

Histry 224

Re: King and Beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement

Lewis, pp. 86-88 King's place in the historic and ideological sweep of Black protest.

Ideological Roots of non-violent protest:

Henry David Thoreau--Civil Disobedience

Count Tolstoy

Mohandas K. Ghandi

Reverend A. J. Muste and his revolutionary pascifism

Four points to King 's operational philosophy'

(1) Every human being has a moral conscience--they can distingusih between right and wrong or good and evil

(2) But some have their moral conscience overlaid or encrusted by evil

(3) The only effective way to overcome evil is to turn it around--to use a kind of superior moral jujitsu. To repay evil with good. The psychological principle that like produces like, kindness provokes kindness, hence an ~~essential~~ appeal to the eswential humanity of the enemy.

(4) A firm belief that victory would be achieved and the desired end reached if the goals were morally right.

A belief in the innate and internal moral conscience of the white American,

To Save the Soul of White America.

The non-violent ethic. This was so contrary to American customs as to be almost revolutionary. Though mainly Christain, Americans did not practice turning the other cheek and loving their enemies. They believed in self-defense. They also believed, less firmly, in obeying the law. Under King and the non-violent protest philosophy, blacks would brwak the law and not defend themselves. Both responses were un-American.

Was this tactic suited to southern blacks? Yes/ Southern blacks grasped the idea right off. Being outnumbered and outgunned nonviolence was the only answer.

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Re: King and Movement

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Mood Mellow(1950s)

It was hard not to succumb to DuBois' brand of despair if you were fighting for justice for the black man in the 1950s

In May 1951 the state of Texas did not allow interracial boxing matches

Florida did not permit white and black students to use the same edition of ~~the/same~~ some textbooks

In Arkansas, white and black voters could not enter a polling place in the company of one another

In Alabama, a white woman was forbidden to nurse a black man in a hospital

North Carolina required racially separate washrooms in its factories.

In six states white and black prisoners could not be chained together

In seven states, TB patients were separated by race

In eight states, parks, playgrounds, bathing and fishing and boating facilities, amusement parks, racetracks, pool halls circuses, theatres, and public halls were all segregated

Ten states required separate waiting rooms for bus and train travellers

Eleven states required black passengers to ride in back of buses and street cars

Eleven states operated separate schools for the blind

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Re: Mood Modest--1950s Background to Montgomery

Break of DuBois

In the 1930s DuBois turned from the integrationist approach. Article in the Journal of Negro Education entitled "Does the Negro Need Seperate Schools?" DuBois argued that it was a disgrace and discervice to black children to use them as battering rams to break into white schools.

" . . . as long as Negroes believe that their race is constitutionally and permanently inferior to white people, they necessarily disbelieve in every possible Negro institution." The crying need, he argued, was not for separte schools or biracial schools, but for the Negro to put aside his "inner paralysis and lack of self-confidence and replace them with a "firm and unshakeable belief that 12,000,000 American negroes have the inborn capacity to accomplish just as much as any nation of 12,000,000 anywhere in the world ever accomplished. . . ."

DuBois was coming out in favor of black seperatism . . . He was showing signs of the defeatist attitude among some blacks.

At the time of his article(1935)Jim Crow in the school systems across this countyr had been the subject of litiagtion 113 times in 29 states and the District of Columbia. On 44 occasions the question was raised in the court systems as to whether it was constitutional. And on 44 occassions the answer was Yes.

Mentioned because in the 1950s DuBois(now in his 80s) had given up on racial progress in capitalist America. The American capitalist system would alway treat blacks as economic cannor fodder. DuBois was now involved in the American Marxist Left. And in the mood mellow of the 1950s he was in jeopardy of being sentenced to a five@year jail term by the A House Un-American Activities Committee.

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The Movement and Mood Moderate(1950s)

Eisenhower Presidency was not interested in dealing with the racial question. Ike privately characterized the Court 1954 decision as retrogressive for race relations. According to President Eisenhower the decision "set back progress in the South" and that it was wrong "to demand perfection in these moral questions." He rarely met with black delegations. He left this task up to VP Nixon...

Eisenhower and the Little Rock crisis... 1957

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Re: King and Montgomery Bus Boycott:

Bus~~s~~ Boycott was in its way the F~~are~~ Bell in the Night--the beginning of the Negro Revolution, or Civil Rights Revolution.

The Montgomery boycott(MIA)beginning in 1955 was influenced by the Supreme Court decision of Brown vs. Board of Education(1954)in which the Court ruled that seperate but equal was in violation of the 14th Amendment.

The Court argued ~~that~~ Negro inferiority ~~was~~ not congenital but induced by inferior and segregated school,systems. In attacking segregated schools the Court also struck at the attitudes justifying segregation. . . .It opened the way for ~~the~~ a mass civil rights movement.