The USA's Modern Civil Rights Movement and Basic Income Guarantee

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THE USA'S MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: AN OVERVIEW

Antecedents

Though President Lincoln recognized the immorality of slavery, preservation of the Union was his priority entering the Civil War. Freedom for the enslaved black Americans was only incorporated when he recognized its strategic value. He was subsequently dedicated to making the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery nationwide (except as punishment for crime) an integral part of his Republican Party's 1864 reelection plan and to getting it through Congress as quickly as possible (Current, n.d.). This was to safeguard the freedom his January 1, 1863 Emancipation Proclamation granted enslaved persons in Confederate controlled states. However, Lincoln's prior priority was in alignment with most politicians' perspective. Then, his assassination put Andrew Johnson, a Southern Democrat, into the White House. Together, these resulted in an uphill

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battle for the radical Republican minority, who wanted a comprehensive Reconstruction of the southern states that supported the rights and well-being of both races (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.c). Unfortunately, the resolution of the disputed 1876 presidential election eroded the radical Republican minority's party-influence as well as their political and military power in the South (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.c).

During this period, the newly emancipated blacks formed coalitions with poor whites in the South and whites in the North on a mandate to undo the effects of slavery. By 1868, they won enough seats to control all southern statehouses and passed constitutions that "denounced and made slavery unconstitutional," "included labor rights," "fought for health care," provided education, extended voting access, "established fairness in the criminal justice system," and raised taxes to fund these programs (Barber 2018). This was met with resistance from the Redemption Movement starting in 1872. The group used voting manipulations, lowering of taxes and physical violence to undermine the progress made by the interracial coalition (Barber 2018).

The post-1876 passage of Jim Crow Laws effected a de facto southern repeal of the 14th and 15th Amendments.¹ In the northern states, inequality was still institutionalized, but less overtly. Even so, black Americans found ways to succeed, creating institutions, communities and stable families.

By the 1900s, black and white Americans' abolitionist energy had transformed into a nascent civil rights movement that strengthened over the next half of a century. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1909 by an interracial group after vicious race riots in Springfield Illinois; W. E. B Du Bois, whose 1905 Niagara Movement was an inspiration, was the only black executive member (NAACP, n.d.a). Headquartered in New York City, the NAACP utilized legislation and publicity to effect change. The National Urban League was founded in 1910 (National Urban League, n.d.). The New Negro Movement, which was a multi-aspect re-imagination of the black identity influenced by black Americans' experience in World War I, included the Harlem Renaissance and saw the rise of leaders with a

¹The 14th Amendment secures the civil rights of every citizen; the 15th Amendment outlaws race-based discrimination in voting.

range of ideologies. These leaders included Marcus Garvey of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and A Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porter (Cunningham 1996). The second decade of the twentieth century also saw the first wave of the Great Migration of southern black Americans seeking to escape segregation and its economic limitations by moving north (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.b). Founded in 1942, Congress of Racial Equality was an interracial organization that embraced direct-action projects and Mohandas K. Gandhi's² nonviolence to end segregation and improve race relations (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.a).

World War II sparked black activism both during and afterward. A Philip Randolph and the NAACP's plan for a march on Washington DC induced President F. D. Roosevelt (1941) to issue an executive order opening defense jobs to people of all races (Clayborne, n.d.; NAACP, n.d.a.). President Roosevelt also established the Fair Employment Practices Committee to ensure adherence to the executive order (NAACP, n.d.a). Inspired by the experience of equality aboard and angered by the discrimination within the armed forces, veterans added a new vigor to the civil rights movement; Medgar Evers, active in the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (founded 1951) and the NAACP, was a veteran (Clayborne, n.d.; NAACP, n.d.b; Ownby 2018).

The NAACP's *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) lawsuit led by civil rights lawyer Thurgood Marshall resulted in the Supreme Court's ruling that separate education is not equal. This victory overturned the 1896 Supreme Court *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, whose "separate but equal" had "ratified" Jim Crow Laws (Clayborne, n.d.; NAACP, n.d.a).

