

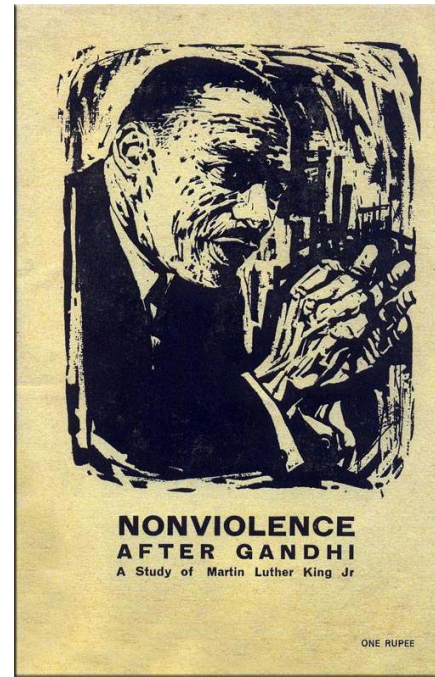
NONVIOLENCE AFTER GANDHI

A Study of Martin Luther King Jr

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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAWAN, BOMBAY

PREFACE

This booklet is based on the symposium of articles that appeared in *Gandhi Marg* 47 (July 1968)—a special issue which paid homage to one of the greatest exponents of nonviolence after Gandhi, the late Martin Luther King Jr. Readers familiar with the work of that journal will not be surprised to encounter in the following pages a wide spectrum of opinion, some of it quite critical, others quite appreciative, but none that can be dismissed as blind adulation.

Great men before King and Gandhi have suffered from the adulation of an uncritical minority and it has taken many years of patient scholarship to save their ideas from the pernicious distortions that follow such adulation. Nowhere perhaps has this myth-making tendency been in greater evidence than in India, where for trackless centuries we have excelled in the art of weaving impenetrable cocoons around our great men, with results that have been truly disastrous for the onward march of ideas. 'Sraddhavan labhate jnanam' ('A man of faith alone attains knowledge') is an old tradition in India—but the tragedy is that we mistake an atrophy of critical judgement for faith. Faith and an inquiring scepticism must go hand in hand in our search for truth.

There were many who thought that nonviolence died with Gandhi. They lived to retract their words. There are many today who think that nonviolence died with King. But the mortality of great ideas has nothing to do with the mortality of great men. Men come and go and are forgotten, but the ideas they leave behind them live forever. This is at once man's hope and holocaust. For it is not the good ideas alone that survive our brief summers here on earth, but the bad ones as well. And there's the rub. Our inheritance is a mixed one—part Hitler, part Gandhi. It is no use blaming our inheritance. We must learn to carry our Cross with patient dignity, not by erasing the memory of Hitler and the Ku Klux Klan, but by etching into our minds the memory of Gandhi and King. This is the meaning of faith.

But to that remembrance and faith must be added a modicum of inquiring scepticism. For our duty is not to cower behind Gandhi and King, in their

shadow, but to climb on their shoulders and look ahead. The tides of history wait for no man. If in our ignorance and shortsightedness we neglect this little duty, we shall soon be washed ashore, to fester and be forgotten. The future of nonviolence depends not on what Gandhi and King did and said—but squarely on us.

T. K. MAHADEVAN

INTRODUCTION

Human life is a continuous stream of experiences, whose flow is registered in the consciousness of man. Since the discovery of writing this function of registering the experiences in living memory has been extended to documents and books which serve mankind as externalised memory. It is this fact which is helping man to expand his range of thought and reflection. Though man is still largely a plaything of his elemental vital urges, there is a growing tendency to control those urges and think of rationalising his whole life.

Nonviolence is a rational principle based on the natural social instincts of man. It is therefore a socialising influence and to that extent it is a civilizing force.

Pitirim Sorokin, the sociologist, has said that humanity has been raised to higher levels of existence not by great conquerors or warriors or kings or even scientists, but by men of intuition like Buddha, Christ and others of that calibre. In the case of many of them, they had opportunities to preach but very meager scope to practise and prove to the world the efficacy of nonviolence. In the case of Gandhi, he could not only theories but inspire millions to make use of nonviolence to fight injustice and tyranny. He also predicted as early as 1936 that the Negroes perhaps would prove further the efficacy of satyagraha. And so it has happened.

Satyagraha, the doctrine of nonviolent resistance of evil without ill- will, has proved a powerful weapon in the hands of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. and his followers. One need not therefore despair or be depressed at the passing away of the apostles of nonviolence. The principle is inherent in the very law of human evolution. It was a brilliant idea to invite writers to express their thoughts about nonviolence after twenty years of Gandhi's passing away and almost immediately after Dr Martin Luther King's death at the hands of an assassin.

Man is mortal but the law of life is immortal. To discover it is to discover truth. To live according to it is real truthful life. The way to truth lies through

nonviolence and nonviolence itself is its own reward. It is the seed of future peace and harmony for mankind.

We have here a collection of articles which deal with several aspects of nonviolence and its use in the social life of man. I am sure the study of these articles will leave the reader more enlightened about this important principle of life.

I may however add that nonviolence represents the peripheral or external approach, from the action-end. It can become a permanent possession of humanity only when the approach is central, that is, when love—the identity of interest and its inner experience—becomes the source and inspiring fountain-head of outer nonviolence. Humanity in its sadhana for perfection has to strive for that inner transformation which alone ensures its true destiny.

R.R. DIWAKAR

MARTIN LUTHER KING

TEN YEARS AGO, DURING THE PIERCING CHILL of a January day and on the heels of the year-long Montgomery bus boycott, a group of approximately 100 Negro leaders from across the South assembled in this church and agreed on the need for an organization to be formed that could serve as a channel through which local protest organizations in the South could coordinate their protest activities. It was this meeting that gave birth to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

A Decade of Change

When our organization was formed ten years ago, racial segregation was still a structured part of the architecture of Southern society. Negroes with the pangs of hunger and anguish of thirst were denied access to the average lunch counter. The downtown restaurants were still off limits for the black man. Negroes, burdened with the fatigue of travel, were still barred from the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. Negro boys and girls in dire need of recreational activities were not allowed to inhale the fresh air of the big city parks. Negroes in desperate need of allowing their mental buckets to sink deep into the wells of knowledge were confronted with a firm 'no' when they sought to use the city libraries. Ten years ago, the legislative halls of the South were still ringing loud with such words as 'interposition' and 'nullification'. All types of conniving methods were still being used to keep the Negro from becoming a registered voter. A decade ago, not a single Negro entered the legislative chambers of the South except as a porter or chauffeur. Ten years ago, all too many Negroes were still harried by day and haunted by night by a corroding sense of fear and a nagging sense of 'nobodyness'.

But things are different now. In assault after assault, we caused the sagging walls of segregation to come tumbling down. During this era the entire edifice of segregation was profoundly shaken. This is an accomplishment whose consequences are deeply felt by every Southern Negro in his daily life. It is no

longer possible to count the number of public establishments that are open to Negroes. Ten years ago, Negroes seemed almost invisible to the larger society, and the facts of their harsh lives were unknown to the majority of the nation. But today, Civil Rights is a dominating issue in every state, crowding the pages of the press and the daily conversation of white Americans. In this decade of change, the Negro stood up and confronted his oppressor. He faced the bullies and the guns, the dogs and the tear gas. He put himself squarely before the vicious mobs and moved with strength and dignity toward them and decisively defeated them. The courage with which he confronted enraged mobs dissolved the stereotype of the grinning, submissive Uncle Tom. He came out of his struggle integrated only slightly in the external society, but powerfully integrated within. This was a victory that had to precede all other gains.

In short, over the last ten years, the Negro decided to straighten his back up, realizing that a man cannot ride on your back unless it is bent. We made our government write new laws to alter some of the cruellest injustices that affected us. We made an indifferent and unconcerned nation arise from lethargy and subpoena its conscience to appear before the judgement seat of morality on the whole question of Civil Rights.* We gained manhood in the nation that had always called us 'boy'. It would be hypocritical indeed if I allowed modesty to forbid my saying that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference stood at the forefront of all of the water-shed movements that brought about these monumental changes in the South. For this, we can feel a legitimate pride.

But, despite a decade of significant progress, the problem is far from solved. The deep rumbling of discontent in our cities is indicative of the fact that the plant of freedom has grown only a bud and not a flower. With all the struggle and all the achievements, we must face the fact that the Negro still lives in the basement of the Great Society. He is still at the bottom, despite the few who have penetrated to slightly higher levels. Even where the door has been forced partially open, mobility for the Negro is still sharply restricted. There is often no bottom from which to start. And where there is, there is almost no room at

the top. Consequently, Negroes are still impoverished aliens in an affluent society. They are too poor even to rise with the society, too impoverished by the ages to be able to ascend by using their own resources. The Negro did not do this to himself. It was done to him. For more than half of his American history, he was enslaved. Yet he built the spanning bridges, the grand mansions, the sturdy docks and stout factories of the South. His unpaid labour made cotton king, and established America as a significant nation in international commerce. Even after his release from chattel slavery, the nation grew over him, submerging him. America became the richest, most powerful society in the history of man. But it left the Negro far behind. So we still have a long, long way to go before we reach the promised land of freedom. Yes, we have left the dusty soils of Egypt. We have crossed the Red Sea that had for years been hardened by the long and piercing winters of passive resistance. Before we reach the majestic shores of the promised land there will still be gigantic mountains of opposition ahead and prodigious hilltops of injustice. We still need some Paul Reveres of conscience to alert every hamlet and every village of America that revolution is at hand. Yes, we need a chart. We need a compass. Indeed we need some North Star to guide us into a future shrouded with impenetrable uncertainties.

The Good and Bad Things of Life

Now, in order to answer the question, 'Where do we go from here?' which is our theme, we must first honestly recognize where we are now. When the Constitution was written a strange formula to determine taxes and representation declared that the Negro was only 60 per cent of a person. Today another curious formula seems to declare he is only 50 per cent of a person. Of the good things in life, the Negro has approximately one-half those of whites. Of the bad things of life, he has twice those of whites. Thus half of all Negroes live in substandard housing. And Negroes have half the income of whites. When we view the negative experiences of life, the Negro has a double share. There are twice as many Negro unemployed. The rate of infant mortality among

Negroes is double that of whites; and there are twice as many Negroes dying in Vietnam as whites, in proportion to their size in the population.

In other spheres, the figures are equally alarming. In elementary schools, Negroes lag one to three years behind whites and their segregated schools receive substantially less money per student than the white schools. One twentieth as many Negroes as whites attend college. Of employed Negroes, 75 per cent hold menial jobs.

The Challenge Ahead

This is where we are: where then do we go from here? First, we must massively assert our dignity and worth. We must stand up amidst a system that still oppresses us and develop an unassailable and majestic sense of values. We must no longer be ashamed of being black. The job of arousing manhood within a people that have been taught for so many centuries that they are nobody is not easy.

Even semantics have conspired to make that which is black seem ugly and degrading. In Roget's Thesaurus there are 120 synonyms for blackness and at least 60 of them are offensive, as for example, blot, soot, grim, devil and foul. And there are some 134 synonyms for whiteness and all are favourable, expressed in such words as purity, cleanliness chastity and innocence. A whitejie is better than a black lie. The most degenerate member of a family is a 'black sheep'. Ossie Davis has suggested that maybe the English language should be reconstructed so that teachers will not be forced to teach the Negro child 60 ways to despise himself, and thereby perpetuate his false sense of inferiority, and the white child 134 ways to adore himself, and thereby perpetuate his false sense of superiority.

Black is Beautiful

The tendency to ignore the Negro's contribution to American life and to strip him of his personhood, is as old as the earliest history books and as contemporary as the morning's newspaper. To upset this cultural homicide, the Negro must rise up with an affirmation of his own Olympian manhood. Any movement for the Negro's freedom that overlooks this necessity is only waiting to be buried. As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free. Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against the long night of physical slavery. No Lincolnian Emancipation Proclamation or Johnsonian Civil Rights Bill can totally bring this kind of freedom. The Negro will only be free when he reaches down to the inner depths of his own being and signs with the pen and ink of assertive manhood his own Emancipation Proclamation. And, with a spirit straining toward true self-esteem, the Negro must boldly throw off the manacles of self-abnegation and say to himself and to the world, "I am somebody. I am a person. I am a man with dignity and honour. I have a rich and noble history. How painful and exploited that history has been. Yes, I was a slave through my foreparents and I am not ashamed of that. I'm ashamed of the people who were so sinful as to make me a slave." Yes, we must stand up and say, "I'm black and I'm beautiful", and this self-affirmation is the black man's need, made compelling by the white man's crimes against him.

Another basic challenge is to discover how to organize our strength in terms of economic and political power. No one can deny that the Negro is in dire need of this kind of legitimate power. Indeed, one of the great problems that the Negro confronts is his lack of power. From old plantations of the South to newer ghettos of the North, the Negro has been confined to a life of voicelessness and powerlessness. Stripped of the right to make decisions concerning his life and destiny he has been subject to the authoritarian and sometimes whimsical decisions of this white power structure. The plantation and ghetto were created by those who had power, both to confine those who had no power and

to perpetuate their powerlessness. The problem of transforming the ghetto therefore, is a problem of power: a confrontation of the forces of power demanding change and the forces of power dedicated to the preservation of the status quo. Now power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change. Walter Reuther defined power one day. He said, "Power is the ability of a labour union like U.A.W. to make the most powerful corporation in the world, General Motors, say 'yes' when it wants to say 'no'. That's power."

Love and Power

Now a lot of us are preachers, and all of us have our moral convictions and concerns, and so often have problems with power. There is nothing wrong with power if power is used correctly. You see, what happened is that some of our philosophers got off base. And one of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites—polar opposites—so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love.

It was this misinterpretation that caused Nietzsche, who was a philosopher of the will to power, to reject the Christian concept of love. It was this same misinterpretation which induced Christian theologians to reject the Nietzschean philosophy of the will to power in the name of the Christian idea of love. Now, we've got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive and love without power is sentimental and anaemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love. And this is what we must see as we move on. What has happened is that we have had it wrong and confused in our own country, and this has led Negro Americans in the past to seek their goals through power devoid of love and conscience.

This is leading a few extremists today to advocate for Negroes the same destructive and conscienceless power that they have justly abhorred in whites.

It is precisely this collision of immoral power with powerless morality which constitutes the major crisis of our times.

A New Program

We must develop a program that will drive the nation to a guaranteed annual income. Now, early in this century this proposal would have been greeted with ridicule and denunciation, as destructive of initiative and responsibility. At that time economic status was considered the measure of the individual's ability and talents. And, in the thinking of that day, the absence of worldly goods indicated a want of industrious habits and moral fibre. We've come a long way in our understanding of human motivation and of the blind operation of our economic system. Now we realize that dislocation in the market operations of our economy and the prevalence of discrimination thrust people into idleness and bind them to constant or frequent unemployment against their will. Today the poor are less often dismissed, I hope, from our consciences by being branded as inferior or incompetent. We also know that no matter how dynamically the economy develops and expands, it does not eliminate all poverty.

Work and Income

The problem indicates that our emphasis must be two-fold. We must create full employment or we must create incomes. People must be made consumers by one method or the other. Once they are placed in this position we need to be concerned that the potential of the individual is not wasted. New forms of work that enhance the social good will have to be devised for those for whom traditional jobs are not available. In 1879 Henry George anticipated this state of affairs when he wrote in *Progress and Poverty*: "The fact is that the work which improves the condition of mankind, the work which extends knowledge and increases power and enriches literature and elevates thought, is not done to secure a living. It is not the work of slaves driven to their tasks either by the task, by the task-master, or by animal necessity. It is the work of men who

somehow find a form of work that brings a security for its own sake and a state of society where want is abolished."

Work of this sort could be enormously increased, and we are likely to find that the problems of housing and education, instead of preceding the elimination of poverty, will themselves be affected if poverty is first abolished. The poor transformed into purchasers will do a great deal on their own to alter housing decay. Negroes who have a double disability will have a greater effect on discrimination when they have the additional weapon of cash to use in their struggle.

Beyond these advantages, a host of positive psychological changes inevitably will result from widespread economic security. The dignity of the individual will flourish when the decisions concerning his life are in his own hands, when he has the means to seek self-improvement. Personal conflicts among husbands, wives, and children will diminish when the unjust measurement of human worth on the scale of dollars is eliminated.

Now our country can do this. John Kenneth Galbraith said that a guaranteed annual income could be achieved for about 20 billion dollars a year. And I say to you today, that if our nation can spend 35 billion dollars a year to fight an unjust, evil war in Vietnam, and 20 billion dollars to put a man on the moon, it can spend billions of dollars to put God's children on their own two feet right here on earth.

Violence and Nonviolence

Now, let me say briefly that we must reaffirm our commitment to nonviolence. I want to stress this. The futility of violence in the struggle for racial justice has been tragically etched in all recent Negro riots. Yesterday, I tried to analyze the riots and deal with their causes. Today I want to give the other side. There is certainly something painfully sad about a riot. One sees screaming youngsters and angry adults fighting hopelessly and aimlessly against impossible odds. And deep within them, you can even see a desire for self-destruction, a kind of suicidal longing.

Occasionally Negroes contend that the 1965 Watts riot and the other riots in various cities represented effective civil rights action. But those who express this view always end up with stumbling words when asked what concrete gains have been won as a result. At best, the riots have produced a little additional anti-poverty money being allotted by frightened government officials, and a few water-sprinklers to cool the children of the ghettos. It is something like improving the food in the prison while the people remain securely incarcerated behind bars. Nowhere have the riots won any concrete improvement such as have the organized protest demonstrations. When one tries to pin down advocates of violence as to what acts could be effective, the answers are blatantly illogical. Sometimes they talk of overthrowing the racist State and local governments and they talk about guerrilla warfare. They fail to see that no internal revolution has ever succeeded in overthrowing a government by violence unless the government had already lost the allegiance and effective control of its armed forces. Anyone in his right mind knows that this will not happen in the United States. In a violent racial situation, the power structure has the local police, the State Troopers, the National Guard and, finally, the army to call on—all of which are predominantly white. Furthermore, few if any violent revolutions have been successful unless the violent minority had the sympathy and support of the non-resistant majority. Castro may have had only a few Cubans actually fighting with him up in the hills, but he could never have overthrown the Battista regime unless he had the sympathy of the vast majority of Cuban people.

It is perfectly clear that a violent revolution on the part of American blacks would find no sympathy and support from the white population and very little from the majority of the Negroes themselves. This is no time for romantic illusions and empty philosophical debates about freedom. This is a time for action. What is needed is a strategy for change, a tactical program that will bring the Negro into the mainstream of American life as quickly as possible. So far, this has only been offered by the nonviolent movement. Without recognizing this we will end up with solutions that don't solve, answers that

don't answer and explanations that don't explain.

The Most Potent Weapon

And so I say to you today that I still stand by nonviolence. And I am still convinced that it is the most potent weapon available to the Negro in his struggle for justice in this country. And the other thing is that I am concerned about a better world. I'm concerned about justice, I'm concerned about brotherhood, I'm concerned about truth. And when one is concerned about these, he can never advocate violence. For through violence you may murder a murderer but you can't murder murder. Through violence you may murder a liar but you can't establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate. Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that.

And I say to you, I have also decided to stick to love. For I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love, I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. And I have seen too much hate. I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the South. I've seen hate on the faces of too many Klans- men and too many White Citizen's Councillors in the South to want to hate myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. I have decided to love. If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we are moving against wrong when we do it, because John was right, God is love. He who hates does not know God, but he who has love, has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality.

A Man Without Love

And so I say to you today, my friends, that you may be able to speak with the tongues of men and angels. You may have the eloquence of articulate speech,

but if you have not love, it means nothing. Yes, you may have the gift of prophecy, you may have the gift of scientific prediction and understand the behaviour of molecules. You may break into the storehouse of nature and bring forth many new insights. Yes, you may ascend to the heights of academic achievement so that you have all knowledge. And you may boast of your great institutions of learning and the boundless extent of your degrees, but if you have not love, all of these mean absolutely nothing. You may even give of your goods to feed the poor. You may bestow great gifts to charity. You may tower high in philanthropy. But, if you have not love, your charity means nothing. You may even give your body to be burned and die the death of a martyr, and your spilled blood may be a symbol of honour for generations yet unborn, and thousands may praise you as one of history's greatest heroes. But, if you have not love, your blood was spilt in vain. What I am trying to get you to see is that a man may be self-centred in his self-denial and self-righteous in his self-sacrifice. His generosity may feed his ego and his piety may feed his pride. So, without love, benevolence becomes egotism and martyrdom becomes spiritual pride.

Restructuring American Society

I want to say to you as I move to my conclusion—as we talk about 'Where do we go from here?'—that we must honestly face the fact that the Movement must address itself to the question of restructuring the whole of American society. There are 40 million poor people here. And one day we must ask the question, "Why are there 40 million poor people in America?" And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth. When you ask that question, you begin to question the capitalistic economy. And I'm simply saying that more and more, we've got to begin to ask questions about the whole society. We are called upon to help the discouraged beggars in life's market place. But one day we must come to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. It means that questions must be raised. You see, my friends, when you deal with

this, you begin to ask the question, "Who owns the oil?" You begin to ask the question, "Who owns the iron ore?" You begin to ask the question, "Why is it that people have to pay water bills in a world that is two-thirds water?" These are questions that must be asked.

Now, don't think that you have me in a 'bind' today. I'm not talking about Communism. What I'm talking about is far beyond Communism. My inspiration didn't come from Karl Marx. My inspiration didn't come from F. Engels. My inspiration didn't come from Trotsky. My inspiration didn't come from Lenin. Yes, I read *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital* a long time ago. And I saw that maybe Marx didn't follow Hegel enough. He took his dialectics, but he left out his idealism and his spiritualism, and he went over to a German philosopher by the name of Feuerbach and took his materialism and made it into a system that he called dialectical materialism. I have to reject that.

What I'm saying to you this morning is that Communism forgets that life is individual. Capitalism forgets that life is social, and the Kingdom of Brotherhood is found neither in the thesis of Communism nor the antithesis of Capitalism but in a higher synthesis. It is found in a higher synthesis that combines the truths of both. Now, when I say question the whole society, it means ultimately coming to see that the problem of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together. These are the triple evils that are interrelated.

If you will let me be a preacher just a little bit: One night, a juror came to Jesus and he wanted to know what he could do to be saved. Jesus didn't get bogged down in the kind of isolated approach of what he shouldn't do. Jesus didn't say, "Now Nicodemus, you must stop lying". He didn't say, "Nicodemus, you must stop cheating if you are doing that". He didn't say, "Nicodemus, you must not commit adultery". He didn't say, "Nicodemus, now you must stop drinking liquor if you are doing that excessively". He said something altogether different, because Jesus realized something basic—that if a man will lie, he will steal. And if a man will steal, he will kill. So instead of just getting bogged

down in one thing, Jesus looked at him and said. "Nicodemus, you must be born again".

He said, in other words, "Your whole structure must be changed". A nation that will keep people in slavery for 244 years will 'thingify' them, make them things. Therefore they will exploit them, and poor people generally, economically. And a nation that will exploit economically will have to have foreign investments and everything else, and will have to use its military might to protect them. All of these problems are tied together. What I am saying today is that we must go from this convention and say, "America, you must be born again!"

'Let Us Be Dissatisfied'

So, I conclude by saying again today that we have a task and let us go out with a 'divine dissatisfaction'. Let us be dissatisfied until America will no longer have a high blood-pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds. Let us be dissatisfied until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort and the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by the battering rams of the forces of justice. Let us be dissatisfied until those that live on the outskirts of hope are brought into the metropolis of daily security. Let us be dissatisfied until slums are cast into the junk heaps of history, and every family is living in a decent sanitary home. Let us be dissatisfied until the dark yesterdays of segregated schools will be transformed into bright tomorrows of quality, integrated education. Let us be dissatisfied until integration is not seen as a problem but as an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity. Let us be dissatisfied until men and women, however black they may be, will be judged on the basis of the content of their character and not on the basis of the colour of their skin. Let us be dissatisfied. Let us be dissatisfied until every State capital houses a Governor who will do justly, who will love mercy and who will walk humbly with his God. Let us be dissatisfied until from every city hall, justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. Let us be dissatisfied until that day when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall

be afraid. Let us be dissatisfied. And men will recognize that out of one blood God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth. Let us be dissatisfied until that day when nobody will shout 'White Power!'—when nobody will shout "Black Power!"—but everybody will talk about God's power and human power.

