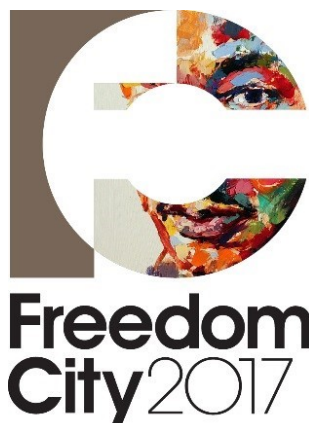




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Martin Luther King and His Legacy

Foreword—Brian Ward—

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On November 13, 1967, Martin Luther King stood in the King's Hall of Newcastle University to receive an Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law. In many ways it was a strange, almost inexplicable visit. King, the preeminent figure in the US civil rights movement, had flown the Atlantic and caught an overnight train from London to spend less than eleven hours, only eight of them awake, in a city he knew little about and at an institution he had probably never heard of until, early in 1967, he received an invitation to accept the highest honour the University could bestow.

As I researched the circumstances of King's visit, the central question of why King accepted the invitation to visit Newcastle and then actually bothered to show at a time of tremendous personal strain, ill-health and political uncertainty loomed large. After all, King was hardly short of invitations to accept awards, give speeches or attend public events. Moreover, his workload was enormous, as he became increasingly involved in protests against the Vietnam War and for the Poor Peoples Campaign – an attempt to bring together all the exploited, marginalized and dispossessed groups in America in a massive campaign for social and economic justice.

The answer, I think, lies mainly in two factors that have much to tell us about King and the African American freedom struggle of the 1950s and 1960s. The first factor was the timing of the invitation. It was precisely because King was under such personal and political pressure in 1967, struggling to find a

constructive way forward for the civil rights movement and beset with grave doubts about his own ability to lead it, that Newcastle University's recognition of his past efforts and support for his ongoing work had a hugely uplifting, therapeutic effect.

In this context, it is important to appreciate the hostility that King confronted in 1967. He found himself alienated from President Lyndon Johnson and many of the white liberals who had once been broadly supportive of black civil and voting rights, but who struggled to accept King's increasingly vehement denunciations of free enterprise capitalism and who often saw his condemnations of US foreign policy as nothing short of treasonous. He was under surveillance and being harassed by the FBI, which had long claimed King was a willing instrument or unwitting stooge of the Communist Soviet Union. Influential sections of the mainstream US media had begun to depict him, not as a visionary hero, but as a wanton trouble-maker, agitating for dangerously radical social change long after black statutory rights had been secured by the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act – after which many whites rejected the idea that more reforms were necessary to make genuine equality of opportunity a lived reality, rather than just a legal principle, for African Americans.

Meanwhile, King was also in a tricky position within the African American protest movement. He was caught between, on one hand, increasingly militant black power factions, who felt King's approach

to social change was too moderate and who sometimes rejected his insistence on nonviolent direct action protest methods in favour of armed self-defense strategies, and on the other hand, moderate black leaders such as Roy Wilkins of the NAACP and Whitney Young of the National Urban League, who felt King's criticisms of President Johnson's Vietnam policy and attacks on the entire economic structure of US society were counterproductive when white support was still needed to improve black lives.

In the face of this incessant criticism at home, King was delighted to visit a country and an institution that seemed truly appreciative of his accomplishments and efforts. In a heartfelt note of thanks to the University's Vice-Chancellor he wrote of how, "in the course of constant criticism and malignment of one's best efforts, the recognition...of the historic significance of one's work in the ministry is a tremendous encouragement, far overshadowing the barbs and arrows from the daily press."

The second, related reason why King made the grueling journey to the North East was because he increasingly saw the US civil rights movement as part of an international struggle for human rights and social justice. In recent years, one of the boom areas in scholarship on the US civil rights movement has been to put it into international context, shaped by the Cold War and by campaigns for independence from colonial rule around the globe. King certainly appreciated these connections. In Newcastle he spoke about the "inextricable network of mutuality" that bound together all the peoples of the world and of a shared battle against what he saw as the three great and interlocking problems of his day: racism, war and poverty. Fifty years later, while we could add many other issues to King's list of global toxins, few would deny that racism, war and poverty continue to be major international issues. Indeed, Freedom City 2017, an ambitious multifaceted celebration of King's Newcastle visit, offers a timely reminder of the call he issued in Newcastle for people of goodwill to rise to meet the challenges posed by those problems.

An interview with Meredyth Bell (nee Patton)



Pictured here on the left, Meredyth was Deputy President of the Students' Representative Council in 1967. She answered the questions of the Teesdale History Research Group via email.

How did the students feel about Martin Luther King coming? What was the atmosphere like on campus?

Very excited. A great deal of preparation had been made.

How well publicised was his visit? Was there much media interest?

There was a great deal of media interest. The local television was there. It is all filmed in black and white, I think it was Tyne Tees

How did you get invited to the meeting with Martin Luther King?

They needed some students to meet King and be involved. I was the Deputy President of the Students' Representative Council. My colleague Nick Nicholson was the President. He carried the Mace ahead of the procession

What was the atmosphere like in the meeting?

Very highly charged. There was very little noise as everyone was waiting for the great man to appear.

Were you nervous at all?

I don't remember being nervous, more excited.

What was he like as a person? Did he have any individual characteristics?

He was very quietly spoken and very courteous. Beautifully mannered, he was dressed in the most expensive mohair suit as were all his bodyguards. They were all big black men and we had never seen such smart men – we were students in the 1960s and Newcastle wasn't poor but they were awesome!

What did he talk about?

He spoke generally about the struggle of black people and the problems they faced. He asked me which course I was doing. I told him dentistry and he commented that was a good profession.

What question (if any) did you ask him? What was his response?

I didn't ask him any questions. I was like a rabbit in headlights. I just didn't move – hardly breathed! We were asked to meet him for coffee after the ceremony.

If you could go back, what question would you ask him now?

I would ask what help did he need from the world to enable the black people of America to be free?

What do you remember of the speech he gave? What reception did it receive?

His speech was awesome and it was unplanned. He wasn't supposed to make a speech and he was tired from the flight. But his use of English was stunning. I suggest you watch the video of his speech. I remember some of the phrases he used – "justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream" and "you can't make a man love you but you can stop him from lynching you!" It was mesmerizing. We were all transfixed and rooted to our seats. Truly a great orator and a very great man.

