

“FROM DU BOIS TO MLK, THEN BACK TO DU BOIS:

A Homily on the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday”



by

Rev. Roderick Andrew Lee Ford, Litt.D., LL.D.

January 19, 2026

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About the Author



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“On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and *a very loud trumpet blast*.

“Everyone in the camp trembled.

“Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

“Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire.

“The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently.

“As *the sound of the trumpet* grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.”

-- Exodus 19: 16 - 19

With the pages of this letter I hope to inform the entire world of the acerbic mood of the United States of America during this year’s National Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Today is a day that is filled with much grave national apprehension!¹

¹ **Exhibit C.** See J.D. Wolf, “Trump becomes first president to skip MLK Day Proclamation” MSN.Com (Jan. 19, 2026).

Nevertheless, as Messianic Jew, I turn with hope to timeless lessons of hope that is contained within the Torah.

Indeed, to be both black American and a Messianic Jew — i.e., to be a Lemba Jew — especially compels me to this task of seeking answers to our national crisis from within the pages of the Torah! Therefore, it is from this Messianic Jewish perspective that I interpret, and approach, the African American-oriented civil rights struggle and movement in the United States.

Within the Torah (and the Hebrew-Jewish tradition), the “trumpet” is a metaphor for the voice of the LORD God himself.

When Moses spoke to God at Mount Siani, and when the people heard the LORD’s voice and felt His presence, they thought that they heard the sound of a great trumpet.

For this reason, and to this very day, the Jews (and the Messianic Jews and many Christians) commemorate the “Feast of the Trumpets.”²

I liken the King National Holiday to the Jewish “Feast of the Trumpets,” because the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s voice (and its underlying message) moved our national consciousness like none other.

Indeed, the Dr. King’s baritone voice seemed as though it had the sound of a mighty *trumpet*!

Dr. King’s voice echoed “the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man” and “love for all mankind.”

With the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution’s Bill of Rights, and perhaps for the ancient Greco-Roman ethos of virtue, Dr. King’s voice merged Christ’s gospel of redemptive love into a great civil rights movement and protest movement designed fundamentally to create

² The Feast of Trumpets, also known as Rosh Hashanah, is a significant Jewish holiday that marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year. It typically falls in September or October, on the first day of the month of Tishrei in the Hebrew calendar.

so much social tension within the American civil polity that the chief magistrates of the nation would be forced to the tables of negotiation and, upon careful reflection upon the *logos* of agape and justice, enact positive legislation toward social change and improvement.

When I was a teenager in rural northern Florida during the early 1980s, it was Dr. King's voice that carried the day, that awakened within me a "Hebraic" Christian consciousness – centered on liberation in the same fashion as the ancient Hebrews' trek from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land-- merged with positive motivation and moral courage.

It was Dr. King's voice that brought Black history to life and merged that Black history within the moral laws of the ancient Israelites of the Sacred Scriptures of Torah.

It was Dr. King's voice that pointed me in the direction of a "Higher Law" that is found in the Torah – including the law of reason of the ancient Greeks, as well as the "law of Christ" in the Gospels!

Dr. King's "Letter from the Birmingham City Jail," for instance, taught me to look to the Torah, the Gospels, and the "law of reason" as the corrective measures of man-made positive laws.

And all of this was great intellectual development for an aspiring law student as I was then during the 1980s.

During my undergraduate college years, however, I encountered and courageously confronted certain "iron laws" or "laws of nature" which the great Pan-African scholar and sage W.E.B. Du Bois (February 23, 1868 – August 27, 1963) had reduced to science throughout his voluminous writings over a very long career.

Du Bois' writings caused me to challenge Dr. King's ideas.

In that regards, I suppose that we African Americans are not unlike our rabbinic Jewish brothers – we too engage in *friendly debate* about important matters the effect African American life!

Hence, I studied both Dr. King and Dr. Du Bois both consecutively and simultaneously during the 1980s and 90s.

I compared Dr. Du Bois with Booker T. Washington – and I felt that Dr. Du Bois ultimately won the debate.

I next compared Dr. King to Malcolm X – and I felt that Dr. King ultimately won that debate.

Henceforth, I had never compared Dr. Du Bois to Dr. King. This was a struggle – i.e., comparing these two giants-- that has been roaming around in my mind for a number of years now.

Given the exigencies of the moment in which African Americans find themselves today, the good Lord put it within my mind and heart to set down in writing something of a comparison and contrast between Dr. Du Bois and Dr. King.

This homily is not meant to replicate any sort of academic scholarship – just my initial impression of the subject matter in the form of a homily that is designed to get the listener or reader to thinking about this subject matter in a creative manner.

I write in haste; but, at the same time, I write in prayerful reflection – the subject matter of comparing Du Bois and King being long pent up in my mind – I am only now putting it down in writing as a sort of preliminary reflection.

