

The trials and tribulations of martin luther king jr assignment

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Unit 5 Project Kaplan University SS310-03 Exploring the 1960's March 25, 2010 Abstract This paper is meant to describe the trials and tribulations as well as the influences and effects that the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. had on the 1960's and beyond. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Martin Luther King was born on January 15, 1929 as Michael Luther King but changed his name to Martin in 1934. King was brought up in a morally wealthy family as his grandfather and father both served as pastors. He had a B. A. from Morehouse College and a B. D. (Bachelor of Divinity) from Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland, Pennsylvania.

He was elected to president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference which was an active leadership group for the civil rights movement. King provided many peaceful actions including a protest in Birmingham, Alabama that he called the ' coalition of conscience' and led the drive for African Americans as voters. His " I Have a Dream" speech was a display of peace in front of 250, 000 people in Washington, D. C. All of these events led to his receiving of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 at the age of thirty five and was the youngest to ever have received such an award. Politics King registered as a Republican in 1956.

His political ideologies stemmed from the fact that the Republicans of the time fought for civil rights and the Democrats, though they initially freed the slaves, contributed instead to the typical views of the civil rights movement and denied African Americans rights and privileges. The political ideologies of the Republican Party were the supporters of the anti-slavery laws, overall freedom and civil rights of the African Americans of the time. Unfortunately, the democrats of the time were against the civil rights at the start of the <https://assignbuster.com/the-trials-and-tribulations-of-martin-luther-king-jr-assignment/>

1860's and continued to be all the way through the 1960's. Even President John F.

Kennedy as a senator in 1957, voted against the civil rights act as well as Democratic Senator Al Gore Sr. It was the Republicans of the era that amended the constitution to grant African Americans the freedom they deserved (13th amendment) and citizenship (14th amendment) as well as the right to vote (15th amendment) after viscous battles with President Andrew Johnson following Lincoln's assassination. Even the republicans in the 1960's supported African American rights in law and government such as Republican Senator Everett Dirksen (Illinois), who wrote the language of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1968 Civil Rights Act.

It has been alleged that many of the supporters of the Ku Klux Klan in the 40's through the 60's were democrats and a famous one in Robert C. Byrd has been uncovered. A fact displayed and uncovered by Byrd's GOP opponent in 1952's general election campaign to the U. S. House of representatives with a letter Byrd had handwritten to (Samuel) Green, the KKK Imperial Wizard, recommending a friend as a Kleagle and urging promotion of the Klan throughout the country. The letter was dated 1946 — long after the time Byrd claimed he had lost interest in the Klan. The Klan is needed today as never before, and I am anxious to see its rebirth here in West Virginia," Byrd wrote, according to newspaper accounts of that period. (Pianin, 2005). So one can see, it would make sense for Martin Luther King to be a republican in the 1950's and 1960's and why he believed that that political party would be his choice to represent or back his cause. Ideologies

Personal ideologies consisted of the civil rights of the African Americans and moving them along in the social order of the country and transform the ideas and rights into something tangible.

Although the Emancipation Proclamation was set into motion by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, with the written words: “ that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “ are, and henceforward shall be free. ” the African American lack of freedom and unjust treatment was supremely evident, especially in the south. Martin Luther King was also a very religious and moral supporter and spoke to that end in his speeches. Whenever he spoke publically, he referenced God and the bible and promoted his beliefs in his peaceful teachings.

King is most famous for his “ I Have a Dream” speech performed on August 28, 1963 in Washington, DC. This speech delivered some extremely powerful messages to the nation and to the African American community in general. I personally find this passage to be especially powerful as it pulls words right from the Declaration of Independence and delivers them in a commanding context: “ I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “ We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal. (Martin Luther King, 1963) Assassination In Memphis, Tennessee, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on March 4, 1968 while on a balcony at the Lorraine Motel getting ready to march with the African American sanitation workers on a wage and working issues topic. King was only 39 years old, but had made such an impact on not only the African American community, but on America as well. James Earl Ray was

charged with the crime and was later sentenced to 99 years in the Tennessee state penitentiary.