Freedom, the Law and the Hearts of Men -

Bethany Windle

"So, while the law may not change the hearts of men, it does change the habits of men if it is vigorously enforced, and through changes in habits, pretty soon attitudinal changes will take place and even the heart may be changed in the process."

This quote, taken from Dr King's speech upon receiving his honorary degree in Civil Law from Newcastle University (13 November 1967) lays out the truth of King's dream for the future; legal action independent of activism fails to succeed in its ultimate goal and thus, we must actively practice its fulfilment in order to satisfy its intention. However, it does make the hopeful argument that the law will, in the least, make these crimes more difficult to commit, and therefore, discourage their frequency; proposing that with time this has the ability to alter opinion so that the wish to perform such hateful acts does not arise in the first place.

Today's society, when viewed in the context of King's hopes for such laws to succeed, seems to fail when compared with these aspirations: Trump's America seems to be reversing King's work towards freedom and equality with his new approach to immigration encouraging the very attitudes King hoped future policies would eradicate. A prime example of this is Trump's intention to withdraw DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) - the Obama-age programme which grants legal status to immigrants when they come to the US as children, enabling them to attain a National Security number, apply for work permits, as well as shielding them from the threat of deportation.

DACA protects these children, the next generation, who are the future of King's dream for equality, and thus Trump's action to revoke this protection, leaves this new generation vulnerable, directly contradicting King's life's work which was dedicated to making a better tomorrow for the subsequent generations to follow.

Looking further into the impact of Trump, according to the Southern Poverty Law Centre's (SPLC) annual census of 'extremist' groups, "The number of hate groups in the United States rose for a second year in a row in 2016 as the radical right was energised by the candidacy of Donald Trump." Furthermore, according to the Centre for the Study of Hate & Extremism, state data on anti-Muslim hate crimes indicate a spate of crimes across North America, including physical assaults, vandalism, and phone threats, in the five days that followed in the wake of Trump's 7th December 2015 speech calling for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on," in response to the San Bernardino terrorist attack.

This sparks the debate of whether, in the case of Trump and similar figures, all freedoms should be considered absolute or are there potentially exceptions to this?

For example, should freedom of speech be extended to fascists, to those who would give hate speeches on race, which we can predict with confidence will inspire a rise in the number of acts of violence against those it criticises, and an increase in the number of deaths of the people it attacks the following day? Should books encouraging racist, sexist, homophobic views be permitted to be published, allowed to be bought and read and thus act as an enabler; a catalyst that provides encouragement to adopt these damaging and dangerous views? However, if we use this to appropriate the view that we are qualified enough to dictate when a certain group has a freedom and when it does not, can this concept still be considered a freedom. Is freedom truly present when it is regulated and not accessible to all? I don't believe so. Yet when this is considered further, if some freedoms are not absolute then by extension, freedom is a spectrum and if this is true, then how realistic is the achievement of freedom when it is not a unanimous concept; when freedom for some means a lack of it for others? How can everyone's interpretation be satisfied and is this even possible? I believe in some regard, freedom becomes synonymous with human rights and with a right, a responsibility always follows. Consider the previous topic as an example: with the right to freedom of speech comes the responsibility to ensure this does not cause offence or facilitate acts of hate to be committed. Thus King's hypothesis that the law has the ability to make the freedom of some more achievable is justifiable as legal action creates an expectation as well as a universal standard that the majority then feel an obligation to uphold. This creates the potential for the proposal that a right is simply a conceptualised freedom, and thus a law to formalise a right, brings freedom that little bit closer by making it accessible through its removal from that idealised concept that we would otherwise struggle to define, let alone achieve.

Thus, this shows the importance of King's legacy and the truth it still holds for the success of our world today - a law will legitimise the rights upon which freedom revolves and hence "change the habits of men" and create an atmosphere in which "attitudinal changes will take place and even the heart may be changed in the process." It is up to us, the next generation, to actively support laws and their ideals, to promote the legacy of King and what he stood for, in order to ensure these rights become a reality for all, with the hope that, gradually, we will develop an atmosphere in which regulating someone's freedom due to the threat it poses if given to them, is no longer a problem to consider, as every individual instinctively accepts the responsibility that accompanies the right and thus makes freedom a thing of the present rather than a goal to be achieved in the hopeful future.

Freedom and or Equality -

Nina Holguin

In many ways Martin Luther King Jr was an example to us all. He was kind without being passive, determined without being aggressive and loyal without being misguided. Also, he was a freedom fighter. The History Research Group recently had the privilege of viewing the documentary inspired by the Freedom City 2017 project. 'Freedom!' directed by Ian McDonald, opens with a scene in which Donald Trump quotes King and speaks of the importance of freedom. The originally liberal word 'freedom' has recently been 'hijacked' by the far-right and its supporters. This contradiction and the juxtaposition of Trump quoting King seemed both baffling and provocative. In a fascinating question and answer session with the director one of our group asked 'Is freedom what we should aim for?' If freedom allows harmful freedom of speech, which protects the prejudices of many, should we be aiming for freedom? In response McDonald admirably described the idea of positive and negative freedoms, and the importance of recognising these differences in order to move forward. Yet I have difficulty with this. If we are advocating freedom, yet declaring that some uses of freedom are bad, isn't that restricting freedom, by dictating what you should or shouldn't do, thus not being freedom at all? All my past thoughts on the matter came rushing into my mind, and I became compelled to further study this concept- in our society, would freedom destroy us all?

Let's begin with a definition. The Oxford English Dictionary defines freedom as 'The power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants'. This automatically strikes me with an issue. Everybody 'wants' different things in their lives, so acting on this want will immediately cause clashes. In addition, often individual desires are completely selfish, which isn't really a surprise considering we live and think from fundamentally egocentric viewpoint. Even the kindest person in the world will act on the fact 'I couldn't live with myself if I didn't...' which again shows they are in fact the centre of their actions. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, however. So once we've established the innate selfish nature of people, we must accept that in complete freedom, what's stopping robbery, rape or murder? If they want to do it, the right of freedom dictates they should be able to. While many would argue that this argument is ridiculous, as in reality freedom would never be exercised without laws, it is important to note that there are problems with the basic principles of freedom in relation to our society.

However, we cannot disregard the importance that freedom has in the development of our lives. Freedom of speech was originally the idea of scientists and liberal politicians alike to push away the constraints of conservative society and move forward in the world.