For this reason, I have taken the liberty to attach the original writings of both Dr. Du Bois and Dr. King, so as to do justice to both men.

As I compare Dr. Du Bois to Dr. King, I do not find that there was much of a conflict in their respective positions – except to say that Dr. King's emphasis represents a local, national phasis of the African American-oriented civil rights movement; whereas Dr. Du Bois' emphasis represents a global, Pan-African phase of the African American-oriented civil rights movement.

Both Dr. King's and Dr. Du Bois' respective perspectives on civil rights have historically worked in tandem with each other – although very seldom has the civil rights movement produced men and women capable of understanding both of these movements.

In the past, most African American civil rights leaders tended to work under the banner of “civil rights” or “Pan-African international human rights” but not both.

However, my impression today is that Dr. Du Bois' version of Pan-African civil rights has slowly overtaken that of Dr. King's – not that these two movements are opposed to one another, but because the “iron law” of race, racial prejudice, racial economic self-interest, and racial identity appear to be too great of a hurdle for Dr. King's version of civil rights to succeed.

Interestingly, I note that when Dr. Du Bois heard Dr. King's voice during the 1950s, in his article, “Will the Great Ghandi Live Again?” (*National Guardian*, Feb. 11, 1957),³ he had this to say:

[W]e have today in the South millions of persons who are pathological cases. They cannot be reasoned with in matters of race. They are not normal and cannot be treated as normal. They are ignorant and their schools are poor because they cannot afford a double school system and would rather themselves remain ignorant than let Negroes learn.⁴

[Dr. Du Bois opined that the Montgomery bus boycott, which Dr. King led in 1955] “tried to show the world the synthesis of this antithesis...

³ See **Exhibit A**. This article is reprinted in *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader* (New York: Henry Holt Books, 1995).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

Did this doctrine and practice of non-violence bring solution of the race problem in Alabama? It did not.

Black workers, many if not all, are still walking to work, and it is possible any day that [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.] will be killed by hoodlums perfectly well known to the white police and the city administration, egged on by white councils of war, while most white people of the city say nothing and do nothing.⁵

[Nevertheless, even though Dr. DuBois predicted King's assassination, he supported Dr. King's nonviolent philosophy and campaign, stating] "[i]t may well be that the enforcement of these [civil rights] laws and real human equality and brotherhood in the United States will come only under the leadership of another Gandhi."⁶

From my Messianic-Jewish perspective, W.E.B. Du Bois was clearly right. And, unfortunately, I fear that Dr. Du Bois' prophetic prediction has come to fruition. Dr. Du Bois' concerns were eerily similar to the concerns of 20th-century Jews who embraced Zionism.

Dr. Du Bois's actions in turning to Pan-Africanism and becoming a citizen of Ghana are likewise eerily similar to the actions of millions of 20th-century Jews who returned to the nation state of Israel.

On the other hand, Dr. King's actions were different yet his general sentiments were not much different than Dr. Du Bois'.

⁵ Ibid., p. 359.

⁶ Ibid., p. 92.

Indeed, Dr. King knew and understood the meaning of Dr. Du Bois's life's work and thought.⁷

But Dr. King was nevertheless willing to accept the very real risks of being sacrificed and martyred, which Dr. Du Bois knew too well.

Today, we honor Dr. King, because Dr. King—knowing full well the risks of being sacrificed and martyred-- gave our nation *the benefit of the doubt*.

Many African Americans—including Malcolm X—did not want to give the United States *the benefit of the doubt*.

By the time of the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dr. Du Bois had already given the United States *the benefit of the doubt*; and, by 1957, Dr. Du Bois continued to doubt.

In 1957, Dr. Du Bois wished the best for, but continued to doubt, Dr. King.⁸

Nevertheless, for a very brief season, Dr. King's methods were masterfully successful, resulting in the monumental Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (posthumously enacted).

Dr. King's eloquent baritone voice—like the trumpet in the Book of Exodus—mesmerized the nation for a brief season, and today it continues to inspire us.

Yet, Dr. King did not have the luxury of time or resources to address the inner problem of “lust” and “sin” which are both driving our national crisis.

⁷ See, e.g., **Exhibit B**, Martin Luther King, Jr. “Honoring W.E.B. Du Bois Speech” (delivered 02/23/1968 at Carnegie Hall, New York).

⁸ See **Exhibit A**. This article is reprinted in *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader* (New York: Henry Holt Books, 1995).

Obviously, the white segregationists of the South have a “lust” / “sin” problem – this Dr. King’s philosophy and movement not directly address.

Dr. King’s philosophy and movement did not directly confront the “lust” / “sin” problem of the white racists of the North – such as, e.g., in Chicago.