A Rocky Road

I must confess, my friends, the road ahead will not always be smooth. There will still be rocky places of frustration and meandering points of bewilderment. There will be inevitable setbacks here and there. There will be those moments when the buoyancy of hope will be transformed into the fatigue of despair. Our dreams will sometimes be shattered and our ethereal hopes blasted. We may again with tear-drenched eyes have to stand before the bier of some courageous civil rights worker whose life has been snuffed out by the dastardly acts of bloodthirsty mobs. Difficult and painful as it is, we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future. And as we continue our charted course, we may gain consolation in the words so nobly left by that great bard who was also a great freedom fighter of yesterday, James Weldon Johnson:

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod felt in the days
When hope unborn had died.

Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
Come to the place
For which our fathers sighed?

We have come over the way that with tears hath been watered.
We have come treading our paths through the blood of the slaughtered,

Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
where the bright gleam
Of our bright star is cast.

Let this affirmation be our ringing cry. It will give us the courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom. When our days become dreary with low hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in

this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize that the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.

Let us realize that William Cullen Bryant is right: "Truth crushed to earth will rise again". Let us go out realizing that the Bible is right: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is our hope for the future, and with this faith we will be able to sing in some not too distant tomorrow with a cosmic past tense, "We have overcome, we have overcome, deep in my heart, I did believe we would overcome".

□ Slightly abridged from Martin Luther King's last presidential report to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, 16 August 1967.

MAURICE FRIEDMAN

MARTIN LUTHER KING, the man who brought Gandhi's nonviolent resistance to the social and racial conflict in America and who, like Gandhi, became a living symbol of the fight for the human in man, was assassinated like Gandhi, in the midst of the very tensions to which he had tried to bring a word of justice and peace. Since his assassination, King has been compared not only with Gandhi but with Christ, and some have spoken of him as 'the first citizen of the world'. The world has, indeed, mourned the loss of one of its greatest sons, a man whose way of fighting confirmed even the enemy that he fought against and rightly earned him the Nobel Peace Prize. We mourn him, and we bear witness to him. Whether we are ourselves religious or not, we cannot fail to pay honour to the man who, like Gandhi, proclaimed the inseparability of the religious and the social revolution.

Martin Luther King first became known to the world through his leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956. This boycott began because one Negro woman of integrity and courage, without any premeditation or political strategy, refused to move to the back of the bus, as the unconstitutional laws of Alabama required Negroes to do. It continued and gained momentum as Martin Luther King, only twenty- nine years old at the time, took over the helm and held it steadfast in love and in prayer. Even when his own house was bombed and his wife and child nearly killed, he dispelled the angry crowd of Negroes before his house with the declaration that *their* way was to be love not hate, nonviolence not violence. Yet, again like Gandhi, not non-resistance, but nonviolent resistance, a struggle in which the means were as important as the end, in which the end informed the means.

A few years ago on my way to a lecture I was to give on 'Man and the Space Age' I heard that J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, had just called Martin Luther King "the most notorious liar in the United States". I found this a depressing commentary on our progress in the space age, but i was given new hope the next day by the reply that Martin

Luther King made to this charge. He did not defend himself; he did not give way before the attack. He said instead that J. Edgar Hoover, in charge of handling one of the most difficult activities in the United States, was obviously feeling the strain. In so doing, King was following in the footsteps of a man one would not ordinarily think of in this connection—Job, the protagonist of the book of that name in the Hebrew Bible. Martin Luther King had to make another, very painful decision the day after the Alabama state police had charged the crowd with tear gas and clubs and then the thousand ministers and other people had come down to Alabama to march again from Selma. At this time there was a court injunction against the march to Montgomery, and Martin Luther King had to decide whether to break the law for the first time in his nonviolent campaign. He decided that the people assembled there had to march, but when they arrived at the bridge and the troopers were lined up to block their way, he accepted that limit and knelt there and prayed. Again I would suggest that the prototype for these actions is Job, or what I call in my book, *Problematic Rebel: An Image of Modern Man*¹, the 'Modern Job'.

Recently before giving a lecture at a college on "The Modern Promethean and the Modern Job", I asked a student what he thought the title meant. "Well", he said, "a contrast between someone who does not conform and someone who does". The one who does not conform was obviously in his mind Prometheus, who has been from of old a symbol of rebellion. But that leaves Job as the one who conforms. This reply is typical of our general way of thinking in terms of simple opposites. Either you rebel, in which case you destroy the opposition and remove everything in sight, or you conform and submit to the opposition and allow it to trample upon you. We very seldom think in the terms that Martin Buber uses when he speaks in *I and Thou* of the 'I-Thou' relationship—the relationship of 'directness, mutuality, and openness—as teaching us to meet others *and* to hold our ground when we meet them. But this is exactly what Martin Luther King did, and this is why I single him out as the Modern Job. He did not strike back in like fashion, trading insult for insult. But neither did he give way. He allowed room for a point of view from the side of J. Edgar Hoover, and at the same time he did not slight his own point of view. In other words,

from the standpoint of Modern Job it is possible, as Martin Buber has put it, to confirm an enemy even in opposing him—to confirm his right to stand where he stands.

The answer the young man made to me also typifies what we have come to think about Job. Job's patience is proverbial, his rebellion is not. Yet to an unprejudiced reader of the Book of Job, it is not his patience but his rebellion which stands out. Job is the prototype of the Biblical rebel. He is also the prototype of a type of rebellion which I hold to be the most mature and the most indispensable for today. Yet from one writer to the other, from one Sunday School lesson to the other, Job is seen only as the man of faith who says, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord"; the man who repents in dust and ashes at the end of the book and confesses that he spoke words he did not know.

The Job of the body of the poem is quite different. In Chapter 9 Job indicts God with a bitterness unequalled in any religious scripture of which I know. "I am blameless, I regard not myself. I loathe my life, it is all one. Therefore I say he destroys both the blameless and the wicked. When disaster brings sudden death he mocks at the calamity of the innocent. The earth is given into the hands of the wicked; he covers the face of its judges. If it is not he, who then is it?" If Job says, "He may slay me, I await it," he adds, "But I will argue my ways before him". The key to Job and what makes him the prototype of the Hebrew Bible and of the Modern Job is the fact that he trusts *and* contends, that the two go together, that his contending with God takes place in the dialogue with God, and that in that dialogue he stands his ground. He is like modern man in that he has no ground on which to stand but that of his created existence and yet he stands. He says, "God would crush me without a reason... There is no umpire between him and me." Yet he also says, in effect, "I care less about my life and the fact that I shall be crushed than to witness, as I must, for the fact that I am suffering unjustly".

Job is a Biblical rebel—the rebels who stands the ground of his created existence, whose rebellion is not incompatible with his trust in God and whose

trust is not incompatible with that contending which makes Abraham say: "Shall the Lord of justice not do justice? ... I who am dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord." When Jacob wrestled with the angel, or messenger, until dawn, he would not let him go until he blessed him. When the stranger finally blessed him, it was with the name 'Israel' which means, 'He who contends with the Lord'. That is the very meaning of Israel. This is what is focussed in Job. Nor is it true that Job in the end repents of his rebellion, as is customarily thought. On the contrary, Job is upheld in his rebellion. The Lord says to Job's friends, "You have not spoken of me what is true as has my servant Job". What Job is censured for is stated very clearly in Chapter 40, "Will you condemn me to justify yourself?" There is a distinction between witnessing for your own innocence and making comprehensive statements about the nature of reality.

This is the key to the 'Modern Job' as distinguished from the 'Modern Promethean'. When I suggest in *Problematic Rebel* that we live in an era of the 'death of God', I do not mean that we cannot believe in God but that we no longer possess an image of authentic human existence, that we have lost the real source of values—not in the sense of 'universal values' but of a direction that makes this path rather than that a meaningful one. We western men stand in the heritage both of the Greeks and of the Hebrew Bible, and yet at the same time we are cut off from both. We have no order in which we can believe, no 'moira' with which we can become reconciled, like the Greek tragic hero. Nor do we stand in the Biblical dialogue with God; we lack Biblical man's trust in existence, and we know ourselves as more or less alienated and in exile. Some people, to be sure, find many ways of escaping from the alienation and not recognizing it. Others settle down in the exile. But there are also those who rebel against it. Among the rebels there is a distinction which should be made, but seldom is, between the 'Modern Promethean' and the 'Modern Job'.

The 'Modern Promethean', unlike the ancient one, does not rebel on the ground of an order, on the ground of immortality, or on the ground of foresight, as we find it in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. Rather he rebels against all order. He

rebels not only because he wants to recapture the creative freedom of man which has been alienated to the transcendent, but also because of the desperation which makes him believe that he stands in an all-or-nothing situation. He desperately defies the inhuman world which he sees as indifferent to man or the inhuman social and political order which he sees as crushing man. As Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby Dick* believes he must destroy the White Whale or it will destroy him, so the social and political rebel believes he has to destroy his enemy or be destroyed by him, whether that enemy is seen as a ruling class, the government in power, another nation, or a coalition of nations. Underneath his romantic rebellion lies a philosophy of despair. For our human existence in the simplest terms is an existence which places us over against the reality that comes to meet us, whether this be nature or other men or other countries, and we cannot remove this facing quality of our existence. If we cannot remove it, must we submit to whatever we meet? No. It is possible to hold our ground before it. But to do this there has to be that existential trust which the Modern Promethean does not have. Existential trust does not mean the belief that values already exist 'out there'. But it does mean an openness to finding values in genuine dialogue, even in the dialogue with the absurd.

I know no better example of this trust than Martin Luther King, the Christian man of action, Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher, and the atheist writer Albert Camus. If the early Camus began with the subjective defiance of 'the absurd'—that nostalgia that man has in the face of an irrational universe, the later Camus moved clearly to the position of the Modern Job. In Camus' novel *The Plague* the Modern Job is Dr Rieux himself, the man who discovers the plague, who organizes the fight against it, who recognizes that it will come again. Dr Rieux will not submit to the unjust order like the Catholic priest Father Paneloux, but neither does he want to be a victim or a 'saint without God' like the journalist Tarrou. Dr Rieux wants to be a healer. In commenting on Father Paneloux's sermon, he says, "Of course the plague can elevate and uplift man like everything else, but still, you'd have to be a mad man or stone blind or deaf not to want to relieve the suffering when you encounter it." Even if God does exist, the religious man could do nothing better than fight against

the order of death while he sits above in silence. The struggle which Dr Rieux takes up—this fight against the order of death—is a never-ending one which can never issue into victory; yet it is not a total defeat. Tarrou suggests to Dr Rieux that the difference between him and Father Paneloux is that Father Paneloux believes in God and Rieux does not. Rieux says no, that is not it. "He is a city priest, an intellectual. He believes in truth with a capital T. But any parish priest who has sat by the bedside of a dying man gasping for breath would know what I mean. He would want to relieve suffering rather than to exalt it." It is Dr Rieux who in the end witnesses for the city, for the outrage that it has suffered, and witnesses what he learned in the time of plague—that "there is more to admire in man than to despise". Thus Dr Rieux clearly states the third alternative to being a victim and an executioner, the alternative which refuses to submit and refuses to withdraw. This is the Modern Job, the man who stands his ground. He is not a rebel on principle. He is a rebel only where he is called to be one by the situation which confronts him. He meets what comes with clear-sighted trust, affirming where he can affirm, and withstanding where he must withstand.

"We cannot escape history", says Camus in his essay, 'Neither Victims nor Executioners'²; "We are in it up to our necks". But we can fight within it for that part which is man's, attacking all the ideologies that claim the day. In this time of abstractions, this 'vast conspiracy of silence' which threatens to destroy the living dialogue of mankind, someone is needed to give a meaning to everyday life. This is the rebel to whom Camus points. He stands in the realest sense in open contact with the reality that he meets, and in *this* sense he is like the Biblical Job. The same question of existential trust that is central for the Biblical Job is central for the Modern Job. When I sent Martin Buber the baccalaureate address that I gave at the University of Vermont, he wrote that I should not call Camus an atheist. Camus, he said, is one of those men who destroy the images of God that have become inadequate in order that the religious man may set out across the nameless reality for a new meeting with the nameless Meeter.

A distinguished Jesuit theologian, taking part in an interchange with Martin Buber, said to him that without Christ the life of dialogue must lead to Job's question. What he meant was that without Christ we would break asunder on the problem of evil, the reality of evil. Buber responded, however, in a very different way, the way of the Modern Job. "The dialogue does indeed lead to Job's question", he replied. "My God will not allow to be silent in the mouth of his creature the protest against the great injustice of the earth. And even when this man knows peace because God has come near to him again, this is not incompatible with the fight for justice."

The all-embracing, all-suffocating 'cold war' and its cancerous outgrowth, the war in Vietnam, lend a special, dreadful relevance to what we have said about Martin Luther King and the Modern Job. We live in an era which makes it increasingly meaningless for any nation to declare that it is perfectly willing to make peace *entirely on its own terms*. It is not just that this is contradictory to ordinary common sense; it has to do with the situation in which we find ourselves. We cannot make the world 'safe for democracy' any more than the communist nations can make it safe for communism. Each nation and each bloc of nations finds itself facing an enemy it must often oppose but cannot eliminate. If this is so, then the greater strength, the greater nobility, the greater heroism, and the greater courage would be to emulate Martin Luther King: that is, to hold our ground when we meet other countries and cultures, yet to confirm them even in opposing.

We are so used to the stereotype of the unreconciled rebel that we interpret the ending of the Book of Job to mean that he was no rebel at all. Yet the strongest rebellion is that which is able to hold its ground *and* confirm the other. Only this double action prevents that transformation of rebellion into new tyranny against which Camus warns. The Modern Promethean's fight against what oppresses him—that fight which surely must have been in the hearts of many of those in Selma after the brutalities of the first day of the march and of other fighters for justice and equality on countless occasions since then—is part of us too; we cannot ignore it. Yet we have to bring it into

the larger framework of the Modern Job. In the Modern Job, exile and rebellion become a way of man—a way for individuals but also, in this hour of confrontations, a way for races and for peoples.

When Martin Luther stood before the German princes, he said: "Here I stand. I can do no other." His namesake Martin Luther King had to bear witness in the same way. In 1963 it seemed as if King had reached a high point of influence with the famous March on Washington and King's great speech to 100,000 people, "I have a dream"! Within two years after this march, many of those who were concerned about civil rights in America became equally concerned about the disastrous war in Vietnam. In the fall of 1966, King had to make a difficult decision, and he made it unhesitatingly. At that point he declared that the fight for civil rights could not be divorced from the demand for peace in Vietnam. The immediate and all too realistic link was the fact that college students were being exempted from the draft and that the American Negro, as a result, was bearing a disproportionate share of the fighting in Vietnam. Relatively few American Negroes have had the education or have the financial resources necessary for entering college, and for many young Negroes even volunteering in the army seemed better than eking out a subsistence living on the margin of unemployment and welfare. The more basic reason, for King, however, was the impossibility of separating into watertight compartments the fight against injustice at home and the fight against injustice abroad. Immediately a number of the leaders of various branches of the Black Movement in the United States disclaimed King's action. None attempted to impeach his sincerity or his patriotism, but all stated that this was not 'good strategy' in the fight for civil rights.

It was at this point that my admiration for King reached its highest peak. Here was a man prepared to bear witness for the right as he saw it even at the expense of 'strategy'. Here was a social actionist and political leader ready to sacrifice influence and prestige rather than give in to an argument of expediency. Knowing that King had on occasion quoted Martin Buber in his speeches, I was strongly tempted at this time to send him my translation of two

short pieces in Martin Buber's then unpublished book, *A Believing Humanism*. As the American Martin Luther King was the disciple of Gandhi on the path of nonviolent resistance, so Gandhi in his turn was deeply influenced by an American of a century ago—Henry Thoreau. Writing on the centennial of Thoreau's death, Buber testified that reading Thoreau's classic tract on 'Civil Disobedience' had had a strong impact on him in his youth, but that it was only much later that he understood why. "It was the concrete, the personal, the 'here and now' in the writing that won my heart for it. Thoreau did not formulate a general principle as such; he set forth and grounded his attitude in a particular historical-biographical situation. He spoke to his reader in the realm of this situation common to them so that the reader not only learned why Thoreau at that time acted as he acted, but also—provided that this reader was only honest and unbiased—that he himself, the reader, must have acted, should the occasion present itself, in just such a way if he was seriously concerned about making his human existence real."³

In writing these words, Buber, like Thoreau, was not just concerned with one of the many cases in which powerless truth struggles against a power inimical to truth. For Buber as for Thoreau, it was "a question of the wholly concrete indication of the point at which time and again this struggle becomes the duty of man *as man*". What Buber said to Thoreau must be said in still greater measure of Gandhi and of Martin Luther King. Because each of them spoke as concretely as he did from his historical situation, he expressed in the right manner what is valid for all human history.

This is what I felt impelled—though alas not to the point of doing so!—to send to Martin Luther King. I also wanted to send him the longer companion piece in which Buber applied the question of 'civil disobedience' to the international situation today. Civil disobedience, if it is to be legitimate, must be obedience to a higher authority than the one that one here and now obeys. But there is no general way of demonstrating the legitimacy of this higher authority or of setting the limit to what we have to give to Caesar. Not at all times and places

but only in the particular situation, in the here and now, can this question be answered.

In our situation, however, it is easier to answer than ever before, for man is today on the point of letting the determination of his fate slip out of his hands. The all-embracing preparations and mutually outstripping bellicose surprises on all sides in the 'cold war' may reach such a point of automation as to transform the human cosmos "into a chaos beyond which we can no longer think". If, as Buber thinks, the rulers of the hour cannot wake up before it is too late, command a halt to the machinery, and learn to talk *to* instead of *past* one another, then who will come to the rescue while there is still time but the 'disobedient', those who personally set their faces against the power that has gone astray? "Must not a planetary front of such civil disobedients stand ready, not for battle like other fronts, but for saving dialogue? But who are these if not those who hear the voice that addresses them from the situation—the situation of the human crisis—and obey it?"⁴

Who can doubt that Martin Luther King was not just the representative of the Afro-Americans in their fight against racism and social inequality but a man who stood ready for saving dialogue, a man who heard and obeyed the voice of the concrete situation, a man who discovered in the situation, both national and international, not just what affected his face but the wholly concrete indication of his duty *as man*? It was with great pride that I marched with 400,000 others in New York City April 15, 1967, in a protest against the war in Vietnam led by Martin Luther King.

The decisions which Martin Luther King had to make in the last months and weeks of his life may have been the most difficult and painful of all. During these months the extremists in the 'Black Power' movement no longer looked to King as their leader nor to nonviolence as their spirit and their method. In the face of the riots that broke out in one after another of the Negro ghettos in the great American cities, in the face of threats and increasing danger of planned and spontaneous violence, King was placed before a cruel dilemma. If he tried to keep in the forefront of the civil rights movement, would he have to counte-

nance or at least go along with the violence he had so long opposed? If he failed to make common cause with the new forces in this movement, would he be forced into inaction as his only protection against allowing his influence to increase the possibility of violence? Here too, in the face of an ever more polarized situation, King stood firm and walked the way of the Modern Job. He increased his activity, if anything, joining in the strike in Memphis and planning his great 'Poor People's Campaign'. Yet he refused to depart from the spirit and principles that had guided his social witness in the dozen years since he had assumed leadership.

The weekend before King's assassination I was giving a seminar in a large mid-western city in the United States. In the course of the seminar we came to a discussion of the almost certain danger of still more terrible riots occurring in the American cities this summer and of the massive preparations of the police forces of those cities to meet those riots. I had not followed closely what had been happening in Memphis where King was marching with the strikers and was taken by surprise when one leading citizen after another accused him in connection with the police violence against Negroes that had occurred. Finally I saw a dark-skinned girl who had just come in raise her hand, and I called on her, expecting that she at least would do King Justice. "By his very presence there he is inciting violence!" she exclaimed. (She was not, as I had imagined, part Negro, but an American Arab who had been sent to interview me by the local Christian radio station.) "That is unfair!" I replied. "If there is any man who stands for something, it is Martin Luther King. If a small group has used his activities as a cover for violence, that cannot be laid at his door, nor can he be expected to cease his activity because of it." My belief in King was borne out by the facts that I later learned –that only a small group had incited violence, and King had resolutely opposed it. Five days later when the news of King's assassination reached me, I wondered what those faithful church-going people in the Protestant church at which I had held the seminar, would be thinking. Would their words come back to them with shame? Or would they see precisely this event as a justification for what they said? The possibility of his being murdered was nothing new to King. He and his wife and his co-workers in the

Southern Christian Leadership Conference lived with that possibility every time he made an appearance anywhere. But are we going to say then that when a man stands his ground, without flinching and without hatred, he must be held responsible for the fact that precisely such conduct calls forth the murderous hatred and violence of the weak and the cowardly?

The assassination of Martin Luther King is also a murder of man as man. It is an eclipse of the image of man that so much else has obscured and tarnished in our day. Yet Martin Luther King's presence •will remain with us—not just as an American Gandhi, a latter-day Thoreau, a suffering Christ, or even a Modern Job, but as himself in his unique personal witness. He will remain for us an image of what—in this time of great confrontations and little dialogue—it means to be human.

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1. New York: Random House, 1963.
 2. In Paul Goodman, editor, *The Seeds of Liberation* (New York: George Brazillier Co., 1965).
 3. Martin Buber, *A Believing Humanism: My Testament 1902-1965*, trans, with an Introduction and Explanatory Comments by Maurice Friedman (New York; Simon & Schuster Inc., 1968), "On 'Civil Disobedience' p. 191.
 4. *Ibid.*, "More on 'Civil Disobedience' pp. 192 f.

MULFORD Q. SIBLEY

THERE ARE SEVERAL PARALLELS between the lives and deaths of Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi. Both sought for nonviolent methods of social change. Both saw nonviolence as a way of life, rather than as a mere technique. Both were willing to admit serious blunders. Both were assassinated. In death, both were praised almost universally; yet most of those who praised them refused to follow their ideas. Both were almost immediately elevated by some to the ranks of demi-gods.

It is important, in assessing King, as in evaluating Gandhi, that we resist the tendency to make him a god. As in the case of Gandhi, there was a great deal of sentimentalism at his funeral and a tendency not to see the ambiguities in his career. Americans have a peculiar predilection for spinning myths about their assassinated leaders. Thus the real Lincoln has been lost—perhaps forever—in the often fuzzy legends which have developed since his passing. John Kennedy, who at the time of his murder was not the most popular of Presidents, now is a new god in the American Pantheon; and to question his wisdom or virtue is in many circles little short of sacrilege.

To see King in perspective is to see him as a man with the shortcomings as well as the virtues associated with the human condition. He was remarkable in many respects, to be sure. But he was also subject to severe limitations. While millions throughout the world no doubt see him as the symbol of nonviolence in America, we should never forget that he did not invent nonviolent direct action. It has been present throughout the American experience. In relation to race relations, it was utilized in the nineteenth century. In the forties and fifties of the twentieth century, men like Bayard Rustin and James Farmer were experimenting with it while King was yet in school. In some respects, events made King and he was less of a path-breaking pioneer than others.

When he first became widely known, in 1955, as leader of the Montgomery, Alabama bus strike, he was very uncertain of himself and was honest enough to admit that he often did not know which way to turn. His brief public career

from that time to his death in 1968 was the story of one who could learn from experience but who was sometimes less bold and imaginative than many would have liked. His failures were as significant as his successes and even the latter were often clouded over with ambiguities.

A highly intelligent man, he became keenly aware of the great difficulties in applying general principles to concrete situations. Thus he was often uncertain as to how the ethic of nonviolence should be spelled out in the many serious confrontations of the civil rights movement. Although he eventually came to justify civil disobedience—as in the Birmingham incidents of 1963—he literally agonized over the problem of whether those who were pressing for enforcement of desegregation laws could consistently at the same time advocate deliberate breaking of other laws.

At times he was quoted as approving the use of National Guard and federal troops during civil rights disturbances, even though he undoubtedly knew the mischief that resort to the military might cause— not to speak of its apparent incompatibility with the ethic of nonviolence. Once I had a conversation with the late A.J. Muste about this problem and he interpreted King as saying, in effect: "According to those who don't believe in the ethic of nonviolence, it is necessary to use federal troops and the National Guard to 'preserve order'. I am simply saying that, given their premises, the employment of troops is a duty." But A.J. Muste's interpretation was not satisfactory to me. On the other hand, the statement of a recent writer that "whenever the going got a bit rough" King "invariably screamed for Federal troops" (Robert Calese in *Peace News*, April 26, 1968, p. 6) is surely unjustified. Perhaps all that we can say is that, as in the case of Gandhi's acting as a recruiting officer for British troops in World War I (which some criticized as violating the ethic of nonviolence), the biographer must simply insert a large question mark.

