

50 Years of Static: The Consistent Injustices
Facing African Americans in Los Angeles
From the Watts Rebellion to the Present
By Megan Walker



Police arrest a man during the Watts Riots. World-Telegram photo by Ed Palumbo.

Throughout the history of America, there have been countless rebellions and revolutions. When Americans have felt as though they were being treated unfairly, they have taken up arms against those against them. The beginning of American history included a revolution where the colonists broke away

from a government who was treating them unfairly and not giving them the rights they deserved. Inequality and injustice were two of the main arguments colonists used to take up arms against the British. These two main arguments are the same arguments African Americans used when they rebelled against the government, only they are not called rebellions or revolutions, but instead described as riots. This is not just semantics. When white Americans have risen up against injustice, it has been called a rebellion; a revolution. When African Americans have, like in 1965 and 1992 Los Angeles, it has been called a riot. Words have unbelievable power and using the right word to describe situations is of grave importance. Using the word riot evokes an image of an unruly mob participating in senseless, unmotivated violence and disturbing an otherwise peaceful society. The word rebellion evokes an image of people reacting to continued injustices with a goal of change. In describing the 1965 Watts Rebellion and 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion, it is important to recognize the meaning associated with these words and to use the appropriate one. Riot and rebellion cannot be used interchangeably and distinguishing between the two is gravely important and a crucial first step when discussing these rebellions. Using the word riot to describe these uprisings only furthers the inequalities and injustices facing African Americans in Los Angeles.

The injustices facing African Americans in Los Angeles did not start with the Watts Rebellion but goes back much further. Although slavery was abolished in the United States with the 13th amendment, the injustices and inequalities have long continued. Despite there being a law stating equality among all men, Los Angeles has been anything but. Since before the Watts Rebellion in 1965 to the present, there have been continued injustices facing African Americans in Los Angeles. The consequences of the continued injustices led to the Watts Rebellion in 1965, the Los Angeles Rebellion in 1992, and will result in a third Los Angeles Rebellion.

THE WATTS REBELLION OF 1965

On the night of August 11, 1965, Marquette Frye, an African American male, was arrested for drunk driving in Watts, California. This quickly escalated into a beating by the police, outraging bystanders who took to the streets to rebel against such actions. This was not the only reason for what would soon be known as the Watts Rebellion but instead was the final injustice the African Americans in Watts were willing to take. There were thousands of arrests, at least 34 deaths, and an estimated \$40 million in property damage.^[1] 16,000 members of the National Guard were sent in to help the Los Angeles Police Department oppose this rebellion.^[2] This rebellion lasted six days until August 17, 1965. California Governor Pat Brown issued an investigation of the

rebellion to identify its causes and come up with solutions to make sure another rebellion would not happen. This investigation and those involved came to be known as the McCone Commission.

The uprising in Watts in August of 1965 was caused by the injustices facing the African Americans which included jobs being taken out of the community, poor education, bad police-citizen relations, and housing restrictions in the years leading up to that fateful night. It was not solely because of a man that was brutally beaten by police but instead a culmination of events where the beating was the last straw. Los Angeles in the years after World War II had one of the best employment opportunities for African Americans.^[3] Although there were still various barriers, they were able to succeed in Los Angeles better than most other cities in the United States. These were blue collar jobs that drew African Americans from other states, especially those in the south like Texas and Louisiana, into Los Angeles. In the 1960s, these jobs began to relocate to other suburban areas and eventually out of the country with the rise of the international economy.^[4] Because these jobs that brought so many African Americans into Los Angeles began to disappear, unemployment rose significantly. In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act was created to help solve such issues as poverty in Los Angeles but because of political struggles between the mayor and African American community representatives, the \$20 million that was allocated to Los Angeles was never issued to them.^[5]

Jobs exiting the city was not the only cause for rebellion. The police-citizen relations were getting worse by the minute. The Los Angeles Police Department was notorious for their racism, the overwhelming majority of them being white, and police harassment by LAPD officers was recorded as some of the worst of the time with numerous complaints against them, many of which were never properly looked into.^[6] The predominantly white police force in Los Angeles was surrounded by a growing number of minority races and they made it known that they were not happy about this demographic change.