In general, Dr. King touched upon war, militarism and Vietnam. Yet Dr. King had not the time to help his fellow American clergymen to workout, as a theologian and a church pastor, the real moral “lust” / “sin” crisis facing both White America and Black America (and now Brown/Hispanic America) as a whole.

Today it is obvious that “materialism” and “spiritual hedonism” have caused a sort of breakdown of traditional family values in all American communities – a major crisis that has cut across all communities.

In the late 1960s, when King preached, this crisis was not readily apparent, yet there were key indicators, such as, arguably, the Moynihan Report of 1965. But because King himself did not fully address this crisis, the legacy of today’s American Civil Rights movement constitutes a moral vacuum – a vacuum filled with unorthodox value systems.

The problem of “lust” and “sin” caused the ancient Greek and Roman stoics to pursue virtue.

The problem of “lust” and “sin” had caused the Apostle Paul to observe that “law alone” could not liberate us from the slavery of sin – only freedom in Christ (i.e., “virtue” and “holiness”) could do that.

Later, during the early 5th century, Augustine of Hippo had observed that this problem of “lust” and “sin” had led to the downfall of the Roman empire; and that purpose and function of the church had been to restore “virtue” and “holiness” throughout the Roman empire and the world.

Dr. King, no doubt, fully understood this vital part of our national crisis (i.e., “lust” and “sin”), but Dr. King had not the space of time to adequately address the component of the equation of national liberation.

For this reason, the enactment of the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, as with the 1860s and 1870s, has not fundamentally changed the problem of “lust” and “sin” in the United States.

In his essay “Will the Great Ghandi Live Again? (*National Guardian*, Feb. 11, 1957),⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, in essence, concluded that the problem of “lust” and “sin” had tacitly created too many untrustworthy, mentally deranged, and racist white persons.

Today, there is no national program directed at restoring “virtue” and “holiness” throughout the body politic.

In the year 2026, I have learned the President Trump has not officially acknowledged the King Holiday.¹⁰

I do not know why.

I cannot surmise that President Trump has simply acted with unjust motivations.

I can only guess that President Trump’s actions reflect that there are real insecurities held by many white Americans – they are insecure towards the type of civil rights movement which Dr. King helped to set in motion during the 1950s.

W.E.B. Du Bois predicted this sort of national insecurity.

Thus, we cannot escape the honest recognition that even President Trump, our chief executive, has determined that the nature of race

⁹ See **Exhibit A**. This article is reprinted in *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader* (New York: Henry Holt Books, 1995).

¹⁰ **Exhibit C**. See J.D. Wolf, “Trump becomes first president to skip MLK Day Proclamation” *MSN.Com* (Jan. 19, 2026).

relations, civil rights, and the popular doctrine of “diversity, equity, and inclusion” are so threatening to the plight of white people in the United States that even the King National Holiday needs to be modified, halted, or even cancelled for the sake of national security!

The push-back against Dr. King’s conception of national prerogative and civil rights policy is readily apparent.

This, Dr. Du Bois anticipated and forewarned us!

During the 1940s, for instance, Dr. Du Bois and the entire African American community in the United States were paying close attention to international plight of Jews and worked closely with the Roosevelt and Truman administrations to enact policies and laws that would root out racial oppression and discrimination.

Indeed, during World War II, the African American community had pushed the “Double V” slogan, meaning victory of the Nazis abroad and victory of racial discrimination and prejudice at home in the United States.

The parallel situation concerning the Jews in Nazi Germany and American Blacks in many areas in the South, and in many parts of inner cities in the North, were unnerving.

During the early 1940s, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois had expressed the very realistic concern that:

As the Negro develops from an easily exploitable, profit-furnishing laborer to an intelligent independent self-supporting citizen, the possibility of his being pushed out of this American fatherland may easily be increased rather than diminished. We may be expelled from the United States as the Jew is being expelled from Germany.¹¹

¹¹ W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Dusk of Dawn,” *Writings* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1986), p. 778.

In 1945, the NAACP sent Dr. Du Bois, as one of its delegates, to the United Nations, where he witnessed the ratification of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Rights.

That Declaration set forth nearly all of the principles and objectives which Du Bois, the NAACP, and scores of other African Americans — including the Black Church — had sought to achieve since the end of the U.S. Civil War (1861 – 1865).

Interestingly, as Harvard Law Professor Noah Feldman has pointed out, the Black-Jewish alliance in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s died out during the 1970s and has never been rekindled.¹²

Professor Feldman explains that this break-up of the Black-Jewish alliance was not intentional, but rather it was the result of a very pragmatic approach to the question of “**Jewish redemption**.”¹³

According to Professor Feldman, American Jews had looked upon the American-European landscape of history and determined that simply

¹² Noah Feldman, *To Be a Jew Today: A New Guide to God, Israel, and the Jewish People* (New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2024), pp. 47-48, 163.