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Modern Civil Rights Movement

Born Michael King Jr. in Atlanta, Georgia (1929), and renamed Martin Luther King Jr. aged five after his father's life-and-name-changing trip to Germany (Brown 2019), MLK was as much influenced by his own racial experiences as by his mother's affirmation of his personhood and his father's personal and ministerial resistance to segregation (King 1998). The peaceful race relations MLK experienced in the northern state of Connecticut the summer before entering Morehouse College, Georgia,

²Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948) led India to independence from colonizing Great Britain via nonviolent protests that mobilized masses of poor Indians.

had a great impact on the fifteen year old (King 1998). At Morehouse, MLK was encouraged to seek a positive solution to racism, discovered Henry David Thoreau and eventually followed his father, grandfather and great grandfather into ministry (King 1998). An early mentor was Morehouse's President Benjamin Mays, who prioritized action for gospel-inspired social justice (Lewis and Clayborne 2019).

MLK continued his studies at Crozer Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania. Here, he sought a means to end social ills by reading major social and ethical philosophers, encountered and deeply explored Gandhi's non-violent approach to social change, was elected president of the predominantly white student body, further honed his oratory skills and graduated valedictorian (King 1998; Lewis and Clayborne 2019). Formal studies culminated at Boston University with a doctorate in systematic theology at age 26. MLK and Coretta Scott of Alabama, who was studying at the New England Conservatory of Music and already a civil rights activist, met in Boston and married; thus, the choice to begin his career in the South and as a pastor was a thoughtful, well-discussed decision made by both, fully aware of the sacrifices and responsibilities they were accepting (King 1998).

He was at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery Alabama fifteen months with a very young family when Jo Ann Robinson and the Women's Political Council championed Rosa Park's refusal to give up her seat on the bus to a white man (King 1998). This decision mushroomed into a clergy supported movement that saw MLK, who was a member of the Alabama Council on Human Relations and the local NAACP chapter, elected as the inaugural president of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) (King 1998). MLK's reflections on the public's debate of the bus boycott led him to conceptualize the campaign as a nonviolent choice to not cooperate with an evil structure (King 1998). He also realized that "Christ furnished the spirit and motivation while Gandhi furnished the method" (King 1998, 67). Up to that point, MLK had struggled with how love could be a transformative force socially as well as interpersonally (King 1998). During this campaign, he worked out his principles for nonviolent living³ as presented in his first book "*Stride Towards Freedom: The Montgomery Story*" (1958, 90–95). This book is a reflection

³See the King Center's website (<https://thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy/>) for an overview of MLK's philosophy including the Six Principles of Nonviolence.

on the year-long bus boycott campaign that claimed victory on November 13, 1956, when the Supreme Court (*Browder v. Gayle*) ruled bus segregation in Montgomery and Alabama unconstitutional.

MLK was elected president of what would come to be known as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in January 1957 by close to 100 southern civil rights leaders (King 1967a). This new organization provided leadership for civil rights organizations across the South, and recognizing the nation would not be whole until black Americans were completely free, took as its motto: "To Save the Soul of America" (King 1967a, 1998). He held this office until his assassination on April 4, 1968. His leadership included direct actions⁴ to the point of arrests. MLK's 1963 "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" responded to several interfaith leaders who urged patience in the work to end racial segregation. It documents the core of his 6-point methodology for nonviolent social change⁵ (King 1986b, 290).

As the direct actions, speeches, books, articles, media appearances, sermons and leadership work continued MLK's stature grew nationally and internationally. He traveled to Ghana and India where he met with national leaders; Vice President Nixon, Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson consulted with him (King Institute, n.d.). MLK was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and selected *Time* magazine Man of the Year in January 1964. At the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, MLK gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. He was present when President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that outlawed Jim Crow Laws and put measures in place to prevent discrimination in public and work environment (King 1986c). The Voter's Rights Act was passed in 1965.

However, in the opening chapters of "*Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*" (1986c), MLK recognized the need for a second

⁴Direct action is the fifth step to nonviolent social change: entered into when the other party is not engaging in dialogue, it is meant to create conditions to stir the other party's or observers' morality and, thus, motivate the other party to participate in the process of effecting social change. The King Center notes that 250 types of direct actions have been identified.

⁵See the King Center's website (<https://thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy/>) for an overview of MLK's philosophy including the Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change.

phase to the civil rights work and grappled with the splintering of the non-violent movement as continued resistance to legislative civil rights victories gave rise to Black Power terminology and ideology. MLK also noted that the major legislative victories did not impact most black Americans' everyday quality of life. This post-1965 period deepened MLK's understanding of racism's foundations/nature and what needed to be done to realize love's force to transform society—hence, his public denouncement of the Vietnam War and his emphasis on the economic aspect of civil rights, that was part of his consciousness even before he entered Morehouse College (King 1998). Economic aspects came to the fore with the Poor People's Campaign (PPC).

