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# Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Contributions to Education as a Black Leader (1929-1968)

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DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S

CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

AS A BLACK LEADER

(1929-1968)

by

Clarence White, Jr.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Education  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study is an inquiry into the struggle for human rights of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. This study will identify and classify Dr. King's ideas. It will also relate his ideas to one another and place them in the more inclusive pattern of civil rights movements. This dissertation will determine and evaluate the nature and character of his philosophy, the varying concerns of those who contributed to it and the circumstances that have marked the main lines of its development. For example, the ideas of such men as Thoreau and Gandhi will be examined in relation to Dr. King's philosophy.

The objectives of this inquiry are to: (1) define Dr. King's theories and the ideologies of various civil rights movements; (2) examine the educational contribution of Dr. King as a Black leader; and (3) assert that human rights can exist only in a stable society that will effect the integration trends and patterns of our community.

The method employed in this inquiry is one of an historical evaluative analysis. All theories, whether partial or complete, have a number of standard elements which may be classified into the following groups. First, they all have a purely factual and descriptive component. Although the degree of historical interpretation varies from one study to another, all history rests on purely chronological and descriptive elements. From the descriptive element generalizations can be made. In this study, such generalizations will reduce and order a huge mass of civil rights data and

the complications of policy making. The final element is the moral component of theories. Therefore, the author will evaluate and analyze Dr. King's philosophy and contributions to education as a Black leader in terms of descriptive components, generalizations about the system, and moral principles.

The importance of this study is that it seeks to reveal and set forth the philosophy of the leader of the Black Revolution in America; in doing this, it will shed light on one of the timeless problems of justice for all: equal treatment under the Constitution, the promise of the American dream, and the aims and purposes of an integrated society. It will also examine in a comprehensive way, the causes, reasons, and the justifications for various civil rights movements. It also will show how his philosophy of non-violence fits into the continuity of both eastern and western thought and tradition of Thoreau and Gandhi.

Social, political and economic philosophies rest on assumptions regarding man's behavior which either is or is supposed to be authoritatively maintained. Political thought does not exist in a vacuum.<sup>1</sup> It is born out of conflicts in a society or between societies, out of the struggle between the "is" and the "ought to be."<sup>2</sup>

Political philosophy arises from the contest for authority, distilled and articulated into patterns of thought. The unavoidable problems inherent in a society, of individual and group superiority and subordination of the control of man over man compels thinking men to question

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas P. Jenkins, The Study of Political Thought (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

the "why" and the "how" of it all and ask "to what purpose?" Thus, political theory is concerned with causative, normative and descriptive issues.<sup>3</sup> Such theory seeks to examine why we behave and believe the way we do, and how our government system was established and what, if any, sound generalizations we may make about political and economic systems.

Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.'s theory indicates that human rights can exist only in a stable society because when the social fabric is ripped apart, liberty degenerates into license and government breaks down. Political, social and economic stability are therefore essential to true liberty.<sup>4</sup> However, society is organized into a community with power and authority vested in some type of a government empowered by various means to make compulsory rules of action. Government maintains itself and orders its changes through enforceable law. Dr. King's theory is largely concerned with what these various rules of action in the society are, or ought to be. The causative theory of human relations makes such conclusions appear logically necessary or desirable.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy attempted to describe the values by which the American citizenry ought to live; the goals of society American citizens ought to seek; the means by which they should seek them; and the institutional fabric which would best maintain them. His philosophy is of a critical nature. Dr. King indicated from the start that it should be clear that Rosa Parks was not the cause of the boycott; her arrest had merely precipitated the fight for human rights. The action

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 2 - 14.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 8 - 13.



he started was the culmination of a series of injustices and indignities that existed over the years. The Montgomery bus boycott led by Dr. King took silent solace in his victory over the White Establishment. The White Establishment often referred to Dr. King as L. L. J. which meant Little Lord Jesus. The Black leader, Dr. King, was referred to by Blacks as the leader that came on earth to deliver the indentured from Egypt. Perhaps Dr. King's greatest accomplishment was that for the first time the White people of the United States were being forced to study the Black man and his problems. For the first time, scores of millions of Americans who had seen Blacks without ever noticing or caring, began to feel the pangs of conscience. Dr. King's theory sought to explain and denounce the evils within the present system and rectify them. He sought to convince the American people of the "rightness" of his convictions that the government should pursue a moral course. He stressed a particular public policy because he felt that it would achieve justice. Dr. King did not denounce the system of government; he denounced the practices that the system allows which are not consistent with the pronounced ideals.

Dr. King stated that Blacks in America have had more than their share of suffering. However, some historians and political scientists contend that Black suffrage was not forced on them, but they would be shorn of considerable political power if they did not adopt it voluntarily. During the period of 1864 to 1877, the unjust treatments of Blacks, the unequal protection of the law and deprivation of rights (human rights), denied Blacks the right and opportunity

to enter the economic and political system. To Dr. King political power meant participating in sharing and monitoring the decision-making process. Participation in the policy-making process meant sharing in decision-making; dealing in the allocation of resources and benefits and having a voice in the process which affects our lives. In Dr. King's way of thinking, that is political power. It can be noted that no significant Congressional action to enforce civil rights took place between 1875 and the Civil Rights Act of 1957 which created the Civil Rights Commission and raised the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Section to the status of a full division. This authorized the Attorney General to seek injunction relief against "any person" whose right to vote was denied or threatened because of racial discrimination. Dr. King indicated that the 1957 Act was not satisfactory due especially to difficulties in obtaining access to state voting records. Congress then enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1960 which declared voting records public property, required their preservation for twenty-two months following the election, and authorized the United States Attorney General to examine them. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 enforced the Constitutional right to vote, conferred jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide relief against discrimination in public accommodations, authorized the Attorney General to institute suits to protect Constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, extended the Commission on Civil Rights, prevented discrimination in federally assisted programs, and established a Commission on Equal Opportunity Employment.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Acts of 1965 brought the Federal government squarely behind the struggle for equal rights for Blacks, and this brought about justice and equality in these areas for the first time. Dr. King's dream, at this time, was coming true after working for ten years in his non-violent movement.

Dr. King's entire adult life was dedicated to the poor, the meek, the humble, and what President Franklin D. Roosevelt once called "the ill-housed, the ill-fed, and ill-clothed." He worked, preached, marched, went to jail, suffered physical attack and even gave his life for the poor and downtrodden folk. He did not have to do it. It must be noted that Dr. King came from a middle-class family and never knew the grinding poverty of the people he tried to help. His parents were not rich by any means in material wealth, but they never wanted for the necessities of life. Dr. King had a comfortable childhood, as far as material things can contribute to comfort.

Dr. King attacked the problem of the poor with the ferocity of a tiger. The poverty and injustice under which his people lived sickened him. Injustice especially irritated him; however he always kept a tight reign on his temper. Dr. King viewed the total pattern and style of poor people living in a community and learned quickly that certain cultural gaps existed in our society for the poor. The pattern of the poor community is different from the middle class community in the following cultural concepts.

<u>The concept of</u>	<u>Middle Class</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Education	The road to better things for one's children and oneself	An obstacle course to be surmounted until the children can go to work.
Society	The pattern one conforms to in the interests of security and being popular	"The man"--an enemy to be resisted and suspected
The Future	A rosy horizon	Nonexistent. So live each moment fully
Joining a Church	A step necessary for social acceptance	An emotional release
Violence	The last resort of authorities for protecting the law-abiding	A tool for living and getting on
The Street	A path for the auto	A meeting place, an escape from a crowded home
Money	A resource to be cautiously spent and saved for the future	Something to be used now before it disappears
Sex	An adventure and a binding force for the family --creating problems of birth control	One of life's free pleasures
Authority, Courts, Police, Principal	Security--to be taken for granted, wooed	Something to be hated, avoided

<u>The concept of</u>	<u>Middle Class</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Ideal Goal	Money, property, to be accepted by being successful	"Coolness"--to make out without attracting the attention of the authorities
Delinquency	An evil originating outside the middle class home	One of life's inevitable events to be ignored unless the police get into the act
Liquor	Sociability, cocktail parties	A means to welcome oblivion. <sup>6</sup>

In essence the cultural difference was a part of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s program for the poor. In tracing the history of education, we find that all history reflects and repeats the history of humanity as a development. Also we have discovered that modern systems of education are the outgrowth of experience of the past. This is why Dr. King worked for the poor seeking equal opportunity in education, housing, employment, and public accommodations where styles and concepts could enable them to rise above an unavoidable handicap.

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<sup>6</sup>Dr. S. Demsch, "Psychology of Learning," Conference, Texas Western College, November 14, 1966.

Dr. King maintained that the fight he led was as much for poor Whites as for Blacks. In truth, their economic plight in many parts of the South was almost as bad as the Blacks. They could ride on the front of a bus, were served in restaurants, could use a public restroom, could attend a movie, get a hotel room, etc. All these things they could do if they had the money. However, it was the poor Whites who provided the hard core of resistance to Dr. King's idealistic dreams. It would take a psychiatrist to figure out the inner working of their minds, what caused them to oppose the things he stood for. However, they had as much to gain from Dr. King's work as their Black bretheren, but they refused to acknowledge this. The Whites were in the forefront of the opposition, yet Dr. King was the best friend they had.

The economic plight of too many of his followers depressed Dr. King. He had only to look around him to see the effect of years of injustice and malnutrition on his people. Children whose growth was stunted because of an inadequate diet, tenant farmers' wives wearing clothes made from flour sacks and feed sacks, children wearing hand-me-down clothes year after year were some of the things that kept him in a constant state of depression. The way Dr. King saw it, human rights and economic rights went hand in hand, if indeed they were not one and the same. The way he saw it, a hungry man may not be too interested in anything other than obtaining food. Dr. King indicated that a man might gain the right to sit at a cafe counter, but what good was this if he could not afford to pay for something to eat? It was the hamburger story all over again.

Affluence had come to America by the late 1960's, but vast pockets of poverty remained. Millions of people were just as badly off as they had been during the Depression. In fact, the Depression never ended for them. The Georgia tenant farmers and the Alabama sharecroppers still owed more at the end of the year than they had earned. It was like a man taking two steps forward and falling back three. Action was the only way to remedy the situation, and action Dr. King provided. The economic stagnation was bad enough, but when it was coupled with the injustices meted out to Black men in the South, it was utterly hopeless. Dr. King set out to alleviate both the economic bondage and racial injustice. It was a two-front war in the truest sense. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was Dr. King's army to fight the two-front war. From the beginning, he realized that only peaceful means, firmly pursued, could attain his ends. He knew he would have to have help from Washington, the courts, state legislators (and this would take plenty of prodding) and from Whites. If violent tactics were adopted, the end result would be to solidify the opposition, hence non-violence. Dr. King's abiding faith in the human conscience led him to his non-violent approach. In the beginning, he worked with the White man's conscience; he figured to shame the White man into helping. Dr. King dreamed of the day when Southern Blacks could sit down to a table filled with nourishing food. He dreamed of the day when "a man would be judged by his character rather than the color of his skin."

Dr. King's dreams and theory were to achieve the social, economic and political institutionalization of freedom for the American Blacks. His theory sought to achieve for this racial minority the usual human

rights and liberties denied it by the majority. Also it wanted to describe a policy whereby the government could include and extend to their minorities some concrete means of helping to activate and prod the government into action where it was slow in moving. Dr. King attempted to stay within the accepted democratic framework of this country. In a few words, Dr. King attempted to use this country's safeguards--whether constitutional or legal or both--to gain and secure these human rights.

Dr. King's objectives were to gain those human rights and liberties and social and economic privileges which were denied by means of discriminatory practices and segregation. He attempted to use not only the available methods, constitutional and legal, but also his theory of non-violent direct action to make these things a reality. As Dr. King saw it, to make these things a reality for the Blacks would enable the entire society to enjoy their rights and privileges to a greater extent. Dr. King's theory did not seek to deprive the Blacks or Whites of their human rights, liberties and privileges. However, it indicated that some members of the White community had deprived themselves of the fullest use of their own human rights, liberties and privileges to keep the Blacks in their place. To remedy these obstacles and adopt King's prescribed ideals, leads one to the beloved community.

To meet one objective, Dr. King employed and practiced various tactics to precipitate a legal situation--an ultimate confrontation of local, state and sectional provisions for segregation with national Constitutional provisions--which presently interpreted, provide for integration. Dr. King stated:

Non-violent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly



refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.<sup>7</sup>

Also Dr. King stated:

Non-violent action . . . is . . . the way to supplement . . . not . . . replace the process of change through legal recourse.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.'s ideas sought a restructuring of the conflict situation. By using ethically-founded techniques, he hoped to bring about substantial attitudinal changes on the part of the conflict participants. The American people would enable themselves to move closer to the beloved community (the good life). Dr. King sought to restructure the conflict situation by non-violent means. Therefore, by using these means, Dr. King felt that the end results, goals and objectives attained would be much more complete and final.

The goals and objectives as stated by Dr. King:

. . . a bold, brave start has been made and a rededication to the obvious fact that urgent business is at hand, and the resumption of that noble journey towards the goals reflected in the Preamble of the Constitution, and the Constitution itself, the Bill of Rights and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments.<sup>9</sup>

L. D. Reddick states that:

Democracy is one of the grandest forms of government ever conceived by the mind of men. And when realized, that is transferred from thin paper to thick action is unsurpassed.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Martin L. King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 105.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>10</sup>L. D. Reddick, Crusader Without Violence (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 22.

Dr. King had the sense of determination to banish the blemish of racism scarring the image of America, and the belief that democracy will finally overcome prejudice.

Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. can be referred to as a contemporary "social critic" one who worked to eliminate social injustice, and to enhance human rights, liberties and economic privileges of a particular nature. The classic statement in favor of the "social critic" can be traced to ancient Athens. Socrates the great Athenian teacher and philosopher was accused by the government of Athens of introducing new Gods, and of corrupting Athenian youth. Socrates was telling the youth that society tends to be smug, sluggish and is set in its ways. The society needs to be aroused, stirred into life, if constructive changes are to be made to cope with society's needs. Thus, the job of "stirring up" is the function of the gadfly or the "social critic." However, we have some citizens who will probably resent this and may even demand that the gadfly or social critic be squelched. Therefore, other citizens will be stimulated into thinking about the conditions that exist in our society and proposed action will be initiated by the gadfly or social critic. In other words, to do this the social critic must wage an active and often fierce fight in behalf of his values and beliefs, if major constructive changes are to be made in the society. Thus, the major issues are beliefs, values, and working assumptions by a man like Dr. King (social critic) to dramatize the needs within a society and seek a solution to its problems.

Dr. King, "social critic", did some writing concerning various issues of society and here is what was stated:

The issues which must be decided are momentous. The contest is not tranquil or relaxed. The search for a consensus will tend to become a quest for the least common denominator of change. In an atmosphere devoid of urgency the American people can easily be stupified into accepting slow reform, which in practice would be inadequate reform.<sup>11</sup>

Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for non-violent gadflies to create the kind of tension in our society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic height of understanding and brotherhood.<sup>12</sup>

In essence Dr. King was trying to tell us the same thing that Socrates was trying to convey, that the government at times be urged into action. Also, it can be noted and must be remembered that the social critic can only do an effective job in a society which guarantees freedom of thought and the right to express those thoughts without any obstacles. Thus, it is only when thought becomes expression that problems may arise. Dr. King, knowing this, has stressed time and again that the Blacks, in expressing their dissatisfaction, grievances, and the like, do so in a way as would not threaten the public order and safety. Dr. King indicated the way to do this is by non-violent civil disobedience, which he justified as both a moral duty and obligation.

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<sup>11</sup>Martin L. King, Jr., "Let Justice Roll Down," The Nation (March 15, 1965), p. 273.

<sup>12</sup>King, Why We Can't Wait, p. 81.

Dr. King's civil rights movement and the role it played upon public education indicates that integration in education is the only course which explicitly seeks to achieve a single nation rather than accepting the movement toward a dual society. Dr. King felt that all boards of education must accept the fact that the path toward integration is a hazardous one. However, integration represents a major break from the status quo that has existed for hundreds of years in various areas in the United States. The rule of the game is to keep the Black people in one area. This phenomenon, a prevalent one in many cities and towns, is known as containment. He did not fear the changing of the status quo of segregation as some Americans feared it, especially when many feared that association with the human rights movements certain questions had to be answered. Will my property value go down? Will my children's habits, morals, language, and personal values be diminished? These are just a few of the fears which make the issue of desegregation such an important factor in our educational system.

However, Dr. King implied that an integrated public school system must be tackled by the educators, and desegregation and full integration are essential if educators are to discharge some of the basic responsibilities in the job of educating children. King believed that changing the prevailing pattern will take a certain amount of courage, but perhaps even more needed is simple

determination to do the job without delay, using the skills and facilities already available. The children cannot wait for all their elders to overcome bigotry and prejudice. They are growing and learning now. Dr. King inferred what they learn, and whether they learn it together in classrooms where there is respect for and understanding of the differences among the family of man, or separately, fearing and distrusting each other, will determine the course of our nation.

This introduction presents the main problem of this study and presents a brief summary of what contribution it will make in Dr. King's struggle for human rights. My objective is not to show all the details of various civil rights movements, theories and ideologies, but the history and change and growth of these various ideas. It is my hope that this type of study will be both enlightening and useful in our society. The biographical sketch of Dr. King will be done in Chapter II. In Chapter III, the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will be discussed. In this chapter it will be necessary to discuss Thoreau and Gandhi in relationship to non-violence. In Chapter IV the theory and practice of different civil rights movements will be discussed. Chapter V will examine the education for Black students that came of the civil rights movements in today's society. In Chapter VI, I will give the summary and conclusion of the dissertation.

## CHAPTER II

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. MARTIN L. KING, JR.

The heritage to which Dr. King came is comprised of his parents and maternal grandparents. The author shall look into the stock from which young Martin Luther King, Jr. sprang and its relationship to his childhood background. How his predecessors served in developing Martin in his early days will be discussed in this chapter.

Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., one of America's most admired men, was born in the gray and white house at 501 Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. His mother Alberta, wife of Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., went through more than twenty-four hours of pain before she finally gave birth to her son. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not move, did not breathe. Was he dead? The doctor gave the baby's bottom a few brisk slaps. There was a weak cry and then a stronger one. Life had begun for Martin Luther King, Jr. The Kings were not poor. Reverend King, Sr. was a respected Baptist pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where his father-in-law had been pastor for thirty-seven years before him. The oldest child was Christine, born a year before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and two years before Alfred Daniel King. Reverend King, Sr. drove his own car and refused to truckle with white tradesmen.

Dr. Martin Luther King was born into comfort and security, a world of clean sheets and nourishing food. In the slums of Atlanta, many

small babies did not have such advantages. However, this baby immediately shared a burden with many of those babies in the slums. He was a Black baby. In 1929 the laws and customs in Atlanta and the state of Georgia and in the United States of America, placed the Blacks automatically in an inferior position to white people. The roots of the system could be traced to a three hundred year period that relegated Black people to an inferior status because of skin color. Dr. King was very young when he learned what it was like to be Black. He and a white boy were the firmest of friends until the white boy's mother came to the door one afternoon and advised Martin to break up the friendship and "not come here anymore." The shock did not bring tears to his eyes. However, he was stunned by this turn of events.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ancestors came from Africa. While some came voluntarily to the new country, others came as slaves torn from their native villages and sold like cattle to landowners. The slaves were needed in the New World of the mid-eighteenth century that was suddenly producing huge crops of rice, tobacco and cotton. Cheap slave labor was regarded as the answer to the great need for field hands. The buying and selling of human beings was justified by the rulers of Great Britain's colonies in the Western Hemisphere who had passed laws depriving slaves of their human rights. Thus, if a slave were not really human then it was not wrong to separate a family by selling the mother, father or children. Even when the family was kept together, the slave owner, not the father was the head of the family. Healthy Black women were bred like cattle to produce some more slaves. Some babies sold for as much as \$200. This was a great deal of money then, and slave selling was a very profitable business. It was a crime to teach

slaves to read or to give them a Bible. Since the laws held that slaves were personal property and not really people, they could be, and were, treated like horses or dogs.

The United States by 1807 had Blacks that were half slave and half free, and the United States began to feel annoying pangs of conscience. A national law was passed which forbade bringing more slaves into the country. Slavery began to die out in the North. However, the South, which was more dependent on agriculture than the North clung to the cheap labor source. Slavery became a bitter issue between the North and South. In February 1861, ten southern states broke away from the rest of the country. On April 12, 1861 the North and South went into war. President Abraham Lincoln, near the end of the war, freed the slaves in the states in rebellion by an executive order known as the Emancipation Proclamation. Also, the 13, 14 and 15th Amendments to the Constitution officially abolished slavery and gave the ex-slaves all the rights of citizens, including the right to vote. For a while it looked as if Blacks had been given instant equality. They crowded the voting places and elected several Black Senators and Mayors and even a Black Governor. Black children went into school. The Black mothers began to dream the all-American dream that someday their son might be President of the United States. However, it did not last long. The terrorist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, Mother's Little Helpers, and the Baseball Club of the First Baptist Church were organized. Black elected officials were murdered, sometimes in broad daylight, while many people stood by and watched. Therefore, little or no effort was made to search out and punish the murderers. The law, myth, and custom indicated that those White people in favor of slavery did everything



possible to keep the Blacks from enjoying the opportunities and privileges available to the White man. Today some Whites still believe that Blacks ought to be treated as inferiors. This system of racial discrimination in schools, hospitals, parks, transportation and in the use of restrooms and drinking fountains made Blacks believe that they actually were inferior and they hated themselves and other Blacks for it. Such a man was James Albert King, the father of Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr. He showed his hatred by drinking. Thus, drinking would help him forget the hopeless life he lived.

James Albert King was a sharecropper on a farm in Stockbridge, Georgia, a town located about twenty miles from Atlanta. He sharecropped another man's land and paid him for the use by giving him half of the profits from the harvested crop. The landowner provided James King with a house, land, seed, fertilizer and sometimes food. Since James King was illiterate the landowner kept the only accounts. Lacking property and capital, the sharecroppers only skill was their labor. James King had dreamed early in his life that someday ownership of his own farm would become a reality. However, James King could never seem to make a profit, and each year saw himself owing large sums of money to the store.

James King and Delia King had ten children. Martin Luther King, Sr., the second child, was the oldest son. When he was born, his father called him Martin, but his mother wanted to call him Michael. When the mother was living, he was Michael. In 1934, he had his name legally changed to Martin. Thus, Michael King became Martin Luther King, Sr. He went to school only three months out of a year. A bright and ambitious young man, Martin Luther King, Sr., earned money for himself

and his family by raising and selling hogs. He managed to save enough to buy a colt which was the first horse or mule that anyone in his family had ever owned. Martin often wondered why his father did not own anything. Martin Luther King, Sr., received the answer one day when he went with his father to settle accounts with the landowner. James Albert King reported the number of bales of cotton produced for the year. After the landowner checked his books, he indicated that King's debts balanced exactly with his profits. Remembering that there were seven and a half bags of cottonseed out in the wagon, young Martin asked about it. He knew that cottonseed was worth about a thousand dollars to his father. Martin became enraged with the landlord about the profit, and the landlord did not like the enraged youngster. When he lifted his foot to kick the boy, James promised that he would discipline his son for daring to speak up for his father. Martin Luther King, Sr. was then sixteen years old, and he could not see that there was a future for him in Stockbridge. He did not want to work all his life and have nothing to show for it as his father had. He was sure that if he moved to Atlanta and got a job, someday he would have a brick house. By the time he was twenty-five, he had earned a high school diploma. He then enrolled in Moorehouse College in Atlanta as a freshman. In 1926, he married Alberta Williams, the daughter of Reverend Williams, a leading Black minister who was the pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. When Reverend Williams died in 1931, his son-in-law became the pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

• Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., became a leader of those Blacks who opposed the indignities of segregation in Atlanta. A power in the

local NAACP and the Atlanta Negro Voters League, he refused to ride the segregated buses. He led a battle to obtain equal pay for Black teachers. Also, he managed to get the courthouse elevators integrated. The Ku Klux Klan on many occasions wrote Reverend King threatening letters and made threats and insults on the telephone. Finally, when Martin Luther King, Jr. was thirteen years old the Reverend King moved into his brick house that he had dreamed of while living in Stockbridge. In reaching for that goal he had managed to achieve more. He had become an important leader of the Black people and had created a stable, loving home in which Martin, Jr. was to grow and prepare for his participation in future world-shaking events.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the age of four started to sing in public. He was sensitive as a child. Twice he attempted to commit suicide by leaping out of a second floor window. Reddick has pointed out that Dr. King was a man of considerable complexity. The most aggressive tendencies he showed were directed at himself. Thus, on the two occasions when he attempted to commit suicide, both involved his grandmother, Mrs. Williams, towards whom he felt deep affection. Martin attempted to inflict destruction upon himself. Dr. Lawrence D. Reddick pointed out the two incidents:

The first time was when Alfred Daniel King slid down the bannister and accidentally knocked their grandmother unconscious. Dr. King, thinking his grandmother had been mortally injured, rushed to the second floor of the house and jumped out of the window. Fortunately, Martin was only slightly injured. The second time was when Martin was ten. Mrs. Williams suffered a fatal heart attack and again he tried to commit suicide. Overcome by grief plus the fact that he had slipped out to watch a parade on the very day she died, the boy repeated his leap from

the second floor window. As before, he sustained only minor bruises. This boy who could not bring himself to strike anyone else, could, under great stress, do injury to himself.<sup>1</sup>

Childhood is a time of terrors and vague fears for all children. For a Black child who must come to terms not only with himself but with the uneasy knowledge that the world knows something about him and his past, childhood is a period filled with monstrous shapes and shadows.<sup>2</sup> Dr. King's childhood does not seem to have differed significantly from the usual pattern. Although his world was more secure than that of most Blacks, the same shadow that menaced other Blacks lay athwart the sun of his world. Like all Black children, Martin felt the shadow before he saw it.<sup>3</sup> Dr. King had places to go and things to do. Thus, the privileged position in a privileged family meant that the shadows were not altogether a known reality, but one day the shadow would fall. Segregation of Blacks and Whites was not understandable to Dr. Martin Luther King in his early years.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an intelligent child was promoted through some grades in elementary school. He enjoyed school and earned high grades. He was ready for enrollement in a Black school before the age of six years old as the law required. Martin started to school at

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence D. Reddick, Crusader Without Violence (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 60 - 61.

<sup>2</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., What Manner of Man (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 14 - 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

the age of five, his mother insisting that he was six years old. He proved his academic accomplishments by pointing to a sign across the street and reading it aloud "For Whites Only." This was the winter of 1934, and in the month of April he indicated to his classmates about the birthday party he had in January. "There were five candles" he said proudly. The teacher expelled him at once. At the age of six years he was again enrolled in the first grade, but his knowledge proved so superior that he was at once advanced a grade. In Dr. King's early education the public schools of Atlanta may have lacked a high quality of education, however, it did provide him with a variety of experiences and new friends. Dr. King entered Morehouse College at the age of fifteen after he had attended four elementary and secondary schools.

The first was the Yonge Street Elementary School where he attended the first two grades. Dr. King's next four grades were at the Howard School. Following Howard School, he attended the Laboratory High School at Atlanta University which was an exceptional school. Then after Dr. King had been there two years the school closed; so it was back to public school, namely Booker T. Washington High School. Dr. King's grandfather, Reverend Williams had been instrumental in getting the city to build Booker T. Washington High School. At school Martin was a good student or, an almost model student, deferential to his elders and considerate of his peers. Dr. King's hard work enabled him to skip the ninth grade at Booker T. Washington and he entered the sophomore class in the fall of 1942.

As a high school student, he was like that of the average student in some respects. He belonged to several clubs, but he was not a school leader. The one area in which Martin seems to have gained most recognition was in speaking activities. His English teacher at Booker T. Washington, Miss Sarah Grace Bradley, noted that Martin was really a promising young speaker. Miss Bradley encouraged him and when she felt Martin was ready she would enter him in several Elk's oratorical contests. He, on one occasion, won the local event. The following year, with a year of experience behind him Martin became regional champion.

It was during the Summer of 1944 that Martin made his first trip north. He took a train to Hartford, Connecticut to pick tobacco during the school vacation. There were no separate rest rooms or waiting rooms. He did not feel the atmosphere of fear and worry that seemed to hang over the South. It was a whole new experience for Martin. He saw that there could be a better way for people to live together. Following Martin's return from Hartford in 1944, he was given the college entrance examinations. The results of the examinations let him skip the twelfth grade. Thus, after his junior year at Booker T. Washington High School, Martin was ready for college at the young age of fifteen. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was accepted at Morehouse College as a freshman the same year. By the time he was sixteen years old it was assumed by all, except his mother, that he would become an ordained minister and follow his father and his grandfather. However, it was not until his senior year at Morehouse that Martin made his decision. It must be noted that his decision was not final, but Martin felt that he could reach more of

his people and preach more of his "uplift" creed from a pulpit.

In September 1944, Dr. Martin Luther King entered Sale Hall Chapel on the Campus of Morehouse College. The chapel was a small auditorium with about 550 seats. The only decoration on the walls was a picture of the President of the college, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays. Dr. Mays had taken his doctorate at the University of Chicago and had instituted the Hutchin's plan of early admissions at his Baptist College in Atlanta. Students with high intelligence and emotional maturity who have obtained their fifteenth birthday, but not their eighteenth birthday are eligible for admission. The bus ride across town did bring Dr. King closer to the realization of his dream. For the Black youth being a "Morehouse Man" was about as important as being a "Harvard Man" for the Whites or perhaps more so for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. because he could fulfill his dreams. Also he would be able to discuss the aspects of racial injustice that exist in society without fear. Morehouse College is noted for its distinguished alumni and this Black College can boast about having provided undergraduate education for more Black college Presidents than any other school.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a member of the freshman class that had 206 students that entered Sale Hall Chapel September 1944 to hear Dr. Benjamin E. Mays welcome them to freshman life at Morehouse College. Though more college officials were with Dr. Benjamin E. Mays to file onto the speaker's platform, all eyes turned automatically to Dr. Mays. He was the sort of man whose appearance and manner commanded attention the minute he walked into a room. Dr. Mays was a very tall, dark, man with steel gray hair. He welcomed the new students and told them what was required of them as Morehouse men. They were expected to

believe in themselves and to succeed in life he said. They were expected to be leaders with determination and daring. A Morehouse Man cannot fail he said.<sup>4</sup> This was the first of many chapel convocations that Martin would attend to hear Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, an eloquent speaker, a minister, a college president, and an inspiration to Martin.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. enrolled as a sociology major and began his studies. He found the atmosphere in his classes very exciting. For Martin this was the first time he actually participated in a discussion on racial injustice. Never before had he heard it said in a classroom that segregation was wrong and should be abolished. "Nobody here is afraid," he thought.<sup>5</sup> Since Morehouse College was a private college, it did not depend for its funds on the State of Georgia or the city of Atlanta. Independence from southern government money meant that racial injustice could be called just that without the fear that funds needed for operating the college would be cut. The schools Martin had attended earlier received state funds; this was one of the reasons teachers did not feel free to discuss segregation in class.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an honor student. Dr. King sang in the glee club and joined the campus chapters of the Young Men's Christian Association and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Also, Dr. King was a member of the student-faculty discipline committee and he pursued his love for the power of words by

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<sup>4</sup>Robert M. Bleweiss, Marching to Freedom the Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Xerox Corporation, 1968), p. 48.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



taking part in oratorical contests. During his sophomore year, he won second place in the Webb Oratorical contest.

During Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s college days, he was ordained and named assistant pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church. While attending Morehouse College, Dr. King took jobs that exposed him to the problems of poor Black people. Although he could have gotten an easy office job because of his father's important position in the Black community, Martin took jobs that required backbreaking work. He noticed that Blacks usually were paid less than Whites for doing the same job. This meant that the Blacks were lowered to a humbler condition than that of their White fellow workers. The Blacks were paid less because they were considered inferior, and he realized that Blacks would stay inferior as long as the unequal salaries continued. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. remembered something his sociology teacher, Professor Walter Chivers, had said again and again in class "money is not only the root of evil but also of race." Now Martin saw Professor Chiver's theory in action.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his senior year, was beginning to develop definite opinions about what education ought to do for the individual. He wrote an article about what education ought to do for the individual, "The Purpose of Education" in the Maroon Tiger, the Morehouse College student paper. Here is a summary of his paper:

Education should not merely train a person in the technique of doing a certain job. It should not just prepare him to enter a particular occupation either, he wrote. Education should train people to think scientifically and logical. Education should enable a person to be able to tell the true from the false, fact

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

from the fiction. A logical person would lean toward true and worthy goals. A logical person would reject the theory that one race was superior to another.<sup>8</sup>

In June 1948, Martin graduated from Morehouse college and won a scholarship to Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. During his college career, he had developed into a sturdy, well-built young man with a serious, thoughtful way about him. Dr. King had some knowledge of what his life's work must be. Thus, in college he read Thoreau's essay on "Civil Disobedience" and it had a profound effect on him. Leaving Morehouse in June 1948 and entering Crozer Theological Seminary in September 1948, Dr. King was influenced by the writings of the Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi. From Thoreau's essay Dr. King gained his Christian ideas and from Gandhi he gained and learned his operational technique. His attendance at Crozer Theological Seminary was his first experience at an integrated school. He was one of six Black students in a total student body of one hundred. Martin felt watched and judged by the White students and was determined not to display any of the bad qualities that he knew many White people believed were in all Blacks. Blacks were thought of as always late, always laughing, loud, dirty, and messy. Dr. King avoided being in this category by being serious and quiet, keeping his room immaculately clean, his shoes shined, his clothes neat and never being late for anything. Becoming the most admired student on campus, Dr. King was designated as the seminarian-most-likely-to-succeed. He was elected student body president, earned all A's and stayed at the top of his class during his entire time at Crozer. At

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

twenty-two he graduated at the head of his class and was class valedictorian. Also, he won a \$1,200 scholarship which he used to attend Boston University.

Dr. King entered Boston University in September 1951 and began work on his Doctor of Philosophy degree. Boston University was selected by Martin because it was noted for its philosophic emphasis on personalism. Martin continued his intellectual quest at Boston University. The strength of Morehouse college and Crozer Theological Seminary experiences were reinforcing him and Martin could be considered a scholar by now. The Boston University faculty was impressed with his scholarship. Professor L. Harold De Wolf of the Philosophy of Religion said "of all the doctorate students I have had at Boston University, some fifty in all, I would rate Martin Luther King, Jr. among the top five."<sup>9</sup>

In his two years of course work at Boston University, Martin took additional courses in philosophy at Harvard. This arrangement was similar to his Crozer days when he had attended the University of Pennsylvania to take additional courses in philosophy. Dr. King was searching everywhere for ideas. New ideas were needed to wipe out racial injustice. The old ideas were not working. Fighting injustice with violence seemed only to increase injustice. Fighting injustice only in courts of law was difficult, slow and sometimes impossible in Southern courts. The philosophy courses added a broader cultural dimension to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s personality. Therefore, many experiences in which Martin participated on the East Coast were prohibited by the South's segregation laws and policies in his native Atlanta. Dr. King

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<sup>9</sup>Reddick, Crusader Without Violence, p. 88.

was awarded his Ph. D. in Systematic Theology in June of 1955. His dissertation: "A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman."

During his course of study at Boston University, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. met Coretta Scott, a native of Heiberger, Alabama, not far from Selma or Marion. She had done her undergraduate work at Ohio's Antioch College. Now the attractive soprano was preparing herself for a career as a concert singer. Like Martin, she was the second of three children. She had been born into poor circumstances on April 27, 1927, and had attended a one-room country school before attending the semi-private Lincoln High School operated by the American Missionary Association in Marion and had progressed to the New England Conservatory of Music. Although Coretta Scott's family was under-privileged, she suffered not from lack of parental love, pride and ambition for the children. Coretta remembered her parents' determination to provide education for their family. Coretta's mother indicated early that her children were going to college "even if I have only one dress to wear." Mrs. King's father had a sixth-grade education and her mother had completed the fourth grade. Mrs. King shared her parents' desire for a college education. She looked upon higher education as the key needed to change the conditions of her early life. At Antioch College, Coretta had had White boy friends. She could smile, hold hands, kiss and listen to the lofty promises of marriage. However, she was determined to be a concert singer. If she went home to Alabama, the best she could expect would be to sing in Black churches. In the North, Coretta knew that she could be successful and appreciated. Her ambition to

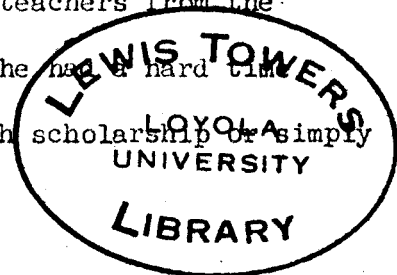
achieve "equality" almost dominated her life. The more Mrs. King was convinced that the North was far more liberal and palatable to her, the more Martin Luther King, Jr. missed the South.

Dr. King dated Coretta on a tentative basis, his ardent warmth fighting the icicles of her suspicions. Throughout a cold winter, they saw much of each other, and Martin arrived at a swift and final conclusion "This is the girl for me and I am going to marry her." Dr. King's protestations of eternal love were received by Coretta as the usual tactic of all males, most of whom would vow, "I love you and want to marry you" without sincerity, merely to attain the age-old goal. By July 1952, Coretta was convinced that her swain was sincere and in love and she was now certain that he was anything but a down-home preacher. Normally, love is an emotion which overtakes a romantic tunnel. In Coretta's case, she was one who could dwell upon all the aspects of love and marriage as a banker might read an application for a loan. Coretta still had reservations, but she wanted to meet his parents; she wanted to see the church of his father; she had a desire to weigh what life would be like, even down to the type of living in a middle-class Black community. She agreed to visit in Atlanta that summer. Almost from the start she realized that her competition was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s father. The young minister loved and admired the stern and righteous old man, but Coretta wanted a marriage in which she would be the determinant, not a Father-in-law minister who might be inclined to make important decisions for her and her husband. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott were married June 18, 1953. The wedding was fashionable and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr. performed the ceremony at the

home of the bride's parents in Heiberger, Alabama. Everybody who was anybody in Black social life was present, and as an event, it had little in common with the crossroads Blacks. Before Coretta would agree to the marriage, she wanted it understood that she was going back to Boston in the autumn to continue her studies at the conservatory. This was perfect, because Dr. King wanted to return to Boston College to qualify for his doctorate. The solitary schism between them, small as it was, would widen in time. Mrs. King really wanted a singing career in the North and nowhere else. Therefore, she wanted Martin to promise that he would seek a job as a minister of a Northern church or one as a teacher of theology. Dr. King could afford to smile, and answered his wife's demands by saying "we will see, we will see."

The couple returned to Boston to start their new life. Mrs. King surprised and delighted Martin with her intelligent approach to personal problems, by her philosophy which adjusted to the dismal aspects of world affairs. By now Mrs. King was working her way slowly and accurately to the conclusion that he would not remain in the North, even though Martin had already received two good offers from churches. It was in the summer of 1954 when Mrs. Coretta Scott King was graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music and her husband passed his preliminary examinations at Boston University. To the union of Martin and Coretta would be born four children: Yolanda, Martin III, Dexter Scott and Bernice.

Dr. King was invited to give a trial sermon shortly after Christmas. The Dexter congregation consisted mainly of teachers from the Alabama State College. As he prepared his sermon he had a hard time deciding whether he should try to impress them with scholarship or simply



depend on the inspiration of God as he usually did. Finally the decision was made to himself "keep Martin Luther King in the background and God in the foreground and everything will be all right." Dexter Avenue Church must have liked the sermon. A month later they invited him to be the pastor of their church. Dr. King asked for three considerations before accepting the pastorship of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church: (1) that he be granted an allowance of time to complete his work at Boston University coming to Dexter as a full pastor not later than September 1954. During this interval he would fill the pulpit at least once or twice per month; also, he would be expecting Dexter to defray the expenses in his travel from Boston to Montgomery. (2) That the parsonage be completely furnished, and (3) the proposed salary of \$4,200 per year would increase as the church expanded. In September 1954, the Kings took up residence in Montgomery, Alabama where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. assumed the pastorate of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Mrs. King was very happy that he accepted this offer because this was not too far from her parents' home.

Montgomery, Alabama had been the capital of the Confederacy during the Civil War. Life for Blacks in Montgomery was considered by many as being the worst in the South. Segregation was rigid; good paying jobs were few. Black voter registration was discouraged by slow and tedious processing procedures. Blacks were not permitted to sit in the first four rows of seats on buses.<sup>10</sup> This meant that when the bus was

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<sup>10</sup>Bleiweiss, Marching to Freedom: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr., p. 59.

crowded, Blacks had to stand over empty seats. For years in Montgomery, educated and uneducated Blacks had raised scarcely a word of protest against the injustices they lived with every day. The Supreme Court ordered all schools desegregated in May 1954, causing voices being raised and stirrings to be heard in the Black community of Montgomery. The Kings moved into the parsonage on South Jackson Street. Dr. King, at this point, familiarized himself with church routine. He reorganized the church budget. Also, Dr. King organized a parish social and political action committee to encourage the congregation to take a more active role in community affairs.<sup>11</sup> The first job of the committee was to set up a voting clinic. In this voting clinic unregistered voters of the congregation were trained to avoid the traps of red tape that registrars set for the Black voters.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. continued to work on his dissertation and by the spring of 1955, completed it. His research had led him to the conclusion that Dr. Paul Tillich, a German professor, believed God was power and being, while Dr. Henry Weiman, an American professor, believed God was goodness and value. His dissertation was approved and he was awarded a Ph. D. degree by Boston University in 1955. Just prior to Dr. King's receiving his degree, the Supreme Court reaffirmed its 1954 decision and ordered all schools in the land desegregated "with all deliberate speed." This action angered many Southern Whites. They organized White Citizens Councils to counteract the court order. That same year Emmet Till, a fourteen year old Chicago boy who was visiting relatives in Mississippi, was kidnapped and lynched. Blacks and Whites

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.



across the nation were horrified. Thus, unrest, anger and impatience grew in the Black community in the following months. Then, on December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama in the early evening it was unseasonably warm. The stores were closing and early Christmas shoppers poured out into the street. The Cleveland Avenue bus pulled to a stop near the Montgomery Fair, a large department store, Mrs. Rosa Parks got on. This forty-three year old Black woman worked as a seamstress in the Montgomery Fair. She had been shopping after work and her feet were hurting. The bus was filling up. Mrs. Parks was lucky enough to find a seat near the front, one row behind the section reserved for White passengers. Mrs. Parks sat down and eased the heel of her shoe off just a second. When the bus pulled up to the stop in front of the Empire Theater, there were no seats left on the bus. At this point some White passengers boarded the bus. The normal practice is for the driver to turn to the Blacks sitting just behind the White section and say "Let me have those seats." Three Black passengers got up at once. However, Mrs. Parks did not move. Thus, Mrs. Parks forgot the color of her skin. At this point she became a human being whose feet hurt and who had found a seat on a crowded bus. The driver asked her again, but still she refused to move. The driver called the police. When Officers arrived, Mrs. Parks looked up at one of them and quietly said "why do you push us around?" "I don't know" said the officer "but the law is the law and you are arrested."<sup>12</sup> For this protest of not giving her seat to a White man, Mrs. Parks, a respected member of the Black community was taken to jail. She was charged with violating

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

the city's segregation law. This year alone five Black women and two Black children had been arrested for disobeying bus drivers. One Black man had been shot to death by a policeman for the same offense. News of Mrs. Parks arrest spread quickly throughout the Black community. After many phone calls, several influential Black women got the idea of a bus boycott. The idea was passed on to Mr. Nixon who thought it was a good idea after a brief study of the idea. Mr. Nixon was a pullman porter who, despite his lack of education, managed to make a comfortable living for his family. He had been raising his voice against segregation for years.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., received a call early Friday morning, December 2, 1955. Mr. Nixon, so excited he did not bother to say hello, told the story of Mrs. Parks' arrest and jailing. His voice trembling, Mr. Nixon ended by saying we have taken this type of thing too long already. I feel that the time has come to boycott the buses. Only a boycott can make it clear to the White citizens that we will not accept this type of treatment any longer. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. agreed with the idea of a boycott. After a series of meetings, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. suddenly led 42,000 Montgomery Blacks to stop riding the Jim Crow buses. The Blacks, along with the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Black citizens, decided that they would rather walk to work than ride on such buses. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as head of the Montgomery Improvement Association staged a bus boycott which lasted more than 380 days, resulting in victory when the Supreme Court ruled that the kind of racial discrimination practiced on the buses was illegal. Long before the boycott ended, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s name was world famous.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ideal was to be a teacher-minister like Dr. Benjamin E. Mays. He felt, though, that he needed the experience of ministering to a church before he could teach. Dr. King considered the question of whether to settle in the North or the South. Though not perfect, the North was a much freer place for Blacks to live. However, Dr. King had fond memories of the South despite its problems. The experience and education he had obtained might help to solve those problems.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had set himself a task so difficult (and to some even impossible) as to stagger the imagination. The burden he carried was enormous. For thousands of his followers, he was civil rights. They looked upon him as a modern Moses, as indeed he was to a great extent. There were many similarities between Dr. Martin Luther King and the man who set the Jews free from the Pharoahs. His problem was to eliminate racial prejudice and injustice without a great blood-bath. To those who have followed the struggle since the Civil War this staggered the imagination. Dr. King was always explicit about one thing: whatever was done must be done nonviolently. This was Moses' way. It took Moses forty years to lead his people to the promised land. Dr. King had worked at his task less than half that when he was felled by the assassin's bullet. Like Moses, Dr. King had to contend with extremists on both sides. He had his doubters. The Black power movement almost split his organization asunder. Many Whites and liberals who had been a mainstay in the early days dropped out. Moses grew very weary of his task and called upon the Lord for relief. Some of his followers forsook him. We do not know what went on in communication between

Dr. King and the Lord, but we do know he never gave up. Tired yes, but not too weary to carry one.

Dr. Martin Luther-King, Jr. started his civil rights career with the Montgomery bus boycott. He was moved to get into the fight by the fact that a woman, almost too tired to move, was arrested for failure to move to the rear of a city bus. From that point on it was clear his life's task was cut out for him. Inevitably, as a symbol of integration, he became the object of unrelenting attacks and vilification. His home was bombed. He was spat upon and mocked. He was struck and kicked. He was stabbed, almost fatally, by a deranged Black woman. Dr. King was thrown into jail frequently. Threats became so commonplace his wife learned to ignore cross burnings on the lawn and ominous phone calls. Through it all Dr. King adhered to the creed of passive disobedience that infuriated segregationists. Like Moses, Dr. King had his crosses to bear. The adulation that was heaped upon him eventually irritated even some of those in the civil rights movement who worked hard, but in relative obscurity. They pointed out, with heavy sarcasm, they referred to him as "de Lawd". They noted his success was built on the labors of many who had gone on before him, the "noncoms and provates" of the civil rights army who fought without benefit of headlines and television cameras.

The Black extremists he criticized contemptuously dismissed his passion for nonviolence as another form of servility to White people. They called him "Uncle Tom" and charged him with hindering the Black's struggle for equality. He rejected the doctrine of Black power. The

Black needs the White man to free him from his fears. The White man needs the Black to free him from his guilt. At the root of King's civil rights philosophy was a deep-rooted faith in the basic goodness of man and the great potential of American democracy. These beliefs gave his speeches a fervor that could not be stilled by criticism. Scores of millions of Americans, both Black and White, were thrilled by his voice when he made his famous "I have a dream" speech to 200,000 marchers in Washington in 1963. He had the power to "turn men on" long before that term was taken over by the hippies.

All over the world men were moved as they read his words of December 10, 1964, when he became the third member of his race to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. King refused to accept the idea that man is mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life which surrounds him. Also, Dr. King refused to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and was that the day-break of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality. . . . he refused to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of thermonuclear destruction.<sup>13</sup>

King believed that while right may be temporarily defeated the unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. He wanted his followers to give up their weapons of violence and accept the weapon of nonviolence, the breastplate of righteousness, the armor of truth, and just keep marching. He had a way of reducing complex issues to terms that anyone could understand. Thus, in the summer of 1965, when there was widespread discontent among Blacks about their struggle for equality of employment, he indicated: "What good does it

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

do to be able to eat at a lunch counter if you cannot buy a hamburger?" The impact of this statement was one of the reasons he was in the President's room in the White House August 6, 1965 when President Johnson signed into law the voting rights bill that struck down literacy tests, provided federal registrars to assure the ballot to unregistered Blacks, and marked the growth of the Black into a political force in the South.

Through his Southern Christian Leadership Conference, money was raised and sit-ins were planned. Some campaigns were conducted for Black voter registration, and other measures through which Blacks hacked away at segregationist resistance, lowering the barriers against them in the political, economic and social life of the nation. The minister who became the most famous spokesman for Black rights since Booker T. Washington, was not particularly impressive in appearance. About five feet eight, he had an oval face with almond-shaped eyes that looked almost dreamy when he was off the speaker's platform. There was little of the rabble rouser in his oratory. Dr. King was not prone to extravagant gestures or loud peroration. His talent was not that of a spellbinder. Occasionally, after a particularly telling sentence, he would tilt his head a bit and fall silent, as though waiting for the echo of his thought to spread through the hall, church or street. In private gatherings he lacked the laughing gregariousness that often makes for popularity. Some thought he was without a sense of humor. While not gifted with the flamboyance of the late Adam Clayton Powell or the cool strategic brilliance of a Roy Wilkins, what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did have was an instinct for recognizing the right moment to make his

moves. Some critics looked upon this as pure opportunism. Thus, it was this sense of timing that raised him in 1955 from a newly-arrived minister in Montgomery with his first church, to a figure of international prominence. After he assumed command of the bus boycott, he indicated that:

• If we are arrested every day, if we are exploited every day, if we are trampled every other day, don't ever let anyone pull you so low as to hate them, we must use the weapon of love. We must have compassion and understanding for those who hate us. We must realize so many people are taught to hate us that they are not totally responsible for their hate. But we stand life at midnight; we are always on the threshold of a new dawn.<sup>14</sup>

In essence these words sound like they might have been uttered by Moses. Certainly they have the same meaning. Moses might well have used identical language in exhorting his people to rise up and escape from Egypt or in urging them to make their way out of the wilderness and on to the Promised Land. They both had a dream. Moses realized his. Dr. King's will have to come in the hereafter.

In spite of difficulties and frustrations, Dr. King still had a dream that "one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed." Dr. King stated that these truths are held to be self-evident that all men are created equal. Dr. King's frustration and setbacks of his dream started with the White House rejection of his proposal for a conference on civil rights had prompted him, through the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to call for a mass prayer pilgrimage in Washington, D. C. The plans Dr. King might have had to lead the demonstration were dashed when the National Association for the

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<sup>14</sup>Bennett, What Manner of Man, pp. 45 - 46.

Advancement of Colored People skillfully assumed sponsorship. The date had already been agreed upon as May 17, 1957, the third anniversary of the Supreme Court decision abolishing segregation in schools. More than 30,000 people, about ten per cent of them White, stood between the Lincoln Memorial and the Mall on that day. Dr. Martin Luther King sensed that he was on trial before the old leaders of his people, and he had decided to combine an intelligent plea for justice with the repetitive phrase which always had impact in the South. A. Phillip Randolph spoke first. Roy Wilkins was introduced. Then came congressman Adam Clayton Powell and two massed choruses which intoned hymns. Mahalia Jackson sang, and there were short addresses by Black spokesmen. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. feared that the people would be tired of listening before he was introduced. However, this was not so, and the people were waiting for the newcomer. Dr. King enunciating each word slowly, sent them rolling down over the crowd. Dr. King indicated in his speech: "Give us the ballot, and we will no longer plead, and we will write the proper laws on the books." The crowd screamed "Amen!" Also, Dr. King stated "Give us the ballot and we will fill the legislatures with men of good will." The crowd shouted in unison. Dr. King went on in his extraordinary voice "give us the ballot and we will get the people judges who love mercy and if we get the ballot we will quietly and lawfully implement the May 17, 1954 decision of the Supreme Court." The crowd stood in approval of Dr. King's statement. He was, by any test, the man of the hour. The people yelled, cheered, and begged him to go on. Truly on his way to becoming a national figure, Dr. King was a new leader and a Christian following the bare feet of Jesus and Gandhi.



As school opened late that summer, the South remained peaceful. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference realized that it was fighting the acquiescent Black as much as it was fighting the arrogant White. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. arranged for twenty-one mass meetings in twenty-one Southern cities on the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, February 12, 1958. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference did not warn to "Give us the ballot now," because it would require a decade of registration before the Black vote would be able to tip the balance in Southern elections. Dr. King was in favor of something with more immediate and dramatic results. It was time for Dr. King to have a White House Conference; however, his public "demands" irritated President Eisenhower because they left the press and the Blacks with the impression that until now, the White House had not listened to or tried to improve race conflict. Thus, Dr. King received his first invitation in June 1958. The conference was held in the big Oval Office. The President extended his hand and grinned. So did Dr. King and both men did not feel comfortable. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, and Lester B. Granger of the Urban League listened while A. Phillip Randolph read a nine-point proposal for a more active government role in promoting Southern integration. The proposals were reasonable and lawful. Thus, when Randolph concluded reading them the President unclasped his hands, shook his head sadly and stated "There are so many problems . . . Lebanon, Algeria . . ." At this point the Black leaders knew at once that either the President did not comprehend the nine points or more likely did not want to honor them. The group left the White House crestfallen.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was more an innocent than a sophisticate. Perhaps his most serious mistake was in thinking that Black people, because they were Black, were unified. His inability to understand some Northern Blacks became obvious when he arrived in New York for a book-autographing party at a department store in Harlem. On the night before the party, Dr. King drove through Harlem nodding and waving from the plush backseat of a limosine. Blacks pelted his car with eggs. The following morning, September 20, 1958, Dr. King emerged from his car still smiling and waving. Black nationalists heckled him and booed. Dr. King was shocked and puzzled, and then he proceeded into the autographing party. Inside, he sat alone at a desk, smiling at a line of women, mostly Black who held copies of his book. One woman walked to the desk and said softly, "Are you Dr. King?" The expression on the woman's face changed swiftly. She took a long Japanese letter opener from her purse. "Martin Luther King," she shouted "I have been after you for years!" The blade tore into his ribs until only the handle was sticking from his chest. At Harlem Hospital, Dr. Emil A. Naclerio and two other surgeons were, in all likelihood, more frightened than Dr. King. They realized that since the point of the weapon had just missed the heart, if he sneezed, it would mean sudden death. An operating room was prepared and the doctors proceeded with this operation which took three hours of delicate work. The would-be assassin was Mrs. Izola Curry, who was forty-two years of age and lived in New York. Her reason for attempting to assassinate King was based on a belief that he was trying to convert her from Roman Catholicism.

After his recovery, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. decided to accept an invitation to visit India that he had received a year earlier. He had studied more about Gandhi's teachings and worked to walk in the Indian leader's bare footsteps. When the plane landed in New Delhi in February, 1959, the press duly noted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s observation: "To other countries I may go as a tourist. However, when I visit India, I come as a pilgrim."

Prime Minister Nehru entertained the Kings at an informal dinner. The young man from Georgia was flattered to find that a chief of state was so well acquainted with his struggles for racial equality. As Dr. King was about to leave India, he thrust aside the narrow shielding cloak of the cleric for the broad and vulnerable one of the politician. Now the question was asked: Is he a Communist? Dr. King was not. However, there were radicals among his followers or at least one who had been a party Communist. The pastor was as aware of them as they were of him. Ironically, as this group worked on plans to use Dr. King to further their ends, he told close friends that he would bend the radicals to do his work.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference meanwhile had set up headquarters in Atlanta. Dr. King all but commuted between Atlanta and Montgomery. After an agony of soul-searching, he decided that he could no longer divide his time between big things and small things. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference promised a bigger role in life than the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. This organization's headquarters being in Atlanta was a factor in Dr. King's submitting his resignation to the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. In the summer of 1960, Dr. King

arrived in Atlanta. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was involved in a mammoth drive to register Black voters for the coming national elections. Although strong and unified Black vote would draw attention to civil rights, many Blacks were apathetic. Nor was he doing well with some militant students among the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee who claimed that he and his non-violence had betrayed the organization. These critics said that Dr. King was a person who bubbled with enthusiasm and then went home to forget SNCC. Others stated that Dr. King had had "his day." Thus, this led Dr. King, Adam Clayton Powell and A. Phillip Randolph to stage a loud civil rights rally in Los Angeles in July, as the Democratic Party was convening in the same city. Dr. King invited all the leading candidates to address the Blacks. The candidates did not or would not risk taking a stand on civil rights. This rally was far from a milestone in civil rights. The only people who spoke plainly and fluently for civil rights were the Blacks. The rally failed also as a publicity device, and did not sway any votes in the big smoky convention. John F. Kennedy was nominated on the first ballot. Therefore, by not committing himself he owed nothing to Blacks and was prepared to give them nothing until it was politically advantageous.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was subjected to many criticisms from both Blacks and Whites. While he forgave them all, he never could forgive the lack of feeling, interest, and concerns of some citizens. Dedicated to the cause with a fervour that knew no bounds, Dr. King had to inspire some of his faint-hearted followers who were inclined to

wilt when the going got rough. He knew from the outset it would be that way, and only the man determined to go ahead at any cost would have a chance of success. The fight that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. started was long, hard and at times seemingly impossible and only the abiding faith of a deeply religious man could conquer.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was many things to many people. To the segregationist, North and South, he was a troublemaker, a threat to "our way of life," an anathema. To the moderate or lip-service liberal he gave a guilty conscience, an uncomfortable call to contrition. To the liberal White he was the nation's salvation, the embodiment of the best of the Judeo-Christian tradition. To the Black masses, he was a "Balm in Gilead," the symbol of all their aspirations. Also to some of the Black middle class, he was an opportunist. Whatever he was, he has left an indelible print on the mid-1950's and the 1960's in American history and has changed the life patterns and styles in today's society for many citizens, both Black and White.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, to understand the nature of Dr. King's philosophy and concepts, it is necessary to trace and give a sketch of his life as has been discussed in this Chapter. The next chapter will deal with two prime factors developed from the biographical sketch in regard to King's philosophy of civil disobedience and non-violence.

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<sup>15</sup>Donald H. Smith, "Martin Luther King, Jr., Rhetorician of Revolt" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, The University of Wisconsin, 1964), p. 60.

### CHAPTER III

#### PHILOSOPHY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The basis of Dr. King's philosophy will be explored in this chapter. However, the application of his philosophy to the various civil rights movements will be demonstrated later in this study. In this chapter King's philosophy and methods of social persuasion will be related to his development of his non-violent philosophy and concept.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the shepherd of the pilgrimage to non-violence, yet this journey ended abruptly in Memphis, Tennessee, April 4, 1968 when the bullet of a cowardly sniper snuffed the breath of life from the body of a champion of justice by squeezing the trigger of a rifle with a telescopic sight. Dr. King was America's foremost, exponent of non-violent resistance which was for him both a philosophy and a method of social persuasion. Dr. King's philosophy and method resulted from a multiplicity of experiences. Martin Luther King indicated that his Christian ideas were gained from Thoreau and his operational non-violent techniques were gained from Gandhi, and this will be discussed in detail toward the end of this chapter. An apostle of non-violence in the long battle for civil rights, he was appalled when others evilly warped his philosophy into a self-assumed license to loot, burn and destroy. When his death touched off rioting, burning, looting and more death, some people shouted that "the whole concept of non-violence died with Dr. Martin Luther King!" However, Reverend Ralph Abernathy assured the public that his work would continue.

Dr. King was a member of a long line of marchers led by Peter, John, James, Paul, Socrates, Abraham Lincoln and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Thus, keeping in line with Dr. King's philosophy of non-violence for those who remain on the scene should be to hold up the unimpeachable doctrine of non-violence. A non-violent leader from the very beginning, he had studied non-violence as a student, and later preached it. Some of the experiences that shaped his philosophy were: (1) Growing up in Atlanta abhorring not only segregation, but also the oppressive and barbarous acts that grew out of it. (2) Passing the places where Blacks had been savagely lynched. (3) Watching the Ku Klux Klan on its rides at night. (4) Seeing police brutality with his own eyes, and (5) Watching Blacks receive the most tragic injustice in the courts.<sup>1</sup>

In essence, all of these things had done something to his growing personality and helped him form his philosophy. Dr. King once had become close to resenting all White people. He had had to learn that the inseparable twin of racial injustice was economic injustice. Although coming from a home of economic security and relative comfort, he could never forget the economic insecurity of many of his playmates and the tragic poverty of those living around him. Dr. King had worked two summers in a plant that hired both Blacks and Whites, and saw the economic injustice that exploited the poor White just as much as the Blacks. Through these experiences he grew up deeply conscious of the varieties of injustice in our society.

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., Stride Toward Freedom (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 90.

The very essence of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy was that more good could be accomplished by peaceful demonstration than through violent action. This firm belief caused his death. From the beginning, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ~~hero~~ was Gandhi, who had led India to its independence from England. Gandhi was the originator of the policy of non-violence which was such an important part of Dr. King's life. King believed fervently in firm, though non-violent action like boycotts and marches. He often walked alone, though there were thousands with him. Far on the fringes, the advocates of faster action through violence were always waiting for Dr. King to stumble so they could take over the civil rights movement. This always worried and haunted him. His failure to control Black militants in his first Memphis march shook him to the core. This first real failure in the use of non-violence tactics disturbed him. For this reason, he was determined to return to Memphis and prove that his non-violent approach was correct. His second trip to Memphis led to his death. Dr. King knew that unless he could lead a successful, peaceful march in Memphis and a peaceful poor people's march on Washington, his non-violent course was doomed. Dr. King admitted after the violence of the first march that "our intelligence was nil." The march that was planned did not work, because <sup>?</sup> too many militants participated and the leaders were completely cold to that situation.

