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Social Justice Autobiography

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“Social Justice Autobiography,” by Lamont Harrell

If you don't know who you are, any history will do — Afrakan Proverb

My name is Lamont Kwesi Harrell Sr. and I have been incarcerated behind enemy lines since 2007. When I look at the term social justice, the first thing that comes to mind is fairness, impartial behavior, and equality for all people no matter your race, class, gender, ethnicity, culture, or religion. I wish this was true in Amerika, but it's not, because the only people social justice applies to is the dominant society which happens to be Europeans (white people).

Growing up in Baltimore city as a child was rough because my neighborhood was a war zone infested with drugs, violence, prostitution, and dilapidated housing. The level of poverty forced people to do whatever they had to do in order to survive. When I went to school most of the teachers didn't care if you passed or failed because their pay rate wasn't what they thought it should be. On top of that, all the books had pages missing and all the other materials were outdated and raggedy. It was very hard to learn anything in that type of environment. I, as a child, was confused because every time I turned on the television I saw a different Amerika where Europeans were living in healthy clean communities that were not infested with drugs, violence, prostitution, or dilapidated housing. Their children went to better schools that had brand new books and other materials that made the process of learning easier.

I've always asked why Black people's plight was so different from white people, but I never got an answer until I came to prison and started practicing Pan-Afrakanism. Once I was introduced to the Pan-Afrakan lifestyle, I started studying Our-Story, which is the true history of my ancestors and all the freedom fighting warriors and revolutionaries who fought for social justice and equality. Studying our-story helped me gain a deeper understanding of my people's struggle here in Amerika and abroad. Here in Amerika brothers and sisters from Afrakan descent have been experiencing social injustice for hundreds of years. It's been a constant struggle for Black people to truly be ourselves due to this unnatural environment. Amerika, since the enslavement of Afrakans, has perpetrated violence, negative behavior, and a selfish way of thinking centered around capitalism and materialism. It also promotes alienated spiritual/religious doctrines along with an educational system that's geared towards the indoctrination, manipulation, and control of Afrakans and other people of color. Each one of these

denominations are racist in nature because they are controlled by the dominant society which happens to be rooted in white supremacy. Due to Black people lacking the true knowledge of our story, we fall victim to the institutions within the system just to be accepted by the dominant society, while, at the same time, looking for a savior for the struggles we face every day. Our great ancestor Marcus Garvey once said, “A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.” Black people will continue to suffer from social injustice until we gain the true knowledge of ourselves and start to implement principles such as (Umoja) unity and (Ujamaa) cooperative economies within the fabric of our communities.

Miseducation is the root cause of injustice, starting with the school system. The western educational system is constructed around a European curriculum designed to advance Europeans by falsifying and distorting information to make them feel superior over Afrakans and other melanated people. The system is also designed to disenfranchise, and marginalize Black children so they will grow up being consumers and working for our oppressors instead of being creators, builders, entrepreneurs and business owners. The only way Black people will obtain social justice in Amerika is if we keep fighting against the system of oppression and white supremacy until it's destroyed. This is going to take (Ujamaa) collective work and responsibility from everyone who claims to be against social injustice, and for freedom, justice and equality for all.

Our struggle continues!

Lamont Kwesi Harrell Sr.

Genre

Social Justice Essay

Tags

Social Justice; Afrikan lifestyle and philophy; Marcus Garvey; Umoja- unity and (Ujamaa(Ujamaa) cooperative economies