

## **Three Great Lives Compared, Contrasted and Analyzed:**

### **Malcolm, Gandhi, and Martin**

The Memphis Civil Rights Museum, dedicated to the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., annexed a new feature—a section on Gandhi and non-violence. Although King was strongly influenced by Gandhi’s methods of nonviolence and non-cooperation, as a historian, I thought it odd that the museum would promote a King-Gandhi alliance when, in fact, these two men were politically opposed in many ways. As King once said, “Christ gave us the goal and Mahatma Gandhi the tactics.” On that score, Gandhi had more in common politically with Malcolm X than with Dr. King. A Malcolm X-Gandhi connection seems to me to be a natural connection. It has weight. Especially when we consider the fact that Dr. King was an integrationist and a political moderate.

Gandhi, on the other hand, was politically radical and an Indian Nationalist. Similarly, Malcolm X was both a political revolutionary and a Black Nationalist. In this essay I will examine the political similarities and differences of Gandhi and Malcolm X, and show how they influence the political ideology of Dr. King’s great work in the Civil Rights Movement. The article entitled *The Intellectual Development of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Influences and Commentaries* by David J. Garrow maintains that, “King was not a disciple of Gandhi. He was a disciple of Jesus Christ.” (Union Seminary Quarterly Review 18) The museum focuses on Gandhi’s non-violence strategy at the expense of his radical political views. “Relations between groups must therefore always be predominately political rather than ethical.” (11)

A political “trinity” exists: left, right, the middle. King was often criticized in private by colleagues for his moderate positions. He had a particular interest in Hegelian analysis which champions another trinity: thesis, synthesis and antitheses. Dr. King would almost always try to arrive at a synthesis, or bring concepts together, so that they lean neither too much to the right nor to the left. For example, “hospital food is very good” equals thesis. Antithesis? “Hospital food is extremely bad.” King would search for a synthesis: hospital food is neither good nor bad but rather, it is nutritious. King’s fundamental inclination was towards compromise.

Although Gandhi wanted to strike a balance with his opposition, he more often found himself in the position of extremist where British rule was concerned. Likewise, Malcolm X found himself advocating for total independence from western religious values. He wanted complete independence from white Americans and their oppressive culture against Black people. “...we were kidnapped and brought here out of the Muslim world. ...we were stripped of our language, stripped of our ability to speak our mother tongue, and it’s a crime today to have to admit that there are 20 million black people in this country who not only can’t speak their mother tongue, but don’t even know they ever had one. This points up the crime of how thoroughly and completely the black man in America has been robbed by the white man of his culture, of his identity, of his soul, of his self. And because he has been robbed of his self, he is trying to accept your self. Because he doesn’t know who he is, now he wants to be who you are. Because he doesn’t know what belongs to him, he is trying to lay claim to what belongs to you. You have brain-washed him and made him a monster. He is black on the outside, but you have made him white on the inside.” (Meier pg 393)

Both men's positions relative to British oppression of Indians and American oppression of Blacks were considered by the British and white Americans as extreme and often uncompromising. Gandhi wanted the British to leave India if they could not agree to become Indian in culture. He maintained, "I hold British rule to be a curse... My ambition is no less than to convert the British people through nonviolence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India..." (Erikson pg 444) When asked to define his program Gandhi said one word, "Non-cooperation." He knew that "Indians could not simultaneously oppose the government and work with it. To boycott British Exports was inadequate; they must boycott British schools, British courts, British jobs, British honors; they must non-co-operate... Non-co-operation was negative enough to be peaceful but positive enough to be effective. It entailed denial, renunciation, and self-discipline. It was training for self-rule." (Fisher pg 187) Hence, self-rule and political independence were the goals of Gandhi and Malcolm.

The dominant American white culture that made separate but equal national law painted Malcolm with the brush of separatism, negating the fact that it was white Americans who were the poster children for separatism, segregation, and the hatred of Black people. Malcolm was consistently characterized as a separatist and by implication hate-filled. It became the unofficial job of the American media to spin, politically, whatever Malcolm would say about himself, the Nation of Islam, Black Nationalists and the Black Panthers in the most negative light possible. This is a common tactic of the white American media: framing a vocal leader of color as a social or political pathology. In this, competitors join forces, aiming their artillery at a single target. This oftentimes serves to polarize the individual from both their race and white America.

This tactic worked, and organizations and movements – like the Nation of Islam, Black Nationalism, and Black Power, positive entities with roots grounded in Black progressive politics – were transformed in the public eye into menacing organizations whose primary goals called for the destruction and death of white America. When the issue is race relations, fear gets results. Clear sides are chosen. This lie was so thoroughly propagated that the Black elite began to side with white America in an effort to become mainstream. Others went along because they were often ignorant of the facts. Then there were those who believed it just because white people said so.

Simultaneously, King, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the NAACP and COFO were cast in the most positive political light although they were denied most of their moderate political requests in Alabama, and by the US government in general. When asked about his goals of separation, Malcolm responded beautifully: “A better word to use than separation is independence. This word separation is misused. The 13 colonies separated from England but they called it the Declaration of Independence; they don’t call it the Declaration of Separation, they call it the Declaration of Independence. When you’re independent of someone you can separate from them. If you can’t separate from them it means you’re not independent of them. (Breitman 60)

Gandhi agreed with Malcolm’s definition of independence. On the contrary, King and the integrationists never had political independence as their ultimate goal. This may have come as a surprise to some followers. “Furthermore, some blacks were not sure that integration into white society was the most appropriate goal of the civil rights movement or whether nonviolence was the right method for achieving that goal.” (Cone 29) Thurgood Marshall was certain that

integration was the path but when “asked if he supported the idea of nonviolent protest as exemplified by Mahatma Gandhi’s civil disobedience campaign against the British in India, Marshall said nonviolent protest movements did not interest him.” (Williams 142)

Educated leaders seem to represent a diversity of opinion on this issue. I feel strongly that when some of the masses claim they were fighting for their freedom, some thought that meant freedom or independence from white Americans in the way that Malcolm X meant. But, this fine-tuned and truncated definition of freedom emerges as I read volumes of literature written by intellectuals like Bayard Rustin, Walter White, Mary Ovington, Ralph Bunche and Dr. King. There is a conspiracy to make Blacks only Americans and to tie the Negro’s destiny to white America’s destiny. As a group, these thinkers denied Black Americans a heritage and genetic connection to Africa, while at the same time affirming American culture. The incendiary message is we are Americans to the exclusion of being African.

Unlike most of his fellow integrationists, King maintained that he was proud of his African heritage. Yet, later in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, he betrays this when he says, “The American Negro is not an African.” (53) If we were indeed Americans it begs the question, why did we have to struggle for our rights? King often lamented that he was tired of marching for rights that whites were born with. The people to whom we are inexplicitly tied to Africans, not white Americans. Thus, no matter how much King and the other integrationists tried to deny our otherness, white Americans did not accept us as *Americans*. The primary reason was that our African heritage was apparent on our black and brown faces. Malcolm was firm on this point. Whites did not hate us because we are Christians or Muslims. They hated us because we are Black. We are Americans by culture and biogenetically Africans.

There is no getting around our African heritage. Bill Cosby and other prominent Blacks may protest, but all the denial in the world cannot change the reality of our hybrid reality. Although seemingly well-intended in 1950, Walter White and the NAACP and their allies did African-Americans a disservice in an effort to make us only Americans.

Both the great Dr. Du Bois and the amazing Paul Robeson dissented with this position of disconnecting from Africa. Robeson affirmed that he wanted to be more African everyday. Du Bois gave up his American citizenship for African citizenship, and would ultimately die in Ghana where he was honored as an advisor to then-President Kwame Nkrumah. Du Bois stated to the world: "I never liked Walter White." I have not been able to discern whether disconnecting from Africa started out as an unconscious or conscious strategy, but the leaders of the movement came to identify the Negro as only American and our destiny as singularly linked to white America's.

There comes a time when every generation must re-examine the lives and ideas of its former heroes and heroines to ensure that those ideas rest on a continuum. A merging of previous ideas with current, relevant applications. In saying this I do not mean to diminish the contributions made by either Dr. King or Malcolm X, nor do I wish to deny them historical, cultural or social prestige. However, we must look at the whole. Believing that these men are our only and/or best thinkers is short-sighted and limiting. That they are better known is no yardstick for measuring their ideas as superior to other Black thinkers. Certainly they are two of Black America's most celebrated thinkers. However, we must remember that these great leaders are representations of the 1000s of other African-American thinkers who fought for the Black

liberation struggle in America. A key issue centers on thinkers who step forward and are supported when they do step forward.

The Black integrationist tradition is peopled with giants like the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, the titan intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois, the great institution builder and accommodationist, Booker T. Washington. What about the great Black women who fought for our freedom? Harriet Tubman had a will of steel leading Negroes north to freedom. Sojourner Truth predicted the Civil War when she told Frederick Douglass, “God is not dead,” as he despaired over the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Maria Stewart taught and lectured to the first integrated audiences. Finally, Dr. Anna Julia Cooper’s scholarship influenced the great Du Bois, proving that Negro men and women were worthy and intelligent human beings. It’s a reality that because we are alive, we credit our most recent dead with having brilliance, to the detriment of our ancestors long gone. That’s in part because we tend to falsely believe we are wiser than those who have died. By unilaterally declaring Dr. King and Malcolm X our best thinkers we do a form of unnecessary violence to our history. This is a European bias of categorizing and putting thinkers on a scale of who is the “best,” and dismissing all others. This is a trap we cannot afford. Best is always a relative concept. Let us begin to appreciate each individual for their contribution to our quilt of history, realizing that some will have larger roles than others. We have had many great leaders and we must use and rethink their ideas in light of the time in which we live. They have been comparable and sometimes superior to Dr. King’s ideology. Those of us who are historians have to be vigilant to remind our people of our illustrious history and that we have men and women who have been incredible thinkers and to only give credit to a few is a discredit

to our own historical past. Nonetheless, all parts of the quilt are necessary in order to understand and complete the whole.