King never worked but the principles which might conceivably distinguish between morally legitimate coercion, on the one hand, and illegitimate coercion—or violence—on the other. There can be no doubt about his commitment to nonviolence as a person and as leader of a movement. Obvious

cases of violence, such as killing, seriously maiming, or war, he clearly rejected. He also recognized that nonviolent direct action established, in his words, a "creative tension" which was often essential if negotiations were to take place: in effect, direct action had a large coercive element in it. But it is impossible to discover in his writings any guidelines as to how one can differentiate nonviolent from violent coercion. An economic boycott injures those boycotted and may deprive them of their livelihood. King did not regard it as an act of violence. Yet he leaves the impression that any use of physical force, however restrained, must be barred—even though it might cause less damage to soul or body than the boycott. King did not examine such issues, which also, unfortunately, remain somewhat unsettled in the writings of Gandhi.

King's greatest appeal as a leader was rooted in his understanding of the southern black man's religious culture. Theologically highly sophisticated himself, he could still employ honestly and un-selfconsciously the deeply emotional religious imagery so characteristic of rural and small-town Negroes—an imagery going back to the days of chattel slavery. Much of that religion is embodied in Negro 'spirituals', those often- haunting songs which so frequently express the age-old yearning for freedom. Moses and the Hebrew Promised Land have been ubiquitous in both the spirituals and other facets of black men's religion. Men and women respond wholeheartedly when King invoked such pictures. Thus just the night before his assassination he spoke to 2,000 black folks. After expressing some striking premonitions about his coming death, he alluded to Moses on the mountain-top having glimpses of the Promised Land:

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountain-top... Like anybody, I would like to live a long life... But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land. He also appealed to another facet of black southern religious consciousness—that of redemption through suffering. Since the days of slavery, black men had seen

their suffering as preparing the way for freedom, very much as the 'suffering servant' passages of Isaiah view Israel's bruises and hardships as essential for emancipating the Jews and all mankind. Gandhi's conception of nonviolence, which so impressed King (a portrait of Gandhi was prominently displayed in his home), fitted well into this native Negro tradition. To be sure, the tradition could be used to rationalize an 'Uncle Tom' attitude of sub-serviency. But King used it—as Gandhi employed nonviolence in India—to build a sense of solidarity, of personal worth, and of self-confidence. He saw that suffering, voluntarily endured for a cause, can be one of the most powerful and emancipating forces in the world. The 'terrible meek', refusing to retaliate in kind yet insisting on their basic rights as human beings, can make kings and ruling classes tremble.

Some have contended, with a certain amount of justification, that King's influence was not as great in the northern parts of the United States as in the southern regions. Perhaps this was due in part to the fact that northern black men were less closely tied to traditional religion whose symbols were so central in King's messages.

It is sometimes said that he moved too slowly and that he was often indecisive. In a measure, this criticism is just. On the other hand, once he did become persuaded that a proposed course of action should be taken, he could not be moved by contrary pressures. He worried for a long time as to whether he should take a vigorous public stand against the war in Vietnam. Privately, of course, he had opposed the war from the beginning. But some argued that public opposition would divide and weaken the Civil Rights cause and, by alienating the American ruling class, cut off any benefits the government might otherwise bestow. After much deliberation, however, King reached the conclusion that he must speak out as a matter of conscience and leave the consequences to God. Hence the last months of his life witnessed an interweaving of Civil Rights and anti-war arguments: he could not separate the cause of black emancipation from that of casting out human slavishness to war.

Many Americans, now that he is dead, seem to delight in portraying him as a 'moderate', by contrast, presumably, with such alleged 'militants' as Rap Brown

and Stokeley Carmichael. Some members of the American ruling classes would like to take King into their ranks posthumously. But King was not a 'moderate', as that term is often used by respectable and comfortable whites. Particularly during the latter years of his life was he moving in a radical direction. He repudiated violence, among other reasons, because he thought that it would inhibit fundamental social change in the direction of equality. To be sure, he began his career by seeking only relatively limited objectives, such as the right of Negroes to eat at lunch counters. But experience taught him that there was a fundamental malaise in the relations between white and black and that only very basic economic and social upheaval could eliminate the evil. He went to Memphis, it should be remembered—where he was to meet death—to assist in a strike of garbage collectors, those 'untouchables' of the American scene. In the weeks before his assassination, he was preparing for the great Poor People's Campaign which had among its ultimate objectives a radical redistribution of income and the building of social solidarity across race lines among all the poor of the land. Poor whites, poor blacks, poor Puerto Ricans, and poor American Indians were to be joined together in a great crusade for drastic alteration of the property system. To be sure, some have argued that King was not fully aware of his crusade's implications for drastic change; but even if he did not completely understand at the time of his death, he would most assuredly have grown in comprehension had he continued to live.

Those who would portray King as a 'moderate' must blot out the memory of his great *Letter from Birmingham Jail* which was written in 1963. In it he argued for the moral right and obligation of civil disobedience and for an 'extremism' which ran contrary to the mainstream of conventional American thought: "Was not Jesus an extremist in Love?... Was not John Bunyan an extremist?—'I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.'... So the question is not whether we will be extremist but what kind of extremist will we be... Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice— or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?"

Critics of King have sometimes argued that he was oblivious of the necessity for ordinary 'political' action through the electoral and judicial process and that his form of 'nonviolent direct action' is obsolete. But King never thought of nonviolent resistance and orthodox processes as necessarily opposed. Resistance might be a way of developing political consciousness, for example. King's movement was active in voter registration and in elections, as well as in campaigns of direct action. King always recognized the pioneering efforts of the National Association for Advancement of Coloured People in fighting important legal battles through the courts. To him, orthodox and unorthodox actions supplemented each other. Sluggish administrators and legislators had to be prodded through the shock tactics of direct action, just as direct actionists had to recognize that part of their objective was to secure important changes of policy through the legislative process.

Now that he is gone, there is much talk about the death of nonviolence. Some critics, like many of those who idolize him, appear to think that he invented nonviolent resistance and that it therefore passes with him. But they are wrong. While he did, to be sure, contribute to our understanding of nonviolence, he built upon the labours of others and upon realities in the general American and black communities. Those realities are still present. Among them are the black religious consciousness to which King appealed; the proven efficiency of nonviolent direct action under certain circumstances; the tendency for violence to impose reactionary imperatives of its own; and widespread awareness that if blacks turn to violence it would simply provide a rationalization for those who wish to suppress the Negroes' stride toward freedom. Non-violent resistance and direct action may be far more needed in the future than in the past and their potentialities are still with us.

At the time of his death, King was moving in the direction of revolution through nonviolence. It is the only 'revolution' which is not spurious. His successors must be even clearer than he was about the meaning and theory of nonviolence, for they confront a world in which enormous violence is built covertly into existing social orders and in which the cult of violence has unfortunately affected many

alleged revolutionaries. The political realists among would-be revolutionaries are those who resist the temptation to violence because they see in it a trap which will frustrate basic change, as it helped destroy revolutionary potential in the France of 1792, the Russia of 1920, and the Spain of 1936. The romantics are those who think that violence produces revolution, rather than reaction. The romantics are soft-headed; the advocates of nonviolence are hard-headed. It was King's great merit that, with all his ambiguities, he saw this with increasing clarity.

WILLIAM ROBERT MILLER

"The king is dead", said a black American. "See what nonviolence gets you? I've made up my mind – it's not for me." In the period of national mourning, many white reactionaries were silent; the few who were not said what they had always said – that Martin Luther King's 'so-called nonviolence' led to violence – and they seemed to take satisfaction in his violent death.

There were journalistic pundits who said Martin King had a premonition of his death. They ignored the simple fact that King lived with the prospect of death for a dozen years. In January 1956 his home was bombed. A year later another bomb was thrown on his porch but failed to explode. In September 1958 he was stabbed. On May 11, 1963 the motel which was his headquarters in Birmingham was bombed, and so was his brother's home. A year later his motel headquarters in St Augustine, Florida, was raked by gunfire from three sides. Had he been in his room on either occasion, he would have been killed. Churches and homes were bombed or set on fire in Montgomery, Albany, Birmingham. In 1965, Malcolm X was shot. James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo, Jimmie Lee Jackson, Jonathan Daniels, Bruce Klunder, Medgar Evers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, Herbert Lee, the six Birmingham children, President John F. Kennedy— all these and more have been killed in this violent land. It required no 'premonition' for Martin Luther King to be acutely aware that his days were numbered.

H. Rap Brown, one of the new demagogues of black power, has said, "Violence is as American as cherry pie". He was talking about the violence of white power, the violence that virtually exterminated the American Indian and has been diligently trying to do the same to the peasantry of Vietnam. Very few white Americans have died at the hands of black Americans, even in self-defence. To my knowledge, the only whites who died in the struggle for racial equality were those who championed the cause of their black brothers—those, in other words, who shared Martin Luther King's dream of a new America, a dream of nonviolent revolution.

The assassination of Martin Luther King brought in its wake riots in more than forty cities, an explosion of blind rage and frustration within the black ghettos. The death toll, at last report, was almost all Negro. On Chicago's West Side, where King built his Union to End Slums, there were teenage gangs, the Cobras and the Vice Lords, which held out against the looting and burning—they, of all people, were youths who heard and heeded King's message of nonviolence. But listen to these words from the white editor of a Protestant denominational newspaper, commenting on the riots: "Who were these who thus mocked the memory and methods of one of the greatest of their own race? They were a minuscule group of black men who had arson and larceny in their hearts long before Dr King was killed. With the ring of the fatal shot, they said to themselves: 'They can't blame us now', and they proceeded to dishonour their race and their nation."¹

It is, I submit, precisely this kind of officious, insensitive moralizing that makes me fear for America's future. The author of these words is not a reactionary. I suppose he could be credited with all kinds of good intentions and moral rectitude. What he leaves out of account is the fact that "arson and larceny" (note the legalism in the choice of words) were planted in black men's hearts by the deeds of white men who, to begin with, herded them into the rat-infested ghettos and then turned a deaf ear to the urgent pleas and warnings of men like Martin Luther King who told them repeatedly and insistently of the consequences that would surely ensue unless the problems of the black ghetto were faced on a vast scale. The stage is now set for more and worse riots this summer. To become capable of rioting is paradoxically a sign of health, and affirmation of the will to live. In so far as Martin King roused the people of the ghetto from their apathy, he made them capable of taking their destiny in their own hands, capable of lashing out against a whole web of evils in which life had ensnared them. Life? What kind of life? The life decreed for them by white America, which rejected their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of good jobs, housing, schools and everything else which white America reserved to itself. Now Whitey rebukes those who "mocked the memory and methods of the greatest of their own race", and thereby reveals why he came to admire Martin

Luther King, not as a great American or a great Christian but as "one of *them*". And in this resides a colossal misunderstanding.

White America has consistently been blind to its own violence against others. Had it not been callous in the infliction of subtle, everyday violence, the violence that created and maintained the ghettos? It not only tolerated crime but syndicated it and celebrated it. So long as there was no damage to white property or white lives, the ravages of ghetto life aroused little interest. And the same may generally be said of the life of the Negro everywhere in America. The 'good' white people of Montgomery, Alabama, allowed the 'bad' white people of that city to set the pattern of insult and ill-treatment that caused the buses to be boycotted in 1956. Moreover, the 'good' white Americans outside Montgomery were, at best, only mildly critical of the whole system of racial injustice—to the extent that they noticed it at all. And for the most part they didn't even notice it until people like Martin Luther King dramatically brought it to their attention. When he did, only a tiny minority took their stand with him. To most he remained 'one of *them*'—and as such they were relieved to know that he preached nonviolence and told his followers not to retaliate. No white blood would be shed—how wonderful. They liked to hear this, took reassurance from it and even to a certain extent responded charitably or with what they thought was generosity, sunning themselves with liberal pieties of brotherhood which never even really began to enter into the depths of King's dream or of the black man's cry for recognition as a fellow human being. They could feel righteous indignation toward only the worst and most flagrant deprivations of remote Southern police and sheriffs and Klansmen against Negroes. What they were really afraid of was the vengeance which, deep in their psyche, white Americans knew they deserved. They came to appreciate Martin Luther King for 'cooling it', for sparing them from 'the fire next time'. But in this there was a good deal of ambivalence. White America would have preferred to be left alone altogether, to wallow in its orgies of safe television violence. If it must have the nuisance and annoyance of 'racial unrest', let it be minimized by nonviolence. That is how they liked to think of it, and that is why they

appreciated it to the extent they did. And then when the great man of nonviolence was dead, they mourned him with unbridled ambiguity.

In a sense, America had already lost Martin Luther King as early as 1966, or even 1964, for the same processes which brought him to the position of leadership in the freedom revolution also gave rise to the demand for 'black power*'. The first proponents of black power began as dedicated apostles of nonviolence, and even as they raised the new slogan in the summer of 1966 they continued to adhere to a nonviolent discipline. It is only subsequently that black power advocates have talked of armed resistance. They have practised it only defensively and only in extreme situations. The slogan did not arise out of thin air but from a growing realization, over a period of years, that the white power structure was largely immune to moral suasion alone; and that throughout America there were so few white people willing to struggle against the white power structure that black men who wanted freedom could not count on them as allies. That is a debatable point and a source of division within the movement, but it is also a reality which changed the movement's centre of gravity and made 'black power' the new rallying cry rather than 'freedom now' or 'racial equality'. Martin Luther King thought the slogan was unfortunate; he did not like its anti-white implications. But he endorsed its basic meaning, which is that black people should attain political, economic and other kinds of power and thus be able to control their own destinies instead of settling for fair treatment (which they usually couldn't get anyway) under conditions of white ownership and control.

Intelligently understood, black power is a reasonable aim and a necessary step toward a new America of racial equality. It represents a deepening of the struggle and a recognition that genuine racial integration is a more complex event than it first seemed to be. Martin Luther King knew this; he always made a distinction between desegregation and integration. He hoped against hope for a breakthrough, clinging desperately to a faith in America which white America did little to vindicate. I shall never forget that moment in March 1965, at the end of the march from Selma to Montgomery, when President Lyndon B.

Johnson declared, "We shall overcome. . . . The real hero of this struggle is the American Negro. . . . He has called upon us to make good the promise of America." It seemed too good to be true, the President of the United States aligning himself with the freedom movement. And then, as months passed, it was too good to be true, if it had been true at all, it was only for a moment. The crusade against racism and poverty was quietly scuttled as the war in Vietnam escalated. The Congress of the United States could not find \$40 million to exterminate rats in the festering slums of our cities, but it could appropriate billions to conscript slum-dwellers and send them across the planet to kill 'gooks'. Racism, by whatever name, triumphed at home and abroad, two sides of the same coin, making a mockery of all the hopeful slogans of the Johnsonian Great Society—and throwing black people back upon their own resources.

And there was, too, a 'white backlash'—a reaffirmation of white racism by those who complained that blacks were demanding too much. Even white 'liberals', erstwhile supporters of Martin Luther King, fell away, professing horror at the 'threat' of black power. The road ahead is a rough and uncertain one. It is much too early to predict anything. As I write, Martin King's friend and jailmate, Ralph D. Abernathy, has established an encampment of the poor in Washington, D.C., calling it 'Resurrection City'. One would like to hope that this would be a redemptive sequel to Martin King's death, but I am afraid that White America is not so kind nor so easily transformed. Even where there are good intentions there is a lack of depth of understanding. It takes a conflagration like Watts, apparently, to stir many white liberals from their torpor—and at the same time the same events confirm others in opinions which are potentially genocidal.

The genius of Martin Luther King was that he knew how to channel and to focus the legitimate discontents of black people. Both nonviolent demonstrations and unbridled rioting can dramatize black men's protest against evil. The sad fact is that during the last two or three years of his life, Martin King's influence was waning, as was the capacity of black Americans to protest again and again without resorting to violence.

In the past decade, while the nonviolent movement scored important though inconclusive gains in the South, conditions in the urban black ghettos worsened. Poor people got poorer, while everyone else prospered and the rich got very much richer. In the private sector of the American economy there is more than enough wealth to eradicate poverty. If, say, all wealth above the level of one million dollars was allocated to A. Philip Randolph's Freedom Budget, it would not be difficult to fill it to the \$100 billion mark. The money is here. It is the old old story of how it is distributed—'Them as has, gets'. Now rebellion is brewing in the ghettos. There are people there who feel that they have nothing to lose and who are fed up with being oppressed and excluded. And a new black leadership is emerging, ready to articulate the anger of the ghetto. If the successors of Martin Luther King do not succeed in bringing needed change through nonviolence, these black jacobins will undoubtedly come to the helm. The solution to this dilemma is less in the hands of Abernathy than it is in the hands of those in positions of responsibility—those who control America's wealth and determine its priorities.

The expressions of mourning which followed Martin Luther King's death were of unprecedented magnitude. It is possible that hearts were changed as people mourned—but to what extent remains to be seen. To what extent will white Americans of good will re-dedicate themselves to the dream he proclaimed? To what extent will they transform first themselves and then their racist white neighbours? White America has deceived itself for a long, long time. It has been blind to things which were only too clear to black Americans. The veneer of benignity has been peeled away by recent events. Some of us have become aware for the first time, for example, that police are generally racists and that in black ghettos they are generally a law unto themselves, and that they are frequently, as Martin Luther King observed in a perceptive article in *Saturday Review* in November 1965, involved in pervasive organized crime "designed, directed, and cultivated by white national crime syndicates". Idealistic young rookies soon learn that if they are to fit into their jobs as police officers they must become cynical and corrupt, catering to the privileged. Nathan Wright in his recent book, *Ready to Riot*, based on a detailed and largely first-hand study

of Newark and its racial violence, asserts that the white power structure's concept of 'order' has little to do with law and still less to do with justice. The urban poor, predominantly black, are boxed in. They must fight for their lives, intelligently or stupidly, through well-planned demonstrations or through disorganized outbursts.

The first words of the introduction to my book *Nonviolence* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964) were, "Nonviolence is an idea whose time has come". The statement, paraphrasing Victor Hugo, is one that Martin Luther King uttered on many occasions. Now, four years later, it may be asked whether that idea's time has come *and gone*. History does not readily enthrone what is noble. The martyrdoms of Jesus and Gandhi have prepared us for that of Martin King, and we are not astonished. Nor are we astonished that Christian *agape* and Gandhian Satyagraha have not taken the world by storm. Each in its time produced a harvest of good. Most of the civil rights laws enacted in the past decade would not have been adopted but for Martin Luther King's heroic and saintly work. How fitting it is that his last campaign was waged on behalf of the Negro garbage-men of Memphis. For King was, of his kind, a Brahmin like Gandhi, and these were his Harijans. Their struggle was, more than for anything else, for human dignity and the recognition of their humanity. Like Jesus, whom he revered above all others, Martin King embraced all mankind—rich and poor, white and black, Brahmin and Harijan. He could have led a comfortable life, very successful 'as the world giveth', within the bounds set by America's racial caste system. He chose otherwise, casting his lot with 'the wretched of the earth'.

The King is dead. Brother Martin is dead. The legacy that remains to us is a mixed one, rife with the unsolved problems in which he was enmeshed. His spirit lives on. Is that a trite thing to say? Yet I believe it does and will always, whether it is timely or not. Even among those who most ardently espouse the slogan of black power, there is honour for his memory and a will to take nonviolence as far as it will go before resorting to other measures. We need such a reservoir of hope, for our situation is every bit as desperate as Martin

Luther King said it was. Time and again, he warned that if the white power structure did not come to terms with the nonviolent revolution, it would have to face violence. He was not advocating the latter, but recognizing the handwriting on the wall. If we share his faith and his commitment, we must above all share this heartbreaking concern. White America must wake up and let black America come in out of the cold, or there will be great tragedy in store for all of us. That, it seems to me, is Martin Luther King's most immediate and urgent message—let the disadvantaged enter into their rightful inheritance. Make way for them. There must be an end to the rule of white power over powerless blacks. Blacks must have power too, and the dignity it confers. It was the capstone of Martin Luther King's crusade for freedom that his wielding of nonviolence created such dignity and gave birth to a feeling of power on the part of the disadvantaged. The next move now is Whitey's.

□ Mr Miller has just completed a comprehensive biography, *Martin Luther King*, to be published in the U.S.A. in November 1968.—*Editors*.

1. Paul C. Allen, "Random Reactions during Those Ten Pays in April", *Crusader*, May 1968,

PAUL F. POWER

MARTIN LUTHER KING HAD TWO, interrelated roles. First, he was a righteous man with an ultimate vision who preached about the human condition. Second, he was an activist who used peaceful means to alter social institutions. Gifted with a prophetic mission, he helped to shape recent American history.

If one looks at King as a prophetic figure, there is the immediate fact that by family tradition, training and choice he became a Protestant Minister in a non-liturgical, evangelical tradition. Central to that tradition is the sermon which became his characteristic medium of expression. Through it King revealed his particular message. Typical was a sermon in which he adopted Scripture to justify and limit resistance. Speaking to fellow victims of segregation, he said: "You must continue to work passionately and vigorously for your God-given and constitutional rights. It would be both cowardly and immoral for you patiently to accept injustice... But as you continue your struggle with Christian methods... be sure that the means you employ are as pure as the end you seek" (*Strength to Love*, 1968 ed., p. 161). With a few changes this might have been Gandhi speaking. King expressed a debt to Gandhi, especially to his method. The Negro leader could not go beyond this tribute because his theological premises were different.

The Christian character of King's assumptions may need no more comment than to recall that they existed and influenced his two roles. They also accounted for at least part of his visibility among sophisticates. "The *belief* of Martin Luther King", Elizebeth Hardwick wrote in *The New York Review of Books* shortly after King's funeral, "What an unexpected, peculiar strength it had!" Peculiar or not, this belief, centred in Christianity's founder, provided King with the basis for his social Christianity which bridged his prophetic and reformist functions. Walter Rauschenbusch and William Temple were among the formative influences on King's commitment to social reform as a necessary extension of faith. To his meliorism King brought a conviction that evil would persist despite legal changes. Only redemption would overcome evil. Thus he

said that the "enforcement of civil rights laws will bring an end to segregated public facilities... but it cannot bring an end to fears, prejudice, pride and irrationality... These dark forces and demonic responses will be removed only as men are possessed by the invisible, inner law ... [of *agape*]." (*ibid.*, p. 28).

In addition to Biblical sources, belief in evil traced to Reinhold Niebuhr. The Negro leader credited Niebuhr with showing him the weakness of liberal Protestantism's optimism about man and reform and the complex relation between morality and power (*Stride toward Freedom*, 1964 ed., p. 81). King, however, showed more millennialism in his roles than Niebuhr did in his later career. King considered and rejected Niebuhr's reasons for withdrawing from pacifism, holding that the theologian confused it with non-resistance and did not see the potentialities of nonviolent opposition developed by Gandhi. Yet King accepted part of Niebuhr's views and agreed with him that pacifists are not free of the dilemmas that trouble non-pacifists. This was one reason why King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference did not adopt an ideology of pacifism. In turn this condition helps to explain how they could act in conjunction with disbelievers in non-violence, provided that the latter did not insist on their methods. None the less, there was a dividing line between the two groups. King came to accept the small radius of his circle. This quality permitted the ashram to guard its norms and to influence others. His acceptance also came from certain realities. At first pledged to King's values, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee turned away from SCLC to more adventuresome leadership. Additionally, King was unable to organize SCLC units in northern cities because of resistance from such leaders as Adam Clayton Powell and social and intellectual factors at variance with the Southern Negro culture where the movement had begun.

A summit of Dr King's prophetic role was his 'Let Freedom Ring' address to the 1963 demonstration in Washington. The march itself originated with A. Philip Randolph and owed its management to Bayard Rustin. King made a primary contribution to the event which helped to produce the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Urban riots that summer when King visited New York City, the radicalization of

SNCC and the Congress of Racial Equality, and the rise of anti-integrationist leaders to prominence seriously eroded SCLC's position in the Negro rights movement. The Southern organization and its head tried to close the gap by adopting 'militant nonviolence' as their creed and economic justice 'now' as their program. The effort caused a shift from the Biblical to the neo-Sorelian, evident in SCLC's posters for the 1968 Poor People's Campaign which show grim peasant faces that Diego Rivera might have drawn. Poverty consciousness can, of course, be integrationist and nonviolent, and it is these qualities which save SCLC's rationale for the Campaign from technical agreement with several varieties of black power.