¹³ Regarding the Jewish break with the African-American-led Civil Rights movement, Professor Feldman states:

But once American Jews began to confront the reality of the Holocaust [during the 1970s], it became harder to rely on this traditional, citizenship-and-social-justice solution to the theological question of redemption. The devastation of the Holocaust showed, among other things, that equal citizenship, as Jews had formally achieved in Germany, France, and even Poland before World War II, had not sufficed to protect or save Jews from genocidal murder. Jewish survival through equal citizenship in the United States looked like an almost accidental feature of the superiority of American liberal constitutionalism, not a success of the Progressive Jewish strategy of relying on liberalism. To a significant degree, omitting the United States, the classical prewar Zionist critique of Progressive Jewish political liberalism had been correct. Equal citizenship, privatized religion, and the struggle for social justice had not saved Europe’s Jews, much less redeemed them.

Feldman, *To Be a Jew Today*, supra, p. 163 – 164.

fighting for “equal rights” in “somebody else’s” land or country could not guarantee Jewish safety, Jewish freedom, and Jewish prosperity.¹⁴

For that, the state of Israel had come into existence during the last 1940s – in order to provide Jews from all over the world with a realistic option. Hence, the Jewish movement morphed into a pro-Israel movement and superseded the fight “black- Jewish” struggle for equal and civil rights.¹⁵

Zionism and the struggle for the state of Israel was born out this Jewish realignment.

Since then, the “black-Jewish” alliance has never been the same.

But there is one kernel of possibility in revitalizing that “black-Jewish” alliance in the United States and comes from the Pan-African analogy to Zionism.¹⁶

Here, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that Dr. Du Bois was a founding father of Pan-Africanism and that he died in Ghana, a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ For instance, one of the founding fathers of Pan-Africanism Henry Blyden (1832 – 1912) explicitly likened Pan-Africanism to Zionism, viz.:

In suggesting a redemptive role for African Americans in Africa through what he called Ethiopianism, Blyden likened their suffering in the diaspora to that of the Jews; he supported the 19th-century Zionist project of Jews returning to Palestine. In their book *Israel in the Black American Perspective*, Robert G. Weisbord and Richard Kazarian write that in his booklet *The Jewish Question* (published in 1898, the year after the First Zionist Congress) Blyden describes that while travelling in the Middle East in 1866 he wanted to travel to “the original home of the Jews--to see Jerusalem and Mt. Zion, the joy of the whole earth”. While in Jerusalem he visited the Western Wall. Blyden advocated for the Jewish settlement of Palestine and chided Jews for not taking advantage of the opportunity to live in their ancient homeland. Blyden was familiar with Theodor Herzl and his book *The Jewish State*, praising it for expressing ideas that “have given such an impetus to the real work of the Jews as will tell with enormous effect upon their future history.”

Ghanaian citizen, on August 27, 1963, which was the eve of the March on Washington, where Dr. King delivered his famed “I Have a Dream” speech.

For a brief period, in 1963, it seemed as though Dr. Du Bois – by virtue of the timing of his death on the eve of the March on Washington – briefly passed his torch of national civil rights leadership to Dr. King, who would go on to lead Black America until his untimely death in 1968.

And yet, it also seemed as though, less than two months before his assassination on April 4, 1968, Dr. King passed the torch of leadership back to W.E.B. Du Bois’ Pan-African descendants.

On February 23, 1968, on the 100th anniversary of the birth of W.E.B. Du Bois, the great Martin Luther King, Jr. gave one of his most erudite and profound speeches at Carnegie Hall in New York.¹⁷

As fate would have it, that “*Honoring W.E.B. Du Bois*” speech would be overshadowed by Dr. King’s iconic “I have a Dream Speech” (August 28, 1963), “Mountaintop Speech” (April 3, 1968), and “Letter from the Birmingham City Jail” (April 16, 1963).

But clearly Dr. King – by the year 1968 – had recognized that much of his proverbial “Dream” has been summarily rejected by very powerful forces within the governmental establishment.

As an American constitutional lawyer, I would be remiss here if I did not clearly point this out:

- Dr. King’s “Letter from the Birmingham City Jail” (1963), which was an eloquent defense of First Amendment freedoms and natural or fundamental rights, was ultimately categorically

¹⁷ **Exhibit B**, Martin Luther King, Jr. “Honoring W.E.B. Du Bois Speech” (delivered 02/23/1968 at Carnegie Hall, New York).

rejected in the United States Supreme Court's majority opinion in the case of:

- *Walker v. City of Birmingham*, 388 U.S. 307 (1967)(Chief Justice Earl Warren, however, joining the dissenting opinion).