Our quilting and building must never end. Each person must perform their role to the best of their ability so that one day our children will become a free and sovereign people, themselves adding to our historical quilt. We need contributors, not categories. Everyone wins when we have active contributors. We must see that there are only preferences. One may prefer the philosophy of Du Bois to Booker T. Washington, without denying that within certain contexts, Washington's philosophy had other applications. The marriage between context and content. We as a people must remain open-minded and not become absolutist to seeing ideas for what they are--- political--- to be used or not used according to our needs. We can then see both Martin and Malcolm as great thinkers, and situation determines whose ideas we use. We have access to a great well of thinkers and doers. Our platform is indeed broad, one that absorbs and includes Martin and Malcolm. We have their life stories--- they did not. We must draw strength from their work and lives as we continue to build future generations. The struggle rests on a continuum. For Blacks in America, there is no end.

Seeds symbolize beginnings. Dr. King had a beginning before achieving prominence. He gave an extemporaneous speech at the first mass meeting of the Montgomery protest, December 5, 1955:

First and foremost we are American citizens. We are here because of our love for democracy, because of our deep-seated belief that democracy transformed from thin paper to thick action is the greatest form of government on earth. There will be no crosses burned at any bus stops in Montgomery. There will be no white persons pulled out of their homes and taken out on some distant road and murdered. There will be nobody among us who will stand up and defy the Constitution of this nation... We are not

wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong, then the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong then the Constitution of the United States is wrong. If we are wrong God almighty is wrong. If we are wrong Jesus of Nazareth was merely a utopian dreamer and never came to earth. If we are wrong justice is a lie... We are here this evening because we are tired now but let us say that we are not here advocating violence. We have overcome that. I want it to be known throughout Montgomery and throughout this nation that we are Christian people. We believe in the Christian religion. We believe in the teachings of Jesus. The only weapon that we have in our hands this evening is the weapon of protest. This is the glory of America, with all of its faults... The great glory of American democracy is the right to protest for right. We are not afraid of what we are doing, because we are doing it within the law. There is never a time in our American democracy that we must ever think we're wrong when we protest... We must keep, and I want to stress this, in all our doings, in all of our deliberations... we must keep God in the forefront. Let us be Christian in all of our action. And I want to tell you this evening that it is not enough for us to talk about love. Love is one of the pinnacle parts of the Christian faith. There is another side called justice. And justice is really love in calculation. Justice is love correcting that which would work against love... Standing beside love is always just. And we are only using the tools of justice. Not only are we using the tools of persuasion but we've got to use the tools of coercion. Not only is this thing a process of education but it is also a process of legislation.... (14-15 usqr)

King gave this speech before ghost writers and other more politically-minded individuals began to give him a far more mature understanding of the political situation of Black people in America. This speech is also before he encountered some of the hard realities causing him to call for a restructuring of the American political and economic systems. It seems to be King's stance that love was his focal point, and that this love is rooted in Christian doctrine. However, Dr. James Cone maintains "that justice and not love was his major theme." (31 usqr) If Dr. Cone is correct then King's position appears more balanced.

King's over-emphasis on love is problematic to some white Christian theologians according to Reinhold Niebuhr, who critiqued King's "way of love" strategy. Love is a motive, not a method. Love must always be intent on justice, and the boycott is one of the methods of establishing justice. It is justice, rather than love, which one has to deal with conflicting wills and

interest. (Garrow 20) By using Christianity, King allows white America to see that he agrees with them, theologically, and that his theological base is Christian even though he may be interpreting Christianity differently. King's alternative interpretation of Christianity sets him up to be totally disillusioned with the white church and its leadership. His concept of love does not square with their interpretation of Christ. (Playboy 352) In short, he accepts their theological premise of the divinity of Jesus. However, he calls into question their interpretation of Jesus' theology of love, and some of the white clergy's anti-Christian behavior of supporting the violence and segregation of the members of their congregations.

The treatment of Black bus riders is a point of contention – going against Christian beliefs of treating others as you want to be treated. A clear indictment. King contrasts the differences in this new movement with white Christians' violent behavior of burning crosses and murdering people. There is no place for this egregious behavior in this new movement. King essentially agrees with white theology, white political philosophy, and, at this time, is not challenging capitalism. The primary difference between King and white theologians is that King's interpretation of theology is practiced and lived whereas the white's interpretation gave more lip service and was eschatology at best. He is as similar to white people as he can possibly be, relative to religion and philosophy. He is not yet identifying his deep theological difference in his interpretation of Christianity. Hence, his difference is primarily racial and not wholly philosophical. King's position is not only integrationist but it is also an assimilationist position. He wants the American system to work for him and other Blacks equally, as it does for whites. At this time, he believes this is possible in American democracy. Justice and fairness will

triumph because that is the American way. He is totally optimistic about the political future of Black America. In 1955 America, this is a naïve position at best.

There is no reference to Gandhi and nonviolence as political tactics at this stage. This relatively uncritical assessment of America aligns well with the ideas promoted by the NAACP and Walter White that were developed as propaganda to fight communism and project a positive image of race relations internationally. With this speech the American government and the educated elite knew they had a “responsible leader” at the helm of the movement. In other words, Dr. King was seen as safe.

Yet, safety was an illusion in 1960s America as each year passed. Dr. Robert Franklin wrote his important essay *An Ethic of Hope: The Moral Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Under the subtitle *Analysis of Race and Class* he reminds us that the mid-sixties was a turbulent and unstable time in African-American history. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, and the Voting Rights Act passed in 1965. Dr. King symbolized Black progressive thinking when he appeared on the cover of *Time*. They also voted him Man of the Year, and he received the Nobel Peace Prize. After years of protesting, collaborating with Congress, and negotiating with Presidents Kennedy and Johnson to enact civil rights legislation, King began to realize that such legislation did very little to improve the lives of abjectly poor African-Americans throughout the South. Bayard Rustin, more politically sophisticated and worldly than King, had for many years been trying to get King to broaden the issues to include economics and poverty. But his suggestions went largely ignored. Race had been the primary focus.

While King was awakening to the realization that these laws had very limited impact, Malcolm X was calling for a redefinition of the Civil Rights Movement. He ferociously argued that it was a “human rights struggle,” placing the argument in an international context rather than solely a national one. Malcolm wanted to bring America “Before the world court and accuse her of denying to Afro-American citizens their basic human and civil rights. While his plan was never realized, he won a symbolic victory by influencing King to redefine the scope and semantics of the Civil Rights Movement.” (Franklin/Union Seminary Quarterly Review Vol XL Number 4 1986 P. 44)

Dr. King continues to develop his ideas. At an SCLC staff retreat, he told participants the following:

I think it is necessary for us to realize that we have moved from the era of human rights [sic, civil rights]...when you deal with human rights, you are not dealing with something clearly defined in the Constitution. There are rights that are clearly defined by the mandates of a humanitarian concern...We are talking about a good, solid, well-paying job. We are talking about a good, sound, sanitary house. We are talking not merely talking about desegregated education, but we are talking about quality education. (44)

Frustrated with the civil rights bourgeois arm, King critiqued them harshly saying that they had avoided poor, grassroots communities. In addition, with this shift away from civil rights to human rights came a social consciousness regarding the economic aspects of poverty and liberation. He argued effectively that integration must be defined, “from an aesthetic, romantic goal to a power-sharing and economically just reality.” (45) Thus, with this shift to economic concerns, King began to see just how pervasive and deep America’s racial divide was and that the fight over economic entitlements is at the core of America and European civilizations.

In his classic work *The Souls of Black Folks*, Dr. Du Bois wondered aloud how socially elite Blacks could live in comfort and be silent when the masses were being trampled by the iron feet of injustice. He protested that the best of life is not simply to be enjoyed by the talented and gifted few, but rather by all of humanity. Numbers matter. Change and progress must signal a “we,” collective attitude and actions, not a “me” one centering on personal gains.

In a speech on Indian civilization, Gandhi warned India to be very careful in blindly believing that progress and civilization will take place in India because they imitated Europe. “We think that we shall be able to progress through the great discoveries that have been made in the continent of Europe. But, this is an illusion.” ... He continues. “That European civilization is Satanic we see for ourselves.” (Iyer 302-303) “...British rule cannot see its own Satanism...thanks to them, some of us are unable to see the chains of slavery which bind us.” (68) “For myself, I am an uncompromising enemy of the present-day civilization of Europe.” (277)

The term Satan, and its synonym, devil, have caused much ink to flow, especially when they are applied to European civilization and to Europeans themselves. It is rarely mentioned that Gandhi saw European civilization as the manifestation of evil and that he fought against it with his whole being. Compare this to how American whites demonized Malcolm X when he referred to their civilization and them as Satanic or as the devil. “The Hebrew word for Satan is HAS-SHATASN and it means simply ‘the adversary.’ An adversary is one that contends with, opposes or resists.” (Green 15) This definition places American whites in the position of legitimately being called Satanic or the devil. Only a people who are ahistorical can possibly argue that white people as a collective have not been the adversaries or enemies of African-American people.

When Malcolm X, being the Black Nationalist that he was, appropriately used the term devil, he was charged with being the devil himself by whites. Conversely, Gandhi, an Indian Nationalist, who also called European civilization satanic, is made into a modern-day saint by the press and other media outlets. This creates a distorted image favoring the politics of Gandhi over those of Malcolm X. What's wrong with this picture? Either Gandhi was the devil when he demonized European society and Malcolm X the saint for applying the term legitimately to American racist white behavior. It cannot be both.