Dr. King had received a promise from Black power leaders that there would be no violence in the second march, but it was too late. Fate already had stepped into the situation. The assassin was already planning his murder. The power of small events to change the course of history entered the story at this point. If Dr. King could have staged



the second Memphis march successfully and could have gone on to lead the Washington march without violence, his position would have been vindicated and he would once more have been in unquestioned control of the civil rights movement. These are two big "ifs," to be sure; they were too big to overcome as it turned out. Had Dr. King succeeded here, there would have been no mule-drawn caisson carrying his body through the streets of Atlanta. The movement would have been back on an even track and the nation might have been spared a bloodbath.

Raw, naked power always sickened Dr. King who was a religious man. Violence to his fellow man, for whatever cause, was abhorrent to him. He firmly believed in the "turn the other cheek" teachings of the Bible. However, there were those who completely misjudged his determination. Dr. King's philosophy was peace, yes, but not at any price. While a prisoner in the Birmingham jail in 1963, he received a letter from eight White ministers urging him to negotiate his differences with city and state officials and calling upon him to observe the principles of law and order and common sense. Dr. King's answer, in part, written from the Birmingham jail, was:

. . . My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and non-violent pressure. History is long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their unjust posture; but as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups are more immoral than individuals.

. . . We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was "welltimed" according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "wait." It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "wait" has always meant "never." It has been a tranquilizing thalidomide, relieving the emotional stress for a moment only to give birth

to an illformed infant of frustration.<sup>1</sup> We must come to see with the distinguished jurist of yesterday that "justice too long delayed is justice denied." We have waited for more than three hundred and forty years for our constitutional rights and God-given rights.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. King answered the questions posed by the eight Alabama White ministers: "Why not negotiate? But why direct action? Why not litigation?" The following part of Dr. King's letter answered the questions from the Birmingham jail which indicated Dr. King's philosophy in this situation:

. . . You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Non-violent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. I just referred to the creation of tension as a part of the work of the non-violent register. This may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word tension, but there is a type of constructive non-violent tension that is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, we must see the need of having non-violent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. So the purpose of direct action is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation . . .<sup>3</sup>

Dr. King was concerned that the Alabama ministers deplored the demonstrations that were presently taking place in Birmingham. However, he regretted that the letter did not express a similar concern for the conditions that precipitated the demonstrations. Dr. King was sure that each of them would want to go beyond the superficial social analyst

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<sup>2</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., What Manner of Man: Martin Luther King, Jr. (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1968), p. 111.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 111 - 112.

who merely looks at effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. Also, Dr. King stated that there are four basic steps to any non-violent campaign: (1) collection of facts to determine whether injustices are alive; (2) negotiation; (3) self-purification and (4) direct action. Dr. King had gone through all these steps in Birmingham when he was placed in jail. In essence, other nations were moving with jet-like speed toward the goal of political independence, and here in the United States we were still creeping at a horse-and-buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a lunch counter.

Dr. King indicated to some of the citizens that have never felt the stinging darts of segregation who say to wait, but not when you are aware of vicious mobs who lynch fathers and mothers at will and drown children at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize and even kill your Black brothers and sisters with impunity; and you are aware of the vast majority of the twenty million Blacks smothering in an air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society. As Dr. King pointed out, the darts are really rough when your first name becomes "nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" and your last name becomes "John" and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs." This will leave you harried by day and haunted by night and by the fact that you are Black living constantly at tip-toe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next and plagued with the inner fears and outer resentments, then you can see why Dr. King said we find it difficult to wait. Dr. King's philosophy on the various non-violent marches can be derived from the above-described conditions of the Blacks.

As he examined Gandhi's philosophy, King's skepticism concerning the power of love as an agency of social reform gradually diminished as he recognized its pattern for the first time.<sup>4</sup> Before reading Gandhi, he had concluded that the ethics of Jesus were effective only in individual relationships. The "turn-the-other-cheek" and "love-your-enemies" philosophy was only valid, he felt, in cases of individual conflict. When racial groups and nations were in conflict a more realistic approach seemed necessary. In the philosophy of Gandhi that placed emphasis on love and non-violence, Dr. King discovered the method for social reform he had been seeking. He came to feel that non-violence was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. Here is Dr. King's basic philosophy of non-violence which incidentally was formulated many years before riots began rippling across this country. He stated that:

. . . First it must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards, it does resist. If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the instruments of violence, he is not truly non-violent. This is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight. The phrase passive resistance often gives the false impression this is a sort of do-nothing method in which the resister quietly and passively accepts evil. But nothing is farther from the truth. For while the non-violent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong. The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually.<sup>5</sup> (see)

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<sup>4</sup>King, Stride Toward Freedom, p. 96.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

He states the second basis of the non-violent philosophy:

. . . A second basic fact that characterizes non-violence is that it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The non-violent resister must often express his protest through non-cooperation or boycott, but he realizes these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of non-violence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.<sup>6</sup>

He indicated that the third basis for the non-violent methodology is:

. . . A third characteristic of this method is that the attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is evil that the non-violent resister seeks to defeat, not the persons victimized by evil. The tension is at the bottom, between justice and injustice. We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. King stated that the fourth basis of the non-violent philosophy is:

. . . A fourth point that characterizes non-violent resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back. Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood, Gandhi said to his countrymen. The non-violent resister is willing to accept violence if necessary, but never to inflict it. He does not seek to dodge jail. If going to jail is necessary, he enters it as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. King further states that the fifth basis for his non-violent philosophy is:

. . . A fifth point concerning non-violent resistance is that it avoids not only external physical violence but also internal

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

violence of spirit. The non-violent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love. In the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns. 'To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. If I respond to hate with a reciprocal hate I do nothing but intensify the cleavage in broken community. 'I can only close the gap in a broken community by meeting hate with love. Booker T. Washington was right: "Let no man pull you so low as to make you hate him."<sup>9</sup>

The final point of the non-violent philosophy as stated by

Dr. King is:

. . . A sixth basic fact about non-violent resistance is that it is based on the convictions that the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently, the believer in non-violence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the non-violent resister can accept suffering without retaliation. For he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship.<sup>10</sup>

In essence, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of non-violence is not the resignation from all real fighting against wickedness. On the contrary, his non-violent concept involves a more active and real fight against wickedness than is a policy of retaliation which by its very nature increases wickedness. Non-violence was, for him, a method of social persuasion, of resistance to injustice that was a part of our society. 'Dr. King's personal philosophy and non-violent methodology was also influenced by Reinhold, Niebuhr and Hegel. Niebuhr made him realize man's potential for evil.<sup>11</sup> Of Niebuhr, Dr. King says:

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

. . . Niebuhr's great contribution to contemporary theology is that he has refuted the false optimism characteristic of a great segment of protestant liberalism, without falling into the anti-rationalism of the contentional theologian Karl Barth, or the semi-fundamentalism of other dialectical theologians. Moreover, Niebuhr has extraordinary insight into human nature, especially the behavior of national and social groups. He is keenly aware of the complexity of human monies and of the relation between morality and power. His theology is a persistant reminder of the reality of sin on every level of man's existence. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, Niebuhr contributed King's recognition of the complexity of man's social involvement and the glowing reality of injustice and collective social evil.

In structuring his philosophy, King was also influenced by Hegel and the Hegelian dialectic. Hegel's contention that the "truth is the whole" led Dr. King to his philosophical method or rational coherence. His analysis of the dialectical process helped Dr. King to see that growth came through struggle.<sup>13</sup> Hegel's theory held that "world-historical individuals" were the agents who carried out the will of the world spirit.<sup>14</sup> He stated:

. . . They may all be called heroes, in as much as they have derived their purposes and their vocation, not from the calm regular course of things, sanctioned by the existing order; but from a concealed fount, from that inner Spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, which impinges on the outer world as on a shell and bursts into pieces. (Such were Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon.) They were practical, political men. But at the same time they were thinking men, who had insight into the requirements of the time what was ripe for development. This was very true for their age, for their world . . . It was theirs to know this nascent principle, the necessary, directly sequent step in progress, which their world was to take, to make this their aim, and to expend their energy in promoting

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>13</sup>Bennett, What Manner of Man: Martin Luther King, Jr., p. 27.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

it. World-historical men--the heroes of an epoch--must therefore be recognized as its clear-sighted ones: their deeds, their words are the best of their time.<sup>15</sup>

In essence, Hegel's theory was, and is, amoral. It could be used by either Gandhi or a Hitler. Thus, what was necessary was an informing insight leading to "noble ends." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. found a glimmer of that light in the works and words of Walter Rauschenbusch. In Dr. King's formulation of his philosophy he adopted the philosophical posture of personalism. This holds that personality is the key to the meaning of the universe and that not only man, but also God is supremely personal.<sup>16</sup> Also, Hegel's theory gave Dr. King the bases for two convictions. He states that:

. . . Personalism . . . gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. King's main tenet of this philosophy was the conviction that non-violent resistance was one of the most potent of weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice. Dr. King read Rauschenbusch's Christianity and the Social Crisis, a book which he said "left an indelible imprint on his thinking."

. . . Although King did not agree with the whole of Rauschenbusch's philosophy, he was "fascinated" by the great preacher's application of the social principles of Jesus to the problems of the modern

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 27 - 28.

<sup>16</sup> King, Stride Toward Freedom, p. 100.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



world. Thereafter, the main thrust of the "social gospel" --the idea that the church should take a direct, active role in the struggle for social justice--became a pivotal element in King's personal philosophy.<sup>18</sup>

Also, Dr. King indicated that after reading Rauschenbusch's philosophy and comparing it to his experience:

. . . It has been my conviction that any religion which professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, Rauschenbusch helped Dr. King to realize that Christian man must act to overcome the evil in the present world not by withdrawing from the world, but by revolutionizing it. Also, Rauschenbusch stated that religion which failed to concern itself with man's social well-being "like the desire for power and the overweening love of property, was for him evil." This left little doubt that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s would be a pulpit deeply concerned with man's tribulations on earth.

Dr. King studied the writings of many other great philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Hobbes, Bentham, Mill and Locke. He also read the existentialist works of Sarte, Jaspers, Heidegger and Nietzsche. Also he read some social theories, including Marxian socialism. Dr. King's thinking was changed from his strict fundamentalist upbringing and was uprooted by the atmosphere of liberalism. Although he rejected part of liberalism, he did not accept

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<sup>18</sup>Bennett, What Manner of Man: Martin Luther King, Jr., p. 28.

<sup>19</sup>King, Stride Toward Freedom, p. 72.

the doctrines of neoorthodoxy. This seemed too extreme in the opposite direction. Dr. King said that "an adequate understanding of man is found neither in the thesis of liberalism nor in a synthesis of neo-orthodoxy, but in a synthesis which reconciles the truths of both."<sup>20</sup>

Dr. King had read writer Henry David Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience during his Morehouse days. Thoreau stirred him to the point that he would return to Civil Disobedience again and again. King felt that one's own personal convictions should lead one to improve others. For him, love is the motive of non-resistance and non-cooperation against social evil and injustice. In other words, it is a wrong to impose one's will on any creature which can be determined to be unjust and evil in a society that makes unjust laws. According to King, the concept of non-violence leads to the idea of "non-resistance," a refusal to take part in government that relies on force. It is important to note that non-violent resistance or civil disobedience may lead to non-violent direct action that involves breaking the law.<sup>21</sup> Civil disobedience has usually been understood to be substantially an individual consideration. This means resistance or refusal to obey a given law because that law offends the individual's conscience. In short, civil disobedience is a conscientious act. The dissenter attempts to justify his disobedience by an appeal to the incompatibility between his political circumstances and his moral

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<sup>20</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength of Love (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 136.

<sup>21</sup> William R. Miller, Non-Violence: A Christian Interpretation (New York: Association Press, 1964), p. 71.

convictions. To see how Dr. King's theory on civil disobedience was formulated, we will examine Henry David Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience and ascertain its influence in King's philosophical development.

#### General Philosophical Outlook--Thoreau

In the nineteenth century Thoreau is asking why men resign their consciences to legislators argued "that it is not desirable to cooperate with laws that you feel are unjust."<sup>22</sup> When a man truly feels that a law which society has made is wrong, he should disobey the law. However, he must be willing to take the punishment society sets for breaking that law. "When society makes unjust laws the best place for the good man is jail." Thoreau stated "the only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think is right."<sup>23</sup> King applied Thoreau's doctrine of civil disobedience to the segregation laws which he felt were not only unjust, but contradicted the United States Constitution. Thus, a principle of King's reform movement was to place the question of "right" before that of "law."

Dr. King read Karl Marx, the nineteenth century German political philosopher whose teachings started communism. King believed that Marx's dictatorial methods for indicating injustice were in

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<sup>22</sup>Robert M. Bleiweiss, Marching to Freedom: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Xerox Corporation, 1968), p. 55.

<sup>23</sup>Carl Bode, ed. The Partable Thoreau (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 111.

themselves wrong.<sup>24</sup> Marxist violence denied the dignity of man as did the segregation laws. To King, Thoreau's idea of non-violent resistance seemed a better method for using the principles of love and brotherhood as a force against injustice.

Dr. King examined some other philosophers such as Boetie, Godwin, and Tucker attempting to identify techniques used by those of forceable civil disobedience. Thoreau, who had been influenced by Godwin, Emerson and the non-violent religious tradition of the East, preached both passive resistance and active resistance to modern government in the form of civil disobedience. Thoreau wrote about the unfair laws:

. . . Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? . . . If the government is of such nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.<sup>25</sup>

Thoreau, as did others, refused to pay taxes and withheld all other types of cooperation from the government when it engaged in certain wrongful actions such as the Fugitive Slave laws and the Mexican War.<sup>26</sup> Thoreau, in asserting the principles of non-violent civil disobedience, stated that:

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<sup>24</sup>Bleiweiss, Marching to Freedom: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr., p. 55.

<sup>25</sup>Bode, The Portable Thoreau, pp. 119 - 120 and Henry D. Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," Walden and Other Writings (New York: Modern Library, Inc., 1937), p. 644.

<sup>26</sup>Thoreau, Walden and Other Writings, p. 636.

. . . must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? . . . it is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right . . . law never made man a whit more just; and by means of their respect for it even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice.

. . . Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. "A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; . . . it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison or to give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate to choose . . . When, the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office then the revolution is accomplished.<sup>27</sup>

In asserting his strong antagonism to slavery and his personal solution to the problem, Thoreau stated:

. . . I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name--if ten honest men only-- . . . and if one honest man in this State of Massachusetts, ceasing to hold slaves, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail, therefore, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever.<sup>28</sup>

In other words, Thoreau states his case for the refusal of moral men to obey the laws of an immoral society. Conscience, rather than State statute, was the important standard of behavior to Thoreau; for government founded on expediency was frequently given to inexpedient actions. Thus, it is a known fact that even though a statute had the sanction of the majority of the community behind it, it did not make that statute a just one. Also the sanction behind majority

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 636 - 647.

<sup>28</sup> Bode, The Portable Thoreau, p. 121.

rule was force of numbers and sheer power and had no correlation with evil and justice in our society. Thoreau felt that one need not wait for the sanction of a statute to take action, or even for the support of a single majority for where God was on his side a man did not need the support of men, "moreover any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already."<sup>29</sup>

Thoreau possessed a militant spirit, and, just the opposite of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was not opposed to violence, if need be, to resist social evil and injustice. Thus, Thoreau chose to protest social evils and injustice on an individual basis. He was not especially interested in being converted, but instead he sought to free "himself from the guilt of acquiescence to social evils and injustice."<sup>30</sup> Thoreau's isolation at Walden meant his refusal to support the state. Dr. King, the social reformer, in part had a deep admiration for the counsels of Thoreau in formulating his Christian ideas in the various non-violent civil rights movements.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s political philosophy is not a complete one, in the sense that it offers an alternate system of government. A complete political theory can be said to explain and justify a political system. Thus, King's theory is a partial political theory that emphasizes one element more than another. Therefore, it can be classified as prescriptive in nature.

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<sup>29</sup>Jean V. Bondurant, Conquest of Violence (Princeton: University Press, 1958), pp. 3 - 35.

<sup>30</sup>Bode, The Portable Thoreau, p. 119.

Non-violent civil disobedience is the key to King's political ideas and his fundamental concept is the concept of social and political change. Although he had not elaborated a comprehensive political philosophy, it should be recognized that King did develop a set of related political ideas. For example, King did comment on the nature of an ideal politics on the limits and responsibilities of individual and group political participation, and on modes of effecting political change. King's political ideology in some aspects, qualifies him as a political theorist. His political ideas and notions are valuable and suggest the worth of a general assessment.

Political theorists may be divided into two groups on the basis of their methodologies.<sup>31</sup> The first group constructs an ideal state of affairs, and using that as a model, criticizes existing conditions. These ideas are based on fundamental assumptions taken from actual experiences. The result of this form of inquiry is that the thinkers concern themselves largely with the general principles underlying individual and social action.<sup>32</sup> This generally abstract approach uses in concrete instances to illustrate theoretical arguments. Plato chronologically and essentially leads the way in this deductive method of approach. His Republic is the first of a long series of treatises dealing with the Utopian conception of politics.<sup>33</sup> The second group, whose first leading exponent was Aristotle, used the inductive method of reasoning in their attack on political problems.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Sheldon S. Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little Brown Co., 1960), pp. 18 - 19.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

Aristotle and the disciples of his method analyze existing states and their constitutions in great detail. Their concern is consequently more with the forms of government, their workings and their limitations, than with the abstract principles upon which they are based.<sup>35</sup> The thinker is either an idealist and is concerned with the first principles to the neglect of practical detail; or he is a realist and eager to induce from actual experience some rules which may be of use to practical politicians. In some situations, both approaches co-exist and complement each other. The idealist and the realist examine the same problems from different perspectives. While their conclusions may differ, they are not necessarily contradictory.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to realize the injustices and social evils that were in his midst. The growing awareness of the economic and racial injustices that existed within his society compelled him to seek means to rectify the situations. He expressed some concerns about his power of love in dealing with human affairs. His decision to re-examine his thinking on the power of love led him to examine the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. King was reaching for a more realistic approach when racial groups and nations are in conflict with each other.

Just before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s graduation from Morehouse College, the frail Mahatma Gandhi was struck down by an assassin's bullet. While King and Gandhi never met in the flesh, their ideas met in the concept and strategy on non-violence.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.



Philosophy Toward Educating the Public  
on Non-Violent Outlook--Gandhi

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., while attending the seminary had doubts about the power of love as a solution for social problems. As indicated earlier, Dr. King's philosophies of "turn the other cheek" and "love your enemies" are valid when individuals are in conflict with other individuals. When racial groups and nations are in conflict, another strategy is necessary.<sup>36</sup> One Sunday afternoon, Martin traveled to Philadelphia to hear a sermon by Dr. Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Johnson had tried repeatedly to conquer racial injustice by preaching brotherly love, but he found that his words did not move those people who had the power to end injustice. Johnson, who had recently returned from India, spoke enthusiastically about the life and teachings of Mahatma K. Gandhi. He indicated that in India he had seen a way to use love as a force for good. Johnson stated that Gandhi had freed the Indian people from British rule without approving the firing of a shot or without uttering a violent word. His message was so profound and electrifying that Dr. King left the meeting and bought a half dozen books on Gandhi's life and work.<sup>37</sup> Dr. King said:

. . . As I read I become deeply fascinated by his campaign of non-violent resistance . . . As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished and I came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>King, Stride Toward Freedom, pp. 96 - 97.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

He further stated that:

The whole Gandhian concept of satyagraha (satya is truth with equal love and graha is force: satyagraha is thus, truth force or love-force) was profoundly significant to me . . . At that time, however, I acquired only an intellectual understanding and appreciation of the position, and I had no firm determination to organize it in a socially effective situation.<sup>39</sup>

Gandhi, by coordinating and combining the prime ideas of some of his influences, had developed a new social and political technique called satyagraha,<sup>40</sup> which included both civil disobedience and non-violence. Satyagraha embraced the method and the essential philosophy of civil disobedience, but through its application and refinement it became a technique for social and political change which transcended the substantial limitation of the earlier concepts.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, to clarify this concept of stayagraha, it will be in our best interest to grasp his meaning of ahimsa or non-violence, which is the heart of his entire philosophy. Some writers who dwell on Gandhi's effective use of satyagraha have failed to examine his idea of non-violence, which is the foundation of his entire philosophy. In essence satyagraha is the method of non-violent resistance. It is based on the Hindus and joins the concept ahimsa that holds that every living thing is sacred. The concept of non-violence, as Gandhi put it, was neither cowardly nor militant. A strong weapon for fighting evil, satyagraha defies the enemy and also seeks to convert him. According to Gandhi, only the strong and fearless man is prepared to give his life for the virtuous cause.

It will be impossible for a coward to follow non-violence, for he is never prepared to give his life. As Gandhi sees it, one who is

<sup>39</sup>King, Strength to Love, p. 141.

<sup>40</sup>Bondurant, Conquest of Violence, p. 3.

afraid to die can never be truly non-violent. A cowardly person is not a fighter. He always submits to the wrong, runs away from the situation out of fear or compromises with it. Thus, he will suffer dishonor and defeat and this will allow evil to prosper in all situations. Gandhi stated:

My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. . . . There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. I have therefore said more than once in these pages that if we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship by the force of suffering, . . . non-violence, we must if we are men, be at least able to defend all these by fighting.<sup>41</sup>

The non-violent person resists evil but never retaliates. This person will suffer the violent torture inflicted on him. He will not offer the least opposition according to Gandhi. Gandhi believes that the turning of non-violence goes on suffering till the evil doer realizes his mistakes and changes his behavior. Gandhi's opposition to the evil is by love and suffering. Gandhi states this about opposition to love and suffering:

. . . I contemplate a mental and therefore a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek, entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer would elude him. I would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him.<sup>42</sup>

In other words, Gandhi's philosophy indicates that the follower of non-violence persuades his enemy to affection, non-violence and charity.

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<sup>41</sup>William S. Nelson, "The Tradition of Non-Violence and Its Underlying Force," Journal of Religious Thought (Summer-Autumn, 1959), p. 123.

<sup>42</sup>Mahatma K. Gandhi, Young India (October 8, 1925), p. 346.

Also Gandhi's aim was not to get vengeance but to change the evil-doer to a moral individual. In short, his purpose is to convert and not to coerce the opponent.

N. B. Paruleka stated the six principles of Gandhism. They are:

1. He or she must have a living faith in non-violence. This is impossible without a living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it, he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear, and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all, and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipresence of God also means respect for the lives of your opponents. It is needless to say that one must be a seeker after truth and must, therefore, possess a spirit of humility.
2. The exercise of non-violence presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance.
3. Fraud, lying, deceit and all the brood of violence will have absolutely no room in the method one adopts. He must therefore thoroughly cleanse himself of all these impurities and thus make his character beyond reproach.
4. Everything is done by him openly and above board, for Truth hates secrecy. The more open he is the more truthful he is likely to be.
5. If "martyrdom complex" creeps in, if one has that pride of egoism, there is no non-violence.
6. One must have unshakeable faith in ultimate success of one's self-sacrifice and self-suffering.<sup>43</sup>

Gandhi believed that a God-fearing man should answer only to God and the dictates of his conscience. When the laws of men conflict with one's conscience, then one ought to break those laws.

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<sup>43</sup>N. B. Parulekar, The Science of the Soul Force or Mahatma Gandhi's Doctrine of Truth and Non-Violence (Bombay, 1962), p. 24.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in evaluating Gandhi's influence on his ideas and thought, stated that:

Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above more interaction between individuals to be a powerful and effective social force on a large scale. Love for Gandhi was a potent instrument for social or collective transformation. It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months.

The intellectual and moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social tracts theory of Hobbes, the "back-to-nature" optimism of Rousseau, and the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the non-violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi. I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.<sup>44</sup>

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. further stated that:

When I went to Montgomery, Alabama as a pastor in 1954, I had not the slightest idea that I would later become involved in a crisis in which non-violent resistance would be applicable. After I had lived in the community about a year, the bus boycott began. The Negro people of Montgomery, exhausted by the humiliating experiences that they had constantly faced on the busses, expressed in a massive act of noncooperation on their determination to be free. They came to see that it was ultimately more honorable to walk the streets in dignity than to ride the busses in humiliation. At the beginning of the protest, the people called on me to serve as their spokesman. In accepting this responsibility my mind, consciously or unconsciously, was driven back to the Sermon on the Mount and the Gandhian method of non-violent resistance. Christ furnished the spirit and motivation and Gandhi furnished the method.<sup>45</sup>

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was impressed by Gandhi's Satyagraha as a method of social protest, but he must also have admired Gandhi's showmanship skills. Dr. King was also impressed with Gandhi's philosophy of love, non-violence, humility, self-sacrifice, good means to the good end, the obligation to take action against social evils,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

as well as other concomitants to these principles. These ideas, taken from Gandhi's philosophy, were later to go into the formulation of the philosophy and technique of King's social protest movement. One of the main tenants of Dr. King's philosophy was the conviction that non-violent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice.<sup>46</sup>

Jesus, Thoreau and Gandhi supplied the philosophical roots for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s theory of non-violent social change.<sup>47</sup> The teachings of Christ, as expressed in the "Sermon on the Mount" with its emphasis on humility, self-criticism, forgiveness and the renunciation of material gain, provided some of the prime elements for Dr. King's theory of non-violence.<sup>48</sup> Thoreau provided Dr. King with the element of non-cooperation with an evil system. Gandhi gave Dr. King the means and method for his theory of non-violence. It can be stated that this synthesis is known simply as a "Philosophy of Love."<sup>49</sup> This philosophy of love, as the theologian calls it, is not just a theory; it is an alternative to the conflict and killing that we usually associate with social progress.<sup>50</sup> This philosophy of social progress as the sociologist would refer to it, is expressed as non-violent civil disobedience. Thus, it is with this aspect that Dr. King was

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<sup>46</sup>King, Stride Toward Freedom, p. 101.

<sup>47</sup>L. D. Reddick, Crusader Without Violence (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 14.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

mostly concerned in the civil-rights movements. Non-violent civil disobedience or non-violent resistance is the key to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy. In essence, Dr. King's ideas and acts have done much to change race relations in this country, and his non-violent civil-rights movement has merited improvements for the Blacks and Whites in today's society.

Thus, the next chapter shall deal with Dr. King's theory and practice of the different civil rights movements and it will show how the social change was stimulated in our society by these civil-rights movements.

CHAPTER IV  
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DIFFERENT  
CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

Social change in American history often has been stimulated by the demand of some excluded, but aggressive group for larger participation in the national democracy. The rising social consciousness of Blacks contained the potentially of ushering in a new era in which they would not only win their rights but renew the democratic commitment to the national community democracy. In order to develop a more explicit picture of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy, it is necessary to examine the environment, its social thought and a general trend that prevailed during the 1950's and 1960's. In America the general belief is that all men should have equal political and social rights and should be entitled to an "open society" for living. Since the slavery period the Black minority has been set apart as being distinctive because of their color. The Black minority has sought since their arrival in this country as slaves to gain the justice and equality that this nation's fundamental concept promised to all men.

In a few words, what has been happening in America since 1619 has been an increasing social movement to gain for the Blacks social justice and equality. To understand the objectives of the civil rights movement, it is necessary to examine the concepts of "social justice" and "equality." The concept of social justice which exists in our



society and culture has been partly defined. According to this concept, a society is without justice insofar as it is without statutes or precedents, written or-unwritten rules, legal and moral rules; it must, in both its formal and informal aspects, treat similar cases with similarity.<sup>1</sup> It must also treat all human beings equally or it must show reason why--a requirement which governs its rules as well as its acts and institutions. That is, the primary similarity to be respected is that which all men as such, have. But a just society must also respect some, though not all, differences.<sup>2</sup> In particular, it must respect differences in capacities and needs, and in contribution, desert or merit.<sup>3</sup> These differences may often make it just to treat people unequally in certain respects thus at least qualifying the primary requirement of equality. However, there are many other differences --for example, differences in blood or color--are not justice-making. The recognition of capacity and need and the recognition of contribution and desert are not, however, the only principles of justice which may qualify the principle of equality. There is also the principle that agreements should be kept.

Thus the principle of beneficence or utility is not a principle of justice, but it is a moral principle.<sup>4</sup> A society is not unjust if

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<sup>1</sup>Emil Brunner, Justice and the Social Order (London: Butterworth Press, 1945), pp. 105 - 115.

<sup>2</sup>R. B. Brandt, Ethical Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1959), p. 409.

<sup>3</sup>J. Haspers, Human Conduct (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961), p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>Brandt, Ethical Theory, p. 11.

it is not by its own direct action bringing about the greatest possible balance of good over evil. It is, however, an old and well-known view that it is unjust for society or the state to injure a citizen, to withhold a good from him, or to interfere with liberty (except to prevent him from committing a crime, to punish him for committing a crime, or to procure the money and other means of carrying out its just functions), and that this is unjust even if a society or the state deals similarly with all of its citizens. Also, a society is unjust if by its actions, laws, and mores, it unnecessarily impoverished the lives of its members materially, aesthetically or otherwise, by holding them to a level below that which some members at least might well attain by their own efforts.<sup>5</sup> The equal treatment must be qualified in the light of certain principles; for example, the recognition of contribution and desert, the keeping of agreements, non-injury, non-impoverishment, protection, and perhaps the provision and improvement of opportunity. Such principles seem to go beyond the requirements of equality. As they are principles of justice, they may be roughly unified under a concept of social justice involving a somewhat not clearly defined, but still limited concern for the goodness of people's lives in society, as well as for their equality.

In order to gain an insight into the problems of equality, it is also valuable here to describe the various types of equality which men have sought and still seek. Dr. King's insight on equality was that men should seek "political equality" in the sense of demanding an effective share in the policy decisions that shape the basic life of

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<sup>5</sup>Brunner, Justice and the Social Order, pp. 103 - 105.

the community. Also, Dr. King indicated that men should seek "civil" or legal equality in the sense of enjoying equal power and the right to control the conditions under which they participate in group life, their choice of religion, their expression of opinions, their right of assembly and petition, and their right to serve on juries. Dr. King further indicated that men should seek "economic equality" in the sense of the absence or removal of discrimination. Men, in addition, should seek "equality of opportunity" for personal development. This includes most of the preceding types of equality that Dr. King sought in theory and practice in various movements. The social movement that Dr. King led which works in the direction of greater equality involves all of these major types of equality, which in the past years have become the most significant and complex of all the drives toward equalitarianism.

