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## REMINDER: "Race Relations" 1973

*"The more things change, the more they remain the same!"*

**"It is impossible to tell the truth about race relations in America and be non-controversial. I intend to be constructively controversial *in lieu* of destructively controversial."**

Note: We stood up for America; when will America stand up fairly for us—Africans in America?

--Major Gyasi A. Foluke, "Social Actions Officer Rap Shop"  
*Easy Flyer*, Military Newspaper, 1973, Udorn Thailand--



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**Let Us Commemorate The Real Dr. Martin L. King Jr.**

Gyasi A. Foluke

***"May his spirit rise to haunt the hearts and minds of all Americans until we have won the victory for which he gave his life."***

---Auxiliary Bishop John J. Dougherty, in *The Wisdom of Martin Luther King in His Own Words*, Edited by the staff of Bill Adler Books Inc., 1968--

Let us congratulate members of the MLK Holiday Planning Committee, apparently, seeking public input and/or to refocus the King holiday routine celebrations in our city. While assuming that this is their motive, I suggest simply that, metaphorically, we "shift gears" from celebrating Dr. King the "Dreamer" to commemorating the Real Dr. King, both the "Dreamer" and "Schemer," the latter defined as a planner of action, under a concept of which I am prepared to share with appropriate groups and churches in this city.

Since I was among hundreds of dedicated citizens who worked hard to achieve a national holiday to commemorate the late-great Dr. Martin L. King Jr., I can still experience some degree of happiness through our now routine celebration of this very

special "Messenger of God." In this context, our problem today lies in making a clear distinction between these two words--commemoration and celebration. Indeed, our annual celebrations of Dr. King have become much too routine, with a strong focus on "eating and drinking together, playing music" and often with superficial speeches that still promote an empty theme of "I have a Dream," with little or no substantive challenge for all of us to WAKE UP and go to work, seriously, on a "Scheme" to commemorate or truly to honor the memory of this unprecedented deceased leader.

As a young teenager in Columbia, SC, I was commissioned by the adult branch of the NAACP to start a youth chapter for that organization, before the late Dr. Martin L. King Jr., became involved in the Black liberation struggle during the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, as Dr. King emerged as our paramount Black leader. Moreover, having worked briefly with King in 1963, including helping to "scheme"-plan or to strategize how to "bring down the walls of racial segregation" in Montgomery, Alabama, I can distinctly recall the REAL Dr. King. For he far transcended being just a "Dreamer." with a "Scheme" for inter-racial justice or equality for America, including a systemic attack on poverty and a Marshall Plan--"to repair major damages" or reparations--for Black America. But oh how silent the voices to promote the Real Dr. King today!

Accordingly, let us be reminded that we, fully, have not achieved King's great Dream--a gross understatement--traceable to an ugly, most often hidden, heritage (especially in "His-story" textbooks) of stolen Black wealth, racist oppression-suppression and the failure of "kneegroes" to coalesce while promoting greater self-help measures. For many of "us" have become too egotistical, while personally "selling out" our group interests for individual selfish gain. Indeed, with poverty and violence, too often increasing nationally, with Black aggravate wealth only a pittance of White wealth, with our public schools grossly mis-educating us, as our juvenile "justice" centers, jails and prisons are predominantly Black, clearly the time has come, indeed it is far past due for all of us to embrace and to transcend "celebrating" Dr. King's holiday, while moving towards commemorating him with a "new" Scheme or strategy for liberation.

Initially, therefore, the MLK Holiday Planning Committee should seek speakers and or artists, etc, who, courageously, would confront-address communal issues of substance, with sufficient specificity progressively to help us in moving forward "**until we have won the victory for which he (Dr. King) gave his life.**" Moreover, our "commemorating" audiences should be reminded that "in the old days" of the civil rights movement, it was both VERY difficult and personally DANGEROUS to be involved in this protracted civil or HUMAN rights struggle, while it is still marginally difficult as considerable dangers remains today. As King spoke in 1964:

"I seldom go through a day without a death threat. Some are telephoned anonymously to my office; others are sent--unsigned, of course through the mails. (COWARDS--Author)...I have a job to do. If I were constantly worried about death, I couldn't function. After a while, if your life is more or less constantly in peril, you come to a point where you accept the possibility philosophically. I must face the fact, as all others in position of leadership must do, that America today is an extremely sick nation, and that something could well happen to me at any time. I feel, though, that my cause is so right, so moral, that if I should lose my life, in some way it would aid the cause."

Amen! And Dr. King's "death" has aided our "cause," including a doubling of the Black middle class during the decade of the 1960s. Therefore, all of us, especially this new Black middle class, should be admonished by the MLK Commission to minimize our "celebrations" of Dr. King's holidays, while getting MUCH more serious in coming together to commemorate the REAL Dr. King with a credible "Scheme Beyond the Dream." And this "Scheme," as I perceive it, includes an inter-racial Mecklenburg County-wide plan of action for citizen inclusiveness, with specific programs to confront

ethnic disparities in this area, encouraging us, with governmental and private (Foundations) financial support.

Most germane, the Commission should confront "The Ghost of Dr. Carter G. Woodson," including gross MIS-EDUCATION in "our" public schools and a too often related "worthless" Black middle class who, after their Euro-centric mis-education, are still worshiping the "Greeks"--even though ancients Africans TAUGHT these Greeks. Indeed, when more Blacks become African-centered in their thinking, they should be able to take the initiative in the development of our total community, including the creation of a strong sophisticated Black coalition-organization, with a good sense of direction, beyond our existing small generally dysfunctional organizations or "chaotic cliques" with a credible proactive agenda. To reiterate, the goal of the King commemoration should be to help us in moving forward progressively from our present Black marginalized socioeconomic status in society to one of greater human dignity, involving "Seven Dimension of Freedom"--physical, mental, spiritual, economic, cultural, political and emotional. In the profound words of our former physically enslaved Black ancestors:

Oh Freedom, Oh Freedom  
Over me  
And before I'll be a slave  
I'll be buried in my grave  
And go home to my Lord and be Free.

Hotep (Peace)!