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Reflection On Doctor King

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

I am not one of a number of persons and commentators who come merely to hypocritically give salutations to Dr. King, when in their own times, they betray his entire history of activism. In fact, the political establishment present us with a Martin Luther King, who never really existed. A saint, instead of an activist, a dream instead of a man, and a pacifist, instead of a man who would fight back if you personally tested him.

The King we are being presented is the corporate King, the creature of the white government who used this pacifist myth to beat down the Black freedom movement of the 1960's with blood, and of which he was one of the major casualties, along with Malcolm X, the other major leader of that period. We are fed this garbage every year at this time, which totally circumvents logic and perverts history about Martin Luther King jr. and the civil rights movement itself.

It is done to really remove him from his people, and put him in the hands of the White political establishment, and in that respect that is what has been done. They also want to give us a man they claim who was a sheer pacifist, and could not support the liberation movements which existed all during the revolutionary 1960's. That also was false since we know that Dr. King

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was opposed to the Vietnam war and reached a point where he began to criticize the political institutions of the capitalist government and economy itself. That is why they killed him.

By no stretch of the imagination are we free in 2001. We have over one million Black prison inmates in the US prison system, each year 500-1,000 Black and poor persons are killed by the police in this country; over three million homeless persons walk or sleep on our streets; millions are locked out of the capitalist economy and into poverty of the worst sort, and we have just seen in the past election the revival of some of the worst Southern racist impediments to block our right to vote in the last Presidential election.

Along with the rise of a new super-poor, a new Black middle class surfaced in the wake of Dr. King's sacrifice, but even that is being crushed by the most reactionary elements of the Republican party. We have serious challenges, but very little leadership, what we do have like Sharpton, Farrakhan, Jessie Jackson and others are flawed, weak, and compromised by money and privilege. To them, organizing is about frightening the political establishment and major corporations to give money to their organizations, in other words, a shakedown.

King was a good man, and even though his politics of moderation were superseded by the Black Power movement of the last 60's, it could be said he was no crook. What we have got to do now is build a mass revolutionary movement, led by the poor (not preachers, politicians, or academics) which can totally dismantle the political, social and economic system of the United States. In other words, a Black revolution as the first stage of a social revolution.

That's what on the agenda. Let's get to it.