Therefore, the Black civil-rights movement had to try to obtain all of these various types of equality. Historically, the movement of the Blacks to gain equality was complicated by the previous condition of slavery. Although there were a few Blacks in the United States prior to the Civil War, the majority of Blacks in the country were slaves.<sup>6</sup> The condition of free Blacks was nearly that of an indentured servant, in that their civil and social rights were limited. The original status of the majority of Blacks was that of a slave.<sup>7</sup> As a slave, the Blacks had none of the ordinary civil and personal rights of a citizen. It can be

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<sup>6</sup>John H. Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), pp. 238 - 239.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

noted that slaves were treated as "things" (economic goods) instead of people. The most perplexing thing about slavery is that, in America, it has never been thoroughly explained. Many Americans are ignorant about the system of slavery that was practiced in the United States and of its consequences. In comparing Brazil and the United States, Professor Glazer stated:

In Brazil, the slave had many more rights than in the United States: he could legally marry, he could, indeed, had to be baptized and become a member of the Catholic Church, his family could not be broken up for sale and he had many days on which he could either rest or earn money to buy his freedom. In short the Brazilian slave knew he was a man and that he differed in degree, not in kind from his master. In the United States the slave was totally removed from the protection of organized society, his existence as a human being was given no recognition by any religious or secular agency, he was totally ignorant of and completely cut off from his past, and he was offered absolutely no hope for the future. His children could be violated or sold (there was something comic about calling the woman the master permitted him to live with a "wife"), and he could be also subject, without redress, to frightful barbarities. The slave could not, by law, be taught to read or write; he could not practice any religion without permission of his master, and could never meet with his fellows, for religious or any other purposes, except in the presence of a white; and finally, if a master wished to free him every legal obstacle was used to thwart such action. This was not what slavery meant in the ancient world, in medieval and early modern Europe, or in Brazil and the West Indies.<sup>8</sup>

Here is another way one author put it:

American slavery was profoundly different from, and in this lasting effect on individuals and their children, indescribably worse than any recorded servitude, ancient or modern. The peculiar nature of American slavery was noted by Alexis de Tocqueville and others, but it was not until 1948 that Frank Tannenbaum, a South American specialist, pointed out the striking differences between Brazilian and American slavery. The feudal, Catholic society of Brazil had a legal and religious tradition which accorded the slave a place as a human being in the hierarchy of society--a luckless miserable place, to be sure, but a place withal. In contrast, which could accommodate to the fact of human bondage and the slaves were therefore reduced

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<sup>8</sup>Nathan Glazer, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M. I. T. Press, 1963), p. 8.

reduced to the status of chattels, often no doubt, well-cared for, even privileged chattels, but chattels nevertheless did exist.<sup>9</sup>

With the spread of the revolutionary ideas of "natural laws" and "natural rights," the existence of slavery was increasingly questioned. The colonists could hardly claim that their liberty was being violated when at the same time they were denying liberty to Blacks. The movement to free the slaves gained ground as several influential colonists published statements regarding Blacks inalienable right to freedom.

The death of Crispus Attucks, a runaway Black slave, in the Boston Massacre may have aroused concern over the relationship between British policy and slavery. In this prelude to the Revolutionary war, Attucks was among the first Americans to be killed. His death probably increased public support for the movement to end slavery. The Reverend Isaac Skillman declared that "natural law" required slaves to rebel against their masters. Thomas Jefferson published his famous pamphlet, A Summary View of the Rights of British America. The great principles of right and wrong, Jefferson wrote "are legible to every reader; to pursue them requires not the aid of many counsellors."<sup>10</sup> Human bondage, Jefferson argued, was wrong, no great lawyers were needed to make this plain. England's reasons for supporting slavery and the slave trade were meaningless in the light of the simple truth that slavery was wrong. Jefferson declared that the colonists desired an end to slavery and accused England of blocking all efforts to halt the slave trade.

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<sup>9</sup>"The Destruction of Negro Families," Current, VI (November, 1965), p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 129.

The movement toward independence was rapidly gaining ground. The test of the colonist's regard for slavery came in their reaction to the Declaration of Independence submitted to the Continental Congress by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's specific charges against the King were harsh and uncompromising. Among them were the following as Jefferson states:

He has wages cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This practical warfare, the approbation of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain . . . ,<sup>11</sup>

Jefferson then blamed the King for the continuation of the slave trade and for slave rebellions against the colonists. However, Congress dropped the last paragraph from the final version of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>6</sup> This was the most important change Congress made in Jefferson's draft of the document. South Carolina objected to the passage because it offended Southerners who were slaveowners. Rhode Island objected because many Northerners were profiting from the slave trade. There was fear, moreover, that the statement would remove any justification for slavery once the colonists had gained independence. Thus some of the delegates realized that the responsibility for slavery was not England's alone.<sup>7</sup>

With the coming of the Revolutionary War and the subsequent independence of America, such documents were written as: (1) the Declaration of Independence written in the tradition of the British Petition of Rights, and of John Locke's political thought; (2) the French

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen which declared that governments are instituted to guarantee to men the enjoyment of their natural and inviolable rights. The Declaration of Independence retained these famous words:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.<sup>12</sup>

Did Jefferson, the principal architect of the Declaration believe that this sentence applied to Blacks? Historians differ on the question. Some think that Jefferson did not include Blacks among the "men" who were "created equal." Thomas Jefferson's failure to free his own slaves would seem to support this view. Other historians, however, insist that to him liberty included the abolition of slavery. Like other statements in the Declaration, this one was interpreted to mean what each signer wanted it to mean. Most of the signers who were slaveholders probably did not consider it an attack upon slavery. However, some non-slave holding signers, on the other hand, if they were not engaged in the slave trade, probably hoped that this statement would strengthen the civil movement to free the slaves. Whatever the original signers may have thought, the Declaration's ringing assertion about men's equality and "unalienable" rights has been a constant challenge to the American people. The oppressed of all nations have drawn inspiration from it.

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<sup>12</sup>W. A. Barnes and S. Smith, The Constitution of the United States (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1956), p. 29.

Thus, the Declaration was destined to point out the way to the later democratic evolution of our nation and become part of the American Dream. One author commenting on the "American Dream" indicated that:

The American Dream that has lured tens of millions of all nations to our shores in the past century has not been a dream or merely material plenty, though that has doubtless counted heavily. It has been much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to the fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which have slowly been erected in older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of any and every class. And that dream has been realized more fully in actual life here than anywhere else, though very imperfectly, even among ourselves.<sup>13</sup>

Gunnar Myrdal expressed his views on the American Dream that:

These ideals of the essential dignity of the individual human being, of the fundamental equality of all men and of certain inalienable rights to freedom, justice and a fair opportunity to represent the American people the essential meaning of the nation's early struggle for independence. In the clarity and intellectual boldness of the Enlightenment period these tenets were written into the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and into the Constitutions of the several states. The ideals of the American Creed have thus become the highest law of the land. The Supreme Court pays its reverence to these general principles when it declares what is constitutional and what is not. They have been elaborated upon by all national leaders, thinkers, and statesmen. America has had, throughout its history, a continuous discussion of the principles and implications of democracy. A discussion which in every epoch measured by any standard, remained high, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. The flow of learned treatises and popular tracts on the subject has not ebbed, nor is it likely to do so.<sup>14</sup>

"The Black people in America are no exception to the national pattern."<sup>15</sup> They too, believe in and accept the American Dream. It has been one of the motivating forces for which Dr. King made his many

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<sup>13</sup>James F. Adams, The Epic of America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1931), p. 405.

<sup>14</sup>Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 4 - 6.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 4.



drives for social justice and equality. As Myrdal observes:

Every man in the street, White, Black, Red or Yellow, knows that this is the land of the free, the land of opportunity, the cradle of liberty, the home of democracy, that the American flag symbolizes the equality of all men, and guarantees to us all the protection of life, liberty and property, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and racial tolerance. . . . The American Blacks know that they are a subordinated group experiencing, more than anybody else in the nation, the consequences of the fact that the creed is not lived up to in America. Yet their faith in the creed is not simply a means of pleading their unfulfilled rights. They, like the whites are under the spell of the great national suggestion. With one part of themselves they actually believe, as do the whites that the creed is ruling America.<sup>16</sup>

It can be noted that many social movements with their extraordinary injustice which flourished during the three decades prior to the Civil War sought racial reconstruction of society. Thus, these social movements had hoped to get a closer institutional approximation to the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence. The theory and practice underlying the theme in these movements which is important here was their purpose of seeking equality for all. As we can see, equality did not, for them, mean that men were or ought to be equal in talents or possessions, but rather that men were by nature and should be by law equal in their rights. The Black movement did realize both freedom and the professed ideals in the Declaration which took two approaches during this period and through the Civil War. One approach was escapism which manifested itself in two ways. Blacks who attempted to use the escapism route frequently were supported by Whites who encouraged the colonization movement among the slaves. A second method of escapism employed was that of the "underground railroad." The idea of sending American Blacks back to Africa or to some other place outside the United

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

States were primarily encouraged by Whites.<sup>17</sup> Dr. Ralph Bunche observes: "the real significance of the colonization scheme is to be found in the conception of the Black as an evil that had to be done away with."<sup>18</sup> "This is true also in the case of such humanitarians and liberals as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln when they showed interest in such projects."<sup>19</sup>

The second approach stemmed from deepening and sincere convictions on the part of men. This approach was a moralistic and religious one, and it was expressed by men like Garrison, Thoreau, Trotter and Channing, the self-styled abolitionists. These men attempted to obtain freedom for the Blacks by denouncing slavery on the grounds that it was morally and religiously wrong and contrary to the basic principles of humanity. The abolitionist movement resorted to various propaganda techniques, such as speaking to mass audiences, distributing leaflets, petitioning the government, and civil disobedience. These men employed their particular theories of the nature of society and human motivation, as well as theological, ethnological and sociological arguments against the institution of slavery.<sup>20</sup> Franklin stated that "Slavery, as a system of social relationships was thus seen as a positive good,"<sup>21</sup> by those who defended it in the era before the Civil War.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 806.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Alan D. Grimes, Equality in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 55.

<sup>21</sup>Martin L. King, Jr., Strength to Love (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 35 - 36.

Commenting on the degree of slavery, Dr. Martin Luther King,

Jr. observed that:

Slavery in America was perpetuated not merely by human badness but also by human blindness. True, the causal basis for the system of slavery must, to a large extent, be traced back to the economic factor. Men convinced themselves that such a system which was so economically profitable must be morally justifiable. They formulated elaborate theories of racial superiority. Their rationalizations clothed obvious wrongs in the beautiful garments of righteousness. The tragic attempt to give moral sanction to an economically profitable system gave birth to the doctrine of white supremacy. Religion and the Bible were cited to crystalize the status quo. Science was commandeered to prove the biological inferiority of the Black. Even Philosophical logic was manipulated to give intellectual credence to the system of slavery. So men conveniently twisted the insights of religion, science, and philosophy to give sanction to the doctrine of white supremacy.<sup>22</sup>

Grimes observed that:

The use of race theory to give legitimacy to the superior condition of whites and the subordinate condition of Blacks was a fundamental part of the slavery controversy.<sup>23</sup>

The crisis was at its highest peak when the Civil War ensued and the Blacks gained their freedom as a result. It must be understood that there was no one single cause for the War; however, a multiplicity of causes can be noted here. Franklin asserts that:

It was in the atmosphere of slavery that the weapons for waging the Civil War were sharpened. It was the question of slavery that sundered the sections and forced them to settle the question by a bloody war. The humanitarian reform movement would have proceeded apace had there been no slaves, for temperance, women's rights, and the like would have received generous support in communities where there was a tendency to assume civic responsibility. It was the question of slavery, however, that intensified the reform crusade and brought the country to the impasse of 1860. Without slavery, the question of the extent of federal authority in the territories would have remained academic, and could have been debated openly and peaceably. Without slavery the South would

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Grimes, Equality in America, p. 50.

have remained a land where freedom of thought could command respect and where all institutions would not feel compelled to pursue a course of action prescribed by the planting aristocracy. Just as the anti-slavery movement had its roots deep in the liberal philosophy of the Revolutionary period, so inter-sectional strife and the Civil War itself had their roots in the question of the future of the Black in the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Another author states that:

Once and once only did the Black problem become the focus of national attention; in the prolonged conflict with the South over slavery in the Civil War and during reconstruction. After the national compromise of the 1870's American historians have, by and large, adjusted to the changed political situation and have satisfied the national demand for historical reationalization and justification for the Black. They have stressed that the North did not fight the Civil War to free the Black slaves. This is apparently correct as far as the immediate political origin of the conflict is concerned. The emancipation proclamation was later issued but only after one hundred days warning to the rebellious states to lay down their arms, and in it Lincoln declared that the measure was adopted, upon military necessity. But the deeper reality is nevertheless, that there would have been no Civil War had there been no Blacks in the South, and had not Black slavery stamped its entire social fabric. The economic, ideological and political rivalries between the two regions all mainly derived from or were greatly determined by the fact of slavery.<sup>25</sup>

While Civil War did emancipate the Black, it did leave an entrenched residue of slavery that haunted the Blacks until today. This tragic blindness is "now found in racial segregation, the not-too-distant cousin of slavery."<sup>26</sup> Thus, with the enactment of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments after the Civil War the Black leadership turned its attention to preparing the people to use their newly attained rights fully. While these movements were successful to some degree, the moralistic and religious were most beneficial to the masses. It

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<sup>24</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 270.

<sup>25</sup>Grimes, Equality in America, p. 431.

<sup>26</sup>King, op. cit., p. 36.

should be noted that no tactic was completely successful by itself.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated that the Civil War did not settle the question of White supremacy:

Soon this idea was embedded in every textbook and preached in practically every pulpit. It became a structured part of the culture. And men embraced this philosophy, not as the rationalization of a lie, but as the expression of a final truth. They sincerely came to believe that the Black was inferior by nature.<sup>27</sup>

In the Post-Civil War period, second-class citizenship for Blacks was normally accepted by the government and indeed by the vast majority of Americans both North and South and certainly by the leaders of the Black race. The election of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 ended Reconstruction and a new era began. A new system of de jure segregation replaced physical slavery in the South. De jure segregation in the South continued and perpetuated the myth of racial supremacy systematically. Blacks were kept in "their place" and a segregated caste system was established. The White South could now rule itself without fear of either "Northern interference" nor "Black rule." Thus the nation was no longer divided; the "lost cause" had triumphed.

Black equality was again held back by the Jim Crow laws through the Southern states. The Grandfather clause was enacted in Louisiana in 1898. Several other Southern states wrote into their constitutions clauses which exempted those persons or their descendants who had been legal voters on or before January 1, 1867, from literacy tests, poll taxes and other such voting requirements. Since Blacks were ineligible to vote before this date, the Grandfather Clause obviously eliminated them from voting. This discriminatory practice was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1915, but in the meantime it had

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

effectively excluded Blacks from the polls. Just as Blacks were denied access to the polls through various "legal" means, so they were excluded from participating in the activities of the only political party of importance in the South. The "White primary" prevented Blacks from helping to nominate candidates for office. Though the primary was a more democratic method of choosing candidates, its effect in the South was to bar Blacks from voting. This was made possible because Blacks were denied membership in the Democratic Party, which was for all practical purposes the only political organization in the South. By the end of 1901, Mississippi, South Carolina, Louisiana, North Carolina and Alabama had adopted constitutional provisions to deprive most Blacks of voting rights. By 1910, the remaining Southern states had followed their example. The thoroughness of the White man's efforts to eliminate the Black as a political factor in the South is shown by the registration figures for Black voters. For example, Louisiana had 130,334 Blacks registered to vote in 1896, and in 1904 after a new constitution was adopted, only 1,342 Blacks could vote. Black voter registration in Alabama declined from 181,471 in 1900 to only 3,000 after its constitution was changed in 1901. As a result of this, the number of Blacks elected to state and national legislatures naturally fell sharply. In 1875 the number of Blacks elected to the United States House of Representatives declined from eight to three by 1889, and to one in 1899. The next Black was elected to the House in 1928. After Senator Blanche K. Bruce's term expired in 1881, no Black served in the Senate until the 1966 election of Senator Edward Brooke as the Republican Senator from Massachusetts.

The Black's loss of political rights permitted Whites to assume almost complete control over the "southern way of life." "White supremacy" was constantly being defended in terms of the supposed "inferiority" of Blacks. This racist view had prepared the South, and some parts of the entire nations, to accept the curbs placed on Black voting and office-holding; it was next used to justify strict segregation of the races in almost all public places. Laws, regulations, and custom led to the emergence of a pattern of segregation generally observed throughout the South. The Jim Crow movement gained new strength after the Supreme Court's 1883 ruling to the effect that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional. In 1890, new laws were passed requiring separate public facilities for Blacks and Whites. A wall of segregation soon confined Blacks to separate hospitals, separate schools, separate neighborhoods, separate train and theater accommodations, separate rest rooms, drinking fountains, and separate cemeteries. This was a cradle-to-grave system of racial segregation. While the White Southerners defended the Jim Crow laws as a means of ensuring better relations between the races, these measures actually encouraged lawlessness against Blacks. The historian C. Vann Woodward has stated that the Jim Crow laws:

Put the authority of the state or city in the voice of the street-car conductor, the railway brakeman, the bus driver, the theater usher and also into the voice of the hoodlum of the public park and playgrounds. They gave free rein and the majesty of law to mass aggression that might otherwise have been curbed.<sup>28</sup>

It is noted, that the Jim Crow laws fostered new acts of violence.

Lynchings in the South increased rapidly during the 1890's when

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<sup>28</sup>C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 52.

constitutional conventions were held to legalize the Black's inferior status. Blacks unjustly accused of crimes or in economic competition with Whites were the typical victims of mob action. This new system which the Southerners used to continue and perpetuate their myth of racial supremacy systematically relegated the Black "to his place" and organized a segregated caste system. Professor Woodward states that:

The public symbols and constant reminders of his (the Black's) inferior position were the segregation statutes, or "Jim Crow" laws. They constituted the most elaborate and formal expression of sovereign White opinion upon the subject. In bulk and detail as well as in effectiveness of enforcement the segregation codes were comperable with the Black codes of the old regime, though the laxity that mitigated the harshness of the system was replaced by a rigidity that was more typical of the segregation code. That code lent the sanction of law to a racial ostracism that extended to churches and schools, to housing and jobs to eating and drinking. Whether by law or by custom, that ostracism eventually extended to virtually all forms of public transportation, to sports and recreation, to hospitals, orphanages, prisons, and asylums, and ultimately to funeral homes, morgues, and cemeteries.<sup>29</sup>

While the "Jim Crow" system was the work of Southerners, Americans in every section of the country were responsible for its spread. In other words, their apathy and silence made possible, even encouraged, the stripping of citizenship rights from Blacks. The policies and actions of the federal government reflected this indifference. With this new system of segregation installed, the Whites asserted their superiority while the Black began his new struggle for justice and equality. This time the Black struggle for justice and equality took an economic approach.<sup>30</sup> This does not take into account a brief alliance of the

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 7 - 8.

<sup>30</sup>August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, The Making of Black American Vol II (New York: Atheneum, 1971), pp. 14 - 15.



Black and the poor Whites during the Populists era. For further clarification and illumination of the Black struggle for equality, let us look at this attempted alliance between the poor Whites of the South and the Blacks. The leader of the attempted alliance was Tom Watson.<sup>31</sup> As Franklin stated:

Watson was the logical man to formulate the policy toward the Black. This he did in a number of speeches. The populist program called for a united front between Black and White farmers. Watson framed his appeal this way: "Now the people's party says to these two men, you are kept apart that you may be separately fleeced of your earnings. You are made to hate each other because upon that hatred is rested the keystone of the arch of financial despotism which enslaves you both. You are deceived and blinded that you may not see how this race antagonism perpetuates a monetary system which beggars both."<sup>32</sup>

In other words, Watson's program called for a reversal of deeply-rooted racial prejudices and firmly fixed traditions as old as Southern history. In the place of race hatred, political proscription, lynch law and terrorism, it was necessary to foster tolerance, friendly cooperation, justice and political rights for the Black.<sup>33</sup> Watson's action was reflected in his challenge. He attempted to meet each issue as frankly as possible.

It should be the object of the populist party he said to make lynch law odious to the people. Georgia at that time led the world in lynchings. Watson nominated a Black to a place on the state executive committee of his party, as "a man worthy to be on the executive committee of this or any other party." "Tell me the use of educating these people as citizens." He spoke repeatedly from the same platform with Black speakers to mixed audiences of Black and White farmers. He did not advocate "social equality" and said so emphatically, since that was a thing each citizen decides for himself, but he insisted upon "political equality" holding that "the accident of color can make no difference in the interests

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<sup>31</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 336.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 337 - 338.

of farmers, croppers and laborers." In the same spirit of racial tolerance, he was continually finding accomplishments of the Black race at home and abroad to praise in articles and speeches.<sup>34</sup>

With the defeat of the Populist revolt by the conservative elements in the population, "some early populist leaders, like Tom Watson of Georgia soon reversed their earlier position and violently denounced Black suffrage.<sup>35</sup> Watson's bitterness towards the Black after his defeat stemmed from the belief that they had insufficiently supported the Populist Party. It is noted that the effects of Watson's attempted alliance between the poor White farmers of the South and the Blacks seems to have set the Black further back and hurt his chances for equality. In spite of this setback the Black drive for social equality and justice continued itself with any alliance, any movement and theory that promised to improve the Black's status.

Booker T. Washington was the leader of the Blacks in the first decade of the twentieth century. He indicated that an economic approach was the best means to secure justice and equality. When Washington dined with President Theodore Roosevelt in the White House, the reaction was what might have been expected in the nation at this time. White Southerners were furious with Roosevelt. This affair charged one southern newspaper, was "a crime equal to treason." Blacks, of course, were pleased with the recognition given to Booker T. Washington. This was only a temporary feeling, because when President Roosevelt began his second term in office, during two southern tours, the President urged Black students to stay out of the professions. Roosevelt even amazed

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 336.

some Whites when he came out in favor of the restrictions on Blacks. At this point Black leaders, with the exception of Booker T. Washington, bitterly criticized Roosevelt after his return to the capital. It was apparent that he was committed to traditional policies on the Black question.

By 1910, as we have seen, all the Southern states had enacted laws to deprive most Blacks of the ballot. Barred from participation in politics, Blacks soon encountered new social and economic difficulties. As Blacks moved into the cities of the South and North, they encountered racial barriers on every hand. All newcomers experienced hardships when they moved into the cities, but race prejudice added to the burden of the Blacks. In southern cities, Blacks came up against the age-old race bigotry of the "poor whites." In the Northern areas, where fewer Blacks were living at this time, competition for jobs and housing kindled anti-Black prejudice among European immigrants. Most of the American newcomers had never before come into contact with Blacks. They, too in most cases had been the victims of prejudice. It is noted that they vented their frustrations on those groups whose skin color set them apart as "visible minorities." Thus, racial prejudice divided minority groups and prevented a united effort to solve their common problems.

A new protest movement was started by the NAACP for the Blacks at the turn of the century, because they could not accept the idea that freedom and justice were for White men only. The conditions of Black life brought Americans of both races together to organize for the protection of Black citizens. This new movement was organized by the NAACP to gain improved economic opportunities for Blacks. This marked the

beginning of a new crusade for equal rights. This new protest movement was to be a landmark event in American history since it signified the rebirth of the Black's-struggle for freedom and social justice.

It was often claimed that Booker T. Washington's economic approach to social justice and equality, with its different techniques and conciliatory manner, was supposed to reduce tension in the South. However, Washington's compromise was a "negative peace" for the Blacks which enabled the South to build a solid foundation of segregation and "Jim Crow" laws which Dr. King attempted to dismantle in his nonviolent movements for social justice and equality. In spite of the increasing emphasis on self-help, moral and economic development and racial solidarity; in spite of growing tendencies toward a conciliatory tactic, the basic traditions of protest retained some vitality in the South. Then came men like Douglass and DuBois who saw no basic contradiction between agitation for an equalization of both political and civil rights and emphasis on middle-class status. In a few words, for them, economic and self-help and agitation for political and civil rights were just two sides of the same coin. Douglass stated that "the real question is whether American justice, American liberty, American civilization, American law, and American Christianity can be made to include all American citizens."<sup>36</sup> In DuBois' brilliant scientific pursuits he became the leader of a protest group. In the Souls of Black Folks, he gave literary form to a philosophy antagonistic to Washington. DuBois demanded full social and political equality for Blacks according to the constitution and complete cultural assimilation. DuBois offered his demands not as ultimate goals but

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<sup>36</sup>Myrdal, An American Dilemma, p. 78.

as a matter of practical policy today.<sup>37</sup>

Then the Black struggle for equality and social justice took a political approach. The NAACP was founded in 1909 to promote the cause of equal rights for Blacks through politics and law. This political approach included many forms of protesting and agitation through any political channels to obtain full social justice and equality. It was felt that if the Black obtained political justice and equality, he would have general justice and equality. In the Niagara movement, this represented the first organized great reaction after Reconstruction.<sup>38</sup>

The main purpose was that it brought into open conflict and wide public debate two types of Black strategy, one stressing accommodation and the other raising the Black protest. Thus, DuBois and Washington became rival Black leaders. While DuBois argued for political equality, Washington urged a gradualistic and economic approach.<sup>39</sup>

The National Urban League, established to further the training of Blacks in social work, sought the cooperation of employers in obtaining job opportunities for Blacks.<sup>40</sup> In Father Divine's peace movement was the attempt to gain self-respect and social justice on the part of the Black through God. This could only work in a government under God, and we have to realize that Father Divine was not God. The Universal Negro Improvement Association, founded by Marcus Garvey was organized to foster new constructive activities. His "Back to Africs" Movement,

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 742.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 742 - 743.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 837.

which won the approval of some Whites and of the Ku Klux Klan, did not generate a great deal of support. The lack of organizational skills contributed to the failure of Garvey's grass-roots Back-to-Africa movement. Professor John Hope Franklin states that "Garvey's conduct of his steamship company finally put an end to his meteoric rise."<sup>41</sup>

The Blacks started to move into a new area in which at least they could fight for their rights. Many economic incentives were offered to Blacks who migrated to New York and other Northern industrial cities. With the political approach, the migrating Blacks began to seek civil and political clubs for Blacks for the purpose of getting them onto the voting rolls and to seek alliances for them. As a result of this, the political potential of the Black began to grow in the Northern cities. In other words, the Black gained a minimal degree of civil and political equality but the individual election of a Black to Congress gave them new inspiration. It stimulated and influenced them to continue this approach for social justice and equality. Then, the great depression of 1929 with the stock market crash led to more suffering for the Blacks in the economic area. They were the last to be hired and the first to be fired. Therefore, capital reserve was non-existent for the Blacks. As Franklin stated that "even at starvation there was discrimination, for a few places where relief was administered on a basis of equality."<sup>42</sup> In other words, some religious and charitable organizations, in the North as well as the South excluded Blacks from

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<sup>41</sup>Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 491.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 496.

the soup kitchens which they operated to relieve the suffering. In some cases, Blacks were discriminated against in the public assistance programs. In some cases there was as much as six dollar differential in the monthly aid given to Black and White families. / This was for the Blacks evidence that democracy and equality did not apply to them. More and more, they began to feel that if it were to be retrieved at all, it could come only through the exertion of a potent political influence.<sup>43</sup> It was an awakened consciousness, brought on by suffering and discrimination that drove the Blacks to this conclusion. The Blacks now began to drive for equality and social justice in their struggle for equal rights.

In decision after decision, the Supreme Court attacked state-supported practices which violated the principle of equal rights. The Supreme Court began to whittle away at segregation in travel in 1941 when it ruled that Blacks could occupy seats and berths in any part of a Pullman car on trains crossing state lines. The Supreme Court extended desegregation to railroad dining cars when it ended the custom of using curtains, partitions and signs to set apart a small area for Blacks. In 1953, the Supreme Court rules against the "white primary" by stating that no political "club" involved in national elections--even one which merely "recommended" candidate for office--could exclude Blacks. This decision speeded integration in hotels, theaters, and other public places in some Northern areas.

The Black movements had three different phases that aided them in their struggle for equality and social justice. The first phase

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 497.

was one of constitutional change in which the major instrument was litigation and the major immediate goal was the removal of legal barriers to racial equality and social justice. In other words, the legal approach for equality was "Phase One." The second phase can be viewed as one in which progress was largely achieved through executive orders. The third phase soon emerged out of the impasse created by legalism and executive orders. This phase featured direct action in the form of sit-ins, Freedom Rides, economic boycotts, demonstrations, picketing and mass arrests.

The arrest of Mrs. Rosa Parks, a Black woman, set off the Montgomery bus boycott, which was led to its successful conclusion by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This arrest sparked the beginning of a new philosophy which has characterized the Black struggle for social justice and equality in a direct action trend. Dr. King's philosophy in general provided an underpinning and justification for the movement. In Dr. King's philosophy for social justice and equality, we can see an underlying social, economic or political philosophy. Dr. King's theory was dominant in the Black's struggle for equality and social justice since the time of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Also, his theory was in tune with the democratic traditions and way of life. Dr. King's social and political theories of non-violence, civil disobedience, and stressing of Christian virtue, love, self-sacrifice have given the Black movement its justification, in regard to the political system. It can be noted, that the most consistent factor in the history of the Black people has been the struggle for social justice and equality. This dissertation will now examine the theory and practice of Dr. King in the 1950's and 1960's.



The Albany movement came after Dr. King had achieved success in the Montgomery bus boycott, various sit-ins and the freedom rides. Now it was time for him to organize an effective and strong civil rights group with the SCLC and to initiate action against injustice that exists in our society. When, on December 1961, twelve Freedom Riders were arrested in Albany, Georgia, Dr. King thought he saw the opportunity and the place. King and his aides came to Albany after receiving an invitation from the civil rights leaders of Albany and planned the civil rights movement's first mass protest demonstration. The purpose of this campaign would bring all the resources of the Black community face to face with the city's total social and economic structure.

The Albany Blacks, with Dr. King leading the way, marched on city hall, staged sit-ins in libraries and bowling alleys, and held prayer vigils on downtown streets. One thousand of the demonstrators went to jail. They were charged with illegal assembly, unlawful parades and disturbing the peace. The Chief of Police saw to it that all demonstrators were handled with care as they were put into jail. The Federal government did not intervene. <sup>o</sup> Dr. King declared that he would stay in jail until Albany consented to desegregate its public facilities. But two days after his arrest, <sup>o</sup> Dr. King came out of jail on bail. The Albany movement collapsed and Dr. King was bitterly criticized for helping to kill it. Dr. King admitted that he had made a mistake in Albany by allowing himself to be bailed out of jail. <sup>o</sup> Dr. King thought that the victory had been won but later discovered it was all a hoax. The initiative was lost and the Albany movement never regained it. <sup>o</sup> Dr. King learned it was more effective to attack the economic power structure

rather than the political one. In other words, you cannot win against a political power structure, if you do not have the votes. You can win against an economic power structure when you have the economic power to make the difference between a merchant's profit and loss. King's defeat in Albany was the darkest hour for the non-violent direct action civil rights movement.

