

Asian american communities and racism in the usa essay

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Multiculturalism is one of the main problems of the USA. Being inhabited by many nationalities and ethnical groups, it is obvious that national minorities are going to face a number of problems. Speaking about Asian American communities in the USA, they face a number of difficulties on the basis of racial differences. Fighting for personal rights, Asian American communities face crucial race relation issues in the contemporary period. Los Angeles Riots/Civil Unrest was one of the largest issues in the Asian American communities. There were a lot of factors which led to the mentioned above Los Angeles Riots/Civil Unrest. Being oppressed by the white Americans, much attention should also be paid to the consequences of racial conflict. Reading Helen Zia's "To Market, to Market, New York Style" and "Lost and Found in L. A.", it is possible to see through the author's experience how Asian Americans were pressed at the financial aspects. Being oppressed by the administration, Asian Americans were limited in their business. Moreover, racial prejudice, Tropic market incidents as well as the Apple market incidents were directed at making sure that Asian Americans would leave the USA (Zia 88).

Many conflicts appeared between African Americans and Asian Americans, therefore, the latter appeared between two powers, white Americans and African Americans that added to the reasons for the Los Angeles Riots/Civil Unrest (Zia 101). The most appealing cases discussed in the book are those devoted to murders of Rodney King and Vincent Chan. The court proclaimed that the police officers were not guilty. Such decision made Asian Americans to act. Elaine H. Kim in the article "Home is where the Han is: A Korean American Perspective in the Los Angeles Upheavals" says that the main

reason for Los Angeles Riots was “ the sorrow and anger that grow from the accumulated experience of oppression” (Kim 80). Dai Sil Kim-Gibson’s video *Wet Sand: Voice from LA Ten Years Later* points to the same reasons of the riot. Asian Americans were tired of constant pressure and discrimination, therefore, they stopped being afraid and went at the streets. Elaine H. Kim and Dai Sil Kim-Gibson’s ideas are very similar in relation to the reasons of riots. Dai Sil Kim-Gibson in his documentary video states that mass media did not highlighted the information about the riots correctly. Many Americans considered Asian community as the minority which does not even deserve attention due to their reputation.

Reading a dialogue between anthropologist Louisa Schein and filmmaker/activist Va-Megn Thoj in “ Occult Racism: The Masking of Race in the Hmong Hunter Incident” it should be stated that racial perceptions as well as racial prejudice negatively affected Hmong Americans. Being a part of Asian American group, Hmong Americans were considered as the lower layer of population. Taking one case which occurred with a young student in a bathroom, Americans dared to think that all members of Hmong community are the same. So, having considered the case when a Hmong girl gave birth to child in a bathroom and killed a child there, Americans preferred to believe that all members of Hmong community are the same. Having negative attitude in relation Asian Americans in general, people began to mock with the tragedy having used “ Asian character with a stereotypical Asian Accent” who “ firs of all use a tragic history involving a teenage woman killing a baby... And then denigrating the Hmong community

and the Hmong culture and having this racial caricature on the show” (Schein and Thoj 434). Is such the only in the world? Of course this is not. There are a lot of cases which may shock a society, however, American situations are not so spread and they are not involved into such discussions. The situation is about the race. Thinking about Asian community, Americans do not think about people, the situation discussed in the article and the case considered in the video are the specific examples which led the Asian community to riots. People just wanted to release from constant pressure.

Watching the video Desi: South Asians in New York and reading Sunaina Maira’s “ Youth Culture, Citizenship, and Globalization: South Asian Muslim Youth in the United States after September 11th” it is possible to elaborate on the diversity of the South Asian American population and on racial misperceptions which overlook these differences. After the 11th of September most South Asians with Muslim religious considerations were considered as terrorists. These people were heavily beaten and assaulted in various ways. There was a feeling that Americans assured themselves that somebody had to pay and they did all possible to make South Asians do it. The problem of racial discrimination and ethical difficulties rose. South Asians, Arab Americans, Muslim Americans were followed under the “ War on Terror” policy. It is essential to remember that after 9/11 “ Muslim families began experiencing the ‘ disappearance’ of their husbands, brothers, and sons, and many families ended up leaving the country after indefinite separations and loss of the means of family support” (Maira 335). These events encouraged Hindus, Syrian Christians, Sikhs, South Asian Jewish, and

Muslims unite and support each other. Thus, trying to limit the number of South Asian Americans on the territory of New York, American government increased the ties between cultural and religious traditions of discriminated nation (Desi).

According to Gary Okihiro, “ When and Where I Enter” Asian Americans were also pressed. No matter where they wanted to enter, the doors were closed before them. No matter where Asian Americans referred to they were considered as minorities and not many white Americans wanted to assist them. Black-white issues are just the parts of the discrimination and pressure. There are a lot of other minorities in the USA who appear under pressure. Black-white issues are just the oldest, however, Asian Americans also have to struggle for their independence and free activities on the territory of the USA. African Americans have their problematic with Americans while the problems of Asian Americans are different. Therefore, speaking about ethnical problems in the USA black-white conflict should be considered as one of the parts of the issue. Okihiro says that “ African American men bore the stigma of race, but African American women bore the stigma of race and gender” (Okihiro 5). Additionally, Asian Americans also experienced “ barriers to full membership” (Okihiro 5). Angelo N. Ancheta in “ Neither Black nor White” says that Asian Americans are considered as something intermediate between white and black. The problem is that all legal acts and norms were related to black-white opposition, therefore, when some freedoms were provided they did not touch Asian Americans and this problem was essential for many Asian Americans.

