

# Impact of martin luther king on civil rights assignment



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How much Impact did Martin Luther King have In changing civil rights for black Americans? Eyes on the Prize, American's Civil Rights years, 1954-1965, Juan Williams Eyes on the Prize, Juan Williams On the bus boycott " When the trial of the boycott leaders began in Alabama, the national press got its first good look at Martin Luther King Jr. , the first defendant. Four days later, King was found guilty. The sentence was a \$500 fine and court costs, or 386 days of hard labor. The judge explained that he had imposed this minimal penalty' because King had promoted non-violence.

King was released on bond; his indictment and invocation became front-page news across the nation" Eyes on the Prize, Juan Williams, peg 130 from an Interview with Diane Nash who led the campaign to desegregate the lunch counters of Nashville department stores ' I think it's really important that young people understand that the movement of the sixties was really a people's movement. The media and history seem to record it as Martin Luther King's movement, but young people just like them, their age, that formulated goals and strategies, and actually developed the movement. Peggy " Kennedy delivered a new civil rights bill to Congress on June 19. Stronger than the bill that had died in Congress at the beginning of the year, the new bill would outlaw segregation in all interstate public accommodations, allow the attorney general to initiate suits for school integration, and give the attorney general the important power to shut off funds to any federal programs in which discrimination occurred. It also contained a provision that helped ensure the right to vote by declaring that a person who had a sixth-grade education would be presumed to be literate.

SYNC, and other Civil rights groups had no intention of allowing this bill to die in Congress. To demonstrate the strength of public demand for this legislation, they would march on Washington. Peggy “ On February 4 the militant Black Muslim minister Malcolm X came to speak in Selma at the invitation of SYNC. At first, King's colleagues feared that the controversial leader might incite the local people and jeopardize King's control of the movement.

Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000 (Penguin, 2001) ‘ In some ways it was the obstinacy of the whites in Montgomery, not the deliberate planning of the blacks, that turned the boycott into an international cause célèbre. After all, blacks in Montgomery asked only for a fairer application of “ separate but equal,” not an end to segregation itself... In a similar way, Martin Luther King Jr. , only emerged as the symbol of the protest when whites began to persecute him. Whites calculated that by breaking King, they could break the boycott; instead they made

King a martyr, a hero, and the outstanding symbol of black resistance. ‘ (227-228) ‘ The sit-in movement made a massive dent in the structure of segregation. In the Deep South, crushed by violence and arrests, they failed to integrate lunch counters. But in the upper South, and in the “ rim South” states of Florida and Texas, they proved effective. The disruption caused by the sit-ins themselves, and the economic impact of consumer boycotts, hurt the dime stores: the profits of Woolworth, the main target, plummeted.

Downtown merchants as a group also suffered. The cash-register logic of the sit-ins proved hard to resist: on March 19, 1960, San Antonio, Texas, became

the first city in the South to desegregate its lunch counters; Nashville did so in May; by the end of the year, store owners in at least eighty towns and cities had agreed to serve blacks. ' (245) ' The force of the 1963 demonstrations so surprised and disturbed white Americans that the Kennedy administration decided to fundamentally revise its approach to the civil rights question.

The nonviolent revolt had riveted the attention of the nation onto the South, revealing the underlying ugliness of the Jim Crow South and embarrassing the United States in the eyes of the world. The government also worried that racial conflict and violence might engulf the entire nation. ' (279) William H. Chafe, Raymond Savings and Robert Sarasota (deeds), Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South (The New Press, 2001) Maim Young on the inequalities in segregated education: ' Lots of these youngsters now don't remember.

