(1954). Therefore, Washington’s significance is lessened as he was disadvantaged by the Jim Crow laws. Despite his short-term contribution to the development of black civil rights, his popularity amongst “both colours” had a long-term impact in paving the way for King. Although King built on the accomplishments of Washington in cultivating white approval there’s clear-cut differences. This points to the fact that King’s more remembered for his efforts in advancing African Americans socially and politically via his non-violent agenda with far-reaching effects. This contrasts the short-term nature of Washington’s efforts, based on economic advancement with no real challenge to segregation.

Likewise, King’s ‘dream’ of equality wouldn’t’ve been possible if it weren’t for support from other civil rights activists such as Philip Randolph. He’s significant in gaining recognition of African Americans’ union organisations as well as being the first black activist to have presided over the successful National Brotherhood of Workers in 1919. Randolph was a key figure in combining ideals of previous leaders. He understood the political and economic power of non-violent demonstrations and compelled administrators to move towards racial equality. Although King’s praised for his involvement in the March of Washington, 1963 yet he cannot credited for the idea. The march was initiated by Randolph as a tactical threat to persuade President Roosevelt to ban discrimination in both federal government and war industries. This “highly effective tactic of the march on Washington which king dominated but Randolph organised” applied the necessary pressure. Thus, he ultimately masterminded the turning point in the Civil Rights Movement yet as King is regarded as the face of the movement, Randolph’s significance is overlooked.

Randolph also played a major role in teaching King how to organise non-violent protest and political tactics, catalysing the rapid development of the Civil Rights movement. In a number of occasions, Randolph supported King’s anti-segregation campaigns and he used a number of Randolph’s tactics. Including marches, demonstrations and working with white sympathisers; this was key to the change of momentum of civil rights. King also publicly praised Randolph for his “unafraid to challenge an unjust state power.” Perhaps this points towards King’s reliance on other black activists in polishing his tactical skills. He was thus effectively in a era where Black Civil Rights was at the forefront of the movement. Roosevelt’s spirit is appreciated in terms of being the most important civil rights leader to emerge from the labour movement. He prioritised the interests of black workers for much of the 20th century however he fails to make any ground-breaking changes.

King’s activism in the later years of black civil rights is considered ground-breaking as captured by white journalist, Geoffrey Gould in the Boston newspaper. Martin Luther’s ‘I have a dream speech’ is praised as one of the most famous and inspiring speeches of the civil rights campaign, emphasising its long-term impact. Gould notes King’s stress on the slow pace of change of the civil rights struggle, sparked from Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. African Americans are still fighting for full citizenship rights in the 1960s. (Appendix 1B)

Contextually, this source is valuable in projecting the emotional impact King’s rhetoric induced at a when civil rights campaigns were at their peak, showing the change of attitude amongst whites. Importantly, this article was written by a white Journalist whose purposes were to inform the public of the event. His emphasis on King as a “magician” shows the extent to which King had an emotional impact.

Gould emphasises King’s desperation for change, “‘The time is now’. “Now”! Said the man in front of me.’ Gould explicitly notes King’s bold but hopeful metaphor, ‘from every hill and mound in the

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7 Accessed February 15 2020: https://getrevising.co.uk/diagrams/philip-randolph
In turn, Historian Dyson offers a contrasting perspective by placing Malcolm X as ‘the mouthpiece of the nation of Islam’ (Appendix 2B) and a significant leader in the civil rights era. He advocated ‘self-defence’ and economic advancement ‘by whatever means were necessary’. Clearly, this conflicted the non-violent, mainstream stance of King. However, Malcolm’s charisma and oratory skills as a minister of the NOI was significant to the development of black consciousness. He’s recognised as the ‘most brilliant preacher’ and the ‘first prominent advocate of separatism’ (Appendix 2B), showing the scale of influence Malcolm encompassed.

Dyson’s interpretation places King and Malcolm X on different ends of the spectrum. He notes how King’s preaching of ‘non-violent disobedience’ (Appendix 2B) was at odds with Malcolm’s promotion of the ‘liberation of blacks’ even if this led to ‘reciprocal violence’. Malcolm rejected King’s passivity to white violence, voicing what many African-Americans ‘secretly felt’ about the failure of non-violent act to outlaw inequality. Despite, the end to the ‘separate but equal doctrine’ of 1896, black people were continually treated as second-class citizens. But Malcolm x acknowledged the poor conditions of the ghetto youth that continued since the end of the Reconstruction period in 1877. Malcolm X’s ministry focused on the economically disposed or those looking for an alternative to King’s ‘passive strategies of resistance’.

Although, Malcolm expresses the frustrations of African-Americans towards the ‘cultural costs of white racism’ (Appendix 2B) beyond King. His significance in the development of black civil rights is often restricted to Black nationalism. In reality, Malcolm X had softened his radicalism to civil rights and presented himself as an alternative to King rather than a rival. The militant strains of the black left encouraged the white moderate to sympathise more with King’s agenda. From 1964, Malcolm set up a pan African movement and as head of the 0AAU organisation he advocated African human rights. He worked well with other civil rights groups to expose the impact of oppression.

Nevertheless, Malcolm X’s greatest contribution lies in his ‘unique ability’ to articulate thoughts on black resistance, and emphasises, he helped regain national and international visibility and interest for the civil rights movement by advertising separatism via speeches and sermons that were misconceived as encouraging racial hatred. His visible outspokenness rose a number of organizations to great significance such as the Black Power Movement of 1963. His separatist message entailed a long-term significance even after his assassination in 1965 with episodes of urban riots as an alternative to the disillusion of non-violent protest. But in comparison to King, Malcolm X is


18 Race Relations in the USA 1863-1980, third edition, pg. 157, Vivienne Sanders

19 Civil Rights in the USA, 1865-1992, chapter I African Americans and civil rights, Nicholas Fellows and Mike Wells