Coming to the USA, Asian citizens want to become as close to the American culture as possible with the purpose to become the deserving citizens of their new home. Those who have an opportunity to assimilate with American nation have more chances to get jobs, however, coming out of Helen Zia's experience, those who managed to learn language, operated it in an appropriate way and received good education had chances to find their place in American society, however, in most cases they were told that China citizens cannot be accepted for a job. Helen Zia says that having assimilated, many Asian Americans feel guilty for their actions, they feel that they betrayed their native country and it may cause a number of difficulties. Helen Zia writes that " the State Department had a policy that no persons of Chinese descent should work at the China desk, no matter how many generations removed from the ancestral bones. This would protect America in case some genetic compulsion twisted [Asian] allegiance to China" (Zia 141). This is a law which encourages Asian Americans to work in the USA, to struggle for social justice, engage in forms of resistance, and participate in electoral politics. Asian Americans have to become as close to the US native citizens as possible for them to forget about their native country. Why does this matter for the USA? Paying salary for people, government wants to be sure that this money remain in the country, that people spend their money for food and other needs in the USA and do not send all their money to their native countries.

As a result, Asian Americans have to complete many particular procedures in order to become legal citizens of the USA. It results in many cases of illegal

presence of Asian Americans on the territory of the USA. Helen Zia remembers, “ Taxi drivers had no health insurance, no benefits-only traffics jams, air pollution and demanding passengers. Their work is a virtual sweatshop on wheels, the most dangerous job in the country” (Zia 202). Not to become such a taxi driver people have to start working legally and for this they are to be socially active. This is very important for American government. American government wanted others to be interested in making the USA more important for Asian Americans than their native countries. Some people assimilated to such extent that they were more devoted to the USA than to Asian countries, however, it did not mean that they had an opportunity to be equaled to white Americans. Discrimination at the workplace still was a part of Asian American life, no matter whether they took part in social life of the country or not.

Filipino Americans are the group of Asian Americans. Being distinguished, Filipino Americans create a separate subgroup due to the peculiarities of their culture. Filipino American and Asian American hip hop culture contribute to historical awareness of the USA. It is essential to state that the USA is a multicultural country and the role of Filipino Americans and Asian Americans as well as African Americans is great. The culture of the USA consists of the cultures of the nations which inhabit it. Filipino American and Asian American hip hop culture is not just the songs and dance. This is a specific vision of the world. Presenting hip hop songs as the part of the vision of the life, Filipino Americans and Asian Americans contribute to the political, social and economical problems. Raising urgent problems, Filipino Americans

and Asian Americans contribute to the present social issues. Thus, hip hop culture in most cases raises the problems of violence, racial discrimination, social instability, economic crisis, political failures etc. Filipino American and Asian American hip hop culture contribute to the historical awareness of Americans as in most cases racial discrimination and other social instabilities are poorly highlighted in press. Remembering Los Angeles Riots and other cases of social instability in the society, if the reason for civil unrest were minorities, the problem was tried to be depressed without particular announcement of the issues. Only hip hop culture through songs and vision of life were able to deliver the information to the society.

According to Glenn Omatsu's "The 'Four Prisons' and the Movements to liberation: Asian American activism from 1960s to the 1990s", Asian Americans live in the environment of poverty, racism, hyper-capitalism and neo-conservatism. One of the main peculiarities of this article is that Asian Americans struggled for liberation of all people, but they failed to create a particular strategy (Omatsu 109). Speaking about prisons, the author of the article referred to poverty as one of the main economical conditions people had to live into. Then, racism is described. Asian Americans could not call themselves free until they were pressed by the prejudices in relation to ethnical origin. Social injustice also existed in American society. It was important to check the opportunities offered for ethnical minorities and to the while Americans. There has never been equality. Even now when the whole word speaks about democratic and free from prejudices American society, the problem of glass ceiling still remains. Environmental degradation

imprisoned minorities in the USA (Omatsu 109). People in many cases refused to get better positions, they refused to work harder as they were satisfied with what they had.

Vijay Prashad in “ Crafting Solidarities” and Mari Matsuda in “ We will not be used: Are Asian Americans the racial bourgeoisie?” speak about internal differences which create particular complication of the way of Asian American group to form coalitions in order to work together. These authors agree with Omatsu about the degradation of some parts of Asian Americans. However, the problem of degradation stands higher. Having common roots appears to be not enough for Asian American community to unite for common good, “ the solidarities that must be crafted to combat our oppressive present must be alert to the desire among South Asian migrants to set themselves apart” (Prashad 551). Mari Matsuda calls Asian Americans “ racial bourgeoisie” expressing the fear that in case Americans consider them as it is, they are seen to the world as “ small merchants, the middle class, and the baby capitalists” (Matsuda 558), in other words those who have no opportunity to make decisions and those who flow in the direction chosen by others. Therefore, it may be concluded that there are a lot of problems facing Asian Americans in the American society. Being socially, politically, and economically dependant from this new home, Asian Americans are to perform a number of activities which make them forget about their home. However, the attitude of the American society to them still remains prejudiced that causes a number of problems.

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