

# [The struggle of black inequality](https://assignbuster.com/the-struggle-of-black-inequality/)

Adam faircloff commences at a convenient point of the failure of the reconstruction process after the civil war and triumph of white supremacy in the decade that followed. Fircloff ‘ s writing indicated the struggle of black inequality in the period immediately following the triumph of the northerners over the south republics and the hopes and expectations of the Negro population in the aftermath of the civil war. There hope of freedom and equality before the law.

The 13 thirteenth amendment and the recognition of Negro marriages,, their right to form families , to worship as they viewed fit, to acquire and hold property , enjoy the freedom of movement but they soon realized that liberation would be empty without land , legal rights and the right to vote in and atmosphere free from persecution , Fircoff skillfully introduces the aspirations that black held through the period 1890 to 2000 and the inequality they suffered in gaining what was legally theirs at the hand of a militant and biased white population.

Emancipation was nothing without independence and the Negro population quickly realized that and began organizing themselves into groups and association to ensure this. They began to distance themselves from the white population by forming their own churches and rejecting the limitations of the whites in laboring contact.

Faircliff illustrated the circumstances that surrounded the fall of the reconstruction program with the assassination of President Lincoln and the appointment of the former slave holder vice president Andrew Jackson, this political situation undermined the reconstruction movement as He quickly reintroduced self government to the southern states.

The introduction of Black codes helped to nullify the reconstruction movement as the legislature passed discriminatory laws, that place blacks under strict white supervision, the black codes expresses the determination of southern whites to define freedman of color as rural laborers with inferior right. The black codes convinced many republicans that the reconstruction process needed federal governance, along with race riots that were prevailing through the southern states during this time . The republican realized that the reconstruction process was being sabotage by the president and there was a need to regain control of the process.

In the 1866 congressional elections the republican party was able to gain a 2/3’s majority in the new congress and they were able to return the south to a military occupation and restart Reconstruction anew. The program is referred to as the Radical Reconstruction Process, the 14th amendment of 1867 stuck down all Black codes making black full citizens and the “ equal protection of all laws” An the fifteenth amendment 1870 forbade denial of the vote to any adult male base on race, class , color or former servitude . The republican the went about a process of registering the black population

Fairclough depict the upward movement of the black population under the reconstruction process, the holding of public office , under the occupations of sheriffs, judges, councilmen and commissioners , legislators, congressmen and senators,. He notes the role of the freedmen’s bureau in creating a system of education for the black population. Firclogh also points toward one of most important flaws in the radical reconstruction process that sabotaged the success and that was land. The promise of 40 acres and a mule that was expected did not materialize instead the republican part gave back whites their confiscated land .

He note however that blacks did mage to acquire land but fails to reveal the process of the land acquisition, and the ma fact that many blacks , began to cooperated under a system of sharecropping, he also fails to reveal the continued domination of the white landholder during this process. He illustrates another flaw of the Republican part in the process and this was the Education process, with the closing of the freedman’s bureau in 1870 education was placed under thee supervision of state legislatures, and under them, the system faced gross neglect.

In 1890 i/2 of the white population was enrolled in school in comparison to the 31 % of the blacks . And high illiteracy gap between the races with the 65 of the black population being unable to read or write. However the worst failure of the reconstruction project was the governments inability to enforce it’s own policy of racial equality. Radical in conception it was weak in execution, The republicans alienated most of the white southerners by disenfranchising them , they quickly reinstated the confederates into the union and had a mere skeleton p force to maintain control in the south.

The idea of reconstruction was not well meet whit white southerners as they rallied behind the democratic part and the fought to reestablish white supremacy. Terrorism was employed to scare off whites sympathetic to the cause and the Ku Klux Klan was in Pulasksi Tennessee in 1866. However it was the blacks that bore the brunt of the terrorism this terrorist threat help in the destabilization of the republic legislature in the republican strong holds of South Carolina , Louisiana, Mississippi .

