

Final exam

[History](#)



“ Eight Alabama Clergymen’s Public ment to Martin Luther King, Jr.”

Quotation Essay The analyzed quotation is part of “ Eight Alabama Clergymen’s Public Statement to Martin Luther King, Jr.”. It was written by a group of white clergymen from Birmingham in 1963. That year the integration process between white and African-American population was going on in southern states. The eight clergymen represented Episcopalian, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, and Jewish faiths. They included priests, bishops, ministers, and a rabbi. In the statement the clergymen expressed their criticism of King’s civil rights demonstrations. The authors of the statement called for ending the protests in Birmingham and believed that such measures would not solve the problem or ease racial tension. The main point in the “ Eight Alabama Clergymen’s Public Statement to Martin Luther King, Jr.” is that communities should reach compromise without demonstrations in the streets. The clergymen believed that direct action could only make the situation worse and called for patience and gradual change through negotiation. The quotation suggests that demonstrations prevent success of integration in the community and mentions the “ outsiders” influence (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). This part of the statement refers to Dr. King and suggests that he is not able to understand the peaceful processes in Birmingham. The clergymen, in their turn, assume to be more knowledgeable about the situation. They contrast actions inspired by King to the decisions of “ local Negro leadership” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). The white community personified by the clergymen approves of the local leaders because they “ called for honest and open negotiations of racial issues in our area” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin <https://assignbuster.com/final-exam-essay-samples-8/>

Luther King, Jr.”). This is the assertion the clergymen agree with. The authors of the statement believe that all demonstrations should stop and the civil rights issues should be solved by negotiations among local leaders. In clergymen’s opinion only local citizens, “ citizens of our own metropolitan area, white and Negro”, can take part in the process since they have the necessary “ knowledge and experience of the local situation” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). If we consider that the clergymen express the opinion of the white community, it would become obvious that the civil rights movement was not seen in the broad perspective. It was not regarded as the process that involved the whole state and country. The quotation implies that the white population saw integration process as an issue affecting parts of communities. It was not the change for the whole state and society but the issue that could be resolved locally. The clergymen admit that there is a problem but they do not know how to solve it. Besides they do not seem to be interested in coming up with the solution quickly as they refer to finding “ proper channels for its accomplishment” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). The point is stressed again as the clergymen show understanding: “ We recognize the natural impatience of people who feel that their hopes are slow in being realized” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). The analyzed quotation shows the two sides to the conflict. The opinion of the oppressed is given in the subtext: they see the situation changing very slowly and take action. The oppressors, on the other hand, are not interested in making quick changes, they are still thinking about making the changes. The point is stressed by the clergymen when they refer to the integration process not as series of actions but as the situation that hopefully would

<https://assignbuster.com/final-exam-essay-samples-8/>

result in changes and call it “ days of new hope” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). Although the demonstrations that took place in Birmingham were peaceful, the clergymen continuously spoke of violence in their statement. They disapprove of violence as such: “ hatred and violence have no sanction in our religious and political traditions” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). At the same time they believe that demonstrations are “ actions as incite to hatred and violence, however, technically peaceful” (“ Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”). The implied meaning of the quotation is that all actions that African-American population takes, especially actions that do not have approval and supervision from the white community, are potentially dangerous. Consequently, to preserve peace in community the demonstrations should be stopped. The main argument in the analyzed quotation is that inhabitants should remain calm and maintain peace in time of transition. The authors of the statement repeatedly address the fact that they have authority to give spiritual guide to the community. As their statement was published in the newspaper their audience included the whole population of the city, state and possibly of the South. The clergymen of different faiths tried to establish common ground. I think that this attempt was of great importance and value especially in the time of transition. On the one hand, the statement written by the respected clergymen could play a big role in relieving the tension. On the other hand, the authors’ arguments and their choice of words made the analyzed quotation sound like the manifestation of oppressors’ viewpoint. The brief laconic statement and the prescriptive tone of the quotation could convince the community that the protests were the attempts of African-American

population to interrupt the lawful and peaceful process of transition. It would seem that the protesters were rushing the events; they jumped to conclusions and were guided by suspicious strangers. The analyzed part of the “ Eight Alabama Clergymen Public Statement to Martin Luther King, Jr.” made it seem that the ideas expressed by the white community supported peace, while Dr. King did not have the proper understanding of the situation and put the peaceful processes at risk. I do not agree with the ideas expressed in the given quotation as they present the biased view of the situation. In my opinion, the clergymen did not truly want to promote understanding. Otherwise they would have called for dialogue, not absence of action and passive waiting. Besides, the other side of the story, the supporters of Dr. King, is portrayed in negative light. The authors do not try to understand the true nature of protests, so they want to ban them as something not corresponding to their plan of actions. But the actions need a compromise and a compromise means considering the opinion of the other side. As the quotation does not demonstrate respect and understanding of the position of King’s supporters, it cannot achieve its goal. Its assertions and meaning become biased and do not help relieve the tension. Therefore the main message of the analyzed quotation is that the clergymen wanted all the protests in the streets to end even though the latter were nonviolent. The authors of the statement felt that the only solution was dialogue. The main point of the statement is that the African-American and white members community should work together. Attempts of one side of the dialogue to create nonviolent tension in the community was seen as negative and dangerous to the goals of the dialogue. Works Cited Eight Alabama Clergymen's Letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Web. 16 Dec. 2012. . <https://assignbuster.com/final-exam-essay-samples-8/>