topic will deal with basic information describing the history and various circumstances influencing African-Americans just to introduce situation before and after the end of slavery. Afterwards the economic, political and social situation of African-Americans in the USA during the period of Reconstruction after the Civil War will be in the centre of my attention.

Lives of various African-American personalities coming from different social backgrounds, living in different eras, but having the same goal will

be taken into account in further chapters. This goal is to protect African-Americans' identity, to fight for their freedom and equal rights. The most important thoughts, ideas and heroic life stories of famous African-American politicians, leaders and thinkers from the 19th and early 20th century like George Washington Carver, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman will be mentioned. Later in my thesis, I will describe how the situation turned well in the late 20th century when black leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X came up against racial discrimination to reach equal rights for everyone. Finally, I will go through the lives of some contemporary political and cultural theorists like Cornel West and Henry Louis Gates.

The second main part of my bachelor thesis will focus on the situation in contemporary society. I will map the results of efforts invested by African-American leaders I mentioned in the first part. One of the most interesting contributions to my thesis will be comparison of different points of view given by both white and black people concerning the development of African-Americans position in the world, especially in the 21st century. Last chapter will summarize results emerging from my thesis.

This study will allow me to present carefully worked-out image of the situation of African-Americans painfully struggling, but also successfully fighting against the discrimination and poverty, protecting their lives and human rights, from past to present. Results of my work will show what has improved since the end of slavery when African-Americans found themselves in a very bad situation and what has remained the same. This bachelor thesis is supposed to serve all students and other people who are interested in African-Americans issue and who want to enrich and develop their knowledge.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“ Slavery, condition in which one human being was owned by another. A slave was considered by law as property, or chattel, and was deprived of most of the rights ordinarily held by free persons.”[1] It is said to be a submission to a supreme influence of a person or a state which keeps people under authority, rule and control of their owner.[2] Slaves are people who belong to their owner against their will. They are deprived of right to leave and they usually involuntarily have to perform different kinds of work without any claim for salary or reward. Slavery is sometimes connected with the practices of debt bondage. There are no age differences; even children are treated as slaves.[3]

Historically we can find slavery in almost all countries of the world. Some countries were even dependent on it because it was very important for agriculture, for example for the production of cotton in the USA. Nowadays the slavery is forbidden in all countries of the world, but in spite of its abolition, it is still possible to find slavery today. In fact, slavery is present in nearly every country in the world. Women are often kept as slaves and they are used for prostitution. Today, slavery can be found in more than 90 cities of the USA. [4]

In prehistoric societies there was no need of slaves, because it would just mean one more person requiring food. In these societies just hunters and gatherers could be recognized. They were trying to supply their families with enough food and slaves would not be useful for them. However, when people started to live in bigger cities, the need of cheap labor appeared. Cities were craft and industrial centers and small farms around supplied them with food. In these conditions farmers felt a huge need for slaves who were providing cheap labor. It was not difficult to gain slaves. It was common to capture them during war or on a slave marketplace. These methods were very frequent in ancient world. Another possibility was to get slaves from pirates who used to sell their prisoners taken from the ships they defeated. In addition, there were also

people who had unpaid debts so they had to become slaves dependent on debt bondage. It was not an exception that people were sold to slavery by their relatives and there were cases when slavery was a punishment for those who committed a crime. Children born to slave parents became automatically slaves.[5],[6]

2.1 Race question

Scientists claim, that all people belong to one single species, Homo sapiens, but there exists zoological frame of different groups of mankind which have common heritable physical differences influenced by ancestors and by the environmental background where they live.[7] Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice issued in 1987 by UNESCO states:

All human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity. All individuals and groups have the right to be different, to consider themselves as different and to be regarded as such. However, the diversity of life styles and the right to be different may not, in any circumstances, serve as a pretext for racial prejudice; they may not justify either in law or in fact any discriminatory practice whatsoever, nor provide a ground for the policy of apartheid, which is the extreme form of racism.[8]

During colonization and exploring the New World, a variation of physiognomic and bodily appearances on people living on different places of the world was in the centre of attention of people. They focused on these differences also when African slaves were brought to the New World to cultivate land and encountered Native Americans. Western Europeans divided people into different categories based on various qualities such as cultural worth, intelligence or attractiveness, but it was not the same in all civilizations. One of the results of this situation was the beginning of slavery on American continent which influenced all human beings' lives. Stratification touched their political, social and economic

situation and opportunities and the way how other people treated them.[9],[10]

After the era of slavery the idea of race developed in citadels of science in Western Europe in the 18th century and people were arranged according to natural signs. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach stratified humankind into Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malayan races. Anthropologists, divided into polygenists and monogenists, followed Blumenbach's idea of ranking the race in the 20th century. Polygenist Samuel Morton claimed that white people have larger brain size which made them superior over other races. His idea supported racism, but in 1977, biologist Stephen Jay Gould proved that Morton's data were wrong. Franz Boas continued with his ranking of race fighting against racism when he studied Native Americans history.[11]

Margaret Mead, born in 1901, was one of the best known anthropologists who felt that American society needed to change the way poor people, women and African Americans were treated and stereotyped. She wanted to prove that the way people behave is not determined by biological factors. During her research in South Pacific in 1920s and 1930s, she found out that personality is mostly influenced by culture, not by genetics and biological differences. She became role model for supporters of women's rights, opened anthropology to general public and helped to understand social role of men and women in the 20th century. With her research, she greatly contributed to the discussion on biological and cultural determination which included also the question of race.[12]

At the end of the 20th century the anthropologists aimed on the idea of race itself instead of being focused on race ranking. New anti-racists criticized that humans were divided only into a small number of races related to few features regardless a great number of invisible biological traits such as blood factors and enzymes.[13]

Race question draws attention of people from different background. It is an important topic for studies of sociologists, anthropologists and biologists. UNESCO had to react on this question and focused on it in series of the statements on race since 1950. Racism appeared in our society as a result of human species stratification into different groups. Racism shows practices which are justified by the idea, that all humans are divided into different groups with regard to racial identity and some of them are superior and the others are inferior. It is difficult to find the exact definition of racism and to fight against it, because there is a great deal of forms of racism on national, regional and local level which are all aimed on distinct kind of people.[14] Statement on Race published in 1951 mentions about the development of racism:

In some formerly dependent countries, people formerly classified as inferior have for the first time obtained full political rights. Moreover, the participation of formerly dependent nations in international organizations in terms of equality has done much to undermine racism.[15]

There have been many signs of resistance and protests against racism from political and famous personalities, scholars and all people in the world, but the world will always remember injustice and crimes that have been done on innocent people. Even though anthropology proclaimed in 1960 that race does not exist, racism remained as oppression of different race and also ethnicity, which is based on culture and nationality shared by certain group of people.[16]

2.2 Slavery in the USA before the Civil War and it's abolition

Slavery in America started after 1619 with the foundation of the North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia. On this occasion 20 Africans were transported by a Dutch ship in order to help as slaves in

agriculture, especially with cultivation of rice, woad and tobacco. It is estimated that 10 to 16 million slaves were transported to the New World and that 54 thousands voyages were executed between the 15th and 19th centuries. However, the slavery developed quickly in all colonies so it is difficult to say a precise figure. The “Middle passage”[17] was a term used for the way of African slaves to America. This journey took from four to six weeks and 40% of slaves did not survive extremely cruel conditions on board where 250 to 600 slaves were transported. Most common problems they had to face were malnutrition, dehydration, illnesses, hard punishments and rape.[18] Alexander Falconbridge, a British surgeon who participated in these voyages, states that “... the excessive heat was not the only thing that rendered their situation intolerable. The deck, that is the floor of their rooms, was so covered with the blood and mucus which had proceeded from them in consequence of the flux, that it resembled a slaughterhouse.”[19]

It is known, that slavery was present in majority of American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries and it significantly supported economic situation of a new nation because slaves were contributing to economy by products of their work on plantations which served as business articles. There was a trade system called Triangle Trade which covered goods grown by African slaves which used to be sold to Europe. Unnecessary goods from Europe was exchanged for slaves from Africa who were then deported to America. There were some signs and loud voices of people in the North who wanted abolition of slavery after the American Revolution, because it was not important for economy of this part of the USA and they considered it wrong. The new U.S. Constitution defined slaves as three-fifths of a person to support taxation and representation in Congress and to strengthen slavery itself. However, the South appeared in crisis. The invention of Cotton Gin in the late 18th century did not facilitate slaves’ situation. Slaves’ hands were needed for removing seeds from raw cotton fibers so the slaves’ work targeted on

the South economy. In addition, growing textile industry in England led to a huge demand for cotton.[20]

Important personalities of a movement which sought to abolish slavery in America were Frederick Douglass[21] and Harriet Beecher Stowe known for an antislavery novel describing life of slaves called Uncle Tom's Cabin which gave abolitionists reason to start their fight. For some people the reason for abolition of slavery was that they considered it a sin, the others tended to the idea of free-labor.

