

**HISTORICAL
PRECEDENT FOR
GUN CONTROL**

Elian Matias



There is a significant issue surrounding gun violence within the US. As of May 2023, there have already been 202 mass shootings. Since 2015 mass shootings have seen an upward trend, increasing every year, and peaking in 2021 with 686 total mass shootings.

Efforts to implement stricter gun control laws have been met with criticism from those who believe that the 2nd Amendment protects all gun rights, and to place any restrictions on gun owners would be a direct violation of said right. This stagnation in the progress of gun control can seem hopeless, however there is historical precedent for people to be able to change large scale problems. Many different Black rights movements and the Women's Suffrage movement have shown that you can create real change in the face of an overwhelmingly difficult situation.



This image taken by Margaret Bourke White shows a breadline during the Louisville flood. Looking closely at the image, we can see that among the crowd of people in line there are no white Americans, only black. This by itself already shows that black communities were disproportionately impacted by disasters, however the irony of the background image is very apparent. "The World's Richest Standard of Living" and "No Way Like the American Way" appear to only apply to typical white American households, and when contrasted with the breadline of black Americans, it implies those who are not white are not Americans and aren't entitled to the same privileges

In the face of such struggles, many different black groups such as the Black Power Movement and the Black Art movement, emerged and sought to make a change to the treatment that black Americans were experiencing. These groups knew that this issue was one that required coming together as a community and making their voices heard.

Black Panthers were a big presence during much of the Black power movement. They wore military uniforms, berrets, and grew out their afros. This was in an attempt to adopt the look of a non-conformist and a fighter. Black Panthers were often hostile with police, and actively opposed brutality on black Americans.



However, Black Panthers were not focusing mainly on physical confrontations. In this image we can see a Black Panther member helping to provide breakfast for some children in the community. The Black Panthers were the first to introduce a free breakfast program. They saw problems occurring in their communities such as children who were going to school hungry, and took matters into their own hands. This free breakfast program would later be turned into the free lunch program that many schools use today.

WELCOME

Afro-American Society Salem State College
Dear Incoming Freshman and Transfer Students
We are the Afro-American Society on campus
We would like to introduce ourselves at this time
Our purpose of writing this letter of invitation is to invite you to participate in programs sponsored by the Afro-American Society and also to inform you on the 1970 Student Union elections on campus. We welcome all of you to be active members and support in one of the student organizations to better our own racial relations on campus. But we want to establish a good working relationship among these student organizations.



Dear Salem State Students

The Salem State College Afro-American Society welcomes you. We are one of many student organizations and we encourage you to participate in those which interest or excite you. As an informed student, you can and should make your voice heard on campus by your involvement in the Afro-American Society and other student organizations.

Our goal is to enhance racial and social awareness by sponsoring educational, cultural, and social programs which represent the Afro-American experience. We invite your support of and involvement in our organization.

With your support, we will be strong. If we are strong, you will have support.

Sincerely,

Claudia Roemer

Claudia Roemer
Chairwoman
Afro-American Society



GOALS AND PURPOSES

The Afro-American Society of Salem State College was founded in 1968 by a group of Black students who felt that the Afro-American Society was not doing enough to represent Black students. Since its inception, the organization has supported its members whenever necessary and has enjoyed a high degree of Black awareness in the campus community.