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: BIG ADVOCATE

Political Activism, Justification and Responses

In an address to the SCLC Eleventh Annual Convention, MLK identified the need to work for “a guaranteed annual income” in the context of “restructuring the whole of American society” to address the interrelated “triple evils” of “racism,” “economic exploitation” and “war” (1967b). He also contrasted economist John Kenneth Galbraith's identification of an annual cost of \$20 billion for a guaranteed annual income program with the annual \$55 billion spent on the Vietnam War and the moon landing program. He also maintained that implementing BIG would eliminate other social ills.

In MLK's work, the larger goals were America's actualization of the promise enshrined in the constitution and the incarnation of the Beloved Community, later the world house, where human laws match divine laws, where all peoples live together in peace and justice and where humanity's innate dignity is recognized (King Center, n.d.; King 1964, 1967a, 1986a, b, c). Thus, humankind's potential to embody love and to live at the highest moral level would be fulfilled. This means MLK justified BIG in terms of patriotism, national self-actualization, a condition for peace and justice, the dignity of the human person and humankind's self-realization. Therefore, his support of BIG was not a stand-alone issue and ultimately sought to benefit all peoples everywhere. Further, in classic Kingian style, it was the fruit of deep thought, a maturation of his nonviolent philosophy, and documented in “*Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*”

MLK (King 1986c) recommended a guaranteed income for those who could not work and a guarantee of meaningful jobs with a guaranteed income for everyone else. He also recommended a dynamic income level tied to the median income. The call for a guaranteed annual income structured as a regular unconditional means-tested payment or as wage for meaningful jobs remained throughout the Poor People's Campaign (PPC) and was documented in the first two demands of the campaign's Social and Economic Bill of Rights (Chase 1998; Jackson 2007; Poverty Initiative 2012). Thus, MLK proposed a modified BIG as it lacked some of the five essential elements identified in Basic Income Earth Network's (n.d.b) detailed definition of "a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means-test or work requirement."

The December 4, 1967 press conference announcement of the PPC launched political activism (Chase 1998; Poverty Initiative 2012).

The PPC was conceived to be three-phased (Chase 1998; Poverty Initiative 2012). Phase one was to be the building of a shanty town (Resurrection City) to house up to three thousand poor persons in a very visible location in Washington, D.C. and the holding of daily demonstrations. Phase two was to consist of large-scale arrests across the Capital in the context of demonstrations and marches meant to further awaken the government and the public to the reality of American poverty. Phase three was to be a nationwide boycott of shopping areas and the country's most powerful corporations until stakeholders forced Congress to enact the Social and Economic Bill of Rights.

In preparation for phase one, MLK traveled across the country mobilizing local groups to join the national movement, seeking funding, inspiring poor communities and establishing alliances with multiracial poor⁶ activist organizations across issues, with labor unions and with other groups; this included a March 1968 gathering of fifty multiethnic organizations⁷ (Chase 1998; Jackson 2007; Poverty Initiative 2012). In March 1968, MLK decided to support the Memphis Sanitation Workers' strike against the city, even after there was violence, realizing the importance

⁶Outreach was to Native Americans, Whites, Mexican Americans and Asian Americans

⁷The meeting attendees included representatives of Federal Alliance of New Mexico, Appalachian Volunteers from Kentucky, California farm workers, Newark Community Union, Southern Regional Council and American Friends Service Committee (Poverty Initiative 2012).

of building local groups and their direct actions while simultaneously preparing for the national PPC (King 1998). His assassination during this time meant leadership passed to Rev Ralph Abernathy, Vice President of SCLC. Dr. Abernathy redirected the campaign to consist of a modified phase one only that was meant to endure until the bill of rights was enacted (Poverty Initiative 2012).

On April 29, 1968, delegates gathered in Washington DC to lobby federal agencies before dispersing to dispatch nine caravans of the diverse poor people coalition that journeyed from the ends of the country to Washington DC, growing in size as they got closer; the first arrived on May 12, 1968 (Jackson 2007; Poverty Initiative 2012). Construction of Resurrection City began the following day and lobbying resumed (Jackson 2007; Poverty Initiative 2012). The Solidarity Day Rally for Jobs, Peace and Freedom on June 19, 1968, was the only mass action and brought fifty thousand supporters (Jackson 2007; Poverty Initiative 2012). On June 24, after the initial and renewed permits expired, residents of Resurrection City were forced to leave by police dressed in riot gear; Resurrection City, which was on the National Mall between the Lincoln and Washington Memorials, was subsequently bulldozed (Poverty Initiative 2012).