Dr King's part in SCLC's effort to regain lost political ground in the Negro community is found in his description of the Poor People's Campaign as "a last desperate demand to avoid the worst chaos, hatred and violence any nation has ever encountered". Is this the equivalent of Gandhi's 1942 'Quit India' statement which frightened the war-time British government, not into granting concessions but into suppressing the party and jailing its leaders until the end of the conflict? I think not. King held out the picture of violence while Gandhi did not, although some violence did follow his call. Another problem raised by the analogy is that of imperialism. Did King think that imperialism existed in the United States? Probably not, despite his increasing radicalism and his discussions with Ben Bella in 1962 in New York City on what the Algerian revolutionist called mutual problems. King worked for and lived to see the ending of many kinds of legal segregation. After his assassination a previously reluctant Congress passed an open housing bill which he had sought. There is little evidence that he came to believe that he lived under foreign rule. Although the captivity idea is firmly fixed in King's Old Testament role, in his political role he did not, like some of his successors, interpret the American government as another Pharaoh. Although shaken, he continued to believe in the American promise.

Dr King's jeremiad about the 1968 Washington demonstration cannot be put aside, however. It links up with similar comments that indicate how in his last

phase an apocalyptic aspect of his prophetic role may have outweighed his reformist function. About Operation Breadbasket, one of SCLC's more constructive programs, he said in mid-1967 during riots: "As long as people are devoid of jobs they will find themselves in moments of despair that could lead to the continuation of these disorders". Clearly King deplored the earlier outbreaks in Watts where he visited and met both applause and disapproval. Still, the apocalyptic tendency was strong in his last few years. On the Report of the National Commission on Civil Disorders he said that it "is a physician's warning of approaching death, with a prescription for life". Perhaps the Negro leader had become disenchanted with appeals to white conscience and decided on brinkmanship whereby his cause would borrow strength from prophecies about impending disasters. More likely in the perspective of his whole career was that his reforming had passed under the control of a despairing side of his prophetic role. The result in either case was that his judgments were open to the interpretation that he had abandoned evolutionist methods and that the moment of truth had arrived in a final struggle between light and darkness. Accordingly those who disagreed with his philosophy might well wait to see if the storm would bring him over to their camp.

King's entrance into the controversy about the war in Vietnam requires special mention. Although he had long opposed nuclear weapons he joined the anti-war protest when his movement had economic, personnel and psychological needs. SCLC had been losing the donations, manpower and energies of radical white liberals and their supporters who had become concerned with napalm than with the Mississippi Delta. Without their help the SCLC might have survived, but it would have lost a national political foothold and an integrated following, thereby giving indirect aid to black separatists. King was also challenged by Negro leaders such as Julian Bond who denounced the war and Negro participation in it. The decision to join the anti-Vietnam coalition had its costs. Moderate public opinion deplored King's action, although as the war became increasingly unpopular this reaction lessened in importance. A different cost was in terms of the United States' reputation abroad. The best known Negro leader in world opinion added his weight to charges that the Johnson

Administration was trying to perpetuate white colonialism and had committed Nazi-type aggression. Several Negro leaders disapproved of King's joining of civil rights and the war issue, among them Ralphe Bunche, Whitney Young, Jackie Robinson and Paul Anthony. Perhaps the most effective response to the King-SCLC decision came from the NAACP. In April 1967 its directors rejected the move as serving neither civil rights nor peace, adding that the former would have to win on their own merits, regardless of international conditions.

For his part King grounded his decision on three main points: the War was undercutting domestic programs on poverty and civil rights; an escalated conflict risked China's involvement and a nuclear war; and as an advocate of nonviolence he had to extend the ethic to foreign affairs. Throughout much of 1967 King's attention was drawn to the Vietnamese controversy to the detriment of advancing civil rights through peaceful means. A turn came in the fall with the SCLC decision to organize the Poor People's Campaign to emphasize economic needs that could be met by a shift of resources from war to domestic reconstruction. Mindful of the past summer's upheavals, Congress and the Executive Branch reacted with concern about the announced plans which included mention of the blocking of Washington facilities. Here another cost of Dr King's move into the anti-war circles, the virtual cutting of communication with a President who had done much to expedite civil rights and social legislation, adversely affected the federal government's reception of the news about the Poor People's Campaign.

Why did the SCLC decide on a poverty issue rather than to confront the war question directly? An interviewer probed for an answer to this question with King in early 1968 and was told that those in SCLC who wanted the demonstration to stress Vietnam were won with the argument that if the demands of the Poor People's Campaign are met, the war in Southeast Asia cannot be waged (Jose Yglesias, *New York Times Magazine*, March 31, 1968). Another possible explanation is that before the Hanoi-Washington peace talks were mooted Dr King and the SCLC had developed reservations about too close an association with the antiwar question and chose an issue of broad domestic

concern since at least the time of John F. Kennedy. It remains to be seen how the issue is advanced by the SCLC-led Campaign and what reception it receives from the central government and the American voters in an unpredictable and crucial Presidential election year. Regardless of its outcome, the fact that the Campaign was placed on a wide social question rather than on a racial or international issue is a tribute to Dr King.

Although the SCLC leader had visited India, Africa and Europe, his international interests had been limited before he became a critic of American policy in Vietnam. His typical political role was concerned with domestic affairs. His most impressive phase was when the role was regional and he led nonviolent protests in the South. Lasting until early 1965, this phase was comparable to that part of Gandhi's South African period which started with his first civil disobedience campaign in 1906. Both leaders faced repressive environments and both sought moral victories as much as practical gains. For King this controlling outlook persisted from the Montgomery bus boycott through the disappointing Albany Movement of 1962, the turbulent Birmingham episode the next year when he was arrested for the thirteenth time, and the 50-mile march in the Selma episode which helped to produce a voting rights law that promises to give the Southern Negro important power. Birmingham was the occasion for his writing of 'From Birmingham City Jail', an answer to conservative clerics who mistook his Christian humanism for anarchism and who were told to look again. Of more substance than his Nobel Prize address in late 1964, the tract established him as a major theorist of civil disobedience.

During these regional activities Dr King's prophetic and reformist functions seemed to have been in particular harmony. There was a high correspondence between his role as an authoritative witness and his part as an irenic activist. He was living out Romans 10: 14-15: "And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?"

BAYARD RUSTIN

THE MURDER OF DR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. has thrust a lance into the soul of America. The pain is most shattering to the Negro people. We have lost a valiant son, a symbol of hope and an eloquent spirit that inspired masses of people. Such a man does not appear often in the history of social struggle. When his presence signifies that greatness can inhabit a black skin, those who must deny this possibility stop at nothing to remove it. Dr King now joins a long list of victims of desperate hate in the service of insupportable lies, myths and stereotypes.

For me, the death of Dr King brings deep personal grief. I had known and worked with him since the early days of the Montgomery bus protest in 1955, through the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Prayer Pilgrimage in 1957, the youth marches for integrated schools in 1958 and 1959 and the massive March on Washington in 1963.

Though his senior by 20 years, I came to admire the depth of his faith in nonviolence, in the ultimate vindication of the democratic process and in the redeeming efficacy of social commitment and action. And underlying this faith was a quiet courage grounded in the belief that the triumph of justice, however long delayed, was inevitable. Like so many others, I watched his spirit take hold in the country, arousing long-slumbering consciences and giving shape to a new social movement. With that movement came new hopes, aspirations and expectations. The stakes grew higher.

At such a time, so great a loss can barely be sustained by the Negro people. But the tragedy and shame of April fourth darkens the entire nation as it teeters on the brink of crisis. And let no one mistake the signs: our country is in deadly serious trouble. This needs to be said because one of the ironies of life in an advanced industrialised society is that many people can go about their daily business without being directly affected by the ominous rumblings at the bottom of the system.

Yet we are at one of the great crossroads in our history and the alternatives before us grow more stark with every summer's violence. In moments like these there is a strong temptation to succumb to utter despair and helpless cynicism. It is indeed hard to maintain a clear perspective, a reliable sense of where events are heading. But this is exactly what we are called upon to do. Momentous decisions are about to be made—consciously or by default—and the consequences will leave not one corner of this land, nor any race or class, untouched.

Where, then, do we go from here?

We are a house divided. Of this Dr King's murder is a stunning reminder. Every analysis, strategy and proposal for a way out of the American dilemma must begin with the recognition that a perilous polarisation is taking place in our society. Part of it is no doubt due to the war in Vietnam, part to the often remarked generational gap. But generations come and go and so do foreign policies. The issue of race, however, has been with us since our earliest beginnings as a nation. I believe it is even deeper and sharper than the other points of contention. It has bred fears, myths and violence over centuries. It is the source of dark and dangerous irrationality, a current of social pathology running through our history and dimming our brighter achievements.

Most of the time the reservoir of racism remains stagnant. But— and this has been true historically for most societies—when major economic, social or political crises arise, the backwaters are stirred and latent racial hostility comes to the surface. Scapegoats must be found, simple targets substituted for complex problems. The frustration and insecurity generated by these problems find an outlet in notions of racial superiority and inferiority. Very often we find that the most virulent hostility to Negroes exists among ethnic groups that only recently 'made it' themselves or that are still near the bottom of the ladder. They need to feel that somebody is beneath them. (This is a problem which the labour movement has had to face more acutely perhaps than any comparable institution in American life. And it is a problem which some of labour's middle-class critics have not had to cope with at all.)

Negroes are reacting to this hostility with a counter-hostility. Some say the white man has no 'soul'; others say he is barbaric, uncivilized; others proclaim him racially inferior. As is so often the case, such a *reaction* is the exaggerated obverse of the original *action*.

And in fact it incorporates elements of white stereotypes of Negroes. ('Soul' for example, so far as it is definable, seems to consist in part of rhythm, spontaneity, pre-industrial sentimentality, a footloose anti-regimentation, etc.— qualities attributed to Negroes by many whites, though in different words.)

This reaction among Negroes is not so new as many white people think. What is new is the intensity with which it is felt among some Negroes and the violent way it has been expressed in recent years. For this, the conservatives and reactionaries would blame the civil rights movement and the federal government. And in the very specific sense, we must conclude that they are right.

One effect of the civil rights struggle in the past 10 years has been to convince a generation of young Negroes that their place in society is no longer predetermined at birth. We demonstrated that segregationist barriers could be toppled, that social relations were not fixed for all time, that change was on the agenda. The federal government reinforced this new consciousness with its many pronouncements that racial integration and equality were the official goals of American society.

The reactionaries would tell us that these hopes and promises were unreasonable to begin with and should never have been advanced. They equate stability with the preservation of the established hierarchy of social relations, and chaos with the reform of that unjust arrangement. The fact is that the promises were reasonable, justified and long overdue. Our task is not to rescind them—how do you rescind the promise of equality?—but to implement them fully and vigorously.

This task is enormously complicated by the polarization now taking place on the race issue. We are caught in a vicious cycle; inaction on the poverty and civil

rights fronts foments rioting in the ghettos: the rioting encourages vindictive inaction. Militancy, extremism and violence grow in the black community; racism, reaction and conservatism gain ground in the white community.

Personal observation and the law of numbers persuade me that a turn to the 'right' comprises the larger part of this polarization. This of course is a perilous challenge not only to the Negro but also to the labour movement, to liberals and civil libertarians, to all the forces for social progress. We must meet that challenge in 1968.

Meanwhile, a process of polarization is also taking place within the Negro community and, with the murder of Dr King, it is likely to be accelerated.

Ironically and sadly, this will occur precisely because of the broad support Dr King enjoyed among Negroes. That support cut across ideological and class lines. Even those Negro spokesmen who could not accept, and occasionally derided, Dr King's philosophy of nonviolence and reconciliation, admired and respected his unique national and international position. They were moved by his sincerity and courage. Not perhaps since the days of Booker T. Washington—when 90 per cent of all Negroes lived in the South and were occupationally and socially more homogeneous than today—had any one man come so close to being *the* Negro leader. He was a large unifying force and his assassination leaves an enormous vacuum. The diverse strands he linked together have fallen from his hands.

The murder of Dr King tells Negroes that if one of the greatest among them is not safe from the assassin's bullet, then what can the least of them hope for? In this context, those young black militants who have resorted to violence feel vindicated. "Look what happened to Dr King", they say, "he was nonviolent, he didn't hurt anybody. And look what they did to him. If we have to go down, let's go down shooting. Let's take whitey with us."

Make no mistake about it: a great psychological barrier has now been placed between those of us who have urged nonviolence as the road to social change and the frustrated despairing youth of the ghettos. Dr King's assassination is only the latest example of our society's determination to teach young Negroes

that violence pays. We pay no attention to them until they take to the streets in riotous rebellion. Then we make minor concessions—not enough to solve their basic problems, but enough to persuade them that we know they exist. "Besides", the young militants will tell you, "this country was built on violence. Look at what we did to the Indians. Look at our television and movies. And look at Vietnam. If the cause of the Vietnamese is worth taking up guns for, why isn't the cause of the black man right here in Harlem?"

These questions are loaded and oversimplified, to be sure, and they obscure the real issues and the programmatic direction we must take to meet them. But what we must answer is the bitterness and disillusionment that give rise to these questions. If our answers consist of mere words, they will fall on deaf ears. They will not ring true until ghetto-trapped Negroes experience significant and tangible progress in the daily conditions of their lives—in their jobs, income, housing, education, health care, political representation etc. This must be understood by those often well-meaning people who, frightened by the polarization, would retreat from committed action into homilies about racial understanding.

We are indeed a house divided. But the division between race and race, class and class, will not be dissolved by massive infusions of brotherly sentiment. The division is not the result of bad sentiment and therefore will not be healed by rhetoric. Rather the division and the bad sentiments are both reflections of vast and growing inequalities in our socio-economic system—inequalities of wealth, of status, of education, of access to political power. Talk of brotherhood and 'tolerance' (are we merely to 'tolerate' one another?) might once have had a cooling effect, but increasingly it grates on the nerves. It evokes contempt not because the values of brotherhood are wrong—they are more important now than ever—but because it just does not correspond to the reality we see around us. And such talk does nothing to eliminate the inequalities that breed resentment and deep discontent.

The same is true of most 'Black Power' sloganeering, in which I detect powerful elements of conservatism. Leaving aside those extremists who call for violent

'revolution', the Black Power movement embraces a diversity of groups and ideologies. It contains a strong impulse toward withdrawal from social struggle and action, a retreat back into the ghetto, avoidance of contact with the white world. This impulse may, I fear, be strengthened by the assassination of Dr King.

This brand of Black Power has much in common with the conservative white American's view of the Negro. It stresses self-help ("why don't those Negroes pull themselves up by their own bootstraps like my ancestors did?"). It identifies the Negro's main problems in psychological terms, calls upon him to develop greater self-respect and dignity by studying Negro history and culture and by building independent institutions.

In all of these ideas there is some truth. But taken as a whole, the trouble with this thinking is that it assumes that the Negro can solve his problems by himself, in isolation from the rest of the society. The fact is, however, that the Negro did not create these problems for himself and he cannot solve them by himself.

Dignity and self-respect are not abstract virtues that can be cultivated in a vacuum. They are related to one's job, education, residence, mobility, family responsibilities and other circumstances that are determined by one's economic and social status in society. Whatever deficiencies in dignity and self-respect may be laid to the Negro are the consequence of generations of segregation, discrimination and exploitation. Above all, in my opinion, these deficiencies result from systematic exclusion of the Negro from the economic mainstream.

This exclusion cannot be reversed—but only perpetuated—by gilding the ghettos. A 'separate but equal' economy for black Americans is impossible. In any case, the ghettos do not have the resources needed for massive programs of abolishing poverty, inferior education, slum housing and the other problems plaguing the Negro people. These resources must come primarily from the federal government, which means that the fate of the Negro is unavoidably tied to the political life of this nation.

It is time, therefore, that all of us, black and white alike, put aside the rhetoric that obscures the real problems. It is precisely because we have so long swept these incendiary problems under the rug that they are now exploding all around us, insisting upon our attention. We can divert our eyes no longer.

The life and death of Martin Luther King are profoundly symbolic. From the Montgomery bus protest to the Memphis sanitation workers' strike, his career embodies the internal development, the unfolding, the evolution of the modern civil rights struggle.

That struggle began as a revolt against segregation in public accommodations—buses, lunch counters, libraries, parks. It was aimed at ancient and obsolete institutional arrangements and mores left over from an earlier social order in the South, an order that was being undermined and transformed by economic and technological forces.

As the civil rights movement progressed, winning victory after victory in public accommodations and voting rights, it became increasingly conscious that these victories would not be secure or far-reaching without a radical improvement in the Negro's socio-economic position. And so the movement reached out of the South into the urban centres of the North and West. It moved from public accommodations to employment, welfare, housing, education—to find a host of problems the nation had let fester for a generation.

But these were not problems that affected the Negro alone or that could be solved easily with the movement's traditional protest tactics. These injustices were imbedded not in ancient and obsolete institutional arrangements but in the priorities of powerful vested interests, in the direction of public policy, in the allocation of our national resources. Sit-ins could integrate a lunch counter, but massive social investments and imaginative public policies were required to eliminate the deeper inequalities.

Dr King came to see that this was too big a job for the Negro alone, that it called for an effective coalition with the labour movement. As King told the AFL-CIO convention in 1961:

"Negroes are almost entirely a working people. There are pitifully few Negro millionaires and few Negro employers. Our needs are identical with labour's needs—decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old-age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community.

"That is why Negroes support labour's demands and fight laws which curb labour.

"That is why the labour-hater and labour-baiter is virtually always a twin-headed creature spewing anti-Negro epithets from one mouth and anti-labour propaganda from the other mouth.

"The duality of interest of labour and Negroes makes any crisis which lacerates you a crisis from which we bleed. As we stand on the threshold of the second half of the twentieth century, a crisis confronts us both. Those who in the second half of the nineteenth century could

not tolerate organized labour have had a rebirth of power and seek to regain the despotism of that era while retaining the wealth and privileges of the twentieth century.

...The two most dynamic and cohesive liberal forces in the country are the labour movement and the Negro freedom movement.

...I look forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one, with no thought to their separateness as Negroes, Jews, Italians or any other distinctions.

"This will be the day when we shall bring into full realization the American dream—a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed, a dream of a land where men will not take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few; a dream of a land where men will not argue that the colour of a man's skin determines the content of his character; a dream of a nation where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity; the

dream of a country where every man will respect the dignity and worth of human personality—that is the dream."

And so Dr King went to Memphis to help 1,300 sanitation workers— almost all of them black—to win union recognition, dues check-off, higher wages and better working conditions. And in the midst of this new phase of his work he was assassinated. Since then, the sanitation workers have won their fight. But the real battle is just beginning.

The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders is the latest in a series of documents—official, semi-official and unofficial—that have sought to arouse the American people to the great dangers we face and to the price we are likely to pay if we do not multiply our efforts to eradicate poverty and racism.

The recent recommendations parallel those urged by civil rights and labour groups over the years. The legislative work of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and of the AFL-CIO has been vital to the progress we have made so far. This work is now proceeding effectively on a broad coordinated basis. It has pinpointed the objectives for which the entire nation must strive.

We have got to provide meaningful work at decent wages for every employable citizen. We must guarantee an adequate income for those unable to work. We must build millions of low-income housing units, tear down the slums and rebuild our cities. We need to build schools, hospitals, mass transit systems. We need to construct new, integrated towns. As President Johnson has said, we need to build a 'second America' between now and the year 2000.

It is in the context of this national reconstruction that the socioeconomic fate of the Negro will be determined. Will we build into the second America new, more sophisticated forms of segregation and exploitation or will we create a genuinely open, integrated and democratic society? Will we have a more equitable distribution of economic resources and political power or will we sow the seeds of more misery, unrest and division?

Because of men like Martin Luther King, it is unlikely that the American Negro can ever again return to the old order. But it is up to us, the living black and white, to realize Dr King's dream.

This means, first of all, to serve notice on the 90th Congress that its cruel indifference to the plight of our cities and of the poor—even after the martyrdom of Dr King—will not be tolerated by the American people. In an economy as fabulously productive as ours, a balanced budget cannot be the highest virtue and, in any case, it cannot be paid for by the poor.

Next, I believe, we must recognize the magnitude of the threat we face in an election year from a resurgence of the rightwing backlash forces. This threat will reach ever greater proportions if this summer sees massive violence in the cities. The Negro-labour-liberal coalition, whatever differences now exist within and among its constituent forces, must resolve to unite this fall in order to defeat racism and reaction at the polls. Unless we so resolve, we may find ourselves in a decade of vindictive and mean conservative domination.

We owe it to Martin Luther King not to let this happen. We owe it to him to preserve and extend his victories. We owe it to him to fulfill his dreams. We owe it to his memory and to our future.

STEWART MEACHAM

THOUGH VIOLENCE IS THE COMMON denominator of U.S. policy, both foreign and domestic, nonviolence now challenges the United States in the person of the murdered Martin Luther King. His position even before his murder was unique among other black leaders of comparable influence. The leaders of the older civil rights organizations, though not violent men, do not present a nonviolent challenge to the country, for they are black men who have been accepted into the Establishment; they are relied upon to do two things: (1) keep themselves in positions of leadership and thereby maintain their Establishment credentials, and (2) in times when crisis threatens, be a moderating and temporizing influence on the black masses. They are able, safe men who preside over their institutions and use them (the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the Urban League, etc.) to accomplish good, solid purposes but not comprehensive social change. They are men who reassure the discontented that patience, hard work, and persistent hope can eventually bring results. These men, while not given to violence (indeed they are passionately committed to due process and to orderly steps) nevertheless accommodate to the violence of the state whether it be in Vietnam or closer to home. They champion equal rights for blacks to engage in state-sanctioned violence (the military, the ghetto police), and when violence flares out in the ghettos or on college campuses they (with appropriate head shaking) line up on the side of repression so long as it is restrained in its methods and officially sanctioned. Thus instead of being nonviolent, they are unviolent in their support of the powers- that-be who preside over a violent society. They are unviolent in their identification and their cooperation with an increasingly violent social order.

The black radicals on the other hand are typically young leaders who have gone through a period of strong, consistent adherence to nonviolence, only at last to chuck the whole business and declare themselves ready for violent social struggle. They have been beaten by the police, fired upon by white mobsters,

treated with contempt, and subjected to every indignity by people who are not even aware of their own racist attitudes. The black radicals in despair have turned from nonviolence; they frankly advocate violent struggle.

Both the more staid black leaders who have 'made it' in the Establishment and the radicals who choose defiance and all-out struggle are readily understandable. But Martin Luther King, who strangely combined characteristics of both, is not. The Establishment he has left behind would gladly extol his memory and use his nonviolence as a means of social control over the defiant radicals who reject doctrines of nonviolence and seek a quicker, more explicit solution. But neither the Establishment nor the new radical can either appropriate Martin Luther King or forget him.

Martin Luther King stood both for U.S. military withdrawal from Vietnam and for social justice and human dignity in the United States. It is a measure of the spiritual and moral chaos at the very core of American life that these two issues, peace and civil rights, though perceived in a theoretical way as joined, actually in practice often compete with each other. Young black soldiers in the armed forces in Vietnam enjoy opportunities for career advancement in the military establishment which they rarely experience in desegregated academic or religious institutions, where the ideal of peace, rationality and human brotherhood would seem to have a stronger social claim. The army, to them, offers a better chance for a job and some measure of social acceptance than they can find elsewhere.

White students resisting the military conscription system are frustrated in their efforts to bring blacks into their movement. Even when the young blacks shout, "Hell no, blacks won't go", what they really want is black liberation here and now, not just draft evasion. Resistance to the draft is incidental. And one of the things they want to be liberated from is the leadership of white radicals.

During the last four years of his life Martin Luther King was criticized by many of his more respectable supporters because he spoke out against the war in Vietnam. They thought he should stick to civil rights. Many American liberals, white and black, say that it is unrealistic to insist, as King did, that both issues,

withdrawal from Vietnam and bringing an end to racist policies at home, must go hand in hand. As a matter of strategy they prefer the so-called Freedom Budget plan approach which provides for the war on poverty within the context of an expanding military budget. They have advocated, and continue to advocate, both guns and butter. But not Martin Luther King. He more than any other American leader, white or black, has at the same time and without compromise fought for black liberation at home, and for an end to war in Vietnam. Shortly before he was to launch his Poor People's Campaign King was asked by a reporter whether he advocated a modest reduction in the military budget so that the funds saved could be used to meet the problems of poverty and at the same time maintain the military establishment substantially intact. His reply was eloquent: "The guns-and-butter idea is an absolute myth. Spending \$85 billion a year on war and \$35 billion a year on Vietnam is totally inconsistent with meeting the needs of people here at home. It is as if we were trying to write our own obituary as a nation. Vietnam is the most tragic error in the history of the nation. The U.S. is engaged in criminal activity in Vietnam. The more we continue the war in Vietnam the more we will refuse to meet the problems of the cities."