The republican attempted to stop the wave of these terrorist attacks by deploying troops , forming state militia, spending the writ of habeas corpus and prosecuting. . In a move to legislate through the federal government and they allowed the democrats to redeem the south. With the democrats in power in the southern legislatures, the attempted to infringe on the black voting process, by sleath , they gerrymanded electoral districts, abolished elective post and devise complicated methods of the procedures of voting.

They attempted by every means possible to sabotage black voting and even resorted to fraud. But the points out that the black vote was hard to suppress despite of every obstacle blacks continued to vote in large numbers. In 1890 Mississippi the state with the largest black population adopted a new constitution requiring all electors to be able to read and interpret any part of the constitution this cut down vote from 190, 000 To 8, 000.

This led to ripple effect in other states as the federal government’s inaction on this matter led to adoption of this procedure in other states in the south. Faircloff also draws reference to the attempts at a populist movement based on bi raciality. The populist argument that blacks and whites alike face the same economic problems and ought to act together, the accident of color did not make a difference in the interest of farmers share croppers and laborers.

In North Carolina in 1984 the populist and the republican formed a coalition referred to as ‘ Fusion’ and was elected to power. Fusion was home grown experiment in biracial politics that allowed for a greater degree of black participation. However the modeled was short lived and was never exported to the other southern states. The model failed under the banner of white supremacy and the whites organized themselves into quasi military groups and the newspapers were dominated by instance or alleged instance of Black men reaping white women.

Hysteria was raced at the threat of Negro Domination . He raises the point that Fusion would have collapsed without the interface of thew white supremacist because of it own contradiction, while they accepted bi raciality they shied away from promoting racial equality. Firciff also attributes the failure of reconstruction to the lack of interest by the republican party, because of their failure to protect their interest in North Carolina t it represent their half hearted commitment to the politics of the north.

BY 187 and the failure of reconstruction they made only token gestures to the movement for racial equality and by 1900 they were comfortable in endorsing white supremacy. The had lost their belief in the blacks ability to rise to level of whites due to the fact that immigrant were viewed as inferior white breed if this was so then how could the blacks be remotely equal to the old stock Americans. Firclough in this chapter traces the demise of the reconstruction movement in the south he attributed this to the changing northern perception of the ability of the blacks to transform themselves according to the republican.

As time passed the Influx of immigrant in the northern states contributed to the changing perception of the northern whites to the status of the blacks and the understanding of the northern whites of the racial supremacy of the south. This massive influx of inferior whites helped the whites to come to terms with the inferiority of the black, also the southern had launched a series of campaigns at the northern to educate the north about the realties of the Negro population preaching the doctrine separate but equal, all of these factor helped in establishing the supremacy of the white man.

In the next chapter two chapters he looks at the two extremes of the responses to the conception and practice of black inequality, protest and accommodation, especially he illustrates two Black Americans who epitomized to two diverging conceptions of how the society should be organized , Ida . B Wells and Booker . T. Washington. Chapter is dedicated to the work and protest of the colored Journalist Ida b. Wells and her campaign against Lynching, he also address’s the formation of women’s clubs and groups of colored descent, and the raising of international awareness of the inhumanities of lynching in Southern America..

Fairclough described her campaign against lynching as the starting point in the modern civil rights struggle, the beginnings of the first organized fight against the concept of white supremacy. The chapter describes the harsh realities of lynching as a method of justices and the general apathy and unofficial acceptance as a method of justice in the southern. He makes clear to mention that it was accepted by both the people and the officials as a method of justice and the detention of perpetrators were never forthcoming, despite the fact that many of the perpetrators were boastful of their deeds.

The ideological justification of lynching was the fact that the black man was savage brute, it was justification for deny blacks the vote, discrimination I the workplace, discrimination in their ability to be juries and it expresses the need for strict segregation by stressing black sexuality and the awful consequences of social equality, which was seen as the rape of white women and the hand’s of black men. He points out that during the 1880’s the black organisation, did little more that denounce the process of lynching and their response were caution and apologetic. It was Ida B.