The press, some labor unions, the political powers-brokers and the FBI were against the campaign, with the FBI acting to sabotage it (Chase 1998; Jackson 2007; Poverty Initiative 2012). Jackson (2007) documents alarmed white Americans writing to President Johnson asking for the campaign to be stopped and that the President wavered between indifference, appeasement and preparations for violence during the Resurrection City era lobbying efforts. A June 10, 1968, Washington Post article reported a national survey which found that while eighty percent of blacks supported the PPC (and only eleven percent opposed it), only twenty-nine percent of whites backed the campaign and sixty-nine percent rejected it (Chase 1998).

Analysis of Political Activism and Justification

This analysis will focus on four areas: response within the Modern Civil Rights Movement (MCRM), response from the rest of the USA, political activism events and MLK's thought and methodologies.

MLK was a theologian, philosopher and an ordained minister, who identified the interrelated triple evils of poverty, racism and militarism

empirically when he realized the Vietnam War was debilitating President Johnson's War on Poverty (King 1986c). Thus, he considered his evolution to including economic inequality in the work to end the adverse effects of racism as a turn to human rights. However, Harman (2017), a historian, formulated a view of the origination of the triple evils that reveals economic rights are civil rights. Harman argues that class society developed when humankind transitioned from roving hunter-gatherer communities to become settled producers who developed large-scale production. In the former arrangement, the hunters provided meat, which was a treat, and the gatherers provided the staples. Both groups needed and valued each other. In the newer large-scale arrangement, the managers of the resultant surplus, who were also the planners of production, began to think their contribution was more important even as they recognized their dependence on those who actually produced the surplus. Harman holds the managers' response was to develop class society, economic inequality and supporting ideologies.⁸ He also documents the emergence of the military at this point. From this perspective, it becomes clear that the 1960s racism and militarism were the contemporary enforcers of an unjust economic order and that poverty itself is the primal civil injustice because structuring society in this way prevents the people whose work directly creates the wealth from receiving an equitable share of the profits generated together. Economic inequality then prevents them from participating fully in society's economic sphere. The latter became more significant as financial and economic structures increased in sophistication.

When MLK observed that post-1965 racial segregation was enforced by posting the menu with prices outside the restaurant as poor blacks would not bother entering (King 1986c), he was close to recognizing poverty as the original civil injustice. However, he only saw economic inequality as a way of legally maintaining racism and its segregation, not that racism existed to enforce the unjust socioeconomic order. His recognition that the Vietnam War was fought to maintain the economic order and that it could be replicated in other foreign countries (King 1967a) brought him closer to recognizing Harman's (2017) view of the origination of the triple evils.

⁸Harman (2017) acknowledges the work of Karl Marx. Marx differs from Harman by asserting the means of production and social relations are tied together; he does not allow room for ideology. Thus, the only solution to class society's injustice is to derive a different means of production. See <https://www.britannica.com/topic/MarxismMarxism>.

The distinction of economic exploitation as the originator of an oppressive class society is very important as it highlights the value of MLK's founding his political activism for BIG on a call for a revolution of values tied to the restructuring of American society with the Beloved Community/world house as the end point. Closely aligned with this is his preference for a dynamic BIG tied to the median income level. Firstly, MLK was identifying the cause of poverty and seeking to address this cause. Secondly, ontologically, BIG is a community process⁹; this reality is demonstrated by the fact that the institution that has come closest to enacting BIG is the family, which is an embodiment of "us." Therefore, it is reasonable to expect BIG would not be sustainable in a society founded on division. Thirdly, as a review of the legislative history of divisive issues, from abortion to welfare benefits or voting rights, substantiates, legislation alone does not work to effect lasting change. This is because, as Covey (2004) rightly emphasizes, actions flow from one's worldview or perception of reality. Thus, sustainable socioeconomic or political change is predicated on the prior inner transformation of a significant segment of society. So in calling for a revolution of values to restructure American society, MLK identified a means of attaining sustainable economic change. Fourthly, the revolution of values goes beyond political or religious ideology, which can be hard to bridge, to a deeply personal area that informs an individual's daily life while facilitating a sense of belonging in local and national communities. These characteristics of values are the very things that make MLK's justifications of peace and justice, fulfillment of the nation's promise and humankind's self-actualization potentially desirable to a very large segment of the population and capable of facilitating transformation into the world house's ethic of "a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation" to "an all-embracing and unconditional love for all men" that ultimately "preserve[s] the best in our individual societies" (King 1964). Finally, the quantitative particulars of MLK's BIG would have effected socioeconomic restructuring by providing a secure middle-class income as society's lowest financial threshold via the dignified means of work or an unconditional regular payment.