Not only were African Americans facing unemployment because of jobs exiting the city and police brutality, but housing restrictions also led to other injustices including hyper-segregation. Watts was “selected” by powerful white real estate agents as an area for African Americans to be because the whites in the area did not like the growing African American population to be housed near them.^[7] Public housing began to be built for this growing population who, much of the time, were forced to live there because of housing restrictions that were racially restrictive.^[8] This brought on many lawsuits in the decade before the rebellion, more than any other city in the United States.^[9] Because of these

restrictions, African Americans were forced into this area causing hyper-segregation and unfair treatment. Instead of having the freedom to live anywhere, they were forced to reside in an area “designated” to them by the powerful whites who did not want this population near them.

This Rebellion was triggered by these injustices. It was not some “mindless riot” but instead an insurrection where violence was the only way for the African American population to communicate with white society and alert people of the problems in their community. The people of Watts felt powerless to change their situation and violence was seen as the only option to alert people of what was going on in their community.^[10] Peaceful protests and sitting around aimlessly hoping for change to come was not working. The beating of Marquette Frye was the final injustice they were willing to peacefully take.

During this rebellion, the destruction of property included hardly any churches, homes, or libraries.^[11] Few of these were damaged showing that this was a very mindful uprising where those involved were conscious of what they were doing. This was not mindless violence where people were going around destroying anything and everything in sight but instead articulate protests against real grievances towards those who continued to treat African Americans as inferior. They specifically did not target people’s homes or community buildings, showing this was truly a mindful act.

Not only did those involved in the rebellion not destroy homes, churches, and libraries, but they also spared certain businesses. Poor, working class African American family businesses along with white business that allowed for credit from African Americans were spared during the rebellion.^[12] The protesters made a point to only protest against those businesses notorious for their high prices and hostile manners toward African Americans.^[13] Instead of protesting against any business that crossed their path, the protestors were mindful of those that had treated them fairly throughout the years and did not touch them. They instead used this as protest against the businesses that had kept them down for years with their high prices and hostile behavior. The protesters specifically targeted the individuals and businesses that continued to treat them unfairly, showing that this was an act of consciously rebelling against those who contributed to their unjust treatment.

The media played a crucial role in the Watts Rebellion. This was how the news went from Watts to the rest of California and the entire nation. Newspapers had this story on their front page and magazines had entire issues on it. The media had the opportunity to showcase to the rest of Los Angeles and the

entire nation the injustices African Americans in Watts were facing. Instead, the media during the Watts Rebellion further contributed to the negative opinion of the upper-middle class white majority who saw this as an uneducated group of minorities participating in mindless violence.

In a Life Magazine Issue from August of 1965, this was exactly the case. This magazine had dozens of pages dedicated to the story of the Watts Rebellion. Instead of showcasing the injustices going on, they had articles that described “Get Whitey” as a war cry coming from the African American participants.^[14] Instead of focusing on the real issues and reasons behind the rebellion, this only spreads the inaccurate message of the rebellion being about “getting whitey” instead of obtaining equality and justice. Another article within the magazine was titled “Wild Plundering-Grab and Run.”^[15] This, too, contributes to the idea that this was mindless violence and looters only wanted to rob people and businesses. This takes away from the real meaning behind the rebellion. Instead of showcasing who and what was being looted, it makes it seem as though participants were only motivated by the want to steal instead of the goal of change.

THE MCCONE COMMISSION: HELP OR HINDRANCE?

After the Watts Rebellion, California Governor Pat Brown decided to investigate the causes of the Rebellion and to come up with solutions to solve them to make sure this would never happen again. To do this, he created what is now known as the McCone Commission, named after the Chairman of the Commission, former CIA director John McCone. This Commission was tasked with going into Watts to determine what was going on that led to the African Americans in the community to rebel. They then were to come up with ways to alleviate the problems to make sure that something like August of 1965 would never happen in Los Angeles again. Although Governor Pat Brown had a good idea in creating this Commission for this purpose, it was a failure in the making from its very beginning because of the lack of diverse members and the amount of time it took them to decipher the deep causes and potential solutions. Once finished, the solutions given were mild when compared to the problems and ultimately placed blame on the victims instead of the system which created the issues.

The McCone Commission was a failure from the beginning when they decided who the members of the commission were to be. It consisted of six whites and two African Americans.^[16] The makeup of this commission was greatly reflected in the findings. Instead of having a commission made up of people who more understood and were sympathetic to the struggles of the poor African

Americans in Los Angeles, it was 75% upper-middle-class whites. Therefore, they had certain assumptions and preconceived notions about the neighborhood which they were suppose to analyze.^[17] Because of this, they were prevented from the very beginning from analyzing the situation with as little bias as possible. Any information they gathered was filtered through these lenses, making for an incomplete understanding of the rebellion in Watts from the very start.

