



# A REBEL WITH A CAUSE

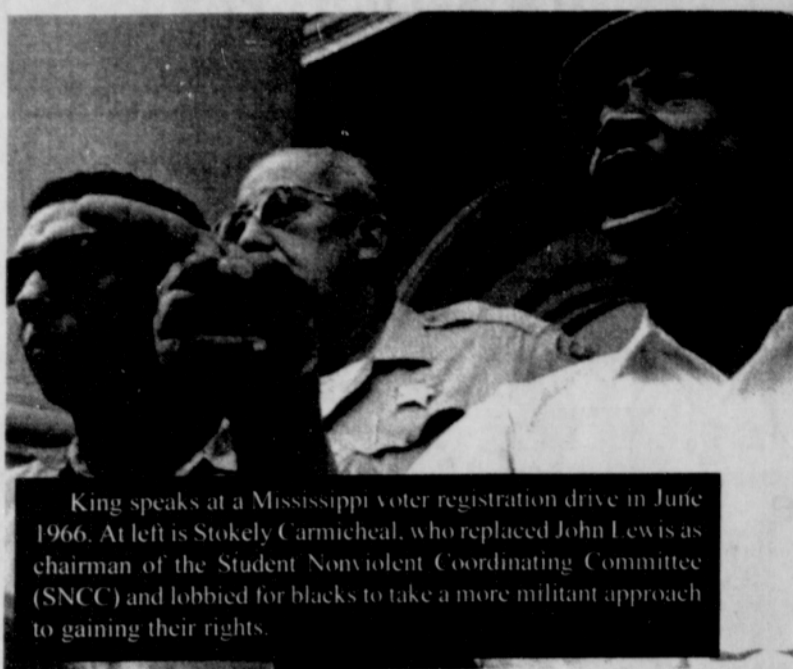
By GRACE LEE BOGGS

During the 1960s, like most activists in the Black Power movement, I identified more with Malcolm X than with King. I was inspired by the Civil Rights movement in the South, but I had no real understanding of how deeply rooted it was in the people and the community or how it challenged not only the racism of American society but the concepts of revolution held by most radicals, including myself. It was only as I studied the speeches and writings of Dr. King in the last two years of his life that I have learned to appreciate how profoundly visionary he was and especially how he exemplified what I believe to be one of the most important qualities of revolutionary leadership, the ability to evolve and change your ideas as reality changes and as you learn from your own experiences and those of others.

The turning point for King was the eruption of the youth rebellions in northern cities, beginning with Watts in 1965. These rebellions made King painfully aware that the vision of black and white children marching hand in hand, which had inspired the civil rights struggle in the South, did not meet the more complex needs of new generations of Black street youth whom Hi-Tech had made expendable and who were being sent to die in the rice paddies of Vietnam.

Recognizing that we had entered into an era of rebellion but also recognizing that unceasing rebellion would only mean unceasing chaos, King was exploring a new kind of revolution, a non-violent revolution that would challenge all the values and institutions of our society and combine the struggle against Racism with a struggle against Poverty, Militarism and Materialism.

Recognizing that these four evils were deeply rooted in Capitalism, King was trying to conceptualize a new system that would go beyond Capitalism which he said was too centered, too individualistic and Communism



King speaks at a Mississippi voter registration drive in June 1966. At left is Stokely Carmichael, who replaced John Lewis as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and lobbied for blacks to take a more militant approach to gaining their rights.

which he saw as too collective, too statist. Warning that material growth had been made an end in itself and that our scientific power had outrun our spiritual power, he refused to accept the dictatorship of Hi-Tech which he said diminishes people because it eliminates the sense of participation.

We have guided missiles and misguided men, he said. And he called for programs that would involve young people in direct actions in our dying cities which would be both self-transforming and structure-transforming.

I don't know - no one does - what King would have been thinking and doing had he not been killed. But today, 32 years later, I am convinced that in order to build a new movement for revolutionary social change for our period we have to begin where he left off, i.e., with the need to go beyond rebellion to revolution.

That means taking seriously King's conviction that the struggle against Racism should not be separated out from the struggle against Poverty, Materialism and Militarism. It also means that we should be involving our young people in self-transforming and structure-transforming community-building programs, especially in our schools.

King was able to respond so creatively to the black rebellions because he had learned to think dialectically from Hegel, his favorite philosopher. Recognizing that new contradictions are bound to emerge in the course of struggle, Hegel warned against getting stuck in the ideals of the pasts.