Wells an outspoken Journalist who challenged the idea of lynching as a justification of rape, even denying that lynching was a form of justice against rape but it was a method of terror and inhumanity to surpress the economic progress of the black man because of the fears of economic displacement if the black man advanced. Wells started her journalism career as an unpaid contributor to a local black newspaper but soon she was expanding her base by selling articles to newspapers such as the “ the American Baptist”, The Indianapolis world” the Kansas city dispatch and the New York Freedman .

In 1889 she became part owner and editor of the Memphis free speech. Wells openly depicted the idea of Black men rapeing white women but put for the few of a consensual sexual act between the two parties in once of her article. The south retaliated Threading to hang the writer of the article he two business partners fled an she moved to the North to avoid retribution. Her migration to the north allowed her galvanize the artrocies of lynching and the and gain support for her movement against the inhumane method of justification.

In 1895, she published a Red Record that investigated the circumstances surrounded the occurrence of lynching and he was revealed that only 1/3 of the lynching cases in the south there was ever a justification of rape, this emphasized her point of the brutality of the process and lackluster justification. She was pivotal in raising international awareness of the inhumanities against lynching . Her 1893 trip to London helped to gained disapproval for the brutality of the process and embarrassed the united states on the international stage.

Her most important allies emerged in the 1890’s with the formation of black women’s clubs and in1896 the National association of colored women were formed. By 1900 the NACW had 18, 000 members in 300 local clubs. She was directly involved in the formation of the Women’s Loyal Union . These clubs supported Wells attack on lynching echoing her denial that rape was either a justification or a cause . In raisin the subject of interracial sex Wells challenged the stereotype of the depraved , lubricious Negro.

Wells made an enormous contribution to the , modern civil rights struggle he impact was felt and her arousal of international attention helped in the process of the decline of lynching. BY 1985 Booker T. Washington emerged giving his famous Atlanta compromise speech which crystallized the tread towards accommodation, he urged blacks to abandon agitation and for new settlement was proposed between the races a settlement of accommodation. Booker T . Washington was a living refutation of White Americas degrading image of the black man.

His unflagging efforts to mend the rift between the black man and the white earned a reputation as a statesman as well as an education and by the time of his death in 1915 he was the most powerful black leader in America. Washington preached the ideology of economic cooperation and offered two concessions . The first was the admission that radical reconstruction had been a mistake believing that blacks had started from the top instead of at the bottom and had devoted too much energy to politics neglecting the skills of habit and industry.

The second concession to white assurance was the fact that blacks were not looking for social equality and many white saw this an endorsement to racial segregation.. Though challenged and critised Washington put forth a positive program for economic cooperation . He urged blacks to stay in the south concentrate on working hard rather than agitating for their rights and cultivate friendly relations with the white southerners.

Washington’s Atlanta comprise ushered in a new era of race relations but as the 19th century gave way to the 20th century and the position of blacks did not improve he was criticized by a small but influential group that later from the NAACP . They claimed that the Atlanta compromise was not a compromise at all but blacks made all the concessions and whites made nothing. The comprise seemed more to illustrate and emphasize he fact of white supremacy. According to Fairclough Washington strategies for black process rested upon his Tuskegee Institute and the idea it represented.

It arrived in Alabama in 1881 and was administered only by black persons.. In creating a wholly black runned school, Washington was making a powerful statement of racial equality. It was proud symbol of hope to both Black African and West Indians. Tuskegee represented the philosophy of progress through education. . The Tuskegee Idea was progress through master basic working skills and applying them to the demands of the Southern agricultural economy.

Firclough in his fourth chapter describes the rise of the NAACP , this organisation spearheaded the black struggle for equality and became one of the most influential organisations of reform in American history. On Mat 31st 1909 a array of eminent American gathered in New York city to attend the National Conference on the Negro and they denounced the growing oppression and brutality that blacks were enduring. The men and women who formed the NAACP were typical of the Progressive era (1980-1917) .

