

A problem of oppression in united states

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The Oppressed (Unpopular by the Majority) Opinion

The United States is a nation with great diversity that offers freedom to everyone with equal opportunity... so it is believed. For as long as the United States has been diverse, there have always been groups of people that are ranked within a social hierarchy. The United States displays a system where white men seem to be on top of this pyramid while all other groups such as women, African Americans, members of the LGBT community and much more have fought and continue to fight for justice within their 'group'. There have been examples of racist figures in history that demand power over certain groups of people such as George Wallace, other famous figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. that insist on challenging the unpopular opinion while fighting for justice, and thousands of other pieces of literature that try defining the impurities in today's society in order to combat them with one example being Iris Young. Often times, the words and ideas offered by oppressed people are the most valuable to the advancement of a society, but the world as a whole isn't willing to listen to a new perspective or idea. This neglect between the oppressor and the oppressed impedes quick change in society, but the selfless actions taken by the oppressed are what bring justice to the world.

Most can agree that social justice is when a person or group of people strive to promote fairness and freedom between diverse groups regardless of race, religion, color, and other distinguishing factors. It is easy to see today that some populations are more accepted or neglected by society. However, in 1960s Alabama, there was no desire to listen to the oppressed as the

popular opinion was to uphold segregation and poor treatment of African Americans. Historical figures like Governor George C. Wallace can be put to blame for slowing down the process of achieving social justice in America. Wallace remarks with great emphasis to maintain, “ segregation today... segregation tomorrow... [and] segregation forever” (3) in Alabama. His extreme hatred for African Americans was displayed in his speech and actions while in office. As a white male governor in a southern state, Wallace had the power to convey and change the minds of the world one act and speech at a time. However, his opinion while governing this way transcended into the minds of nearly the whole white population making justice for blacks seem nearly impossible. In this situation, Wallace wanted to maintain the rich history of our nation by regressing the advancement of African Americans in society and suggesting the continuation of poor treatment to them. This did not promote justice, but rather encourage the oppressors to remain to hinder any social advancements from the black community.

As a result of the sentiments made by Wallace and many other anti-civil rights activists, Martin Luther King Jr. produced one of the most memorable, powerful and encouraging speeches in history from his jail cell. King was able to captivate both white and black citizens across the nation and begin change by acting fearlessly. Justice began to be served when King writes, “ We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed” (5). King expressed the unpopular opinion while the entire world was watching. However, the nation began to see policemen terrorizing blacks and famous figures such as Rosa Parks. The combination of this speech’s power, the

president starting to support the oppressed, and the public viewing dishonorable acts demonstrated by the oppressors on live television started a compelling movement in America. The actions taken by the oppressed, though were not popular by most at the time, enabled large steps of justice to be taken.

In modern times, there are still abundances of groups that are undervalued and oppressed. There is still work being done in the black community, but there has been a profound increase in respect and justice to those who are part of this group. Nevertheless, one recurring theme in the media is police brutality towards African Americans. By analyzing the work *Five Faces of Oppression* by Iris Young, one is able to categorize these continuous acts of violence as forms of oppression. One of the more obvious connections to oppression is when Iris writes that some groups, "... must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their person or property" (4). Across the south in the United States where, historically, blacks have seen the greatest neglect, there seems to be a common trend of random deaths of African Americans due to police brutality. This seems to be a result of whites being predominantly powerful in the south. The roots of George Wallace's ideas seem present and the continual police attacks are a result of the injustices in predecessors beliefs. In order to move forward as a nation, it is necessary to examine the thoughts and views of those who have been oppressed. We must question why we lengthen a problem that should be uncomplicated to solve.

It has been seen that the process of shifting a nation's oppressing belief into one that serves justice for all can be slow-moving and take time. However, those who question the unpopular concepts are the ones who serve justice over time. Famous figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. lived oppressed lives in jail, received many 'no's' in their lives and even were killed to ensure that justice would be served and that oppressed groups would live better lives.