

Martin Luther King and the Effect of the Civil Rights Movement on an International Community

At Utah Valley University, students have the pleasure of attending many lectures, conferences and presentations showcasing esteemed honored guests. This past school year, Utah Valley University has received dignitaries including the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), and the Afghanistan Ambassador to the UN. For the Martin Luther King holiday, students have the opportunity to receive honored guest Julian Bond, civil rights activist. His key note address along with many student panels provide an opportunity for students and faculty alike to take part in the holiday and discuss many important topics.

The student panel I attended yesterday focused on the international community; similar movements in the Soviet Union that were taking place during the civil rights movement in the United States. Students from the university have had the opportunity to intern and travel to Russia, and they were able to sit on the panel as educated commentators and provided interesting information on Soviet activists Andrei Sinyavski and Andrei Sakharov.

Though the Soviet activists and Martin Luther King probably did not contact one another or have direct influence over the separate movements, the timing of the Daniels/ Sinyavski trial and the movement for civil rights were close enough together that it would be detrimental on a research level to not see them as intertwined.

Though in the Soviet Union racism and inequality were not the agenda for the movement, free speech and the free expression of ideas fueled the dissent of activists Andrei Sinyavski and Yuli Daniels. Richard Portwood, student panelist and former Student Body President at Utah Valley University, discussed the importance of viewing these movements on a similar plane and accepting

that though the activists lived in different countries, the ideas and changes of the world were impacting communities all over the globe.

In conclusion, another panelist offered the Martin Luther King quote: "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment". This can be interpreted to mean that humanity is inescapably connected. Borders are imaginary lines, created for political purposes, and under this pretext we must as students come to be aware of movements around us and understand what the current and past pulse of our global community is/was.

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KateLyn Price-Riadh, UVU student,