The loose network of Underground Rail road helped slaves to escape from the captivity. It was a system of connections between people living in safe houses which provided help some to slaves in order to set them free. Finally, American expansion in the west and very strong abolition movement in the North were reasons to start the discussion focused on slavery. Eleven states seceded from the Union and created Confederation which did not agree with abolition of slavery. This separation was considered unlawful and the Union did not want to acknowledge Confederate states. Situation escalated in American Civil War from 1861 to 1865. Even though the main objective for central Union was to keep United States together as one nation, the aim of this war for Abraham Lincoln was primarily the abolition of slavery. The war resulted in victory of Union and this bloody conflict brought freedom to all slaves. It was Abraham Lincoln[22] who approved Emancipation Proclamation on the January 1, 1863 which prohibited slavery.[23],[24]

2.2.1 Life conditions of slaves

It is widely believed that slaves were supposed to perform unskilled work, but in fact, a great deal of their job was skilled. Slaves lived in small dirty cabins and they were provided with food which would not be suitable even for animals. The majority of work was agricultural. They had to cultivate tobacco, rice and cotton and it required a great deal of

skillfulness. Sometimes men worked as carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, butchers, metalworkers, drivers or builders of railways. Women were used as domestic servants, cooks or spinners. Slaves usually worked 10-16 hours a day and thanks to religion, they did not have to work on Sundays. They worked in groups supervised by white men called “overseers” or by privileged slaves called “drivers”. There were no age or sex differences. Even children, handicapped slaves and older slaves had to perform some kind of work.[25]

Slaves were treated in different ways; it depended on their owners and their status. Sometimes they were physically punished, kept in jail or chains, but in some cases, they were rewarded by a small piece of land to grow some crops for themselves. The only thing that kept them positive was strong family bond. That was the reason why separation from their family was the worst punishment for each slave. However, the separation from family members often appeared, because slave marriage was not accepted in the United States so they could not prevent it. Slaves did not have basic rights and freedoms that were needed for developing content families. Common slave codes existed in all states. Only owner could do business with his own slaves. They could not possess gun and they were not considered a valuable witness in crime cases. Slaves were not allowed to educate themselves and they could not assemble without white person being with them. Since slave women were seen as chattel, raping them was not punishable.[26],[27]

2.3 Period of Reconstruction after the Civil War

Reconstruction is a period of ten years following the American Civil War, i.e. from 1865 to 1875. In those times, cities and plantations in the South were devastated after the war and its economy had to recover. The South had to adapt itself to new conditions, especially to the situation that occurred after the abolition of slavery. Many important and famous

personalities passed away and culture itself was in decline. USA needed to be rebuilt as one union, because during the war good relations and trust among member states were broken. Problems with readmission of the eleven states back to Union had to be solved.

Free slaves had to take care of themselves. As a help, they were usually given some piece of land where they could grow their own crops in there. In 1869, the Fifteenth Amendment approved the right to vote for everyone regardless of race, color of skin or their previous life as a slave. However, the question of equality remained on the table, because there was still a great deal of people who refused to accept former slaves as free human beings with equal rights. In addition, the Ku Klux Klan was founded as an organization representing supremacy of white people, racism, anti-semitism, anti-immigration and anti-catholicism.[28]

2.3.1 Abraham Lincoln's Reconstruction plan

Two main personalities of the Reconstruction were Abraham Lincoln[29] and Andrew Johnson[30]. First of all Abraham Lincoln wanted to revitalize the Union. He gave so-called two Confiscation acts to slaves. These acts made them safe from Confederacy in case that somebody would not tolerate their freedom. During next years, Confederate property was confiscated and all slaves were gradually set free in all states of the Union, even though there was a general fear that slaves could turn against them. Lincoln wanted to create new governments in all southern states as soon as possible, but just in case that they would take an oath of loyalty to him. He wished to integrate all rebels into common society. For this reason, on December 8, 1863 Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction and presented his "Ten percent plan". This plan was supposed to allow creation of new government and election of new representatives in Congress in case that ten percent of voters participating in election in 1860 would take an oath of loyalty to him.[31]

Freed slaves who took an oath of loyalty were recruited into the Union Army, but Lincoln was still afraid that they would not be treated well by white people. He tried to persuade ex-slaves to colonize some parts of Central America. However, black people did not agree with his plan even though he promised to protect their colonies. They did not wish to leave, they just desired their rights. One of the Lincoln's important moves was Freedmen's Bureau Bill. It was a law which was supposed to help freedmen and white refugees to supply themselves with food, clothes and fuel. It also offered them advice concerning the negotiation of labor contracts. This law confiscated all land and sold it to people regardless of their color of skin.

Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865. He was always seen as a moderate president who had to deal with radical representatives.[32],[33]

2.3.2 Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction plan

Andrew Johnson was Lincoln's successor who continued with his own Reconstruction plan. He was more radical and extreme than Abraham Lincoln, but his reconstruction plan was close to the Lincoln's one. He sought to punish all rebellions and he took all property from planter aristocracy, former military and civil officers. He wanted to offer pardons to all who would take an oath of loyalty, but he wanted to exclude aristocracy. His goal was to give power to small farmers instead of big farmers living in the South. He tried to recover all states in order to avoid further secession and he wanted to make them show their loyalty so they could create their own government. The right to vote became a widely discussed issue, because a great deal of African-Americans was still dependent on their former owners which meant that ex-slaves could have been influenced easily. His aim was to completely banish slavery before it could be readmitted.[34]

Under his command the Thirteenth Amendment which guaranteed freedom for all black people was adopted. However, white people kept control over black people, because radical slave codes limiting African-Americans' rights and freedoms existed. They could not own land or work as free people and they did not have many civil and political rights which white people did.[35]

The end of the Reconstruction came after all the troops finally left the South. Unfortunately supremacy of white people over African-Americans did not disappear and they persisted without most of civil and political rights for a long time. Economic and social situation in the South remained the same. For some people the period of Reconstruction meant a division of American nation into those who agreed with equal rights for all people and their opponents. For the rest the Reconstruction was an important event in the past of the United States, which influenced country in a positive way and gave it new goals that should be accomplished in the future.[36]

3 AFRICAN-AMERICAN'S SITUATION IN THE 19th CENTURY

The situation of African-American people after the abolition of slavery and victory of the Union was difficult, because there were still lot of codes and restrictions denying their rights and freedoms and it influenced their lives on economic, political and mostly social level. A great amount of slaves hoped to get some land which would give them an opportunity to become more economically independent. Nevertheless white supremacy was a considerable obstacle and radical codes prevented black people from many rights. On the other hand, the Freedmen's Bureau law helped African-Americans. They were given medical care, basic rations and they were also provided with basic education and literacy training. In the 19th century the first black schools were established and first black people, former slaves, were allowed to

study at the Harvard University. Thanks to education, these people had bigger chances to get a better job. Unfortunately not all African-Americans were that lucky and some of them had to stay on plantations as workers. It meant that their living conditions were similar to those of slaves.[37]

After the end of Reconstruction in 1877 there was an extensive growth of racial discrimination and intolerance. Under these conditions many African-Americans decided to leave the United States. Injustice concerning the Supreme Court's decisions was obvious so the protection given to black people by the Fourteenth Amendment, which protected the legal equality of ex-slaves, became limited. One of the discussed decisions was the Court's Plessy v. Ferguson decision which permitted segregation of public facilities based on color of skin and origin. This fact followed the situation when a mixed-race Homer Plessy was taken to court for having taken the seat designated for white people on a train. The Supreme Court decided that such segregation did not violate the Constitution.[38] Americans seemed to be like two nations in one country. All facilities like schools, restaurants, swimming pools, toilets, water or fountains were segregated. It was called Jim Crow laws.[39] This law stated for example that "It shall be unlawful for a negro[40] and white person to play together or in company with each other in any game of cards or dice, dominoes or checkers." [41] One of the reasons given for justification of this law was the fact that African-Americans were stereotyped as dirty and contaminated.