Not only was the composition of the members a problem, but the amount of time they took to analyze the issues shows the lack of understanding. This Commission was tasked with “probing deep” into the issues that led up to the Watts Rebellion, yet they finished their report in only three months.^[18] Three months was an unreasonably short amount of time to “probe deep” into this massive rebellion. After the Commission was finished with their laconic investigation, a mere 86 page report was compiled.^[19] Robert Blauner even compares this Commission Report to the the report done after the Chicago Rebellion of 1919 which included 672 pages and took two years to complete.^[20] The injustices that were taking place in Watts, as in Chicago in 1919, were deeper than the investigators touched upon. To study with scrutiny a subject so immense, one would take months if not years to complete such a task and a lengthy report would surely follow. Instead, the members of the commission took a mere 100 days and 86 pages to communicate the problems existing in Los Angeles and the solutions to help solve them.

Not only was the report not given adequate attention and paper space, but the conclusions that the commission came to were not substantial. They were all legitimate problems with possible solutions and the report deserves credit in that regard. But these solutions were all so mild when compared to the problems and injustices facing this community. The three problems the report observed as causes of the rebellion that needed to be fixed included issues of unemployment, education, and police-civilian relations.^[21]

When it came to the issue of unemployment, the report recommended job training within the city and youth centers to assist finding employment for the youth.^[22] This was only part of the issue of unemployment and does not solve the immediate problem of adult unemployment because of jobs being taken out of the city. Education was another problem the McCone Commission reported on. Their explanation of how to fix the problems of poor education was to create “emergency schools” and permanent pre-school programs to provide early education.^[23] This emphasis on education for the youth is important but not the only problem of the education system in this community. This, much like the solution to unemployment, signifies an upper-

middle-class solution to a problem that needs different solutions. Lastly, the McCone Commission names police-civilian relations as a problem within the community.^[24] Although they recognized this huge issue and said police relations needed improvement, they endorsed the police department in all actions.

The McCone Commission gave minor solutions to major problems within the community but this was not their only fault. This report continuously blamed the victims and even protected the police who were accused of harassment and brutality. It described the rebellion as useless violence, altogether missing the point of looting and rebellion as being legitimate forms of protests against real grievances.^[25] Because the rebellion was seen through the looking glass of upper-middle-class whites, any other form of protests besides the ones they were accustomed to were seen as useless. The Commission failed to read into any social or political meaning behind the uprising.^[26] Instead, they placed blame on community leaders who they said were aggravating citizens for illegitimate reasons.^[27] Here, the Commission had the chance to place blame on policies that were unjust and angered citizens but instead placed blame on the messenger spreading knowledge of the unjust circumstances they were facing.

Even when the Commission attempted to solve the problems within the community, they used solutions which gave implications of blame being placed on African Americans. When putting an emphasis on job training instead of creation of jobs, the blame is transferred from the establishment onto the people.^[28] They make it seem as though they are “unemployable” which is why they can not find jobs when in reality their jobs have been taken out of the city and even the country. Placing emphasis on education and schooling was decent as the Commission recognized the relationship between education and employment, but they insisted that this was in part due to a lack of culture within the community and placed blame on families in the community for this problem.^[29] Once again, the Commission did not miss the opportunity to blame African Americans for their oppression.

When it came to police-civilian relations, the Commission took a firm stand against the community. They insisted that this hostile relationship was because of civilian resentment of the police, not because of police actions.^[30] They defend the police throughout the entire section on law enforcement, insisting that the allegations against the department are untrue and that only a few officers who “represent a tiny fraction of one percent” are guilty of brutality.^[31] These conclusions by the McCone Commission only furthered the notion that this was a senseless riot by the uneducated minority who resented the police. Instead of being a vessel for truth and change to help

cure Los Angeles of the injustices facing African Americans, it further fed into the problems it was supposed to be solving.

INTER-REBELLION PERIOD: 1965-1992

After the Watts Rebellion concluded and the McCone Commission completed their “deep probing,” the situation in Los Angeles did not see any improvement. Instead, all of the solutions recommended by the McCone Commission failed to be instated. Unemployment, poor education, and hostile police-civilian relations with African Americans in Los Angeles continued, ultimately creating the same situation in Los Angeles which sparked the previous Watts Rebellion. There was continuing injustices that were not fixed but rather escalated further.