It was in this mood of all-out commitment to the struggle against poverty, human deprivation, and war that Martin Luther King went to his death, gunned down by a sneak assassin under circumstances generating questions, suspicions, and rumours which call to mind the welter of unresolved questions surrounding the death of President Kennedy, of Malcolm X, and of Medgar Evers, to mention only three of the other victims of the similar killings that have felled Americans, great and obscure, in recent years. It is not surprising that in King's case, particularly, there would be expressions after his death calling to mind the Christian teachings about redemption which are related to the death of Jesus. This is so not merely because of King's own deeply religious orientation, and that of his followers, but, one suspects, more especially because liberal whites in America are deeply disturbed by his death, feel their own guilt, and seek spiritual reassurance. On the one hand they know that the assassin could not have emerged except for the social climate not only of Memphis and the

deep South, but also of the entire country which is dehumanized in its attitude toward black people and already has denied them their humanity in its heart long before the idea of a particular bullet for Martin Luther King had entered the mind of his killer. On the other hand there is the stark fear among whites that the reaction of the black people will be of anger and revenge producing not just a summer but a whole new era of violence in American cities, ripping apart the social fabric which covers the poverty and despair of the black ghettos, and exposing the white communities and the entire social machinery to the wrath of a small but desperate minority. Thus guilt and fear move the whites to construct a new mysticism of nonviolence which will ease their own sense of guilt in King's murder and paradoxically justify them later in using the police to crush black uprisings when they occur.

Among the blacks one senses a less traumatic reaction to King's death. They are not surprised that King has been killed. They have seen others killed for doing far less. At the same time, in a way, King's death validates their own despair and even their resort to violence. "Why not?" they ask. Nonviolence presupposes a capacity to respond non-violently. And where is that in white America?

It may well be that the Poor People's Campaign, which will occupy the centre of the stage in America's 1968 summer, will provide a last opportunity for the people of the United States, white and black, to discover whether they really have the capacity to move toward nonviolence in fact, or whether this high and compelling social demand for which Martin Luther King gave his life, will be again rejected by the American people who in so many ways are now re-examining themselves.

WILLIAM STUART NELSON

IN RESTROSPECT, IT IS CLEAR THAT the phenomenal achievements of Dr King were attended by serious, sometimes baffling, problems which cast even clearer light upon his extraordinary character and abilities. He was fortunate in his many loyal followers. He was brave and was undaunted by the problems inherent in America's racial situation, in the conservative elements in the Federal Government, in his motley followers composed not only of the deeply loyal and able but also of the timid, the inept, the radical, the bitter. Facing his problems in these contexts, Dr King exhibited extraordinary insight and fortitude.

One recalls the sudden and, for Dr King, unexpected birth of the Black Power slogan in his movement. It took place in Greenwood, Mississippi, in the summer of 1964. Stokely Carmichael, a member of King's marching band, mounted a platform and proclaimed the need for 'Black Power' to which the crowd gave a roaring, affirmative response.

No persuasion by Dr King could prevent the contagion of the Black Power fever, especially with its encouragement by the press. He was forced to face what he conceived to be a nihilistic philosophy resulting from the Negro's inability to win otherwise in the struggle for his rights. Personal trauma followed the negative shouts by members of the Black Power movement which later greeted his speeches. He was not deterred, however, in his effort to lay bare the weaknesses of the slogan and to preach a better way.

Black Power he describes as a 'cry of disappointment' born of 'the wounds of despair and disappointment'. It was born in the State of Mississippi where in three years more than forty Negroes and whites have either been lynched or otherwise murdered and no man brought to justice for the commission of these crimes.

Black Power, for Dr King, was 'a call to black people to amass the political and economic strength to achieve their legitimate goals', a need which no one can

deny. It is 'a psychological call to manhood', the power of the black to wipe from his memory the insinuation that he is a nobody, biologically deprived and worthless. It is a cry for independence from whites, a second Emancipation. It is the wiping out of shame by the Negro that he is black. But all these, says Dr King, were the objectives of the civil rights movement before Black Power was born.

Dr King rejects Black Power as a slogan and argues that it is a nihilistic philosophy born of the conviction that the Negro cannot win and thus a philosophy which cannot long sustain itself. It is a philosophy of separatism which is deadly, since there is no solution in isolation, no possibility here of effective political power, no insurance against social injustice, no gain in economic power. On the contrary, the ability to enter into alliance has been a mark both of the Negro's strength and his weakness. There is, writes Dr King, 'no separate black path to power and fulfillment that does not interest white paths—we are bound together in a single garment of destiny'.

It is this conviction that should be set against the call for retaliatory violence which Dr King regarded as the most destructive aspect of Black Power. In sadness Dr King admitted the use of the Black Power slogan principally by those who had lost faith in the method of nonviolence. They say, he writes, "Sing us no songs of nonviolence, sing us no songs of progress, for nonviolence and progress belong to middle-class Negroes and whites and we are not interested in you".

Dr King points further to the danger of organizing a movement around self-defence, since this often becomes an invitation to aggression. If loss of life is any index to the value or disvalue of riots, we might recall that the loss of life in the Watts rioting in Los Angeles in one night was greater than that of ten years of nonviolent resistance demonstrations in the southern part of the United States.

Finally, Dr King argues strenuously against the validity of violence as an appeal to conscience—in the belief that "power and mortality must go together, implementing, fulfilling and ennobling each other".

And so this noble disciple of Gandhi, after years of dramatic success, found himself confronted, even in his own ranks, with a philosophy many implications of which ran counter to his deepest convictions. He did not, however, retreat. He argued his views with passion and continued to pursue his chosen cause.

The Poor People's Campaign

Dr King, writing in this year's *Look* magazine of April 16 set forth the conviction, partly in alarm and partly in censure, that "The policy of the Federal Government is to play Russian roulette with riots; it is prepared to gamble with another summer of disaster. Despite two consecutive summers of violence, not a single basic cause of riots has been corrected." Recalling that discernible progress had been made a few years ago through nonviolence, he concedes that in more recent times this movement had not been playing its "transforming role".

This was an introduction to the announcement that the time had arrived for a return to mass nonviolent protest and that a series of demonstrations was planned for the following spring and summer, the first to be held in Washington. In this Washington demonstration economic issues would be emphasized—"the right to live, to have a job and income".

Whence would the people come? Dr King answered that ten cities and five rural districts had been selected from each of which some 200 poor people would be selected. The protests of these 3,000 persons would set the pattern. Since November they had been in training in the discipline of nonviolence.

Some of these people, it was planned, would walk to Washington at distances from their starting points of several hundred miles on the theory that the sound and sight of such a growing mass of poor people walking toward Washington would have a dramatic effect upon Congress. Congress, wrote Dr King, is "still a coalition-dominated, rural dominated, basically Southern Congress" with Southern committee chairmen who, with right-wing Midwestern or Northern Republican support, can be expected to stand in the way of progress as long as

possible. The idea was to dramatize the whole economic problem of the poor but without the illusion of moving Congress in two or three weeks.

Observing that no structural changes have taken place, Dr King emphasized his intention further to dramatize the living conditions of poor people in America by erecting a shanty town in Washington, emphasizing the absence of violence at all times.

Dr King pointed to the fact that in cities where mass demonstrations have been held, the crime rate tended to decrease, with Montgomery, Alabama, showing a decrease of 65 per cent for an entire year. The people had found a way to slough off their self-hatred, a channel through which to express their longings and a way to fight nonviolently.

In the discussion of these plans, Dr King reiterated his absolute commitment to nonviolence. This he had found to be a philosophy of life "that regulates not only my dealings in the struggle for racial justice, but also my dealings with people, with my own self. I will still be faithful to nonviolence."

He warned, however, that if the nonviolent campaign failed to bring progress an increase in violent activity could be expected. It was his determination that he and his co-workers would not fail. They would bring the problem of the poor to the seat of the government of the wealthiest nation in the history of mankind. "If this society fails", he wrote, "I fear that we will learn very shortly that racism is a sickness unto death".

Dr King in this quiet, almost plaintive disclosure of his plans for Washington, hearkened back to the divergent views of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and stated that he and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference had not given up on the integration of Whites and Negroes. "We believe", he wrote, "in black and white together. Some of the Black Power groups have temporarily given up on integration. We have not."

Dr King expressed disbelief that there had been a massive turn to violence. White persons had rarely been killed in the riots. Rather, Negro wrath had been

vented largely on property and not persons "even in the emotional turbulence of riots".

He warned, however, that if the plans for Washington failed Negroes would begin to think and act in violent terms. His hope was for an Economic Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged, requiring about ten to twelve billion dollars for the support of a specific number of jobs, a program to abolish unemployment, and a program to supplement the income of those whose earnings were below the poverty level. "These", he wrote, "would be the measures of success in our campaign".

"Black Americans", felt Dr King, "have been patient people, and perhaps they could continue patient with but a modicum of hope; but everywhere 'time is winding up'—in the words of one of our spirituals, 'Corruption in the land, people take your stand; time is winding up!' "

This was Dr King's dream for Washington and his admonition. Under new leadership some three thousand of the poor at the time of writing have now come—Negroes, whites, American Indians, Mexicans, and others. And with them have come also the spring rains, deluging their Resurrection City of improvised shelter. Delegations from the 'City' have called upon high Government officials with varying results. A march on Washington planned after the pattern of the celebrated March on Washington of 1963 will be held on June 19. It will be remembered that on the occasion of that earlier march Dr King delivered the now famous address, 'I have a Dream'.

Resurrection City is also his dream. Whatever may be its fruits they will bear the imprint of this young prophet, dreamer and builder.

JUNE J. YUNGBLUT

MAY 4, 1968— TODAY I PASSED by a park in Atlanta, in the Druid Hills section. Druid Hills has been cited in a national magazine article as the most desirable place in America to live for middle income families (of course, the article had white families in mind). Playing together there in this beautiful weather were Negro and white children; they were swinging, pushing the hand-run merry-go-round, running after each other in games of tag, and playing ball. Even more surprising, white and Negro mothers were sitting on the same benches watching their children play.

I stopped to watch too, thinking that if there had been no Montgomery Bus Boycott, there would have been no civil rights legislation; if there had been no march in Selma there would be very little implementation of the civil rights laws. Martin Luther King's place in history was witnessed to silently today as I passed by that park. The moral leverage, the power of his spirit of nonviolence as an individual, and the organization, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, that he built, made possible, indeed made inevitable, the little scene I passed by today. The assassination took place exactly four weeks ago. Now the Poor People's Campaign is getting under way from all parts of America, joining poor Negroes, poor whites, poor Mexican immigrants, and poor American Indians in common cause. Martin Luther King gave his life for the quiet scene which I witnessed today. It is only a beginning. His dream is becoming our reality.

Fifteen thousand telegrams have come to Coretta King. They have come from all over the world. Almost without exception they speak in the highest praise of Martin King; some of them liken him to the New Messiah, many refer to him as a great prophet of the time, the contemporary Moses who did not live to see the promised land, etc. The remarkable thing is that his spirit and person, his place in history, are all the greater when they are seen in the light of his human frailties as well as greatness, his organization's struggles and weaknesses

as well as its great vision, his little failures as a father and husband as well as his magnificence in both roles.

My husband and I are among those who counted it a privilege to live and work closely with Martin and Coretta King. We came to Atlanta, to Quaker House, at the same time that Martin Luther King came here to assist his father at the Ebenezer Baptist Church and to lead the Southern Christian Leadership Conference into the powerful organization it was soon to become. He, as well as we and other Americans, was deeply influenced by Gandhi's powerful work and witness to the truth of nonviolence.

While he was still a student working on his doctor's degree at Boston University, Martin King came under the influence of Gandhi through the teaching of Dr Alien Knight Chalmers, who had long worked for civil rights and who promulgated the teachings of Gandhi in his classes. Martin's strict adherence to nonviolence during the Montgomery bus boycott is well known and documented. It was surprising to me to hear once again the television interview of that period, so long ago now, when Martin spoke on behalf of Rosa Park's action refusing to go to the back of the bus, and outlined the support his church people as fellow Christians planned to give her for her courageous stand at a time when it was unheard of for a Negro to assert his rights. I had thought there would be naivete, immaturity, even awkwardness perhaps in those early announcements by Martin of the principles of nonviolence. To my astonishment, his message, even at that time, was consistent and spiritually mature. Totally dedicated to nonviolence, his articulation of his faith sprang full blown, the faith of the once-born man.

When his house was bombed, some of his people armed themselves. Martin went from house to house, asking for the weapons and clarifying once again the Christian principles of nonviolence on which his work and life would stand. Victory came at the end of the year and what began as a simple incident in one city of the South became a crucible for the nation.

At Quaker House we offered in 1960 a platform to Martin so that his message of nonviolence might be heard as a unifying message for black and white alike.

Although even then he was answering calls from across the nation to speak and to gather up the forces for change, he week-by-week here at this house instructed the gathered people in the power and Tightness of nonviolence. With the expanding organization, and the attraction it had for prominent figures, there came all the problems of maintaining the original spirit within a highly complex organization. Staff, volunteers, constituents reached across the nation: they had to hammer out together the tensions arising from whether nonviolence should be an inward spirit permeating all actions, thought, and dedication, or whether it would be used as long as it was viable as a technique for social change. Some of us saw Martin every other week preaching at his church here in Atlanta and also in his home and at meetings. Watching him at close range, we can affirm and witness to the absolute steadiness of his purpose.

Although on his staff many were torn, unpersuaded of the historical relevance of nonviolence, he kept them on, influencing them in their work and lives, frequently bringing about a change in their hearts, never giving up on them when no change occurred, but remaining in creative tension with them, and leading in his way which was the way he believed Christ had pointed out. Some considered it a weakness on his part as an administrator and leader that he kept troubled souls on his staff; however, to those who believe that men's hearts can change, it was a great testimony. Black militant leaders and followers considered it Martin's weakness that he continued to believe in the common future of the white and black man in America and throughout the world. To them he was the picture of naivete or worse. He had to endure labels which hinted of his being an Uncle Tom to the white man. For example, African leaders in exile in Zambia considered him a worse enemy than the white rightists of Southern Africa or America. His attitude toward nonviolence was misunderstood as passivity in the face of injustice, as effeminacy foisted upon the already emasculated black male, etc. With reasonableness, patience and understanding he continued the slow task of preaching and teaching the one message up and down the land and over the world, in tiny all black

communities in the Mississippi Delta, in the great gathering of the Nobel Prize convocation, at Hollywood first nights, during academic awards and honours.

SNCC, which changed from a combined black and white student effort to bring about change in the South and later across the nation, to a black militant organization excluding whites and finding all white people the object of mistrust, became double-minded about Martin King, sometimes trying to work with him while resenting the national publicity that would attend SCLC's joining their efforts, and sometimes pulling away completely, relegating SCLC to the cause of the white man. Those white people who only see SNCC as a black organization over against them, bitter and determined to overthrow white oppression whether violently or otherwise, should remember the history of SNCC, the way these young people went into areas of Mississippi, Alabama, South Georgia and Louisiana, where beatings, lynchings, and shootings were common, though unreported. Their courage and dedication cannot be assailed. The tragedy that they became divided from SCLC and white people of good will is not just the outcome of their isolated bitterness; it is a judgment on the intransigence of a violent white element in the South which ran unchecked particularly in the rural communities, and whose oppression of black people was overlooked, winked at, or complied with by 'whites of good will'. If SNCC lost faith in nonviolence it would be ironic to point the finger at Martin King's failure; the failure belongs squarely on the politicians' desks and in the hearts of the people of the South.

Many of us were critical of Martin's not coming out sooner to link the problems of peace (and particularly the situation in Vietnam) with the problems of race and poverty. We kept up pressure on him to speak out while other pressures were overwhelming him. He did speak out at a time early enough to bring a reaction across the nation. The criticism of many liberals, who were with him on race and poverty but not on a strong stand against the war in Vietnam, became a wave of reaction. It was like a playback of earlier accusations (when he started the bus boycott and later went to prison in Montgomery) on the part of churchmen and others, "Why not wait for gradual change?" "Why rock the

boat?" "Why bring these issues into the open?" "You are dividing the nation!" "You are letting down our boys!"

Anyone at this time seeing and hearing the unhurried and unruffled Martin Luther King as microphones were thrust at him when he boarded the planes, and reporters firing questions at him whenever he appeared would not have guessed at the agonizing hours he spent in his own Gethsemene where decisions of personal spiritual import and international consequence had to be made. Typical of this kind of decision making was what took place in the days immediately before the assassination. My husband and I had brought Martin Father Thomas Merton's invitation to have a quiet retreat at Gethsemni Monastery, bringing one or two of his leaders with him to renew the life of the spirit in the face of the protracted Washington Poor People's Campaign. He both wanted and felt the need to do this. Memphis then occurred as a demand on him; the plight of the Negro garbage workers in that city was TOO immediate to be overlooked. With the momentary failure of nonviolence during the first march he felt called to return. He was to have met with us on Friday, April fifth, to set the date for going to the monastery. He died on Thursday, April fourth, in the action of nonviolent confrontation of injustice.

Coretta King has said, and we all have heard in his sermons of that week, that there was an expectation on his part that his own end might come soon. By that time his spirit had become a vessel for a will other than his own; this premonition seems quite in keeping with the whole orientation and submission of his life to service.

The great experience for many of us has been the way his spirit seems to have moved into the hearts and minds of Coretta King and some of his staff in SCLC. My husband has written elsewhere that about the third day after his death we in Atlanta felt a kind of resurrection of the spirit in which we felt that we could go ahead and believed that we would be given power to do so. The continuity of this spirit will be crucial to the Poor People's Campaign in particular and to the future of America and indeed of the world in general. That Coretta King is permeated with it is obvious. I have been with her at her home since the time

of the assassination and, although working there to be of help to her and the children, it was inevitable that I would observe her closely in the terrible days that followed. She was prepared for his death, there is no doubt of that, but she was also prepared to take on both the spirit and the problems of his work.

When she brought his body back from Memphis, a few of us were in her living room, and of course we thought that she would want immediately to be alone with her grief when she returned to the house. Instead of this personal need, she seemed to be responding to our need for comfort at this time. She came forward and greeted each person with great compassion. She came to me and embraced me, holding me for a long time in her arms as though to give me of her own strength and will and faith.

May 8, 1968—When I spoke with Coretta today, she described the problem of myriad decisions which she has to make each day about her public appearances and statements and the role she may continue to play in the civil rights movement which is now connected with the problems of peace and poverty. Then she referred to the challenge of the times meaning both the Washington March and the issues being raised by the presidential candidates. After a long pause she said very simply, "I wish Martin could be here to see it".

It is her determination to carry forward his work in whatever role she will be best suited. It seemed to me that the test of Martin King's greatness is that his spirit lives on in his family and in the spiritual decisions of his wife, in his immediate surroundings, while at the same time serving a great cause and being an instrument to a power which mediates between the present and the eternal. He changed radically the history of this country and the history of the world. There is a likeness of spirit which one sees in the Lincolns, the Pope Johns, the Gandhis, and the Martin Luther King's of this life.

There is no doubt that in Martin's case, as in Gandhi's case, the movement dominated his life. In so far as his personal life with his family and with others is concerned, he tried to be sensitive to their needs but relationships were subjected to the rigorous and sometimes nearly devastating forward motion of this wave that was rolling toward the future. Those closest to him, his family

and his staff, although they suffered most from the demands of the movement, loved him most both because and in spite of the demands he put on them. They are now bearing witness to this love in their lives and in their continued dedication to his spirit. The power of his own dedication is also attested to in the change of hearts and minds in Atlanta which is symptomatic of the change which has taken place across the nation toward action and good will on the part of many heretofore unmoved whites and Negroes, all of whom had remained embedded in the status quo through self-interest or lack of imagination.

It is incredible to remember that a few years ago when he won the Nobel Peace Prize, there was little intention in Atlanta to do anything to recognize this world figure who lived with us. Some liberals, Negro and white, came together for a luncheon meeting and after great effort on their part slowly the gathering impulse pervaded some levels of power within the city. Some men of influence responded because they recognized greatness. Others had pressures put on them by the businesses they were affiliated with which had offices in New York City. Mayor Ivan Allen that night found himself singing 'We Shall Overcome', as everyone in the banquet hall held hands and swayed with the music which had hitherto been a rallying song for a few liberal whites in the city and the masses of Negro oppressed and socially-conscious people. Obviously the recognition was not that of an emotionally-swayed mass of people. Rather this was a recognition somewhat reluctantly wrung from a group of city leaders in joining finally with the liberals because the greatness of the man could not go unrecognized.

When in Riverside Church in New York City a year ago he publicly made clear the inescapable connection of the movement for civil rights with the need to stop the war in Vietnam and attend to the problems of poverty at home, there was a reversal again and new attacks were launched at him. The Atlanta papers which had grown toward a liberal point of view on the revolution for civil rights, now editorialized about 'Peaceniks', 'Cultists', and other 'disruptive groups'. It took his assassination to change the editorial policy. Once again there is a feeling of good will and even a concerted desire for social change and

peace. When Doctor Suzuki of Japan flew to Atlanta from Prague, arriving after the funeral and coming to Coretta with tears in his eyes to tell her of his sorrow and the sorrow of the people of Japan over her loss which they felt as their loss too, Coretta took his hands in hers and said, "My husband was glad to give his life for what he believed in. We all heard him day in and day out, but now we really understand what he was saying."

If we do at last really understand what he was saying in spite of the weaknesses, whether they are in ourselves, in the various civil rights organizations, in our government, in our country, or in the world, then we will go ahead to bring about changes in the social structure by the grace of the spirit summed up in the lives and in the deaths of men like Gandhi and Martin Luther King. It seems to take both their lives and their deaths to change our hearts, but that change cannot be emotional and momentary because then it subsides into a sentimentality which is a worse state than the intransigence of will which preceded it. No, that change must be a spiritual change which imbues our heart, mind and will. Furthermore, it must grow into works which by their very nature reflect our faith in the vision which these men had to climb the mountain to see. If we are unable to climb that same mountain we can and must take step after step along the way without being turned back. We must see in our hearts what they were driven to see 'face to face'.

It was Martin King's work to change laws to gain a better life for his people and all people, but it is this spiritual dimension which he achieved or was given which is the destiny for men. Many of us in this country believe that the Washington March is the last hope for the white man and the black man alike in this nation. By the time this article is being read, part of this historical denouement of Martin King's life will have been played out in action. His test in history is over; ours, we are suddenly aware, is just beginning.

JANES E. BRISTOL

IN 1959 FROM EARLY JANUARY until the middle of March I was privileged to cooperate with G. Ramachandran and Swami Viswananda of the Gandhi Memorial Trust in making possible the visit of Martin Luther King and his wife, Coretta, to India. They visited India at that time at the invitation of the Gandhi Memorial Trust and under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee. Together we planned for a month's stay, which began early in February and terminated exactly four weeks later. During a journey which took us to widely scattered portions of India Swami Viswananda and I accompanied the Kings during literally their every waking and sleeping moment.

Thus it was that both Swami Viswananda and I learned to know Martin Luther and Coretta King well in a relatively short space of time.

Before he came to India Martin Luther King had been my hero—a valiant believer in nonviolence, following courageously in the footsteps of Gandhi. After the experience of being so closely associated together in India both he and Coretta were my friends.

It is always easy for the great men of the world to make moving statements from public platforms, and to write books full of impressive words which many of us applaud. In some cases, however, to know great people better is not unfortunately to gain confirmation of what they have said and written for the public. Exactly the opposite was true as I learned to know Martin and Coretta King so well. In addition to the beauty of the love which they bore towards each other and the marvellous and infectious sense of humour which Martin displayed in those moments when he was able to relax, I was most deeply impressed with two facets of his character: (1) his unswerving dedication to nonviolence, never considering even for a split second any deviation from his commitment thereto, and (2) his genuine love for his enemies, his ability to harbour no hatred in his heart and forgive genuinely and completely even those who had bombed his home, and threatened his wife and children, yes, even the woman who had almost killed him in a New York department store. Clearly

these were no 'public pronouncements' on his part. These were the bedrock facts of his life and constituted the faith by which he lived. And, it should be added, the bedrock facts of Coretta's life and the faith by which she lives.