Former slaves had to pay their debts which meant that they could not refuse low paid jobs. White people were trying to infringe African-Americans' right to vote defined in the Reconstruction Fifteenth Amendment through discriminatory measures which included literacy tests. The Voting Rights Act prohibiting literacy tests and all the measures limiting or refusing black people's right to vote was adopted in 1965. Despite all restrictions, problems with discriminations, codes and

court decisions, the most serious problem was that during the 1890s more than 1000 African-American people were lynched.[42]

3.1 Leaders, politicians and thinkers of the 19th and early 20th century

3.1.1 Sojourner Truth (1797 - November 26, 1883)

Sojourner Truth[43] was born in 1797 in Swartekill in New York into slave family as Isabella Baumfree. Baumfree family was separated after the death of its owner Colonel Hardenbergh and his son Charles. Afterwards Isabella was sold to a very cruel man John Neely. As a slave, she was sold several times. She had five children with her husband Thomas. However, she left them and escaped with her youngest daughter Sophia in 1826. Here are some notes describing her escape from slavery which were published in the book *Slave Narratives*:

No one appeared, and, for the first time, the question came up for settlement, "Where, and to whom shall I go?" In all her thoughts of getting away, she had not once asked herself whither she should direct her steps. She sat down, fed her infant, and again turning her thoughts to God, her only help, she prayed him to direct her to some safe asylum. And soon it occurred to her, that there was a man living somewhere in the direction she had been pursuing, by the name of Lewi Rowe, whom she had known, and who, she thought, would be likely to befriend her.[44]

Later she found out that her son was illegally sold to another owner and she decided to rescue him. While defending his rights she became the first woman fighting against a white man in the United States court.

After her break-out Truth had to face many life obstacles. She worked as housekeeper several times. She spent many years with her son when they were both free. After changing her name in 1843, Truth was registered to The Northampton Association of Education and Industry in

Northampton, Massachusetts whose members were abolitionist who were supporting women's and African-Americans' rights.[45]

One of her first steps as an abolition activist in 1850 was a publication of her memories called "The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave". Afterwards, she executed a job of speaker at the first National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts. She collaborated with two other escaped slaves Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman[46]. In 1851, she started to be known for her spontaneous speech "Ain't I a Woman?". One passage from this speech says "Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him."[47]

Thanks to her growing popularity Truth kept on promoting ideas of antislavery movement. She emphasized the importance of women's equality, but also promoted prison reforms, universal suffrage and abolition of capital punishment. However, her opinions were seen as too radical by certain abolitionists.[48]

Sojourner Truth personally met President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War in order to share her experiences and ideas concerning African-Americans and slavery with him. Even after the end of the Civil War, Truth kept on realizing her ideas. In Congress, she fought against segregation of public facilities and against white people who had in their possession a great deal of land that could have been given to black people. This fact could have prevented African-Americans from being inferior to white people. Sojourner Truth passed away on November 26, 1883.[49]

3.1.2 Harriet Tubman (1819/1820 - March 10, 1913)

Harriet Tubman[50] was one of the first people were liberating black people before the abolition of slavery. She fought for freedom, civil rights and human equality in the United States. Araminta Harriet Ross was born as an African-American slave in Maryland in 1819 or 1820. During her youth she and her siblings were sold several times to different plantations where she was raised in horrible conditions. Violence committed by her owners and other white people was nothing exceptional. All her life she suffered from headaches, narcoleptic episodes and strange visions because of the strike into head from one of the overseer when she was at the age of 12.[51]

When Harriet was an adult, she married John Tubman and changed her name from Araminta to Harriet. That was in 1844. By that time almost a half of African-American slaves were given freedom or escaped from captivity. Finally, Harriet Tubman ran away thanks to help of a white man. She escaped with her two brothers in 1849 using Underground Railroad. Unfortunately her frightened brothers returned on the plantation and she continued to reach Philadelphia.[52] Harriet Tubman stated "I had crossed the line. I was free; but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom. I was a stranger in a strange land."[53]

Harriet's family bond was so strong that instead of staying in the safety she returned back from the North to save them. She gathered necessary finances through different activities to save her family. She came back using the Underground Railroad about two times a year to safe her parents, some of her siblings and many other slaves. Other slaves called her "Moses". When the Fugitive Slave Law[54] was approved in the North of the United States, Harriet had to extend The Underground Railroad to Canada. Slavery was prohibited in Canada and therefore no fugitive was afraid of being sent back on plantation. It is estimated that she rescued around 300 slaves.[55]

During the Civil War Harriet served in the Union Army as a cook, scout, nurse, laundress and spy. After the Civil War, Harriet gained money for establishment of new schools for African-Americans. She died of pneumonia in 1913 after fighting consequences of her head injuries in the rest home named after her.[56]

3.1.3 George Washington Carver (1864 - January, 5 1943)

George Washington Carver[57] was an African-American slave who was born to slave parents who had been kidnapped by night raiders from Arkansas approximately in January 1864 in order to be sold to Kentucky. He was raised by his owners on a plantation in Missouri town of Diamond. Carver and his owner Moses were trying to find his kidnapped mother, but they did not succeed. George Washington Carver was one of the lucky slaves. His owners took care of him and his brother after the abolition of slavery. They encouraged him to study and helped him to learn writing and reading. Because of sickness he did not have to perform hard labor. George continued his studies at a school for black children in Neosho. He desired to study at an academy, but he was forced to attend several different schools because, being black, he had to face white people who used to attack black people. He faced several rejections at some colleges because of his color of skin.[58]

During his studies at the Simpson College Carver proved his talent for painting plants and flowers and he was advised to study botany. He became the first black student attending faculty and as a result of his studies got a master degree. After his studies Carver accepted offer from Booker T. Washington[59] and started to work as a teacher at the Tuskegee Institute and as a director of the Agriculture Department. He reached fame for his laboratory research aimed to help many farmers to make their production more diversified. In his laboratory, he and his students found more than 450 varieties of use of peanuts, sweet potato,

pecan and other plants. These products were chocolate-coated peanuts, peanut punch, peanut butter, tan remover, peanut tofu sauce, soap, sizing for walls, axle grease, shaving cream or wood filler. Carver also invented the idea of crop rotation[60] which made the production more successful. This idea gave solution to problems of many farmers in the South where the land was destroyed after the cultivation of cotton.[61]

Carver was a remarkable teacher and researcher, but his absence of administrative and organizational skills was a common reason for conflicts during his work at the Tuskegee Institute. During his numerous lecture tours Carver worked on relationships with white people who understood racial injustice. Carver was very modest in his life, never demanding compensation. He encouraged and supported the George Washington Carver Foundation at Tuskegee to continue the research by giving it a significant donation.[62]

3.1.4 Booker T. Washington (April 5, 1856 - November 14, 1915)

Booker Taliaferro Washington[63] was born as a slave to a slave family on April 5th, 1856 in Virginia. He lived with his mother under the supervision of their owner James Borroughs without ever knowing his white father. As a small boy Booker had to perform hard and difficult work of carrying sacks of grain which represented a common reason for punishing him. Instead of dedicating his childhood to education he had to work in salt and coal mine. Back then, because of his passion for education, he started to learn to write and read.[64]

His first opportunity to study came when he got his first job as a houseboy and his very strict boss found talent inside him. In 1872 Booker enrolled at the Hampton Normal Agricultural Institute in Virginia. After taking different kinds of job to support himself he was given a scholarship from white man for his hard work. Booker was working as teacher at school in Malden, Virginia after graduating from Hampton in 1875. He

became famous after a speech he gave at Hampton's graduation ceremonies where he got a new job of teacher in Hampton. Finally, he became a head of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute instead of a white man who should have been nominated on this position. This Institute is considered to be a monument of his work.[65]

Booker T. Washington passed away on November 14, 1915 as a man moderating fight for equal rights for black people, but also as a man sponsoring a great deal of court cases which were opened against discrimination of African-Americans.[66]

3.1.5 W.E.B. Du Bois (February 23, 1868 - August 27, 1963)

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois[67] was born in Massachusetts on February 23, 1868 as a free man. Since his childhood he studied together with white people even though he was a mulatto. He attended the Fisk University where he got a bachelor's degree in arts. Afterwards he studied at the University of Berlin and at the Harvard University where he became the first black man having received doctorate in history. He focused his studies on African American history. During his adolescence W.E.B. Du Bois benefited from the support of white teachers. After recognizing Jim Crow laws at the Fisk University, Du Bois started to be concerned with the African-Americans' question of racism and began to fight against it.[68]

In his landmark study called "The Philadelphia Negro" Du Bois mentioned a term "talented tenth" which pointed out 10% of black leaders of the race who were capable of fighting against segregation. He was very disappointed that the situation of African-Americans did not change since the Emancipation Proclamation in spite of the fact that everyone was saying that black people were free. One of his famous studies was "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of