They really don't. You tell them things that happened, they just can't believe it. That's why they can't appreciate Martin Luther King because they don't know what happened. They really don't know what happened during those days. Hard to visualize it. ' (187) Charles Grafton: ' To challenge white people was just the wrong thing to do. You just automatically grow up inferior, and you had the feeling that white people were better than you... Most blacks in the South felt that way until the late fifties and sixties when Dr. [Martin Luther] King Or. Come along with his philosophy, and it started giving black people some hope that the way we were being treated wasn't right and this thing can change. Just some hope that we were waiting on. Whenever I would hear Dr. King talk, it seemed like he was touching me from the <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-martin-luther-king-on-civil-rights-assignment/>

inside. He could touch your feeling from the inside, things that you would want to say but you just didn't know how, things that were right and wrong but you kept inside of you because you didn't know how to express it. So he was a really good leader and a great man, and I think he done a wonderful job in what he done for our people as a whole. (8) Howell Rained, *My Soul is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered* (Penguin Books, 1977) Franklin McCain (involved in student sit-ins): We knew that probably the most powerful and potent weapon that people have literally no defense for is love, kindness. That is, whip the enemy with something that he doesn't understand. ' Rained: ' How much was the example of Dr. King and the Montgomery Bus Boycott on your mind in that regard? McCain: ' Not very much. The individual who had probably most influence on us was Gandhi, more than any single individual.

During the time that the Montgomery Bus Boycott was in effect, we were tots for the most part, and we barely heard of Martin Luther King. Yes, Martin Luther King's name was well-known when the sit-in movement was in effect, but to pick out Martin Luther King as a hero... I don't want you to misunderstand what I'm about to say: Yes, Martin Luther King was a hero... No, he was not the individual that we had most in mind when we started the sit-in movement. ' (79) Laurie Prescient (police chief of Albany Georgia in 1961): ' They came to Montgomery, and I was in Montgomery when they marched there...

I will never forget one day there I heard the clap, it sounded like thunder, and we looked up, and it was the sheriff's posse on those horses, and the sparks were flying' off of the shoes as they came down the street. And they

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went into the crowd with bull whips, they run up on the porches... Some of the horses were cut at, which I can't much blame the people. But this created that problem there, and, as I stated before, Dr. King, when he left defeated man. In my opinion, right or wrong, if Birmingham had reacted as Albany, Georgia did... Heed never got to Selma. Dr. King, through his efforts, was instrumental in passing the Public Accommodations [Act] but the people that were most responsible was " Bull" Connors and Sheriff Clark... ' (366) Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters The SCLC leaders were in a bind. They wanted a " people's movement," like SCLC itself, and yet without King, the Selma march had had little impact on the outside world, and without such impact it was nearly impossible to inspire more of Lullaby's ordinary people to take up the crusade.

What they needed was the use of King's influence without his suffocating glory, and it was all the more galling that they were obliged to ask King to reform himself accordingly - Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters, p. 614 As President Kennedy and the Attorney General had anxiously awaited the outcome of the showdown with Governor Wallace, a telegram came in from Martin Luther King on the " beastly conduct of law enforcement officers at Danville. " Asserting once again that " the Negroes' endurance may be at breaking point," King implored the Administration to seek a " Just and moral" solution....

Given his recent sensitivity to King's opinions, these urgings may have influenced President Kennedy's extraordinary decision to make... A civil rights address on national television. " Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters, p.

823 Professor Eleanor Holmes Norton, " reviewing Parting the Waters", in the <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-martin-luther-king-on-civil-rights-assignment/>

New York Times, November 27th 1988 [https://www. Anytime.](https://www.Anytime.Com/books/98/12/06/specials/branch-waters.HTML)

Com/books/98/12/06/specials/ branch-waters. HTML By the time Mr.. Branch left home to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1964, “ the people I met were already more interested in Vietnam. In his view, however, “ the civil rights movement was why they cared about Vietnam. ” It was King and others, he believes, who first opened the door for his generation to “ look at the world from a moral perspective. It occurred to me that the most fundamental political questions were, in fact, moral questions. ” It was the awareness of those moral questions that steered Mr.. Branch away from his premed major in college and toward political philosophy and an eventual writing career. In “ Parting the Waters” Mr..