Dr. King's baritone eloquent trumpet of love, justice, and brotherhood of 1963 had been categorically rejected by the cold calculation of the Supreme Court's law-logic of 1967.

Dr. King was not nationally popular in 1967, and this was especially true after he spoke publicly against the War in Vietnam.

Then disaster came in 1968, just as W.E.B. Du Bois had with great sadness and remorse predicted that it would.

But just before it came, Dr. King acknowledged he, like Moses, had been to the mountaintop, and that he too had seen the Promised Land.

Perhaps I am being somewhat presumptuous, but I believe that Dr. King, in his "Honoring W.E.B. Du Bois" speech of 1968, plainly and unequivocally pointed us toward the global struggle of the world's poor.

I believe, too, that in this same speech, Dr. King also pointed African Americans in particular toward the possibilities of Pan-Africanism—just as the Jews had looked toward the possibilities of a state of Israel and the Zionism!

Here I do not mean that African Americans must return to the continent of Africa—although for many this will be an only option or a real viable option.

I do not mean that Africans or African Americans must re-create a replica of the state of Israel, or to try and make Pan-Africanism into a carbon copy of Zionism.

However, what I am thinking here is more along the lines of the "law of nature," where Dr. Du Bois' "Conservation of Races" (1897) counseled

against racial suicide and promoted racial progress, with special pride in African origins and cultural ties.

But, where necessary, some African American repatriation to the African continent might become inevitable, just as the exigencies of Jewish genocide in Nazi Germany had ultimately necessitated the creation of the state of Israel or a national homeland for the Jews.

In the year 2026, the philosophy and movement of Martin Luther King, Jr. will through necessity become *global* and, hence, *Pan-African*. I surmise, too, to this new global, Pan-African phase of Dr. King's inspired civil rights movement will naturally cause thousands, if not millions, of African Americans to trace their ancestral roots to the Caribbean, the nations of central and south America, and to the African continent – and to seek relocation to those homelands. And when this global, Pan-African movement begins – a movement which I hope will in earnest replicate the high moral ground of the Torah-- as a matter of the next phase within a global movement for human rights, then the mantle of leadership from Dr. King back to Dr. Du Bois will have been completed.

REV. RODERICK ANDREW LEE FORD
Member, The Lemba Cultural Association

January 19, 2026



EXHIBIT A

6 NATIONAL GUARDIAN

February 11, 1957

NEGRO HISTORY WEEK, 1957

FEB 11 1957

Will the great Gandhi live again?

By W.E.B. DuBois

THE GREATEST PHILOSOPHER of our era pointed out the inherent contradictions in many of our universal beliefs; and he sought eventual reconciliation of these paradoxes. We realize this today. Our newly inaugurated President asks the largest expenditure for war in human history made by a nation, and proclaims this as a step toward peace! We have larger endowments devoted to peace activity than any other nation on earth, and less activity for abolishing war.

As I look back on my own attitude toward war during the last 70 years, I see repeated contradiction. In my youth, nourished as I was on fairy tales, including some called History, I quite naturally regarded war as a necessary step toward progress. I believed that if my people ever gained freedom and equality, it would be by killing white people.

THEN, AS A YOUNG MAN in the great affluence of the late nineteenth century, I came to believe in peace. No more war. I signed the current pledge never to take part in war. Yet during the First World War, "the war to stop war," I was swept into the national maelstrom.

After the depression I sensed recurring contradictions. I saw Gan-

dhi's non-violence gain freedom for India, only to be followed by violence in all the world; I realized that the hundred years of peace from Waterloo to 1914 was not peace at all, but war of Europe on Africa and Asia, with troubled peace only between the colonial conquerors. I saw Britain, France, and America trying to continue to force the world to serve them by using their monopoly of land, technique, and machinery, backed by gunpowder, and then threatening atomic power.

THEN MONTGOMERY in Alabama tried to show the world the synthesis of this antithesis. And not the white Montgomery of the Slave Power; not even the black Montgomery of the Negro professional men, merchants, and teachers; but the black workers: the scrubbers and cleaners; the porters and seamstresses. They turned to a struggle not for great principles and noble truths, but just asked to be let alone after a tiring day's work; to be free of petty insult after hard and humble toil. These folk, led by a man who had read Hegel, knew of Karl Marx, and had followed Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, preached: "Not by Might, nor by Power, but by My Spirit," saith the Lord. Did this doctrine and practice of non-violence bring solution of the race prob-

lem in Alabama? It did not. Black workers, many it not all, are still walking to work, and it is possible any day that their leader will be killed by hoodlums perfectly well known to the white police and the city administration, egged on by white councils of war, while most white people of the city say nothing and do nothing.

