

1968: the year that rocked the world

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1968: The Unique Year in World History Admittedly, 1968 was a historic year in the world, and specifically in America. The year ushered in triumphs and tragedies in equal measures. In the context of triumphs, 1968 is the year when NASA successfully launched an orbiter on the moon. Contrarily, 1968 marked a tragic time in America when the country lost two of its key peace proponents in close succession. 1968 was the peak moment for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. These two personalities were iconic figures of peace and human rights advocacy in the United States. On April 4, 1968, Luther King Jr. was fatally shot in his room at the Lorraine Motel, Memphis. On June 5, 1968, Robert F Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles. The relentless efforts for peace by these two figures are recorded in 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' by Luther King Jr. and 'Remarks to the Cleveland City Club' by Robert F. Kennedy. In this context, the closely successive assassinations of Luther King Jr. and Robert F Kennedy contributed to 1968 being a unique year in world history.

Presently, the world regards Martin Luther King Jr. as an icon of nonviolent protests. Luther King Jr. is placed in the same category with Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. Luther King Jr. was an once-in-a-lifetime leader who kept the gentlest interests of his people at heart. Tragically, April 1968 marked the death of the greatest human rights activist in American history. Selfless dedication to human rights advocacy by Luther King Jr. is inscribed within his 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'. In the letter, Luther King Jr. who was not a resident of Birmingham explains the reasons why he supports nonviolent protests in the city. Luther King Jr. asserts that he was touched by human rights abuses going on in Birmingham. Luther King Jr. lived in Atlanta. However, he mentioned that he could not sit idly in his Atlanta residence

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because he believed that, ' Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere' (Martin, 01). Until April 1968, Luther King Jr. was the chief advocate of the discriminated Negro community in America. Therefore, 1968 is a historic year which consumed one of the greatest human rights advocates in the United States.

Robert F Kennedy is another iconic figure of human rights activism that was consumed by the year 1968. Robert Kennedy was a Senator, and advocated for recognition of human rights from the political front. On April 5, 1968, just hours after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, Robert F Kennedy delivered a landmark speech on the state of violence in America. In his speech delivered at Cleveland City Club, Robert mentioned that the increasing fatal violence in America was staining the nation and the lives of American citizens. In his speech, Robert Kennedy demonstrated his unwavering commitment to peaceful causes when he says, ' No wrongs have ever been righted by riots and civil disorders' (Robert, 01). Robert was concerned that the increasing cases of violence and unjustified assassinations would be woven into the fabric of American societies. In this case, Robert reiterated that America as a nation should shun any form of violence; else the whole nation will be degraded.

Analysis of the ' Letter from Birmingham Jail' shows that Martin Luther King Jr. was a selfless proponent of peace. Luther King Jr. willingly supported nonviolent protests outside his home, and influenced his fellow clergymen to join his just cause. In addition, Robert F Kennedy demonstrated his pronounced dislike towards violence and emphasized that the wave of killings taking place in 1968 would stain the nation and spoil subsequent generations. In conclusion, it is evident that Luther King Jr. and Robert

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Kennedy were champions of peace, and the closely successive assassinations of Luther King Jr. and Robert F Kennedy contributed to 1968 being a unique year in world history.

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