America". These two studies brought him fame. He was recognized as important scholar, successful civil rights activist, leader, sociologist, educator, historian, teacher and Pan-Africanist. He supported the idea of setting all African colonies free and independent on European powers. During his life Du Bois published 21 books, he was an editor of 15 books and he wrote over 100 essays and newspaper articles. He dedicated all his life to protest activities against white supremacy. He became an opponent of Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise". He was rejecting the idea that for black people vocational education was more important than social advantages like higher education. Du Bois found this compromise to be unequal and to be in favor of white people.[69]

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois founded the Niagara Movement. It was an African-American protest group of educated and prominent African-Americans who demanded the end of segregation of public services and right to vote for everyone. The Niagara Movement's speech states "We want full manhood suffrage, and we want it now, henceforth and forever. Second. We want discrimination in public accommodation to cease. Separation in railway and street cars, based simply on race and color, is un-American, un-democratic, and silly. We protest against all such discrimination." [70]

However, this group had to face many problems so it did not survive more than seven years. One of his other important moves was foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – NAACP in 1909. This organization was attempting to reach equality on national level. His life ended up on August 27 1963.[71]

3.1.6 Marcus Garvey (August 17, 1887 - June 10, 1940)

Jamaican Marcus Mosiah Garvey[72] was born on August 17, 1887 to well organized family which supported him in his education. After leaving school at the age of 14 he became a printer's apprentice and

participated in printer's strike for higher wages. This experience led him to passion for political activism. Afterwards he made trips to South, Central America and even to London where he attended the Birkbeck College. Later he found job as newspaper editor for African Times and Orient Review.[73]

After his return to Jamaica in 1914, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was founded. His philosophy was inspired by Booker T. Washington and desired to establish the similar Institute like Washington did. For this reason Garvey moved to the United States where he was promoting UNIA and started with publication of editorial Negro World. His partly successful goal was to make African-Americans value their culture and persuade them to come back to Africa.[74]

Garvey established a shipping company Black Star Line and the Negro Factories Corporation. The first one facilitated transportation of people to Africa. The second one supported economic independence of black people by supporting separate trade network between Africans in America and those in Africa. There were many people admiring Marcus Garvey, but for some African-American leaders his theories were inconvenient. W.E.B. Du Bois considered him to be an enemy for black people in the United States, because his actions were slowing down Du Bois' efforts to reach equal rights for African-Americans. Many leaders did not like his idea of black people leaving America and having their own separated economy and trade. Garvey stated in one of his speeches: "For three hundred years the Negroes of America have given their life blood to make the Republic the first among the nations of the world, and all along this time there has never been even one year of justice, but on the contrary a continuous round of oppression." [75]

After revelation of mail fraud in his company Black Star Line in 1922, Garvey was arrested and sentenced to prison for five years. Even though business of the company was not trouble-free, all investigation

was probably motivated by political affairs. After his releasing, Garvey was sent back to Jamaica where he continued in his activism in UNIA. Garvey lived in London since 1935, but he lost a great deal of supporters after imprisonment. He passed away in 1940 in London. Marcus Garvey became an inspiration for future Civil rights movement leaders and his Pan-African philosophy[76] gave basis to a movement called Garveyism and Nation of Islam.[77][78]

The years soon before and after the abolition of slavery were not easy for African-Americans. Their lives changed very much, but not all of them were able to adapt as freedmen to new circumstances and had to face poverty and lived almost in the same way as they did as slaves. Personalities mentioned in this chapter were important because they either lived as slaves or were born soon after its abolition, so they had authentic life experiences. They were able to help other people, to risk their lives, to prove their courage and show all African-Americans that they are worthy, that they can educate themselves and find a good job. Important organizations as NAACP were founded and laws protecting black people were issued in order to facilitate their situation. In the 19th century long journey for black people started. It was a journey of fighting for equal position in the society.

3.2 African-American leaders and a question of race equality in the late 20th century

3.2.1 Civil rights movement

Civil rights movement or so-called Freedom Movement was one of the most powerful movements which existed in all states of America during the mid 1950s. It was fighting against racial segregation[79], race inspired violence, race oppression and economic injustice. Its members demanded social and political equality. These problems continued even after the abolition of slavery which was assured by the Emancipation

Proclamation and later by publication of three Reconstruction Amendments. The Thirteenth amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth amendment protected the legal equality of ex-slaves and the Fifteenth amendment guaranteed voting rights to male freedmen.[80]

As reaction to Jim Crows law [81], Civil right movement started with nonviolent protests and activism to reach change. With American's power expansion many black people in the world were treated in the same way and they were missing basic rights. During the World War II the situation was even more difficult because of the differentiation of ideological opinions. Finally, NAACP reached desegregation of public schools in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954. This year is considered the beginning of Civil rights movement, but most of its veterans agree that year 1951 is more convenient. The end is dated in 1968.[82]

During following years many leaders devoted their personal and professional lives to ideas of this movement. Movement failed in gaining a great deal of its goals, but a significant victory was achieved when Voting Rights Act and Civil rights Act were adopted in 1968 and Jim Crow law was discarded.[83]

3.2.2 Montgomery bus boycott, Sit-Ins, Freedom rides

At the beginning of Civil rights movement on December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks⁸⁴, a NAACP activist, denied to give up her seat in bus in Montgomery, to a white man. For this act, she was fined 14 dollars and as a reaction a considerable wave of activism and protests raised. Protests were led by Martin Luther King, Jr.[85] Transport segregation provoked King's followers who, in a reaction, denied using public buses and demanded first-come-first rule and equal treatment for black passengers as well as for white people. Montgomery bus boycott cost bus company thousands of dollars. Finally, the Supreme Court declared desegregation

of the bus system on November 23, 1956. Another manifestation of Civil rights activities was an event called Sit-Ins. Four black college students ordered a coffee in lunch-counter which black people were not allowed to enter. Lunch-counters were fast-foods like McDonalds and Burger King. After refusal from counter staff students simply did not leave. Thousands of students continued in this campaign and sought desegregation of consumer facilities even though it was against the law and they could have been arrested for it.[86]

In 1961 the first bus riders, both black and white, were sponsored to test desegregation of bus transport by crossing Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and New Orleans. This was called Freedom rides. Black riders had to face violence, but they resisted until an intervention of police. Freedom rides together with Sit-ins encouraged other protest activities in Southern parts of the United States. A considerable amount of violent conflicts and powerful Civil rights campaigns were reasons to issue a new law. This law prohibited racial discrimination at work and in all public institutions. Current President J.F. Kennedy agreed with these ideas and he introduced preliminary legislation of Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the summer of 1963. Thousands of demonstrators participated on the March on Washington where King presented his speech "I Have a Dream" in order to support this law.[87]

In November 1963 J. F. Kennedy was assassinated and it was his successor President Lyndon B. Johnson who adopted the Civil Rights Act in 1964 which made segregation illegal. The Voting Rights Act was adopted in 1965 and provided male African-Americans by equal right to vote independently on literacy tests and other measures which discriminated them. In March 1965 nonviolent protests supporting African-Americans lost their power and importance because of raising racial violence and anger growing among white people. Finally, black people started to be inspired by thoughts of Malcolm X.[88] He led them to the

creation of institution under sole control of black people. In this way they attempted to reach political power and their own autonomy.[89]

3.2.3 Rosa Parks (February 4, 1913 - October 24, 2005)

African-American activist Rosa Parks[90], so-called “the first lady of civil rights”, was a very important and brave woman who by single action influenced the future of American nation and started up the Civil rights movement. She was born on February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee Alabama. She grew up in the era of segregation when Ku Klux Klan followers walked around her house in the streets threatening her family. She could not attend school for white children and when her grandmother fell ill she dropped out of the school for black children. Later she started to work in shirt factory. She married a NAACP member Raymond Parks and finished her degree at the high school in 1933. [91]

She became famous because she did not obey a driver on bus when he demanded her to give up the seat to a white man when she was going home from work on December 1, 1955. She was sitting at front in the part which was segregated for white people. Black people were supposed to sit in back and in case that the bus was overcrowded and there were white people standing, driver had the right to move the mark separating black people’s seats from white people’s seats. He was allowed to demand black people to give up their seat, stand up or leave the bus, even if the seat was reserved for black people. Rosa Parks refused driver’s order and as a result she was arrested and fined 14 dollars. This single woman’s action provoked most of the Civil rights activities against racial segregation.[92] Here is a record of discussion of Rosa Parks and driver of the bus published in documentary series Eyes on the Prize:

Why don't you stand up?" Parks responded, "I don't think I should have to stand up." Blake called the police to arrest Parks. When recalling the incident for Eyes on the Prize, a

1987 public television series on the Civil Rights Movement, Parks said, "When he saw me still sitting, he asked if I was going to stand up, and I said, 'No, I'm not.' And he said, 'Well, if you don't stand up, I'm going to have to call the police and have you arrested.' I said, 'You may do that.[93]"

