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## As I See It

By Elbert "Big Man" Howard

Civil rights as a major issue in the United States is dead; it ended with the death of its prophet, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Racist America had many reasons to want Dr. King silenced but the key reason that put the plot to murder him into motion, was his open opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Up to that point, the struggle for integration and civil rights had not cost racist corporate America a high price. Those losing their lives and suffering were for the most part, the victims, the have-nots, and the civil rights workers. A few of those victims were leaders or were hand-picked and set up as such by the oppressors.

The people never choose these so-called "leaders"; they are chosen by the oppressors because of their ability to deliver speeches with clever and/or comical one-liners and the ability to quote credible sources, such as Dr. King. These "leaders" are never around for the actual struggle, but are always present after the fact, when the media and TV cameras are available.

Some of these so-called "leaders" were there when Dr. King was shot but somehow they managed to elude the bullet that ended his life and thereby ended the civil rights movement. These "leaders" were certainly in the camera shots of the death scene.

While living a few years in Memphis, I did some research into the death of Dr. King and had questions that no one could seem to answer.

One question I had was: With the sanitation workers' strike going so well and with the presence of tremendous community support, why did those preachers beg Dr. King to come to Memphis when they knew his life would be endangered?

Another question was: With attempts already having been made on Dr. King's life, as well as the many threats against him, why is it that these preachers did nothing to protect him? Why were there no security measures?

On the contrary, did they offer him up on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel to give the assassin a clear shot? Could there have been something in it for them?

Dr. King's position against the war was that there were many corporations with deep pockets who ultimately were running the US government and who would have lost profits should the war have been ended.

These capitalist war profiteers still include those giant corporations such as General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, DuPont, Standard Oil, the Bank of America, Lockheed, and many others. It is these corporations and others that make puppets of the President and the whole US institution of government. It is corporate power that determines who will be President and elections and votes and party representatives mean nothing. US Congress is made to sit down and shut up about it. The American Constitution is therefore just a relic of history which has little or no significance in the new American empire.

The American press has become a propaganda machine ala Hitler's Germany. The Free Press is non-existent and no longer recognizable as "free", for it belongs to the empire and is told what should be printed for the American public to digest. To get the truth, one must rely on oneself and sometimes the alternative media.

For an example of how the media is used as vehicle for propaganda and a weapon against the people, look at the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" excuse that was used as the main justification to invade a sovereign Middle Eastern country and wage war. Not surprisingly, no such weapons were ever actually found, yet still the "war" continues.

In my opinion, those who perpetuated these lies and those who have the power and continue to use it to send American sons and daughters to kill and be killed behind these lies, as well as their lackeys and boot-lickers, should be put on trial before the American people and be executed.

Not only are these imperialists plundering and murdering people around the globe, they are also doing at home, here in America. With the "help" of this government, working class and poor people have lost their jobs, health care, homes, and any security they might have had, not to mention the loss of hope for the future of their children. The workers unions and job

protection have all but been destroyed by the government. Deregulation allows corporations to do what they wish to workers and also the environment. Healthcare and medicines are priced for profit and are no longer affordable for the vast majority of people. The poor, the old, and the sick are left to suffer and die unless somehow they come up with the money.

America has shown the world that racism and bigotry is alive and well by their actions and/or their lack of action, especially during the recent flooding of New Orleans and the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. Indeed, Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans gave the world a clear look at the real thieves and criminals who are those in power in the US government. Not only are these criminals plundering and trying to control the world's wealth and resources, they are bent on destroying many of this country's people as well. While thousands drowned and starved, the US government watched and did nothing. As a matter of fact, the government withheld resources that were bought and paid for by the people, including resources that were paid for by our tax dollars.

Thousands of US aircraft carriers are always ready to drop bombs and kill innocent people but none were available to rescue drowning and starving American citizens. Supplies including food and water were not to be had for these people and yet, were always available to help friends of the gang of thieves and murderers, whose hands are stained with the blood of the masses of American citizens. Of note also, on the scene of this criminal behavior, is the lack of the usual clever and comic statements made by the white-appointed Black "leaders" of the community.

Not so long ago, one of these so-called Black "leaders" went to a far-off land to plead for the freedom of an American hostage (one who had no business in that land in the first place). Yet we have young Black men locked away in prisons for years with not one word spoken on their behalves by these same "leaders". But then the house niggers have never objected to anything that their masters did to the field niggers. I say, this dog-eat-dog existence is getting old.

There can be no greater and/or wake-up call for all of us, especially the poor and oppressed and Black people, than what we have seen occur in New Orleans. In such a situation, no leader, politician, or government agency is coming to save anyone – they simply do not care.

As I see it, people would be well-advised to study history and learn from it. Look at how programs such as the Free Breakfast Programs, Community Control of Police Programs and Medical Clinics were developed and instituted by the Black Panther Party within so many communities. People **must** pay attention and come together if we are to save ourselves.

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