⁹Ontology is the branch of philosophy that studies things as they are. See <https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/philosophy/philosophy-terms-and-concepts/ontology>

MLK's activism is rooted in his methodology for nonviolent social change. Therefore, his political activism is analyzed within this framework. They are also examined in conjunction with the responses to the campaign identified in the previous section and with what actually happened.

MLK's methodology for nonviolent social change has six steps: gather comprehensive information on the issue; educate others on your position (especially the one(s) you want to persuade); daily renew your commitment to the principles of nonviolent living; negotiate and dialogue with goodwill; employ direct action when negotiation is not possible; build friendship, reconciliation and consensus with the other party as the Beloved Community is the ultimate goal (King Center, n.d.). Direct action, the fifth step of this methodology, was used successfully in obtaining the 1964 and 1965 legislative victories as well as the Supreme Court's desegregation of the Alabama bus system. Direct action is meant to introduce creative tension into the negotiations and move the other party toward the desired outcome (King Center, n.d.). The brutality, immorality and injustice of segregation were revealed to the rest of the USA by the activists' nonviolent responses to the segregationists' behaviors. However, the segregationists were not the ones who made the changes. Thus, the decision makers were not the perpetrators and very likely already had values that objected to what they witnessed. However, the PPC was highlighting a different situation.

The PPC was challenging the values the decision makers lived.¹⁰ It was challenging the country's economic and political foundations. Add to this the idea of black dominance the term Black Power awoke in many non-blacks (King 1986c), the threat of violence that was stoked by the FBI (Jackson 2007) and the macro-system reality of the working and middle classes being economically comfortable during this period (Janssen 2015). The combination of these factors possibly explains the response from the press, the government, the FBI, the sharp difference in race-related support for the campaign documented in the June 1968 survey and the small turn out for Solidarity Day: limited identification and possibly race-based fear. Further, in setting the PPC, the task of actualizing

¹⁰Chase (1998) documents the theory that MLK was depending on the support of liberal whites for the success of the PPC and this is the reason the campaign failed; this author rejects MLK was doing this due to the inclusion of the third phase of the PPC that was meant to put pressure on business persons to motivate the business owners to pressure Congress into enacting the Economic and Social Bill of Rights.

America's promise, MLK was in the realm of fostering a new national identity and social compact. He was attempting a transition from the existing social conflict theory arrangement with its inequity and class conflicts to a humanistic model with an emphasis on the value of the individual and his/her capacity for freely chosen actualization and value-based living (Hutchison 2015). All of these new conditions particular to the second phase of the MCRM required adjustments to MLK's methodology.

An alternate approach that puts modified versions of King's second and sixth steps of nonviolent social change (steps of education and formation of the Beloved Community) on par with the fifth step as initiators of creative tension could have been more successful. This would have included lots of aspirational and values-based reinforcement (as documented in his "world house" reflections [King 1964, 1986c] and as done successfully with his "I have a Dream" speech [Sinek 2009]¹¹) along with the demands of the Economic and Social Bill of Rights and exposure to the reality of poverty via the direct action of the PPC. A key aspect of this modified approach would have been his insights into how the triple evils employment of a "I-it" manner of relating rather than "I-Thou" was damaging to both members of the interaction (King 1964, 1986c). Examples of the desired values at work could have included the wealthiest Americans voluntarily paying taxes above ninety percent in the 1950s to help pay off budget deficits (Freeland and Taibbi 2012).

As noted previously, the SCLC was founded to lead the civil rights movement. Leadership is an essential aspect of political activism for it undertakes the function of deciding how to deploy resources to achieve the desired result. The specific tasks are considering vision, mission, values along with interior and exterior capacities, forces and developments to chart the optimal course (Covey 2004). MLK's last book is a testament to his striving to do this. However, he was focused primarily on the current and future work to be done by the MCRM.

