

BLACK HISTORY

The Portland Observer

The Negro Is Your Brother

By DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
(Editor's note: From the Birmingham jail, where he was imprisoned as a participant in nonviolent demonstrations against segregation, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote in longhand the letter which follows. It was his response to a public statement of concern and caution issued by eight white religious leaders of the South.)

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities "unwise and untimely."

Seldom, if ever, do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all of the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would be engaged in little else in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I would like to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should give the reason for my being in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the argument of "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every Southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Ga.

We have some 85 affiliate organizations all across the South, one being the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Whenever necessary and possible, we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago our local affiliate here in Birmingham invited us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct-action program if such were deemed neces-

sary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promises.

So I am here, along with several members of my staff, because we were invited here. I am here because I have basic organizational ties here. Beyond this, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the eighth-century prophets left their little villages and carried their "thus saith

pel of freedom beyond my particular hometown.

Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid. Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice every-

side the United States can never be considered an outsider.

You deplore the demonstrations that are presently taking place in Birmingham. But I am sorry that your statement did not express a similar concern for the conditions that brought the demonstrations into being. I am sure that each of you would want to go beyond the superficial social analyst who looks merely at



Police Chief Laurie Pritchett of Albany, Georgia, placing Martin Luther King Jr., and Dr. W.G. Anderson under arrest.

the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their hometowns; and just as the Apostle Paul left his little village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to practically every hamlet and city of the Greco-Roman world, I too am compelled to carry the gos-

We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives in-

effects and does not grapple with underlying causes.

I would not hesitate to say that it is unfortunate that so-called demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham.

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A Tribute To My Real Heros

Living in a world full of bitterness, racial tension, and violence I grew up watching my "Super Heroes" on television. I had many heros like Batman the cape crusader, Robin the boy wonder, Superman, spiderman and many more crime fighters whom I called my heroes.

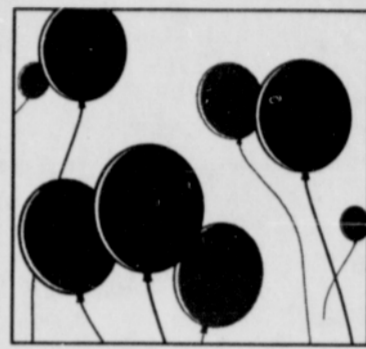
But deep in my heart I always knew who my real heros were, the ones that paved the way for me and all other African Americans like me.

It was the true crusaders like Fredrick Douglass, SoJourney Truth, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Medger Evers, Rosa Parks, and many, many more civil rights leaders who lost their lives fighting the real battles. They fought not with guns, and knives, but with much faith, hope, courage, diginty and pride.

It was you "My Real Hero's" who survived the dark nights, it was you who severed the storms, it was you who was strong, firm and steadfast and would not be moved, it was you who ran the race, who kept the faith, and kept hope alive.

Truly you are my "real hero's" and the wind beneath my wings. Well done my great and faithful hero's, well done. I thank you.

--Kelly Hollins



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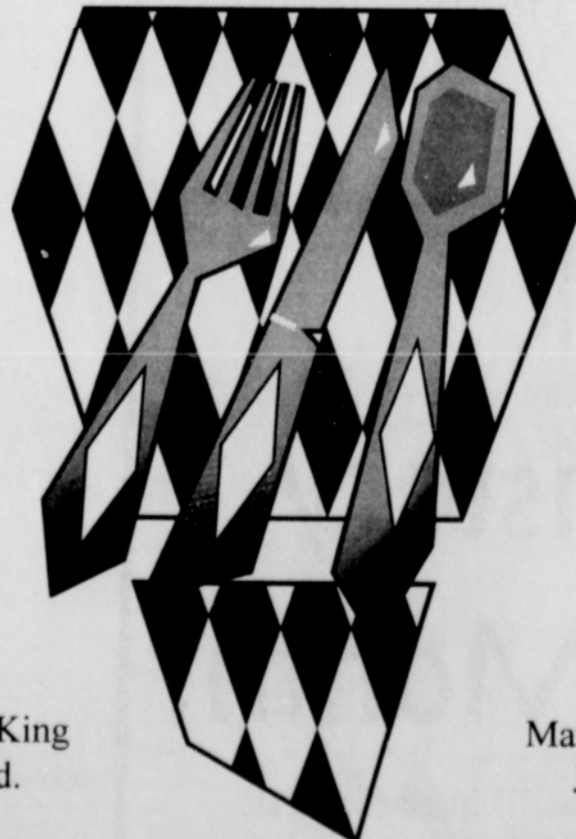
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