

## PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

### Charlotta Bass

Journalist, politician

*"Win or lose, we win by raising the issues."*

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#### Background Information

Birth: February 14, 1874 – Death: April 12, 1969

Bass was born in Sumter, South Carolina. She attended public schools throughout her early education. After graduation, Bass attended Pembroke College in Brown University for a semester. She then moved to Providence, Rhode Island to live with a brother. She worked at the local Black newspaper, Providence Watchman for several years. In 1910, Bass moved to Los Angeles and started working at the Eagle.

#### Bass's Resistance

In May of 1912, Bass took control of the newspaper and renamed it the California Eagle. She used the newspaper to voice her disdain for racial discrimination and segregation. The California Eagle fervently spoke out against "The Birth of a Nation", a film that was filled with racist propaganda and emboldened the Ku Klux Klan across the country. In 1919, she ventured to Paris for the Pan-African Congress that had been organized by W.E.B. Du Bois. In 1920, she was elected as the Co-President of the Los Angeles chapter of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.<sup>1</sup>

Bass formed the Home Protective Association to defeat housing covenants in all-white neighborhoods. She helped organize the Industrial Business Council, which fought against discrimination in the workforce, and they encouraged Black people to go into the field of business. She also advocated to end job discrimination at the Los Angeles General Hospital. After retirement Bass entered the political arena and was nominated for Vice President. "Win or lose, we win by raising the issues." was her campaign slogan.

#### Achievements

Bass is recognized as the first African American woman to own a newspaper. Prior to Kamala Harris' historical nomination as Vice President, it was Bass who holds the honor, as she was nominated for Vice President in the United States in 1952.<sup>2</sup> Although Bass did not win, succeeded in gaining momentum for the political changes she wished to see in her community. In her reflection of not gaining the Vice-Presidential nomination, she famously proclaimed, "Win or lose, we win by raising the issues."

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia contributors. (2020, November 16). Charlotta Bass. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotta\\_Bass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotta_Bass)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/people/charlottabass.htm>

## Essential Questions

1. Charlotta Bass was the first African American woman to be nominated for Vice President of the Progressive Party in 1952. In 2020 Kamala Harris was elected as the first African American and Indian American woman Vice President. Page | 2
- a. What responsibility do the various political parties have in nominating Black women and other women of color to work in these roles?
  - b. How can Kamala Harris use her platform to ensure another half century doesn't pass before another woman/woman of color is in her current position?
2. How did Bass use journalism, Black economics and finally politics to resist white supremacy? Why is it important to be well versed in many strategies and tactics when working to end discrimination?
3. ***"Win or lose, we win by raising the issues."***
- a. What message is Bass trying to convey with this statement?
  - b. How can losing in a competition actually benefit the person who lost?
  - c. What is the responsibility of the person who won?