Nine years later Martin Luther King is dead, killed by an assassin's bullet. Moreover, he has been killed at a time when the tide of commitment to nonviolence is ebbing in the United States and throughout the world. Though such a statement may be difficult to document, it is fair to say that in American pacifist circles today there is a general acceptance of two facts:

(1) that the civil rights movement is to a considerable extent turning in disillusionment and despair away from nonviolence to the practice of violence in an effort to gain freedom and justice for the Black community in America; (2) that the peace movement in the States (the 'anti-Vietnam war movement' is probably more accurate) is presently becoming both much larger in size and more militant, embracing today even advocates and practitioners of violence, including those who openly support an NLF victory in Vietnam. From the point of view of both movements it is hard to conceive of a worse time to lose a leader so deeply dedicated to nonviolence and so deeply respected in many portions of both the black and white communities.

Not for a moment would I try to minimize the fact that this is a dreadful time to have been deprived of such a leader (nor would there ever by the wildest stretch of the imagination be a propitious time to lose the leadership of such a one as he), but there are also three counterbalancing facts to bear in mind, facts not the product of wishful thinking, but down-to-earth and realistic.

1. *We have had* a nonviolent civil rights movement of large scope in America for more than a decade, and we have also had the great example of Gandhi, both in South Africa and in India. Nothing can erase their impact from the history of human experience. In spite of the fact that there is more scepticism about nonviolence now than was true five years ago in America, it must also be borne in mind that the buses were boycotted in Montgomery, Alabama only twelve years ago, and that before that time there was no nonviolent civil rights movement in this country at all. All the

dedication and experience that followed in the wake of Montgomery is still valid, and leaves its legacy of learning and achievement with us. We are at the present moment much further ahead in America in our experience with nonviolence than any of us would have thought possible prior to Montgomery twelve years ago. Before that only a tiny handful of Americans had any interest in or knowledge of nonviolence.

2. We *have had* Martin Luther King speaking and preaching up and down the length and breadth of America. He has been heard by millions, including multitudes of white people, and read by millions more. His words have always carried with them the authority of his example, that genuine authority which comes only out of a life committed to and consistent with that which is being advocated. The legacy he leaves us is immeasurable, and this we did not have twelve years ago.
3. The Poor People's Campaign *is*, thank God, *under way*, launched by Dr King some months before his death. To carry this campaign through to successful fruition gives the Southern Christian Leadership Conference a specific and ultra-challenging task to do. It is difficult to over-emphasize the value and importance of this fact, for it means that there is no time for grief and looking back. Instead there must be planning, hard work and action now, and constant looking forward to the next day and the next week. Thus it is that his closest followers have been galvanized into action such as they never would have achieved had Martin Luther King still been alive. I have even heard the Rev. Andrew Young, second in the leadership ranks of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference today, say that so often in the past even highly placed leaders in SCLC allowed Dr King to carry the weight of everything, while (as Andy Young put it) "we goofed off". Now these people are challenged as never before, and instead of grieving hopelessly for their lost leader they are deriving inspiration from him to carry on the greatest struggle in which they have ever been engaged.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has turned to the Old Testament and found a text in the Book of Genesis to which they are referring repeatedly.

It is a text which has been inscribed on a white marble tablet at the Lorraine Motel in South Memphis where Dr King was killed, and it reads: "They said one to another, 'Behold, here cometh the dreamer. Let us slay him and we shall see what becomes of his dreams'." They are staking their lives now on making the dreams of their slain dreamer come true!

Thus it is that the Poor People's Campaign looms all-important for believers in social justice and its achievement by nonviolent means. I believe it is wrong to call it the "final testing ground for nonviolence" as some are doing, but it is still almost impossible to over-estimate the size and scope of its importance. Should the campaign flounder in a sea of ineffectualness, or should it erupt into a violent effort, it would set back the cause of nonviolence a great way, and make it very difficult to launch another nonviolent undertaking or crusade for some time to come.

Even as I am writing these words (May 16th) the Poor People's Campaign, with the first people having arrived in Washington four days ago and a half dozen marches from all parts of the country converging upon Washington, is in an entirely fluid and flexible stage of development, and no one can predict with any certainty what may or may not happen. Less than a week ago I spoke to a woman who since January has been spending virtually her every waking moment on the Campaign, and who was among the group that went initially to Washington with Ralph Abernathy at the end of April. Dedicated for a lifetime both to nonviolence and to the achievement of social justice, at the end of our conversation she said out of the past four months' experience that the Poor People's Campaign is 'a fragile vehicle', though infinitely and gloriously better than none at all. In spite of the fact then that what I write in this article may be proved inaccurate by the time it is printed, I want to say what I can at present say about the Campaign.

To sketch in some of the background about the mood of the country as the Poor People's Campaign was launched may be of value. I.F. Stone, writing in *I.F. Stone's Weekly* for April 15, 1968, says at the beginning of his article about the tragic death of Dr King: "The assassination of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. was the

occasion for one of those massive outpourings of hypocrisy characteristic of the human race. He stood in that line of saints which goes back from Gandhi to Jesus; his violent end, like theirs, reflects the hostility of mankind to those who annoy it by trying hard to pull it one more painful step further up the ladder from ape to angel.

"The President and the Washington establishment had been working desperately up until the very moment of Dr King's killing to keep him and his Poor People's March out of the capital; his death, at first, promised to let them rest in peace. The masses they sang were not so much of requiem as of thanksgiving that the Nation's No. 1 Agitator had been laid to rest at last. Then a minority of his own people and not all of them the ignorant and the hungry, celebrated his memory with an orgy of looting while black radicals and New Leftists hailed the mindless carnival as a popular uprising... Those among his own people who sneered at his nonviolent teaching as obsolete now seized upon his death as a new excuse for the violence he hated. Thus all sides firmly united in paying him homage."

I am inclined to agree with I.F. Stone as to the "massive outpourings of hypocrisy". As soon as Dr King was killed, tributes and adulation poured in from every corner of the land—from every political leader, from every Presidential hopeful; in fact, all the front-runners (even those not yet declared as presidential candidates) were actually present at the funeral in Atlanta. The country practically came to a halt for five days, every bit as much as at the time of President Kennedy's assassination.

The very people who had opposed him bitterly hastened to praise him. Newspapers that had not been friendly eulogized him in editorials, and carried special pictures of Dr King, many of them in colour. A glaring example of this sort of instant change was found in the city in which I live. The morning paper, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, for April 5th, had printed an editorial in its Star Edition which is put on the newsstands about 7 p.m. the night before. In that edition already on the stands when he was killed there appeared an editorial, "Dr King and the Law", attacking him for his advocacy of civil disobedience,

specifically for his determination to hold a march in Memphis in support of the striking garbage men in defiance of a Federal Court's restraining order. In part it read: "It may be that Dr King's own ego is more at stake in this confrontation than anything to do with Memphis garbage men. Certainly his sense of proportion is questionable... When he exerts his leadership on the side of breaking the law—and disowns in advance the consequences—he is guilty of hypocrisy at best, and a taste for hell on earth hardly becoming a man of the cloth, at worst." As soon as word of his death reached the offices of the paper a fleet of trucks was dispatched to gather up every available copy of the paper from the stands. A glowing editorial tribute was substituted and appeared in all later editions for that day. During the next several days *The Philadelphia Inquirer* out-did itself in praise of Dr King, even providing a special full-page colour picture with all its Sunday editions.

Even on a TV program (one of many) eulogizing Dr King the Mayor of Los Angeles saw fit to criticize his stand against the Vietnam war. Obviously, there was in this country great opposition to Martin Luther King, to his position on Vietnam, and to his Poor People's Campaign, and as the shock of his death recedes, the opposition appears again.

President Johnson announced the day after the assassination that he was going to address a special joint session of the two Houses of Congress to urge immediate passage of Civil Rights measures and the spending of billions of dollars to implement the recommendations of the President's Commission on Civil Disorders, which up until then (from March 1st to April 4th) had been quite coolly received by President Johnson and seemed destined simply to gather dust on the shelves. Within a few days he decided to postpone the speech; now it seems to have been forgotten entirely.

Nonviolence is Not Dead

Let us next look at the Poor People's Campaign itself and at the faith and commitment of those who lead it. The *New York Times* for April 21st carried an article appraising the position of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

and the Nonviolent Civil Rights Movement after Dr King's death. It began with these few sentences: "In those hours just after the assassination of the Rev. Dr Martin Luther King Jr. stunned witnesses stood around at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, quietly debating the future of nonviolence in the civil rights movement. 'This movement is finished', a young Negro man said. 'You can say that nonviolence ended right here.' Others shared the same thought. The movement could not survive, they felt, without the charismatic leadership of Dr King. 'The movement', someone else said, 'died with him'." The article went on to say that events since that time have, however, indicated that these initial reactions were wrong. The Rev. Ralph Abernathy, said the *Times*, has shown real "toughness and determination" as the new leader, and though definitely militant in his approach, has shown no signs at all of backing down or of compromising with nonviolence.

In fact, as the Poor People's Campaign moves ahead, Ralph Abernathy becomes ever clearer and more specific in his emphasis upon the need for adherence to nonviolence. A friend of mine who at the end of April was at the large mass meeting in Washington on the first night of the visitation to high government officials told me that as Abernathy addressed that throng he more than once stressed his own belief in nonviolence, and emphasized the moral basis for that conviction. Again in Washington on May 13th at the dedication of the 'City of Hope' (now rechristened 'Resurrection City') which the campaigners will occupy he was emphatic about their determination to remain nonviolent.

On May 14th I was present in a crowd of some 30,000 people who heard him speak in Philadelphia. I recorded verbatim some of the statements that were an integral part of the emphasis he was making throughout his speech. Said he: "The problem is poverty, and we must remain nonviolent so that we do not give people the excuse to say the problem is violence, and thus shift the attention away from poverty." Again: "We will commit no violence at all, but you can't tell what else will happen. We're going to turn this country upside down and downside up." Still again: "I'll tell you what we're going to do. We're going to love this nation to death." Once again: "I believe in love and believe in

nonviolence, and I have all along; I'm nothing new." And finally: "Marching on Washington is a nonviolent army, armed not with weapons, but armed with truth and love—and Ralph Abernathy is the general." Those who heard him speak in Philadelphia could have doubted neither his militancy nor his emphasis upon remaining nonviolent.

Andy Young, SCLC's second-in-command, speaking at the First Methodist Church, Germantown, Pennsylvania, on the night of April 30th reaffirmed his faith and that of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in nonviolence, and in the determination of Martin Luther King to see justice for *all peoples of all colours* established in America. In the course of his address he stated: "There is more power in poor people singing and praying than the Molotov cocktails and throwing bricks through windows." He predicted that the Poor People's Campaign "will be the greatest thing since Gandhi's Salt March to the Sea", and avowed that in and through it "we want to redeem the soul of America".

The role of Coretta King is of vital importance in shaping the future of the movement and insuring its adherence to nonviolence. She is herself deeply committed to nonviolence. Staunchly against the Vietnam war, for the past two years she had been steadily acting on her own (I saw her in Atlanta in January when she was just back from leading the Jeanette Rankin Brigade demonstration in Washington). Since the assassination she has been active in the anti-war movement, speaking at a large rally in New York City, and has devoted herself unstintingly to the Poor People's Campaign, speaking out repeatedly, strongly and clearly for nonviolence, for the power it produces, for its ability to achieve its purposes and for the courage required to adhere to it through thick and thin.

One can readily understand as he sees and hears these brave and committed followers of Martin Luther King why Ossie Davis, the prominent Negro actor, said in a recent interview with Nat Hentoff (*New York Times*, May 5, 1968): "I was absolutely flabbergasted when I got to Atlanta for the funeral and talked to some of the men who had been around Martin Luther King—Jesse Jackson, Andy

Young, James Bevel, Coretta King too, and Ralph Abernathy. There is so much strength there! Believe me, there's no vacuum."

His Legacy to Us

Martin Luther King, as all mankind knows, stood as did Gandhi *both* for the practice of nonviolence, *and* for the achievement of a just social and economic order for *all men*, for others as well as for members of his own group.

1. He aroused his own people and inspired them to a new sense of self-respect, no longer to acquiesce and to accept the age-old slights and wrongs and indignities, but to fight for justice and an equal place in the sun.
2. At the same time he stressed that they must carry on the fight non-violently and with regard and love even for those pitted against them (eleven years ago I heard Ralph Abernathy, his closest friend and now the leader of SCLC, say: "We may not like them, but we sure *do* love them!")
3. And—he awakened large numbers of whites *both* to see at last the awful inhumanity and injustice of our racist society *and* the power of nonviolence to effect change and cure.
4. In the course of the years he became a charismatic figure for both blacks and whites.
5. Yet—he never produced the revolution he sought to implement in American society as a whole. He was not able in his lifetime to redeem America. He did not live to see the fulfillment of the dream he dreamed and caused others to dream. Like Moses he never reached the Promised Land.

Long before his death he had seen militant young blacks leave his ranks to take up arms and use the weapons of violence; he had heard them taunt him and deride him as 'de Lawd'. His death at the hands of a white assassin (especially one of whom weeks later no trace has been found) confirms them in their conviction that the only language 'Whitey*' understands is that of violent force. Although we can expect them to act accordingly in another "long, hot summer", his death has *not*, as some feared might happen, robbed his followers of their faith in nonviolence. Nor am I surprised. I was privileged in mid-January to be

in Atlanta for the SCLC staff meetings, where under Martin Luther King's leadership about sixty people from many parts of the country engaged in planning for the Poor People's Campaign. Not only Dr King, but all the leaders there were clearly committed to nonviolence.

His death moreover has aroused many of *his own* people, including middle-class Negroes, who never before were identified with the struggle. His assassination has moved a large number of white people to support the freedom movement actively for the first time, and as the campaign continues to develop, there is apparent a veritable upsurge of support from whites who are asking, 'What can we do?' And the response is truly overwhelming in certain local communities as literally tons of food are contributed and thousands of beds are provided for the marchers making their way to Washington. Thus the Poor People's Campaign may indeed have greater support from both the black and white community than would have been the case were Martin King alive today.

Conclusion

The two most powerful forces in America today that can thwart everything for which Martin Luther King lived and died are *white racism* and *white apathy*. Obviously, whites constitute the overwhelming majority of American citizens, and with a few exceptions all members of Congress and of the executive and legislative branches of the government are white. In spite of all the awakening produced by Martin Luther King's death only a small percentage of whites even now are actively and passionately concerned to see justice and equality achieved for their black brothers. The tragic fact is that a very sizable percentage are racists— simple, kindly, gentle, good, respectable, devoutly religious white people who express their gentleness and quiet Christian devotion in the vocabulary of hatred, physical assault, cruel beatings, injustice and even murder when they find themselves confronted by a black man, woman or child, especially if these black people are striving to live with dignity and self- respect, and have the effrontery to behave as equals.

This *white racism* is totally opposed to all that Martin Luther King stood for, and even his death has in many cases only served to harden the racists' hearts.

Here we find so many of the humble rank-and-file of America—the housewives, the clerks, the labourers—people never quoted in the press nor on T.V., but a powerful force to be reckoned with none the less, especially in an election year when the chief concern of members of Congress and presidential candidates is with getting votes. How to deal constructively with white racism is extraordinarily difficult. How to remove prejudice and insecurity, and the hatred these breed, presents a problem both as old as the human race, and one to which we thus far have no workable answer.

In an article published only three days prior to Dr King's death James A. Tillman Jr. offered "A Dissent from the Kerner Report (Report of the President's Commission on Civil Disorders)" in *Christianity and Crisis* (page 66, April 1, 1928). Said he: "We repeat a grave error if we continue only to propose programs designed to improve the physical lot of blacks. God knows, no one can deny that such programs are necessary. But to neglect the need of whites to overcome their hang-ups and to improve their mental health is a grave oversight.

"In articles published four years ago I stated that whites are mentally ill with respect to race and that white racism is a collective mental illness that needs systematic treatment. This means, for one thing, that such programs as are recommended by the commission cannot be mounted—so long as the power to initiate and implement such programs rests with the white community and until whites have begun to come to grips with their own insecurities, which cause them to need—and to live by— racism.

"Therefore, the commission's failure to make proposals and recommendations to this end is a significant loss. Confession and contribution •on the part of the white Establishment is simply not enough!"

From his experience directing anti-poverty and urban programs Tillman knows full well how deeply rooted white racism is, and that it is at this time far from sufficient to wring our hands and shed crocodile tears while acknowledging our *past* misdeeds and shortcomings. Radical departures from old patterns of thought and action, and revolutionary moves in a totally new direction alone

can save us. Will such departures and moves be forthcoming, and will they be forthcoming fast enough?

Gandhi could lead the Indians to independence, and Martin Luther King could lead the Blacks some steps down the road toward freedom, but somehow someone in America must lead not those in bondage and those dispossessed, but the privileged and the 'top dogs' to serve their fellowmen and share with those less fortunate. Nor dare there be condescension in that service and that sharing. Both must spring from a realization of equality genuinely recognized as the equality of human beings everywhere.

When Whitney Young, the National Director of the Urban League, himself a Negro and one of the leading Civil Rights leaders in America, was asked who could replace Dr King as a "symbol of nonviolence and faith in the system" he replied: "I am not looking for a black leader to replace Dr King. I am looking for an American leader who will lead us all to justice." America desperately needs such a leader, and the change of mind and attitude of millions of white Americans to the point where they will follow him. Perhaps the actual appearance of the man may serve to move many in his direction; that has happened before in human history, and could again. Perhaps the Poor People's Campaign will be able to take giant strides toward the redemption of America's soul, and in so doing prepare us all for the advent of the leader this country needs so much. Perhaps out of the crucible of black-and-white-together in that campaign such a leader is even now being born!

ADAM ROBERTS

AFTER GANDHI, MARTIN LUTHER KING was without question the most important proponent of nonviolent action in this century. As with

Gandhi, so with King, assassination came at a time when his achievements were being called into question and his ideal of nonviolence disregarded even by his own people. If the riots which have occurred in American cities every summer since 1964 have been as nothing compared to the Indian riots of the 1940s, at any rate as far as loss of life is concerned, they have nevertheless placed a large question mark against the methods of struggle used by Martin Luther King, and the gains won by him.

That nonviolent forms of resistance have not produced in the United States the dramatic and speedy solutions which many had hoped for is obvious. The reasons, however, are complex. It is much too simple merely to conclude that 'non-violence' has failed, and that, as Negro advocates of violence have put it, 'the only language the white man understands is violence'. In non-violent, as in violent, campaigns it may be for particular and local reasons that failure occurs, or that no more than partial success is achieved. The American civil rights struggle has had many unique characteristics; and it is in some respects a uniquely difficult struggle.

The sheer scope of the U.S. racial problem is itself the underlying cause of present frustrations. In addition to the fact that they are in a minority of only 19 million, American Negroes have to face a deeply-rooted system of white supremacy dating from the centuries of Negro slavery, the well entrenched economic superiority of most whites, the inaction of successive federal governments, and their own striking lack of organization.

The Negro revolt of the last twelve years has made a considerable dent in these problems. Buses and other public facilities throughout the South have been largely desegregated. Many overt racists, such as Sheriff Jim Clark in Selma and 'Bull' Connor in Birmingham, have left public life. Negroes have gone on the

voting rolls in the South, especially since the voter registration campaign in Selma, Alabama in 1965 and the subsequent Voting Rights Law.¹ In some cities Negroes have vastly improved their own levels of employment. In Memphis, Tennessee, the dustmen won their struggle in early 1968 for higher wages and the right to organize a union—though only some time after King's assassination on 4 April. Throughout the U.S. there is a greater degree of Negro militancy; and a gradual, though painfully slow, erosion of the old federal attitude of *laissez faire* towards racial problems.

Such achievements, however important, are pitiful in comparison with the injustices and deprivations suffered by the American Negro, who has been promised freedom so frequently since the emancipation proclamation of 1863, and who has so often seen 'historic' decisions of the President and the Supreme Court fail to make history. King himself, at times, may have been guilty of over-optimism. Of King's 'I Have a Dream' speech delivered at the 1963 March on Washington, his biographer wrote: "Splendid as the words were, they nevertheless fell short of King's own high standards. . . . He focussed primarily on ends and not means. . . . This approach, though of immense value from the standpoint of internal morale and external public relations, left King open to the criticism of events."² King's speeches and writings indicate that he came increasingly to recognize the immensity of the task he had set himself. In *Chaos or Community?*, his last book, he wrote that "the Negro's struggle in America is quite different from and more difficult than the struggle for independence" against a foreign invader.³ He criticized American Presidents from Lincoln onwards for their empty rhetoric and betrayal of their own promises to the Negro. His attitude to President Johnson was far more critical than it had been in his 1964 book, *Why We Can't Wait?**

Origins of Nonviolent Resistance

In the slow process of achieving equal rights for the Negro, nonviolent resistance played a particularly prominent part only after the beginning of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott on 5 December 1955. Nonviolent resistance

was adopted by the civil rights movement not as the outcome of a long intellectual and strategic debate, but because nonviolent methods proved themselves useful in the campaign to desegregate the buses in Montgomery. These local origins of the Negro nonviolent movement were a key to its success. Disciplined non-cooperation is always easier to propose than to conduct, and the yearlong Negro boycott of buses in Montgomery proved a more effective advertisement for nonviolent action than all the more ambitious plans and ideas of Negro leaders in preceding years. What is true of the civil rights movement in general is also true of Martin Luther King, who was unknown before the Montgomery bus boycott and an international figure after it. His ideas about nonviolence developed only as a result of the bus boycott and subsequent events. Although he was familiar with Gandhian ideas, he did not start out with a complete ethical rejection of violence, and his belief in nonviolence was and always remained the product of a complex combination of pragmatism and Christian morality. For King and for his movement, Montgomery crystallized the idea of nonviolence, not *vice versa*.

There had, of course, been earlier advocacy of nonviolent action, and earlier use of this technique; and these previous developments may have helped to create the climate for Montgomery and for its aftermath. In the nineteenth century, there had been some largely nonviolent resistance in the North working for desegregation of public transport facilities.⁵ In the twentieth century many attempts were made to develop a nonviolent Negro movement along Gandhian lines. In his book written in 1932, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Reinhold Niebuhr had briefly discussed the idea of using Gandhian methods for Negro emancipation, referring particularly to the possibilities of boycotts of segregated enterprises—a remarkable piece of prophecy.⁶ In February 1936, in his well-known remark to Dr Howard Thurman, Gandhi had said: "It may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world."⁷ But the most serious attempt to produce a Negro nonviolent movement was in the early 1940s, when A. Philip Randolph, still today a key figure in the Negro leadership, announced a 'nonviolent goodwill direct action campaign' which was to have included various

types of boycotts and marches. In 1942 he held a series of mass meetings, but the following year, on the eve of his campaign, America erupted in race riots and the campaign was 'postponed'. The lack of immediate impact of all these attempts has been summed up by Lerone Bennett: "The graveyard of Negro leadership was by 1956 replete with the bones of men who had attempted to establish an American passive resistance movement based on Gandhian methodology."⁸

When nonviolent resistance began, it began in a local way, and it was always to remain local and decentralized in character. The events in Montgomery in December 1955 were an odd beginning for a mass movement. The year-long boycott of Montgomery's buses arose out of an incident on 1 December 1955 when Mrs Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on the bus to a white man; originally intended to last only one day, the boycott began, not as a campaign against segregation, but as a campaign for more equal treatment within the 'separate but equal' system; and after coming close to defeat it ended in success only thanks to a Supreme Court decision of 13 November 1956 that Alabama's laws on bus segregation were unconstitutional.⁹

Constitutional Framework

These events established a pattern which was to endure for over ten years. In the first place, the constitutional framework in which the boycott and many subsequent campaigns took place was of considerable importance. It provided a legal basis for many civil rights actions, and this appeal to a 'higher law' was especially important where a local law, regulation, or order had to be contravened. Moreover, the constitutional framework reflected the ideology of the civil rights movement, which sought Negro integration into existing society. As this ultimate goal has been challenged by new leaders, so too has the constitutional framework to which it was related.

Nonviolent action and federal law reinforced each other in a whole series of ways: and it is probable that the very emergence of the civil rights struggle owed as much to the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court as to the rather

uncertain dissemination of Gandhian ideas. In 1946, in the Irene Morgan case, the Supreme Court had first outlawed segregation in inter-state travel; and in 1954 it had declared that in public education 'separate but equal' facilities had no place, following this up in May 1955 with an order to desegregate schools with 'all deliberate speed'. Such decisions, even where they were not implemented, undoubtedly contributed to Negro militance, and to Negro confidence that the goal of equality might, after all, be attainable.

