

Stop Pimpin Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By: Kofi Taharka

On Sunday, August 28, 2011 the nation is set to dedicate a memorial on the national mall for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. With this occasion comes an opportunity for teaching and substance. We should utilize this moment to take an in-depth look at the man, his organization and the broader movement of the 1960's which swept this country. Unfortunately, all too often during the events surrounding Dr. King he is marginalized and homogenized into an acceptable two second sound bite of "I have a dream." This is a disservice to the breath and depth of the man and to the true structural changes he saw as a necessity in this country. The current conditions in the African in America communities of unemployment, mis-education, mass incarceration, poor health care and substandard housing forty three years after his assassination require all of us to stop the pimpin of his legacy.

In the book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Dr. King shares his insights on a host of relevant issues of then and now:

"Generally we think of white supremacist views as having their origins with the unlettered, underprivileged, poorer class whites. But the social obstetricians who presided at the birth of racist views in our country were from the aristocracy: rich merchants, influential clergymen, men of medical science, historians and political scientists from some of the leading universities of the nation. With such a distinguished company of elite working so assiduously to disseminate racist views soon the doctrine of white supremacy was embedded in every textbook and preached in practically every pulpit. It became a structural part of the culture."

See video clip of Dr. King below

<http://youtu.be/HlvEiBRgp2M>

"The majority of Negro political leaders do not ascend to prominence on the shoulders of mass support. Although genuinely popular leaders are now emerging, most are selected by white leadership, elevated to position, supplied with resources and inevitably subject to white control. The mass of Negroes nurtures a healthy suspicion toward these manufactured leaders. Experience tells them that color is the chief argument their leaders are offering to induce loyalty and solidarity... Tragically, he is in too many respects not a fighter for a new life but a figurehead of the old one."

Again, let us use this opportunity to gain a better understanding of this crucial time period through study and analysis of various figures and formations of that period: Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Nation of Islam (NOI), Black Panther Party (BPP), Republic of New Afrika (RNA),

Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), Organization for Afro-American Unity (OAAU). Surely, we will see unfinished business from that era. With Dr. King or any other servant to humanity we cannot cherry pick or cafeteria shop there positions. This would be the ultimate disrespect to their respective legacies.

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