Examples of this are Galileo and the Catholic Church with heliocentrism or the US Bill of Rights. This encouragement of expression has been, and will continue to be, vital to our society, especially as the technological and scientific world increases hand in hand with the political. But freedom has never been this one-sided dream. In fact, the American Civil War could be traced back to the South being frustrated about how in new western territories (that would be declared as free states) they wouldn't have the freedom to take their property (slaves) there but people who didn't have slaves could take theirs. While one can tell this argument is wrong by our current moral standards, under a strict definition of freedom, the slave owners were being denied their right to take their property where they wished.

Some may describe this as a negative use of freedom. Yet, there are two sticking points for me when regarding this thought process. One being that you are applying a moral compass onto an idea which by definition doesn't have one. Freedom is a thing, a concept- not good or bad. It is the belief of acting on desires, regardless of its impact on others. The second issue is that of morality. Ethics and morals are well debated amongst the philosophical community, probably more so than freedom, but morality is subjective. It may be described by some as objective fundamentally, as they believe deep down morality is programmed into our DNA. But still, if this is the case, the perception of this gut feeling is key and will differ from person to person. So, 'positive' or 'good' freedoms to one group will be vastly different to another, just by natural variations in beliefs and environments. Is that bad? Not necessarily, but it would be foolish to think that your perception is the only true one.

So, philosophically and literally, freedom won't work in our world, and that's generally quite good in my opinion. Without rules and boundaries, people would end up maltreated, or perhaps even dead. Socially, there is no harm in wanting freedom, as you would always apply the context of society to the concept. However, what particularly the left have difficulty grasping is that Donald Trump's freedom of speech, is technically the same as theirs. If, that is, you believe in absolute freedom. Honestly, I don't; you are free to disagree with me, in fact I encourage it. But I feel that every right, every freedom you should have as a human, should be exercised with respect- respect of others and their beliefs, respect of your surroundings and of your actions and consequences. By definition you wouldn't be free, as you're restricting your actions based on others, but is that a bad thing? Life on the planet would be much more harmonious if we started thinking less of what you have the right to, and more of what others don't. This is my argument. Equality may be impossible, but the hypothetical situation of equality seems much more desirable to me than freedom, and equality cannot as easily be molded to people's argument, perhaps preserving its purity. If it is true that only in death we are equal, let's make our living world a heaven of its own.

What Martin Luther King Means To Me—

Ben Arundel

“The time is always right to do what is right,” said Martin Luther King in 1964 at Oberlin College to help encourage those who wanted to overcome racial segregation. I believe this quote is inspiring for not just those civil right campaigners but for everyone else since. For example overcoming a fear, the time is right to overcome it and do what needs to be done. So therefore King wasn't just an inspiration then but also now, he encourages us even when he is no longer with us that it is never too late to fix what has been done wrong, it is never too late to apologise for something you have said and done, it is never too late to change the law.

On December 1st 1955 Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus for a white man. Four days later a bus boycott began, led by King at the age of 26. This took place in Montgomery, Alabama. The target was to not use the buses around the town and instead use car shares until they were able to sit wherever they wanted on any bus, this meant that workers with cars would take each other to work or to shops. This lasted for 381 days which shows how much of a strong community the black people of Montgomery were, struggles like this brought them all together. As well as being campaigners they were a family that supported each other and that is how they managed to achieve what was needed. So eventually the laws were changed and the council accepted defeat. Black people could sit wherever they wanted to on a bus but still, this was only a fragment of what King and other activists wanted to aim for.

Motivation was a feature of King's oratory, his delivery throughout all his speeches was clear and demanding but easy and deliberate to understand. 'I have a dream.' This speech was probably the most well remembered speech because of those four words and yet they are only a tiny piece of what King challenged America to change. A dream is something which is quite snug and comfortable but King was calling for real change that was far from comfortable. His dream was to have a non-racial society. Racism is still a factor of life now but it is not as great as it used to be. King's dream partially came true, legal segregation disappeared but racial prejudice still exists and those four words are remembered because they remind us of what still needs to be done to fully deliver the vision that King encouraged us to strive for.

King was a non-violent man who opposed war and if he was still here with us he would be disappointed with the budget going into the military rather than for schools and health. People viewed him as a radical and so do I but the way he pursued his views showed that he was doing it for the greater good. It was time for change

and he did the right thing to lead it and do what he did. If we didn't have such figures like Martin Luther King we would still be living in a world of heavy segregation and racism. He influenced many to do the right thing. A recent Gallup poll revealed that 94% of Americans viewed him in a positive light. King was a figure- and still is- that changed the world for the better and his legacy inspires us to this day.

The Radical King -

Jake Knight

“All that unromantic, un-American, unglamorous, untelevised, untidy, unsafe, unclear, un-Southern, unpaid-for organizing stuff was just too much for us” – Vincent Harding

When Martin Luther King stood at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28th 1963 and delivered his iconic 'I Have a Dream' speech, it was a defining moment for the civil rights movement. It is an event which shaped modern America, by giving voice to the hundreds of thousands of black Americans who were suffering under injustice and racial discrimination. It was also the speech which cemented Dr King as an American civil rights hero who paved the way for racial equality. When the mainstream media remembers the life of Dr King, it often seems to jump, after this speech, to images of the Selma marches in 1965, and then to his assassination in Memphis in 1968. It was not that King's views remained static after 1965 – far from it: in these three years, he became much more radical in his assessment of American politics and the economic system, demanding great change. During these later years, King moved on from fighting racial injustice in America, to tackling the wider problem of global injustice. He focussed his attention on what he believed were the “triple evils” of racism, poverty and war, and fighting these required not “a little change here, a little change there,” but a “reconstruction of the entire society, a revolution of values”. However, these radical views are rarely explored when we remember Dr King. It seems we have ‘sanitised’ our vision of King into a more palatable, comfortable metaphor for hope, rather than the more uncomfortable radical he became in his later years.

By 1966, when Dr King had moved north into Chicago, the civil rights movement had delivered the black community protection through law, but had failed to eradicate the problems of economic inequality: an estimated 22-33 percent of Americans (black and white) lived in poverty in 1960. Dr King became convinced he needed to move his focus beyond civil rights and dedicate his efforts to eliminating this economic inequality. In May 1967, at a Southern Christian Leadership Conference, King stated “I think it is necessary for us to realize that we

have moved from the era of civil rights to the era of human rights.” To him, human rights included the economic rights of decent housing and decent pay across all racial lines. He concluded that economic problems were rooted within the American capitalist system itself: “something is wrong with capitalism as it now stands...we are not interested in being integrated into this value structure. Power must be relocated.”