The whites within the organisation were affluent old stock American , protestant, socialist , they lived in the big cites and many were descended from the abolitionist movement. The blacks were also well educated and of relatively high economic standing. Howe ever fairclough indicates that those who formed the movement differed from the conventional progressives who had little interest in Black America. The NACCP ideology was a rejection of total racism , they believed in the equality of all humanity beyond the lines of color.

The moved repudiated Booker T. Washington’s claim of advancement through accommodation and their was a call for agitation against oppression. The conference insisted on a strict adherence to the constitution and equality. Howevre fairclough concludes that the NAACP was and unbalanced and uneasy relationship between whites and blacks . Whites were well represented on the 30 member board but the 3 key positions of prominence were held by whites. This made it uneasy in the eyes of it s critics but it was W.

E Bois presence and support of the movement that aided their credibility as a organization geared toward the advancement of Black America. W. E Bois was a well educated Colored defender of Black equality versed in the arts he was a ardent critic of Booker T. Washington’s accommodation program. . He believed that true emancipation would not coming along through economic striving alone .. Dois idea of the talented tenth as a cultured broadminded leadership , that would fight for equal rights .

His views were in direct opposite to Washington as he belived that no amount of economic wealth could counter the loss of education or the right to vote. The Niagra movement formed in 1905 was the first collective attempt by Afivcan Americans to demand full citizenship tights in the 20th century, howere fairclough saw this movemnt as failing to to be a beckpoon of black protest as it also demonstrated the flaws that accompanies Dubois leadership in the fact that its roots were in the Northern States and was ill trusted byy black southerns.

Firclough attributed the race riot of 1906 which took place in atlantan as an important , ark in the failure of the Niagra movemnt as it demoralized the altanta leadership and gace Wqashington a platform on which to reaserat his influence in the black community. The failure of the niagra movement allowed for the progession of the NAACP and DuBois as it spokeman. The Naacp pursued a line of aggesive litigation. Firclugh illustrated the fire of the movement, and the increades support of the movemnrt that was demonstrated n byt thr increase in the number of menm, eber, .

In 1916 the membership stood at 8, 785 wirth 8 brances spread throughout the north and sout. Firclogh claimed that the death of Booker T. Washington opened up a vaccum that was filled by the NAACP, Bbut this did not mean unity as a number of blacks especially in the south were reluctant to the isea of open aggitaaion. Firclouges deals with the imact of the First World War on the community of black American as it inspired blacks with hopes that this war would end white supremacy as the civil war had enced slavery..

The great was according to Fairc, logh had a number of effects on on Black Americ . The first and was most notable was the great Migration to the Northern States he attributeds this to the ecnomic oppurtunites created by the outbreak of the war, industries that had previously excluded blacks , opened their doors to them during the great war . Firclough maked the important point that though Ecnomic oppoutunity may have been a pull ffator in this migration politics played and influential role as he attributes thoiis to the fact of decades of oppession in the Southern Staes.

He also notes that the war present a renewed effort at aggiatation, due to the racial segration in the military . This led to a more miltant attides as the blacks became more resentful to racial dicrimation at home so were the whites in their determination to blackes repressed. The migration resulted in a vicious blash by white America as they saw the black movement as a threat to their ecnomic security. Om July 2nd 1917 in Houston , a brtual race riot insued that left 40 blacks dead and 8 whiteds dead, this illustrated the intensity of the tension in the migration process.

There was clear miltary segration Fairclough draws referance to the fact that 80% of the blacks were assigned to labour battalions and comprised of 1/3 of the armys pick and shovel workers. He attributes this to the miltance in america on their return the bitterness of their discrimantion changed the poltical landscape and transformed black aspirations /This miltancy was captured by Jamican born Marcus Garvey leader and founder of the Unia The Universal Negro Improvement Association.