The McCone Commission, though a failure from the beginning, concluded with mild solutions to the problems in Watts. Instead of taking action to complete the solutions they recommended,, the Commission Report instead collected dust. Twenty years after the Watts Rebellion, the Los Angeles County and City Human Relations Commission revisited the McCone Commission to review its content and action. Within their investigation, they found that the McCone Commission and government officials failed to complete even the minimal tasks presented by the Commission to help improve the conditions in Watts and most who testified said conditions were just as bad if not worse than the 1960s.^[32] This document reveals that the failures of the McCone Commission were known a decade before the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992.

Two years before the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion, the *Los Angeles Times* had an article also articulating the failures of the McCone Commission in accomplishing their goals. It described specific examples of the failures, such as a 12-unit housing complex that was supposed to help house some of the African Americans living in poverty, but instead has been boarded up since its completion.^[33] A manufacturing company built in response to the rebellion was later shut down, again leaving hundreds jobless.^[34] They built a hospital that claimed to provide better healthcare that ended up having dozens of charges against them due to inferior health care.^[35] Even certain programs suggested by the McCone Commission that were actually put into place ended up closing or shutting down, further showing the failure of the Commission to truly grasp the immensity of the problems. Instead of being a beacon of hope, the Commission was more of a placebo to help calm the people of Watts from rebelling. After they succeeded in this task, they left Watts and attention, once again, drifted away from the injustices of the system.

The failure of the McCone Commission was not the only contributor to the continued injustices after the Watts Rebellion. Generations of policies before and after also aided in this continuity. Because unemployment, poor education, and hostile police-civilian relations continued in Los Angeles toward African Americans, another rebellion was inevitable. Federal aid into Los Angeles, along with other urban cities that, like Los Angeles, had a high African American population, saw a dramatic decline of 50% during the 1980s under the Reagan administration.^[36] Instead of putting forces into the city, they were actually taken out. There were also 47,000 police brutality complaints which resulted in less than 200 fines or prosecutions.^[37] The police-civilian relations were no better than the 1960s. An African American LAPD officer even complained of the excessive force he personally witnessed and was later pushed out of a window by a white Long Beach police officer who was later acquitted for this crime.^[38] The African Americans of Los Angeles saw no real, fundamental change and these continued injustices of bad living conditions and brutality by authority goes back to the days of slavery and continue long after the chains of slavery were removed.^[39] These injustices are what led to the Watts Rebellion of 1965 and would lead to the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992.

THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION OF 1992

On March 3, 1991, Rodney King was involved in a police chase that ended in one of the most horrific police beatings ever caught on tape. King was speeding on the freeway when police attempted to pull him over. Once pulled over, the police beat and threatened the two passengers in the vehicle and brutally beat King to the point where he suffered from fractured bones and numerous bruises. This now infamous scene was videotaped by a witness to the event who shared the footage with the local media. This video of the horrendous beating of an unarmed African American man was viewed by millions of people across the world and showcased the type of grave brutality and injustices that African Americans in Los Angeles faced. The police involved were charged for the incident, only to be acquitted a little over one year later. On April 22, 1992, after the jury acquitted the officers involved in the horrific beating, the people of Los Angeles took to the streets once again to showcase to the nation that change and justice had not yet reached African Americans in Los Angeles and they were no longer willing to sit peacefully on the sidelines and take the unjust, brutal treatment. Very much like Watts in 1965, Los Angeles in 1992 was a rebellion against the continued unjust treatment of African American Los Angeles.

The beating of Marquette Frye in 1965 was the last injustice the African Americans were willing to take which led to days of rebellion. After the officers

