

The Growing Pains of Equality: 1959- VIOLENCE VS. NON-VIOLENCE

Robert Williams and Martin Luther King

“in-print” debate in two published articles

“The Liberation” (Sept. & Oct. 1959) and reprinted in *The Southern Patriot* (Jan 1960)

★
The Great Debate

Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?

For the Positive: Williams Says ‘We Must Fight Back’

By ROBERT F. WILLIAMS



THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT

For the Negative: King Sees Alternative in Mass Actions

By MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



Editor’s Note

...debate in the integration movement in recent months has been a struggle between two instruments of social change. It was brought dramatically to the public consciousness by the mass protest of 1957-58. The debate, long smoldering and unresolving, last spring when Robert Williams, Negro leader, made his much-publicized statement that Negroes must use violence. Much misunderstanding of both positions has resulted.

“Nonviolence is a very potent weapon when the opponent is civilized but nonviolence is no repellent for a sadist” - excerpt from Williams’ essay

“There is more power in socially organized masses on the march than there is guns in the hands of a few desperate men.” -excerpt from King’s essay, *“The Social Organization of Non-Violence”*

To learn more visit the Dickerson Genealogy & Local History Room (Monroe, NC) and ask for the vertical files, *UCVF: Williams, Robert*

Photo credits:

Williams: Digital image from August 31, 1961 Charlotte Observer photo negatives shared by The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library

King, upper right: pulled 7-4-2011 from "Martin Luther King - Biography". Nobelprize.org.
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-bio.html

Southern Patriot Image (background) http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/primarydocuments/Vol5/Oct1959_TheSocialOrganizationofNonviolence.pdf