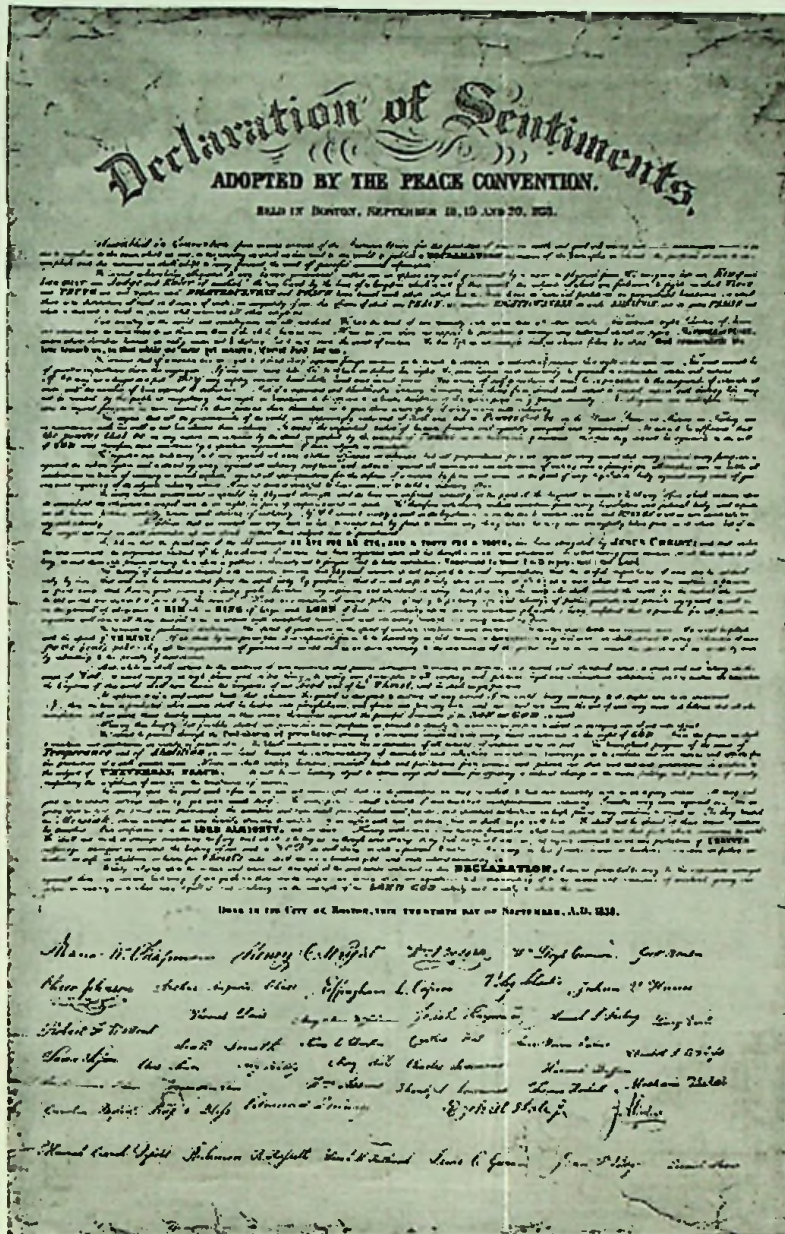
The purpose of the Afro-American Society is to encourage unity and understanding among Black students at Salem State College. The Afro-American Society was first established as a primary means of informing on the campus regarding all aspects of Black awareness. The organization is devoted toward the total growth of each Black student at Salem State. We recognize specific and general goals, both academic and non-academic that affect the life of the Black student. Therefore, we use our organization as a dining community with all expectations for achieving a quality education. We cooperate with the school, non-school, political and spiritual institutions of the Black campus community.

In this capacity, we are involved in a wide range of activities for the Black student. Our purpose is not only to fulfill the Black student's needs on the campus, but also to extend the Afro-American population including all other student organizations and individuals.

The Afro-American Society is located on the second floor of the College Union, Room 8203. Our phone number is 743-0236, ext. 409. Please feel free to drop by or call any time. We are looking forward to seeing you and having you grow and share with us.

Not all activism was left in the hands of big organizations either. Here we have a brochure from the Afro-American Society at Salem State during the 1970s. This brochure states that many black students did not have their expectations met by the school, and sought to create an organization that would work to raise black awareness on campus.

In both these examples we can see how black communities saw a problem with how they were being represented, and worked together in an attempt to try and resolve those issues.



Moving over to the Women's Suffrage Movement we can see a very similar set of events on fold as with the Black Power movement. When taking a look at the Declaration of Sentiments we can see just how women were being unfairly treated and restricted compared to men. Some lines include "He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice", "He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise", and "the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty".

The irony in these lines from the declaration of sentiments, is that they're the same issues stated in the declaration of independence, and what this country was founded on solving. Women simply wanted to be treated in the same regard as men, yet they had to fight incredibly hard just to obtain those inalienable rights.



FREEDOM ORGANIZING SERIES #1

The
Combahee
River
Collective
Statement:

Black Feminist Organizing In
The Seventies and Eighties

The Combahee River Collective
Foreword by Barbara Smith

A Third party among these movements was the Combahee River Collective, who were a group of black, lesbian feminists. They believed that both the women's rights and black rights movements at the time did not quite fulfill the needs and issues that they were facing.

In the Combahee River Collective Statement they said that the "difficulty in our political work is that we are not just trying to fight oppression on one front or even two, but instead to address a whole range of oppressions". The women in the CRC were caught in the middle of several different marginalized groups, and knew that if they wanted to be free, everyone else had to be free first. Leading them to work together with other movements, particularly the feminist movement. However even in the feminist movement, black women still faces problem associated with their race, as it was clear "how little effort white women have made to understand and combat their racism"



**EVERYTOWN
FOR GUN SAFETY™**

These examples of groups of people identifying problems that were having a major effect on them, and coming together in groups to fight and find ways to address them, provide the necessary precedent to also try and change laws around gun control. It's entirely possible to create real change even if it seems as though the 2nd amendment would stop such efforts. Many of the groups mentioned above had to fight against legislations and laws that were put in place to keep them down.

If you want to get involved in pushing for more gun control to prevent mass shootings, visit everytown.org to volunteer, donate, or just find out more information about the issue at hand.

Work Cited

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