Rosa Parks' activities did not bring her success in her life, she lost her job and had to move from Montgomery. In 1987 she founded the Institute for Self-Development and at the end of her life Rosa Parks received Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Clinton and Congressional Gold Medal. Rosa Parks passed away at the age of 92 in 2005 in Detroit. As an honor she lies as the first woman at the Capitol which is reserved for Presidents of the USA.[94]

3.2.4 Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968)

Martin Luther King, Jr.[95] was born on January, 15, 1929 in Georgia, named as Michael. Faith was very important for his entire family so he became member of the Baptist Church as well as his grandfather and his father who gave new energy to this church. King's childhood was peaceful and he had a loving family. However, he tried to commit a suicide after the death of his grandmother. King was very gifted at school. He attended segregated schools in Georgia, the Booker T. Washington High School and the Morehouse College in Atlanta where he reached his sociology B. A. degree. He passed three years of theological study at the Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. After questioning his faith, he finally entered ministry and empowered his faith. Martin Luther King, Jr. earned his doctorate degree at the Boston University and became pastor. It was in Boston where he met his wife Coretta Scott.[96],[97]

Martin Luther King, Jr. was the main personality leading the first African-American nonviolent demonstration called the Montgomery bus boycott as a reaction on Rosa Parks' case from 1955. He called for

nonviolent way of protests to reach desegregation. He embodied new energy for Civil rights movement because he was young and new. Finally, King and his followers achieved victory when segregation was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. As a result, Southern Christian Leadership Conference was founded as an organization supporting nonviolent way of promoting civil rights of African-Americans and Martin Luther King, Jr. was employed as its spokesman and president. King spoke to people all over the country in order to educate them and he traveled to India to inspire himself by Gandhi because Gandhi recognized a big success with his own nonviolent policy. King wrote five books and many articles. In his speeches given during Sit-ins, he advanced efforts of students in desegregation of lunch-counters. His house was bombed while he was performing his civil rights activism and he was arrested several times for violating law, but John F. Kennedy stood behind him and helped him to be released from prison.[98]

He was a leader of the peaceful March on Washington which attracted attention of approximately 250,000 people on August 28, 1963. On this demonstration, near the Lincoln Memorial, Martin Luther King, Jr. presented his famous speech "I Have a Dream". He emphasized possibility of equality of black and white people. King's speech changed the way a great deal of people perceived segregation of public facilities and discrimination of African-Americans. Finally, the Civil Rights Act was adopted in 1964. [99] Martin Luther King, Jr. states in his speech "I Have a Dream":

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 color of their skin but by the content of their character.[100]

In 1964 Martin Luther King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as the youngest man in the history. However, reactions on the Civil Rights Act were often cruel. During civil rights march, seventeen demonstrators were hurt and treated violently. In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was approved. Martin Luther King had to deal with a remarkable wave of followers of Malcolm X. and his idea of Black power.[101] King's activism started to be seen as lazy, passive and non-effective.[102]

Before the end of his life, Martin Luther King was frustrated and tired of the low progress of Civil rights movement, multiple imprisonments, threats and physical violence. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968. [¹⁰³]

3.2.5 Malcolm X. (May 19, 1935 - February 21, 1965)

Malcolm X.[104] was born as Malcolm Little on May 19, 1935 in Omaha, Nebraska. He was a charismatic Civil Rights movement activist. Since his childhood he and his family had to face threats from the Black Legion, organization that splintered from the Ku Klux Klan.[105] Malcolm X.'s experience with Ku Klux Klan members from his childhood published on official website dedicated to him states:

When my mother was pregnant with me, she told me later, a party of hooded Ku Klux Klan riders galloped up to our home... Brandishing their shotguns and rifles, they shouted for my father to come out.[106]

Racism they had to face was growing up. Even though all the family moved away, their house was burned down. Two years later Malcolm's dad was murdered, but police closed the case as an accident. After all, Malcolm's mother ended up in a mental institution.[107]

Malcolm X. studied at the West Junior High School, where he was treated well by his schoolmates, but they used him more like a toy for fun.

He was a smart, talented and successful student. However, his teacher destroyed his dream of being a lawyer when he told him, that he should be realistic, because an African-American boy cannot become a lawyer. This was the reason why Malcolm X. left school at the age of 15. In Boston, he performed different kinds of jobs and finally ended up as a drug dealer. He had problems with crime, prostitution and gambling. Finally, Malcolm X was arrested and sentenced to ten years in jail. During this time he was trying to gain further education by reading books and he inspired himself on the Nation of Islam and studies of its leader Elijah Muhammad. The Nation of Islam was a group of black Muslims supporting Black Nationalism. They required absolute separation of black people from white people. After his conversion to the Nation of Islam, Malcolm Little changed his name to Malcolm X.[108]

When Malcolm X. was released from prison, he was promoting the Nation of Islam. He was appointed Minister of Temple No. 7 and No. 11 in Harlem and Boston, created Muhammad Speaks newspaper and founded new temples. He used radio, television and newspaper as a mean of communication with people in the United States. He was an opponent of nonviolent protests. His idea of Black power was to create black nation no matter what it costs. He said that if government was not able to protect black people, they would have to protect themselves using any means which would be necessary. During several years, Malcolm X. reached fame and gained many supporters who joined the Nation of Islam.[109]

Martin Luther King, Jr. criticized Malcolm's idea of Black power for having damaging consequences on black people. However, more problematic for Malcolm X. was when he found out that his mentor Elijah Muhammad violated his rule of respecting celibate until marriage and seduced several women in the Nation of Islam. Afterwards, Malcolm X. refused further cooperation and left the Nation of Islam in 1964. He converted to traditional Islam during his journey to North Africa and Middle East and changed his name for the second time. This trip altered

his life and opinions concerning integration and Civil rights movement. He returned to the United States with a new vision of future and new energy which was necessary for the support of brotherhood and nonviolent revolution. Unfortunately, Malcolm X. was assassinated at the age of 39 by three gunmen who proved to be members of the Nation of Islam on February 21, 1965.[110]

The end of the 20th century was definitely one of the turning points in the history of African-American people. Multiple Civil rights movement activities such as Sit-Ins, Montgomery bus boycott and others achieved significant changes in minds of both black and white people and in the way black people were treated. African-Americans started to fight for themselves, present themselves in public, fight against segregation and all measures which limited their rights and freedoms. Finally, they achieved positive results in the form of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act.

3.3 Contemporary situation of African-Americans, famous politicians and cultural theorists

During centuries, the question of the right to vote, segregation and free choice of school were solved. Unfortunately, the question of money, economic situation and equality of opportunities remained unanswered. After the World War II everything seemed to be much easier for those African-Americans who were educated and belonged to the higher class than for those who were poor. Affirmative actions were established as programs supporting black students, workers, disabled people and women. Black politicians reached a huge influence through Congressional Black Caucus which was created in 1969 by the U.S. House of Representatives. This organization was trying to influence economic and social situation of African-Americans.[111]

After the abolition of slavery and all problems that occurred during the 20th century, the situation of African-Americans improved. Unfortunately there are still people refusing their equality. There are some areas, where education, living conditions, housing and health service for minorities of Blacks is not on the same level as the service given to white people. When Barack Obama[112] was elected President of the USA in November 2008, it seemed that American society and Civil rights movement experienced transformation. It was an important move for elimination of racial problems and discrimination in the United States. It was not expected that racism will be completely eliminated, but it was widely believed that thanks to Civil rights movement African-Americans would realize that they have a right to present their opinions, disagreements and that they are allowed to fight for it.[113] Ronald Richardson, randomly chosen African-American man to answer the question “What was the biggest contribution of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Civil rights movement” says:

The civil rights movement helped us understand that while racism will probably never go away, we still have the right, no matter what color we are, to be whatever we want to be in life - even President of the United States.[114]

3.3.1 Cornel West (born June 2, 1953)

Democratic Socialist, academic, activist, author and philosopher Cornel West[115] was born on June 2, 1953 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As a student Cornel West participated in many demonstrations in order to defend rights of black people and to promote black studies courses at the Kennedy High School. He was influenced by his religious education. He worked as a professor at the Harvard University, Yale, Princeton, University of Paris and later for the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. As a professor he specialized in African-American Studies, Philosophy, Religion and Divinity. [116]

Cornel West fought against apartheid[117] in South Africa and he pointed out living conditions of the poorest. He has published 19 books, edited some others and recorded several solo albums. He wrote a collection of essays called “Race Matter“ when he became a professor of African-American studies at the Harvard University. This collection, “Democracy Matters” and the memoir “Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud”, made him famous. He often participated in CNN, TV shows, radio programs and appeared in documentary films.[118]