He presented radical solutions – a “redistribution of economic and political power” and a multi-racial “non-violent army of the poor”. In 1967, he put pressure on politicians to pass the Economic Bill of Rights which would guarantee: \$30 billion to create anti-poverty programmes; the elimination of slums through social housing construction and an annual liveable wage. He also announced a Poor People’s Campaign, which involved a march on Washington and for people to set up camp within the city until the Bill was passed.

Yet this push for fundamental economic change was worrying many people. African-Americans who had seen the benefits of the American economic system were apprehensive that this change may spell disaster for them. Many resented his idea of social housing, believing their own ‘hard-earned’ properties would be de-valued. Others believed a basic income would drive them out of jobs which they had only recently been able to achieve. Many people thought that King’s movement towards democratic socialism was a worrying prospect, given the deep-rooted fear of communism in America. Indeed, King’s attacks on capitalism saw him labelled as a communist; the FBI even demanded of Congress that they oppose the Poor People’s Campaign given that King was an “instrument in the hands of subversive forces seeking to undermine the nation.”

Reinforcing this criticism of King’s new political stance was his opposition to the Vietnam War. When King first saw images of children scorched by US napalm attacks (whilst eating his breakfast) he is reported to have remarked “Nothing will ever taste any good for me until I do everything I can to end that war.” King opposed war in general. He saw it as morally wrong, not just because of the lives it destroyed, but because it was an “enemy of the poor”, consuming vital resources which could be used in other ways, such as anti-poverty programmes. He was not the first black activist to oppose the war – his wife Coretta had spoken at anti-war demonstrations in 1965, and Stokely Carmichael, in his famous 1966 ‘Black Power speech’, called the war “immoral and illegal.” However, King certainly became one of the most high-profile and vocal opponents of American actions in Vietnam. On April 4th, 1967, exactly one year before his assassination, King gave a speech named ‘Beyond Vietnam.’ It was passionately critical of American policy in Vietnam and its foreign policy in general. He called America the “greatest purveyor of violence in the world today” and called for an international crusade against poverty, racism, and militarism.

In 1967, most Americans still supported American actions in Vietnam and King’s criticism was poorly received in the media and by fellow civil rights groups. The Washington Post said in an editorial that “many who have listened to him with respect will never again accord him the same confidence.” The FBI branded him a traitor and, notably, President Johnson dis-invited King to the White House and was reported to feel ‘betrayed’ by the pastor whom he had supported in the struggle for civil rights.

It is clear, then, that in the last few years of his life, King’s focus had shifted from civil rights to populist economics and anti-war activism. These movements towards a more radical ideology were not only worrying those in the black communities whose economic situation was improving, but angering those in the media and government who had supported the civil rights movement but were now concerned with his ‘communist’ ideology. King himself knew he was “treading in difficult water” by criticising the capitalist system in which so many had so much invested. As journalist David Halberstam said, King was “increasingly at odds with the rest of society.” Some have claimed that this increasing radicalism put a target on Dr King’s back, indeed the King family has always maintained that the government was involved with his assassination. Even if there was no connection, the White House, and many others, could capitalise on King’s posthumous state. When President Reagan created Martin Luther King, Jr, Day in 1983, no mention was made of the pastor’s attempts to tackle poverty and his anti-war sentiment. It is more expedient for politicians if King’s image is that of a moderate and measured dreamer whose quotes can be used to empower and uplift without fear of being called dangerously radical. As the black poet Carl Wendell Hines wrote “Dead men make such convenient heroes.”

Certainly, it seems that America and the rest of the world has largely forgotten what King really stood for, and that our image of him has been airbrushed and sanitised. Little mention is now made of ‘Beyond Vietnam’ or the Poor People’s Campaign. Whether this silence is comfortable convenience or deliberate manipulation, King’s radical ideology has been largely removed from the memory of the public. This allows him to be used as a symbol for hope and racial harmony by politicians across the spectrum, indeed the American public has the convenient hero to whom they can aspire if Dr King’s more extreme views are ignored. Without his radicalism, King is palatable, King is positive, King is comfortable, and King is the sanitised hero which American society wants.

King and Civil Disobedience as Protest -

Grace Tarpey

Martin Luther King is regarded by many as a paragon of peaceful activism – a Christian minister who used his powerful oratory skills to lead the change in the law and bring equality and justice for the black population of the USA. While hopefully few would disagree that the civil rights movement was certainly a good thing, and that Dr. King was certainly a good man, it seems that King's ideas are often somewhat distorted by many in a way that does not quite convey his intentions correctly. I am going to be focusing here specifically on how his ideas about nonviolent protest have carried into today.

Firstly, let's look at what he actually said about how one should protest. King was not always a pacifist – in the early '50s, he rarely spoke of the nonviolence that became such a large part of what he taught. He believed in self-defense, and indeed owned a gun so as to be able to defend himself. Civil rights activist Bayard Rustin was one of his main advisers from 1956 onwards, and he (along with a few others) introduced and advised King about nonviolence. Their beliefs came from a mix of Christian ideals and Gandhism. Once being introduced to Gandhi's teachings he was influenced greatly by the ideas of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience, and these became very prominent in the ideas he taught and the protests he helped to organise.

Departing briefly from the 1950s, different ideas about what protest should be are still a point of contention today. The past couple of years have seen the rise of protest in America by kneeling for the national anthem. This nonviolent form of protest is exactly the sort of thing that King would have been all for - it is similar in intent to Rosa Parks not standing up for a white person on the bus. Not only does it harm no one, the act of not standing in respect for the country perfectly shows how the black community in the US feel left behind by the government that doesn't seem to care enough. And yet this simple, nonviolent protest has been widely criticised by so called patriots for disrespecting the flag, the troops and the country as a whole. The same people who would claim to agree that Dr King had the right sort of idea about peaceful protest will turn around and say actually, not like that. Too often, people who haven't really ever looked at King's actual ideas will use him to tell people how not to protest. In fact, the notion of peaceful protest has almost come to mean next to no protest at all, save for perhaps signing petitions on the internet, or boycotting a shop. King's support of civil disobedience is forgotten by those who use his name to argue against people who block traffic, for example, in protest against whatever topic they're angry about at the time.

