

Abstract

The bachelor's thesis "The Role of African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi in the 1960s: Fannie Lou Hamer" deals with the status of African American women in the early 1960s, when the ideas of the Civil Rights Movement started to slowly penetrate the isolated state of Mississippi. The study uses the biographical method as a probe into this closed society. The object of this probe is Fannie Lou Hamer, one of the local activists who despite racist attacks and gender and class discrimination demonstrated her courage and leadership skills and became the spokesperson not only of the Mississippi Free Democratic Party, but also of the Civil Rights Movement itself. The case study on Fannie Lou Hamer examines how African American women were involved in the Civil Rights Movement and what obstacles they had to overcome as activists on a daily basis. The first part of the thesis focuses generally on the early waves of activism in Mississippi and on the tactics that local leaders used to mobilize local African Americans. Besides the analysis of the role of African American women in grassroots activities, the thesis also addresses the racial, gender and class discrimination. The second chapter examines the impact of these obstacles on one African American woman – Fannie Lou Hamer. Subsequently, the chapter deals with the role of Fannie Lou Hamer as the spokesperson of the Civil Rights Movement. The bachelor's thesis concludes that social discrimination, lack of education, or racist attacks forced majority of the African American women to engage only on the grassroot level. However, there were exceptional women who did not let themselves be stopped by these obstacles. One of them was Fannie Lou Hamer.