Branch aims to re-create for others the same sense of King as a man of power and complexity that he experienced in his college years. “ King was considered passe by 1966, even before people like Stoutly Carmichael; he was considered almost an Uncle Tom. I knew there was something wrong with that attitude. If he was that shallow, then how did I get here? ’ The autobiography of Martin Luther King, JAR. Edited by Collarbone Carson, published in 1999 In 1960 an electrifying movement of Negro students shattered the placid surface of campuses and communities across the South.

The young students of the South, through sit-ins ND other demonstrations, gave America a glowing example of disciplined, dignified nonviolent action against the system of segregation. Though confronted in many places by hoodlums, police guns, tear gas, arrests, and Jail sentences, the students tenaciously continued to sit down and demand equal service at variety store lunch counters, and they extended their protest from city to city.

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Spontaneously born, but integration in hundreds of communities at the swiftest range of change in the civil rights movement up to that time.

This was the time of our greatest stress [when the children were used in Birmingham], and the courage and conviction of those students and adults made it our finest hour. We did not fight back, but we did not turn back. We did not give way to bitterness. Some few spectators, who had not been trained in the discipline of nonviolence, reacted to the brutality of the policemen by throwing rocks and bottles. But the demonstrators remained nonviolent. In the face of this resolution and bravery, the moral conscience of the nation was deeply stirred, and all over the country, our fight became the fight of decent Americans of all races and creeds.

Selma brought us a voting rights bill, and it also brought us the grand alliance of the children of light in this nation and made possible changes in our political and economic life heretofore undreamed of. With President Johnson, CLC viewed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as 'one of the most monumental laws in the history of American freedom'. We had a federal law which could be used, and use it we would. Where it fell short, we had our tradition of struggle and the method of nonviolent direct action, and these we would use.

Hodgkin, Goodbye (2009) Martin Luther King, Queries The speech was at once sermon and political argument. He was talking to several audiences at once. He was directly addressing the thousands who were there in front of him in Washington's Mall. Over their heads he was reaching out to southern blacks and northern whites, to the tens of millions of undecided white



Americans, willing to be persuaded that the time was ripe to end the embarrassing southern folkways of segregation, yet reluctant to be carried away on radical paths.

He was reaching out to the powerless in southern plantations and the angry in northern ghettos, and most of all to the powerful, only just beyond the reach of his voice a mile or so up the Mall on Capitol Hill. So he wove together different languages for different listeners. He borrowed the emotional power of the Old Testament with an echo of the stately music of Handel's Messiah. He also appealed to the sacred texts of the American secular religion, echoing the grand simplicities of Jefferson Declaration of Independence and Lincoln Gettysburg address. . 67 Seven years after the Brown Judgment, progress for black people was still frustratingly difficult. To be sure, although the white South, or at least most of its leaders in the Deep South, had said ' Never! ' to school desegregation, schools had begun to desegregate, especially after President Eisenhower's reluctant decision... To send in the 1st Airborne Division to protect nine black children admitted by court order to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Around the edges, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference found itself, almost immediately after its foundation, the third major Negro organization [the other two were NAACP and National Urban League]. It was southern, it was dominated by ministers, especially but not entirely Baptists, and it had the advantage of being led by someone as gifted, as dynamic and as well known nationally as Martin Luther King Jr. It lacked the membership and financial strength of the two older organizations, as well as suffering from less obvious disadvantages.

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King was an inspiring leader and, if pointed in the right direction, an effective fundraiser. But he was neither a particularly good administrator, nor especially interested in administration. P. 79 The freedom rides represented a new and hard test for Martin Luther King. More than once the SYNC demonstrators raised, directly and in the most personal terms, the question of his personal courage. He argued, and Wyatt Walker argued for him, that he must stay out of jail to raise money, to direct the movement and to lead his people.

He was on probation, he said. They said they were on probation too. They expected him to go with them. When, on May 27 in Montgomery, he refused to join them on the bus to Mississippi, he said he must choose the where and when of his own Goliath'. They accused him flatly of cowardice. King had already shown, and would show again and again, that he was no coward. But he did not want to be told when and where he should risk his liberty and his life by a group of passionately committed by somewhat unfriendly students.