Moreover, Malcolm X instructed Muslims, "Every white man in America, when he looks into a black man's eyes, should fall to his knees and say 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry—my kind has committed history's greatest crime against your kind; will you give me the chance to atone? But do you brothers and sisters expect any white man to do that? No, you *know* better! And why won't he do it? Because he *can't* do it. The white man *was created* a devil, to bring chaos upon this earth..." (Haley 204) Both Gandhi and Malcolm were nationalist—Gandhi, an Indian Nationalist, and Malcolm, a Black Nationalist. Take a look at Malcolm's definition of Black Nationalism: "So all we're saying to our people is to forget our religious differences. Forget all the differences that have been artificially created by the whites who have been over us, and try and work together in unity and harmony with the philosophy of black nationalism, which only means that we should control our own economy, our own politics, and our own society. Nothing is wrong with that. And then, after we control our society, we'll work with any segment of the white community towards building a better civilization. But we think that they should control theirs and we should control ours. Don't let us try and mix with each other because every time

that mixture takes place we always find the black man low man on the totem pole.” (Breitman 26-27)

Gandhi’s nationalism caused him and the Indian people to reject British government by waging a campaign of non-cooperation. He was in no sense ever passive and unconcerned about the mistreatment of the Indian people. Without guns and military training and infrastructure, Gandhi went to war with the idea of non-cooperation to save India. He maintained, “submission, therefore, to a state wholly or largely unjust is an immoral barter for liberty...Our Non-cooperation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our Non-cooperation is with the system the English have established with the material civilization and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak. Our Non-cooperation is a retirement within ourselves. Our Non-cooperation is a refusal to cooperate with the English administrators on their own terms...Civil Disobedience...becomes a sacred duty when the state has become lawless or, which is the same thing, corrupt. And a citizen who barter with such a state shares its corruption or lawlessness...In my humble opinion rejection is as much an ideal as the acceptance of a thing. It is as necessary to reject untruth as it is to accept truth...Non-cooperation is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation in evil. It is not so much British guns that are responsible for our subjection as our voluntary cooperation. It aims therefore not at destruction but at construction. It deals with causes rather than symptoms.”

Gandhi further contends that non-cooperation is the most powerful tool for creating positive world opinion. Cooperating with the British government did not allow the world to understand the distress of the Indian people. “Cooperating with British rule made it appear we were satisfied. Now, that we refuse to cooperate with the government that grinds our people into

the ground and humiliates us the world understands that we are unhappy people. The force that lies beneath this movement is non-violence. It is the voice of the suffering victims of a government gone mad.” (Fischer 165-167)

Public perceptions of Gandhi and Malcolm X represent the two poles of nationalism, just as William Lloyd Garrison and John Brown represented two poles of radical abolitionism. Garrison was for moral suasion; John Brown on the side of physical violence and revolution. Gandhi, on the side of moral suasion, also believed that Indians had to be able to be violent in order to be legitimately nonviolent. Malcolm X preferred nonviolence to physical violence, but would without hesitation defend himself and support bloody revolution, if necessary. The irony is that of these three world-class leaders, the only one to serve in the military was Gandhi, who is seen as nonviolent. Furthermore, at a time when Indians were experiencing physical oppression by the British, he actively recruited Indians to fight in the British War.

We must always remember the enlightened scholarship of Dr. Du Bois who warned us that no ideology is timeless and immutable. We must see clearly that the goals of Malcolm X were freedom and independence for Black people. Gandhi’s goals were freedom and independence for Indians. Malcolm and Gandhi had more in common because of their political ideology than did Gandhi and Dr. King – who chose Gandhi’s method of nonviolence over his radical political ideology. For the most part, King was a political moderate at the beginning of his public career. Only in the last several years of his life, with emphasis on the last three years, did he become a militant or an outright political revolutionary.

To this end, we need to reevaluate the idea of a King-Gandhi connection. In *Bearing the Cross* biographer David Garrow relates the story that SNCC's Diane Nash and SCLC's Jim Bevel proposed that, in answer to the 1963 Birmingham church bombing, the movement respond by taking mass direct action to a new level. Militant nonviolence by 1000s of protesters constructed to completely shut down Montgomery, Alabama. Protesters would throw themselves under the wheels of airplanes and trains. King thought Nash was joking. He laughed at the idea, and responded with, "Oh, Dianne, now wait, wait. Now let's think about this. But Nash was 'dead' serious." By contrast, "Malcolm X had approved of such proposed actions, declaring these tactics to be genuinely revolutionary." (Union Seminary 48) Certainly, like Malcolm X, Gandhi would have approved these militant nonviolent actions to shut down Alabama's capital.

Gandhi was ecstatic when the sentencing judge associated him with Tilak, India's most powerful militant nationalist. Note that Gandhi took pleasure in being classified with Tilak (who before his death in 1920 was the most powerful of India's militant nationalists and had once been sentenced to six years imprisonment in exile). "If the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I." Gandhi affirmed that it was "his proudest privilege and honour: to receive the same sentence as Tilak—a sentence he considered as light as any judge could impose on him." (Erikson 31)

The character of a Black leader who dares to fight the status quo is oftentimes questioned. Manipulated by those in power and the media to cast a dark cloud over their ideas and actions. There is an element in Malcolm's character that some Christians call righteous indignation, and what ahistorical and unsympathetic whites call unnecessary anger. In fact, Malcolm was called

the “angriest man in America,” and this is not a description he denied. Malcolm would use this anger to fuel his crushing critique of American racism and corrupt political practices. This was also the fuel that led him to discover his African roots. With this discovery, he fueled the arguments for Black Power, Black unity and Black pride. Equally, Gandhi used European oppression to fuel his arguments for Indians rediscovering their ancient culture and civilization, which ultimately led to Indian unity, pride and Indian Power. Combined, all ultimately caused the British to leave India. (Wolfenstein 24)

This element of anger seems to be absent in both King and Gandhi. But, in the final years of King’s career and life, he sometimes showed both his frustration and anger. Gandhi managed to contain whatever anger he may have had for the deplorable conditions under which millions of Indians suffered. He appears to have almost totally channeled his frustrations and energies into his noncooperative methods. Malcolm, however, is angry with a cause and he attacks any and all ideals, or people who appear to be against the liberation of Black people specifically, and brown people in general.

Malcolm was very good at this method of defense. But sometimes, although they were rare, Malcolm found himself apologizing for his position to someone he felt he may have been particularly unfair to. Malcolm’s rhetoric could seem harsh and uncompromising, but in reality Malcolm was most humane. Almost always reasonable and logical. Take for example, when Malcolm debated James Farmer on March 7, 1962, on the topic of integration versus separation. Malcolm maintained, “It is not a case of wanting integration or separation, it is a case of wanting freedom, justice, and equality. Now if certain groups think that through integration they are going to get freedom, justice, equality and human dignity, then well and good, we will go along

with the integrationists. But if integration is not going to return human dignity to dark mankind, then integration is not the solution to the problem. And oftentimes we make the mistake of confusing the objective with the means by which the objective is to be obtained.” (Meier, Rudwick and Broderick 390) Malcolm was clear, the objective was freedom.

For the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement, integration was the objective, not freedom. Malcolm was willing to deal with integration if it could achieve the ultimate goal of freedom for Blacks. This he admits. Yet, he doubts that integration will lead to freedom. Therefore, he argues that Black people should separate from America. As a caveat, we must remember that when Malcolm was fighting for and debating over Black rights he took no prisoners so sometimes he overstated the case. We should add an “if...then” clause to some of his statements. For instance, the above statement IF integration would yield us freedom then we will accept it. Thus making Malcolm an integrationist until the true freedom arrived which was his goal. Malcolm was no less sincere but he was at all times a reasonable and honest human being. Having conceded this point it must be admitted that, like far too many ministers, he could sometimes be self-righteous, judicious and simply wrong. He could proceed as if he had the very word or words from God. Plus, his judgments could be hard-line and callous.

Introspection and reflection served Malcolm well. He felt obligated to speak earnestly about his awareness of “sincere white people.” He said: “...I knew, better than most Negroes, how many truly wanted to see American racial problems solved. I knew that many whites were as frustrated as Negroes. I’ll bet I got fifty letters some days from white people. The white people in the audience would throng around me, asking me, after I had addressed them somewhere, ‘What can a sincere white person do?’ When I say that here now, it makes me think

about that little co-ed I told you about, the one who flew from her New England college down to New York and came up to me in the Nation of Islam's restaurant in Harlem, and I told her that there was 'nothing' she could do. I regret that I told her that. I wish that now I knew her name, or where I could telephone her, or write her, and tell her what I tell white people now when they present themselves as being sincere, and ask me, one way or another, the same thing that she asked. (Haley 375-376) Malcolm would tell them to combat racism actively, directly, among their own people in the white community. This was definitely a change in his ideology.

It is important to remember that Malcolm had to negotiate the world differently after his split with the Nation of Islam. The Nation was his economic base and without an economic base his earth had tilted. Although Malcolm was always growing like Gandhi until his death, he, like the mahatma, was extremely political and ultimately would reinvent himself in a positive way. When the question was posed to Gandhi by politicians—was he a saint or politician?—Gandhi answered the question directly. “The fact is that I am a politician trying my hardest to be a saint.” (Fisher 103) Gandhi remade himself by tapping into his inner resources. “Gandhi was a self-remade man and the transformation began in South Africa. It is not that he turned failure into success. Using the clay that was there he turned himself into another person. His was a remarkable case of second birth in one lifetime” (Fisher pg 40)

Regarding Malcolm's shift, he was certainly aware that the change in ideology would elevate his stature with whites and the civil rights elite. Thus, enhancing his opportunities, economically, and widening his once truncated racial perspective. (Haley 375-376) Both Malcolm and Martin were acutely aware of the American media and how it could create or damage a person's image. Although he sometimes agreed with the Civil Rights Movement,

Malcolm was still painted with the brush of being the devil. And, Gandhi, although he politically often agreed with Malcolm and the nationalists, was painted with the wider brush of sainthood.