He pointed out the problems with slow development of democracy and supported the idea of fight against imperialism. U.S. nation seemed to him as “racist patriarchal” nation ruled by white supremacy in all aspects of life. West claimed that white people still had not accepted black people as equal human beings. African-Americans felt to be in constant danger and they had to face physical violence without full protection. Their emotions, beliefs and hopes were influenced by their bad life experience and they considered themselves to be hated for their origin and race. He tried to conserve thoughts of Martin Luther King, Jr. concerning importance of telling the truth, faced manipulations and injustice of institutions and authorities.[119]

West’s life goal was to keep happiness and laugh in his life. He wanted to be positive all the time, because it was fundamental for black people while they were fighting for their freedom.[120]

3.3.2 Henry Louis Gates (born September 16, 1950)

Henry Louis Gates[121] was born on September 16, 1950 in West Virginia as a very clever and talented child. He enrolled at Yale University to receive his bachelor degree. Gates benefited from two fellowships which allowed him make trips across Africa. In 1973 he continued his studies at a part of Cambridge University in England where he became the first African-American to reach Ph.D in English language and

literature. He is known as an editor, literary critic author and educator. He specialized in American literature, history and culture. He was employed as teacher at Yale University, Cornell University, Duke University and Harvard University.[122]

He cooperated as a co-director on discovery of lost literary works in Black Periodical Literature Project. It is proved that during his research Henry Louis Gates found the first novel published by African-American author Harriet E. Wilson called "Our Nig". He collaborated as an editor on several pieces like "Black Literature and Literary Theory" and "Signifying Monkey: Towards a Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism". Gates is known for defining a new notion of signifying which denotes the strategy of indirect describing African-American history, experience and reality by using archetypes from African mythology in literature, religion, folklore and music. He supported development of African-American studies program while working as a director of the African-American Studies department at the Harvard University. He continues to participate in many television shows and he also cooperated on documents such as "Wonders of the African World", "America Beyond the Color Line" or "African American Lives".[123]

Henry Luis Gates was apprehended in 2009 when he had to break into his own house while coming back from abroad. His neighbours called police because they thought that it was a robbery. Police claimed that he was arrested for inappropriate conduct. Gates found acting of police as a sign of racism which provoked a huge wave of criticism. African-Americans are more likely to be negotiated by police than white people, just because of color of skin. President Barack Obama pronounced that it was a "stupid" act from the side of police.[124] Commentary of Barack Obama dealing with Gates case states:

I don't know, not having been there and not seeing all the facts, what role race played in that [Gates case]. But I think

it's fair to say, number one, any of us would be pretty angry; number two, that the Cambridge police acted stupidly in arresting somebody when there was already proof that they were in their own home; and, number three, what I think we know separate and apart from this incident is that there's a long history in this country of African-Americans and Latinos being stopped by law enforcement disproportionately. That's just a fact.[125]

Henry Louis Gates is married, he has two daughters and he works as a director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African-American Research. He gained a great deal of honors, more than fifty honorary degrees and was declared one of the 25 Most Influential American in 2007 by Time magazine in 2007.[126]

African-American question provokes different reactions of black and white people who live in contemporary society. African-Americans' lives experienced considerable improvements; they do not have to face segregation or ubiquitous discrimination. It is important that black people have their representatives, like personalities mentioned in this chapter, in national government, institutions and organizations. They can educate themselves without any limiting measures and they have a possibility to get a job suitable to their abilities and knowledge. However, racism is still deeply settled in some people and racially motivated crimes targeted on black people are not an exception.

4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEAS AND AFRICAN-AMERICANS' GOALS FROM THE 19th TO THE 21st CENTURY

4.1 Life of African-American people in current society

It is proved, that nowadays, racism is not as serious problem as it used to be in the 19th and 20th century and that most people would rather erase dark history of African-Americans. Today black people have

better chances to find a job, place to live, school to study. They can travel, vote and they are not limited in their rights as they used to be in the times of slavery and in the years soon after its abolition. However, it is still possible to find some people admitting that they are racists. They are mostly members of organizations like for example the Ku Klux Klan. Racist stereotypes connected with violence and sex prejudice persist. Because of this, African-Americans are more likely to be prosecuted for committing sexual or aggressive crimes than white inhabitants are. Black women often work in sex industry for less money than their white colleagues. African-Americans are more likely to be stopped by police while driving their car, to be investigated by police and they are sometimes discriminated while asking for a job. Poverty and problems with housing are not an exception.[127]

An example of stereotyping of black people mentioned by D. E. Rogers, a famous American novelist, from 2010 says:

The Katrina disaster was one of the most obvious examples of this bias in the last decade. The majority of the negative press coverage concerning looting and criminal behavior in post-Katrina New Orleans was focused on African-Americans. Some sarcastic commentators parodied the media coverage by observing that “Black people ‘loot’ food, but white people ‘find’ food.”[128]

The Entman-Rojecki Index of Race in Media study proves that African-Americans are often presented in movies and media as violent and vulgar personalities. Writers Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, mention:

Television ads now show many Blacks and eschew stereotypes. However, hidden patterns of differentiation and distance emerge on close analysis. Not surprisingly, for instance, Blacks do not touch Whites in the ads, but (unlike Whites) they rarely even touch each other, conveying a subtle message of Black skin as taboo. A hierarchy of racial

preference is embedded within the casting of commercials.[129]

In February 2012, on the occasion of Black history month's anniversary, figures concerning black population including people of mixed origin who were counted as black people were published by Census[130]. This anniversary has been celebrated each year in February since February 12, 1926. This date commemorates birthday of Abraham Lincoln and Frederic Douglas. In 2010, black population represented 13.6 % of total U.S. population, most of which live in New York City. It is estimated that there will be 65.7 million black people in the USA in 2050. In 2010, 82 % of African-Americans at the age of 25 and older reached high school diploma or higher, 18% got a bachelor's degree and 1.5 million gained an advanced degree. 11.1 million black people participated in congressional election in 2010. It represented 12% of total electorate. Family income increased for both black and white families, but not equally, because there have been fewer marriages and black people's income did not rise. Black households' income dropped to \$32,068 in 2010. In 2004 it was \$35,000 for black people and \$60,000 for white families. Poverty rate for African-Americans was 27.4 %. Health insurance was used by 79.2% black people in this year.[131]

Despite the fact that nowadays, the unemployment rate of white people is approximately 10%; the one for black people is more than 17%. It is influenced by depressed economy, illegal immigrants who create new competition and by illegal activities. Compared to success of 37% of white children, 45% of black children tend to move down in society and end up with lower incomes than their parents even though most of their parents are well educated and belong to middle and upper class today. Only around 17% of black children are more successful in earning money than their parents are. [132],[133]

4.2 Society's perception of African-Americans in their lives

According to psychologist Monica Williams, there is a great number of white people in America, who are scared of African-Americans. However, some white people feel to be superior over them and to be on the top of the social ladder. American society is deeply influenced by media, by their ancestor's opinions and by historic books which are portraying African-Americans in different ways. There is also a question of material self-interest which influences minds of many Americans. White people feel to be stolen jobs by black people and they blame them for their poverty. For some people it is important to belong into white community. They do not want to be different and criticized. That is the reason why they share the idea of racism with people who surround them.[134]

African-Americans have been stereotyped since the very first moment the first Africans were brought to the New World as dirty and contaminated people even though the importance of cleanness is one of their cultural features. This served as a false, but useful reason for segregation. Narcissism can represent one of the motives for racism. It is difficult for white people to admit that someone could be as worthy as they are. They sometimes try to keep their position by undermining and humiliating people who are different. They are not able to see that everything is not just black-or-white and it does not mean that someone who is different is unambiguously bad person. African-Americans are more likely to be suspected of committing crimes or taking drugs, but in fact, black youth are less problematic in this field than white youth are.[135]

According to studies published in 2011 by the Tufts University's School of Arts and Sciences and the Harvard Business School, it seems that white people feel to be discriminated by black people. They think that government focuses too much on minorities and provides them with more

benefits than they need. White people think that for example Affirmative action discriminates them in getting a job, because it obligates an employer to hire certain number of minorities. It means that they do not get the job if there will be places only for black people even if they would be better qualified. A great deal of white people thinks that racism against black people got better lately while black people are not so positive. Eleven percent of white people feel that white people are more likely to become the target of racial discrimination than Blacks are. A research made on a sample of 208 black people and 209 white people showed that only 2% of black people marked themselves as main racism victims.[136]