So how has his message become so misconstrued? It comes, in part, from the way people are taught about him. In primary school, I don't think I was ever taught specifically about him, except for in an assembly or two, and until we started becoming involved in Freedom City 2017 and I had the opportunity to write this, I never looked into him in that much detail. It is understandable that perhaps when you are telling a room full of children aged between 4 and 11 about a key leader of the civil rights movement, you are probably going to limit King's character to a very brave man who believed in peace and used the power of speech to fight (without violence) for equality. And, mostly, he was that person. But if the only thing a person really knows about Dr King, apart from that he was a leader in the civil rights movement, is that he was strongly against violence and believed only in peaceful protest, it is easy for them to see some protesters somewhere breaking some law and say that it's not what King would have wanted them to do without realising that breaking an unjust law in protest is the entire premise of civil disobedience, something that King believed in entirely. So Martin Luther King's ideas are still just as relevant today as they were 50 years ago, and perhaps if people did just a little bit more looking into what he was actually saying, the world would be a better place.

Martin the Media and the Movement -

Jack Parsons-Munn

The 'Revolution Will Not Be Televised' was a slogan of the Black Power movement popularised by Gil Scott-Herron in 1970. Today, media is often accused of being misleading in its portrayal of current affairs, providing simplified images of complicated issues, thus encouraging basic, uninformed and conservative views on events. However, the role of the media in creating simplistic images, juxtaposing 'goodies' and 'baddies' has been advantageous in historic events such as the civil rights movement. Increasingly it created a straightforward representation of the actually rather complicated movement for black freedom and challenged viewers to legitimately oppose a non-violent struggle for equality and dignity. With footage of 'bad' white authorities beating up 'good' black protestors being broadcast to around 90% of American households in the 1960s, the plain images from the media ultimately brought white support into the civil rights movement, as it forced many white Americans to confront the morality of discrimination.

With the exception of celebrities such as Louis Armstrong and Joe Louis, coverage of black news in the mainstream media was rare. It was not until the mass arrest of 115 leaders of the Montgomery Bus Boycott that the international media became interested.

Indeed, the arrest of Rosa Parks in 1955 was completely missed by the New York Times and although the bombing of King's home gained significant media attention, major newspapers such as the Times relied heavily on biased southern reporting. The mass arrests however, brought reporters from around the country to Montgomery and the boycott became front page news internationally for the first time. Instead of being portrayed as a guilty criminal, King's policy of non-violent protests to bring about change meant the media dubbed him an American Gandhi.

Civil rights coverage surged during the Birmingham campaign of 1963, possibly one of the most influential campaigns of the civil rights movement. Birmingham, Alabama was one of America's most segregated cities. A concentrated programme of boycotts, marches and sit-ins organised by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), led by Martin Luther King and others took place. King was arrested, the authorities used violence to break up the protests, releasing police dogs, tear gas and high pressure fire hoses on the crowds. The juxtaposition of King's non-violent direct action and the violent action of the Alabama State Police was televised, producing some of the most troubling and iconic images of the civil rights movement and won wide spread support for the movement's cause. The media's coverage of this event and importantly King's non-violent approach brought the civil rights movement to the attention of the White House, where President Kennedy endorsed the cause, saying "The events in Birmingham... have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them." It was considered a turning point in the civil rights movement.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom at which King delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech commanded national media attention, overriding scheduled television programs. Approximately 250,000 people congregated at the Lincoln Memorial to listen to King's speech, which spoke of his vision of a day when freedom and equality would be achieved for all Americans. The media coverage allowed his words to resonate across the world. This event and his speech became symbolic of the civil rights struggle. The national American news suddenly became of international importance and families all across the world listened as King called attention to the divide between white and black Americans. Thousands watched to hear of the inequality and injustice and of King's dream that one day "... little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls..."

On an event that came to be known as Bloody Sunday, black civil rights protestors marched from Selma to Montgomery to protest against southern state officials obstructing their efforts to register to vote. Again this march accentuated the peaceful black struggle against white brutality. Once more, Alabama state police were televised using tear gas and nightsticks to beat the crowd. The coverage drew national attention, causing an outcry. A week later

on the 14th March, the Observer headlined 'Johnson Pledges for All Negro Voters' in response to his televised pledge on the 13th March where he announced that a new bill for voters' rights would be pushed through Congress. The media coverage, put simply, 'good' peaceful black protestors being attacked by 'bad' white authorities exposed many white Americans to the brutality of racial segregation. This brought change in the law for the benefit of the black population meaning King's dream had started to become a reality.

Fundamentally, the media played an influential role in Martin Luther King's success. Although, slow to get involved, it accurately showcased the violence against peaceful black protestors. It forced many white Americans to make a simple choice: you were either in favour of white oppression of the black populous or sympathetic to the black cause for equality. The televised media helped to spread information and effectively achieved white support for the civil rights movement. So an element of the social revolution was televised, but without King's commitment to Gandhi's non-violent principles, then the inequity of white Americans' use of violence would not have stood out as prominently on television screens. Thus, the civil rights movement would not have gained the widespread support necessary to succeed.

Despite the important role of the media in promoting the non-violent civil rights struggle in the way outlined above it is also important to note that it was the media, in collusion with New Right conservatism that did much to sanitise the Martin Luther King of popular imagination after his death. Reducing the civil rights movement to images of non-violent black protesters singing freedom songs as they marched or sound bites from the "I have a dream" speech hides the radical nature of King's challenge to deal with the fundamental problems at the heart of American society then and now.

The Radical Nature of Nonviolence -

Catherine Soulsby

Every day we see TV screens with news reporters telling us of the most recent brutal bombing or attack in the UK or overseas. We watch videos of military bombings causing mass destruction of entire cities in mere hours. Countries even flaunt their military power to show supremacy over others. But when Martin Luther King stepped forward as a leader of the civil rights movement, he did not attempt to demonstrate power through violent and threatening actions, but rather by demonstrating peacefully. In many ways King's method of gaining power and influence in America was far more radical and threatening than any display of brutality as the relative silence and peaceful nature of such a serious protest makes people uncomfortable.

When threatened by violence, people typically react by fighting force with force and the lines of blame become blurred but when faced with a peaceful protest violent reaction can be more categorically condemned.