This is very telling and also relevant as to how we currently perceive both men. Nonviolence is generally perceived in the Western media as a positive or a good thing. Nevertheless, America's military complex almost always takes a violent position. While white Americans strongly advocate a nonviolence position for Black people by over endorsing King. Few people judge America as a non-Christian state when in the third verse of *The Star Spangle Banner* of our national anthem it promotes war and imperialism when it says, "Then conquer if we must when our cause it is just and this be our motto in God is our trust." What is a just cause to wage war? And, whatever the cause for war God is made an accessory. But American never takes nonviolence into account when they are dealing with people of color and international problems where American white people almost always resort to violence while at the same time it advocates nonviolence for African Americans their former slaves. Similarly, Great Britain has been equally violent and expected Indians to be nonviolent and their making holy Gandhi's tactics of nonviolence help to keep brown people docile. Pakistan which was once a part of India has learned and now has nuclear capabilities. There is a clear pattern of advocating nonviolence for the oppressed while the historical and cultural oppressors and aggressors, i.e., the British and the American governments almost never take a nonviolent position themselves. Accordingly, they raise to cultural heroes and near sainthood people like Martin Luther King, Jr., who was a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, and Gandhi who according to Dr. Erikson, was nominated but never received the award. Nonviolence when used strategically can be a liberating force but generally it helps to ensure that a people be submissive. Why else would two of the most

aggressive nations in the world make cultural icons out of two people who are thought to be least violently aggressive? Could it be that these two national leaders make their people more vulnerable and easy targets? It cost America less to praise King and nonviolence than to be fair with African-Americans and other people of color. King had become aware how the America press was trying to use him and nonviolence against the masses by April 30, 1967 when he preached, "Why I Oppose the War in Vietnam" "he evoked applause when he noted the difference in the response of 'the press and the nation' to his calling for black nonviolence in the south and his plea for American nonviolence in Vietnam. With signs of anger in his voice, he said, "There is something strangely inconsistent about a nation and a press that will praise you when you say "be nonviolent toward Bull Connor and Jim Clark in Alabama, (virulent racists)" but will curse and damn you when say "be nonviolent toward little brown Vietnamese children." There's something wrong with that press," When we begin to look critically at nonviolence some of the critics of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement correctly reminded them that Black people had not been the violent ones and that white people were the aggressively violent people of the world. And, that it was the dominant whites who should be lectured, instructed, and taught to be nonviolent rather than focusing on the already vulnerable and oppressed Black and brown peoples. In fact, Dr. King agreed and stated in *Community and Chaos*, "As we have seen, the first public expression of disenchantment with nonviolence arose around the question of "self-defense." In a sense this is a false issue, for the right to defend one's home and one's person when attacked has been guaranteed through the ages by common law. In a nonviolent demonstration, however, self-defense must be approached from another perspective." (55) Clearly, King is pro self-defense and Malcolm X spoke only in terms of self-defense.

Nevertheless, the media downplays the fact that Malcolm spoke in constitutional terms of self-defense and almost never mentioned that King was equally pro self-defense. Thus, the media makes King and Malcolm seem to be opposed on the subject of self defense when in fact they were not. King makes a blazoned statement when he says, “probably the most destructive feature of Black Power is its unconscious and often conscious call for retaliatory violence...Both Floyd McKissick and Stokely Carmichael have declared themselves opponents of aggressive violence.” (King 54) This begs the question: Who then were these Black leaders who were advocating aggressive and retaliatory violence? Certainly it was not Malcolm X with his message of personal and community self-defense. Nor was it Stokely Carmichael who publically admitted that Malcolm was his role model, and King says, “not Floyd McKissick either.” Then he must be talking about the lunatic fringe which neither he nor Gandhi could control. It is an unfair assessment to require that the leaders of the Nationalist Movement do what the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement could not do and that is control the lunatic fringe. And, let us not forget that many of the Black Power Movement leaders had come directly from the Civil Rights Movement.

In fact, when the question was posed to King by *Playboy* shortly before his death on the subject of violence and revolution and its effectiveness when asked, “you categorically reject violence as a tactical technique for social change. Can it not be argued, however that violence, historically, has effected massive and sometimes constructive social change in some countries?” King readily responded, “I’d be the first to say that some historical victories have been won by violence; the U.S. Revolution is certainly one of the foremost. But the Negro revolution is seeking integration, not independence. Those fighting for independence have the purpose to

*drive out* the oppressors.” (Playboy 371) Here is the Achille’s heel then of the Civil Rights Movement as identified by its major leader shortly before his death. “Those fighting for independence have the purpose to drive out the oppressors” then the Civil rights Movement was not fighting for the independence of Black people. It was fighting for the right to live together with white people. But this has not been the historical purpose of Black resistance. There were in America millions of Negroes who disagreed with simply just integration and not freedom as the aim of Black folks as represented by the UNIA and Marcus Garvey, the Nation of Islam and other so-called radical groups and individuals, and even some more conservative Christians were seen by the larger society as demonic and radical, and influenced by Communism. King is representative of a highly educated and religious Black population and what would later become a substantial Black middle class which was then only beginning. King’s position on Malcolm is reflective of the misinformation that was being highly disseminated by both the major Black and white presses where he maintains, “I met Malcolm X once in Washington, but circumstances didn’t enable me to talk with him for more than a minute. He is very articulate, as you say, but I totally disagree with many of his political and philosophical views—at least insofar as I understand where he now stands. I don’t want to seem to sound self-righteous, or absolutist, or that I think I have the only truth, the only way. Maybe he *does* have some of the answers, I don’t know how he feels now, but I know that I have often wished that he would talk less of violence, because violence is not going to solve our problem. And in his litany of articulation the despair of the Negro without offering any positive, creative alternative, I feel that Malcolm has done himself and our people a great disservice. Fiery, demagogic oratory in black ghettos, urging Negroes to arm themselves and prepare to engage in violence, as he has done, can reap nothing

but grief.” (Playboy 371) Both Dr. King and Malcolm X occasionally found themselves pitted against the other. This is in part because the media’s demonization of Malcolm and the misinformation and propaganda that they were spreading against Malcolm versus the propaganda of sainthood that surrounded King led these two great leaders to sometimes see themselves as adversaries when in fact had they ever had more than one meeting they would have come to realize that they had far more in common than they may have first thought. They would have been able to work out any perceived or real differences for themselves and not critique each other from afar or through the filter of the white media who had neither of their best personal interest at heart nor held African American’s interest as a group. Dr. Cone is clear when he tells us that King consciously avoided Malcolm and it was Malcolm who eventually arranged their brief meeting in Washington. Malcolm’s goal was freedom and independence for Blacks as was Gandhi’s goal for India and the Indian people whereas King’s goal was integration and not independence but rather peaceful coexistence with whites. In this regard, the political goals of Gandhi and Malcolm X are parallel—not the political goals of King and Gandhi. This fact is often never mentioned and is obscured. This misrepresentation of Malcolm happens in the Black community as well as the white community. First, what are Black people reaping if not grief in the form of police brutality and American segregation? Malcolm never advocated aggressive or retaliatory violence. In fact, when King talks about aggressive violence he never mentions Malcolm. Malcolm X stated almost every time he explained his position that if American police will not or cannot protect the lives of Black Americans then it was the duty of Black Americans to protect their own lives. The second amendment to the constitution protects the rights of all people to bear arms. Nevertheless, when Malcolm advocates what every citizen

ought to know and what most white citizens practiced Malcolm is seen by King as doing Black Americans a disservice. Could it be that by King not emphasizing Black America's right to bear arms and defend itself against racist brutality he was doing Black America a disservice? King has acknowledged in *Community or Chaos* that Blacks have a right to defend themselves. Why then is Malcolm accused of doing a disservice when according to the Constitution all Americans have a right to protect themselves. King and Gandhi constantly emphasized suffering for the already suffering masses and that the poor and the oppressed needed to be prepared to die. (Erickson 434) "We will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. We will not hate you, but we cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws. Do to us what you will and we will still love you. Bomb our homes and threaten our children; send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our communities and drag us out on some wayside road, beating us and leaving us half dead, and we will still love you. But we will soon wear you down by our capacity to suffer. And in winning our freedom we will so appeal to your heart and conscience that we will win you in the process." (Cone 25) King went a step further to demand love for the oppressor. Could this not work to the benefit of the oppressor? It certainly could be the case when we consider what Dr. Kenneth B. Clark has to say on the matter, "on the surface, King's philosophy appears to reflect health and stability, while the black Nationalists betray pathology and instability. A deeper analysis, however, might reveal an unrealistic, if not pathological, basis in King's doctrine as well." (Clark 218) Why does the Nationalist position betray pathology and instability when white America continually showed hatred and rejection for Blacks? Is Dr. Clark simply perpetuating white propaganda against the Nationalist to gain mainstream acceptance? It has

been common knowledge since the time of Christ that people tend to love those who love them and hate those who hate them. Contrary to Dr. Clark's negative and wrong assessment the Nationalist's position to reject white people as a collective was natural and realistic as Jesus was aware of this ancient reality. But, the uniqueness of Christ and King was that they taught love of enemies which was in opposition to general wisdom and some critics might add to good common sense. Dr. Clark reveals the merit in the philosophy of the Nationalists by maintaining that "it is questionable whether masses of an oppressed group can in fact 'love' their oppressor. The natural reactions to injustice, oppression, and humiliation are bitterness and resentment. The form which such bitterness takes need not be overtly violent, but the corrosion of human spirit which is involved seems inevitable. It would appear, then, that any demand that a victim love his oppressor... imposes an additional and probably intolerable psychological burden." (Clark 218) Clark further argues the interpretation of King's philosophy of love for the oppressor must be understood in view of the strategic and Christian philosophical principals. A small educated elite might comprehend the full meaning of love one's enemies, but it is unlikely accepted and understood by the masses. "Their very attempt to cope with this type of philosophical abstraction in face of concrete injustices which dominate their daily lives can only lead to deep and disturbing conflicts and guilt. The Gandhian method of passive resistance is perhaps less crippling than a Christian adaptation that calls for feelings of love. It is more disturbing to reflect on the possibility that this aspect of Martin Luther King's philosophy has received such widespread and uncritical acceptance among moderate and liberal whites because it is less threatening and rejecting, making the guilt of whites easier to handle psychologically, and moreover not inconsistent with the stereotype of the Negro as a meek, long-suffering creature who prays for

