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American History: Reconstruction

Martin Luther King Jr. wrote A Letter from Birmingham Jail in 1963 and SNCC documents are the main source of protesting against the treatment black people in Birmingham, Alabama. These documents leads to successful movement in favors of black people. Martin Luther King is also the love of justice. In his famous letter from Birmingham, written in prison in 1963, King sets out his concept of justice.

In April 1963, Negro demonstrations led by Martin Luther King were held in Birmingham. Eight clerics, representatives of different religions, published an open letter to King with a request to stop the demonstrations. In their message, they called for submission to the decisions of the court on racial issues, criticized visitors for organizing demonstrations and approved "calm actions" of the police and authorities during them (King Jr, Martin Luther).

Luther refused to stop the peaceful demonstrations and they put him in prison, where he wrote his answer to the priests. For King, love is first and foremost the love of humanity, the crowning glory of creation. Socrates, in Plato's Banquet, describes love in three stages: it is first of all an aspiration of all living beings to immortality, a means for everyone to transcend their own finiteness, among others through reproduction. More deeply, love is birth in the beauty of wisdom and virtue, "the most beautiful part of which is that which relates to the government of states and families and which is called prudence and justice". Finally, it is an elevation of the human soul to absolute beauty, beauty in itself, what King calls "elevation to God." He who nourishes this conception of love will naturally want everyone to have access to this happiness and therefore he will work to make society and men better, Socrates tells us. We find the same idea in King, for whom love has a redemptive power; he is able to turn people into good.

The purpose of this document is to study the abbreviations of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (1960) signaled in SNCC at its creation, and pronounced in 1962 by the popular fringe of this organization for the civil rights of African Americans. The SNCC pioneered the civil rights campaigns of the early sixties (Freedom Rides 6 or the Mississippi Freedom Summer). In 1962, as a result of the boycott of buses, clashes between students and police broke out.

The SNCC base is becoming increasingly hostile to the strategy of non-violence, and the differences with the SCLC are becoming more important, before appearing in the open in 1965 during the march from Selma to Montgomery 8. This year marks the disintegration of the fragile coalition of black militants: the SNCC rejects the "bourgeois values" advocated by King, defended by the press and supported by government forces. But most of all, faced with the trivialization of police brutality or individual against blacks, many of longer believe in non-violence and integration (Carson). In 1966, the SNCC came under the governance of Stokely Carmichael, who replaced John Lewis, considered too moderate because close to Luther King, and turned to the dissemination of ideas of Black Power and to the challenge of the Vietnam War, opponent counter-violence to violence and openly advocating armed struggle, like the Black Panthers.

To conclude, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote A Letter from Birmingham Jail in 1963 and SNCC documents are the main source of protesting against the treatment black people in Birmingham, Alabama. Both the primary sources explain that the Black Power encourages the black community to become aware of its identity, its roots, its history and its culture and insists on the need to assume its identity, bringing out the notion of black pride (Black Pride).

Works Cited

Carson, Clayborne. In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s. Harvard University Press, (1995).

King Jr, Martin Luther. "Letter from Birmingham Jail (1963)." Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s: A Brief History with Documents (1963).