One example of a country who prides their military status is unsurprisingly the United States, calling their most recent weapon “the mother of all bombs.” Attaching a sense of humour to a deadly weapon creates a massive contrast to strike fear into the military of other countries and governments. Ironically the bomb itself “wasn't as powerful as you think” said an Afghan officer to the BBC as plants and trees were spotted unscathed by the explosion 100 meters away from where the bomb impacted. With this type of attack it is expected that the country being targeted will be bombed into submission. During the civil rights movement in the 1960s when that black people were facing brutal persecution from racist members of the public, the police force and specific laws that limited their rights in comparison to the rights of white people, many protesters did not respond with mobs and attacks, but rather with marches and boycotts and other forms of peaceful protest. What makes this so radical is the discipline and courage that it demands. Many white people feared that the success of the civil rights movement would result negatively for them. Also, the racist frame of mind many white people lived in meant that they didn't think black people deserved to have as many rights as they did, hence why they were eager to prevent it from ever succeeding in a way that would cause massive changes to the society which provided them with many benefits. To face such hostility peacefully, to try, as King encouraged, and combat hate with love was truly radical.

The fact that the method by which black people protested gave opponents no reason to respond with brutality, but they did because they knew they would face no legal redress gave the civil rights movement an advantage. The civil rights movement would never have been as successful as it was had black people used the same violence as white people did as they would have received severe punishment from the law and would never have been viewed as anything other than a group of radical black people fighting for rights they would never receive in the society at the time. When Martin Luther King was killed in 1968 by a gunshot to the face on the morning before a peaceful march in Memphis, he became a martyr of the civil rights movement. For someone who so heavily advocated for non-violent demonstrations to be killed by a known racist with a gun is very telling of the attitude of many white people who wanted no change to the rights of black people living in the same towns and cities as they did. Rather than deal with the issues that these people were raising, white people – including police force – were eager to use murder as a fast and permanent solution.

In conclusion, Martin Luther King's tactic of peaceful protest rang louder than any series of violent mobs and riots because of the impact they had on all people in America. King took a calculated side step around the carnage that could have been created by the civil rights movement and made certain that people were inspired by the demonstrations and his speeches to stand up for their rights and a better future. The lesson King teaches us is that it is better and safer to protest peacefully than to respond with a violent display of dominance or aggression. It is a lesson that should be learned by governments globally.

The Roots of Inequality - Evie Scott

The three great evils in society that King identified in 1967 were racism, war and poverty. These three great evils remain as huge stumbling blocks to the realisation of freedom and equality for all in 2017 and beyond. This article looks at the roots of inequality as societies have developed.

As societies develop the inequality within them increases. The differentiation of social roles gives different members different jobs and, as a result, varied importance within a community. In the modern world there is no reason for inequality, in the initial stages of humanity it was beneficial for the stronger to hunt and for the weaker to look after family, but 'traditional' values now do nothing but stunt development. For example, not allowing women an education merely removes half of a population's potential workforce.

Sociologist Gerhard Lenski presented the Ecological-evolutionary theory which looks at societal development through technological change and presents a useful insight into the growth of inequality. The first societies were small - groups of under one hundred people grouped together to gather food and share the resources needed to live. All jobs encompassed equally the survival of the people and as a result, there was little inequality. However, their nomadic lifestyle meant that, other than their use of simple tools and hunting methods, little development took place - they were what Lenski coined hunting and gathering societies. With the domestication of animals and plants (pastoral and horticultural societies) came the first human settlements, the beginnings of specialised jobs appeared, and the more effective means of gathering food started to produce a surplus of materials - allowing more focus on art and science. Societies could support larger populations and for the first-time examples of feudalism began to emerge in Europe, as farming began to use animal traction methods, and societies became more complex. With surpluses - and population - becoming even larger, feudalism and belief in the divine right to rule were a major cause of class inequality. Peasants worked the land, but had little to eat themselves, whereas the ruling class had an abundance of wealth and resources, but didn't work; yet their right and ability to rule were never questioned.

However, the largest change in social equality came with industrialisation. For example, the slave trade provided a strong current of racism in western society that is still an issue. To help understand this, Karl Marx posed a theory about social versus natural constraints. Looking back to the hunting and gathering societies, he saw what he called 'primitive communism', everyone was focused on getting food because they needed to eat (a natural constraint), but in feudalism, there was enough food to feed everyone, but it wasn't shared because of the social constraints (needing to feed the monarchy) that remained from times when leaders were those who distributed food and kept peace. The same idea can be applied to industrialisation. Humans are always focused on ways to reduce the effort needed to fulfil natural constraints more efficiently, yet little is done to overcome social constraints, provided that those with power are content. For example, a patriarchy exists because of times when men- biologically more powerful- needed to gather food so that women- who carry children- could survive, but even though the natural constraint doesn't exist anymore, the social one remains as an echo of it.

In 2016, 80.2% of both the UK's and the US's GDP was from the service industry. In fact, most of the world's leading economies are becoming more dependent on imports, focusing their economies on the information, technology, and service industries. These are post-industrial societies, they are the final type that Lenski mentioned, but shouldn't be viewed as a developmental endpoint. To function, post-industrial societies must rely on industrial societies to produce the raw materials that they need- for example the UK imports coffee from Brazil. Therefore, as a society develops its inequality increases due to social constraints remaining from when the natural constraint still existed. But after industrialisation an economy becomes more heavily reliant on services and more focused on the welfare of its people; in theory this suggests that world equality is achievable. However, the world has developed at a different rate and issues of war and money mean that equality is not something that will just happen, it must be fought for with the support of those powerful enough to make changes. Unfortunately, these people tend to be rich, white males, which begs the question: what is the prerogative for change? Towards the end of his life King talked of the need to restructure society in order to achieve equality. His words are as apt now as they were then.

The NFL and Racial Protest Now - Will Wood

Recently, the National Football League in America has been embroiled in a controversy over race relations involving a combination of Colin Kaepernick's protests and President Trump's attempts to shore up his base. Kaepernick began sitting, and later kneeling, before his San Francisco 49ers games during the 2016 preseason. Over time, the national anthem protests grew and grew, with 11 NFL players joining Kaepernick in the first week of the 2016 season - many raised their fists, reminiscent of a Black Power salute. Seth DeValve of the Cleveland Browns became the first white football player to "take the knee" in the 2017 preseason. In the third week of this year's season, over 200 players protested, largely because most of the games were played a few days after President Donald Trump called for NFL owners to fire protesting players, accusing them of "a total disrespect of our heritage." Trump willingly or otherwise missed the point of the protests - they were not a blatant disregard of veterans and servicemen as many opponents have painted them; they were actions taken to bring attention to racial inequality and police brutality.