The powers of DuBois and Garvey helped to transalated black aggitation internat an international affir. In the post world war senarion the NAACP began to gro w I the southern states The militancy manifested itself in the formation of labour unions and organized protest. The climate of the period after the great war was tense. The blacklash was even tenser Firclough describes the read summer of 1919 to emphasis this point in the racial tension within society. As it expolded in violence and lychying to both north and south.

During this period as well the Interracial Cooperation committee was forded to end racil viloence and factilate corporation. The sisthe chapter entiled Maarcus Grvey and the UniA reflects on the creation of a mass movement, the first of it kind intergrating black america. It was a nationalist movement of internation dimensions. Gverynism was buit upon the idea of th esuperiotry of the black race dismissing notions of black inferorty. Garvey a firery orator was able to entrall mass support for the concept of africa for the africans.

Firclough accounts the rapidity of the rise of gaverynism to the death of booker t washington and the UNIA ablity to showcase the strenght of an all black organisation , as the NAACP had failed because of it white mebership. Grvey embraced the idea of Racial Segreatiom am advocated sepreatism , he advocated racial purity and he asdvocated the accomodationist philsophy of washington. this in may wasys discredited his legitmacy, the failur e of the black strline and the Libya movemet all helped in the disintergration of the movemnt of garveyism.

He also attibutes the changing direction of the garvey philosophy as one of the major reasons for the failure of the moveme, the most erronous action on the part of Garevey agcording to Firclugh was the fac tthat he admitted to holding secret talks in Altand with the imperial wizard of the Kuklux Klan this was viewd as an act of betrayal by the black community to the idea of black nationalism. This new program adopted by the garvey movement was attacked with a vengence. And anti garvey movemeny was lauched comprised of memeeberso f the NAACP nad other promibnate ofFICAL.

The y atteepted to discredit aGarvey character and 1927 he was deprted to Jamica on the basis of Mail Fraud. Firclough makes pains to prtroy the movement aas a mass movement of internation propotions demostrating the fact that the movement was sprending throughout the world and the British empires concern with the movement as they viewd it as a threat to the status quo within their own therritioes. Chapter 7 the radical thirties attempts to capture the radicalism that sweep acrooss america during the great deperession that country face in the 1930’s.

The chapter caputres the sprit of the Swellinf tensions and the rise of cmmunist as an avenue for social and ecnomic redress. Firclough attributes he rise of the Communism as a ideology of change to the Scottsboro affair he usess this a means of illustrating the rise of the party as a deliverer of justice and their abilty to fight for a cause and their willingness to take on the cause of the black poupaltion. He also indicated the growing faction between the NAACP nad the Comminust party during this period again indicating the spilt in the movemet of the black population.

He vies the communist party as being an avenue of change especially when both white and black america where surfferinfg immense ecnomic harsip. He puts forth the view that the NAAACP was a inadequate organisation during this period of ecnomi didtress as they failed to relaise the climate of the nation and their emaphasis of civil rights created a vaccume that the communist was able to fill with their advocation of bettertin the ecnomic conditions of the working class. The 1930’s saw mass action on the part of blacks through labour unions.

The most powerful exaample according to Fairclough was the autnomous action taken by the Brotherhood of sleeping car porters. In 1935 the BSCP signed a contract with the pullman company who were veryantiunion , gaining substantial perkes for their member. Under the leadership of Phillip Randolph the BSCP was able to make of one of the most triuph conclusions to one of the longest negoitating preocess and in the this action they gained one of the most imporatanr regoniation in the Ameriacn Labour Movment they were the first Black organisation to gain recognition to by the American Labour Movemt.

Its victory embodied a contradiction between means and ends and bedivilled the struggle for equality. The formation of the NaTIONA Negro Congress and thiere attempted Mass March on Washington inn 1941 alowed for the excutive order 8802 which allowed for theelimation of discrimation of blacks in defense industires and government agencies. The order was an affermertive commitment to racial equaltiy by the government of the united States. Hoever by 1945 the radicalism associated with the communist ideology had run it course as the coldwar action characterized by the Mc Catheism commemece.