Dr. King decided to wait a while after the Albany movement failed to plan for his next massive demonstration on the barricades of segregation. Birmingham was the perfect target for Black demonstrations for integration for equal treatment and for freedom. In King's theory the movement was most effective in a crisis situation. At Birmingham, he hoped to gain some help from the Whites. The Blacks made their crisis, but it was no spur-of-the-moment matter. King went to Birmingham to conduct workshops on non-violent techniques. He recruited 200 people who were willing to go to jail for the cause. Carefully planning his strategy in ten meetings with local Black leaders, Dr. King declared that Birmingham is the "most thoroughly segregated big city in the United States." Dr. King knew that Birmingham Blacks had more power at the cash register than at the ballot box. Most of the city's Blacks could not vote but they all shopped in Birmingham's stores. Then, if every Black boycotted the stores, the businessmen could not afford to keep lunch counters and restaurants segregated. Black customers could mean the difference between a store making or losing money. Dr. King and Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, a Birmingham civil rights leader, began to plan their strategy. They called their plan Project C. The C stood for the confrontation they would have with segregation in Birmingham.

Awaiting Dr. King in Birmingham was public safety commissioner, Eugene "Bull" Connor, a man who was to become a symbol of police brutality yet who, in fact, merely reflected the seething hatred in a city where acts of violence were as common as "chitlins and ham hocks." Local elections delayed the start of the demonstrations. The city was governed by three commissioners. one of whom was Bull Connor. In the spring of 1963, Birmingham would elect its first mayor. Connor was leading. His chief opponents were also segregationists, but were much more moderate than Connor. Dr. King felt that a backlash reaction by the Whites to a series of Black demonstrations during the political campaign would help win Connor the votes. Dr. King decided to wait, although he still hoped to organize a massive boycott before Easter Sunday. The demonstrations were started two weeks after the election. Dr. King and his group began putting their plans to work. Bull Connor, who lost the election, but refused to relinquish power, sent his spies into the Black community to seek information. Fearing that their phones were tapped, Dr. King and his friends worked up a code. Dr. King became "J.F.K." and Reverend Ralph Abernathy "Dean Rusk," the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth "Bull" and Black businessman John Drew was called "Pope John."

Dr. King's demonstration moved into the streets, and groups marched on city hall. Two by two they marched silently through the streets of Birmingham. The Birmingham policemen blocked the marchers path about three blocks from City Hall. Both sides were calm and polite. The police remained non-violent. Bull Connor had learned this from the Albany demonstrations. He was trying to handle non-violent demonstrations through the local courts. The court injunction came and ordered

the demonstrations to stop. Looking into the possibility of civil disobedience to further the demonstrations, Dr. King decided he would disobey a court injunction; since he believed the court was using its power to maintain an unjust system of segregation. Dr. King, referring to Henry Thoreau's theory, indicated to his followers a man is required to obey a law, when the law is just and right. Dr. King further stated that: "A law he said squares with the moral law or the law of God."<sup>44</sup> The demonstrations continued and Dr. King was arrested with fifty-four demonstrators and placed in jail. King was separated from the others in jail and was not allowed to make any phone calls or talk to anyone. He was not even permitted to call his wife to let her know that he was safe as was his practice after each arrest. It took the President of the United States to get the Birmingham officials to arrange to have Dr. King call home.

While Dr. King was in jail, he was told that he had been severely criticized by a group of Birmingham's white religious leaders. In answering his critics, he outlined the philosophy behind the non-violent movement and civil rights struggle. He described what it was like to be a "Black" in America. He further explained why the Blacks could not wait for equality and social justice any longer. Dr. King was bailed out of jail, and new demonstrations were started. The next demonstrations saw Bull Connor's high-powered hoses and dogs set on the marchers. The pictures and stories of what happened in Birmingham shocked America and the rest of the world. Some citizens of Birmingham,

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<sup>44</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., What Manner of Man: Martin Luther King, Jr. (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1968), p. 103.

too were disturbed by the way Connor dealt with the demonstrators. A number of White residents believed the Blacks deserved a better life. Homes and a motel were bombed in an attempt to drive the Blacks into a violent trend or pattern but King indicated that progress could be made if they did not fall into the segregationist's trap of violence.

The Alabama Supreme Court ruled that Bull Connor and the other commissioners did not have the right to remain in office for an additional two years. Bull Connor was no longer in power in Birmingham. The hope that was born in Birmingham spread across the nation. Discrimination against the Blacks was not confined to the South, and the civil rights struggle became a national movement. Dr. King became world famous and a national leader with the theory of nonviolent civil rights movements. These demonstrations in Birmingham had stirred the nation's conscience. Thus, this had convinced many people that it was time for the Blacks to achieve equality and social justice. Bull Connor's actions in Birmingham helped the civil rights movement progress in the struggle for equality and social justice in this country for the Blacks.

\*During the agonies of 1963, millions of Americans, both Black and White were united in the crusade for freedom. In almost a thousand cities, demonstrators marched, prayed, sang "Freedom Songs" and suffered countless indignities. They sought an end to segregation in schools and public places; they called for equal job opportunities and voting rights. The summer reached a climax on August 28, 1963 when more than 200,000 Americans took part in the historic March on Washington. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others gathered at the Lincoln

<sup>0</sup> Memorial to protest the nation's failure to safeguard basic human rights. The demonstrators heard the leaders of the various civil rights organizations call for a "new birth of freedom." The most dramatic moment came when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about the goals of the civil rights movement. "I have a dream" said Dr. King.

I have a dream that one day, on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of opposition, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.<sup>45</sup>

In other words,<sup>9</sup> the theory of this movement was the awakening of the nation and world to the Black struggle for equality and social justice. Thus, Dr. King's dream was deeply rooted in the American Dream<sup>0</sup>

Dr. King's next important move was the massive demonstrations in St. Augustine, Florida. He planned to take advantage of that attention to help end the city's total segregation. These demonstrations presented Dr. King with problems that he had not faced in any other city.<sup>0</sup> The policemen, for the most part, looked the other way during the demonstrations. White segregationists attacked the demonstrators as they held "wade-ins" at the city "white only" beaches. This civil rights movement was a violent one for the demonstrators. They were stoned and acid was dumped into the pool where the demonstrators were swimming. This was Dr. King's last civil rights movement before the Civil Rights

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<sup>45</sup>Robert M. Bleiweiss, Marching to Freedom: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Xerox Corporation, 1968), p. 107.

Act of 1964 was passed in awarding the Blacks some important aspects of their struggle for equality and social justice.

Early in 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. announced a massive protest intended to focus national attention on the denial of voting rights. In Selma, only two per cent of the Blacks of voting age were registered to vote. In this civil rights movement three participants lost their life through violence. The violence at Selma, like that in Birmingham two years before, aroused nationwide demands for action. The objective for this phase of civil-rights movement was for Congress to pass a new civil-rights bill guaranteeing the right to vote in all federal, state and local elections. This was an effort of American Blacks to secure for themselves the full blessing of American life. Dr. King indicated that we must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice that exists in our society. In short, Dr. King asserts that the Black needs a two-pronged attack. He indicated that the Blacks must work on two fronts in their struggle for equality and social justice in the civil rights movements. He indicated on one hand, the Blacks must continue to resist the system of segregation which is the basic cause of the lagging standard; and on the other hand the Blacks must work constructively to improve the standards themselves. For Dr. King, nonviolent movement was a means and the way starting with the Montgomery bus boycott.

#### Montgomery Improvement Association and SCLC

In December of 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus to a White

passenger.<sup>46</sup> Mrs. Parks got on a bus in which the Black section was occupied. However, she found a seat near the front, one row behind the section reserved for White passengers. This bus proceeded along its route, passing through Court Square. By the time the bus arrived in front of the Empire Theater, there were no seats left on the bus. Six White passengers boarded the bus. The normal practice was for the driver to turn to the Blacks sitting just behind the White section and state "Let me have those seats."<sup>47</sup> Three Black passengers got up at once, but Mrs. Parks did not move. Suddenly she forgot her skin color and became a human being whose feet hurt and who had found a seat on a crowded bus. She was arrested and fingerprinted and booked with the crime of violating the city's segregation law. There was nothing unusual about Mrs. Parks' arrest, because many similar incidents had occurred before then. But this arrest took place when Montgomery's Black community would no longer tolerate such acts of injustice.<sup>48</sup> Seventeen months had passed since the Supreme Court had declared the end of segregation in public schools. Human rights had become a matter of international concern and world opinion supported the cause of the American Black. Montgomery's Black leadership, mindful of these trends, decided to take a strong stand against southern traditions, which had relegated Blacks to second class citizenship. Mrs. Parks' arrest set off the Montgomery bus boycott which was led to its successful conclusion by Dr. King.<sup>48</sup> This arrest gave rise to a new philosophy which has continued

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<sup>46</sup>Ed. Clayton, Martin Luther King: The Peaceful Warrior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 56.

<sup>47</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., Stride Toward Freedom (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 43.

<sup>48</sup>Clayton, Martin Luther King: The Peaceful Warrior, pp. 53, 66.



characterizing the Black struggle for social justice and equality. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy on social injustice and equality provided an underpinning and justification for the movement in the bus boycott.

The Black movement for social justice and equality had an underlying social economic or political philosophy. To demonstrate their opposition to the kind of social injustice and equality treatment which Mrs. Parks had objected to, Montgomery's 50,000 Blacks were urged to walk to work. Dr. King's leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott caught the imagination of equal rights advocates across the nation. Its success demonstrated the value of Black solidarity and inspired new demands for equal rights. In the movement for social justice and equality, there was an integration of social justice and economic and political philosophies. These philosophies provided an impetus and basis for both a relative standard of judgement as well as an absolute standard. In a few words, they provided the Black's drive for social justice and equality with both a rationalization and a justification.

The Montgomery Improvement Association was formed to co-ordinate civil rights efforts in that area. Dr. King was asked to serve as its president. The boycott began later when the vast majority of Montgomery's Black population stopped using the buses. The organization turned to plans for the mass meeting to be held. King, at first, thought it would be wise to keep all plans for the boycott concealed from the newspaper reporters who would almost certainly attend the meeting. After a long discussion the group felt that it would be better to discuss their plans openly without fear of negative reactions. The plans are to be discussed

openly because they had nothing to hide. It was the opinion of the organization that they would rather be fearless men instead of scared boys. After adopting this philosophy, the fear of the organization disappeared. Although the mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church that night was not scheduled to begin until seven o'clock, people began to come long before that. The church was packed with people by five o'clock and on the outside a traffic jam extended for five blocks in every direction. It was as though all creation was being officially informed of the events to come and of the spirit that would make the world change its theory and practice about equal rights. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed the crowd by saying:

We are tired--tired of being segregated and humiliated. We are impatient for justice. But we will protest with love. There will be no violence on our part. There will be no cross-burnings. No white person will be taken from his home by a hooded Black mob and murdered. If we do this, if we protest with love, future historians will have to say "There live a great people, a Black people who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization."<sup>49</sup>

In other words, Dr. King was indicating that he was withdrawing his cooperation from an evil system, rather than merely withdrawing our economic support from the bus company. The bus company, being an external expression of the system, would naturally suffer but the basic aim was to refuse to cooperate with evil. King's philosophy based on Thoreau's Essay on Civil Disobedience came into play at this point in reference to the theory and practice of the Montgomery bus boycott. What Dr. King was saying to the White community was "We can no longer lend our

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<sup>49</sup> Peter Goldman, Civil Rights (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc.), p. 51.

cooperation to an evil system.<sup>50</sup>

Dr. King's arrangement with the Black taxis would be temporary for they would soon begin to feel the profit less. <sup>6</sup>The Montgomery Improvement Association had discovered that there was a city ordinance that set a minimum taxi fare. Upon learning this, a transportation committee was set up immediately to organize a car pool. Drivers were recruited at the regular meeting. The response was outstanding. It can be noted that at one meeting over 150 drivers volunteered. The committee plotted the location of pick-up stations where people could meet when they needed a ride. As it stood, some people preferred to walk, feeling that it was a symbolic act in the struggle for justice. One driver stopped alongside an elderly Black lady who was slowly making her way down the street. "Let me give you a ride; you don't need to walk" he said to her.<sup>51</sup> But she waved him on. "I am not walking for myself," she explained. "I am walking for my children and grandchildren."<sup>52</sup>

At first, the Blacks did not even ask for integration on the buses. They merely asked that the bus drivers treat them politely and that they not be forced to give up seats to White people. However, the White leaders refused to yield. Then, the Blacks changed their goal. They decided to keep walking until they could sit anywhere they wanted on the buses.

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<sup>50</sup>King, Stride Toward Freedom, p. 51.

<sup>51</sup>Civil Rights, p. 51.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

Dr. King's philosophy was difficult for many to accept. Non-violence to them meant cowardice. Although some never really understood nonviolence, they soon learned that nonviolence was not for cowards. But it was an effective method for Blacks to use in demonstrating their grievances on equal rights.

The city and bus officials were sure that the first rainy day would find the Blacks back on the buses. But the rainy day came and went and still the boycotters held firm. At this point, the officials notified the Montgomery Improvement Association that they were ready to discuss Black grievances. Negotiations with local officials quickly broke down and the boycott continued into 1956. The loss of income forced the bus company to seek a settlement but the city commissioners refused to end segregation. Then, in June 1956, a federal district court declared that segregation on local transportation facilities violated the Fourteenth Amendment. The following November this decision was upheld in the United States Supreme Court. After a boycott which lasted 381 days, segregation came to an end on Montgomery's buses. This boycott introduced several new elements into the struggle for equal rights. It revealed the depth of Black dissatisfaction with the slow pace of change and their determination to move rapidly to full citizenship. This movement demonstrated the effectiveness of peaceful resistance as a means of registering protest and gaining rights previously denied Blacks. Finally the movement gave Blacks a new and forceful leader. In Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. they found a spokesman dedicated to the goal of racial justice, a man who would carry on a nonviolent fight for Freedom, and do so with great courage and dignity.

The Montgomery boycott provided a model for mass protests against segregation throughout the South. Under the leadership of Dr. King, several Black church groups formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to desegregate public facilities in other Southern cities. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference asked all Blacks to assert their human dignity by refusing further cooperation with evil. But this organization said "we call upon them to accept Christian love in full knowledge of the power to defy evil."<sup>53</sup> "We call upon them to understand that nonviolence is not a symbol of weakness or cowardice, but as Jesus demonstrated, nonviolent resistance transforms weakness into strength and breeds courage in the face of danger."<sup>54</sup>

In the formative years, the organization as its first name indicated was concerned primarily with segregation in transportation facilities and voter registration. Some of the more theoretical sit-in students would say later that the Montgomery bus boycott idea was aborted before it reached full development. While there is some truth in this, it is also true that the foundation of the movements of the sixties was laid by Dr. King's first strides in the darkness of the new departure. Most significant during the early 1960's was the growing participation of Southern Blacks in the Civil rights movement. This development represented a sharp break with the past. The success of promoting mass action in the 1960's was stimulated by

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<sup>53</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., What Manner of Man (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company), p. 66.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

Dr. King's SCLC theory in the civil rights movements. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference lent its support to non-violent campaigns in several large cities and enlisted thousands of southern Blacks in its activities.

The first plan called for a series of bus boycotts in Tallahassee, Atlanta and other Southern cities. When the buses in Atlanta were desegregated, one of the ministers was quoted as saying "Thank you, Montgomery. Thank you, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."<sup>55</sup> Dr. King's influence was also felt in Little Rock, where Daisy Bates, a state NAACP leader, out-maneuvered state and city officials and kept nine Black children in a school which had become a national battleground.

The Gandhian technique of non-violence was proving to be a powerful weapon in the Black struggle for equality. Dr. King's goal and Gandhi's goals were different. Gandhi had opposed the rule of his country by a foreign country and thus opposed all British laws as unjust. Dr. King was a loyal American who believed that Blacks as Americans were guaranteed their rights by the United States Constitution. Thus, local segregation laws were unjust because they interfered with Black American's constitutional rights. Dr. King opposed only segregation laws and refused to cooperate with an evil system.

It should be pointed out that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was a manifestation of Black consciousness that had appeared from participation in two world wars. The Blacks were no

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

longer willing to be half-slave and half-free. At this point, Dr. King was concerned that one day very soon the violent segregationists and the impatient Blacks would collide. Somebody had to do something.

Dr. King was convinced that the psychological moment had come when a concentrated drive against injustice could bring great tangible gains. His strategy was to train the youth and adult leaders in the techniques of social change through nonviolent resistance. This method would employ the masses of the people in the struggle for equal rights. At this time Blacks began to boycott stores, theaters, and other businesses where discrimination was practiced. Their efforts forced numerous businesses either to desegregate their facilities or close them. Dr. King had the youths focus their attention on student sit-ins to further the civil rights movement at this point.

#### Student Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides

The Institute of Race Relations was founded in Washington, D. C. for the specific purpose of combating restaurant segregation through the use of sit-in techniques.<sup>56</sup> The group mostly responsible for the leadership against discrimination from 1943 until 1955 was CORE. During this period all its actions employed the nonviolent resistance method. Its activities were numerous and varied. CORE chapters conducted restaurant sit-ins, theater stand-ins, business boycotts and the buying of stock in segregated corporations.

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<sup>56</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., What Manner of Man, p. 188.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s image helped to create the sit-in age, new mandate, and a new mission. This mission was recognized by almost everyone as the "spiritual father" of the sit-in students, Dr. King stepped forward immediately as a spokesman and symbol of the movement. Dr. King's major contribution, however, was in the structuring of student discontent. He had learned that the previous movements in the Black community were usually characterized by what physicists call low specific heat. In other words, they take flame quickly but then die out quickly. To keep the flame burning in this movement, it had to be structured and organized throughout the South. King organized the Southwide conference of sit-in student leaders so that these leaders could delve deeper into the philosophy of nonviolence. The element that Dr. King was creating was the beloved community. If non-violent tactics were used without the spirit of nonviolence, they can become violent. While many students honored Dr. King as a non-violent pioneer, some did not think him radical enough. Many accepted nonviolence as a tactic that had given outstanding "results" in similar Black movements in the past.

The Blacks who walked for freedom in Montgomery were people of all ages, from pre-school boys and girls to elderly men and women. The news of their victory pulsed like an electric current among Blacks in all parts of the country, but none felt it more keenly than young people. In high school corridors and on college campuses they talked of Montgomery and of Martin Luther King, Jr., using the magic new words: nonviolent action.



February 1960, the spark was struck when another technique of protest was used successfully as the equal rights movement gained momentum. Four students led by Joseph McNeill, a freshman from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greenboro sat down at a lunch counter to order coffee. They were refused service because of their race but remained in their seats until the store closed. During the same month, nine students from Alabama State College staged the first sit-in in the Deep South at the Montgomery, Alabama courthouse. The next month the Alabama State Board of Education expelled nine Alabama State students for participating in sit-in demonstrations. Soon the sit-in movement, patterned on the passive resistance techniques of Gandhi, raced across the South. These sit-ins spread to fifteen cities within two weeks, thirty-three in a month, and to sixty-eight cities in thirteen states within two months. From its New York headquarters CORE rushed its experienced workers into the South to help students organize the sit-ins and to teach them non-violence. NAACP officials joined in too. So did Martin Luther King, Jr. The leaders held workshops to drill the students in nonviolent methods. The workshops were like dress rehearsals. Some students sat down at make-believe lunch counters. Others pretended to be rowdy segregationists. They shoved the sit-in students off their seats, hit them and yelled: "Go home, niggers." If a student fought back in the rehearsal the leaders asked him not to join the real sit-ins. Just as Martin had told the Blacks in Montgomery the sit-in leaders explained that violence could not win. The sit-ins set off some fights but most often the students followed the ways of non-violence. If they were called

names, they took the insults in silence. If they were attacked, they shielded themselves with their arms as they had learned in the workshops. If the police came to arrest them for trespassing or disturbing the peace they did not argue or try to escape. About 4,000 went to jail for their actions.

With the sit-ins spreading like chain lightning, the students decided they needed an organization of their own. The leaders from all over the South met with Dr. King. They felt that students in each community should go on running their own campaign. But they decided to set up a central committee so the local groups could keep in touch with one another, trade ideas and plan joint activities. At this meeting they organized the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The cities and towns chose peaceful progress instead of violent resistance. One after another, they set up committees of Whites and Blacks to deal with the problem.

For the most part, the number of integrated cups of coffee served was the revelation of the mind and mood of the young Blacks. It can be noted that the protests indicated a profound dissatisfaction with the pace of desegregation. The Southern Regional Council said the demonstrations made clear that "the South is in a time of change, the terms of which cannot be dictated by White Southerners."<sup>57</sup>

The sit-ins students raised embarrassing questions for almost everyone.

Black moderates were forced to re-evaluate their position, and the

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<sup>57</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., Before the Mayflower (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1969), p. 318.

NAACP which had been considered very radical was forced to step up its pace. Roy Wilkins, NAACP executive secretary said: "we have always used persuasion-through various means of political and economic pressure, but now we are going to use it much more intensively than in the past because the membership has become restless over the slow pace of the Civil Rights proceeding."<sup>58</sup>

By the time the summer of the sit-in was over, lunch counters in forty-three southern communities were open to Blacks and Whites alike. This program was extended to include: "stand-ins at movie theater box offices, "wade-ins" at white-only public beaches, "read-ins" at segregated libraries and "kneel-ins" in White churches.

The first \*freedom ride" was sponsored jointly by CORE national director and James Peck, a slender sandy-haired CORE worker who had been on the first ride in 1947. In 1946 in the case Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia, 328 U.S. 373 the Supreme Court had ruled that segregated seating on interstate buses violated the commerce clause of the Constitution. However, in the South, the bus companies perhaps under pressure from state officials did little to change their segregation practice. In order to test implementation of the Morgan decision the two organizations under the leadership of George Hauser and Bayard Rustin planned a bus journey by an interracial group through the deep South. At this time it was thought that such a trip through the deep South would be suicidal. Arrangements were made to have NAACP attorneys provide legal aid in case of arrests. This journey was not backed by the national NAACP office, whose policy was to stick to legal cases

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

and education and to shun nonviolent action. However, the NAACP branches offered them invaluable support.

Leaving Washington, the group traveled through Virginia without incident. In North Carolina, however, it ran into trouble. Several of the members were arrested in Durham, and others were arrested in Chapel Hill and Asheville. There was one incident of violence--a White rider, James Peck, was struck by an onlooker in Chapel Hill. The group continued through Kentucky, Tennessee and back to Washington. Three of the arrested participants including Rustin were ultimately convicted and sentenced to thirty-day work-gang sentence.

However, during the early 1950's there were few campaigns of direct action. In the years following the Korean conflict, the United States sank into a period of citizen silence. What started as attacks on organizations working for social change became institutionalized through the House Un-American Activities Committee. Later similar committees of Senator James Eastland of Mississippi and Senator Joseph McCarthy continued their attacks. People even suspected of radical ideas or activities and some simply suspected of ideas that were "different" were fired from jobs, and driven from their home towns. By the mid-fifties this concept had reached its peak and some American citizens, both White and Black, had quit going to meetings, joining organizations or signing petitions. In other words, young people coming out of school were being careful not to become involved in anything more controversial than the Parent-Teacher Association; we were bringing up a generation of young people convinced that before it is all right to do something you must get approval from somewhere

--from the government, from powers-that-be. McCarthyism and the emergence of the "silent generation" combined to make social protest of any kind unpopular and even dangerous.

In 1961, a new Supreme Court ruling stated that segregation was illegal not only aboard buses and trains but in railroad stations and bus terminals as well. CORE decided to organize a new trial run --a Freedom Ride. The Congress of racial equality, under the leadership of James Farmer, sent hundreds of "Freedom Riders" across the South. Their main goal was to test laws requiring segregation on buses and trains engaged in interstate transportation. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was appointed chairman of the Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee. SNCC and SCLC joined CORE in their attempt to foster the Freedom Rides. Two buses left Washington in May 1961 heading South, one Greyhound and one Trailway. This time there was no trouble sitting together on the buses. But, at terminal after terminal, waiting rooms and restaurants were still segregated. In spite of the court ruling, some of the terminals had White and Colored signs. The buses rumbled down across the red and gold tobacco lands of the upper South, the Freedom Riders ate and sat in the waiting room without serious trouble.

The Freedom Riders knew that the chances of violence would increase as the buses throbbed into the Deep South. Alabama and Mississippi would be the worst. They were surprised when the bus stopped at Rock Hill, South Carolina and a crowd of Whites was waiting at the terminal. The Freedom Riders were attacked in Rock Hill, South Carolina and beaten. After the policemen broke up the mob, the

Freedom Riders marched calmly into the White waiting room. It must be noted that the non-violence training was working here because the Freedom Riders did not even attempt to fight back. The buses were rolling deeper into the South, where segregationist feelings ran high. As the Freedom Riders stopped in a terminal in Winnsboro, South Carolina, injustice struck again with the arrest of James Peck and Henry Thomas, a Black student at a White lunch counter. But they were freed too, and the buses moved on. The following stops came without trouble: Augusta, Athens, Atlanta, Georgia. The Freedom Riders were now rolling into the state of Alabama where the angry mobs were waiting.

Ten days out of Washington, the Greyhound bus reached Anniston, Alabama with nine Freedom Riders and five other passengers aboard. An angry mob was waiting. The bus pulled away, with the mob pursuing in cars. Six miles out of town one bus tire went flat and the driver pulled to a stop. The mob attacked and threw a fire bomb into a broken window. Some of the riders had to climb out of the window. The United States government sent hundreds of federal marshals to help keep the shaky peace and to keep the Freedom Ride going. They settled beyond question the issue that no state may require segregation of interstate or intrastate transportation facilities. In other words, Jim Crow no longer can have a place in travel through the United States.

With the sit-ins and the Freedom Riders, a new generation of Blacks had come of age. Joining their elders in the leadership, they brought a fresh charge of impatience and energy into the struggle. The spirit of the student leaders was the spirit of action. This spirit was catching in parts of the United States and world.

International Developments FavorThe Black's Struggle

The Cold War, which began in 1947 had a direct bearing on the American Black's struggle for equality. The Blacks viewed their fate as inextricably connected with the fate of darker peoples throughout the world. Regardless of what attitude the United Nations took toward the domestic problems of the United States, Black Americans sensed, more than many people of the United States, the implications of the interdependence of the world brought about by the revolutionary developments in transportation and communication and by the use of atomic energy. This was no sudden awakening on the part of the Blacks. For years disarmament, colonial problems and international relations had occupied the attention of a growing number of Black scholars such as W. E. B. DuBois, Ralph Bunche and Rayford Logan. Some Black press, as well as a considerable number of Black organizations, became interested in the international aspects of the struggle for freedom. The press and organizations sought to define the roles which they, as well as their country, would play in the achieving of the great dream of peace and equality.

The Black Americans assumed a strong moral position as they became more articulate in the area of peace and freedom for the world. The Blacks praised America's goal of a world community of peaceful nations. They were quick to point out, however, that in order to achieve such a goal, discrimination, race hatred, and segregation must be replaced by equality for all citizens at home.

One dilemma that faced the Black fighting in an imperialist war was best expressed by William Simms, a Black soldier in the Phillipines

who wrote home, "I was struck by a question a little boy asked me, which ran about this way. Why does the American Black come from America to fight us when we are much friend to him and have not done anything to him? Why don't you fight those people in America that burn Blacks, that made a beast of you, that took the child from the mother's side and sold it?"<sup>59</sup> Simms admitted he could not answer the question. It can be noted that the Suddentsche Zeitung of Munich, Germany indicated that President Kennedy who ordered federal troops to Mississippi and President Eisenhower, who ordered federal troops to Arkansas were convinced that the seed of slavery, abolished one hundred years ago, would continue to flourish if it were not torn from the Southern soil with a hard hand. L'Aurore, the Paris newspaper wondered if men learned anything from the history of the Civil War, Hitler and racism. This newspaper went on to point out that there is a country (United States) in a so-called model civilization, still distinguishing people between their kind according to the color of their skin.

During the Montgomery bus boycott, money came from as far away as Tokyo, from Singapore, from Switzerland and from ships at sea. The checks came with notes of encouragement. "Your work is outstanding in the history of our country."<sup>60</sup> "You have shown that decency and courage will eventually prevail."<sup>61</sup> "The entire nation salutes you."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Robert Goldston, The Negro Revolution (New York: Macmillan Company, 1968), pp. 158 - 159.

<sup>60</sup>King, Stride Toward Freedom, p. 81.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.



"What you are doing is a real inspiration to us here in the part of the world where the struggle between democracy and communism is raging."<sup>63</sup>

Desegregation of the military was also due in part of the outbreak of the Korean War. With the United States battling against communist forces for the avowed purpose of preserving a democratic form of society among Asians, the United States could not afford world-wide criticism of an official policy of discrimination against its own Black population. America, being sensitive to world opinion, attempted to explain much of the progress that Blacks were to make after World War II. As African and Asiatic nations won freedom from their former White masters, they also won a majority of the votes in the United Nations General Assembly. When America entered a new cold war against world-wide communism,<sup>63</sup> the support of uncommitted nations and of the world's majority of Black peoples became a key to survival.

When the Communist spokesmen pointed out evidences of anti-democratic injustice, most thoughtful Americans could only admit that they were right. You see, making democracy work in the United States became more than an urgent domestic problem. It became a necessary step toward national survival in the atomic age. The American role in the atomic age was to lead the world toward peace and international understanding. The Black element in the population had a peculiar function to perform in carrying forward the struggle for freedom at home for the sake of America's role in the world.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

The years that followed the conflict between communism and democracy focused world attention on this country's race problem. As the leading power among the free nations, the United States had been loud in condemning Communist violations of human rights behind the Iron Curtain. But America's commitment to democracy was weakened so long as millions of American Blacks were denied basic human rights. Abroad, Communist and non-Communist newspapers alike discussed America's race problem. The Anti-American propaganda of the Communists was directed with special attention to the neutral nations of Asia and Africa where it highlighted this country's "Jim Crow" laws and practices as proof that Americans regarded non-white people as inferior. This propaganda had considerable influence on world opinion and persuaded American leaders to take more positive action against discrimination at home. Blacks then took pride in the achievements of Black peoples everywhere and were inspired to step up their own fight for freedom. The emergence of the independent Black nations in Africa also increased the movement to improve American race relations. Many of the diplomats were subjected to insults and indignities when coming to the United States. The complaints lodged by their governments with our State Department compelled federal officials to press more vigorously for an end of intolerance. The effect of these forces was to add greater urgency to American Black's demands for improved living conditions through international developments toward the Black's struggle.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was proposed by President Kennedy during the summer of 1963. The proposal was debated throughout the tense summer of 1963. After the March on Washington, civil rights leaders concentrated on speeding its progress in Congress for their plans hinged on its fate. On November 20, 1963, the Civil Rights bill passed its first roadblocks and was submitted to the House of Representatives. Whatever President Kennedy envisioned for the Blacks was not to be realized during his own lifetime, for on November 22, 1963 he was slain by an assassin just after his arrival in Dallas, Texas. Americans of all races and creeds mourned the fallen leader.