What perhaps brought so much attention to the protesters was as much their methods as their motivations. The simplistic gesture of kneeling or sitting during The Star-Spangled Banner does not fit in neatly to the conventions of racial protest. The actions were clearly nonviolent, but the extent to which they fit into the concept of civil disobedience is limited. Civil disobedience is widely seen as the refusal to obey the government, most commonly in a nonviolent way. It would be fair to describe the actions of the NFL players as social disobedience, rather than civil disobedience. Polls conducted over the last few days of September 2017 confirm these assertions. A CBS poll found over half of respondents disapproved of players kneeling during the anthem. A poll for CNN found nearly half of respondents thought the protests were the wrong thing to do to express their political opinions. A poll for YouGov/Huffington Post found 48% found the kneeling inappropriate. (It should be noted, as expected, that there was a strong racial split, with blacks massively more supportive of the NFL protests). Socially, the NFL players are being disobedient, as most of society finds them so. A near-majority of the American public may find the protests to be wrong because of the fact that they appeared to exploit or disrespect the flag and the anthem - and therefore the military. But how similar were the methods of protests employed by Kaepernick and others to those of the civil rights movement of the 1960s?

When one thinks of the methods of the civil rights movement, "civil disobedience" and "nonviolent protest" spring to mind as actions to achieve the end of racial segregation and discrimination. Civil disobedience originated from Henry David Thoreau, who called for an unjustifiable state to be disobeyed in the late 1840s. Thoreau later had a large influence on the methods and ideas of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, but he has lately had more influence on conservative thought with his belief that "that government is best which governs least." Otherwise, civil disobedience is commonly believed to be intrinsically nonviolent, and encompasses the refusal to follow governmental laws or do as the government says. The various sit-ins, where young activists would defy the segregated seating of various public facilities, of the late 1950's and early 1960's in the civil rights movement exemplify civil disobedience as they broke with government-condoned policy of segregated seating. Nonviolent protest, often called nonviolent resistance amongst other terms, was the other key method of the civil rights movement. Mahatma Gandhi is widely seen as the mainstream originator of nonviolent protest, and he had an undeniable influence on Martin Luther King. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom of 1963 and the Selma to Montgomery Marches of 1965 are the most commonly cited examples of nonviolent protest in the civil rights movement. As mentioned earlier, the NFL protests of 2016-2017 fit strongly into the concept of nonviolent protest for the obvious reason that kneeling/sitting during the national anthem isn't—in any way, shape or form—violent. Conversely, the NFL protests don't fit well into the concept of civil disobedience, as customs surrounding the national anthem are not legally binding and therefore can not be legally disobeyed. Therefore the methods of the NFL protests are only slightly similar to the methods of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, since they only share the concept of nonviolence, and not the concept of civil disobedience.

Martin Luther King always believed in nonviolent protest, and always resisted calls for violence to accelerate change. He held those beliefs because of a synthesis of his strong religious convictions and a large sense of inspiration by the success of Gandhi in India, even referring to him as one of the individuals in the world who "greatly reveal the working of the Spirit of God." Nonviolence and civil disobedience, the two key methods of the civil rights movement, are largely seen as successful because of the landmark federal legislation they resulted in - the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 which were enacted by the Johnson administration. Whether violent protest and revolt would have been more successful seems unlikely - when violent revolution occurs the oppressed often become oppressors, and the federal government would have toughened their stance and rhetoric. Martin Luther King resisted the increasingly violent and bellicose Black Panthers in the late 1960s. What King would make of the NFL protests of the last 18 months appears to be clear. He would support the nonviolent methods

used to call attention to racial inequality and police brutality.

What Would King Be Protesting in 2017? - Scarlett Jones

King supported equality and was made famous by his ideas of all people being equal and deserving the same rights in life as one another. People are entitled to free speech, but they are still expressing their opinions of discrimination against others based on their race, gender, religion and sexual orientation. Years have passed and full acceptance of people's differences is still something which doesn't seem to be near. Although we may be closer to solving these issues now it is a global problem and many places haven't even accepted that it is a problem yet. If King was still here today then he would be working just as hard to give people the rights they deserve and to give equality to everyone no matter who they are.

Men and women have got more equal rights but equality across all genders is still a work in progress. It isn't just women who are often discriminated against because of their gender. People who are transgender have had to fight for equality and acceptance even harder. There may have been people since the dawn of time who were transgender, but only now is it commonly known and understood. A common problem for transgender children is that in school award assemblies they don't fit into a category. For example, in a school where there are awards for a boy and for a girl if you are transgender or struggling with your gender identity does that mean you can't be given the award or do you get forced into a gendered self which doesn't feel like you?

Religion is a massive area of discrimination. People are often categorised for their beliefs and they are treated differently because of it. Religion can be a massive part of your life with some people basing their careers on their religion. Many times it goes ignored and it is one of the biggest types of discrimination. Some religions can be based on the same religious book, but they have different views on the meanings. Religion has a massive impact on the world and on individual lives, but just because people don't believe in the same religions doesn't mean they are completely different or that one is better than the other because your belief is personal and your position on this planet is shared with every single human.

Freedom and equality is also about acceptance and until the world can learn to accept people, no matter who they are, then we will never have freedom and equality. People come from such different cultural backgrounds that it can be difficult to understand traditions, but we don't need to understand we just need to accept who people are. There will always be exceptions, for example honour based killings, but you can't judge an entire culture because one group went to the extreme end of it.

Who is free in a world where you are judged for your gender, race, religion and sexual orientation? If there is anything we should have learned from our past mistakes, it is that discrimination costs innocent lives and forces people to suffer. If King were still with us in 2017 I am sure he would be saying that these issues must be addressed and we must work harder to ensure freedom and equality for all.

Rivers of Blood—1968, the Death of King and its Continued Reverberations -

Cal Baker

When Martin Luther King, age 39, was shot dead in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968, the world was in a tumultuous state. The Tet offensive had been launched several months earlier in Vietnam, turning the tide of the war against the United States. Two months after King's shooting Bobby Kennedy, presumptive Democrat candidate for the presidency, was shot dead in California. In Czechoslovakia Alexander Dubček was leading the Prague Spring. In addition, civil rights problems still remained, exposed that year by the now famous demonstration against racial discrimination at the Mexico Summer Olympics by Tommie Smith and John Carlos. However, it is on the massive juxtaposition of King's visit to Newcastle in 1967 and Enoch Powell's visit in early 1969 upon which I shall focus this short article.