involved in the Rodney King beating were acquitted, this, too, was the last injustice Los Angeles was willing to take. It was not the sole reason for the uprising but instead the final straw in a list of numerous injustices. In an interview with the South Central Los Angeles rapper and activist Ice-T in 1992, he explained how this rebellion should not have been a surprise to anyone actually paying attention to all the injustices within the community.^[40] Speaking as a former resident who grew up in the area of Los Angeles at the center of the rebellion, he spoke first hand of the injustices he saw and personally faced. He defends the protesters who participated in the rebellion because they were bringing awareness to very long term issues that had continued for decades. This was not a rebellion whose participants' sole purpose was the destruction of property and theft but instead one where people were truly mad at the system and wanted real change and their only outlet was participation in this rebellion.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters was also questioned about the causes behind the 1992 rebellion, but instead of by a journalist, it was orchestrated by the Senate Banking Committee. Also similar to Ice-T, Waters explains that this uprising should not have been a surprise to anyone because the county and government continued to neglect African Americans in Los Angeles, along with other inner cities, for decades.^[41] The banks continued to deny African Americans loans, governments continued to abandon them, and big business continued to take jobs out of the community and put them into Third World countries.^[42] Waters then explained that high unemployment and poverty rates, along with the problems with law enforcement, continued to consume African Americans in Los Angeles and the beating of Rodney King was the last and final injustice before rebellion.^[43]

During the decade before the rebellion, there was a severe economic decline. Once again, just like Maxine Waters explained in her testimony, more jobs were taken out of the community and placed into Third-World countries.^[44] Along with this, there was a string of unfair verdicts within Los Angeles that left African Americans on the losing end of the justice spectrum.^[45] Those who committed crimes against them consistently went unpunished. The acquittal of the police officers who were caught on videotape beating Rodney King was the last blow African Americans were willing to take. Not only did the African Americans in Los Angeles rebel against the injustices, but this time, unlike the Watts Rebellion, upward of 44% of participants were Hispanic who, too, were tired of the injustices they faced.^[46] This area that was predominantly African American in the 1960s began to see an influx of Hispanics which was reflected in the 1992 Rebellion. Although Hispanics were

an equal participant in the rebellion, the media made an antagonist on one particular racial group: African Americans.

The media coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion was much like the coverage of the 1965 rebellion in regards to casting a shadow on the real grievances and injustices. Once again the media had an opportunity to show upper-middle-class America the grave injustices occurring in Los Angeles but instead furthered the ideas of this rebellion as senseless violence. The media continued to situate the events into an illogical, ineffective frame instead of legitimate social protests.^[47] They continued to diminish this type of protest and its value altogether.^[48] Because the media played an important role in shaping many views, by delegitimizing this form of protest, they only further fed into the judgements of it being a ridiculous, unintelligent rebellion because that is what upper-middle-class America and contemporary media deemed it to be.

The media accounts of the rebellion consistently portrayed the protesters as a violent mob that burned neighborhoods.^[49] They focused on this without fully putting into context the situation that led up to this uprising. By doing this, the media outlets made the viewers see only the surface and not the entire history behind it. They saw violence on the street and were not given all the information to connect it to the continued injustices. The descriptions the media used included words like “senseless,” further deepening the idea of this being an uneducated, unmotivated mob whose only goal was to disturb peace. Instead of focusing on the continued violence and injustices facing African Americans, the media exploited and ridiculed the efforts of the rebellion.^[50] The media continued in 1992, as they did in 1965, to deepen the view of this type of protest as senseless, pushing the real grievances and injustices further into the dark.

The uprising in Los Angeles continues to be defined by the majority of sources within the field as a riot. Just recently, there has been a shift in the vocabulary used for the Watts Rebellion. It is more rare to find relatively current articles and sources using the word riot to describe Watts in 1965. However, the same is not true for the uprising in Los Angeles in 1992. Though there are some sources that have moved away from the word riot, the majority have stuck to this word. There needs to be a shift in wording for the Los Angeles Rebellion just as there has been a shift in the wording for the Watts Rebellion. By using the word riot to describe the situation in 1992, credit is given to those who deem it as useless, senseless violence by an uneducated minority.

The word riot evokes certain meanings. When this description is used in articles, sources, in the media, and elsewhere, the viewer immediately thinks irresponsible, senseless, and uneducated violence. The Los Angeles Rebellion, just like the Watts Rebellion, was so much more than that. Just because it may not be the way contemporary upper-middle-class America would respond does not make it senseless. There were very real grievances, continued injustices, unfair treatment, and brutality that was not ending but instead, growing progressively worse. Belittling the protests by calling them riots only further belittles the real injustices African Americans in Los Angeles face everyday. We need to right the wrong and use the correct terms for these events. There is so much meaning and power behind a word and it is our responsibility to be careful which ones we use.