Legal enactments and federal law continued to be important to the civil rights cause in a wide variety of ways. It was often morally easier for southern segregationists to abandon their policies in face of a Supreme Court decision than as a capitulation of pressure from the Negro nonviolent movement. Equally, it was only because of direct action by civil rights campaigners that many legal battles were joined and many significant Supreme Court decisions reached. Nonviolent action, far from being extra-constitutional or even illegal, served as a powerful means of pressure for ensuring that legal decisions were first reached and then implemented.

Even more significantly, nonviolent action served as a spur for the enactment of new laws by Congress. By exposing the inadequacies of existing legislations, the 1963 campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, led directly to the passage in the following year of a Civil Rights Act. In 1965, the voter registration campaign in Selma led to a Voting Rights Act.

Federal law implies federal enforcement: and even those civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, who were deeply committed to nonviolent action, did not oppose the use of federal forces to guarantee civil rights. Hence the Selma to Montgomery march of 1965, which was given protection by troops and federal agents. But the alliance with federal forces was seldom as clear-cut as it was on that march. Civil rights leaders were generally impatient at the indolence of federal agents and the caution of Presidents. Even while recognizing the importance of the constitutional framework in which they had acted, they felt increasingly by 1968 that the situation had changed.

The pattern of nonviolent action and legal action stimulating and reinforcing each other will continue to be important in the U.S. But there are signs that the nonviolent movement for Negro rights is moving towards more radical policies which may bring it into a direct clash with the authorities in Washington. As King said, the gains for Negro dignity of the last twelve years were won at bargain basement rates. Future action for Negro rights will demand vast federal expenditure—and may have to be fought for by increased direct pressure against the federal government, as well as by greater emphasis on more strictly constitutional means. It is because the nature of the problem is changing that the old form of the civil rights movement is widely recognized to be inadequate to today's challenges.

Means of Struggle

That changes are required does not necessarily mean that nonviolent means of struggle are likely to be abandoned. Those means of struggle have always been complex and varied, and may prove to be adaptable to the new situation. There is no sign that the riots of recent years have killed nonviolent action in the way that the 1943 riots killed A. Philip Randolph's proposed campaign; the riots have, however, undeniably weakened the nonviolent movement and diminished its effectiveness.

The attitude of civil rights leaders to nonviolence has always been more complex than day-to-day slogans and easy generalizations would suggest. Although Martin Luther King opposed the use of violence in politics generally, and although he opposed it strongly and eloquently in the struggle for civil rights, his was not an absolute ethical rejection of violence for all circumstances. He did slowly move towards the latter position, but his rejection of violence was never complete. King did not call on Negroes to renounce their right to defend their homes with weapons.¹⁰ And he recognized that sometimes the threat of violence in the background may have contributed to winning concessions from opponents. As he wrote: "It cannot be taken for granted that Negroes will adhere to nonviolence under any and all conditions. .

. . Southern segregationists in many places yielded to it because they realized that the alternatives could be intolerable."¹¹

The use of nonviolent action could be, and often was, justified on pragmatic grounds: the Negroes would have to live tomorrow with the opponents they fought today; violence was more likely than nonviolence to reinforce the unity, determination, and inhumanity of white supremacists; while nonviolent action had a serious chance of undermining white unity, of inducing sympathetic federal action, and of making continued segregation costly or even impossible by means of weapons such as economic boycotts and persistent defiance of offensive orders and regulations. Although much emphasis was placed on 'nonviolence' as an ethical idea, these more mundane considerations influenced the movement greatly.

This was not always clear, however, in the public statements of civil rights leaders. Although from its inception the nonviolent movement had conducted coercive campaigns of non-cooperation and nonviolent intervention, such as economic boycotts and obstructions of segregated businesses, King himself frequently referred to the civil rights actions he launched as 'protests' or 'protest movements'—terms which implied action of a far more limited character than that which was actually undertaken.¹² King's emphasis on 'love' was similarly liable to cause misunderstanding about the nature of nonviolent action. He often suggested that it was necessary to love one's opponents—even those opponents who were most rigid in their support of white supremacy. For many, especially perhaps those less deeply committed to Christianity than King, this was difficult to take. A consistent stream of brutal white racist actions, such as the assassination of the Mississippi NAACP leader, Medgar Evers, in 1963 and the killing of four Negro children in a church bombing in Birmingham in the same year, made it hard to love. Those who could not accept King's injunction to love may at the same time, by a natural enough association of ideas, have rejected nonviolence as well. But that nonviolent action did not, in fact, depend only on the moral force of 'protest' or 'love' was clearly demonstrated in many phases of the civil rights movement.

The campaign in Birmingham in 1963 best illustrates the complexity of the methods employed by the civil rights movement. This campaign was dramatically etched on the public mind by mass demonstrations which were unique in the civil rights struggle in that they involved the first mass defiance of court orders, and the first participation of schoolchildren on a mass scale.¹³ The picture of fire hoses and police dogs being used on nonviolent demonstrators were powerful propaganda for the cause of civil rights. (Indeed, one may wonder whether the demonstrators could have been so courageous, or maintained their nonviolent discipline, had it not been for the comforting presence of press photographers and television men.)

The demonstrations in Birmingham, simply because of their scale, had a coercive element. It became clear to some whites that even if mass arrests continued it would be impossible to go on indefinitely suppressing Negro demands. The way in which a Negro march in Birmingham on 7 May 1963 produced this effect on a council of white businessmen during negotiations with civil rights leaders has been described by King in *Why We Can't Wait?*¹⁴ Equally important was the effect of the marches on the forces of law and order. There was a celebrated incident on 5 May 1963 when the Commissioner of Public Safety, 'Bull' Connor, did as he had so often done before and ordered out dogs and fire hoses against Negroes trying to hold a march and prayer meeting. Connor ordered his men to turn on their fire hoses, but he was ignored by them and the march was allowed to proceed.¹⁵ Thus without converting- Connor, the Birmingham marchers had subtly undermined the power of segregation.

But behind the conspicuous demonstrations was another equally important tactic—economic boycott. In planning the Birmingham campaign, King and his advisers had early decided to focus on the business community, "for we knew that the Negro population had sufficient buying power so that its withdrawal could make the difference between profit and loss for many businesses".¹⁶ The original Montgomery boycott of 1955-56 had a powerful economic impact, as had subsequent campaigns against discriminatory employment practices in Montgomery and other cities.¹⁷ The effect of such boycotts was reinforced by a

sharp decline in the outside investments so badly needed in the South: prolonged racial crises in a city—as in Little Rock in 1957—tended to discourage outside investors.¹⁸ As with Gandhi's campaigns in India, the un-dramatic force of economic boycott complemented more conspicuous activities.

Nonviolent methods of struggle were particularly well suited to attacking blatant indignities, and to undermining the discriminatory policies of particular businesses. Increasingly, however, the Negro revolt is entering territory where racialism is harder to oppose. A segregated city is harder to integrate than a segregated lunch counter; white economic superiority is harder to undermine than some of the overt manifestations of white supremacy. It is not surprising that, as Negro aspirations have risen and the deeply entrenched economic superiority of whites remains unaltered, many Negroes have turned from nonviolent methods to demonstrations of militant despair in the form of riots.

Race riots are nothing new in the U.S., as the events of 1919 and 1943 show. It is probably too simple to see the current wave of riots merely as the consequence of pent-up feelings of rage and despair at the humiliations which nonviolent campaigners have suffered, especially as riots have tended to occur more in cities where the nonviolent civil rights movement never secured a very firm base. In the search for explanations for the riots the organizational weaknesses of the civil rights movement deserve examination as a possible contributory factor.

Organization and Leadership

Like most political activities, nonviolent resistance requires a degree of unified organization and leadership if it is to be effective and sustained. It is significant that in Montgomery and many other southern cities it was the Baptist churches, with their strong following and peculiarly autonomous and independent structure, which provided the necessary basis for resistance. But in the matter of organization and leadership the local and accidental beginning of the civil rights movement may in the long run have been a source of weakness. There were plenty of older national organizations, such as NAACP (National

Association for the Advancement of Coloured People), CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), and the Urban League, which could only with difficulty overcome the reserve they felt in 1956 about a young Baptist pastor in Montgomery, Dr Martin Luther King, suddenly becoming a national symbol. Each organization had its own history and its own political emphasis, and for this reason the civil rights movement never had a unified organizational base comparable to Congress in the Indian independence movement. In some actions, such as the 1963 March on Washington, the various bodies were able to combine effectively: but they never succeeded in submerging their individual identities in any permanent unified body.

King himself helped to form yet another organization in 1957—the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Its very name indicated its somewhat limited character—partly because of the emphasis of Christianity (its original call to battle, issued in February 1957, called upon Negroes to "accept Christian love in full knowledge of its power to defy evil") and also because of the use of the word 'Southern', which reflected a deliberate decision on King's part to be a *Southern* Negro leader. In his last few years he changed his emphasis, however, and worked more in the North, particularly in Chicago. But his remark shortly before his assassination, "Don't say nonviolence has failed in the North; it hasn't really been tried there", was to some extent a criticism of himself and of his organization.

King's origins weakened his claims to national leadership not merely because they were Southern, but also because they were so intensely local. If the Montgomery boycott could produce a King, could not other campaigns produce other leaders by a similar process of national selection? As Louis Lomax has put it; "Local leaders in various (Southern) towns saw themselves as potential Martin Luther Kings, and they did not want his organization moving into their parishes to capture the power and the glory that came with a successful desegregation move. What these men *did* want, and still demand, was Martin Luther King, their symbolic leader. . . ,"¹⁹

The disparate character of the civil rights movement was at times its strength. It was by a purely local and spontaneous action in Greensboro, North Carolina, as unexpected as Mrs Parks' action in Montgomery, that the great wave of sit-ins in 1960 began. The 1961 Freedom Rides—a dramatic means of opposing bus segregation better suited than boycotts to the inter-state routes—were initiated by CORE, not by King. But the divided character of the civil rights movement probably added to the already great problems of maintaining nonviolent discipline and overall control. It made it easier for new leaders to emerge who first advocated slogans somewhat suggestive of violence (such as 'Black Power') and then advocated violence itself.

The personal courage and powerful speeches of Martin Luther King did much to hold this movement together. He and some of the other civil rights leaders often gave the impression of being overworked firefighters, rushing from one crisis they had not created to another, and only occasionally having the opportunity to plan their campaigns in a coordinated way. But King, through his extraordinary force of character, did impress a common character on this diverse and disorganized movement, despite its strong centrifugal tendencies.

It was natural that a leader so prominent as King should be criticized. The grounds on which he was most commonly criticized were ones which arose indirectly from the organizational weaknesses of the movement. He was frequently attacked for having come out of jail on bond in Albany, Georgia, in December 1961, after having previously invited others to come in and spend Christmas with him;²⁰ and also for not personally leading actions in Birmingham in 1963, and for coming out of jail as a leader who could coordinate action and hold the movement together. This was perhaps an inevitable consequence of the organizational problems of the civil rights movement.

After King

As his *Chaos or Community?* makes clear, in his last years King recognized more and more that a national organization was needed; and that the movement would have to change its character, fighting increasingly for economic justice

as well as dignity. To King, this meant a national campaign to demand federal programmes on a scale hitherto undreamed of, comparable to that of the Vietnam war which he so strongly opposed. He stressed particularly the importance of greater expenditure on Negro education, and a guaranteed minimum wage for the poor.

The Poor People's Campaign, advance contingents of which reached Washington by mid-May, is a sign of the changed direction of campaigning. Originally planned by King, and now led by the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, King's successor as head of SCLC, it is based on the demand for a guaranteed minimum wage. It is also a desperate attempt to regain the initiative for nonviolent forms of action. Since the Poor People's Campaign has taken the form of a lobby—albeit an unusual one—much will depend on the reaction of President and Congress. As yet, the campaign shows few signs of being effective, and it is hard to be optimistic about the reaction to it, not only because of the expenditure on, and preoccupation with, Vietnam but also because of the continuing inertia of Congress.

The 1968 Civil Rights Act, passed through Congress in the week following the King assassination, is hardly a guarantee of a new spirit in Congress. It deals with a particularly important aspect of the race problem: housing. But those sceptical Negroes who called the 1964 Civil Rights Act a 'rubber cheque' which could not be cashed can perhaps make the same criticism of the latest Bill with greater justification. Although racial discrimination in the sale, rental, or advertising of most dwelling will now be prohibited, such provisions are extraordinarily hard to enforce, and they may indeed prove largely meaningless in the absence of direct federal financial support of house-purchasers, and direct federal action to abolish slums. That the 1968 Civil Rights Act contains new anti-riot provisions', will only confirm the widespread view that it is the product of bargaining in Congress and is no sign of a genuine, overriding determination to attack injustice.

King's assassination has brought together the leaders of the nonviolent movement, who have repeatedly said that if their latest efforts—particularly

the Poor People's Campaign—do not produce results, America will have lost her last chance for a nonviolent solution. It is significant that Mr Bayard Rustin, who broke with King over the latter's involvement of the civil rights movement in the issue of opposition to the Vietnam war, has been very active in the Poor People's Campaign and is organizing the National Day of Support, which will involve demonstrations in Washington on 19 June. He is one of the many very able leaders of the nonviolent moment who have taken on so large a responsibility at so difficult a time. It remains to be seen whether they can proceed beyond the present activities in Washington, and shape the movement into a coherent pattern—both in terms of organization and action.

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1. According to a 1968 report of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, in the eleven southern states, a total of 2,800,000 Negroes, over 57 per cent of the Negro population of voting age, are now registered to vote,—*The Times*, London, 13 May 1968.
 2. Lerone Bennett, *What Manner of Man: A Biography of Martin Luther King*, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 73. This is more up to date than the biography of King by L.D. Reddick.
 3. Martin Luther King, *Chaos or Community?* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1968), p. 62.
 4. See King, *Why We Can't Wait?* (New York, New American Library, 1964), p. 146; and *Chaos or Community?* pp. 34 and 88.
 5. See article by Professor Louis Litwack, quoted in James Peck, *Freedom Ride* (New York, Grove Press, 1962), p. 14. On nineteenth-century Negro resistance to segregation, see also Alan F. Westin (ed.), *Freedom Now: The Civil Rights Struggle in America* (New York, Basic Books, 1964), pp. 61-78.
 6. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (London, SCM Press, 1963), pp. 252-4.
 7. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publications Division, 1960-63), vol. 4 p. 51.
 8. *What Manner of Man*. op. cit., p. 73.
 9. Martin Luther King described the bus boycott in his *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York, Ballantine Books, 1958).

10. See *Chaos or Community?* pp. 27 and 55. In 1957 King himself applied for a gun permit after his home had been bombed; but he eventually thought better of it.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
12. For examples of King's use of the word 'protest', see *Why We Can't Wait?* p. 51; and *Chaos or Community?* pp. 55 and 58.
13. For a sympathetic psychiatrist's discussion of the role of children in the civii rights movement, see Robert Coles, 'The Strength of the Child', *New Society*, London, 23 May 1968.
14. *Op. cit.*, pp. 104-5.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
17. *Chaos or Community?* p. 145.
18. This also happened in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1960. For an account of events there, see Merrill Proudfoot. *Diary of a Sit-in* (Chapel Hill. North Carolina U.P., 1962), pp. 185-6. His book contains an excellent discussion of the methods used by the civil rights movement.
19. Louis E. Lomax, *The Negro Revolt* (New York, New American Library, 1963), p. 110. Lomax's book contains a penetrating assessment of King's leadership.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
21. The latest news, which comes as *Gandhi Marg* goes to press, is that Mr Bayard Rustin has now resigned as co-ordinator of the National Day of Support for the Poor People's campaign. This resignation followe on mounting evidence that this campaign has been poorly organised, and that it is not based on a clear conception of how it is supposed to achieve results. The confusion, coming at this time, is a poor omen for the future of nonviolent action in the American racial conflict.

CHARLES C. WALKER

MARTIN LUTHER KING was a shaper rather than a maker of events.¹

At the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott, he was a recent seminary graduate with fairly conventional ideas of social action. He knew of nonviolence and Gandhi; he had been involved in protest episodes; he had a deep sense of mission; nevertheless, he was settling into a church pastorate, and had declined an invitation to head the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) because it would take up too much time.

He was thrust into the leadership of the bus protest but, once immersed in it, sensed its potential greatness. It was truly a corporate effort and powerful voices, worthy of the tradition of Southern Baptist preaching, portrayed its meaning in vivid exploits of oratory. None surpassed King in grasping and voicing the universal themes, and evoking responses of "the better angels of our nature".

At an early mass meeting in that city, I heard him say: "What is happening today in Montgomery is much bigger than Montgomery. It is as big as the cause of freedom itself. It is a struggle of black people, but for more than black people. It is a struggle for human dignity everywhere."

The first day's boycott exceeded his expectations and within weeks became a national drama. Many leaders would panic before such a prospect, fearing the unforeseen power of a mass movement. King embraced it. In test after test—handling organizational crises or personal harassment or the press or confrontations with the city—he came through with amazingly few tactical mistakes and with impressive gains.

The Montgomery experience seems to have defined his characteristic leadership pattern. Its most significant feature was this: the community made the movement. It was collective leadership at its best. The mass media sought out King, but he pointed to his co-workers and to the people walking the hot

streets and dusty roads. This was no act of phony humility. Montgomery was a participatory movement.

A new ritual evolved: the twice-a-week mass meetings held in various churches. Of these, Murray Kempton, one of the first and best reporters to sense the unfolding drama, writes: "Those nights he never talked to us but only to them, working the old ritual of his affirmation and their response; he did not speak for them but with them: if we wanted to listen to him, we had to listen to them too; they accompanied him into history."²

Nonviolence was an emerging feature. When King's house was bombed, he delivered his crucial 'sermon on the porch' where he appealed for calm and non-retaliation, and the angry crowd melted away. This event stamped the seal of authentic nonviolence on the movement. Even then he tried to get a gun permit but was denied it. As the leaders and the people discovered in new and unexpected ways the power of nonviolence, it caught hold of them. King among others, but most effectively, evoked from Negro lore—history, songs, daily experience—imagery and examples that plumbed the depths of memory and aspiration.

The motifs were far from new. He spoke not only out of Negro life and feeling; he enunciated American themes and invoked American heroes; he gave new meaning to Biblical story, and affirmed values deep in Judaeo-Christian and Western culture. Few of his allusions were Asian or Eastern. While he echoed universal themes, he was a black, American Christian.

In spite of his fame, he was still for some time considered a sectional rather than a national leader. The traditional organizations of protest were somewhat apprehensive about this burgeoning movement in the South, wondering whether it would become ally or rival. Civil disobedience was also a thorny issue. The NAACP had won notable legal victories and had considerable stake in its legal strategy. When at a San Francisco NAACP conference King called upon Negroes to fill up the jailhouses of the South, legal expert Thurgood Marshall (now a Supreme Court justice) stalked out of the meeting.

From the beginning King did not wish to precipitate a North-South battle, and in this he was encouraged by those strategists who saw the possibilities of reorienting national leadership without splintering /Or confrontations. For example, King took out a 'life membership' in NAACP and helped raise money. In 1957 he decided to remain a Southern leader; when he left Montgomery it was to move to Atlanta.³

His appearance on the national scene came in three ways. One was mass media which gave him terrific exposure. This in turn made him the most sought-after speaker in America. These speeches not only publicized the movement, they also raised substantial sums of money. The third path was a series of demonstrations in Washington initiated by Bayard Rustin, the first of which was the Prayer Pilgrimage For Freedom. The impetus for these came from the needs of the Southern struggle, and the recognition that it merited national support.

King undertook some sorties into direct action and organizational campaigns, but they were of modest accomplishment. He was arrested and jailed in Montgomery, stabbed in Harlem by a black woman, but was feted in Ghana and received warmly in India.

The next breakthrough came with the student-led sit-ins beginning in February, 1960. What had begun in Montgomery now took on a mass character. Soon thousands were in jail and a hundred thousand in the streets. In quick succession came the commando-style Freedom Rides into the deep South; the difficult campaign in Albany, Georgia; and the crucial struggle in Birmingham, Alabama. The culmination of these efforts was the giant March on Washington in 1963 and King's climactic speech, "I Have A Dream". Public opinion polls showed repeatedly that King had a preeminent hold on the loyalty and imagination of Negro people. His base was still Southern but his role truly national.

It couldn't last. Historic changes were in the making and black consciousness was intensifying. Nevertheless, the structure of American economic and social life set limits. The Civil Rights Bill of 1963 had been passed, but the basic conditions of Negro life changed only marginally. Jobs, housing, schools, ghetto life generally—the modest gain in these areas were no match for the rising

expectations and the more strident demands. Inevitably the strains upon collective leadership grew severe.

New directions in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee crystallized in May 1966, when Stokely Carmichael replaced John Lewis as chairman.⁴ Floyd McKissick replaced James Farmer as National Director of the Congress of Racial Equality and announced: "Nonviolence is a dying philosophy". After James Meredith was shot and wounded in June 1966, the March was carried on by King, Carmichael and McKissick. While King drew the most fervent responses from the crowds at the meetings, it was the new cry of Black Power enunciated by Carmichael and McKissick which came through as a protest of the new period.

In this new configuration of leadership, King was one among others and no longer the unrivalled rallying point. However, his hold on the black masses was still formidable.

A major feature of his leadership in this period was his constant opening towards the militants rather than turning from them. He refused to attack them by name though he criticized aspects of their claims, and repeatedly emphasized it is the conditions which must change. Had he sought a centrist position, with militancy on the increase, fragmentation would have engulfed the movement. As his death later revealed, he embodied a peculiar significance even for the young militants for whom he was a hero in their adolescence or early organization years. Though they criticized and even ridiculed him, they honoured him for bearing the scars of the struggle, quite literally.

The widest gulf was between him and the young of the ghetto growing up in greater alienation and desperation, for whom King was only a 'big name' from that vaguely sensed region called 'the organization scene'.

Many white people saw King as an alternative to the more militant and violence-prone black leaders. For a time, King himself seemed willing to play that role, saying that unless he could win victories and concessions the result might be ominous. While there was truth in that assertion, it tended to play

into the hands of those who wished to promote dissension in the ranks of black leaders and enervate the movement.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, King's organizational base, moved into Chicago to test its organizational approach in a major northern city, it seemed to have achieved some victories after a strife-ridden summer, but these could not be sustained in face of a crafty politico like Mayor Daley. While "accepting goals in principle" he succeeded in preventing their implementation. Exaggerated hopes had been raised about what could be accomplished by direct action. Chicago was viewed by some as a disappointment, by others as a strategic disaster. The modest gains were indirect. The theoretical and strategic concepts which had grown out of a Southern culture and a religious milieu of the black Southern churches could not sustain an assault on the entrenched exploitative institutions of a northern city.

In the fall of 1967 King announced a campaign of militant nonviolence and possible civil disobedience in the nation's capital, to be held in the Spring of 1968. This he saw as a way to absorb and put to good use the constructive energies that might otherwise produce smoking ruins in America's cities. It was also viewed as a natural next step in the organizational development of some of the nonviolent forces. It was called the Poor People's Campaign.

When Stokely Carmichael returned from his much-publicized tour abroad, he settled down in Washington and launched a new drive for 'black unity'. Whatever the strategic intent, one effect was to mute criticism of black leaders, including King. The two men had a long conversation, during which Carmichael agreed not to interfere with the Washington campaign even if he might not help it.

Then came the shock of the assassination. Despite the effusive and sometimes phony outpourings of feeling accompanying this" tragedy, apparently the shock was deeply felt. It is indeed possible, to use another phrase of Murray Kempton, that a healing has begun. Nonviolence is once again on the lips of many and is not the 'dirty word' it was only months ago.

The Poor People's Campaign is under way at the time of this writing. One achievement can already be seen: the reversal, even if momentarily, of the polarization and fragmentation process within the black community, and between black and white groups in communities across the land. While its demands are not likely to produce much action out of official Washington, even when they are made more specific, this campaign is likely to become a significant organizational thrust for the black liberation movement.

King saw his work as inextricably related to more than the race problem. It was bound up with the fate of the anti-war movement, the labour movement, and other efforts for social change. Underlying all these are fundamental questions of how men can live worthily in a complex and interdependent community. Those concerns were not new with him, though he gave them more attention in later years, and the Nobel Peace Prize indicated that fact.