deliverance but rarely acts decisively against injustice.” (Clark 218-219) With these insights, Dr. Clark proves himself part of the intellectual elite and his negative portrayal of the Nationalist position accords itself with the propaganda of the NAACP, the Urban League and CORE. In their efforts to defeat Communism and Black Nationalism which they equate to Black supremacy, their distortion of the Nationalist position undermines the positive work of these pro Black organizations. In fact, the basis of most of these groups was love of self and community. But, in their rush to be mainstream these groups of the American propaganda machine negate these basic facts and they are rarely mentioned. I have argued that Walter White in 1950 called a meeting to sell America to the international community and even to this day the American educated elite have followed a propaganda agenda which includes, but is not limited to some of the following precepts: American Negroes were only American and on this score separating them from Africans, thereby limiting Negro history and culture to America; the joining of the Negroes common destiny with that of white America; and a belief in American democracy with little or no regard for any other form of government. Dr. Kenneth B. Clark enumerates and elucidates for us several of the strategies that were used which had not been clearly codified: The strategy of prayer failed because it did not produce measurable results and personal solace was not enough. The strategy of isolation failed because the super wealthy Blacks chose to separate themselves and live in comfort irrespective of the poverty and poor conditions of Black people. The Strategy of accommodation failed because it tried to apply middle-class white values of Puritan ethic of saving money, proper sexual mores, and hard work to Negro’s own conception of these values. The strategy of despair failed because it requires one to adjust to hopelessness as a way to survive. The Strategy of alienation failed because it taught Negroes that

they should have a separate nation. The strategy of law and maneuver was successful because it built coalitions, promoted democracy and achieved significant gains by working in the system. The Strategy of direct encounter was successful because students and others dramatized National and state injustices. The Strategy of Truth was successful because it uses ideas and concepts to influence humans to change. (Clark 220-221) These were not all of the ingredients of the propaganda campaign, but they represent some of the most pronounced elements. When Malcolm X was asked, “What is your attitude toward Christian-Gandhian groups?” He replied, “Christian? Gandhian? I don’t go for anything that’s nonviolent and turn-the-other-cheekish. I don’t see how any revolution—I’ve never heard of a nonviolent revolution or a revolution that was brought about by turning the other cheek, and so I believe that it is a crime for anyone to teach a person who is being brutalized to continue to accept that brutality without doing something to defend himself. If this is what the Christian-Gandhian philosophy teaches, then it is criminal—a criminal philosophy.” (Breitman 8-9) However, Gandhi and King would use nonviolence in an usual way that would help the oppressed fight for themselves and because it had never been used before in history the way Gandhi was using it certainly was suspect. The end result however showed that nonviolence used collectively over time could ultimately achieve the goal of revolution. In this instance, Malcolm X did not understand how nonviolence could be used as a revolutionary tool. It must be understood that Gandhi’s nonviolent victory was a relatively new strategy in modern history and this victory came as a result of the Indians being in vast majority and non-cooperative versus American Negroes who were in the extreme minority and nonviolent. The victory of the Indians was not fully comprehended by the British and by even fewer white Americans. It becomes evident after careful research that Gandhi’s

willingness to use violence means that King himself did not totally understand the Gandhian nonviolence philosophy before his death. Therefore, Malcolm's and the general public's misunderstanding of the nonviolent strategy were reasonable. Nevertheless, "Malcolm came to realize that nonviolence could be used militantly and were essential aspects of mass struggle." (Carson 26) In fact, David J. Garrow in his paper *The Intellectual Development of Martin Luther King, Jr: Influences and Commentaries* debunks the idea that King accepted the precepts of Gandhian nonviolence as early as his second year at Crozer Seminary, and that King accepted it wholesale and very easily. This position is like the position taken by the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee where it takes for granted that King and Gandhi automatically go together because they both used nonviolence as a method of operation. Although, there is a base truth in the connection between King and Gandhi, it has become distorted, overemphasized and generally overstated. Some writers posit that November, 1949 was the banner year where King converted to Gandhian nonviolence after attending a lecture by popular pacifist, A. J. Muste. Garrow, contends, however, that Francis Stewart, a fellow Crozer student, later recalled, "King sure as hell wasn't any pacifist then." About one year later, King heard Howard University president Mordecai Johnson speak on how Gandhian nonviolence was revolutionizing Indian society. But on first exposure to Gandhi's writing, King was initially skeptical of the nonviolent method, and contrary to popular belief, so was Malcolm X and many in the general public. King would protest, "There must be some coercion to keep one man from injuring his fellows. An active stance, not a passive one, must be adopted in face of injustice." King felt strongly that Gandhi's method "Fail[ed] to recognize the sinfulness in man." Finally reflecting on his personal evolution seven long years later King maintained "When I was in theological school I thought the only way

we could solve our problem of segregation was an armed revolt.” (Garrow, *The Intellectual Development...*10) Most Americans were not college educated in 1957-58 and many if not most had not heard of Gandhi or nonviolence nor had they grappled intellectually with his method. It is relatively safe to say that many rejected it. The atmosphere in Montgomery targeted King and other protest leaders for violence and social harassment in order to curtail the Civil Rights Movement and keep the so-called Negroes segregated and in their subordinate place. King did not adopt a belief in pacifism, Gandhi, or nonviolence belied by the fact that he and Abernathy felt the need to visit the sheriff’s office to request gun permits, of course their applications were denied. King and his colleagues appealed to Alabama Governor James E. Folsom for the protection of the state where they maintained, “We have no confidence in the city police.” The governor’s response was that he would talk to the Montgomery County sheriff and King and his associates left. (Garrow, pg. 10) Several weeks later, Montgomery was visited by many pacifist political groups. Within these groups was Bayard Rustin, who would become a trusted adviser to King for several years, journalist and future friend William Worthy, and Glen Smiley, a Fellowship of Reconciliation staff member, and also a future advisor. These are some of the thinkers and activists who would debate with and tutor King in long sessions and conversations that would assist in his transformation into becoming America’s leading voice in the Gandhian nonviolent tradition. His transformation did not come without intense intellectual struggle where King admitted to his initial limited knowledge when Smiley queried him about his knowledge of Mahatma Gandhi where King said, “I will have to say that I know very little about the man.” So, Smiley fed him books on nonviolence to fill in the gaps in his basic knowledge and understanding. This aided King’s development into the vanguard of nonviolent advocate.

Therefore, the idea that some scholars and commentaries posit that King became an adherer to Gandhian nonviolence prior to the Spring of 1956 are wrong. ( Garrow, pg 11)

This idea that Gandhi and King shared of suffering and dying on the part of an already oppressed people is nearly pathological. Dr. Clark should have known this although he reluctantly broaches the issue and Dr. Clark like Eugene Wolfenstein share distorted views of Nationalism and pro black perspectives. Malcolm's position accords itself to self- defense when the Organization of Afro-American Unity's basic program states, "that when a racist attack has occurred and the United States government has shown itself unable and/or unwilling to bring to justice the racist oppressors, murderers, who kill innocent children and adults, the Organization of Afro-American Unity advocates that the Afro-American people ensure ourselves that justice is done—whatever the price and *by any means necessary.*" (Wolfenstein 324) Wolfenstein's commentary that Malcolm's position is retaliatory is simply ridiculous. This means that the second amendment of the constitution is activist and retaliatory which he does not mention, however, few people reason that the second amendment is activist or retaliatory. In his book, *The Victims of Democracy* Wolfenstein further victimizes the Nationalist perspective by consistently comparing Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association to the Klu Klux Klan. This comparison is fallacious like comparing apple and eggs or pecans and horses. Marcus Garvey's Nationalism can be seen as having come about in part due to the virulent racism of the American Supreme Court in their ruling Plessy vs. Ferguson which established segregation in America with all of its subsequent evils. Black organizations sprang into existence to teach an oppressed Black people self-love and equip them with the skills and information to survive in a hostile and violent environment dominated by a Klu Klux Klan

mentality. The Klan simply put was an aggressive and violent organization built on white supremacy and hate. It shared nothing in common with Black Nationalism and to suggest that it did by implication by repeatedly comparing the two organizations is wrong. Similarly, Dr. Kenneth Clark does the same when he maintains, “Christian tradition is the antitheses of the doctrine preached by the Black Nationalists.” (Clark 218) This is a complete distortion because some Christians like the honorable Mosiah Garvey were Black Nationalists—the two are not mutually exclusive and Clark should have known better. However, in order to please dominate white people and sell books Black scholars like Clark prostitute themselves to a corrupt white system that does not allow Black people to define themselves.

In fact, according to Mary Ovington in her book *Half a Man* published in 1911 argues that in the south Negroes were seen as subhuman while in the north Negroes were seen “to be half a man. A Negro is wholly a man only in Europe.” (3) Until 1838, Black people used African in the titles of most of their organizations suggesting very strongly that African Americans were still seeking connections with continental Africa. (15) In part, the name change from African to Colored had to do with the negative connotations and stigma that the term African presented because continental Africans had fought so gallantly to physically free themselves from slavery and to be an independent people. Subsequently, African-Americans like Gabriel Posser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner who promoted revolution and independence like their African ancestors were viewed negatively because of their desire for independence from white oppression.( Technically Turner, Prosser nor Vesey were not Americans since they all died before January,1865) King in *Community and Chaos* plays down the effectiveness of their revolts in accordance with the NAACP and their allies’ propaganda agenda to disconnect Black Americans from their African

culture and heritage of these revolutionary Africans as if they had been totally defeated. This was never the case. It is because of these revolutionaries that the Emancipation Proclamation was ultimately signed by Abraham Lincoln. Of course, this interpretation of history was not and is not a component of the Civil Rights Movement and because this interpretation of the historical facts was not honored among Blacks or whites, African-Americans have been convinced that physical revolution cannot serve a positive purpose. How then can whites have a revolution such as the American Revolution and King see positive results when they become independent from England? Is white violence the only violence that can have positive results? History informs us otherwise. For example, an incident happened in Mink Slide, a Black community in Columbia, Tennessee where they armed themselves and successfully defended their lives against mob violence of the police and the white community. “Some of these men who had fought for America is reported to have screamed, “we fought for freedom overseas and we’ll fight for it here.” “Raymond Lockridge [a Black visitor to Mink Slide] said, there “was blood running in the gutters... The paper said that white members of the potential lynch mob “can’t admit even to this day that it took a beating when colored [people] decided to protect themselves and prevent one of the most dastardly crimes known to mankind.” (Williams 134) It appears that the American media chose to obscure, and becomes politically silent when Blacks successfully defend themselves as a matter of course, thus, making nonviolence appear to be the only avenue open to Negroes. Could it be because positive commentary by the media regarding self-defense undermines the nonviolent strategy? Negroes exercising their constitutional rights of self-defense was unacceptable to white people and viewed as retaliatory violence and this ensures Blacks second class citizenship in America. And, the NAACP and its allies do not want to offend

the sensibilities of the white masses and as a result they compromise the constitutional rights of Blacks. This is pandering to vulgar racism. In this regard, Malcolm X and the Nationalists were willing to stand their political ground and place pressure on King and the Integrationists to acknowledge our right to self-defense.

As one philosopher commented, “the first casualty of war is truth.” This would become true in the war to integrate America. The propaganda that was started in 1950 by Walter White where he was careful to stick to the historical facts as a tool for propaganda but the American press, who was not committed to historical accuracy and was more concerned with a favorable image internationally had no such agreement and so the Negro elite took their cues from the dominant white media and not the historically correct Walter White. In King’s assessment of revolutions that had some positive affects he fails to mention the Haitian Revolution which gave African people independence from the French destroying Napoleon’s dream of an empire. Similarly, the Haitian Revolution sparked the desire in American Africans to fight for their freedom and independence. What has essentially happened is that the Civil Rights Movement has shifted the overall purpose of independence to coexistence which originally was not an issue. It was not only a point of issue white people would not have allowed it. They certified this in the ruling in 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson which maintains separate but equal. Dr. King and the Integrationists created a false history that the radical abolitionists and Africans were less effective than they actually were to create an environment of integration that have been neither sought by the first Africans nor desired by the American white people. This is a violence done to the memory and legacy of the continental Africans and African Americans who fought for our ultimate liberation and independence. It is necessary to realize that what King acknowledges in the white world war

and revolution as a positive can also be equally applied to the Haitian revolution and other acts of war committed by Blacks and other people of color for their independence.

It is important to mention here that war can be used for positive good although I consider war a negative. We have accepted Dr. King's position too uncritically as a group because white people or the dominate culture have promoted him and his leadership of the Civil Rights Movement. We must be mindful of the fact that these are the children of the same people who enslaved our ancestors for centuries. We must not accept uncritically the people who they currently promote. The Civil Rights Movement has become problematical in the sense that it is willing to honor some good that comes from white revolution and violence but it maintains boldly for African-Americans that it is nonviolence or nonexistence. According to John Hope Franklin, African-Americans have fought in every American war. Yet, we must practice non violence against whites in America. Is this really a reasonable position or is it a position of cowardice how is it that African-Americans can go to war—bleed, suffer and die for American causes and be the patriot and it becomes somehow problematic to bleed, suffer and die for our own causes. The illogic is apparent. It is true that President Johnson once reminded us of our small numbers and that we were a minority in America but Malcolm X reminded us that if we can fight in Viet Nam and the Chinese outnumbered us far more than whites why is it that we cannot fight in America for our own rights? The point here is I think we've been given a misinterpretation of reality. African- Americans exist everywhere in America and though we are outnumbered if we fight as a unit we can make a major difference in our liberation struggle. But we have been so propagandized with the campaign of the movement of nonviolence that we fail to realize that much of our social progress has come from violent efforts. Herbert Aptheker proves this by

documenting hundreds of little taught and unknown violent and revolutionary outbreaks by African-Americans. We have as a people have as much right to defend ourselves as the dominant culture has to defend itself and as the Constitution allows. Even Gandhi was forced to realize that violence has a place in the world. In fact, he advocated for Indians to go to war if they could not be completely nonviolent. He also realized that they had to have the ability to fight in order not to fight. In this regard, Gandhi said, (which incidentally caused him to have a nervous breakdown), “When friends told me here that passive resistance was taken up by the people as a weapon of the weak, I laughed at the libel, as I called it then. But they were right and I was wrong. With me alone and a few other coworkers it came out of our strength and was described as satyagraha, but with the majority it was purely and simply passive resistance that they resorted to because they were too weak to undertake methods of violence. This discovery was forced on me repeatedly in Kaira.” (Erikson 372) This is an important discovery that King never realized and that is *in order to be completely nonviolent one has to have the ability to be violent*. And because Blacks were in the minority King generally reasoned that Blacks had no other alternative given our small numbers, “even the extremist leaders who preach revolution are invariably unwilling to lead what they know would certainly end in bloody, chaotic and total defeat; for in the event of a violent revolution, we would be sorely outnumbered. And when it was all over, the Negro would face the same unchanged conditions, the same squalor and deprivation—the only difference being that this bitterness would be even more intense, his disenchantment even more abject. Thus, in purely practical as well as moral terms, the American Negro has no rational alternative to nonviolence.” (Playboy 371) If there is no rational alternative to nonviolence then King is not Gandhian in his nonviolent methods because African

Americans would have to have the ability to be violent in order to resist the urge towards violence to become truly nonviolent. Gandhi clarifies, “I have come to see, what I did not so clearly before, that there is nonviolence in violence. This is the big change which has come about. I have not fully realized the duty of restraining a drunkard from doing evil, of killing a dog in agony or one infected with rabies. In all these instances, violence is in fact nonviolence. Violence is a function of the body. *Brahmacharya* consists in refraining from sexual indulgence, but we do not bring up our children to be impotent. They will have observed *brahmacharya* only if though possessed of the highest virility they can master the physical urge. In the same way, our offspring must be strong in physique. If they cannot completely renounce the urge to violence, we may permit them to commit violence, to use their strength to fight and thus make them nonviolent.” (Erikson 374) Gandhi’s seemingly reversal in philosophy was so extreme that many Indians thought Gandhi was “out of his mind” to the point where he could not get a single recruit “to enlist in the British Army.” This caused Gandhi not to be able to write or walk for months that he would pass through the severest illness of his life because he was now advocating for Indians to join the British Army. (Erikson 371) “Today I find that everybody is desirous of killing but most are afraid of doing so or powerless to do so. Whatever is to be the result I feel certain that the power must be restored to India. The result may be carnage. Then India must go through it. Today’s condition is intolerable.” (Erikson 377) Essentially, here Gandhi is saying because the conditions created by the British government were so horrific that they would be permitted to kill in order to correct the condition which is tantamount to what Woodrow Wilson said about World War I—a war to end all wars in a word—violence to end all violence. One might say that the Indians were in the majority positions as it relates to numbers

however this has to do with philosophy and force of will. Black people should have the right to fight back irrespective of numbers and not be forever cosigned to nonviolence. King never understood this fine philosophical point which Gandhi, according to Erikson did. In this regard, we can show that violence does have some redeeming qualities. In March, 1991 Rodney Glen King was publically beaten and tortured by a group of Los Angeles police officers all caught on film. More than a year later, on April 29, 1992 all four officers were acquitted when the jury could not reach a verdict. The Black community exploded in anger and disbelief and given the injustice of the verdict a riot broke out. Conversely, Reginald Oliver Denny, a white 36 year old construction truck driver was attacked and beaten by a group of African Americans which was caught on film as a result of the King verdict. In August 1992 a trial was held. Two of the four officers in the King beating were found guilty and the other two were acquitted. King himself was eventually awarded 3.8 million dollars in a civil trial for injuries he sustained in the beating of 1991. Conclusion, if violence had not broken out all four officers would have gone unpunished. Although, Dr. King may not have liked it violence led to the conviction of two criminal cops and a near 4 million dollar award to Rodney King. Hence the lesson, violence can have some benefits relative to financial rewards and criminal convictions. The American government recognizes that if a person is defending their life he/she has the right to take another life and this is not considered to be murder or a crime but rather it is seen as justifiable homicide as was the recent verdict handed down in the Trayvon Martin case. (Higginbotham 238) Where African-Americans are concerned our first goal should be to seek peace and follow it and our second mission should be to defend ourselves by any means necessary. These are not new ideas nor did these ideas originate with Malcolm X. The great British political theorist Thomas

Hobbes (1588-1679) in his classic work written during the British Civil War (1642-1651), *The Leviathan* promoted similar ideas where he says, "...the first, and Fundamental Law of Nature; which is, *to seek Peace, and follow it.* The Second, the summe of the right of Nature; which is, *By all means we can, to defend ourselves.*" (190) Since these political ideas are not unique to Malcolm X or to me and as you can see these same ideas were promoted by Hobbes some three centuries prior to Malcolm X why do they only seem to become radical when employed by nonwhites.

We need a complete reevaluation of the political theory and thought of the Civil Rights Movement era especially as it relates to Malcolm X and Black Nationalism as compared to Gandhi and his Nationalism and nonviolence versus King, his method for nonviolence and his integrationist stance. It would become immediately apparent that Gandhi was far more politically radical than King and closely politically aligned with Malcolm X. Black Muslims capitalized on the fact that so little racial integration had occurred after the 1954 court decision. In fact, less than ten percent of southern schools had been integrated and Muslims drove home the point that the nation was dragging its feet primarily because white people did not want to be integrated with Black people. This worked to help put pressure on both the Integrationist and the government to step up their desegregation programs. Muslims like the communists were viewed as serious threats and the fact that the government had given them ammunition with their tardy progress toward integration helped increase the Muslim's recruitment programs which in turn caused the integrationist great distress. Moreover, the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), which was a local alliance of four civil-rights groups: SNCC, CORE, SCLC and the NAACP essentially developed a symbiotic relationship with the Nation of Islam. The Nationalist

became the Black counterpart to the Ku Klux Klan which they never were, but although this was a mischaracterization of the Nationalist position many believed it to be true. They would further use this position as a political leveraging tool for integrationists to insist that the white government cooperate with them or face alleged violence from the Muslim or Nationalist. This phantom violence which never had any bases in historical reality was unlike the copiously documented violence of the Ku Klux Klan. Malcolm's fiery rhetoric accused the moderates and the proponents of gradualism as being cowards. A combination of impatience and Malcolm's insistence on Negro political progress forced young Negro Americans to become more radical. SNCC and CORE would ultimately influence the politics of Dr. King.

During Walter White's trip to India he realized that America had a bad reputation because of the embarrassing questions he was asked on racism by the Indian media. Some of the white travelers in the group of 28 who made the world tour to Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia had an alarming wakeup call too when they arrived in India and they were forced to realize one) that American racism was known internationally; and 2) that they were a minority in millions of dark faces. (White 6-7) The brainchild of Walter White's embarrassment would be to host a conference at his Connecticut home in Breakneck Hill in September, 1950. At this meeting the idea of combating Communism with the America propaganda and facts would be discussed and the resolution would be to sell America to the world. He was a leader in selling the world the notion that white America was more democratic than it was and less racist in order to win a more favorable international political audience for Americans. To this end, he organized a meeting with Ralph Bunche, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dr. Louis T. Wright, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NAACP; Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander of a fleet in the Pacific during

World War II and many other world class leaders to speak positively about the progress of the NAACP in America. (White 22) In the forward to White's book, *How Far the Promised Land?* Bunche maintains, "of all races and creeds who realize that democracy to be true must be color-blind...and I believe it was soundly based—that the vast majority of Americans really believe in that democracy whose principles we profess and can therefore be arrayed against practices of racial injustice...[White's] task was through the NAACP and the media of mass communication—to arouse the American conscience to the crude and costly injustice in the treatment of its minority-group citizens, and to mobilize sentiment behind the elimination of all undemocratic practices and attitudes.... [White] was thoroughly conversant with the problems of human rights and freedoms, racial and religious intolerance, and colonialism all around the world. He was acutely sensitive to reactions abroad to American racial injustices, and even more so to American ineffectiveness in getting across to the world the true story of American racial relations." (x) Similarly, Thurgood Marshall, the lead legal counsel for the NAACP was busy strategizing to force confrontation to desegregate law schools. Marshall organized brainstorming sessions to integrate America legally. "Joining Marshall in his late-night strategy sessions were some of the top legal experts in the nation, including Erwin Griswold, the dean of Harvard Law School, as well as the deans of Pennsylvania, Columbia, and Yale law schools. They would debate the law over bottomless glasses of whisky before taking off at dawn. Constance Baker Motley, who was on the NAACP legal staff, said Marshall was able to draw these high-powered legal minds at no charge because of his magnetic personality." (Williams 176-178) So, contrary to popular belief, the Civil Rights Movement was well organized, strategized and planned. Little was left to fate. It should be mentioned that this is more than five years before Dr. King is

selected as the national spokesman for the Civil Rights Movement in Montgomery, Alabama. In short, African Americans were highly organized and thoughtful about the processes and strategies for liberation. In fact, Rosa Parks had been part of the planning and analyzing of Blacks for freedom. “Just before attending the workshop, Mrs. Parks on July 6, 1955 wrote Highlander’s Henry F. Shipherd that she was “hoping to make a contribution to the fulfillment of complete freedom for all people.” (Garrow 633) She was not simply a tired middle-aged woman who just decided not to move to the back of the bus on December 1, 1955 as we are traditionally taught. She was in fact a political radical who had been trying to get arrested. Dr. King would become the most prominent and best salesman for this packaged idea of America which included his famous *dream*. But, his dream was deeply rooted in the concepts of his forerunners in the integrationist movement. Bayer Rustin who was to be one of King’s closest associates and an advisor for seven years instructed him relative to his non-violence and Gandhian method. In fact, he and Glen Smiley essentially tutored King in Gandhian nonviolence. King was more a student of the theology of Jesus and the church where he advised love whereas Rustin being more politically astute and a socialist advised, “for such a coalition is not love but mutual interest. The way lies through nonviolence, integration, and coalition politics.” (Rustin xi) Walter White made a unique discovery in 1954 to this packaged ideal of America that King would use to the benefit of the Civil Rights Movement. “That force is the moral conscience of the predominantly evangelical Protestant South. The students of the social sciences, and particularly psychologists, have long recognized that the extreme sadism of lynching mobs and other perpetrators of violence against the Negro in the South revealed the subconscious torture of men and women who believed themselves to be devout Christians and whose consciences were

troubled by what they were doing to their Negro neighbors.” (White 62) Malcolm X realized very early that these ideas promoted by the NAACP and other nongovernmental groups were ideal at best and in some cases could be outright lies and not representative of the true state of Black America. In fact, Walter White says, “many of them [changes] have come about, not through, but in some cases even in spite of, official government action.” (White 18) In a word it was a propaganda battle and a Progress Report against the fascists and Communists who were using the facts of Negro oppression and segregation in America as a selling point to recruit Negro members. White’s plan was against communism and to disseminate positive and current information on the state of Negroes in America. White shared the political ideology of Dr. Ralph Bunche who “emphasized that the United States and its people are inextricably involved for all time in the struggle for the free association of free people and that this means not only mobilization of government and industry, but preparation of the people for the new role of world responsibility that has been thrust upon them.” (White 23) When Dr. Bunche and White tied the Negro’s destiny to that of white America’s they essentially untied the Negro’s genetic/biological connection with Africa and began effectively overemphasizing the Negro’s American culture downplaying the Negro’s physical connection to Africa thus forcing the Negro to be only American with little or no ties to the continent of Africa. This pro-American propaganda would be disseminated nationally and internationally. Negro scholars and writers would take their cues and began to disconnect American Negroes from Africa. White’s propaganda campaign would later be installed in the American hierarchy. Malcolm X would see the fallacy in this disconnection and fought to reconnect the American Negro to Africa. It is a classic statement of Malcolm X that when Negroes would emphatically state that they had left nothing in Africa

Malcolm X would sarcastically retort, “why you left your mind in Africa!” effectively reconnecting the Negro to his genetic heritage.

The Russians, the Chinese, the Nazis, the Koreans and the Japanese in Guam were also using America’s mistreatment of Blacks as a tool to recruit Blacks into the Communist Party.

Although the campaign had very little effect it did gain a small following and Walter White did not want that following to become larger. “The field was being left clear for anti-American critics and propagandists. For generations the attitude of smug and unrealistic Americans—that the United States could exist regardless of what happened to the rest of the world—had bred an indifference which at times bordered on contempt for what other peoples might think of Americans.” (White 19) White continually emphasized the positive progress being made by Negroes. He insisted that America democracy allowed even Blacks to protest for civil rights and the abolition of the color line which was in fact a testament to America’s greatness. (White 7)

Although there was much truth in some of the propaganda relative to the barbaric treatment of Black Americans at the hands of the white American government, when Walter White asked a soldier who had been captured during the Korean War why he endured great suffering and torture but refused to join the Communist Party that soldier replied, essentially he was not going to trade one master for another in as much as Negroes were making some progress in America.

The corrective analysis of Malcolm X serve to temper and challenge some of the propaganda that Dr. King received from his many advisors in the NAACP, CORE and the many other alliances.

Malcolm was essentially the litmus test to what would and could be allowed to go forth.

Malcolm would not allow unsubstantiated and unrealistic positions about Black people to be sold

to America and the world wholesale without a rigorous challenge to their truths. Malcolm stood as a vanguard to the urban poor of the north as well as the south in his rigorous discourse with the integrationist. He and his followers kept Dr. King's feet to the proverbial fire of realism. Malcolm had come to the position that we needed allies. He felt that the SCLC and the NAACP were right in that we needed allies but Malcolm was clear, "whites can help us, but they can't join us. There can be no black-white unity until there is first some black unity. There can be no worker's solidarity until there is first some racial solidarity. We cannot think of uniting with others, until we have first united among ourselves." (Breitman 45)

Gandhi was far more radical politically than Malcolm X ever was. Malcolm X never advocated African-Americans to join any of the military forces. He never advocated that Blacks should participate in any war effort and he never recruited Blacks for the armed forces. On the other hand, Gandhi did all of these things on more than one occasion. Gandhi's active war participation and the recruitment of Indians to participate in the murder of others is almost always suppressed and not mentioned by historians and is essentially not a well known part of his biography. Could it be that Gandhi has been passed over for the Nobel Peace Prize posthumously by the Western world because of his military activity? Gandhi found British rule so intolerable that he advised killing the British to end it. But this does not square well with his nonviolent image so like with most things it's quietly permitted to exist with little or no recognition of it. "Gandhi who was light brown, often referred to himself as a "Black" man." (Fischer 86) Nevertheless, because of his Asian origin and his overall nonviolent philosophy, Gandhi is given diplomatic immunity that Malcolm X was not accorded as an American Black. The media, nationally and internationally has played a major role in creating the images

associated with how we view these three great lives: Malcolm, Gandhi and Martin and it is the media who determine saint or sinner. It becomes clear to any genuine scholar of nonviolence that King was not the scholar of Gandhian nonviolence; rather he was a scholar of Christian theology. King certainly did not understand Gandhian nonviolence when he advocated nonviolence or when he says that Negroes have no other alternative to violence. Malcolm X takes this philosophy one step further pushing the moral question, "As long as we dilly-dally, and try to appear more moral than anybody else by taking a beating without fighting back, why, people will continue to refer to us as very moral persons and very well-disciplined persons, but at the same time we'll be just as far back a hundred years from now as we are today. So I believe that fighting against those who fight against us is the best course of action in any situation. Not fighting against anybody, but fighting against anybody who fights against us." (Breitman 180)