INTER-REBELLION PERIOD PART 2: 1992 – THE PRESENT

The Rebellion of 1992 was broadcasted throughout the nation and the globe and had the goal of real change for African Americans in Los Angeles. The protests and participants hoped that this time, things would improve and the racism would diminish with the influx of equality. To much disappointment, the years after the Los Angeles Rebellion saw little improvement. There remains a fixation of blaming African Americans for their oppressed state just as there was in 1965. African Americans continue to face police brutality, high unemployment rates, and poor education which will result in a third Los Angeles Rebellion if it goes unchanged. Organizations that have been created to help usher in change continue to be seen as aggravating members of the community instead of beacons of hope and change.

In 1965, the McCone Commission concluded their report on the Watts Rebellion by blaming African American community leaders for aggravating the rest of the population and blamed the community for putting themselves in their oppressed situation. Thirty years later, this was again stated but by a different government official. In an interview with Melina Abdullah, a Black Lives Matter organizer and Professor from California State University, Los Angeles, this is brought to the forefront. In 1994, there was a crime bill passed by President Bill Clinton which his wife Hilary also supported.^[51]

This crime bill led to the expansion of incarceration of many African American youth who Hilary later described in comments from 1996 as “superpredators.”^[52] This crime bill and comments such as Clinton’s blame the people in Los Angeles and other urban cities for their oppressed state instead of blaming the policies that brought drugs into the city to begin with.^[53] Instead of focusing on the system that has created the oppressed situation, the people

caught up in the oppression are blamed. By calling them “superpredators,” it further dehumanizes this population and makes it appear as though they are behaving in certain ways, not as a result of their conditions, but because they are innately “superpredators”.^[54] The blaming of the oppressed for their oppression is not a thing of the 1960s but instead a very real and present reality in the 1990s and continues today.

The same problems the McCone Commission came to in 1965 were still very real injustices in the years after the 1992 Rebellion. Police brutality, high unemployment rates, and poor education opportunities persisted long after the members of the McCone Commission left Watts. There remained spatially based race and class inequalities within Los Angeles with African Americans coming out on the losing end.^[55] Employment and the economy of neighborhoods involved in the rebellion remain low and stagnant while areas around it have grown.^[56] Poverty, unemployment, and crime was much higher in Los Angeles where there was a greater number of African Americans.^[57] Quality of life continued to drop here showing the still very significant role race plays in shaping opportunities for African Americans. The policies continued to overlook the inequalities that faced the African American population and the injustices within Los Angeles continued well into the 1990s and the 21st century.

The Black Lives Matter Movement of the 21st century has been a driving force in trying to stop the injustices and oppression of African Americans throughout the nation. They seek to intervene in a world where African American lives are continually targeted with deadly oppression.^[58] This movement and its members have been targeted in Los Angeles instead of being seen as a cause for change. They are viewed by officials and police in Los Angeles as aggravating members of the community instead of a movement trying to bring equality to African Americans in Los Angeles and worldwide.

The Los Angeles chapter of the movement participated in a nation-wide protest after the non-indictment of the officer who killed Michael Brown, an African American male from Ferguson, Missouri.^[59] During this protest which shut down the 405 Freeway in Los Angeles, 20 of the 330 people arrested were put on trial, all 20 of which are members of the Black Lives Matter Movement.^[60] The Los Angeles Police Department had been surveilling the Black Lives Matter Movement in Los Angeles through a specific cyber-unit tasked with going through social media pages and tapping their phones and intentionally chose those members to put on trial.^[61] Others who were arrested but not charged even had letters explaining their arrest sent to their employers by the LAPD.^[62] Just like within the McCone Commission Report where African

American leaders were blamed, in 2015 the same problem continued. Instead of seeing these activists as justice seekers, they are treated as criminals who need to be stopped.

Since the 1992 rebellion, things have continued to be unfair and unjust in African American Los Angeles. As seen in the inner rebellion period between the 1965 and 1992 rebellions, these injustices build up until a reaction takes place, a reaction that amounts to, in this case, being a rebellion. If things continue to go in the same unjust direction, Los Angeles will see another Los Angeles Rebellion. We can not sit back and see the same things happen over and over again, decade after decade, and expect a different result. If injustices continue, a rebellion will occur. If inequality continues, a rebellion will occur. If racism against African Americans in Los Angeles continues, a rebellion will occur. Los Angeles has seen rebellion twice within the last 50 years. In the last two decades since the 1992 Rebellion, education remains poor, unemployment remains high, and police brutality remains an enormous problem. With the situation in Los Angeles looking very familiar to the inter-rebellion periods of the past, Los Angeles is on the verge of another rebellion. The time, once again, has come for the people to rise up and rebel against the injustices. It is not a matter of if, but when. Which situation will be the last injustice African Americans are willing to take this time, is the only question.