Analysis that includes the SCLC and its history recognizes that the fight against racism, segregation, brutality and voter suppression was a vibrant, wide-spread, decades-long grassroots movement that "spontaneously" became multi-state and birthed the SCLC. However, with his identification that the second stage of the work needed to attend to the

¹¹In his Golden Circle (theory of successful leadership), Sinek argues that people follow leaders for the "why" (the values), not the "how" or "what".

triple evils, MLK was on the cutting edge of civil rights activism. Thus, there was a need to build consensus and to deeply educate within the SCLC¹² so the previous clarity of purpose and high level of investment born of experience and many years of struggle could be developed around this second phase. Further, given MLK's recognition that the limited concrete changes resulting from the legislative victories were straining hope and splintering the dedication to nonviolence, systemic work to facilitate a recommitment to the principles of nonviolence would have been timely. Both choices are also in keeping with Covey's (2004) recognition that private achievements are the foundation of public ones. If these priorities had been attended to, it is very likely that Dr. Abernathy would have carried out the three-phased campaign and the SCLC leaders would have stayed at Resurrection City instead of at hotels as Jackson (2007) documents.

If the approach of taking time to deeply cultivate SCLC's support for the second phase had been employed, a concurrent or subsequent phase would have been for the SCLC to foster the previous level of commitment, action and creativity within the local organizations based on a thorough understanding of how the triple evils uniquely affected each organization as this new phase needed the fuel of persistent direct actions that local organizations provide.

Adaptability and adeptness at identifying and embracing opportunities are necessary aspects of successful leadership because the operating environment is fluid (Covey 2004). The PPC is a testimony of MLK doing this. He recognized the need to create a coalition of the poor rather than just the mobilization of poor black Americans. He learned from the AFDC¹³ mothers (Jackson 2007). He understood the value of pausing work for the national campaign to support the Memphis Sanitation Workers, even after there was violence at their demonstration (King 1998). However, even though he repeatedly referenced John Kenneth Galbraith's work when speaking about BIG, MLK did not extend the PPC's alliances to include the economist. It is possible that MLK overlooked this opportunity to simultaneously advance BIG and the Beloved Community/world house as in his methodology for nonviolent social

¹²Jackson (2007) documents MLK distributed Michael Harrington's *The Other America* within the SCLC to educate about the need to focus on poverty as an interracial issue.

¹³AFDC is the acronym for Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

change the Beloved Community/world house was the long-term outcome, not an immediate priority. Also, his methodology is focused on bringing supporters into his movement, not forming coalitions with those who employed other strategies.

LONG-TERM INFLUENCES OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM ON BEHALF OF BIG

This section is a brief review of significant BIG and/or economic justice political activism connected to MLK that occurred post-PPC.

Economists' 1968 Statement on Guaranteed Annual Income

In May 1968, John Kenneth Galbraith, James Tobin and other economists initiated a statement that was signed by over one thousand economists (BIEN, n.d.a). The PPC was the very first supporter of BIG identified in the second paragraph; the first paragraph urged Congress to adopt a BIG that year (Galbraith 1968). The economists' justification was that "[t]he country will not have met its responsibility until everyone in the nation is assured an income no less than the official recognized definition of poverty" (Galbraith 1968). The petition resulted in a bill for the Family Assistance Program, which was a form of negative income tax scheme; it was adopted by the House of Representatives with a majority in August 1969, but rejected by the US Senate in 1972, even after multiple amendments were adopted to diminish opposition (BIEN, n.d.a).

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival

The Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis of Union Theological Seminary's Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice and the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, President and Sr. Lecturer of Repairers of the Breach, are the founding co-chairs of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival (PPC:ANCMR) (Breach, n.d.; Kairos Center, n.d.b). Dr. Theoharis is also the Director and a founding member of the Kairos Center's Poverty Initiative; over many years, she used this initiative to lay the foundation for the PPC:ANCMR, which was announced on December 4, 2017, the fiftieth anniversary of MLK's announcement of the PPC, and is positioned as a continuation of MLK's work (Barber and Theoharis 2018a; Kairos Center, n.d.a).