Within a week after taking office, the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, delivered his first message to Congress. He sought "the earliest passage of the civil rights bill" for which the late President had fought. Its enactment, said President Johnson, would bring alive "the dream of equal rights for all Americans whatever their race or color."

On February 10, 1964, the Civil Rights bill was approved in the House of Representatives. The next month, opponents of the measure began the longest filibuster in the Senate's history. For seventy-five days they tried to "talk the bill to death." Finally, on June 10, two-thirds of the Senators voted to close debate. Nine days later, the civil rights bill passed the

Senate by a vote of seventy-three to twenty-seven. President Johnson signed the measure into law on July 2, 1964.

This Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the most far-reaching and comprehensive law in support of racial equality and social justice ever enacted by Congress. This Civil Rights Act gave the Attorney General additional power to protect citizens against discrimination and segregation in voting, education, and the use of public facilities. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a symbolic victory for the civil rights movement, however it did not have immediate results. (The murder of Mrs. Luizzo and of James Chaney, Andy Goodman and Mickey Schwerner took place after enactment of the Civil Rights Act.) But it was now possible for Blacks to sue people who discriminated against them in public facilities. In other words, White Americans who denied Blacks their constitutional rights could now be sent to jail. The Southern cities, in face of the new law, had to put an end to some of their segregationist policies. It can be noted that the entrenched habits, customs, and interests of the South were not to be overturned by a law in a single day or a single year or perhaps even a single decade. But a start had been made, and if progress continued it would maybe be paid for in bruises and blood, but it would nevertheless take place.

One of the most controversial provisions required the elimination of discrimination in federally assisted programs, authorizing termination of programs or withdrawal of federal

funds upon failure to comply. Finally the United States Office of Education was authorized to provide technical and financial aid to assist communities in the desegregation of schools.

There were some Blacks that criticized the Act for not going far enough, others were delighted that equality and social justice might now be attainable.

There was a notable decline in discrimination in some fields. The period following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was marked by strong resistance to its enforcement and, indeed considerable violence in some places. There was some so-called "white backlash" created by the Blacks who tried "too hard" for equality and social justice. The Northern White discovered their prejudices for the first time, when they resented direct action protests to eliminate discrimination in their own communities. The segregationist Governor of Alabama, George Wallace, also made a strong showing in the Presidential primaries in Wisconsin, Indiana and Maryland. The backlash in the South was merely the normal pattern which some segregationists used in going about the task of preserving the old order. Some of the public placed did the same thing that had occurred after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1875 by transforming themselves into private clubs. One Atlanta restaurant owner specializing in fried chicken vowed that he would go out of business before he would desegregate his business. He finally went out of business. The Klan reclaimed its position of leadership while the Civil Rights Act

of 1964 was being debated. In Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi its members paraded in protest against racial equality and social justice. The Klan picketed a hotel that desegregated carrying posters stating: "Don't trade here! Owners of this hotel surrendered to the race mixers!" More serious violent acts connected to the Klan and similar groups broke out in the South during the summer of 1964 as the SNCC and SCLC stepped up their voter registration drives. For example in July, a Black educator returning to his home in Washington from reserve officer training was killed in Georgia by a shotgun blast from a passing automobile. Two men identified as Klansmen were tried for the crime but were acquitted. Between June and October, about twenty-four Black churches in Mississippi were totally or partially destroyed by bombings and fires.

It can be noted that despite the civil rights legislation hundreds of thousands of Blacks in the South continued to have difficulty in voting or were barred altogether. Blacks just were not allowed to vote in some areas of the South. In 1964, only five per cent of the Blacks in Mississippi were registered. In many counties almost every White was on the voting rolls but not one Black. White supremacy had rules for generations, and it did not mean to give up or share its power. The methods used to keep Blacks from voting were not subtle. Thus, they were crude and trivial at one end, but brutal, inhuman, even murderous, at the other end.

Alabama and several other states imposed the poll tax requiring all voters to pay a tax. The poll tax and tests of reading, writing and learning of prospective voters in some instances were combined with naked physical threats to hold down Black voting. The 1964 Civil Rights Act had a section that was devoted to voting but applied only to elections for the national offices. Dr. King had long been convinced that until the Blacks gained full political power, other civil rights would be of little value. Dr. King indicated that the Civil Rights Acts would give the Blacks a new sense of hope. He figured that the movement would not get off base if the civil rights movement continued to make progress for equality and social justice in the political system. Dr. King felt that when the civil rights bill was passed, new fuel was added to the fires of resentment among White extremists. He felt that the South despite a great number of White extremists might one day surpass the North in racial progress, because of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1965. The South, Dr. King indicated, more and more would begin to "come to grips with its conscience." The rationale for this was that there was more personal contact between the races in the South, and as a result of this, a better understanding of racial relations would exist. Dr. King's rationale and projection in 1964 seems to have become a reality in the 1970's in the South for equality and social justice for the Blacks.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 re-enforced the constitutional right to vote. It conferred jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations; it authorized the Attorney General to

institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and in public education; it empowered the Commission on Civil Rights to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs by establishing a commission on equal employment opportunity and for other purposes.<sup>64</sup>

This act was regarded by Blacks leaders as the most comprehensive civil rights legislation since 1875, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 contained these provisions for the people: (1) It forbade discrimination in all public facilities and accommodations; (2) It required that the same standards be applied to all persons seeking to register and vote in federal election. For prompt action, cases involving voting discrimination could be tried in special courts with direct appeal to the Supreme Court. (3) To quicken the pace on school desegregation, it authorized the Attorney General to file suits to compel the integration of public schools and colleges. (4) The Act provided financial help to school districts undertaking desegregation and instructed government agencies to withhold funds from school districts maintaining separate school systems. (5) It outlawed discrimination based on race or sex by employers, unions and employment agencies in interstate commerce. (6) It denied federal funds to any state of federal program which practiced discrimination in employment. (7) Finally, the Act extended the life of the Commission on Civil Rights until January 31, 1968 and created a Community Relations Service to help settle local racial disputes.

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<sup>64</sup>U.S. Government Printing Office, "Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964 and 1968," "Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives" (July 1, 1970), 15.



The impact of the law became apparent in two areas of activity almost immediately: (1) the use of public accommodations, and (2) the exercise of voting rights. The public accommodations law was upheld by the Supreme Court in December 1964. In a separate decision, the high court dismissed charges against some three thousand civil rights workers arrested in sit-in demonstrations. These decisions struck a powerful blow against discrimination in the use of public facilities. The voting rights provisions of the Civil Rights Act encountered far more resistance than those sections dealing with public accommodations. During the summer of 1964, civil rights organizations joined in a massive voter registration drive that enrolled thousands of Black voters. They uncovered many loopholes in voting provisions of the Civil Rights Act. Later that summer, the entire nation shuddered in horror at the news that the bodies of James Chaney, a Black youth from Meridian, and two young White New Yorkers, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman were found buried inside an earthen dam. These young people had been participating in a Black voter registration drive. Meanwhile many Blacks were being turned away by local voting registrars. In 1965, the breakthrough came in the voting act of 1965. It abolished the literacy test; and federal examiners were to be assigned to register voters. Finally, this law extended federal protection to persons seeking to vote and to civil rights workers conducting registration drives.

By the end of 1965, the rights of American Blacks were protected by federal laws and court decisions designed to insure their enjoyment of basic citizenship rights. ] The Voting Rights Act of 1965 brought to a close a decade in which more progress had been made

than in any similar period since reconstruction. The Acts of the 1960's created job opportunities, and have torn down almost all the legal and political barriers for equality and social injustice in the Black struggle for human rights.

There still is a great number of poor Black Americans that are not in the mainstream of national life. Much remains to be done to obtain for them their first-class citizenship status. For example, the conditions of Blacks are: unemployment, isolation, poverty, bitterness and inadequate education should be examined so that there will be equal opportunity for all citizens to obtain first-class citizenship. In other words, poor Blacks should have the same chance as every other American to learn and grow, to work and share in society, to develop their abilities, and to pursue their individual happiness. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 brought the federal government squarely behind the struggle for equal rights for the Blacks and this brought about justice and equality in these areas for the first time. Dr. King's dream was coming true for the first time, after he had worked for ten years in his nonviolent movement.

Blacks have played a crucial role in American history since its very beginning. This chapter has indicated that the Blacks had been cut off from the benefits of national life. It also has commented on the effects of the various civil rights movements in stimulating significant Black contributions to the nations growth. The struggle of the Blacks to overcome the handicaps of slavery and of second-class citizenship has been demonstrated by the career of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who led the nonviolent civil rights movement in the 1950's and 1960's, and who made a contribution to our cultural heritage. Dr. King, the Black leader, reflected the struggle to secure those rights and liberties which are a basic part of our heritage. By leading nonviolent protests against bondage and unbending segregationists, Dr. King has helped to make America "the land of the free." As stated, the Black protest movement with Dr. King is deeply rooted in the past. His nonviolence represents a supreme effort to overcome the handicaps of centuries of slavery, oppressions and brutality. The ongoing struggle that Dr. King was involved in has evidences of the democratic progress. The Black's quest for equality and social justice was not fully achieved with Dr. King. However, through his nonviolence, he gained new avenues for the Blacks and this will speak for the future in history and education of the Blacks.

In Chapter V this dissertation will examine the specific educational implications of King's non-violent theory of social change for improved civil rights. Dr. King was a teacher in the broadest sense of the word. He made his concepts and methods clear to his followers.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EDUCATION FOR BLACK STUDENTS THAT CAME OUT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

Dr. King, through education in the growth and discovery period of the civil-rights movements, developed a deep understanding of his mission in life. In his first article "The Purpose of Education," he indicated that education should not equip a person with proper instruments of exploitation so that he can forever trample over the masses. Instead education, to Dr. King, should furnish men with "noble ends rather than means to an end." Dr. King states that:

At this point, I often wonder whether or not education is fulfilling its purpose. A great majority of the so-called educated people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save men from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the unreal and the facts from fiction. The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be man gifted with reason, but with no morals. The late Eugene Talmadge, in my opinion, possessed one of the better minds of Georgia or even America. Moreover, he wore the Phi Beta Kappa key. By all measuring rods, Mr. Talmadge could think critically and intensively; yet he contends that I am an inferior being. . . . We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character is the goal of true

education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. King indicated that "intelligence plus character" and the concern for the masses should be goals of a true educational program. There remained only the quest for "noble ends" upon which to concentrate and the invention of proper instruments of liberation.

The United States Supreme Court in May 1954 rendered a momentous decision for education in the case of Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka when it declared: "we cannot turn the clock back to 1868 when the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted, or even to 1896 when Plessy v. Ferguson was written . . . We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' had no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."<sup>2</sup>

For some fifty-eight years, the decision in the Plessy v. Ferguson case was the law of the land and gave legal sanction to the practice of segregation. In the case the Court had affirmed the Southern position that the Fourteenth Amendment had not been intended to "enforce social distinguished from political equality or a commingling of the two races."<sup>3</sup>

One important part of the Plessy decision was that the Supreme Court advanced its dissent in what it asserted was an assumption of the Black argument: that social prejudices can be combatted by legislation. The Court wrote: "If one race be inferior to the other

<sup>1</sup>Lerone Bennett, Jr., What Manner of Man (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1968), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

socially, the constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane."<sup>4</sup>

The only dissenting opinion in the Plessy case was registered by Justice John Marshall Harlan, who stated that:

There is no caste here. Our Constitution is colorblind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law.<sup>5</sup>

In 1954 the Supreme Court by a vote of nine to none reversed the Plessy Doctrine. In accepting the heavily psychologically documented arguments of Thurgood Marshall and the other NAACP lawyers that racially separated education has deleterious effects upon the Black child, the Court finally recognized the correctness and truth of Mr. Justice Harlan's color-blind principle in the area of public education. However, some of the States resisted the Supreme Court's ruling and the battle for school desegregation became national and international news. In other words, refusal to comply with the law ranged from simple inaction or token integration to riots and bombings.

The pace of school desegregation was agonizingly slow. It can be noted that ten years after the Supreme Court's decision only 9.2 per cent of the Black public school students in the Southern and border states were attending desegregated classes. At this rate, it would take a hundred years to complete the process. In the realms of law and morality victories had been won, but everyday life had become a battle ground of gunpowder and dynamite, cross-burnings and beating,

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<sup>3</sup>Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

arson and murder. Against the violent direct action of the White Citizen's Councils and the Klan a new technique came into being. Blacks under Dr. King's leadership decided to use the nonviolent direct form of mass, passive resistance, to advance the struggle for civil rights. As already indicated Dr. King's thinking had been shaped by Thoreau and Gandhi.

The alienation of the young people from society reached an unprecedented level because of their civil rights participation for school integration. <sup>o</sup> Dr. King indicated that the young people have unprecedented attitudes because this generation was born and matured in unprecedented conditions. <sup>o</sup> Contemporary young people cannot be understood unless we remember that they lived during the period of four wars: World War II, the "cold war," the Korean War, and Viet Nam. <sup>o</sup> No other generation of young Americans was ever exposed to a remotely similar traumatic experience. This is the first generation to grow up in the era of nuclear bomb, knowing that it may be the last generation of mankind. The young people under the impact of social forces have splintered into three principal groups, though of course there is some overlap among the three. The first and largest group is struggling to adapt to the prevailing values of our society. Without much enthusiasm, they accept the system of government, the economic relationships, the property system and the current social stratifications. However, this group is a troubled one. The education of these youths have led them to believe that social attitudes are not congealed or determined; they are fluid and searching. Their consciences have been touched by the feeling that the Viet Nam War was of horror and insanity.

The second group of young people can be called the radicals. This group ranges from the moderate to extreme in the degree to which they want to alter the social system of segregation. They agreed that through structural change the current evils in society could be eliminated because the roots are in the system rather than in men or in faulty operation. Their rebellion comes from having been frustrated in seeking change within the framework of the existing society. They attempted to build racial equality and social justice, and they met stiff opposition for their efforts. It can be noted there are young radicals today who are pacifists. <sup>6</sup> Dr. King indicated that when all radicals understand the need for direct action to be both self-transforming and structure transforming that will be the key to the true educational philosophy in the struggle for equality and social justice/

The young people in the third group are called "hippies." The hippies are not only colorful, but complex and in many respects their extreme conduct presents the negative effect of society's evils on sensitive young people. Those who identify with this group have a common philosophy. They are struggling to disengage from society as their expression of their rejection of it. Their peace demonstrations in some cases were not to improve the political world but to express their own world. This group as Dr. King noted, has "love as the highest human value."<sup>6</sup> In a few words, love can only exist in communication between people and not in total isolation of the individual. The hippies' philosophy was good in a sense, because their dream of social justice,

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., The Trumpet of Conscience (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 42.



equality and human value continues as a dream of mankind. The society at large may be more ready now to learn from that dream than it was a century ago, to listen to the argument for peace not as a dream, but as a practical possibility to choose and use.

The three main groupings of the young people demonstrated that this generation is in substantial ferment. The large group that is not disaffected from society put forward basic questions. Its restlessness helps us understand the radicals with their protest and the hippies with their systematic withdrawal.

Fear was lifted by the Black youths when they took their struggle to the streets; a new spirit of resistance was born. Inspired by the Blacks, the White youth was stirred into action and formed an alliance that aroused the conscience of the nation. The education that Blacks gained under the leadership of Dr. King in the nonviolent resistance first employed in Montgomery, Alabama, in mass dimensions developed original forms of application in sit-ins, freedom rides, and wade-ins. To accomplish this, the young Blacks and Whites had to be educated and accept the nonviolent theory and to transform themselves to protest the evils of society. The young Blacks had traditionally imitated Whites in dress, conduct and thought in a rigid middle-class pattern. Under Dr. King's leadership the Blacks ceased imitating and started to initiate many civil rights movements. This was a revolutionary and wholesome development for both. Because both Blacks and Whites started to learn from each other. The ironic thing in today's society is that so many educators and sociologists are seeking methods to inculcate

middle-class values in Black youth as the ideal in social development.

At this point, the young Blacks threw off their middle class values and made an historic social contribution with Dr. King. They relegated career, status, and economic values to role. Some became "jailbirds and troublemakers" when they took off their middle-class attire. Some left school, not abandoning learning, but to seek it in more direct ways. These youths were constructive school dropouts, and this variety strengthened the society and themselves against an evil system. As a result of this the Peace Corps for both Blacks and Whites was developed. It is safe to say that their work was the inspiration for its organization on an international scale.

The Black movement would have been historic and worthy even if it had only served the cause of civil rights. It is much greater because it stimulated a broader social movement which contributed to change some of the evils of society; decent values were preserved. Youths learned by opposing the evil forces that were crushing them and added stature and meaning to their lives. The Black and White youth in alliance fought bruising engagements with the status quo and inspired each other with a sense of moral mission. Both gave the nation an example of dedication and self-sacrifice. King's nonviolent active resistance to social evils, including massive civil disobedience when the need came up, did unite in a new action-synthesis the best insights of all three groups that can be pointed out among the youths. In Dr. King's movements the youths were educated about injustice that exists in society. They attempted to channel their energy into a re-evaluation of love and creativity.

The schools are creatures of our society. Therefore, the most basic questions we can ask of our schools is if they can make the pursuit of justice and the reduction of prejudice their major goals if the society as a whole does not? Dr. King's feeling was that the public schools should be used as a principal instrument of social reform in the interest of a more humane society. John Dewey stated that:

To an extent characteristic of no institution save that of the state itself. The school has the power to modify social order. But this notion that the school is a lever to change society runs counter to another equally pervasive and powerful view that the school is a transmitter of society's existing values. The school is fundamentally an institution erected by society to do certain specific work and to exercise a certain specific function in maintaining the life and advancing the welfare of society.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, to help a person to change morally and intelligently should be a part of the education program in schools as Dr. King indicated in his "The Purpose of Education," a paper written during his Morehouse days at the age of nineteen. Dewey and other giants of early progressivism in education urged the schools to take over the educating and the acculturating functions that had always been performed by family and church. The school has not been able to fill that vacuum successfully. The family, the community and the adolescent peer-group can exert influences as great or greater than that of the school. The schools have not yet learned how to deal successfully with youngsters from cultures alien to or different from the culture of the school itself. To say it bluntly, some educators simply do not know how to educate youngsters

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<sup>7</sup>John Dewey, Moral Principles in Education (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 82.

from the lower socio-economic classes. Some educators never had been a part of lower socio-economic classes or even had enough interest to learn about the lower socio-economic classes before attempting to educate the youngsters from this class. The pattern of the school is in effect to ignore or to destroy the culture that is dominant, and to assume that the child must totally adjust himself to the culture of the school. Dr. King indicated that the fact is that there are certain middle-class traits, values, attitudes, or skills, which while not in any way inherently superior to other cultural styles are nonetheless essential to functioning in the society that we have. ~~&~~ In other words, the educators do not know how to enable the youngster to move into the dominant middle-class culture without surrendering or destroying for him the separate and significant culture from which he comes. Then, the failure with economically lower-class children is obvious. The schools are a good deal more successful with the middle class youngsters because the culture of the school is compatible with that of the students. Dr. King's ideas of intelligence plus character can be seen in Dewey's "Moral Education Theory."

Dewey stated:

Moral education may be laid down as fundamental . . . that the influence of direct moral instruction, even at its very best, is comparatively small in amount and slight in influence when the whole field of moral growth through education is taken into account.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

It is the large area of indirect and vital moral education, the development of character through all the agencies, instrumentalities and materials of school life that is needed in the educational programs. Then, educators should treat each child with dignity in the classroom so that the subject matter will be a true aim for education and the question of democracy can be answered by the schools. Thus, the maintenance of schools segregated by race and class will not contribute very much to improving Black and White relations. <sup>0</sup> Dr. King indicated that unless the classroom and the schoolhouse become democratic institutions, our society would not be a democratic one/

Dr. King indicated that the mind as well as the body evolves. <sup>0</sup> Education as Dr. King saw it should arise from the experiences of ideas and should be plans or action by which the individual reacts to injustices in his environment/ Then, thinking starts as a result of felt needs of the individual. Dewey asserts that:

. . . all that thinking is problem-centered and that human thought is the instrument of action. Human action is social because it occurs in a social milieu.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, social utility is the test by which truth is established. Dr. King sought to point out that when men are gifted with reason and morals, with common purposes and common interest, there is no necessary opposition between man and society. Men have both the intelligence as well as a social character,

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<sup>9</sup>Melvin C. Baker, Foundations of John Dewey's Educational Theory (New York: King's Crown Press, 1955), p. 55.

which can be fused in Dr. King's intelligence plus character theory. In such a condition means and ends are continuous in the sense that once an end is achieved it serves as a means to a "noble end." On the other hand, social utility is the test by which the truth is established.

It is logical to assume that Dr. King would be in opposition to the often-practiced notion that knowledge is an end or closure in its application. When a learner has the ultimate answer, what then does he do next? Learning then became a process of constant inquiry and discovery. One author asserted that today's sequel to the developing inquiry program should be:

. . . designed to encourage learners to become creative thinkers and to formulate their own scientific theories to explain the physical world about them. In the Developing Inquiry, the learner builds and tests theories to account for events he has seen. He accomplishes this inquiry, questioning, experimenting, observing and researching. Inquiry emphasizes creative scientific thinking by both teachers and students.<sup>10</sup>

In other words the learners should discard all ideas of right and wrong. Thus, learning at this point is a process of constant inquiry and discovery into new ideas.

Under such circumstances, labor itself became motivated by purpose and it is governed by thoughts. The dualism of labor and leisure disappears. Even in our leisure you can either work or play. Thus, we see the oneness as the unification of purpose that can be viewed as our democracy. Then, democracy is the

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<sup>10</sup>J. Richard Suchman, Developing Inquiry (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc. 1966), p. 10.

unification, where all extremes were in some direct or indirect way related. Dr. King's suggestion for reconstruction was to remove the traditional dualism which has been passed on from age to age and society to society. <sup>0</sup> Dr. King felt that a true education in society would eliminate the dualism that we have in many communities. In other words one society for Blacks and another society for Whites means that we cannot maintain this dualism under one nation. It can be stated that Dr. King's awareness of the open character of American society can account for the originality and novelty in his suggestions for its reconstruction. Then, these dualisms not only posed a real problem in our society, but they made the solution for this problem a struggle for the Blacks in their quest for equality and justice. When a problem of this nature exists, we frequently turn to our great writings for new interpretations of weathered words. Chief Justice Earl Warren has in recent years given new and creative interpretations to the Constitution. We might allow ourselves to review the words regarding Democratic education on a problem which America calls "unfinished work." The problem is segregation and Black education. As Dr. King indicated that the <sup>0</sup>"Black Revolution: of the Blacks has been casted by both facto and de facto walls of segregation." This forced separation from the main stream of American life has given him problems which are unique to this situation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Allison Davis, Social Class Influences Upon Learning (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 85.

Another phase of "unfinished work" is the lack of an avenue of social mobility available to some American Blacks. The educative process, both primary and secondary, appears to be a series of efforts and rewards. The rewards can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. The statement is made frequently "as the rewards go so goes the culture." In our culture, the powerful extrinsic reward for learning is most frequently social mobility. Thus, we see another dualism which the writer doubts Dr. King would favor. Dr. King's system of teaching was based on the intelligent and moral development of an individual. Then, his system of teaching made subjects clear, and at the noble end you could apply these subjects to life as a whole. Dr. King's main tasks were to build up intelligence with moral character. Education has to guide the child to the knowledge of good and evil, and should train him to choose that which is good, and this will enable him to keep the desire and continue to make it the law of his life.

It is dangerously easy to oversimplify the change in the psychological dynamics of the racial situation in America during the past decade. True public consciousness has changed under Dr. King's nonviolent civil rights movements, and many racial problems and injustices to the surface. By bringing these racial problems and injustices to the surface, many Blacks and Whites have been educated in the nonviolent civil rights movements and have developed the concept of intelligence and morality that Dr. King



recommended. Black Americans have persistently sought to exercise the civil rights that the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were designed to guarantee. Dr. King generated a more intense resurgence of the struggle of Blacks for justice and equality in the many civil rights movements he led. The initial success of his tactics justified and reinforced his confidence in the "American way" and this educated many citizens about further changes in the patterns of race relations.

But since these early achievements, and especially during the last few years, pessimism about progress in civil rights has been growing. This pessimism can be explained in terms of a set of forces noted by the distinguished psychologist Kenneth Clark who wrote that:

The central problems posed in attempting to understand what is happening to the Black and in America, are the problems of the rapidity of change (complicated by the unevenness of change) and the effects of old patterns of accommodation on the part of both Blacks and Whites in their ability to adjust to the new realities.<sup>12</sup>

It is within this context that one must seek to understand what has happened. First, the problem of change: In pragmatic terms, we have had change and it has been swifter than scarcely anybody thought possible, faster than the White majority deemed either necessary or wholesome. The Black has moved from rural southern areas into more sophisticated urban areas; formal discrimination

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<sup>12</sup>Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 21 - 22.

appeared to decrease and in many cases the educational program is better. Thus, in the fields such as health, employment, individual incomes, and voter registration, statistics show large percentage gains for Black Americans over the last twenty years under Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s leadership. However, these changes that have occurred have not only been small relative to need, they have been uneven. Thus, the rapid desegregation of places of public accommodation and recreation, bus lines and libraries has been accompanied by a move to desegregate the public school systems in some parts of the United States which has added some new avenues to the Blacks. The Black's educational program in some aspects today can be compared to that of Whites; it can be said to be much better now than it has ever been. As a result of this improvement in the educational program, it has made Blacks aware of their rights and of a great gulf between their status and that imagined for all citizens in the land of the "free."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not believe that man is all good, at the beginning of his life. As he saw it, each one of us is a mixture of good and evil. Education is designed to bring out the good. But when man comes into collective life, this evil is even more prevalent than it is in an individual. In a few words, the bad potentialities in man are much more present in collective or group life than they are in an individual life.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., "Love, Law and Civil Disobedience," New South, XVI (December, 1961), p. 6.

Dr. King further asserts that:

. . . there is within human nature an amazing potential for goodness. There is within human nature something that can respond to goodness. I know somebody's liable to say that this is an unrealistic movement if it goes on believing that all people are good. Well, I didn't say that I think . . . that there is a strange dichotomy of disturbing dualism within human nature. Many of the great philosophers and thinkers through the ages have seen this . . . Plato, centuries ago said that the human personality is like a charioteer with two headstrong horses, each wanting to go in different directions, so that within our own individual lives we see this conflict and certainly when we come to the collective life of man, we see a strange badness.<sup>14</sup>

Dr. King, being influenced by Niebuhr, here felt that as a member of a group man sometimes behaves worse than when alone. With a sense of security and power which the numerical strength of his companions may give him, man loses his sense of responsibility, yields to the emotional appeal of the group and participates in activities which he would normally avoid. Thus, Dr. King places greater reliance on the individual nature. The individual, Dr. King felt, can be more amenable to reason and more alive to moral consideration than the group. Thus, a non-violent individual, because the emphasis in group action tends to shift from inner purity to external conformity.<sup>15</sup> "But in spite of all this, there is something in human nature that can

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to Love (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 10 - 19.

respond to goodness."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, according to Dr. King the idea that there is something within human nature that can be changed, stands at the top of his philosophy of nonviolence. Thus, given sincere, intelligent workers, masses can be trained to practice nonviolence. Hence, nonviolence is a pure means to a noble end. Thus, the only moral and practical means to a noble end is nonviolence. Nonviolence, according to King, was the only good moral means that led to lasting peace and progress.<sup>17</sup> Dr. King believed that the means and the noble ends are inseparably connected and was eager that the means used should in no way detract from the moral character of the noble end. Therefore Dr. King's efforts were to give concrete expression to this principle of moral approximation of the noble end, in the form of nonviolence. To Dr. King the moral discipline of the individual is the most important means of social reconstruction and it is vital to his philosophy. Then, whenever a state attempts to use an individual as a means (as does a segregated system), one must reply with nonviolent resistance in order to change it.

Dr. King felt that America has to compensate for the way that she has permitted her minorities to be treated. As a means to make freedom real and substantial for the Blacks, he suggested a Bill of Rights for the disadvantaged which would be based on, or similar to, the Veteran's Bill of Rights

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<sup>16</sup> King, "Love, Law and Civil Disobedience," p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," Phylon, X (December 1957), p. 27.

except it would be much broader-based in scope. In Dr. King's opinion then, "a bill of rights for the disadvantaged would immediately transform the conditions of Black life."<sup>18</sup> Dr. King stated that:

The most profound alteration would not reside so much in the specific grants as in the basic psychological and motivational transformation of the Black. I would challenge skeptics to give such a bold new approach a test for the next decade. I content that the decline in school dropouts, family breakups, crime rates, illegitimacy, swollen relief rolls, and other social evils would stagger the imagination. Change in human psychology is normally a slow process, but it is safe to predict that when a people is ready for change as the Black has shown himself ready today, the response is bound to be rapid and constructive.

While Blacks form the vast majority of America's disadvantaged, there are millions of white poor who would also benefit from such a bill. It is a simple matter of justice that America, in dealing creatively with the task of raising the Black from backwardness, should also be rescuing a large stratum of the forgotten white poor. (A Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged could mark the rise of a new era, in which the full resources of the society would be used to attack the tenacious poverty which so paradoxically exists in the midst of plenty)<sup>19</sup>

In short, Dr. King asserts that the Black needs a two-pronged attack. He must work on two fronts. "On one hand, we must continue to resist the system of segregation which is the basic cause of our lagging standards; on the other hand, we must work constructively to improve the standards themselves. Dr. King indicated that whatever affected the part also affects the whole. Thus, if the Black is educationally disadvantaged, deprived and suffering, then

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait (New York: New American Library, 1963), p. 151.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

society is also educationally disadvantaged, deprived and suffering. Therefore, as Dr. King saw it, equal educational opportunity for all should be stirred into life to prevent these things from happening if we want to progress and improve our society.

#### Equal Educational Opportunity For All

There are those who are frightened by the challenges of desegregation. They would follow the counsel of despair voiced by Black and White separatists alike that maintain segregated schools and abandon the dream of achieving a fully integrated society. This, of course, would solve none of the dilemmas (equal educational opportunity for all) and would only push them underground once again to be tackled by a future, braver generation. This statement contains a prophecy which appears to be all too accurate. We are not asking the progress we need in the attempt to have equal educational opportunity for all, or perhaps in far too many instances the school systems are not attempting to cope with it at all.