ALL OVER THE LOWER SOUTH this situation prevails. Despite law, in the face of drooling religion and unctuous prayer, while the nation dances and yells and prepares to fight for peace and freedom, there is race war, jails full of the innocent, and ten times more money spent for mass murder than for education of children. Where are we, then, and whither are we going? What is the synthesis of this paradox of eternal and world-wide war and the coming of the Prince of Peace?

It lies, I think, not in the method but in the people concerned. Among normal human beings, with the education customary today in most civilized nations, non-violence is the answer to the temptation to force. When threat is met by fist; when blow follows blow, violence becomes customary. But no normal human being of trained intelligence is going to fight the man who will not

fight back. In such cases, peace begins and grows just because it is. But suppose they are wild beasts or wild men? To yield to the rush of the tiger is death, nothing less. The wildness of beasts is nature; but the wildness of men is neglect and, often, our personal neglect. This is the reason beneath our present paradox of peace and war.

FOR NOW near a century this nation has trained the South in lies, hate, and murder. We are emphasizing today that when Robert E. Lee swore to serve the nation and then broke his word to serve his clan, his social class, and his private property—that this made him a hero; that although he did not believe in human slavery, he fought four long years, with consummate skill, over thousands of dead bodies, to make it legal for the South to continue to hold four million black folk as chattel bondsmen—that this makes him a great American and candidate for the Hall of Fame.

We have for 80 years as a nation widely refused to regard the killing of a Negro in the South as murder, or the violation of a black girl as rape. We have let white folk steal millions of black folks' hard-earned wages, and openly defended this as

(Continued on Page 7)

Historic Documents

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Honoring Dr. DuBois" Speech

Delivered at Carnegie Hall in New York City, February 23, 1968.

on the 100th birthday of [W.E.B. Dubois](#)

Tonight we assemble here to pay tribute to one of the most remarkable men of our time. Dr. Du Bois was not only an intellectual giant exploring the frontiers of knowledge, he was in the first place a teacher. He would have wanted his life to teach us something about our tasks of emancipation. One idea he insistently taught was that black people have been kept in oppression and deprivation by a poisonous fog of lies that depicted them as inferior, born deficient and deservedly doomed to servitude to the grave. So assiduously has this poison been injected into the mind of America that its disease has infected not only whites but many Negroes. So long as the lie was believed the brutality and criminality of conduct toward the Negro was easy for the conscience to bear. The twisted logic ran if the black man was inferior he was not oppressed-his place in society was appropriate to his meager talent and intellect. Dr. Du Bois recognized that the keystone in the arch of oppression was the myth of inferiority and he dedicated his brilliant talents to demolish it. There could scarcely be a more suitable person for such a monumental task. First of all he was himself unsurpassed as an intellect and he was a Negro.

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King, Jr**

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But beyond this he was passionately proud to be black and finally he had not only genius and pride but he had the indomitable fighting spirit of the valiant.

To pursue his mission, Dr. Du Bois gave up the substantial privileges a highly educated Negro enjoyed living in the North. Though he held degrees from Harvard and the University of Berlin, though he had more academic credentials than most Americans, black or white, he moved South where a majority of Negroes then lived. He deliberately chose to share their daily abuse and humiliation. He could have offered himself to the white rulers and exacted substantial tribute for selling his genius. There were few like him, Negro or white. He could have amassed riches and honors and lived in material splendor and applause from the powerful and important men of his time. Instead, he lived part of his creative life in the South-most of it in modest means and some of it in poverty, and he died in exile, praised sparingly and in many circles ignored.

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But he was an exile only to the land of his birth. He died at home in Africa among his cherished ancestors, and he was ignored by a pathetically ignorant America but not by history.

History cannot ignore W. E. B. Du Bois. Because history has to reflect truth and Dr. Du Bois was a tireless explorer and a gifted discoverer of social truths. His singular greatness lay in his quest for truth about his own people. There were very few scholars who concerned themselves with honest study of the black man and he sought to fill this immense void. The degree to which he succeeded discloses the great dimensions of the man.

Yet he had more than a void to fill. He had to deal with the army of white propagandists - the myth-makers of Negro history. Dr. Du Bois took them all on in battle. It would be impossible to sketch the whole range of his intellectual contributions. Back in the nineteenth century he laid out a

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Long before sociology was a science he was pioneering in the field of social study of Negro life and completed works on health, education, employment, urban conditions, and religion. This was at a time when scientific inquiry of Negro life was so unbelievably neglected that only a single university in the entire nation had such a program, and it was funded with \$5,000 for a year's work.

Against such odds Dr. Du Bois produced two enduring classics before the twentieth century. His *Suppression of the African Slave-Trade*, written in 1896, is Volume I in the *Harvard Historical Studies*. His study *The Philadelphia Negro*, completed in 1899, is still used today. Illustrating the painstaking quality of his scientific method, to do this work Dr. Du Bois personally visited and interviewed 5,000 people.