Ignazio Silone writes: "A society is renewed when its humblest element acquires a value". King helped that happen in America, and in the course of that mission once more proved the mettle of nonviolence as a force for human betterment. The major contribution of nonviolence in the Southern struggle was to enable black people to act in new ways no longer immobilized by their fears of the white man nor of themselves. A great new flowering of energies resulted, and made possible more wide-ranging efforts to change American life.

No one leader can assume his mantle. As in Montgomery in the early days of 1955, the task now belongs to a collective leadership who might again be thrust into a role beyond their imagining.

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1. A phrase of Lerone Bennett, Jr., in *What Manner of Man*, Johnson Publishing Co., 1964.
 2. *Spectator*, April 19, 1958.
 3. Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.
 4. Jack Newfield in *The Prophetic Minority*, Chapter 5, New American Library, 1966.

MARIE E. BYLES

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ASSASSINATION of Martin Luther King, an Australian newspaper published an article saying that the death of the great leader would probably be followed by the stepping up of the war on poverty and other much needed reforms; it ended by asking, "But will this lead to amity between Blacks and Whites?" The answer was a decided negative. The Negroes might win but the hatred would be as bad as or worse than ever.

In India victory left no bitterness behind. Instead it left that amity so deeply needed in U.S.A. In 1954 I found that holding a British passport was a passport to kindness, and that especially the young men would come to me and call me 'mother' and do everything they could to help. What was there in Gandhi's methods that brought this to pass? What was there about this law of love which he seemed to know intuitively and apply in his dealings, so that victory left only loving kindness behind it?

The much abused term 'love' is used in respect of all forces which draw together. It includes everything from blind sexual passion to sublime compassion and selflessness, and has even been described as that which "holds the sun and other stars". The more we know of any law of nature the more it seems to expand, even as the more we know of the universe the larger it seems to become. The law of love is the same. In Old Testament times it was found it could not work if there was blind retaliation; there must be strict justice, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". The Buddha found that "not by hatreds are hatreds calmed but only by non-hatreds". Therefore both he and Christ after him realised that this law could not work smoothly unless one had loving-kindness even towards those who injured or tried to kill one.

It was at this stage that Gandhi came on the scene and found further requirements necessary for the working of this law of love.

Just before Martin Luther King's murder I read his article in *Gandhi Marg*, and laid it down very sadly saying to myself, "Gandhi would never have written in

that way". The article inculcated nonviolence, but it did not make for friendliness as Gandhi's articles did. Gandhi devoted his life to bringing opponents together and breeding loving-kindness between them. He was always ready to take the blame on his own shoulders or lay it upon his countrymen, and to exonerate his opponents even while he fought them or the system they had imposed. He said the British were his friends and that he wanted to help them as much as he wanted to help the Indians. When there were riots which negated his gospel of nonviolence, he would look to see where his own teaching had failed, and would fast to purify his own mind. He insisted upon the confession of his countrymen's riots before he turned to condemn the far worse atrocity of Amritsar. He stirred up the muddy waters of untouchability when his followers thought he was thereby betraying the cause of home rule. Indeed he was often blamed for inculcating self-reform first of all.

I am English-born myself, and though I should now dislike to live in that country I still cherish the absurd and irrational love for the land of my fathers that doubtless Indians cherish for theirs. We know that all men are brothers and that sort of thing, but we still do not like it when people say unkind things about the land that gave us birth. It is a strange sensitivity, but there it is and we have to accept it. In all the years I read what Gandhi wrote or is reported to have said, I never found the slightest dislike of or unfairness towards my people, nothing that stirred that irrational love and wish to defend my motherland. I never read anything that would have caused anyone to dislike the conquering race. Yet Gandhi worked incessantly to overthrow its domination. He worked for reform as strenuously as he worked for amity. This was often not so with regard to his disciples whose books I have sometimes put down with a feeling that the writer was not fair and did not like us.

It was similarly that I put down that article by Martin Luther King. I could not dispute his facts but I missed Gandhi's note of loving kindness and self-blame, which removed the sting from words just as factually dependable, and bred amity and never dislike of the opponent. For the sake of argument let us agree

to what is often contended that the Negroes have suffered more at the hands of the overlords than did the Indians and that they have no Lord and Lady Mountbatten to help. None the less the problem remains the same, the need for love and understanding by the oppressed people for those who oppress them.

Martin Luther King ceaselessly urged his followers to love their enemies, and one of his books he called 'Strength to Love'. But we cannot love our enemies because Christ or Martin Luther King tells us to do so, more especially when our leader points out all their vileness and ill-treatment of us. That is the problem. How are we to learn to love our enemies despite their vileness and ill-treatment? We cannot work for reform unless we admit the truthfulness of the wrongs done to us. What then are we to do to breed amity? Gandhi set the example by his intuitive understanding. But he did not make the means *explicit*.

So far as I know the Japanese teacher, Tenko San, who died only this year, is the first to have made *explicit* the solution of how to make friends with our enemies.¹

He tells how he searched for the source of all the evils of the world, and found that it lay within his own heart, that it was his own heart that must be purified, and that the way to its purification was by humble selfless service to others, rich and poor alike. This is the truth hidden behind the stories of the great saviours of the world who suffer or die to save others. They take upon themselves the burden of others' evil. Shiva drank the poison of the evil of the world, and bears the dark stain of it at his throat for ever after. Christ was crucified and thereby bore the sins of the world and saved mankind from the result. Our trouble has been that we have left the sacrifice to the saviours instead of performing it ourselves by seeing that the evil (as well as the good, of course) is within our own hearts. And we must start with our personal relationships by seeing this evil within and being ready always to take the blame for it ourselves. Then and not until then are we ready to remedy the evil that is done to our whole race. Tenko San told me that in the case of any

disagreement if only one party admits the fault as his, the discord will be healed. This cannot be tested by mental argument; it must be tried in actual practice, and when it is tried it will be found to work. But what if the fault is *not* ours. The answer is that it always *is* our fault. As Aldous Huxley has pointed out, our own opinion is always wrong because it is *ours*. The egotistical belief is itself evil, for it is opposed to the great Oneness. But in fact one can always find the fault within oneself if one only looks within truthfully.

When I was staying with Tenko San's community of Ittoen in Japan I heard the story of how two of its members started a wayside shelter for people down-and-out, due to the Depression, and often contemplating suicide on the convenient nearby curved railway line. Such people were offered two meals and shelter for the night, and the opportunity of joining the little community in collecting rags and scraps of food and thereby commencing a new life. Among those who came was a former criminal. One of the leaders asked him to enlarge an oven he had built. He refused, got angry and tried to kill the leader. The other members of the community did not blame the criminal; instead they fasted to purify their own minds and prayed to learn where they themselves had failed. In a day or so the criminal left of his own accord, but left in friendliness and wrote to them several times afterwards.

To admit that evil lies within our own hearts does not preclude us from working for reform. It did not preclude Gandhi. But it makes it possible to place ourselves in the position of the opponent, to understand his point of view because we now see the same evil tendencies in ourselves, and know that in similar circumstances we should have done the same ourselves. In *The Discovery of India* Nehru, speaking of the time Indians conquered other lands, remarks that they probably behaved just as badly as conquerors always do. Our own natures are not superior, and we cannot work dispassionately and with love for the enemy unless we recognize this.

It is not utterly heartless to say that this aspect of the law of love applies to Negroes also, perhaps the most abused of all people and homeless in a land that is their only home. But all laws of nature are inexorable, and the law of

love is a law of nature. The collision which resulted in many deaths may have been caused by one motor rushing to help an injured person and another rushing to put out a fire. The noblest of motives cannot prevent the deaths of the occupants.

To understand is to forgive and love even though we are simultaneously working for reform. But the tendency is always to blame the opponent and the opponent only and to forget that "there but for the grace of God go I".

Why? Why do we have this blindness. Psychiatrist Karl Jung points out that we are told to love our enemies, but that our worst enemy is within ourselves, our shadow side, and that it is this that we must first of all understand, forgive and love, and this is most difficult to do, for we like to turn a pleasant face to the world. It is for this reason that we transfer the evil from ourselves and fix it upon the opponent, whether personal or national. As long as we do this then no matter how just our cause there cannot be amity. A retiring judge recently remarked that in his experience every person at one time or another had been guilty of wanting to murder another. How difficult to admit this, and yet unless we do the law of love cannot operate unimpeded. Gandhi knew this by intuition and applied it. Tenko San made it explicit, and made it the basis of his teaching.

Both Gandhi and Martin Luther King saw that we must be prepared to suffer ourselves without inflicting suffering on the opponent, but self-suffering alone without the admission of evil in ourselves may very well only have the effect of increasing outwardly the latent sadism in the enemy.

As I have said it is not intellectually that we can prove this aspect of the law of love. All that the intellect can do is to predispose us to understand. The only proof comes from successfully applying it in actual practice. Perhaps I am fortunate that something under two years ago I received a very serious injury and broken skull; I think this may have temporarily numbed some upper brain centres which usually exercise fair control; I do not know; but I do know that to my unutterable horror I found myself hating, actually hating the good nurses in hospital, and later on frantically indignant with those who had been kind to

me. It was a frightful discovery that these evil feelings were within me. Probably it was an intellectual appreciation of Gandhi and Jung which soon made me see these feelings as the shadow side that must be loved and forgiven and see also the large part that is played by self-pity which undermines virtue sooner than anything. But it was months before that shadow side was really forgiven.

Tenko San has shown this expansion of the working of the law of love by showing the necessity for taking the blame for everything ourselves. Whether our work is then to assist reforms in a practical manner is a matter of our dharma, our job in life. It may or it may not be. But without this basic shouldering of the blame and by humble service to expiate what are our own evils, our dharma cannot be well performed.

What makes the Negro struggle so terribly tragic is that there seems no hope of the victory leading to amity. The expansion of the understanding of this law of love is not found in the writings of its great Christian leader. And yet, second to Gandhi, Martin Luther King remains the greatest leader of nonviolence that the world has seen. Mankind does not leap ahead in measured bounds, but in ups and downs and much suffering. And it learns slowly. Further, progress is less perceptible still when we, who write, write from comfortable surroundings, only in short spasms have known blind hatred of evil, and done nothing to fight nonviolence for any major reform. Gandhi's work seems to have departed from India and the future of true nonviolent warfare seems very remote. But the achievements of the past do not really die; their spirit lives on. "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past." And it is possible to span with one's hand geological strata separated by about two hundred millions of years. The future is not rosy but who are we to despair?

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1. A portion of Tenko San's writings have been translated by Makoto Ohashi in collaboration with the writer of this essay under the title *A New Road to Ancient Truth*, now in the hands of the publishers, Allen and Unwin, London.

E. MARTIN SCHOTZ

I WRITE AS AN AMERICAN STUDENT who shares with millions of other Americans the great feeling of uneasiness and fear which shrouds the United States in 1968. The feeling stems from a recognition, sometimes vague, of the many massive problems which confront us.

The immediate causes of the anxiety in the United States include the problems of racism; the deterioration in the standard of living; the staggering increase in the power and influence of local police forces and federal military agencies; the war in Vietnam; and the emerging pattern of American political assassination. Most Americans are concerned to some degree about all these problems. But perhaps it is the failure to see the intimate inter-relationships of these problems that prevents people from moving toward positive solutions. In fact, more often than not the people are enlisted in efforts which only compound their problems.

Martin Luther King's assassination has accentuated the anxiety, because King's life and death have a powerfully immediate relation to the problems. By standing back to take stock of King, we may see more clearly the true nature of our problems and the general direction in which we must move in order to achieve positive solutions.

Racial prejudice and discrimination between the white people and people of colour is one of the chief mechanisms through which the division and oppression of the masses of Americans is perpetuated. Racism presents itself in two interrelated forms—personal racism and institutional racism. The personal emotions and acts of fear, hate, and distrust by whites against blacks is 'personal' racism. By 'institutional' racism one means the establishing of and cooperation in perpetuating societal structures which function to segregate people on the basis of race. In the United States, almost every institution incorporates such racism — neighbourhood associations, school systems, businesses, unions, local, state, and federal governments.

King's death generated in America a great outpouring of feelings of sadness and verbal expressions which decried racial prejudice. This response was honest and was manifested by the vast majority of Americans –black and white. For whites this was an expression of conscious rejection of 'personal' racism. However, one who denounces race prejudice is not necessarily ready actively to join the struggle against racial segregation and oppression. In fact, such a person is likely to persist for some time in supporting institutional racism. The reason for this apparent hypocrisy is that most Americans do not understand the role of racism in their society, how important its maintenance is to the proper structure, and what its real cost is.

The economically depressed position in which black Americans exist provides a source of cheap services for the white community. Thus black workers are used to buffer the effect on whites of America's highly exploitative and oppressive society. It is the white's acquiescence in this arrangement which leads him to fear and hate blacks and to cooperate in erecting repressive police forces. In many areas of the United States poor whites who have little can at least enjoy the luxury of having some group more oppressed than they.

The price which the masses of Americans have to pay for this arrangement is not cheap. Racial segregation has been one of the primary factors preventing the working people of America from identifying the economic and political forces which oppress them. Due to this blindness, Americans permit their government to send thousands of their husbands and sons to die in the jungles of Vietnam in an attempt to maintain the colonial subjugation of the Vietnamese. This blindness convinces people that they have no choice but to live under the constant threat of nuclear war, no choice but to live under an ever expanding military-industrial state which swallows the productive capacities of the society and shrinks from murdering no one—be he Malcolm X or President Kennedy. America is today a society with miserable educational systems and totally inadequate health care. Millions live in crowded and polluted cities which are controlled by corrupt political machines.

As always, the conditions of today are producing forces determined to and capable of eventually ending the oppression. In the white communities and universities students are criticizing and questioning all the basic tenets of the ruling philosophy. Among the people of colour there is a growing awareness of the true nature of American power. The examples of the giant strides of the Chinese and Cuban peoples do not go unnoticed. In the black communities there is a hardening conviction that change is imperative and possible, and that any means necessary to produce progressive change is justified.

Martin Luther King was a significant contributor to these emerging forces. He was able to mobilize large numbers of people, and in so doing he gave them brief glimpses of the power that resides in masses of united people. This was the important meaning of such projects as the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott and the Civil Rights March on Washington in 1963. Because he was deeply involved in the real problems of the society, he was able to evolve with the political developments.

In the last three years the focus of the struggle by black Americans for freedom has shifted from the rural to the urban centres. This shift necessitated a change in goals from the acquisition of civil rights to the solution of the problems of ghetto living conditions and police violence. This change has been accompanied by the belief among many young black leaders that there is a need for organizations in the ghettos made up exclusively of black people. These institutions are to serve two purposes. First, they are to give blacks a greater personal feeling of self-esteem and ethnic pride in order to combat feelings of inferiority. Second, these groups are to encourage whites to go back into their own communities and begin working to organize a movement with which the blacks might unite meaningfully at some time in the future. These developments of necessity provoked disillusionment among many of the whites previously involved in the civil rights movement. Many whites were shocked to find their paternalistic attitudes toward blacks met with scorn instead of thankful subservience. In this context King provided a very useful service. By joining the anti-war movement and by organizing an integrated poor people's

march on Washington, he helped to maintain a link between blacks and whites at a time when full unity of the freedom struggle was impossible.

With all these obviously significant contributions, King's achievements were limited. He based his political program on the power of nonviolent resistance, and the existence of American democracy, justice and religious brotherhood. He appealed constantly to the federal government to enact and enforce legislation for the realization of full civil rights and the elimination of poverty for all Americans. In doing so he appealed to the men who represent the powerful interests which need and want racism and poverty. Thus it became impossible for him to help the American people focus on the real enemy. Perhaps it was necessary for King to do this in order to demonstrate finally the illusory nature of American democracy and freedom. Because of King's accomplishments within the existing American structure and because of the failure of these accomplishments to bring real change, more and more people are coming to the conclusion that only through a major overturning of the power structure can the solutions to our problems be achieved.

H. S. TAKULIA

HE WAS CHOSEN IN DECEMBER 1955 to head a small civic group in an Alabama town; when he died in 1968 he was the acknowledged leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), not a big organization in terms of membership or finances, but his name and his work were known around the world. Martin Luther King Jr. symbolized the Negro American's deep commitment to his liberation. Though thirteen years is a very small period in the life of a people, yet during no such span of years since the emancipation proclamation by Lincoln has America witnessed such phenomenal developments in regard to Negro civil rights.

King experimented with the use of nonviolent techniques. But he was not the first to realize the potentialities of this method in the context of the Negro's struggle. In 1936 Gandhi had said that 'it may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world'. The Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) founded in the early forties had also organized some nonviolent protest demonstrations against injustice to the Negroes.

Over the years King's flock grew in numbers but this made him only more humble. He contributed more than Booker T. Washington or W. E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Elijah Mohammed or anyone else to giving his people a feeling of self-respect. Even those who did not agree with him were proud that he was one of them.

Leadership and greatness were virtually thrust upon King. He is on record as saying that he was 'caught unawares' when his name was proposed, seconded and unanimously adopted for the office of the President of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). Thereafter almost every day he continued to receive the threatening calls which caused him so much anxiety that he even kept a gun with him for a few days. But he soon saw the contradiction in the leader of a nonviolent movement carrying a gun. Also he came to the realization that 'quality, and not longevity' was the most important

consideration for judging the worth of an individual. Since then he stopped worrying about himself or his family. In fact a few hours before his death he said: "Like anybody I would like to live a long life; longevity has its grace. But I am not concerned about it now. I just want to do God's will. ..."

Further, since the day he prepared his first address as the President of the MIA, he was concerned with the dilemma of how to strike "a balance between the militancy required to keep his people aroused to positive action and yet be moderate enough to keep their fervour within Christian bounds". More than a decade later, in the context of the rising black power movement he wrote: "I have to be militant enough to satisfy the militants, yet I have to keep discipline in the movement to satisfy white supporters and Negro moderates". Indeed his leadership of a number of freedom marches—such as the Washington march, the Selma to Montgomery march, the Meredith march through Mississippi, his proposed Poor People's Campaign in Washington—and his experiments with nonviolent protest marches outside the South, particularly in Chicago, were a part of his efforts to keep up the required militancy of his movement.

Dr King's technique worked well in desegregating public transport, lunch counters, movie theatres, restaurants, sports arenas, hotels, beaches, even churches and public schools. The initial spectacular results surprised many outsiders and even the participants in the struggle. This gave an impression as if what Gandhi hoped for was coming true. Bayard Rustin called this phase of the Negro struggle the dignity period. This was the Negro-American's 'finest hour' and to it King added his matchless grace.

King's commitment to his methods, to his ideals and to his people was firm as ever. His fight was ever against injustice; the humble and the lowly were special objects of his concern. His first fight for justice began when a seamstress refused to obey a city regulation that she thought was not right. King's last effort was on behalf of the garbage men. His commitment to the poor was life-long.

Unlike the black power advocates, however, he always kept the door open to negotiation. He did not believe in humiliating his opponents. He desired their

friendship and understanding and in this he was a true Gandhian. He was no doubt the voice of the Negroes, but more significantly he was, as it were, the disquieting conscience of the whites.

More than a hundred years after his emancipation, the Negro is nowhere near the realization of his goal of equality in American society. In most places his children still go to poor quality all-Negro schools. He cannot register himself as a voter everywhere despite laws that are meant to assure him this right. He lives in old dilapidated buildings which have been discarded years ago by the whites who have moved to beautiful suburbs. The essential municipal services are not available in areas in which he lives. The Negro pays a higher rent for the poor quality house that he can get and a higher price if he could afford to buy one. The bulk of the city's financial outlay is on extending water, electricity and telephone lines to the suburbs and since most of the people who live there work in the town, roads have to be built for them. The Negro cannot enjoy the benefits of such outlays because he cannot get into these beautifully laid out residential areas except as a domestic help. All the same he pays the direct and the indirect taxes.

Not all jobs are open to the Negro even when he is prepared for them. The trade unions do not admit him to membership as an equal of the white, thereby seriously limiting the opportunities for his employment. He is inevitably the last to be hired and the first to be fired. Official statistics on the number of Negroes on relief tell their own story of the unequal struggle that he has to wage to find and keep a job.

The former slaves have been promised equality of opportunity times without number. The Supreme Court has outlawed segregation, among others, in housing, education, use of public facilities and in the context of voting. It has also upheld all the civil rights laws passed since 1957. As a result some schools have been desegregated. Some other school districts have been forced into acquiescence under pressure from the federal government in its attempts to enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Segregation in private housing has also been outlawed by the latest civil rights legislation and it is claimed that more

than 80 percent of available private housing will also be desegregated by 1970. However, if past experience is any guide, even the Civil Rights Act of 1968 is not likely to bring about more than a token gain.

On the other hand Negroes are not willing to accept anything short of complete equality and some of them feel compelled to abandon King's methods of nonviolence and to try to force actions through violent protests. Every summer the vicious cycle—rioting, police brutality, trigger-happy national guards, troops, burning and looting, loss of human lives followed by investigation as to the causes of these riots—is repeated.

The basic causes of riots, even though they have been identified more than once, remain untackled. And because of that the Negro discontent gets further accentuated. It is this discontent that black power militants capitalize on. The challenge to King was to channel this anger and frustration. He was expected to turn the Negroes' accumulated despair into constructive efforts aimed at improving their lot.

King was no doubt a noble soul, a man of God, but even he could not be everywhere though he realized that he should have been at most if not all trouble spots. He picked his targets, some in the North, but mostly in the South. And no matter where he went to organize the Negroes his effort was to keep the problems in the limelight, hoping that it will shame the nation into action. This strategy worked in Birmingham and Selma; it did not in Chicago.

When the emphasis in the civil rights movement was shifted from issues of human dignity due to Negroes to the questions of ameliorating their social and economic conditions, King like everyone else did not know solutions of all the problems confronting the nation nor could he keep everyone including all his followers happy. While the gains made in the South raised Negro expectations in the North they also stiffened the opposition among the whites.

The whites in the North are willing to have Negroes register as voters and exercise their right. They also do not object to a Negro having a job as long as their jobs are secure. Not all of them, however, are willing to have true integration in their school systems and the provision of facilities to transfer

Negro children to schools outside the ghetto. The 'neighbourhood schools' have suddenly become both important and sacrosanct to many Northern whites. These whites also do not want the Negroes as next-door neighbours.

The Negroes in the North resent these deprivations. They realize that King's methods may not help them in solving their problems speedily. In the light of the above developments it is easy to imagine why King, a moderate, was losing his hold on the movement. Certainly there was more criticism of King and his methods of protest towards the end of his life.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee that came into being in the wake of the sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, under the inspiration of King himself snatched the initiative from him, and gave the slogan of black power. King's association with the peace movement and his anti-Vietnam war stand were regarded by some as an attempt to keep abreast of the militants and to keep intact his image of being a fighter for worthwhile causes. His opposition to war was not, however, based on expediency. Like Gandhi his concept of nonviolence inevitably led King to abhor wars. His pointed call for an end of the war in Vietnam annoyed the establishment, many of his white liberal friends and moderate Negro supporters. The gulf between the militant and antiwar Negroes and the whites was widened. Well-known liberals, particularly from the South, snapped their life-long ties with the inter-racial organisations engaged in the civil rights movement which they had supported at considerable personal risk. King's dream of narrowing racial divisions was nearly shattered when he made the crucial decision not to restrict himself exclusively to the winning of civil rights for the Negroes.

Unhappily it also did not help him regain his old popularity among the Negroes. Yet he stuck to his principles and continued the fight. When the first Memphis march ended in street violence he decided to go back to the tense city to lead another demonstration by the garbage workers. His commitment to nonviolence was not merely tactical, clearly it was an article of faith for Martin Luther King. After his death the nonviolent form of protest may not necessarily cease to be relevant.

There are two distinct currents of thought on the relevance of nonviolent techniques of protest in the United States. Floyd McKissick of the Congress on Racial Equality described King after the latter's death as "the last prince of nonviolence". Joan Baez, the famous folk-singer and pacifist, challenges the view. While conceding that nonviolence had not solved all problems she also asks pointedly whether violence has succeeded anywhere in producing better and lasting results? Bell Mauldin, in a thoughtful cartoon, depicted Gandhi telling King, 'The odd thing about assassins. Dr King, is that they think they have killed you'.

Martin Luther King once quoted an old slave preacher: "We ain't what we ought to be and we ain't what we want to be and we ain't what we are going to be. But thank God we ain't what we was." He was certainly right. The Negro has travelled a long distance in his struggle for equality during the last decade; and undoubtedly King made a major contribution to this advance.