If the school system was really serious about solving this problem it should not have had any children in segregated classrooms since the law was passed in 1954. Perhaps the reason for this condition rests in an explanation given by Singer and Hendrick in the Phi Delta Kappan in November of 1967. They said that:

A number of articles appearing in the progressional literature of late have acknowledged usually unhappily, that while there has been no shortage of citizen committee

recommendations and community studies, resolute drives to end segregated schools have neither been very numerous nor very resolute . . . Reasons for these lethargic attempts at desegregation are complicated, although it is still probably safe to conjecture that lack of societal commitment is still the leading explanation . . . Resistance to reform may be attributed to the fiscal cost of desegregation and to a variety of fears expressed by individuals hostile to the idea. . . .<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps these are the reasons, and perhaps they are not! There can be no question about the role that fear plays in this resistance to desegregation. It is fear that individuals expressed in the equal educational opportunity for all in our school systems. It appears that all too often it is the fears of school administrators that are the major deterrent to progress.

As a matter of fact, without truly equal educational opportunities for all boys and girls, we can never have law and order, no matter how many policemen we hire or how many national guardsmen we bring into the cities in time of crisis. Dr. King knew that it took courage to implement the equal educational opportunities for all. It should be the highest priority for school administrators to educate all children equally. Thus, the school administrators have to be willing to "rock the boat" if they expect to cope with the problem of equal educational opportunities for all students. Moreover, the author thinks that they have to take the initiative to "rock the boat first," unless they would like to have someone else tip the boat over for them.

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<sup>21</sup>H. Singer and J. G. Hendrick, "Total School Integration: An Experiment in Social Reconstruction," Phi Delta Kappan (November 1967), p. 142.

Another alternative to cope realistically with racial imbalance has already been written in history books. Singer and Hendrick refer to this one when they stated that:

. . . Virtually all decisions to step up the desegregation process appear to have come as a result of either legal threat or through pressure applied by social reformers and distraught minority citizens. . . .<sup>22</sup>

In some cases, plans for large-scale boycotts were planned to prove that equal educational opportunity for all should be a way of life for its minority citizens. There were some attempts by the board president and school officials to avert the boycotts. However, promises would no longer suffice and the boycotts in many areas continued. In other words, people can tolerate being put off for just so long, and 1954 has been a long time ago.

Many people today are decrying the Black separatist movement. Others are using it to support their own segregationist views. However, those who decry it have no one to blame but themselves. Had programs been started for equal educational opportunities for all twenty years ago, when the Supreme Court told the schools to do so, the separatist movement might never have occurred. If schools are organized toward the separatist track in education all the way we will ultimately have two school systems, one all Black and the other all White. There will be two curricula one Black and one White. Some of the Black schools will become schools for violent revolution and some of the White schools will become training grounds for 20th century "minute men." Then, we

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 143.



will have two separate and unequal societies which can not be justified.

Certainly this can be prevented, if it is to be corrected. It seems to me that it is terribly important that we have a single curriculum, and that it be the right kind of a curriculum--one from which White racism has been eliminated, but not one in which Black racism has been substituted. It is important to have one curriculum for all children. In other words, White youngsters need to know about the contributions of Black people in America, just as the Black children need to know it. No one would deny that the distortions of history have hurt the Black child in the past, but to distort history in a new direction would also hurt him. At the same time, developing "Black identity" can be beneficial to Black children. Promoting the "Black is beautiful" concept in school is good as we work from desegregation to integration. Black children can write on the important thought of "I am Black and I am proud." They can express it in drama, in discussions, and in art. The idea has a noticeable impact on them. Then, when they feel beautiful, they look beautiful, to both Black and White. This will represent the new self-awareness, a self-awareness previously undeveloped because the White people had repressed it from the days of slavery, or before to the present. Thus, we may deplore separatism, but we must assume the major responsibility for its genesis. The three "R's" of today can be recognized as racism, responsiveness and

relevancy. It is interesting too, that in the case with some societal groups at the present time has given reality talks and practice in situations in simulating the "real world."

If we take an honest look at the "real world" we see clearly that while we may have talked about "one set of rules for everyone" we have so warped and biased the "rules" that they only fit the White, middle class. Edgar Z. Friedenberg in The Atlantic stated that:

. . . most politically effective defense of racism consists not in a futile attempt to impute a genetic inferiority to Black people, but in a withholding of generosity by refusing to break its "network of small complicated rules" in order to recognize their plight and redress their grievances. . . .<sup>23</sup>

The Black job applicant facing the standard employment criteria --educational, grammatical, etc.--and the White employment manager must feel like the very short or very tall draftee facing the supply sergeant handing out size forty clothing to everyone. Whether we construct clothing or rules we had better make sure that we take everyone's measurements into account. The school administrators must make up their minds to "have" equal educational opportunities for all children. This job of educational opportunities for all children must not be ignored or feared, or excused, or thought that the problem will solve itself because it will not.

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<sup>23</sup> Edgar Z. Friedenberg, "The Hidden Costs of Opportunity," The Atlantic (February 1969), pp. 84 - 90.

The decision of equal educational opportunities facing the administrators are really far easier than that facing school board members. The administrators have chosen their professions because they have a deep and abiding interest in educating boys and girls. Moreover, in rising to the top as an administrator, a person has demonstrated some of the essential qualities of leadership such as intellectual ability, integrity, energy, initiative and courage. He has been appointed to lead his board of education and his community toward the best possible education for all children in their areas. Therefore, if he reads even narrowly in his own professional journals, he has learned that desegregation and eventual integration are essential if he is to discharge the basic responsibilities of the job. There should be no doubt about his commitment to integration and equal educational programs for all the children. If there is, he does not deserve to be the head of the school. He should do everything within his power to convince his board of education to act on desegregation. To do less makes him unworthy of the role and responsibility he has accepted.

• The board member's decision is slightly more complex, primarily because board members seem to hold one of two divergent points of view. Some think that they have been elected to reflect the wishes of the people or the majority of their constituency. Others, undoubtedly the minority on this issue, accept the fact that they have been elected to lead the people and to direct the administrator if he needs leading. The paradoxical point is that many board members adhere to the second position in all issues

except integration and equal educational opportunities for all their students. They make and adopt budgets without reference to their constituency; they approve textbooks and curricula; appoint personnel and fix their salaries; build schools and govern the school system all without recourse or reference to the opinions of those who elected them. Yet when the issue of integration and equal opportunities programs comes up, they say "the voters don't want it." Board members who care more about being reelected than they do about the results they produce while they are in office, and who care more about the status and power associated with the position than about the welfare of the boys and girls in their charge who often are unwilling to take a position in favor of desegregation. Yet this is the only position which is educational-ly and morally right for their communities and their country. If we changed institutions in this country, the schools alone would perpetuate separation. It is while children are of school age that they develop the basic attitudes they will carry with them the rest of their lives.

It is for this reason that school administrators have to change their position. As leaders, they must provide equal educational opportunities for all the students. They have to realize that a creative approach to the challenge of desegregation may lead in many directions. Desegregation has given impetus to many new programs and new ideas which are leading to better opportunities for all children.

As Dr. King indicated, educational context and associations extend far beyond the classroom into school buses, lunchrooms, playgrounds, pools and gymnasiums. If desegregated schools violate the personal and social rights of students, then the public education facilities must provide program opportunities for all the students in our society. The content of education has some fixed elements, but its variables depend on the kind of society in which instruction is given and on its history. The American public schools have played a great, unique role in the creation of the modern American nation. It not only provided a ladder of opportunity on which millions climbed out of poverty, but by virtue of its integrated classrooms, in which students studied and played in common, unified the most diverse ethnic groups that elsewhere live together in snarling hostility. The requirements of citizenship in a democratic community require the integration of public classrooms even more than integration in the other public avenues. The basic human right is violated wherever segregation and dual systems are practiced, no less in public education than in public transportation. The denial of this right to Blacks in education seriously affects the expression of their basic political rights as well. The processes of education work gradually but effectively in eroding the bigotry of fanaticism. Then as Dr. King indicated, an integrated education in the South and North is our best hope for making the promises of American life come true.

In 1964 the "war on poverty" was launched on several fronts to eliminate "poverty in the midst of plenty." The following opportunities were extended to Blacks and other poor in 1964: (1) community action programs, conducted in part by representatives of the poor, used federal funds to operate credit unions, health clinics, job training programs and other activities designed to improve living standards. (2) Under Project Head Start, disadvantaged children were given preschool education to help prepare them for formal schooling. (3) The Job Corps provided occupational training to high school dropouts between the ages of 16 and 21. (4) The Neighborhood Youth Corps found summer and part-time jobs for underprivileged youths including many students. (5) The Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA), a domestic version of the Peace Corps, trained volunteer workers for community service in urban and rural slums. (6) A work-study project provided part-time work for needy college students so they could complete their education. (7) Operation Upward-Bound provided "catch-up" study opportunities for students from disadvantaged families to help them qualify for college. (8) Loans were offered to farmers and owners of small businesses to create additional job opportunities. (9) Finally, the Model Cities Program encouraged experimentation with advocacy planning, where local groups were given resources to hire their own planners to enable them to develop plans which incorporate social and physical resources for the reduction of urban blight. The major goal for these programs was to insure jobs and adequate family

income not only for American Blacks, but also for the large number of poor who are White. Also, these programs that Dr. King advocated would provide for medical care, the elimination of slums, equal educational opportunities for all, and urban improvement.

In summary, the heads of each school system should look at children--all children--and cast lots with their educational welfare rather than with apparent power blocs of the moment. This is a common practice and pattern in many school systems. It should be, indeed it must be, if we are to survive as a single nation. Changing the prevailing pattern will take courage, but perhaps even more needed is simple determination to do the job without delay, using the skills and facilities already available. However, the plans any school formulates will not be the "ultimate answer" to problems of separation. But to wait for the perfect equal educational opportunity plan to be created by some presently unknown genius is like debating when to build a school in space. The children can not wait for all their elders to overcome bigotry and prejudice. They are growing and learning now. What they learn and whether they learn it together in classrooms where there is respect for and understanding of the differences among the family of man, or separately fearing and distrusting each other, will determine the course of our nation. •

Curriculum and Classrooms in the Black Schools

The academic performance of children from depressed areas, so marked by scholastic retardation, demands curriculum re-appraisal in depth. A thorough analysis of educational goals can determine their appropriateness for disadvantaged children and youth. The idea of equal educational opportunity, the desire that all children "with their human similarities and their equally human differences, shall have educational services and opportunities suited to their personal needs and sufficient for the successful operation of a free democratic society remains a commitment."<sup>24</sup>

The child with limited background and normal intelligence must grow up in school and studies, and in his life if reached and interested by what the school offers. Yet, the typical child with limited background in the typical classroom is indifferent and purposeless, a poor communicator who does not seem to respond to normal teaching methods and subject matter. His capabilities remain unrealized. Why?

<sup>o</sup>The traditional responsibilities of the school staff and the objectives of school services are based upon a uniform "Successful American" social and economic pattern and do not adapt effectively to the non-uniform social and economic patterns which characterize the neighborhoods from which these children come. Many positive reinforcement factors are insufficient or lacking. They include: an acceptable self-image; knowledge of essentials

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<sup>24</sup>Educational Policies Commission, Education and the Dis-  
advantaged American (Washington, D. C.: National Education Associ-  
ation, 1962), p. 29.



such as nutrition and health; a sense of identification with a stable neighborhood; security and freedom from want, both material and emotional; the self-confidence and motivation to achieve which rub off on a child who is surrounded by things and involved in experiences which are accepted both at home and in school either as symbols of success or significant achievements.

It seems reasonable that the educator would be concerned with all that affects the child he is trying to educate. The important thing is to get to know these youngsters and become meaningfully related to them. It is often necessary to cross traditional lines and do "unorthodox" things to help the children who are not doing well in school.

The family of the child with limited background may have many meritable standards and values. Even when its material well-being is limited to basic necessities, the family may be close-knit with love and caring. But always there is a common denominator --not enough. Not enough income, information, and skills to get along successfully--insufficiencies of many sorts. Many children in Black schools reflect this. In other words, he is poorly prepared and poorly motivated for school. It can be noted that the parents of these children are not against education. At worst, they see no need for it, are indifferent. Many have hopes and ambitions for their children which involve getting a good education. They are glad if their child does well in school, but they often have little formal education themselves, and know little about studies or how children learn. Because of the parents' struggle for social

justice and equality, and lack of education, many of them do not understand how to help the child succeed. In Black schools many problems would never develop in the classrooms if there were wholesome relationships between pupils and teachers involved in the learning process. Difficulties begin to clear up and learning takes place in an atmosphere of affection and understanding. Most children like teachers who plan interesting projects, who vary their methods and allow the pupils ample freedom to help initiate and carry out plans for the development of intelligence and morals from the school curriculum. Such consideration helps to improve morale by giving teachers and children an opportunity to know each other better and to experience a feeling of comradeship and belonging. Then, in the educative process, when pupils and teachers are able to relax, have fun, and laugh together, there is little room for friction and tension in the educative setting.

Although many skillfull and dedicated teachers have remained <sup>allusion to WASP</sup> in the Black schools, the prospect of teaching in Black culture areas is not viewed with distinction by many teachers. They are not actually prepared to cope with the many problems and challenges that exist. Despite their better judgement, people of another background often feel that disadvantaged poor Black and White children are by nature perverse, vulgar, or lazy. Children sense quickly the attitudes of school people toward them, and they retaliate against condescension or intolerance with hostility, absenteeism and failure.

Many contemporary teachers came from "culturally deprived" backgrounds. However, when confronted with students whose present economic and social predicament is unlike their own, they tend to react negatively to them possibly to escape the painful memory of their own prior lower status. It is easy for one's own image of self to be reinforced and made total by the convenient device of a protective forgetting--a refusal to remember the specific educational factor, such as a sympathetic and understanding teacher, who made academic success and upward mobility possible in spite of cultural deprivation.

The effective teacher of disadvantaged Black and White children is constantly aware of the circumstances that affect the pupils. He has the understanding and sympathy that prevent him from being repelled by deviations from his own standards. Instead of being struck by the shortcomings of his pupils, he is encouraged by their ability, despite their handicaps, to do as well as they do. The praises are an invaluable motivating force for the children. Riesman states that: "there are teachers who want to teach history to children and there are others who want to teach children history. It is the latter who do the most meaningful job with the Black children."<sup>25</sup> Other general characteristics and behavior patterns that appear desirable for the teacher in Black schools are:

- (1) To be straight forward and direct.
- (2) To define clearly what

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<sup>25</sup>Frank Riesman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 87.

is to be done. (3) To be informal, warm and down-to-earth. (4) To gain affection in a simple, dignified, fashion without overdoing it. (5) To establish routine with simple, clear, enforced rules. (6) To establish understanding between the pupils and teachers. (7) To be dedicated enough to believe in what one is doing. (8) To be proud to teach.

The well-trained, objective, emotionally controlled and understanding teacher has many opportunities during his association with the pupils to engage consciously in sound, constructive, evaluation. Through observation of the pupil's responses during recitation, their general classroom behavior, their habits of work, and other overt expressions of their personal characteristics, the watchful teacher can obtain much concrete data of evaluation of the Black child. Thus, informal appraisal needs to be supplemented by more formal instruments of evaluation. After the results are interpreted, those teaching techniques are then applied that may be expected to assist the learner to progress to the best of his ability toward the achievement of purposeful educational goals.

There is no overnight cure for the attitudes, fears, defenses and deficiencies in children that grew so early and over so many years. Dr. King indicated that we must learn to be logical and scientific thinkers and look again at what we can do in the classroom for the poor. There new questions about the curriculum must be developed for these children and about the teaching materials and strategies that will spur their learning in a classroom. Educators are developing school designs for various

class sizes, for new kinds of teacher pupil and teacher-teacher interaction, and for new ways of structuring the different fields of knowledge. In some Black schools today, students are denied a true reading program in their classrooms. Racism permeates the textbooks (such as the Dick and Jane series, etc.) of a few years ago. These have caused open revolt against the educational system and, in most cases, presented an unrealistic approach to reading for the Black students. One could not help but remember a similar period during the era of slavery when some plantation owners punished those who tried to teach slaves to read and write. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. discovered, the right to read is political and controversial, and he indicated that this should be the first priority in American education. Then, in essence, what Dr. King indicated is that if a student is denied the right to develop his ability to reading skills, he is denied the offer of the potential for personal independence and security. If a man cannot read, he must be dependent upon the reading skills of others and this will severely limit the kind of work he can perform. However, as critical a need as reading is, there is something more important than the right to read. The right to be is more important than the right to read. The right to be is of a higher order than reading. The right to be is a God-given right. Reading is a skill, a faculty of man. The right to be recognizes that man is more important than property, and that while men may own property they may not own or control other men. If our nation honored the right to be, it would give the same opportunity to have a job to a poorly educated Black as it gives to a poorly-educated White mountaineer.

Belief in the right to be would result in a government which would protect Black school children from vicious chain-wielding mobs that seek to deny them their right to read. The improvement of reading must go hand in hand with the elevation of the human condition and the search for the truth. As the struggle continues with insights about intelligence and moral developments of the Black students; the school's role in society should consider the following recommendations for curriculum activities: (1) Smaller classes (lower student-teacher ratios) are imperative for disadvantaged children. (2) Adjustments should be made in room equipment, room size, and class size to make group projects easier to handle. Groups working with a purpose can, themselves, often discipline individual members without teacher interference. (3) A flexible, non-graded grouping of children in the elementary school will permit individuals to progress at their own rates, will reduce discouragement on the part of slower children, and will make it possible for the more able to accelerate and/or enrich their learning. (4) Varying the sizes of classes within the school day (so that the particular talents of some teachers are brought to large groups of children) will improve reading and arithmetic skills, heighten appreciation of music or literature because of the response of a large group to expert interpretation and utilize space in buildings not now being used regularly. (5) The present, highly competitive, system of marks, examinations, and comparisons of all sorts should be replaced by other types of incentives to learn. Marks and grades hurt more than they help; and they tend to make "good students" conformists and "bad students" rebellious. (6) Efforts should be made to overcome the highly

inappropriate teaching of grammar and language usage. Instruction should be tailored to group and individual needs. This might mean abandoning the grammar text in favor of short form exercises adapted to real student problems.

If the above is taken into consideration in program planning, our children should have the right to read and do arithmetic, but more importantly, they should have the right to be. While the curriculum being as is for the Black, this curriculum presents a challenge for each student that is being educated by it in our society today.

#### The Challenge

The modern public school often bases its efforts on assumptions which are not valid for all children. The values of the teacher, the content of the program, and the very purposes of schooling may be appropriate for middle-class children but not for poor disadvantaged children. In many instances school in the Black areas has reinforced the sense of personal insignificance and inadequacy that life has already imposed on a disadvantaged child. (If the school insists on programs or standards that he regards as unrelated to his life or that doom him to an unending succession of failure, he is likely to leave at the first opportunity.)

There are exceptions, but in many Black schools, rates of absenteeism, failure, and dropout are frequently high, achievement low, and classroom response inadequate. Staff and student turn-over is often high and morale low. The major jobs of education are the

war on ignorance, to prepare youth for a life of creativity and freedom as individuals, and for intelligent participation in the affairs of society, including gainful employment.

The problem of selecting learning experiences for Black students in Black schools varies with the kind of objectives that one is trying to obtain. Referring to Tyler's criteria for determining what the school ought to provide, they are:

- 1.) In order to attain a given objective, a student must have experiences that will give him an opportunity to practice the kind of behavior desired.
- 2.) The learning experiences must be such that the student obtains satisfaction from carrying on the kind of behavior desired.
3. The learning that the reactions desired in experience are within the range of possibility for the students involved.
- 4.) The learning experiences can be different, but they can be used to attain the same educational objectives.
5. The same learning experience will usually bring about several outcomes.<sup>26</sup>

(In other words, teachers need some knowledge of the culture of the students they will be working with in order to do justice and provide an equal educational program for all.)

#### Aspects of the Educational Program

Many schools in the Black areas have lost faith in the ability of their students to learn, and the Black communities have lost faith in the ability of the schools to lead. There are two

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<sup>26</sup>Ralph W. Tyler, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 65 - 67.



conflicting points of view: one, that the pupils do not learn because they cannot; the other that they do not learn because they are not taught. The fact is that in a number of Black schools the students are not learning. The problem is to see that they do learn and when they do not, look into the aspects of the educational program. The aspects of the educational programs that are being modified, studied or tested are many and they are affecting all levels and elements of the curriculum in the Black schools. The programs that are being tested are: (1) Pre-school programs for two and four year olds. The curriculum aims to develop cognitive and sensory motor skills, auditory and visual perception and discrimination, motor coordination, observation skills, and ability to understand and follow directions. The coordination of verbal experiences and enrichment activities seek to raise the motivation for school achievement and to enhance the learning-how-to-learn skills. (2) Mastery of fundamental communication and linguistic skill. The development of reading competence and related language skills is of prime concern. A variety of techniques for teaching pupils to read are employed, including experimentation with methods, materials, groupings and special personnel. (3) Social and cultural experiences (concepts, plays, films, ballets, etc.) are offered at nominal fees to students in deprived Black neighborhoods to enhance motivation and upgrade educational achievement. (4) Audio visual and manipulative materials being expanded. Reading-improvement worksheets have functional contents dealing with personal care, vocational orientation, etc. (5) The ungraded, or continuous development, primary unit gears its

pace to individual ability in an effort to insure continuous progress for a child, and reduce the fear of constant failure for the youngster who moves slowly. The unit generally treats the first through third grades as a block with grade lines eliminated so that a pupil may spend as few as two or as many as four years in the primary grades, progressing as he is able to without being retarded. (6) Many schools in depressed areas are going beyond the after-school recreational programs and are providing space for individual and group study, reading, arithmetic and guidance programs. (7) Special summer-school programs in the Black areas are more usually those of enrichment and remediation. The atmosphere is less formal and outdoor recreational experiences are combined with academic and educational opportunities. These are some of the approaches and methods that are being tested for their contribution to the developmental and corrective needs of children in Black schools. A program based upon an understanding of each pupil is a program which challenges each to try and, within which, each can experience a fair measure of success and failure. Success encourages self-respect, stimulating the pupil further to progress and to a higher level of aspirations.

#### Testing Practices for Validity

Both the academic achievement of pupils and their separation into the streams, academic and vocational, generally follow the lines of social stratification. Ability to solve academic problems has been made the measure not only of achievement but also of ability. Most testmakers recognize the linguistic factor as most important

today, however many years passed before they realized this. The pupils who are penalized most heavily are those Blacks and Whites from the lower socioeconomic groups, because they have the weakest reinforcement outside of school. One solution to this problem is to construct the so-called "culture-free" intelligence tests. These tests will attempt to use test problems which represent a reliable cross-section of the mental systems that normal children of all socioeconomic groups exhibit in real life.

The jobs for the teachers to work on should be to make certain decisions on what to teach and how it should be tested. The following recommendations are made: (1) Justify what you teach in terms of facts about the learners, both from the research in growth and development, and from studies of the students in teacher class. (2) Justify what you teach in terms of social forces and values, the needs of your state and community, the reality situation in your school and also in terms of new developments in the disciplines (concepts, generalizations, structure, methods of inquiry). (3) Back up what you teach in terms of values and your philosophy. Decide what is of most worth, what is necessary and should be taught. Be sure your statement of beliefs deals with the good life, the good society, the good school and the role of the school. (4) Back up what you teach in terms of the psychology of learning, what can be taught and what is feasible. (5) Define what to teach clearly in terms of behaviors and content and in terms of the means necessary to achieve the goal.

The importance of looking at the problem in terms of its educational, sociological, economic, political, health, welfare

and housing dimensions is increasingly clear now after looking into the history of many civil rights movements. Through the struggle for social justice and equality many Black Americans have moved ahead toward the fullest realization of each individual's potential in the aspects of the testing programs.

#### Social Adjustments for Blacks

The Blacks have come a long way in reevaluating their own intrinsic worth. The author can illustrate this but a little history is necessary. In the year 1619 the first Black slaves landed on the shores of this nation. The Blacks were brought here from Africa and unlike the Pilgrim fathers who entered Plymouth a year later, they were brought here against their will. Throughout slavery the Blacks were treated in an inhuman fashion and had to make certain social adjustments. The Dred Scott decision well illustrated the status of the Blacks during slavery and the social adjustments they had to make. Another decision of the Supreme Court was in substance that the Blacks are not citizens of the United States, and that they are merely property subject to the dictates of their owners, caused a great amount of social adjustments for the Blacks.

Living with the system of slavery and then later the rigid patterns of segregation, many Blacks lost faith in themselves and began to feel that perhaps they were less than human, perhaps they were inferior. Then something happened to the Black. Such circumstances--the coming of the automobile, the upheaval of two

World Wars, the great Depression--made it possible and necessary for him to travel more often. The Black's rural plantation background gradually gave way to urban industrial life. Black masses began to reevaluate themselves, and began to feel that they were somebody. This caused some social adjustments. With this new sense of dignity and social adjustment that was made by the Blacks, came a new determination to struggle, to suffer, and to sacrifice in order to be free. This brought about the major social adjustment. So in this sense, Blacks have had to make many social adjustments and have come a long way since 1619.

Probably more than in any area we have seen, progress occurred in the complete breakdown of the system of legal segregation in the South. We all know the long history of legal segregation. It had its beginning in 1896 when the Supreme Court of the nation rendered a decision known as the Plessy v. Ferguson decision which established the doctrine of "separate but equal" as the law of the land. A strict enforcement of the "separate" without the slightest intention of abiding the "equal" did cause social adjustments for the Blacks. The Blacks were being nagged by the injustices that this doctrine spelled out. Then, on May 17, 1954, after examining the legal body of segregation on that particular date the Supreme Court pronounced it constitutionally dead bringing about social adjustments for both Black and White citizens. It said in substance that the old Plessy doctrine must go, and that separate facilities are not inherently equal and that to segregate a child on the basis of his race, is to deny that child equal

protection of the law. The author thinks this is a wonderful place to point out the fact that we still have a long way to go before the problem of racial injustice is solved. As usual there is something to remind us that the educational system of our country cannot boast of clean hands in the area of brotherhood and social adjustments for Blacks. Not only in housing but also in education, the majority of Black boys and girls are forced to attend segregated, overcrowded, qualityless educational institutions.

For the social adjustments of Blacks the schools should establish cooperative relationships with community agencies--such as settlement houses, housing departments, public hospitals, juvenile courts, youth boards, attendance officers, and relief agencies. The school has greater knowledge of more children and parents than any other institution. By cooperating with other agencies, it can put this knowledge to use without constantly assuming responsibility for following through with its own personnel.

A coordinated approach can help attack the causes that prevent families from helping their children. Then, the school authorities should take the lead when they can help the disadvantaged Black and White families avail themselves of social services provided by other community agencies that will enhance social adjustment for them. One central element of the cultural changes which most occur is the involvement of children, outside the school, with persons of advanced education and background. This contact is important, for one of the severe obstacles to the desirable

cultural changes of the disadvantaged is lack of desirable models. Desirable models are basic to learning. The school in the Black areas should enlist a regular advisory council, such as a local representative of industry, government, the medical and dental professions, the entertainment professions, higher education, business and labor unions in order to help the Black student and parent to make social adjustments.

The earlier an attempt is made for a child to foster good social relations, the better and more permanent will be the results. The approval of his peers is more important to a child than the good will of adults. In other words, there must be at least one person who is his friend. Many characteristics of the Black's value system, and behavior pattern are falsely attributed to his racial membership, but they really reflect his membership in the lower social class.

History indicates that lower-class children roam the neighborhood and join unsupervised play groups at an age when middle-class children are still in nursery school or in their own back yards. During the preschool and early elementary school years, the peer group is influential as a socializing agent and source of value and status.

In many Black areas the working class mother's desires for unquestioned domination of her children, her preference for harsh suppressive forms of control, and her tendency to maintain considerable social and emotional distance between herself and her children are responsible in part for much underlying hostility and resentment.

It is later expressed in such displaced forms as scapegoating, prejudice, extremist political and religious behavior and delinquency. Thus, this will lead to social adjustment for Black students in today's schools.

As a consequence of prejudice, discrimination, segregation, inferior status, and not finding himself respected as a human being with dignity and worth, some Black children become confused in regard to their feelings about themselves and their group. The Blacks would like to think well of themselves but often tend to evaluate themselves in some cases according to standards used by the other group. These mixed feelings lead to self-hatred and rejection of his group, hostility toward other groups and a generalized pattern of personality difficulties.

The Black child perceives himself as socially rejected by the prestigious society; and having no compelling reasons for not accepting this officially sanctioned, negative evaluation of himself, he develops a deeply ingrained negative self-image. As Dr. King indicated, Blacks should not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the contents of their character. This statement from Dr. King infers that society has labelled many Blacks as being Black first and a human being second, which makes Black children aware at an early age of their racial membership.

The social adjustment for Black children has less deep-rooted anxiety in regard to academic achievement. However, children of lower-class families exhibit more signs of personality maladjustment than do children of middle-class families. Throughout history this



is largely a response to the greater insecurities of daily living, and the greater possibility of failure in an educational and vocational world dominated by middle-class standards. To meet these middle-class standards we must have an integrated school system. Then the social adjustments can be made for all citizens under one integrated nation.

#### Implications for Education and Integration

In studying the history of integration and its implications for education, we find the most dangerous arguments arise when people say that this is not an educational problem, but a housing problem. What they mean is that they do not think the schools should be agencies for social change. The author finds it difficult to know what the schools should be, if not agencies of social change. Social change should be a paramount concern and goal of the schools now, as it has been in the past, for equality and social justice in America. However, we must recognize that the housing patterns are a result of the whole cycle that begins with poor education. Then, if we say wait for the solution to the housing problem, we will be delaying racial justice for a long time. Integrated education, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. saw it, will, in time, have a positive effect upon the housing patterns. In some cities they have physical integration at this point, and they are moving at a slow pace toward psychological integration. Achieving psychological integration, which is essentially a state of mind and the manifestations growing out of that state of mind, will take at least

as many years as have been consumed in physically desegregating all of the schools.

Before Blacks can assume their rightful place in a desegregated American culture, important changes in the ego structure of Black children must first take place. They must shed feelings of inferiority and self-derogation, acquire feelings of self-confidence and racial pride, and develop the personality traits necessary for implementing these aspirations. Changes in ego structure can be accomplished in two different ways. First, the caste status must be removed in education, housing, employment, religion and the exercise of civil rights for the Blacks. Second, through various measures instituted in the family, school and community, character structure levels of aspiration and standards of achievement can be altered in ways that will further enhance his self-esteem and make it possible for him to take advantage of new opportunities.