For King, as for Hegel, the essence of humanity was the struggle for Freedom. But Freedom is not a thing. It is a concept that is constantly evolving as we struggle to evolve into something more human. Thus we have to go beyond the concept of Freedom as freedom of the will or to do your own thing and begin conceiving of Freedom in terms of citizenship or our right and responsibility to govern our communities, our city and our country.

Like Hegel, King had a long-range approach to struggle. As a result, he saw revolution not as an outburst of anger or resentment but as disciplined activity that is transformative and healing not only of society but of ourselves.

These are some of the ways of thinking that contributed to the very special quality of King's leadership. The best way for us to honor Dr. King is to think dialectically ourselves.

# WAKE UP YOUNG AMERICANS!

By DANIEL CLAY

When one looks at the current state of affairs in the United States of America, it is obvious why generations X and Y are so distraught. The political arena is full of corruption; the corrupt accuse the corrupt. There is a blatant disregard for morals and ethics and a blatant disregard for the very earth that sustains human life. This sad state of affairs has caused many people to withdraw into their own little shells. It has caused many to shun politics lest they become soiled by the same. And it has caused many to reject the values and the norms of preceding generations. But, dressing differently, or observing different cultural norms, does not change the system. Refusing to participate in that terrible tainted political system does not change the system. In fact, a refusal to participate is a selfish denial of responsibility that will ultimately allow the system-as-it-is to continue; and if the system of government and politics of today continues as usual, generations of X and Y, and generations to come beyond them, shall be the ones to suffer!

Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, "Success, recognition, and conformity are the bywords of the modern world where everyone seems to crave the anesthetizing security of being identified with the majority. "Now, I tell you, that "non-conformity" can, in and of itself become "conformity"; so, it does not matter whether you wear a baseball cap with the bill turned backwards, or whether you shave part of your head, or pierce part of your body, or tattoo part of your body, these are mere outer ornaments that have NO effect upon what is actually occurring in the political process. These may be fine personal statements, but they are of NO consequence in the world of politics and government! And marching with signs may make you feel good,

but if you do not turn out to the polls, and vote, your signs are worthless! It is important that the young and strong who are familiar with technology, and the needs of today, be involved in the political processes of today. No one can empower you, for you must empower yourselves! How will you be empowered? By taking the responsibility to be an active part of your political system, by voting, by standing behind those who represent the issues in which you believe.

*Can you make a difference?  
You better believe you can make a difference!*

Leadership is very much about ethics. Martin Luther King, Jr. knew this truth and expressed it when he said, "We are called to be people of conviction, not conformity; of moral nobility, not social respectability. We are commanded to live differently and according to a higher loyalty." A government functions optimally, only when those who lead it have the proper ethics to lead it as is best for the people. The government gives you freedom of expression - freedom to write what you want in newspapers, freedom to disagree on the radio; freedom to tattoo your body or pierce your nipples, freedom to make any statement you desire - and it gives you the right and responsibility to be active in the process of the government by backing the candidates in whom you believe, by voting, and, if you do not believe in one of the candidates, you have the right to become one of them! But, if you fail to exercise these rights, then... you may find other rights and privileges dwindling! Even the rights of the expression of your personal beliefs, for as that great Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Blind conformity makes us so suspicious of an individual who insists on saying that what he really believes that we recklessly threaten his civil liberties."

"I have a dream!" was a powerful



Daniel Clay is running as a nominee for the presidency under the Reform Party.

rallying cry; but that dream has not been fulfilled! And it won't be fulfilled until everyone follows their hearts and makes the dream a reality! Those who have been to the top of the mountain, and have seen what is on the other side, have no doubt about what CAN be accomplished. But most of us are greatly saddened by what IS being accomplished! It is so little when so much is possible!

How long will it be before equality, freedom, liberty, and justice for all becomes a reality?