Revs. Dr. Theocharis and Dr. Barber's justification for the PPC:ANCMR is a refinement of MLK's as they articulate deepest religious and constitutional values through the lens of morality. However, they also invoke Jesus, "a brown skinned Palestinian Jew," as unifier of the rejected and judger of nations based on their treatment of the poor and the marginalized, even as they beckon to those who do not follow a faith tradition but believe in love and justice and/or in morality as an inherent aspect of the universe (Barber and Theocharis 2018b). They insert the movement into the national and the biblical traditions of moral dissent and action for the oppressed (Barber and Theocharis 2018b). Christian nationalism and ecological devastation are added to the intertwined evils endangering the soul and heart of America's democracy and limiting the country's ability to fully be (Barber and Theocharis 2018b).

The movement is conceived as a fusion coalition that unites people across all the lines traditionally used to divide, that can sustain a multi-year campaign and that prioritizes giving power to the poor in the work of changing the national narrative and policy focus. Moral analysis, moral articulation and moral action are the identified methodologies for simultaneous local and national activism. Moral action includes moral discernment, moral dissent and moral disruption of the forces of injustice (Barber and Theocharis 2018a, b).

Though the moral agenda that documents demands based on the campaign's *The Souls of Poor Folk* audit's¹⁴ findings (both documents were released at the campaign's April 2018 launch) includes a guaranteed annual income (Barber and Theocharis 2018a; PPC:ANCMR 2018), the campaign has chosen a guaranteed job at a living wage over BIG in its *Poor People's Moral Budget: Everybody has the Right to Live* on the grounds that a basic income is not large enough to meet a person's need (PPC:ANCMR 2019). The movement also supports the right of workers to unionize and "fully-funded welfare programs that provide cash and in-kind assistance directly to the poor" (PPC:ANCMR 2019, 32) for those who cannot work. These three items are among those addressed under the section of the budget entitled "Investment in Domestic Tranquility." The section of the budget focused on "Investments in an Equitable Economy" seeks to hold corporations and the wealthy accountable by demanding they be charged increased taxes to help pay for social programs.

¹⁴The audit period is 1968–2018.

It is noteworthy that their June 2019 forum attended by 2020 Democratic Party presidential candidates, part of a three-day Poor People's Moral Action Congress in Washington DC, provided the opportunity for two candidates who have associated themselves with MLK (Andrew Yang and Senator Bernie Sanders) to speak on their plans for poverty (Segers 2019). The forum was attended by the then four leading 2020 Democratic Party presidential candidates (Vice President Joseph Biden, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Kamala Harris and Senator Bernie Sanders); President Donald J. Trump was invited to participate (Kaplan 2019).

Andrew Yang, 2020 Democratic Presidential Candidate

A BIG of \$1000 monthly for everyone eighteen years and older was one of Andrew Yang's three main platform items; Yang called it a Freedom Dividend (Yang, n.d.a). Though he listed MLK as a supporter of BIG on his campaign website, Yang's justification for BIG was that due to new technologies replacing human workers, there will not be enough jobs in the near future (Yang, n.d.b).

Senator Bernie Sanders, 2020 Democratic Presidential Candidate

Senator Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign was founded on economic justice. His 2020 platform was presented as a movement for "economic, racial, social and environmental justice for all" and he spoke of an Economic Bill of Rights (Sanders, n.d.a, n.d.c); thus, his language and issues resonated with MLK's during preparations for the PPC (King 1968; O'Brien 2017). Senator Sanders' plan to include poor people in the banking system (Sanders, n.d.b) took MLK's vision of economic justice further. Senator Sander's economic policy position included safeguarding union rights to rebuild the middle class and guaranteed jobs for all (Sanders, n.d.c, n.d.e), but not BIG. Also, his personal biographical data on the 2020 campaign website did not include his participation in the MCRM as a young man (Sanders, n.d.d), information that was part of his 2016 presidential campaign.

Black Lives Matter

The Black Lives Matter Global Network was founded in the USA during the second decade of the twenty-first century in response to police brutality toward black men. It is a member-led, chapter-based organization (Black Lives Matter, n.d.a). It describes itself as “a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement” (Black Lives Matter, n.d.b). Its mission is to create a world where “every Black person has the social, economic, and political power to thrive.” They also use the language of “Beloved Community” and commit to peace, justice and liberation in their intracommunity relations (Black Lives Matter, n.d.b). However, they have not articulated endorsement for BIG.