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He soon realized that studies would never adequately be pursued nor changes realized without the mass involvement of Negroes. The scholar then became an organizer and with others founded the NAACP. At the same time he became aware that the expansion of imperialism was a

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threat to the emergence of Africa. He recognized the importance of the bonds between American Negroes and the land of their ancestors, and he extended his activities to African affairs. After World War I he called Pan-African Congresses in 1919, 1921, and 1923, alarming imperialists in all countries and disconcerting Negro moderates in America who were afraid of this restless, militant, black genius.

Returning to the United States from abroad, he found his pioneering agitation for Negro studies was bearing fruit and a beginning was made to broaden Negro higher education. He threw himself into the task of raising the intellectual level of this work. Much later, in 1940, he participated in the establishment of the first Negro scholarly publication, Phylon. At the same time he stimulated Negro colleges to collaborate through annual conferences to increase their effectiveness and elevate the quality of their academic studies. But these activities, enough to be the life work for ten men, were far from the sum of his achievements. In the six years between 1935 and 1941 he produced the monumental seven-hundred-page volume on Black Reconstruction in America, at the same time writing many articles and essays. Black Reconstruction was six years in writing but was thirty- three years in preparation. On its publication, one critic said: "It crowns the long, unselfish and brilliant career of Dr. Du Bois. It is comparable in clarity, originality and importance to the Beards' Rise of American Civilization." The New York Times said, "It is beyond question the most painstaking and thorough study ever made of the Negroes' part in Reconstruction," and the New York Herald Tribune proclaimed it "a solid history of the period, an economic treatise, a philosophical discussion, a poem, a work of art all rolled into one."

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To understand why his study of the Reconstruction was a monumental achievement it is necessary to see it in context. White historians had for a century crudely distorted the Negro's role in the Reconstruction years. It was a conscious and deliberate manipulation of history, and the stakes were high. The Reconstruction was a period in which black men had a

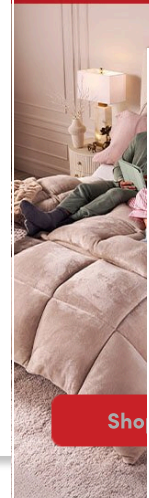
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small measure of freedom of action. If, as white historians tell it, Negroes wallowed in corruption, opportunism, displayed spectacular stupidity, were wanton, evil, and ignorant, their case was made. They would have proved that freedom was dangerous in the hands of inferior beings. One generation after another of Americans were assiduously taught these falsehoods, and the collective mind of America became poisoned with racism and stunted with myths.

Dr. Du Bois confronted this powerful structure of historical distortion and dismantled it. He virtually, before anyone else and more than anyone else, demolished the lies about Negroes in their most important and creative period of history. The truths he revealed are not yet the property of all Americans but they have been recorded and arm us for our contemporary battles.

In *Black Reconstruction* Dr. Du Bois dealt with the almost universally accepted concept that civilization virtually collapsed in the South during Reconstruction because Negroes had a measure of political power. Dr. Du Bois marshalled irrefutable evidence that, far from collapsing, the Southern economy was recovering in these years. Within five years the cotton crop had been restored, and in the succeeding five years had exceeded pre-war levels. At the same time other economic activity had ascended so rapidly the rebirth of the South was almost completed.

Beyond this he restored to light the most luminous achievement of the Reconstruction-it brought free public education into existence not only for the benefit of the Negro, but it opened school doors to the poor whites. He documented the substantial body of legislation that was socially so useful it was retained into the twentieth century even though the Negroes who helped to write it were brutally disenfranchised and driven from political life. He revealed that, far from being the tragic era white historians described, it was the only period in which democracy existed in the South. This stunning fact was the reason the history books had to lie because to tell the truth would have acknowledged the Negroes' capacity to govern

and fitness to build a finer nation in a creative relationship with poor whites.

With the completion of his book *Black Reconstruction*, despite its towering contributions, despite his advanced age, Dr. Du Bois was still not ready to accept a deserved rest in peaceful retirement. His dedication to freedom drove him on as relentlessly in his seventies as it did in his twenties. He had already encompassed three careers. Beginning as a pioneer sociologist, he had become an activist to further mass organization. The activist had then transformed himself into an historian. By the middle of the twentieth century, when imperialism and war arose once more to imperil humanity, he became a peace leader. He served as chairman of the Peace Information Bureau and, like the Rev. William Sloane Coffin and Dr. Benjamin Spock of today, he found himself indicted by the government and harried by reactionaries. Undaunted by obstacles and repression, with his characteristic fortitude he fought on. Finally in 1961 with Ghana's independence established, an opportunity opened to begin the writing of an African Encyclopedia, and in his ninety third year he emigrated to Ghana to begin new intellectual labors. In 1963 death finally came to this most remarkable man.

