

Fresno Center for Nonviolence 2022

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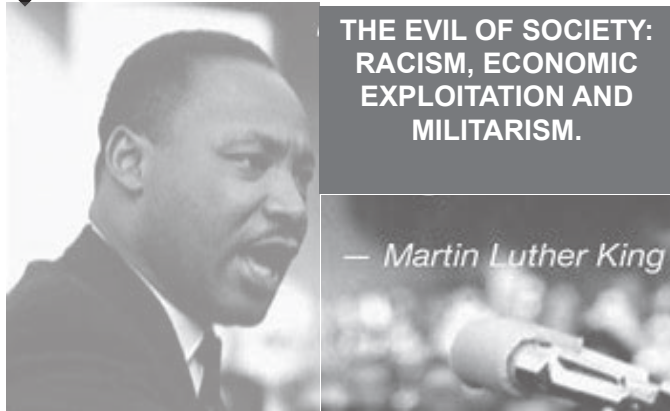
Wake up, everybody it's a new year so what ever you forgot to do last year that was so damn important, you better get on it right away.



Edited by
Richard Gomez.

*Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through
SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY*

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**THE EVIL OF SOCIETY:
RACISM, ECONOMIC
EXPLOITATION AND
MILITARISM.**

— Martin Luther King

Every year as the MLK holiday weekend approaches I begin to feel a bit nauseated—not because of Dr. King himself, but because of the way our culture has tried to transform his memory into something that will make it more palatable to white sensibilities. I have a great deal of respect for the real Dr. King, which is why I find it so offensive that his message seems to become more diluted each year. Way too much attention is paid to his famous March on Washington speech of August 28, 1963, while the larger body of his work gets overlooked. Indeed, even within the analysis of that one speech, there is too much emphasis on the easiest to swallow, least offensive parts of the oration—specifically, the “I HAVE A DREAM” sequence. That sequence about the dream was tacked onto the end of his speech in an impromptu way. It was not even a part of his prepared text. It is highly unlikely that he wanted the “I have a dream” addendum to be the main takeaway from his speech that day. If one looks at the whole body of MLK’s work a very different picture emerges.

While his life is often portrayed as being about the campaign for racial justice, that was just one part of a much larger puzzle with three interlocking pieces. Dr. King made this clear over and over again in multiple speeches. He refers to the three pieces as the three evils of society, or sometimes the evil triplets. They are Racism, Economic Exploitation, and Militarism. The first piece, racism, is the part that we hear about the most and needs no further explanation here, except to say that it is highly interwoven with the other two. The middle piece was given slightly different names by MLK at different times. In his speeches, economic exploitation is also called materialism, or excessive materialism, and sometimes he would just come right out and say capitalism. In any case, he was talking about how poverty is built into our economic system. MLK’s speeches about the third piece of the puzzle, militarism, posed a huge threat to the military-industrial complex, and is thought by some to be the final straw that led to his assassination.

Dr. King insisted that you could not address any one piece of the puzzle without addressing all three. To mount a serious attack on racism one must also deal with economic exploitation and with militarism. One cannot address the economic exploitation piece without facing the fact that it is an inherent part of our economic structure, which meant MLK was mounting a serious challenge to capitalism. That, of course, was a huge threat to the ruling class, and they had every reason to want to stop him. MLK’s attack on militarism was happening during the war in Vietnam. Young men of color were being used as cannon fodder to advance the agenda of the militarists. When Dr. King linked racism to militarism in his Riverside Church speech of April 4, 1967, he was essentially bringing together the two biggest movements of the day—the anti-war movement and the Civil Rights Movement. That is when the powers that be and the mainstream media really began to go after him and did whatever they could to discredit him. Perhaps it is no coincidence that he was assassinated on April 4, 1968, one year to the day after his Riverside Church speech.

It is really not that surprising, therefore, that those same two forces—the people in positions of power and the mainstream media—are the ones who are doing their best to remake Dr. King’s legacy into something that does not challenge capitalism or militarism, and that only challenges racism in ways that are as inoffensive as possible. All of this helps explain why and how the message of MLK has been altered to deceive the modern audience to maintain the three evils for which we are all the poorer now because of this terrible distortion that has been perpetrated upon us. This article written by Gerry Bill.

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Next Show: January 11th**

We begin the new year with host Josh Shurley and his guest TBA. For more information call on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (559) 237-3223 or check our website at www.centerfornonviolence.org.

In our December show with our host Josh Shurley and his guest was peace activist Gerry Condon from Veterans For Peace. Discussing the war in Ukraine plus the increasing threat of nuclear weapons.

In November, your host Josh Shurley was peace activist and veteran Susann Schnall, current President of Veterans for Peace. The discussion will be of VFP’s campaign to reclaim Armistice Day and of broader issues related to her work and the work of Veteran for Peace, which is to expose the true cost of war and to abolish war as an instrument of national policy. To hear again: <https://soundcloud.com/joshua-shurley>