The USA is supposed to be “post-racial” state where most people deny being racists, but some of them feel free to present their opinions based on discrimination. In 2010, Luke Visconti explained that he agreed with the idea that black people were less intelligent than white people. He proved it by the fact, that there were only 38 African-American congressional representatives. [137]

Luke Visconti in this article explains:

Sen. Obama is the third black senator since reconstruction (which ended in approximately 1877). There have been 1,148 senators sworn in since 1877. African Americans have been fairly consistent at 13 percent of our population. If whites felt that blacks were intellectually equal, they certainly wouldn't have enslaved African Americans, and the Senate would have been far more than 0.26 percent black.[138]

According to figures quoted above, African-Americans are not very well represented on the level of national government, but they try to be involved in foreign affairs by the participation in nongovernmental organizations. They have representatives in the UNESCO, the Black church, the International Labor Organization, the World Court and other institutions and organizations of the U.N. system.[139]

4.3 How African-Americans see themselves today?

The majority of African-American population living in the United would not agree with the claim that they are living in the “post-racial” country. In 2008, on the occasion of presidential election when Barack Obama was elected the first black president, most of black people hoped that he would help them. They thought that he would improve their living conditions and that he would focus on black legal and mostly economic equality in the current society. They hoped that he would fight for their interests. It was seen as an important step in the history of the USA, because it is a country where racism was widely extended and where slavery had to be abolished by the Civil War. People will always remember Barack Obama because American nation chose this African-American personality to be their first black president.[140]

However, the truth is that according to a study made by the Washington University in St Louis in 2012, there is a great deal of African-Americans who think that they are less politically free than white people despite the fact that they used to be positive about their rising powers at the beginning of Obama’s presidency. During Obama’s presidency black unemployment rate raised to 15% and black people are three times likely to suffer from poverty than white people. It means that their situation did not improve. [141],[142]

On the other hand, there are black people with such positive opinions as Reverend Tim McDonald who claims that it is not a fault of president Obama. Unpleasant figures do not mean that he does not try to help them. There has always been a lag among communities in USA which means that some community will always happen to be in worse situation. Despite the fact, that president does not talk about race problems in public, because it causes controversial situation, African-Americans can see that this president helps them, Reverend Tim McDonald claims. He is taking appropriate measures to provide them with

unemployment benefits and extra healthcare. They believe that he would never stand against black population living in America.[143]

One of the most unfortunate events which demonstrated how serious and up-to-date problem is racial question happened on February 26, 2012. Seventeen years old Martin Trayvon was staying with his father in Sanford gated community[144] for seven days. He was just going to shop to pick up a snack when he met George Zimmerman, a 28 year old man who was performing neighborhood watch volunteer. Martin Trayvon had a gray hood pulled over his head and he was calmly walking watching the houses in the street with hands in his pocket. It seemed suspicious to Zimmerman so he called the Sanford Police Department. Despite the fact, that Martin was not committing any criminal activity, Zimmerman followed him and entered into a violent action with him. He shot Martin who died without any other witnesses. Soon after the accident Zimmerman told police that he acted in self-defense and police released him. However, DNA results did not find Zimmerman's DNA underneath Martin's fingernails. After revelation of several proofs public demanded Zimmerman's arrest and he and police were accused of racist behavior. Zimmerman was placed in custody in 2012 and he was charged of murder. Judge Debra S. Nelson ruled that hearing will begin on April 22, 2013.[145]

There exist several measures which are supposed to prevent minorities living in the USA from racism and discrimination. Some of the most important are these: Affirmative action, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Affirmative action is supposed to offer equal opportunity to get employment regardless of color, religion, sex or origin of a job applicant. Surprisingly white women are profiting the most from it, because it solves more problems with gender than racial discrimination.[146] There are different opinions concerning Affirmative action. Its supporters claim, that it serves to correct injustice that was done in the past, but opponents

claim that Affirmative action is limiting students and employees who are not African American.[147] The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission seeks to provide people with justice and equality at work. EEOC supports laws protecting job applicants against discrimination based on different race, religion, origin, color and sex.[148]

Unfortunately some African-Americans are undermined by subjective racially motivated information concerning African-Americans' unity, level of intelligence, ambitions, criminality and motivation to education given by national media. This is splitting black community apart and serves to maintain white dominance and control. Today, African-Americans know how important for social mobility is to reach education and they focus on it despite the fact that sometimes the integration is not easy.[149]

In 2009 the U.S. Senate issued resolution dealing with the apology for more than two centuries of enslavement of African-American people and for segregation. Similar apology was given by the House of Parliament in 2008. Republican Party considers this decision an important step for the nation which can make progress and create unified society. In connection with this apology, which some people see as a confession, the question of dealing with reparation payments for slavery, promoted by reparation activists, has been more discussed. Members of Project 21, leading nonprofit African-American organization founded in 1992, claims that government should move on.[150]

Jimmie L. Hollis, a member of the national advisory council of the Project 21 black leadership network, said in 2009 in the African Press International:

As an American of African ancestry, I think this apology is ridiculous and useless. It is just another 'feel good' action. If we are to start apologizing for every injustice and wrong done in the past, we will spend the next few decades just apologizing. Let's move on.[151]

Apology should have been given soon after the abolition of slavery. It will not remedy damages that have already been done and influenced position and decelerated development of African-American population. [152],[153]

4.4 Results coming out of the research

According to the research which was developed in this bachelor thesis it is sure that African-American people have made a considerable improvement and progress in their lives in comparison to the situation in the 19th century. However, it is definitely not possible to claim that they occupy the same position in the society of the 21st century as white people do. Even though slavery was abolished in 1863, it seems that not all black people reached freedom and equality at all levels of their lives. It is not possible to say, that African-Americans were completely free after the abolition of slavery. It was considered more like an official gesture, but in fact, difficulties for black people continued and they were not accepted as equal by people who surrounded them. They might not have been used as slaves, but their life conditions did not change very much and they had to fight for generations to gain respect.

In the following years they had to face racial prejudice, discrimination, fear and intolerance. The problem was not just in minds of white people. African-Americans needed to realize that they were as worthy as white people, that they were nothing less, that they did not have to underestimate themselves. They had to find out that they could present their opinions in public and that they should have the same rights as everyone else. A lot of African-Americans are grateful to all personalities mentioned in previous chapters and to a great deal of other important ex-slaves, leaders, authors and speakers, because their lives and deeds show and prove how strong, intelligent, courageous,

determined, ambitious and successful personalities in all branches of business and life they are.

According to this study it is obvious that one of the most important turning points which changed the way African-Americans were perceived and treated by white people were events connected with Civil right movement which have happened since 1950s. The development of the Civil rights movement and the way how African-Americans determinedly presented themselves, their ideas and their opinions in public influenced masses of African-Americans and gave them new energy to make their future better. All famous speeches delivered by personalities such as Martin Luther King, Jr. or Malcolm X. contributed to this improvement.

It seemed that problems dealing with racism against African-Americans and their rights almost disappeared by the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century and this thesis proves this fact. However, on the basis of information revealed in last chapters of this study it is clear that there are many problems which still occur among black and white inhabitants and need to be solved during next years. In fact, most of these days' Americans appear to be more tolerant and they accept different people more easily than their ancestors did. It is important for them to learn from the experience from history and to create their opinions regardless of racist and subjective information which are sometimes presented by media.

Even though a lot of positive information concerning the development of African-American lives exist, according to study published by the Foundation SumALL in 2013, number of slaves living today is higher than it used to be in 1866. These slaves are not property of their owner, but they are used for making money in all areas of business. The reason for this is that slaves are still very cheap workers. One slave costs around 140 dollars, but it depends on the place where he works and on the reason why he became slave. There are approximately 27 million slaves today while there used to be 25 million in 1866. People become

slaves from the same reasons as they used to. They are not able to pay their debts. Most of them lives in South Asia, but there are thousands living in Africa and the USA.[154]

5 CONCLUSION

The bachelor thesis “Role of African-Americans in the history of the USA” was elaborated based on the knowledge and information gained through the study of various printed and internet sources which are mentioned in bibliography. These sources focused on the history of the USA, slavery, the Civil War, autobiographies of several famous African-American leaders and personalities, racism, race question and current problems dealing with black people. The aim of this thesis was to elaborate a well-developed image of changes in lives of African-American people and to find out whether the situation and their living conditions have improved since the abolition of slavery or not. In this thesis, the output of a research portraying position of black people in different periods of time in the US history is presented. The description starts at the end of the Civil War, continues by the period of Reconstruction and it is further evolved by information about interesting facts and events from the 19th to the 21st century.