It is axiomatic that he will be remembered for his scholarly contributions and organizational attainments. These monuments are imperishable. But there were human qualities less immediately visible that are no less imperishable.

Dr. Du Bois was a man possessed of priceless dedication to his people. The vast accumulation of achievement and public recognition were not for him pathways to personal affluence and a diffusion of identity. Whatever else he was, with his multitude of careers and professional titles, he was first and always a black man. He used his richness of talent as a trust for his people. He saw that Negroes were robbed of so many things decisive to their existence that the theft of their history seemed only a small part of their losses. But Dr. Du Bois knew that to lose one's history is to lose one's self-understanding and with it the roots for pride. This drove him to become a historian of Negro life, and the combination of his unique zeal and intellect rescued for all of us a heritage whose loss would have profoundly impoverished us.

Dr. Du Bois the man needs to be remembered today when despair is all too prevalent. In the years he lived and fought, there was far more justification for frustration and hopelessness, and yet his faith in his people never wavered. His love and faith in Negroes permeate every sentence of his writings and every act of his life. Without these deeply rooted emotions his work would have been arid and abstract. With them his deeds were a passionate storm that swept the filth of falsehood from the pages of established history.

He symbolized in his being his pride in the black man. He did not apologize for being black and, because of it, handicapped. Instead he attacked the oppressor for the crime of stunting black men. He confronted the establishment as a model of militant manhood and integrity. He defied them and, though they heaped venom and scorn on him, his powerful voice was never stilled.

And yet, with all his pride and spirit he did not make a mystique out of blackness. He was proud of his people, not because their color endowed them with some vague greatness but because their concrete achievements in struggle had advanced humanity, and he saw and loved progressive humanity in all its hues, black, white, yellow, red, and brown.

Above all he did not content himself with hurling invectives for emotional release and then to retire into smug, passive satisfaction. History had taught him it is not enough for people to be angry-the supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force. It was never possible to know where the scholar Du Bois ended and the organizer Du Bois began. The two qualities in him were a single, unified force. This life style of Dr. Du Bois is the most important quality this generation of Negroes needs to emulate.

The educated Negro who is not really part of us and the angry militant who fails to organize us have nothing in common with Dr. Du Bois. He exemplified black power in achievement and he organized black power in action. It was no abstract slogan to him.

We cannot talk of Dr. Du Bois without recognizing that he was a radical all of his life. Some people would like to ignore the fact that he was a Communist in his later years. It is worth noting that Abraham Lincoln warmly welcomed the support of Karl Marx during the Civil War and corresponded with him freely. In contemporary life the Englishspeaking world has no difficulty with the fact that Sean O'Casey was a literary giant of the twentieth century and a Communist or that Pablo Neruda is generally considered the greatest living poet though he also served in the Chilean Senate as a Communist. It is time to cease muting the fact that Dr. Du Bois was a genius and chose to be a Communist. Our irrational, obsessive anti-communism has led us into too many quagmires to be retained as if it were a mode of scientific thinking.

In closing, it would be well to remind white America of its debt to Dr. Du Bois. When they corrupted Negro history they distorted American history, because Negroes are too big a part of the building of this nation to be written out of it without destroying scientific history. White America, drenched with lies about Negroes, has lived too long in a fog of ignorance. Dr. Du Bois gave them a gift of truth for which they should eternally be indebted to him.

Negroes have heavy tasks today. We were partially liberated and then re-enslaved. We have to fight again on old battlefields, but our confidence is greater, our vision is clearer, and our ultimate victory surer because of the contributions a militant, passionate black giant left behind him.

Dr. Du Bois has left us but he has not died. The spirit of freedom is not buried in the grave of the valiant. He will be with us when we go to Washington in April to demand our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We have to go to Washington because they have declared an armistice in the war on poverty while squandering billions to expand a senseless, cruel, unjust war in Vietnam. We will go there, we will demand to be heard, and we will stay until the administration responds. If this means forcible repression of our movement, we will confront it, for we have done this before. If this means scorn or ridicule, we will embrace it, for that is what America's poor now receive. If it means jail, we accept it willingly, for the millions of poor already are imprisoned by exploitation and discrimination.

Dr. Du Bois would be in the front ranks of the peace movement today. He would readily see the parallel between American support of the corrupt and despised Thieu-Ky regime and Northern support to the Southern slave masters in 1876. The CIA scarcely exaggerates, indeed it is surprisingly honest, when it calculates for Congress that the war in Vietnam can persist for one hundred years. People deprived of their freedom do not give up- Negroes have been fighting more than a hundred years, and even if the date of full emancipation is uncertain, what is explicitly certain is that the struggle for it will endure.

In conclusion let me say that Dr. