

Black studies 1019--
opinion paper--
choosing two topics
and describing their
ideas...



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BLS 1019 Introduction to Black Studies - Opinion Paper #4 Marcus Garvey's calls for a " Back to Africa" movement inspired Malcolm X to embrace Islam and traditional African cultural heritage as a solution to the repression and hatred of white America, whereas the Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi was the key which opened the true nature of Agape, Divine or Universal Love, to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. which inspired his ministry. The influence of the " Back to Africa" movement of Marcus Garvey is central to the thinking of Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party, just as pacifism and non-violence are to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he develops them from Gandhi's influence. The influence of Marcus Garvey on Malcolm X can be seen when he states: " The American black man should be focusing his every effort toward building his own businesses, and decent homes for himself. As other ethnic groups have done, let the black people, wherever possible, patronize their own kind, and start in those ways to build up the black race's ability to do for itself. That's the only way the American black man is ever going to get respect. One thing the white man never can give the black man is self-respect! The black man never can be become independent and recognized as a human being who is truly equal with other human beings until he has what they have, and until he is doing for himself what others are doing for themselves. The black man in the ghettos, for instance, has to start self-correcting his own material, moral and spiritual defects and evils. The black man needs to start his own program to get rid of drunkenness, drug addiction, prostitution. The black man in America has to lift up his own sense of values." (Spartacus, 2011) Marcus Garvey led the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), which he founded in Jamaica in

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1914, into a worldwide movement that taught a doctrine of self-empowerment, autonomy, and African racial identity to blacks who were still suffering the legacy effects of slavery and racism. Garvey published his views in a newspaper known as Negro World, and Malcolm X relates in his autobiography that his family was influenced by Garvey's teaching in America. Garvey's "Back to Africa" slogan referenced the great cultural history of the African continent and led to his conversion to Islam. Malcolm X relates the experience of his mother being targeted by the KKK because of her association with Marcus Garvey and UNIA on many occasions, and it is these physical attacks on his personal family in many ways that strengthens his resolve to seek arms to protect African-Americans against police repression and racial gangs like the KKK. This leads to the formation of the Black Panther People's Party in the 1960's and to Malcolm X being a mainstream advocate of armed struggle for blacks to seek liberation. Mahatma Gandhi's path was diametrically opposed to any type of violence, even within the anti-imperial struggle and foreign armies. Gandhi led the Satyagraha movement in India and South Africa, building an anti-colonial, liberation theology from tenets that included Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and other world religions, as well as the teachings of Thoreau on civil disobedience. Satyagraha or "Soul Force" was the name of his non-violent social philosophy that sought liberation of the individual and society through the power of divine love. Gandhi and MLK both studied the teachings of Jesus deeply on non-violence, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made a pilgrimage to India in 1959 to seek out Gandhi's heritage and legacy. King's impression with Gandhi and non-violence is so strong that the theme dominates his life's

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work and writings, in a manner similar to the effect that Marcus Garvey had on Malcolm X, though Malcolm X found his spiritual guide in Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. Martin Luther King writes of the powerful influence of Gandhi and India in "Pilgrimage to Non-Violence" (1959), where he states: "I left India more convinced than ever before that nonviolent resistance was the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. It was a marvelous thing to see the amazing results of a nonviolent campaign. India won her independence, but without violence on the part of Indians. The aftermath of hatred and bitterness that usually follows a violent campaign was found nowhere in India. The way of acquiescence leads to moral and spiritual suicide. The way of violence leads to bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers. But the way of nonviolence leads to redemption and the creation of the beloved community. I returned to America with a greater determination to achieve freedom for my people through nonviolent means. As a result of my visit to India, my understanding of nonviolence became greater and my commitment deeper." (Stanford, 2011) King saw in Gandhi a social movement that was identical with the message of non-violence as taught in the New Testament, and used Gandhi's teachings to build a social movement for the recognition of civil rights in America for black people in the 1960s. Historically, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is recognized as a Nobel Peace Prize winner because of the importance of his life and message, whereas the refusal of Malcolm X to refuse violence ideologically, especially in defense of his own family and people against racists, places him more ideologically aligned with the Marxists in Cuba, South America, and other

countries where the State was overthrown through a popular, violent revolution. These two approaches defined the path by which African Americans sought the recognition of their civil, political, and human rights in America in the 1960s. Sources Cited: King, Martin Luther Jr.. " Chapter 13: Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., The Estate of Martin Luther King, Jr., Stanford, The King Center, 2011. Web. 12 April 2011. < http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/publications/autobiography/chp_13.htm > X, Malcolm. Biography - Malcolm X. Spartacus Educational, 2011. Web. 12 April 2011.