On the basis of the research I got an impression that even though restrictions targeting African-Americans seemed to have vanished at the end of the 20th century, their lives are today permanently stigmatized by their painful history and stereotypes which are settled deep in people’s minds. There are still people who deny admitting that black people are equal and should have the same rights. Facts revealed in this study proved that problems dealing with relations among white and black people are less frequent than they used to be, but the situation did not achieve a significant improvement by the abolition of slavery or soon after it. There was a slight change of the way white people treated black people thanks to the establishment of Civil rights movement, but the most tolerant society which can be unfortunately easily influenced grew in the 21st century.

At the beginning of the thesis, there are some theoretical chapters. The first one explains what the race question is. The others describe a

historical background of slavery, the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction. The rest of the thesis is divided into several parts according to the century which is described in them. Each chapter includes general explication of changes that happened and usually the most important personalities are mentioned there. The second part of the bachelor thesis is dedicated to the development in the 21st century where up-to-date problems are presented and some figures revealed by the latest studies are mentioned. Last chapter focuses on more detailed explication of results coming out of the research which was worked out for this thesis.

When I was writing my thesis, one of the biggest problems was to choose the way how to call people who have darker skin. In order to avoid problems, I used the most politically correct term “African-American” because I was talking about people living in the USA. People of darker skin have different opinions about what is insulting and what is not. Some of them prefer to be called “Blacks” with capital letter, some of them “blacks” with lower-case letter and the others prefer terms “African-Americans”, “African Americans” or “black people”. It is also possible to find expressions “Colored” and “Negro” but these are out-fashioned and were used in the times of Civil Rights Movement. Another acceptable is term “the one of African descent”. “N-word” (Nigger) is considered insulting and should be avoided.

A big number of sources, information and problems that concern this topic and could be mentioned in my bachelor thesis exist because I chose a very broad and extensive theme. However, I believe that I fulfilled the main aim which was defined in the introduction. I would be glad if my bachelor thesis served to public in order to provide them with different opinions and hopefully it will be an interesting way to get new knowledge about African-American people.

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8 ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis deals with the description of economic, political and social problems of African-American people in the history of the USA in order to find out whether there have been some changes in their lives. This thesis presents carefully elaborated comparison of perception of African-Americans based on opinions of different people. It provides a reader with the basic historical information concerning the main topic and it focuses on the important African-American personalities and emphasizes their thoughts. Facts are chronologically ordered into chapters according to the century when they happened. Research begins at the end of the Civil War and continues until present. The reader of this thesis will learn more about unfortunate events dealing with living conditions of slaves in the USA, and he will be provided with basic information about famous African-American personalities and organizations. Moreover, this thesis shows the most serious current problems connected with the main topic and it presents to the reader different opinions on the position of African-Americans in current society.

9 RESUMÉ

Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na popis ekonomických, politických a společenských problémů Afroameričanů v dějinách USA s cílem zjistit, zda jejich životy zaznamenaly nějaké změny. Na základě názorů různých lidí tato práce prezentuje podrobně vypracované srovnání toho, jak lidé Afroameričany vnímají. Poskytuje čtenáři základní historické informace týkající se hlavního tématu, zaměřuje se na významné Afroamerické osobnosti a vyzdvihuje jejich myšlenky. Fakta jsou řazena chronologicky do kapitol v závislosti na století, ve kterém se odehrála. Výzkum začíná koncem Občanské války a pokračuje až do současnosti. Čtenář této práce se dozví více o nešťastných událostech, které jsou spojeny s životními podmínkami otroků v USA, a budou mu poskytnuty základní informace o významných Afroamerických osobnostech a organizacích. Tato práce také poukazuje na nejzávažnější problémy současnosti, které souvisí s hlavním tématem, a nabízí čtenáři názory různých lidí na postavení Afroameričanů v dnešní společnosti.

10 APPENDICES

Appendix I

1. Black history Month - Surviving the Middle Passage, *Reflections by Shirley*. [online]. Available from <http://reflectionsbyshirley.com/blog/?p=679> [Retrieved 4th April 2013].
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10. Segregation in Western PA - special education articles. [online]. Available from <http://all-that-is-interesting.com/rosa-parks-mug-shot> [Retrieved 4th April 2013].
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Appendix I

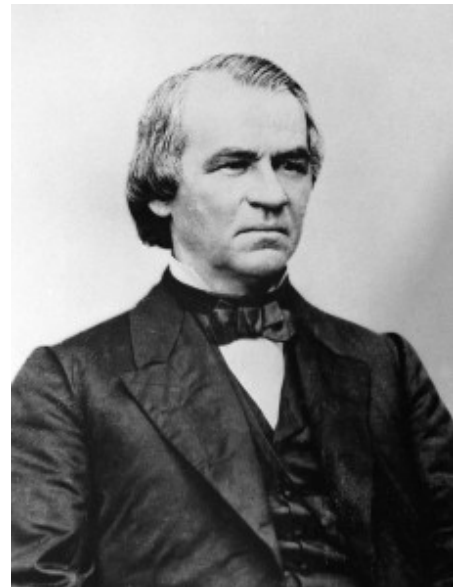
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Appendix II

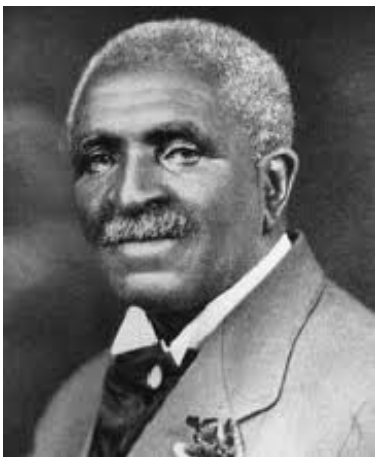
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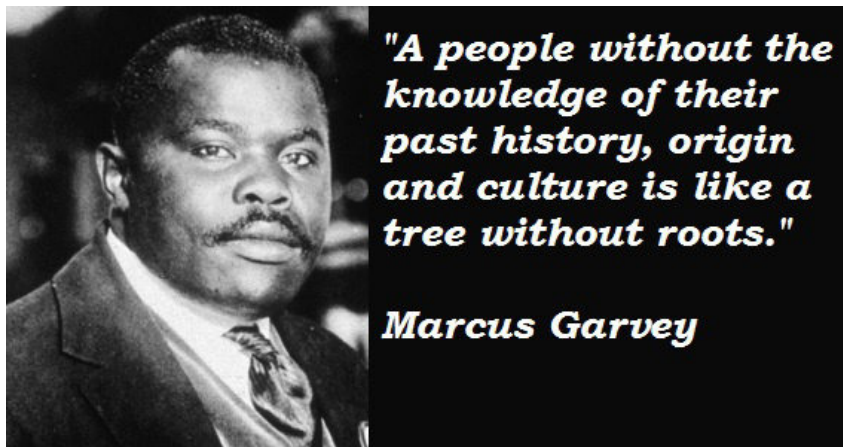
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Appendix III

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Appendix IV

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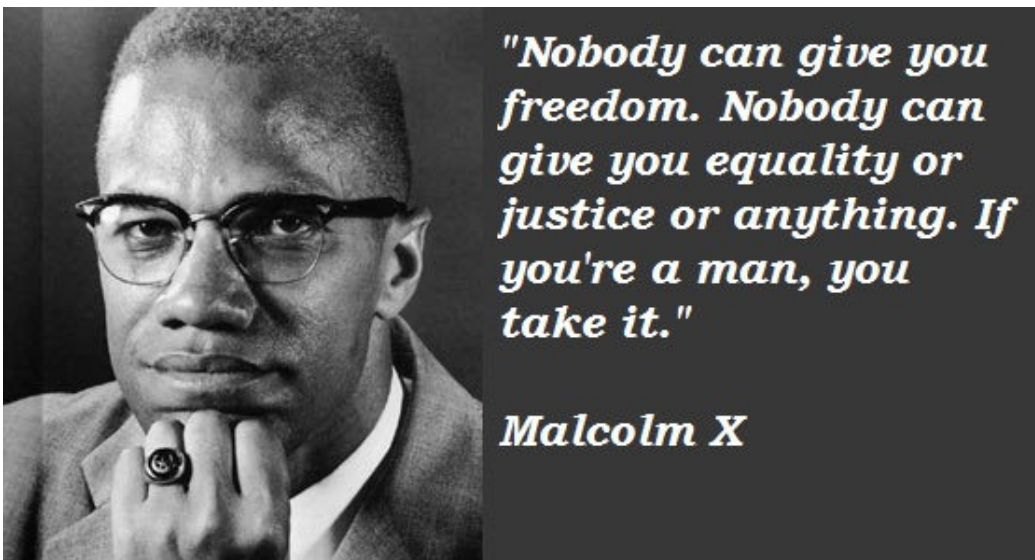
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Appendix V

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