



All Americans gain . . .

NEW YORK—"As the years go by, the figure of Dr. Martin Luther King looms ever larger as one of the great men of American history," Howard M. Squadron, president of the American Jewish Congress, said this week in a tribute to the slain human rights leader on what would have been his 53rd birthday.

Recalling "the close ties of friendship and respect" between the Congress and Dr. King, Mr. Squadron declared:

"All Americans gained from the vision and the courage of this great American.

"He was, of course, the leader of the great struggle of America's Black people for the political and economic justice too long denied them. But he was also an eloquent spokesman and organizer in the cause of peace—in Vietnam, in the Middle East, wherever there was war and carnage. He gave powerful support to Soviet Jewry's struggle to be free. He labored for the right of men and women to organize and win a de-

cent living wage.

"Martin Luther King was a giant who gave his life for human dignity and human freedom. Along with Americans of every race and religion, Jews mark his birthday as a day for rededicating ourselves to the causes for which he gave his great spirit, his loving heart, his very life."

Mr. Squadron recalled that Dr. King had addressed the national convention of the American Jewish Congress in 1958 in Miami Beach, Fla., marking the first time a Black leader had spoken before a white audience in Florida. In 1962 Dr. King received the Stephen S. Wise Award of the American Jewish Congress at a meeting in New York.

In 1963, at the March on Washington led by Dr. King, the then-president of the American Jewish Congress—Rabbi Joachim Prinz—was one of the 10 national chairmen of the event who addressed the throng of 250,000 persons from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

He lived his philosophy

Grassroot News, N.W.—School Board member and educator Herb Cawthorne made cultural history in Portland with his oral history, using the words and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"I felt that during the last years of his life, the dynamics in the Black community led to a misunderstanding of King's philosophy. Some didn't realize how far out on the front lines King was. He has a belief in nonviolence and the Christian Ethic. If you were to compare him to Malcolm X or any other leader who had stronger statements, King nevertheless made the 'out in the streets and down in the alley' changes. Because we got intellectually confused about King's philosophy vs. his actions we began to think that King's method would not work. Also, his method of nonviolence didn't give us a means to react to white violence. With my oral history I wanted to rekindle a sense of his philosophy and beliefs."

Herb goes on to add that someone needed to remind people that King worked out of the context of his religious beliefs. "There are over 22 million Black people in the church. There were many ministers who had no social obligation, nor did they encourage their congregations to fight for a better life on earth. They were told to wait until they got to heaven. King didn't do this and that was one of the main reasons why I

picked him."

King was a minister. Is that why the people trusted him?

"Being a minister helped him in terms of appealing to the middle class, but I think he was the right man at the right time. People were just tired. The spirit of the times was right for him.

"The key factor was that King went out into the streets. He was willing to put himself on the line and you found people willing to go to Selma from Portland just to hear him speak. He gave a sense of strength to people who were engaging in actions that they hadn't since the reconstruction. The Black community had never been that unified behind fighting for social change. King set the stage."

Cawthorne believes that many others followed the steps formed by Martin King. "Malcolm X took King's philosophy and went further. The Black Panthers took Martin Luther King's progressive challenge and went further. But it was King that set the basis for many organizations in the 1960s."

How does Cawthorne perceive King's nonviolent policies? "His nonviolent philosophy was both religious and practical. His understanding of nonviolence was rooted in Gandhi's nonviolent policies. This is suffering injustices to yourself but you don't allow the injustices that you suffer to turn you

around so that you commit the same injustices to someone else. This was the religious base of King.

"He knew if Black people went out there with guns and attacked if they were provoked, whites who were willing to attack them anyway would just have more ammunition to fight us with. Now, even with nonviolence there were some who were killed, had their homes burned and were beaten. But King's policies minimized the violence. It created a moral crisis for the whole country. This was the practical side of King's philosophy."

It's been 12 years since King's departure. What perspective should we place him in? "King was the greatest Black leader of this century. Greater than Malcolm X because his words and works brought forth a greater contribution. I believe that when Malcolm was killed he began to incorporate more and more of King's philosophy.

King always spoke in strong terms. But he couched it in Christianity and flowery words. He had a philosophy that he lived. Many Blacks turned their backs on King because they disagreed with an element of that philosophy. His movement is the basis for all protest movements in this country. Anti-war, women's rights and in the labor movement. King should never be forgotten. He gave his life so that we could live."

His dream will never die

Grassroot News, N.W.—Rev. John Jackson, a fellow Baptist minister, personally knew King. He talks about the kind of man King was. "King was very modest and not pushy at all. He never let you know who he was in terms of making demands. I remember once when we were at a convention. We were ready to leave and the plane could only seat 12. There were 13 of us and the plane had this little seat that they could pull down. Now King had just finished a conversation with Richard Nixon and he waited until all those people got on that plane. King rode in that little seat. That characterized the kind of fellow King was. I spent time with King and you wouldn't know he was who he was unless you asked him. And that's not characteristic of us.

"Now when the Montgomery bus boycott was happening King was the secretary. The reason why he got to speak on the subject is because he took the minutes. That kind of humbleness would be the thing to say about the person who achieved the kinds of things King achieved.

What kind of effect did King have on the Black Church? "In the beginning King was a conservative. But as he moved about he became more so-

cial-minded. Once when we were traveling King told me that he lost his position as head of our Sunday School Congress because he and the President couldn't see eye to eye. So King, along with his father, came over to American Baptist.

"If you were to narrow down what Martin King did for the Black Church you would have to say that he made the Church more social-minded. And he made the Blacks aware of the fact that you can have an earned Ph.D. and be accepted as a preacher. It used to be said that if you had too much education you didn't have spirit. Dr. Martin Luther King turned that all around.

Many men who are popular social advocates today owe their charisma to Dr. King. "During King's time he was offered many honorable posts. He turned it all down. It was said that he was making between seventy and eighty thousand dollars speaking. Men like Andrew Young and Jessie Jackson were involved in the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference). King turned all his money over to the SCLC to keep those men on. It helped pay the salary of many of these fellows. It gave time to these men so that they could learn to function in a political way. If

you would just look at the way Andy Young got elected in Atlanta he got elected through methods King used. If you trace many prominent people back to the South they learned how to be known in the public when they were King's Lieutenants." King learned these methods from Gandhi in India.

Rev. Jackson doesn't believe that King's philosophy was changing; rather, King was pushed into certain things. "In order for King to stay on top he was pushed into changing his direction. He was being pushed away from nonviolence. I don't see how he could have maintained his leadership without taking on what these other fellows wanted to do."

What should we remember the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King for? "I think the dream of Rev. King will never die. It will live forever because of what was said in it. The letter written from a Birmingham jail will also be remembered. That was when he asked when do you go against the government. When do you seek to try to change what the government is doing. That is, go against the status quo. Those are two things that will never grow old. As time goes on, they will become more important."



"All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

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