From the Watts Rebellion in 1965 to the present, African Americans in Los Angeles have consistently been treated as inferior. The educational opportunities have been less than average, the unemployment greater than usual, and police brutality at an all time high. When African Americans have stood up to rebel against such injustices, they have been belittled and undermined by those who ridicule the type of rebellion that has ensued. Both the Watts Rebellion and the Los Angeles Rebellion have been reactions to continued injustices with a goal of meaningful change. The white, upper-middle-class American lenses need to come off so that these rebellions can be seen in their true light and serious changes can finally be made.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Abdullah, Melina. “”Superpredator” Policies Dehumanizes Us.” Interview by Amy Goodman. *Democracy Now*. KPFFK. April 11, 2016.

Dawsey, Darrell. "25 Years After the Watts Riots: McCone Commission's Recommendations Have Gone Unheeded." *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1990. <http://www.latimes.com/>.

Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, *Violence in the City- an End of A Beginning?*, 1965. Los Angeles, CA.

Gyamfi, Nana. "Black Lives Matter vs. the LAPD: Are the Police Unfairly Targeting & Surveilling the Movement?" Interview by Amy Goodman. *Democracy Now*. KPFK. April 11, 2016.

Ice-T. "Interview with Ice-T." Interview by Terry Gross. *Fresh Air*. Transcript. WHYY-FM. May 1, 1992.

Life Magazine, August 27, 1965, 1-34. Accessed March 10, 2016. GoogleBooks.

Los Angeles County and City Human Relations Commission. *McCone Revisited: A Focus on Solutions to Continuing Problems in South Central Los Angeles*, 1985. Los Angeles, CA.

Maxine Waters, "Testimony Before the Senate Banking Committee," *Congressional Record* (1992).

Secondary Sources

Blauner, Robert. "Whitewash Over Watts: The Failure of the McCone Commission Report." Compiled by Robert M. Fogelson. In *The Los Angeles Riots*, 165-88. Salem, NH: Ayer, 1988.

Fogelson, Robert M. "White on Black: A Critique of the McCone Commission Report on the Los Angeles Riots." *Political Science Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (1967): 337-67. Accessed March 08, 2016. JSTOR.

Horne, Gerald. *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Kumar, Amitava. "Los Angeles Riots and Television." *Economic and Political Weekly* 27, no. 26 (June 27, 1992). Accessed April 20, 2016.

Martin, Tony. "From Slavery to Rodney King: Continuity and Change." Compiled by Haki R. Madhubuti. In *Why L.A. Happened: Implications of the '92 Los Angeles Rebellion*, 27-40. Chicago: Third World Press, 1993.

Rich, Michael J.. 1993. "Riot and Reason: Crafting an Urban Policy Response". *Publius* 23 (3). [CSF Associates Inc., Oxford University Press]: 115–34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3330845>.

Rustin, Bayard. "The Watts "Manifesto" and the McCone Report." Compiled by Robert M. Fogelson. In *The Los Angeles Riots*, 145-64. Salem, NH: Ayer, 1988.

Shannon Campbell, Phil Chidester, Jamel Bell, and Jason Royer. "Remote Control: How Mass Media Delegitimize Rioting as Social Protest." *Race, Gender, and Class* 11, no. 1 (2004): 158-76. Accessed April 22, 2016. JSTOR.

Sides, Josh. *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Simmons, Charles E.. "The Los Angeles Rebellion: Class, Race, and Misinformation." Compiled by Haki R. Madhubuti. In *Why L.A. Happened: Implications of the '92 Los Angeles Rebellion*, 141-55. Chicago: Third World Press, 1993.

Spencer, James H.. 2004. "Los Angeles Since 1992: How Did the Economic Base of Riot-torn Neighborhoods Fare After the Unrest?". *Race, Gender & Class* 11 (1). Jean Ait Belkhir, *Race, Gender & Class Journal*: 94–115. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41675115>.

Footnotes

^[1] Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 3.

^[2] Ibid.

^[3] Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles From the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 57.

^[4] Sides, *L.A. City Limits*, 171.

^[5] Sides, *L.A. City Limits*, 177.

^[6] Sides, *L.A. City Limits*, 172.

^[7] Horne, *Fire This Time*, 35.

^[8] Ibid.