Gandhi lived long enough to realize the flaw in his nonviolent philosophy. King did not. Gandhi talks about the contradiction inherent in his advocating that Indians join the military when he says, "It is a difficult thing to teach them to defend themselves and yet not be overbearing. Till now, we used to teach them not to fight back if anyone beat them. Can we go on doing so now? What will be the effect of such teaching on a child: Will he, in his youth, be a forgiving or a timid man? My powers of thinking fail me. Use yours. This new aspect of nonviolence which has revealed itself to me has enmeshed me in no end of problems. I have not found one master-key for all the riddles, but it must be found." (Erickson 376) Gandhi admits that he does not have the solution to all problems facing Indian people and so he is open to ideas and concepts he was once closed to including the idea of violence. King too admitted that he did not have all of the answers facing Negroes when he acknowledged that maybe Malcolm X "had

some of the answers.” In this regard, Malcolm must be reconsidered. He was a Muslim minister, a man of God, no less than the right Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or the sainted Gandhi. We must accept Malcolm’s answer when he is asked, “Is it true, as is often said, that you favor violence?” “I don’t favor violence. If we could bring about recognition and respect of our people by peaceful means, well and good. Everybody would like to reach his objectives peacefully. But I’m also a realist. The only people in this country who are asked to be nonviolent are black people. I’ve never heard anybody go to the Ku Klux Klan and teach them nonviolence, or to the Birch society and other right-wing elements. Nonviolence is only preached to black Americans and I don’t go along with anyone who wants to teach our people nonviolence until someone at the same time is teaching our enemy to be nonviolent. I believe we should protect ourselves by any means necessary when we are attacked by racists.” (Breitman 160)

“Somebody’s got nerve enough, some whites have the audacity, to refer to me as a hate teacher. If I’m teaching someone to hate, I’m teaching them to hate the Ku Klux Klan. ....Why, Uncle Sam is a master hate-teacher, so much so that he makes someone think he’s teaching law when he’s teaching hate. When you’ve made a man hate himself, you’ve really got it and gone.”

(Breitman 181) Malcolm X was no more a hate-teacher than was Gandhi. In fact, it could be argued that he taught it less because Gandhi called Indians into war to prove that they would be able to fight the British but because of the bias in the media both the press and television suppresses Gandhi’s true position on nonviolence. Malcolm like King and Gandhi was a non-violent man and a close reading of their writings and literature leads us to this conclusion. There are a few other fascinating facts: Gandhi is the only one of the three great men who promoted

and recruited for war. He is also the only one to serve in war. I think the most amazing fact is the pervasiveness of the media's influence on how we perceive these three great lives. The primary difference between Malcolm and Gandhi were their political methods for achieving independence and freedom. Whereas, method combined with the theology of loving one's enemy constituted the major difference between Malcolm and King's political philosophies. But all three agreed with self-defense but one would be led to think otherwise because of the media's proclivity to distort facts and focus on this aspect of Malcolm's philosophy as being the one who advocated the most physical and violent aggression. This is simply not true. It was in fact Gandhi who maintained that Indians had to be able to fight and kill the British in order to be properly non-violent. Malcolm never advocated that Black people should participate in any war and he never promoted retaliatory violence whereas Gandhi did. Gandhi maintained that Indians should have the ability to retaliate in violence in order to practice nonviolence. But having the ability to retaliate didn't mean that they should. King taught love of enemy whereas Gandhi didn't make love a necessity. Let us hasten to add when King began to talk about a revolution in American values he had caught up to the politics of both Gandhi and Malcolm. But King never understood that in order to be Gandhian and nonviolent that the African-American had to have the ability to be violent or the ability for self defense. The political philosophy of Malcolm's Black Nationalism was parallel to Gandhi's Indian Nationalism and both modified their political perspectives by the end of their respective lives. King on the other hand became more radical and a political revolutionary by the end of his life due in large part because of Malcolm's proclivity for the truth and especially his habit of telling the world that the press misrepresented his political position and ideology which helped to awaken King's consciousness to some of the

harsh realities of the poor. Malcolm was the pebble in the shoe of the NAACP and the propaganda machine because he dared to speak the unvarnished truth to the American government and to international communities who cared to listen and who had any interest in the relationship between Blacks and whites in America. His fiery oratory acted as hammer blows in influencing power elites to reshape and refocus on the devastating political, economic and sociological plight of the suffering masses. This King would not and could not ignore. Thus, when he publicly called for a revolution in American values and economic structure and began recruiting for the people's campaign for economic improvement, King had reached political maturity in his public service career, a place where Malcolm and Gandhi had already surpassed.

In sum, there is one final similarity in the politics of Gandhi and Malcolm. Gandhi was prohibited from disembarking from the ship he was travelling on when it reached South Africa where he was held at bay for 23 days under the guise of being quarantined for disease. The two charges brought against Gandhi claim that while in India he had indulged in unmerited condemnation of Natal, South African whites and that he was trying to swamp South Africa with Indians. Gandhi pleaded absolutely innocent to both charges. In his speech he deplored South African civilization and the whites who were the fruit of it and who championed it. In addition, he said Western civilization unlike Eastern civilization was predominately based on force.

Similarly, Malcolm was prohibited from entering France because the French government believed the speech he had given earlier was too violent. In response to this allegation, Malcolm responded, "I do not advocate violence, in fact the violence that exists in the United States is the violence that the Negro in America has been a victim of and I have never advocated our people going out and initiating any acts of aggression against whites indiscriminately." (Breitman 170)

Malcolm was accused of being a racist to which he replied, “I am not a racist in any way, shape or form, and I believe in taking an uncompromising stand against any forms of segregation and discrimination that are based on race. I, myself, do not judge a man by the color of his skin. The yardstick that I use to judge a man is his deeds, his behavior, his intentions. And the press has very skillfully projected me in the image of a racist simply because I take an uncompromising stand against the racism that exists in the United States. I think is an injustice, not only to me, but to the French public, or whatever public, that is being misled in this way by the press, especially at a time when efforts are being made by well-meaning people to bring the various racial sections together in trying to create an atmosphere of better understanding.” (Breitman 171) Both Malcolm and Gandhi have the dubious distinction of being barred from entering a country for their radical political views. King, on the other hand, was never prevented from entering any state for having a radical political perspective.

Finally, what King called “the black Zeitgeist” or the spirit of the times had caught up with him and forced him to reanalyze his thoughts about Black Power and its connection between continental Africans and the American Negro. Clearly his feelings had begun to deepen. His sense of identity was tied to his Black African brothers and to his brown and yellow hued brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean. When asked by Playboy, “Do you feel that the African nations, in turn, should involve themselves more actively in American Negro affairs?” King answered, “I do indeed. The world is now so small in terms of geographic proximity and mutual problems that no nation should stand idly by and watch another’s plight. I think that in every possible instance Africans should use the influence of their governments to make it clear that the struggle of their brothers in the U.S. is part of a world-wide struggle. In short, injustice

anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, for we are tied together in a garment of mutuality. What happens in Johannesburg affects Birmingham, however indirectly. We are descendants of the Africans. Our heritage is Africa. We should never seek to break ties, nor should the Africans.” (Playboy 370) Malcolm X had been a primary architect in this new spiritual urgency to claim power in America and King himself was being caught up in the wave. His opinions relative to continental Africans and international politics proves the influence that both Malcolm and the spirit of the times were having on King’s political transformation. In this regard King would move even closer to Malcolm’s position when he began to analyze integration from a political perspective:

What is necessary now is to see integration in political terms where there is sharing of power. When we see integration in political terms, then we recognize that there are times when we must see segregation as a temporary way-station to a truly integrated society. There are many Negroes who feel this; they do not see segregation as the ultimate goal. They do not see separation as the ultimate goal. They see it as a temporary way-station to put them into a bargaining position to get the ultimate goal, which is a truly integrated society where there is shared power.

I must honestly say that there are points at which I share this view. There are points at which I see the necessity for temporary segregation in order to get to the integrated society.” (Conservative Judaism 8)

There can be little doubt that Malcolm X, the Nationalists and SNCC and CORE youth had a positive effect on King’s political ideology. Although King, COFO, and some of his inside liberal advisors fought vigorously to show progress in American race relations which had been the brainchild of Walter White that progress had become too slow and too insufficient for King. In spite of his differences with the Nationalists he was forced to yield to the accuracy of many of their political, economic, and cultural positions which ultimately led to his call for temporary segregation as a way-station to ultimate integration. To suggest segregation of any kind was a

Nationalist position and it was anti-Christian position because King had said earlier that, “there is nothing in Christianity, nor in the Bible, that justifies racial segregation.” (Playboy 370)

Similarly, Malcolm had been willing to accept integration as a “way-station” to the ultimate goal of freedom. With the realization that Malcolm X and the Nationalist had a positive influence on Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement although they were portrayed negatively. And that Gandhi was infinitely more radical than he has been traditionally portrayed. Malcolm was more reasonable than he has been portrayed. The media leaves Dr. King in 1963 at the March on Washington with his I Have A Dream Speech negating the fact that he lived until 1968 moving further to the left politically in the last five years of his life where he had moved politically to the point of near Nationalism far beyond his integrationist dream.

It has been fifty years since the March on Washington in August of 1963. It is time for us to reevaluated the three great lives of Malcolm, Gandhi, and King to see them all again for the first time

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