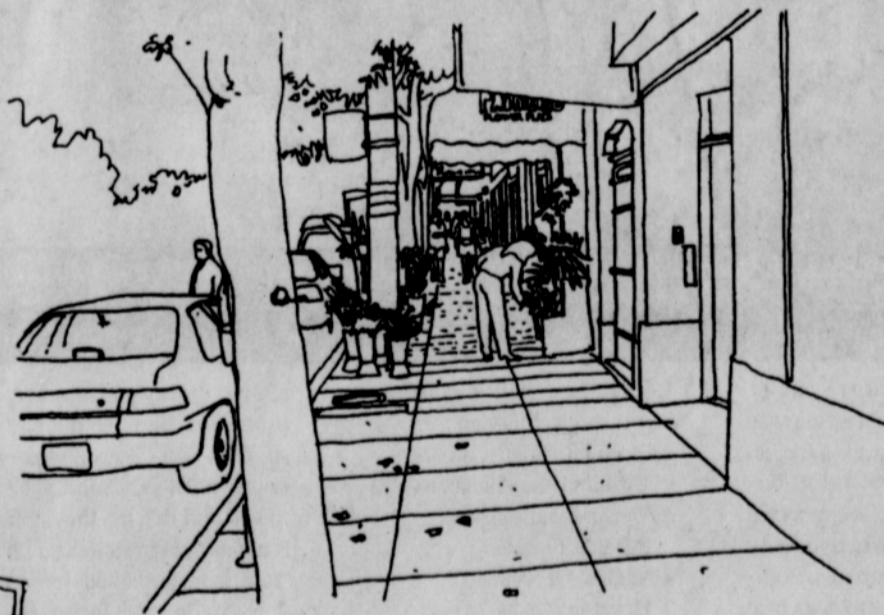
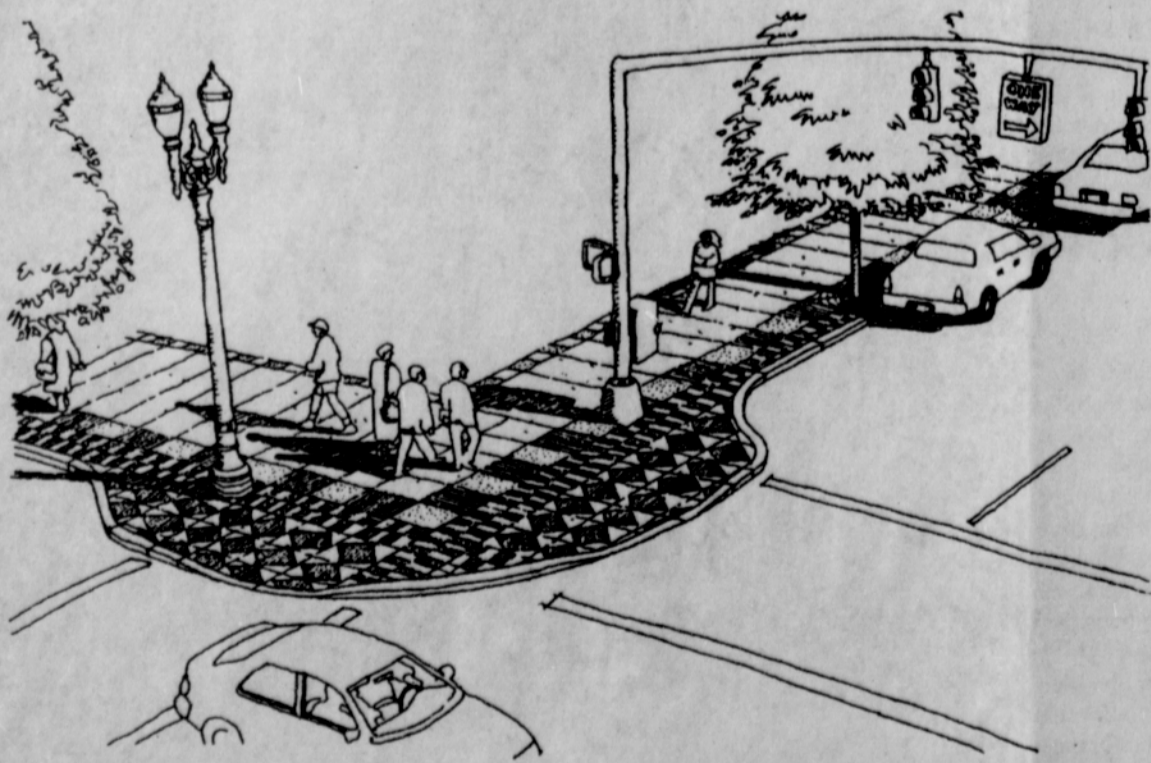
The meek will never inherit the earth if they are willing to exercise their right to vote. Why is the Black Man, the Hispanic, or the Indian more likely to end up in jail or prison than the white man? Perhaps, it is the educational system and the very prejudices built into our society. Generations X and Y cringe at these prejudices; yet, their lack of political activity sustains these prejudices.

If you want change, you must be willing to be part of that change! Only you can empower yourself, and you do so by accepting responsibility and taking the responsibility to be an active part of the political processes.

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