The most frequently expressed excuse for doing nothing about de facto segregation is to say that it is the housing segregation that has to be eliminated first. We must really move on both fronts. Otherwise we are going to wait an awfully long time for anything to happen. Another excuse that is often used is that only the liberal communities can do anything about de facto segregation. This is not true either. Dr. King coordinated these excuses through direct action of the nonviolent protest for equality and social justice in various movements of civil rights in this country. The author thinks that these nonviolent protests were an essential ingredient in the whole picture of desegregation. It can be noted that maybe a few communities

have achieved some degree of success with this whole problem without such activities but they must be few and far between.

Desegregation cannot quickly overcome various long-standing handicaps which Black children bring with them to school such as their cultural impoverishment, apathy toward learning, and their distrust of the majority group and their middle-class teachers. Nor can it compensate for oversized classes, inappropriate curriculums, inadequate counseling service, or poorly trained teachers. Yet it is an important first step in the restructuring of Black personality, since the school is the most logical social institution for effecting rapid change both in ego structure and in social status. A desegregated school offers the Black child his first taste of social equality and his first experience of first-class citizenship.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. King's many civil-rights movements have played an important role in the area of desegregated schools, and the need for him to initiate this has a lot of merit in moving toward the single nation concept. Through some of his civil-rights movements, schools have provided many basics for adapting the curriculum to the realities of the economy. His civil-rights movements have provided guides and planned tours of many facilities for Blacks to broaden the horizons of pupils, and to introduce them to the nature of the American economy. What has resulted from Dr. King's involvement?

1. Much closer cooperation has resulted between schools and other service agencies.

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<sup>27</sup>Clark, Dark Ghetto, p. 117.

2. Each institution has established a closer tie with its neighborhood.
3. Closer contacts among citizens and the many service agencies have ensued.
4. Some preventative educational programs have been launched.
5. Some sharing of data has been facilitated.
6. Opportunities have been open for observation of the communication with children and adults in a wide variety of situations.

Thus, the school may come to be thought of as a complex social institution, which may have the school building as the center, but which also has many vital parts, and various other buildings, industries, institutions and people who can make up a perfect integrated community for the best route to a quality education for the Blacks.

#### Integration, The Route to Quality Education

In order to examine the route to quality education through the history of the integration movements, the author will respond to three questions: (1) Is integration an acceptable concept? (2) Does it lead to quality education? (3) What are some circumstances whereby quality education can come about for both Black and White students?

The first question is easy to answer. According to Dr. King, integration is an acceptable concept. The second question also, is easy to answer. Dr. King indicated that integration can lead to quality education. The answer to the third question is more complex. First, we must define "integration" recognizing the fact that integration and desegregation are two quite different conditions.

Moreover, there are two distinct kinds of segregation. I am not referring to de jure and de facto, my reference is to both Black and White segregation.

Although we hear most about Black segregation, White segregation is perhaps equally evil, but for different reasons and with different results according to what Dr. King fought for in various civil rights movements. Elements of cultural deprivation are concomitants of both Black and White segregation. Desegregation is a physical condition which involves the mixing of people just physically, both Black and White. Any gathering can be desegregated at work. However, integration in the school setting is far more difficult to achieve. Integration in school is a state of mind. Desegregation must precede integration, but once desegregation is achieved, the pace toward integration cannot be slow.

Coleman sees that the burden and function of the public school have dramatically shifted in the past twenty years.<sup>28</sup> The concept of equality of educational opportunity was the responsibility of the child and his family to take advantage of free public resources for school integration. This responsibility has been completely reversed. Through Dr. King's civil rights movements the trends of the schools' passive role about quality education and free resources has changed. One author asserts that now:

The responsibility to create achievement lies with the educational institution, not the child. The difference

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<sup>28</sup>James S. Coleman, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," Harvard Educational Review, XXXVIII, No. 1 (Winter, 1968), p. 7.

in achievement at grade 12 between the average Black and the average White is in effect, the degree of inequality of opportunity, and the reduction of that inequality is a responsibility of the school. This shift in responsibility follows logically from the shift of the concept of equality of educational opportunity from school resource inputs to effects on schools.<sup>29</sup>

Coleman further stated that:

. . . this does not imply that all students' achievement comes to be identical, but only that the averages for two population groups that begin at different levels come to be identical . . . These questions concern the relative intensity of two sets of influences; those which are alike for the groups, principally the school, and those which are different, such as those in the home or neighborhood. . . . The concept becomes one of degree of proximity to equality of opportunity. The proximity is determined, then, not merely by the equality of educational inputs, but by the intensity of the school's influences. That is equality of opportunity is not so much determined by equality of resource inputs but by the power of these resources in bringing about integrated quality educational programs for achievement.<sup>30</sup>

According to Coleman, school integration will not cause academic achievement to suffer. He states that:

If a White pupil from a home that is strongly and effectively supportive of education is put in a school where most pupils do not come from such a home, his achievement will be little different than if he were in a school composed of others like himself. But if a minority pupil from a home without much educational strength is put with schoolmates with strong educational backgrounds, his achievement is likely to increase.<sup>31</sup>

Racial integration, according to Moynihan would influence the social class status of educational achievement of the poor. Moynihan

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> Alfred Lightfoot, Inquiries into Social Foundations of Education (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1972), p. 296.

declared that:

Because race is the single most inclusive (although not of course, complete) determinant of class . . . I will argue that Coleman's data represents the most important demonstration of the absolute necessity of racial integration in education that has ever been assembled. He has shown that the achievement of lower class students is raised when they are included in a predominantly middle-class school, and that the corresponding achievement of the middle-class students are not thereby lowered . . . The evidence is that if we are going to produce equality of educational opportunity in the United States in this generation, we must do so by sending Black students and other minority students as well, to majority white schools.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, the Blacks by getting a good integrated education would get a better job, and this will for them mean more money to upgrade their living status and even be able to buy better property. Thus, it is important that we continue to push for integration in all cities and sections of cities. However, we recognize the fact that some segregation will continue to exist for a long time to come. Desegregation is an essential first step toward true integration. Then, true integration the author believes is the only way we can ever achieve that ultimate goal of one society, one nation, in which all people have free and unlimited access to the American dream.

Summarizing, Dr. King felt that through suffering and sacrificing one can appear uncommonly noble, gentle, and heroic. The education that Blacks received from the various civil rights movements enables one to feel that "we are after all the better men," "better" in moral and spiritual sense. This is to say that one may attain the highest possible potential of his human nature through an integrated

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<sup>32</sup>Daniel P. Moynihan, "Education and the Urban Poor," Lecture delivered to the Harvard Club of New York City, February, 1967.

education. His nonviolence movements represent a supreme effort to overcome the handicaps of centuries of not educating the Black students. The ongoing struggle that Dr. King was involved in has evidences of the democratic process of the American dream. In the Black's quest for equal educational opportunity for all under Dr. King's leadership did gain new avenues for the Black in today's society. The status of the Blacks has been improved in the economic and social world through an integrated educational process in America. In working to end discrimination and segregation, Dr. King moved with great vigor and decisiveness toward the goal of providing equality of educational opportunity for all the children both Black and White. Dr. King's civil rights movements provided an education for the Blacks that will speak well for itself in the future of nonviolent educational processes. These movements will go down in the History of American education as influencing factors that changed the education patterns and styles for the Blacks in this country.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Many things can be said in regard to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s thoughts on the Black's struggle for equality and social justice in the United States. We can see that the Black's struggle for equality and social justice in the country has given rise to a new theory to make it more successful and effective. This new theory stemmed from Dr. King's idea of non-violent, civil disobedience movements. Dr. King preached endlessly about non-violence. However, some of his protest movements often led to violence. Dr. King himself had been stabbed in the chest, physically attacked many times, his home had been bombed three times, and he had been pitched into jail many times. Dr. King's mail brought him a daily dosage of opinion in which he was by turn vilified and glorified. One letter stated that: "This isn't a threat but a promise--your head will be blown off as sure as Christ made green apples."<sup>1</sup> But another ecstatically calls him a "Moses sent to lead his people to the promised land of first class citizenship."<sup>2</sup> Dr. King asserts that:

. . . the word wait has been a tranquilizing Thalidomide, giving birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration. Only by following the cause of tender-heartedness can man matriculate into the university of eternal life. Segregation

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<sup>1</sup>"Man of the Year," Time (January 3, 1964), 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

is the adultery of an illicit intercourse between injustice and immorality, and it cannot be cured by the vaseline of gradualism.<sup>3</sup>

Few can explain the extraordinary King mystique. Yet Dr. King had an indescribable capacity for empathy that is the touchstone of leadership. By deed and by preachment, he stirred in his people a Christian forbearance that nourishes hope and smothers injustice. In other words, Dr. King articulated the longings, the hopes, the aspirations of his people in a most earnest and profound manner. Dr. King was a humble man, down to earth, honest. He proved his commitment through Christian ideas. Dr. King did seek to save the nation and its soul, not just the Blacks. This has provided the civil rights movements with a new impetus and carried them to new heights. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s theory has won for the people many victories in civil rights. It has helped to provide the Black movement for greater social justice and equality with its underpinning and justification. Finally, Dr. King's civil rights movements have helped to develop in the Blacks a new sense of dignity and personal worth.

The most striking aspect of the revolt, however, is the change in Blacks themselves under Dr. King's leadership. The "Invisible Man" has now become plainly visible in restaurants, boards of education, city commissions, civic committees, theaters and mixed social activities, as well as in some jobs. There has been a re-evaluation of the slave philosophy that permitted the Blacks to be satisfied with the leftovers at the back door rather than demand a full serving at the family dinner

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<sup>3</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 78 - 79.

table. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s civil rights movement developed in Blacks the feelings of self-respect. Blacks are more sophisticated now as a result of the various civil rights movements for social justice and equality in their struggle. Blacks have begun to think, to form positive opinions of themselves. There's none of that defeatism. The American Black has a different image of himself asserts Black psychiatrist J. Alfred Cannon. He states that:

We've got to look within ourselves for some of the answers. We must be able to identify with ourselves as Blacks. Most Blacks crimes of violence are directed against other Blacks; it's a way of expressing the Black's self-hatred. Non-violent demonstrations are a healthy way of channeling these feelings but they won't be effective unless the Black accepts his own identity.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, some Blacks once deliberately ignored their African beginnings and looked down on the Blacks of that continent. As for the various civil rights movements, Blacks now identify with Africa--though not to the point where they would repudiate their American loyalties--and take pride in the emergence of the new nation.

The marches made irreversible all that had gone before in the years of the Black revolution. In these years, the Blacks made more gains than they had achieved in any years since the end of the Civil War. A speedup in school integration in the South and the North brought the number of segregated school districts fewer in numbers. In many cities in the South public facilities--from swimming pools to restaurants--were integrated, and in scores of cities across the nation, leaders established biracial committees as a start toward resolving local

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<sup>4</sup>"Man of the Year," p. 26.

inequities. New job opportunities opened nearly everywhere, as the nation's businesses sent our calls for qualified Black help and found a shortage of Black help. - It was then that businessmen started training programs for unskilled Blacks. As a result of Dr. King's effort at social reform in the United States, Blacks have been helped to gain a higher personal image. Dr. King inspired the Black to take non-violent direct-action in behalf of his own social well-being.

Thus, he gave Blacks, through nonviolent crusades, a wholesome channel for the ventilation of suppressed rage. Also, Dr. King did rally to the Black cause White people of good will and moral conscience. Dr. King's nonviolent civil rights movements have forced the American churches to re-evaluate their earthly mission, and in so doing has been heralded by the nation's religious leaders as America's moral conscience, a man who has given new meaning to the American churches in today's society. The motives Dr. King appealed to are religion, patriotism, freedom, morality, anger, economic well-being, power, sympathy, preservation of the human race and personal comfort. These techniques, as Dr. King used them took the form of suggestion and togetherness that made his followers identify many problems that exist in today's communities.

Dr. King's ideas about non-violence and civil disobedience are very much similar to those that happened in the past as pointed out by our history. History has reflected the fact that they have always been used by a weak group, which had no hope of winning by violent means and always imbedded in a strong religious tradition. Dr. King admitted that it is the strong Black religious tradition which

has made his philosophy of nonviolence a living reality.<sup>5</sup> It was not until after the riots in the summer of 1964 that he realized that the entire Black community did not fully accept the philosophy of nonviolence.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the Blacks might have had a strong religious influence historically, but in some areas of the country it was no longer operative.

In the past no other Black has ever so captivated the consciences of Black and White Americans and of peoples around the world as had Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was the central figure in the Black struggle for equality in America, and his preachments of the great universal themes of liberty, justice and human dignity have touched the hearts and minds of men both Black and White throughout the world. In Dr. King's various civil rights movements, he unified the majority of America's Blacks into a force of direct social action to accomplish and achieve certain human rights for the Blacks in their struggle for social justice and equality in this country. When Dr. King told the Black people that they were worthy, that they were no longer afraid, that they had to stand up for justice, the people believed him, and the prophecy was fulfilled.

Dr. King did not create the Black revolution. This Black revolution had been fermenting for over three hundred years, starting when the first slaves arrived in 1619. Historical circumstances and the

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<sup>5</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Burning Truth in the South," The Progressive (May, 1960), 8.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., "Next Stop: The North," Saturday Review (November 13, 1965), pp. 35 - 105.

readiness of the Black people had created the Black revolution. However, Dr. King was selected to lead the formal beginning in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955. Dr. King pointed out early in his movement that:

The quality, not the longevity, of one's life is very important. If you are cut down in a movement that is designed to save the soul of a nation, then no other death could be more redemptive.<sup>7</sup>

It is with this inner strength, tenaciously rooted in Christian concepts, that Dr. King made himself the unchallenged voice of the Black people and the disquieting conscience of the Whites. That voice in turn has infused the Blacks themselves with the fiber that gives their revolution its true structure. Dr. King further asserts that:

. . . the words of an old Black slave preacher, who said "we ain't what we ought to be and we ain't what we want to be and we ain't what we're going to be. But thank God we ain't what we was."<sup>8</sup>

In other words, after 1963 with the help of Dr. King the Black will never again be where or what he was. Dr. King was regarded as an heroic figure of Messianic stature by most of America's twenty million Blacks. Dr. King is the one man whose civil rights leadership seems to overshadow all others.<sup>9</sup> Dr. King believed that non-violence was the weapon for the Black to gain social justice and equality. Dr. King,

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<sup>7</sup>"Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr.," Ebony (December, 1964), p. 173.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>"A Letter from the Publisher," Time (January 3, 1964), 11.

like Gandhi, has synthesized the two main elements in the history and tradition of nonviolence and civil disobedience, from a simple individual ethic to a mass political and social ethic. Dr. King used the various nonviolent movements to revolutionize American race relations. Then, we can clearly see that the evolution and history of nonviolence were some of the prime ideas that underline King's philosophical position. Also, we can see in the past history and tradition of nonviolence that the opponents of this doctrine, even when it was impractical and irrelevant to use, have adhered to it. Dr. King's opponents indicated to him that nonviolence is the only way to live.

The beginning point of Dr. King's philosophy is his faith in God and love. This is what to Dr. King held the universe together. Dr. King's entire philosophy is derived from his principle of spiritual unity. In other words, man being rooted in God, his growth and self-expression require him to know God and to hold to him in order to be nonviolent. As Dr. King sees it, the unity of all life, and self-expression consists in helping and serving all. Thus, God can be pursued only by nonviolent means. Dr. King insists that to achieve the greatest good for all, means must be as good as the end, and there should be no dual code of ethics for individual and group conduct. Also Dr. King asserts that one must be nonviolent because violence offends God, and is not good for all life. Then, violence is therefore immoral. Nonviolence means the highest possible love, agape, love even for evil-doers. He sought to conquer evil by truth, to resist physical force by soul-force, and to convert the evil-doer by undertaking suffering on oneself. Thus, Dr. King attempted to pursue God through nonviolent

means, and this effected and re-evaluated the values and established a life of inner harmony.

Nonviolence in its constructive as well as its cleansing aspects is the instrument of social progress in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy on civil rights movements. Constructive non-violence helps the moral strength of the people be developed, as Dr. King sees it, and disciplines them for the use of nonviolence as direct action. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. asserts nonviolent direct action is the sole technique of transforming the existing social order along moral lines, ones that will be stable and lasting. According to Dr. King, the basis of nonviolence being that all men have infinite moral worth and should be treated as ends in themselves and not as a means, nonviolence alone is the democratic technique of freedom which can lead to establishment of the beloved community.

Dr. King's life philosophy is an organic part of his philosophy of politics. For Dr. King the isolation of politics from moral principles is wrong and evil. The way Dr. King sees it, his method of nonviolent resistance was a great contribution to the philosophy and techniques of revolution. This is a way to restore morality to politics. Dr. King's attempts to show how a minority, within a democracy, one characterized by the magnanimity of the majority, can resist non-violently the immoral laws and unjust system and acquire a maximum result is due some consideration. This should not be passed off lightly. Dr. King's method of attacking the causes in society leaves many things unanswered and many things to be questioned. Dr. King's



nonviolent approach of attacking the causes of injustice, which are prevalent in our society has some merits as well as defects. Dr.

King asserts that:

The nonviolent approach provides an answer to the long debated question of gradualism versus immediacy. On the one hand it prevents one from falling into the sort of patience which is an excuse for do-nothingism and escapism, ending up in standstillism. On the other hand it saves one from the irresponsible words which estrange without reconciling and the hasty judgement which is blind to the necessities of social progress. It recognizes the need for moving toward the goal of justice with wise restraint and calm reasonableness. But it also recognizes the immorality of slowing up the move toward justice and capitulating to the guardians of an unjust status quo. It recognizes that social change cannot come overnight. But it causes one to work as if it were a possibility the next morning.<sup>10</sup>

One can see that Dr. King claims too much for the method. Thus, no one method can have such broad and widespread virtues. For some situations it may become gradualism and in others it may be used to call for freedom now. Dr. King's ideas on nonviolence were just another method to be used in a struggle for social justice and equality. In other words, nonviolence would cause less casualties than the violent force that Dr. King claimed as being the supreme virtue of the struggle. Nonviolence to Dr. King was an absolute precept of morality, also derived from the philosophical doctrine of the unity of being. Thus, the fundamental moral commandment is that men should realize their unity with all being, and in order to realize this unity, men must practice the virtues of love and understanding--of nonviolence.

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<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., Stride Toward Freedom (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 221.

Dr. King's nonviolent resistance was to all forms of racial injustice, including state and local laws and practices--even when this meant going to jail--imaginative, bold, constructive action to end the demoralization caused by the legacy of slavery and segregation, inferior schools, slums and second-class citizenship. Dr. King asserts that:

The nonviolent struggle, if conducted with the dignity and courage already shown by the people of Montgomery and the children of Little Rock, will in itself help end the demoralization; but a new frontal assault on the poverty, disease, and ignorance of a people too long ignored by America's conscience will make victory more certain.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, Dr. King inferred that we must work on two fronts. On one hand, we must continue to resist the system of segregation which is the basic cause for our lagging standards, and on the other hand we must work constructively to improve the standards themselves. There must be a rhythmic alternation between attacking the cause and healing the effects.

Under Dr. King the Blacks played an important role in American history as we can see from the beginning. Though cut off from many of the benefits of national and good life, under his leadership the Blacks have made significant contributions to the nation's growth and development. In attempting to overcome the handicaps of slavery and second-class citizenship, under Dr. King's nonviolent civil rights movements, Blacks have made some major contributions to our cultural heritage. Black life has reflected the nation's struggle to secure those rights and liberties which are a basic part of our heritage

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 224.

Dr. King, in leading the various nonviolent protests against social injustice and unbending segregationists, has helped the Black in America in a sense "the land of the free." Dr. King's nonviolent civil rights movements of the 1950's and 1960's are deeply rooted in the past of the Black struggle for equality and social justice. His nonviolence represents an outstanding effort to overcome the handicaps of years of slavery, oppression and brutality. Future historians will doubtlessly view the struggle that Dr. King was involved in as evidence of democratic progress. Dr. King's struggle sprang from his devotion to freedom our pluralistic society and the American way of life. The fight for equality and social justice was not fully achieved during Dr. King's life time, however, through his nonviolent movements will speak well for the future. Dr. King made it known that moral evils of racism have been recognized as part of our society's style and pattern of life. His civil rights movements focus on the many opportunities to undo earlier wrongs.

Dr. King's civil rights movements played a major role in public education and through his movements it has been indicated that integration in education is the only course which students can seek to achieve a single society rather than accepting the movement toward a dual society. Dr. King indicated that all school boards must accept the fact that the path toward integration is a hazardous trail to travel. He felt that integration represents a major break from the status quo that has existed for hundreds of years in various areas of the country.

For years, a policy of containment kept Black people in one area in many cities and towns. Frequently, barriers created by living patterns have hindered the process of integration. Dr. King understood that the living patterns of containment was used in some cases to preserve the status quo of segregated schools. He obviously did not fear changing the status quo. Many opponents of integration frequently opposed integrating as if the quality of their children's education would be diminished. They also asked if integrating will affect the children's habits, morals, language, and personal values.<sup>12</sup> Dr. King inferred that these questions represented a few of the fears that made the issue of desegregation such an important one in contemporary public education. Dr. King argued that an integrated public school system and a full integration program are essential for a good education for all American citizens. He felt that altering the prevailing pattern would require a certain amount of courage, perhaps even more than a simple determination to do the job without delay, using the skills and facilities already available. Desegregation is an essential first step toward true integration. True integration of education is the only way we can ever achieve that ultimate goal of one nation, one society, in which all people have free access to the American Dream.

Dr. King indicated that the children cannot wait for all their elders to overcome the bigotry and prejudice that we have in our society and public education. They are growing and learning now and now is the time to make it easy to understand justice and

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<sup>12</sup> Chapter I.

equality in this country. Dr. King inferred that what they learn, and whether they learn it together in classrooms where there is respect for and understanding of the differences among the family of man or separately fearing and distrusting each other will be the determining factors about the course of our nation. It can be noted that Blacks under Dr. King's leadership are receiving a better integrated education, better jobs, and these will mean more money to upgrade the Black's living status and will allow them an opportunity to buy better property.

In recent years a new philosophy has emerged in the civil rights movement. The new philosophy has been called by many "Black Power." The strategy of the new philosophy is that the Black should terminate his moral appeal for social justice and equality as Dr. King indicated in his nonviolent civil rights movement. This means social, economic, and even violent means to achieve his civil rights. The proponent of the new philosophy and strategy program were Stokley Carmichael, Rap Brown, and Floyd McKissock. They failed to formulate a coherent program for the new philosophy and concentrated mostly on defending and describing the program.

Dr. King, the major proponent of nonviolence did not allow the Black Power to change his thinking. Dr. King continued to reaffirm his belief and commitment to the moral appeal for social justice and equality in this country. The Blacks feel his moral appeal for human rights is unquestionably his greatest asset. Dr. King continued to denounce the violence associated with the "Black Power" slogan and called immediately for a return to the nonviolent approach as

the only possible means to change race relations for the better in this country. Then, we can show other countries that we have solved our racial problem, and the struggle for social justice and equality is over with in this country.

In closing this dissertation, the author would like to refer to, and somewhat extend an analogy that was once used by the late Walter White. Since the turn of the century, Dr. King has brought the football of civil rights around the opponent's twenty-five yard line. And now we are advancing the ball deep in opposition's territory. The problem for the next few years will be to get the ball across the goal line. Let's not fool ourselves, because this job will be difficult. The opposition will use all the power and force possible to prevent this. He will strengthen his line on every hand. But if we place a good leader in the backfield--like Dr. King--to call the signals and run the ball, and good followers on the line to make the way clear, the Blacks will be able to make moves that will stagger and astound the imagination of the opposition.

Some mistakes will be made. Yes, we might even fumble the ball, but, for Dr. King's sake, recover it! As Dr. King implied teamwork and unity are necessary for the winning of any game. The backfield leader must recognize that he needs the men on the line who must make the way clear for the players to move forward. The Blacks will have to do away with the small class systems that so easily separate us. Then as Dr. King indicated, the highest will not rise without the lowest. Therefore, let us get together and with

great team work in the next few years, we will be able to carry the football of civil rights across the goal line, and Dr. King's dream will be a reality in our today's society.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGY

- January 15, 1929 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. born, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Winter 1934 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. started to elementary school.
- April 1934 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. expelled for starting to school at the age of five years old.
- 1935 Dr. King enrolled in the Yonge Street School for the first two grades.
- 1937 Dr. King enrolled in the Howard School for the next four grades.
- 1941 Dr. King entered the Laboratory High School at Atlanta University.
- 1941 Dr. King attempted "suicide" by leaping from the second floor window after his grandmother's death.
- Fall 1942 Dr. King entered Booker T. Washington High School as a sophomore.
- June 1944 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his first trip north to work.
- September 1944 Dr. King was accepted at Morehouse College and he entered that same year on the Hutchins plan at the age of 15.
- 1947 Dr. King was ordained and named assistant pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church at the age of 17.
- June 1948 Dr. King graduated from Morehouse College where most of his grades were A's.
- September 1948 Dr. King matriculated at Crozer Theological Seminary on scholarship.
- June 1951 Dr. King received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Crozer as class valedictorian. He won a \$1,200 scholarship.



- September 1951 Dr. King entered Boston Univeristy to work on his Doctor of Philosophy Degree.
- June 18, 1953 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott werē married at Heiberger, Alabama.
- May 1954 Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.
- September 1954 Dr. King appointed pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.
- May 1955 Supreme Court ordered school integration "with all deliberate speed."
- June 1955 Dr. King was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Boston University.
- August 1955 Emmit Till, a 14 year old Chicago boy who was visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi, was kidnapped and lynched.
- November 17, 1955 Dr. King's daughter Yolanda Denise (Yoki) was born on the edge of racial crisis of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
- December 1955 Dr. King was selected to be the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
- January 1956 Dr. King's home was bombed.
- June 1956 The Federal Court ruled that racial segregation on Montgomery, Alabama city buses violated the constitution.
- November 1956 The Supreme Court upheld lower court decision which banned segregation on city buses in Montgomery, Alabama.
- December 20, 1956 Federal injunctions prohibiting segregation on the buses were served on city, state and bus company officials.
- December 20, 1956 At two mass meetings in Montgcmery, Alabama Blacks called off year-long bus boycott led by Dr. King.
- December 21, 1956 Montgomery, Alabama Buses were integrated.

- February 1957 Southern Christian Leadership Conference organized at a meeting in New Orleans with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as President.
- June 1957 Dr. King was awarded his first honorary degree.
- August 1957 Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1957. This was the first federal civil rights legislation since 1875.
- September 1957 Federal troops sent to Little Rock, Arkansas to prevent interference with school integration at Central High School.
- October 23, 1957 Dr. King's first son, Martin Luther King III (Marty) was born on the edge of a racial crisis of school integration by federal troops.
- June 1958 White House Conference between Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., A Phillip Randolph and Roy Wilkins with President Dwight D. Eisenhower on the Black's problem.
- September 1958 Dr. King was stabbed in the chest by insane Black woman while he was autographing his books in a Harlem department store.
- February 1959 Dr. King visited India, the land Gandhi helped free.
- June 1959 Prince Edward County, Virginia, Board of Education abandoned the public school system in an attempt to prevent school integration.
- January 1960 Dr. King moved his family to Atlanta, Georgia. There he assumed the Assistant Pastorsip of Ebenezer Baptist Church, his Father's church and S.C.L.C. headquarters.
- February 1, 1960 Four students from North Carolina A and T College started sit-in movement at Greensboro, North Carolina five and dime store.
- February 25, 1960 Nine students from Alabama State College staged the first sit-in in the Deep South at Montgomery, Alabama Courthouse.
- March 1, 1960 One thousand Alabama State students marched on state capitol and held a protest meeting.

- March 2, 1960 Alabama State Board of Education expelled nine Alabama State students for participating in sit-in demonstrations.
- March 22, 1960 Associated Press reported that more than 1,000 Blacks had been arrested in sit-in demonstrations.
- May 1960 President Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1960.
- October 1960 Dr. King was sentenced to four months of hard labor and no bail was allowed in Atlanta, Georgia for breaking a 12-month parole of driving in Georgia with an Alabama license and second case by taking part in a sit-in in an Atlanta department store.
- January 30, 1961 Dr. King's second son, Dexter, was born on the edge of a racial crisis "Jail--No Bail" campaign.
- May 4, 1961 "Freedom Riders" set out for a bus trip through the South.
- May 1961 "Freedom Riders" bombed and burned by segregationists outside Anniston, Alabama. Group was attacked in Montgomery and Birmingham.
- September 1961 Interstate Commerce Commission issued regulation prohibiting segregation on buses and in terminal facilities.
- December 1961 Dr. King, along with 700 demonstrators, were arrested in Albany, Georgia as a result of five mass marches on City Hall to protest segregation and discrimination.
- October 1962 James H. Meredith escorted by federal marshals to register at the University of Mississippi.
- March 28, 1963 Dr. King's second daughter Bernice Albertine (Bunny) was born on the edge of a racial crisis, the Birmingham demonstrations.
- April 1963 Dr. King opened anti-segregation campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. King, along with more than 2,000 demonstrators were arrested before the campaign ended.

- August 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others led more than 250,000 persons in a March on Washington, D.C.
- September 1963 Four Black girls killed in bombing of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.
- November 1963 John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, assassinated in Dallas, Texas.
- Winter and Spring 1964 Public school systems were boycotted in New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, Boston and Cleveland because of de facto segregation.
- Spring 1964 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led massive demonstrations in the oldest city in the United States, St. Augustine, Florida.
- July 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Bill with public accommodations and fair employment sections.
- August 1964 Bodies of three civil rights workers discovered on a farm near Philadelphia, Mississippi.
- December 1964 Dr. King awarded Nobel Peace Prize at a ceremony in Ohio.
- March 21, 1965 Dr. King led thousands of marchers in the first leg of five-day Selma to Montgomery march. Marchers were protected by federalized Alabama National Guardsmen and United States Army troops.
- August 1965 President signed the voting rights bill which suspended the literacy test.
- June 1966 Dr. King and others continued for James Meredith after he was wounded on a voter registration march from Memphis to Jackson. 30,000 attended the rally at Mississippi state capitol.
- March 4, 1968 Dr. King led a march in support of striking sanitation workers. This march ended in Race Riot and the National Guard was called up.
- April 4, 1968 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated by a sniper in Memphis, Tennessee.

April 6, 1968

President Lyndon B. Johnson declared this Sunday a national day of mourning and ordered all United States flags on government buildings in all United States territories and possessions to fly at half mast until Dr. King's interment.

April 9, 1968

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. interred after funeral services at Ebenezer Baptist Church and the Memorial services at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia. Over 300,000 persons marched behind the coffin of the slain leader which was carried through the streets of Atlanta, Georgia on a farm wagon pulled by two Georgia mules. Scores of national dignitaries attended the funeral of Dr. King.

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