Hawk Newsome, President of Black Lives Matter, New York Chapter, was scheduled to speak at the October 26, 2019, New York Basic Income March in his official capacity. This march was part of worldwide concurrent events promoting BIGs (Basic Income March, n.d.a; Black Lives Matter Greater New York, n.d.b). Yet Black Lives Matter, New York Chapter’s list of demands does not include BIG; this could be because they are focused on criminal justice and black Americans’ interactions with the police (Black Lives Matter Greater New York, n.d.a). The Basic Income March’s website includes MLK’s picture with those of leaders who support BIG; however, MLK was the only leader quoted (Basic Income March, n.d.b).

CONCLUSION: THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE

The analysis of the PPC revealed that MLK’s justifications for BIG and his support of a dynamic BIG tied to the median income level are important developments in the history of BIG as they hold the potential for sustainable change, wide appeal and a restructuring of the injustice socio-economic order that sustains poverty. However, his political activism did not directly move BIG closer to reality. This was due to limitations inherent to his methodological framework and the way it was implemented. Therefore, it would be beneficial for MLK’s thought and methodology to be developed further. This could include more scholarships on the political, social and economic policies/structures of the Beloved Community/world house and MLK’s methodology for nonviolent social change.

The analysis of the PPC’s long-term influence indicated the campaign was not a failure. It was cited in John Kenneth Galbraith and colleagues’

influential BIG petition. Further, MLK's work is inspiring a new generation of BIG activists, even if, like Andrew Yang, some have different justifications. It is also very encouraging that Hawk Newsome is supporting BIG in his official capacity as a young MCRM leader, especially as BIG is not in alignment with his organization's priorities. This is a welcome development for BIG activists, given the PPC:ANCMR's choice to favor a right to work over BIG. This choice brings the MCRM into a debate that has been active since the 1980s (Harvey 2004) and can be considered a fracturing of the MCRM on the level of Stokely Carmichael's¹⁵ choosing Black Power over the commitment to nonviolence and eventual reconciliation with white Americans. This is such a splintering of the movement because by choosing a guaranteed job and fully funded welfare programs, they are abandoning MLK's mission to restructure the system that causes beggars. For fully funded welfare programs, even if achieved through the poor having a voice in the policy formulation and political processes, result in a mere rearrangement of the current system. They are also walking away from the potential for sustainable socioeconomic change particular to MLK's justifications for BIG and the quantitative specifics of the BIG he supported. However, this is not surprising as MLK's support of BIG is linked to his nonviolent philosophy and the end goal of the Beloved Community/world house. While the PPC:ANCMR utilizes MLK's language and ideas, it has not included the Beloved Community/world house as the ultimate goal. Also, while MLK developed nonviolence as a way of life that cultivates peace regardless of the personal cost, nonviolence is listed as the last of the PPC:ANCMR's twelve fundamental principles (King 1964; PPC:ANCMR, n.d.). And the principle of nonviolence is presented in a manner that could be interpreted primarily as a rejection of violent behavior. This occurrence in the Modern Civil's Rights Movement's approach to economic justice makes development of MLK's work even more important.

The intensification of the triple evils is another reason for further advancement of MLK's thought, particularly those associated with BIG and economic injustice. Putnam (2013a, b) identifies the three big trends

¹⁵Stokely Carmichael was the president of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The organization was cofounded with the SCLC. However, it was renamed Student National Coordination Committee after it separated itself from the nonviolent methodology in favor of Black Power. Stokely Carmichael was the first within the MCRM to publicly use the phrase "Black Power".

in American society from the 1980s to the present as severe income inequality, social class segregation and a loss of the sense of community that translate to less opportunity for poor children. For Putnam, it is a deviation from the core of the American Dream/Promise that each young person would have an equal start and subsequent success would be based on the individual's efforts. Putnam (2016) is equally concerned that the increased segregation and inequality will adversely impact the country's economy and social character since American society is designed to function with a high level of social capital/trust. The trends are not just in the USA. Freeland and Taibbi (2012) recognize the same movement toward economic inequality across western societies. And in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis (2015) identifies society's many ills, global and local, as stemming from the globalization of the dichotomizing, profit-prioritizing "technocratic paradigm" that fails to even acknowledge the inherent value and form of the other. Thus, there is continued need for a revolution of values that would restructure society nationally and internationally. If the new way chosen is that of the Beloved Community/world house, BIG is an integral part of it. The inverse is equally true: as already discussed, BIG cannot be sustainably achieved without including political activism founded on Dr. King's entire philosophy. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic that laid bare humanity's indisputable interdependence highlights these reciprocal truth. Therefore, the pandemic has the potential to be a catalyst for action towards MLK's expanded dream.

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