Therefore elimating the commist Ideology as an alternative to change . Chapter 8 raises the issue of the black sittion in the south between the period 1919-1942, The struggle for racial equality can be chronicled in termes of aggitation and protest , courtroom confrontation and non violent progress. In the segregated south during the heyday of white supremact which lasted until about 1950 balcks rarely challed whites wtithout undiscriamated brutality as a reaction. But fairclough decribes methods in which blacks adopted to ensure their survival within the confines of white suprmacy.

He decribes that their freedom was to organize under the the banner of Racial Unplift . Behind the walls of segreations , they built parallell insitutions, Racial Uplifement represented one step forward but two steps backward, as they adopted tactics of indirection , they worked for shortime improvement within their seperated world. Women played and imporatat role in bridging the clour lines, viewed as less threatening than men they were able to cordinate with white women attempt to instruct reform.

At a specail meeting in mephis in 1920 the women’s arm of the Commision on interracial cooperation and the women’s missionary council of ther e Methodist church made a gumeue landmark in the interracial movement. It represented the idea of coporation didpite the fact that the meeting failed to organize any program it represeated n ideal. In 1930 a group of 26 women intiated the most significant campaign against racial discrimation.

Thr associating of southern Women for the Prevention of Lyching and by 1941 this women wre able to secure 1, 355 pledges by white policemen and sheriffs to prrtect the rights of prisoners. Friclough puts forth the view that interracial cooperative movements had always been a poor subsitute for political action , as it was viewd a an istiution geared toward presavong the status quo rather than changing it. He claims that the CIC necciatd in oerder to appease southern whites , which was a basic contradiction at the heart of the interracial co-opereration movement.

Education , revealed the ambiuties of thee campaign for better schools . The education system was a battle for blacks, tlack southerners sinc ethe ccommerce of the rconstruction program depended on white philanthropy to fund many of their insiutions. But dispite the raise and improvement in edication it was scarified at the cost of greater bureaucratic control by southern whites. However education was seen as having the long range effect of norishing and strenghting the Negro protest, Black schools and colledges encouraged political awarness by teaching literacy.

Education inspired self worth , ambition and a disire for liberation . In chapter 9 “ The Naaco’s challege to white supremacy, 1935-45 , fairclough attemptd to put forth the claim that even in the deep south during the zenith of white supremacy , some black southerns protestes agaist Jim croow.. There was sublte resistance by indirect means and those who agitated openly to racial discrimination. In this chapter he attributes the rise of the early civil rights movement to the growth of the NAACP as a mass organization.

Many of the NAACP critics viewed the oranisation as comprising of mainly upper and middle class men and women who were not intouch with the masses but fairclough skillfull articles that this was nesscarry as the men and women who led this organization had to be economically independent of whites in order to perpetuate the cause of the movement . the rise of the NAACP was attributed to the gowth in labour unions and their integrating into the NAACP , by 1946 ther was pover 500, 000 many of whom had already participated in openaggitation under their respective unions.

Firclough empoles the point that the second world war bought with it employment, and turned the pacifc coast into an economic colossus. And again black americ pressed their claim of eual citezenship . But the attiudes of white amaerica wre strigent. The second wwaorld war bought jobs but noe equality. The exectutive order of 1941 was vwed as the greatest victory since the civ emancipation howere the formation of the Fir Empoluymnet Practice Committee that was issued under the oder was sabotaged by the attiude of racial America, demonstrating that racial tension were paramount diuing the 1940’s .

This tesion according to fairclough was not limited to empoymnt pratices and industries only . It extended to the military as well, while America portrayed the image odf equality during the War it remained highly divided , this resulted in tesion and violence within the military ranks. An issue which escalated uring the war was the segreation issue, and according to Firclough the issue loomed large under wartime pressure and the incident of violence was pervasive.