^[9] Ibid.

^[10] Horne, *Fire This Time*, 40.

^[11] Horne, *Fire This Time*, 3.

^[12] Bayard Rustin, "The Watts Manifesto and the McCone Report," *The Los Angeles Riots*, 145-64 (1988): 150.

^[13] Ibid.

^[14] "Out of a Cauldron of Hate- Arson and Death: Get Whitey! The War Cry That Terrorized Los Angeles," *Life*, August 27, 1965. Google Books.

^[15] Ibid.

^[16] Robert Fogelson, "White on Black: A Critique of the McCone Commission Report on the Los Angeles Riots," *Political Science Quarterly* 82, no.3 (1967): 338.

^[17] Fogelson, "White on Black," 342.

^[18] Robert Blauner, "Whitewash Over Watts: The Failure of the McCone Commission Report," *The Los Angeles Riots*, 165-88 (1988): 167.

^[19] Fogelson, "White on Black," 338.

^[20] Blauner, "Whitewash Over Watts," 169.

^[21] Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, *Violence in the City- An End or A Beginning?* (Los Angeles, CA, 1965) 8.

^[22] *Violence in the City*, 49-61.

^[23] *Violence in the City*, 68-69.

^[24] *Violence in the City*, 27-37.

^[25] Rustin, "The Watts Manifesto," 149.

^[26] Blauner, "Whitewash Over Watts," 169.

[27] *Violence in the City*, 93.

[28] Blauner, "Whitewash Over Watts," 171-173.

[29] Fogelson, "White on Black," 354.

[30] *Violence in the City*, 27-37.

[31] *Violence in the City* 29.

[32] Los Angeles County and City Human Relations Committee, *McCone Revisited: A Focus on Solutions to Continuing Problems in South Central Los Angeles*, 1985 (Los Angeles, CA), 2.

[33] Darrell Dawsey, "25 Years After the Watts Riots: McCone Commission's Recommendations Have Gone Unheeded," *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1990, <http://www.latimes.com/>.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Michael J. Rich, "Riot and Reason: Crafting an Urban Policy Response," *Publius* 23, no. 3 (1993): JSTOR

[37] Charles E. Simmons, "The Los Angeles Rebellion: Class, Race, and Misinformation," *Why L.A. Happened: Implications of the '92 Los Angeles Rebellion*, 141-55 (1993): 144.

[38] Simmons, "The Los Angeles Rebellion," 144-45.

[39] Tony Martin, "From Slavery to Rodney King: Continuity and Change," *Why L.A. Happened: Implications of the '92 Rebellion*, 27-40 (1993): 28.

[40] Ice T., interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, WHYY-FM, May 1, 1992.

[41] Maxine Waters, "Testimony Before the Senate Banking Committee," *Congressional Record* (1992).

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*

^[44] Simmons, “The Los Angeles Rebellion,” 144.

^[45] Ibid.

^[46] Simmons, “The Los Angeles Rebellion,” 142.

^[47] Shannon Campbell, Phil Chidester, Jamal Bell, and Jason Toyer, “Remote Control: How Mass Media Delegitimize Rioting as Social Protest,” *Race, Gender, and Class* 11, no. 1 (2004): 164.

^[48] Campbell, “Remote Control,” 163.

^[49] Amitava Kumar, “Los ANgeles Riots and Television,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 27, no. 26 (1992): 1311.

^[50] Ibid.

^[51] Melina Abdullah, interview by Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now*, KPFK FM, April 11, 2016.

^[52] Ibid.

^[53] Ibid.

^[54] Ibid.

^[55] James H. Spencer, “Los Angeles Since 1992: How Did the Economic Base of Riot-torn Neighborhoods Fare After the Unrest?” *Race, Gender, and Class* 11, no.1 (2004): 97-99.

^[56] Ibid.

^[57] Ibid.

^[58] Black Lives Matter, “Guiding Principles,” April 24, 2016, <http://www.blacklivesmatter.com/>.

^[59] Nana Gyamfi, interview by Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now*, KPFK FM, April 11, 2016.

^[60] Ibid.

^[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

Photograph

Police arrest a man during the Watts Riots. World-Telegram photo by Ed Palumbo. *This work is in the [public domain](#) in the United States because it is a [work prepared by an officer or employee of the United States Government as part of that person's official duties](#) under the terms of Title 17, Chapter 1, Section 105 of the [US Code](#). See [Copyright](#).*