On April 20th 1968, when Enoch Powell rose to make his now infamous 'Rivers of blood' speech, a new type of right-wing populist figure was heralded by many to be the coming, albeit racist, messiah. I say this, obviously, with heavy sarcasm, but it is indeed true that the 'Enoch was right' movement which staunchly backed the idea that 'As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber flowing with much blood' was indeed gathering speed, worryingly among working class families looking to find a scapegoat for wider economic problems and finding an easy target in immigrants. In fact, one must wonder what direct effect the death of Dr King had on the situation, and whether the idea of nonviolence, love for one's fellow person and a need for a radical rethink of the socioeconomic path the world was taking also died with him on April 4, 1968. Worryingly, it seems that the same phenomenon is being observed today.

The two political events that shook the world in 2016, Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as President can both be directly linked to the rejection of King's values in favour of a more divisive movement aimed at providing a momentary distraction from the common enemy of the proletariat. As De Beauvoir, Sartre and Descartes before them wrote, the subjugation of a people depends entirely on the removal of the duality of their being and therefore the objectivity of a person.

In spite of this problem still being rife in today's society, it still seems as if there is a tendency amongst the populace to back campaigns which, rely entirely on the objectification of a group of people. Whether it is 'the immigrants' 'the Muslims' or 'the Mexicans', it seems just as easy today as when Enoch Powell said in 1968 that ordinary English people have 'the sense of being a persecuted minority,' to blame entire groups of people for economic, social or political problems instead of confronting the real issues. If King were alive to see this happening today, he would be ashamed, as in the later years of his life he spoke frankly about the abandonment of nationalism and the search for a greater social conscience. He said, "I knew that I could never raise my voice again against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without first having spoken against the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today - my government." It seems key to me that if we are to pursue a world where the lives of everyone are valued the same and where nobody is objectified, the first thing that must be eliminated is blind nationalism, something only exacerbated by the rhetoric used in recent political campaigns, and something that if King were still alive today would have been equally abhorred in the case of Nigel Farage as in the case of Enoch Powell.

So, if the language used by Enoch Powell is yet to undergo a radical transformation from 1968 until now, what is to be said for our society today? If anything, despite recent technological innovations, there is a widening gap between rich and poor and our planet is being ruined at a far faster rate than 50 years ago. Perhaps it is our very will to power which inevitably causes the rhetoric of divisiveness and separation that will spell the end for all of our civilization, but one thing is for sure; that if Dr King were still alive, we would have more hope, we would have a more conscious, introspective system and we would, just perhaps, not be heading for a nuclear disaster inspired by two equally bad-haired nutcases. As it is, however, don't forget to tell your friends and family that you love them - one never knows when this system may cave in.

Afterword -

Dr Simon Henderson

During his acceptance speech in Newcastle in 1967 Martin Luther King made the point that the destinies of white and black people are intertwined. "There can be no separate black path to power and fulfilment that does not intersect white routes," he said "and there can be no separate white path to power and fulfilment short of social disaster that does not recognise the necessity of sharing that power with coloured aspirations for freedom and human dignity."

Given the likely audience of this journal, it is fair to surmise that the majority of people reading this piece are white. The majority of you will admire Martin Luther King, consider yourselves enlightened and oppose racism in all its forms. This author counts himself among you but I am also increasingly and acutely aware of the privilege afforded by my whiteness. White power and dominance, white hegemony and identity are the cornerstones of western civilisation. I benefit from them every day and they continue to deny freedom, equality and justice for all. This white privilege was socially constructed over hundreds of years just as racial inequality and the stigma of 'otherness' were woven into the fabric of society.

Acclaimed black writer and social commentator, Ta-Nehisi Coates, has written, "white people are, in some profound way, trapped; it took generations to make them white, and it will take more to unmake them." If we are to break free from this trap, if we are to move beyond simple admiration for King and really tackle the evil of racism then we must start by accepting the privilege of our whiteness. This is an uncomfortable and unsettling message to hear but only if we truly probe the historical construction of racial difference and its impact on the present day can we hope to overcome it.

After all, racial difference at its root is just a construction, an artificial contrast used to divide people for a myriad of social, political and economic motives. As King put it in his speech at Newcastle, racism is based on a "myth of the inferior race; it is the notion that a particular race is worthless and degraded innately and the tragedy of racism is that it is based not on an empirical generalisation but on an ontological affirmation. It is the idea that the very being of a people is inferior." This idea is pernicious and it denies the truth of common humanity. We all love and hurt and laugh and cry regardless of the colour of our skin. Each life at its inception is of equal worth in every way regardless of the ethnic identity of the parents who created it. The myth that King spoke of, that one racial group is inferior to another, took centuries to construct. While the majority of people now see the lore of racial inferiority for what it is, the legacy of its construction continues to surround us all. This is the reality that we must tackle.

The best legacy of the Freedom City 2017 programme would be for us all to commit ourselves, and our children, to be eternally cognisant of how racial identity can shape life experiences big and small, and fiercely vigilant against any and all who seek to use race to divide people. Real change will only come when those who benefit from inequality, however innocently or inadvertently, join with those who are victims of it to demand better for the communities in which they live. This may, as King very well realised, make us uncomfortable and require a reconstruction of some of the things we have grown to take for

granted but it is the only way to erase the racial lines that divide society.

One year after King's assassination the poet Carl Wendell Hines Jnr wrote,

Now that he is safely dead let us praise him, build monuments to his glory, sing hosannas to his name.

Dead men make such convenient heroes: They cannot rise to challenge the images we would fashion from their lives.

And besides, it is easier to build monuments than to make a better world.

So, now that he is safely dead we, with eased consciences, will teach our children that he was a great man... knowing that the cause for which he lived is still a cause and the dream for which he died is still a dream, a dead man's dream.

If we are to move beyond the dream and towards a better reality and really make a difference we must rise to the challenge that King, the 'inconvenient hero' as Vincent Harding so aptly called him, was articulating before he was martyred. His greatest legacy should be to make us feel impatient for an end to racism and, crucially, the structures of racial inequality that continue to dominate society, however uncomfortable the path to achieving that goal. The responsibility for the change that there must be is mine...and yours...it belongs to us all.