Here are the ending words King used in a speech on April 3, 1968 at the Mason Temple one day prior to his assassination: But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And so I'm happy tonight; I'm not worried about anything; I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. Some have said that this was prophetic of the hours that followed and King somehow sensed his imminent danger. It has been theorized for many years about various conspiracies where Ray was not the only one involved in the assassination, but none of them have panned out.

In the accepted version of the assassination??? one which no credible historian, or federal or state investigation has disputed??? James Earl Ray, a career criminal and open racist, murdered Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968. Also, a federal investigation in 1977??? 1978 by the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded that although “there is likelihood” that Ray did not act alone in planning the assassination; he alone pulled the trigger (Brunner, n. d.).

So, as far as I can tell based on the evidence and current facts on the subject, the assassination of Martin Luther King was based solely on racism and not much else. James Earl Ray was simply a criminal and racist and nothing more. Sociological Impact of MLK's Assassination Obviously many people were upset and outraged over the assassination of Martin Luther King. This was especially so in the African American urban districts. This was

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evident with the riots in Chicago, Baltimore and Washington, DC. Over one hundred cities were experiencing riots and unsound behavior due to the news of King's untimely demise.

Ironically, this behavior is completely against what Martin Luther King stood for and the violence actually misrepresents King's ideologies completely. The period of national mourning following the assassination helped pave the way for the last major achievement of the civil rights era in the equal housing bill that was passed. Also, even though many black and white supporters grieved his passing, the rift between the races was slowly widening again, especially in light of the assassination of another African American leader in Malcolm X.

The late 1960's and early 1970's saw a rise in black power in the Black Panther Party. This group of individuals formed a progressive and aggressive organization that stood for civil rights in a violent way immediately following the death of Malcolm X and continuing into the late 1960's. It eventually was broken up due to the jailing and deaths of key members by the mid to late 1970's. After all of the violence and immediate emotions were sated, America started to understand King's teachings and grew to respect the ideals and morals of his ways.

As the ever-growing understanding of the civil rights movement moves along, hope that racism is buried moves along with it. Understanding that slavery and segregation in general are completely immoral and unethical, they also misrepresent the words and ideas brought forth in U. S.

Constitution and Declaration of Independence, upon which our country is

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built. This understanding is recognized more and more as each day passes and we realize that no form of slavery is tolerated and the injustices world-wide need to be recognized and dealt with; not ignored. After the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. the U. S. House of Representatives John Conyers initiated a bill to make King's birthday a national holiday and was first voted upon in 1979, failing to be passed as it tallied just five votes short. Shortly after in 1981, the Rally for Peace Conference was held and the largest petition to Congress in U. S. history was signed by over six million people to pass the bill. President Ronald Reagan had the pleasure of signing that bill on November 2, 1983. The bill was passed and observed for the first time on January 20, 1986. This was truly a triumph for the supporters, family and followers of the reverend King. References Harrison, Brigid C. , Dye, Thomas R. (2008). Power and Society. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning Farber, David (1994). The age of great dreams: America in the 1960's. New York, NY: Hill and Wang Fears, Darryl, (October 19, 2006). Controversial Ad Links MLK, GOP. Retrieved on March 25, 2010 from the website: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/18/AR2006101801754.html> Rice, Frances, (August 16, 2006). Why Martin Luther King Was Republican. Retrieved on March 25, 2010 from the website: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=16500> Brunner, Borgna (n. d.) King Assassination Conspiracy Theories. Retrieved on March 26, 2010 from the website: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/mlk1.html> From Nobel Lectures, Peace 1951-1970, Editor Frederick W. Haberman, Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1972 Pianin, Eric (June 19, 2005) A Senator's Shame. Retrieved on March 26, 2010 from the website: <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

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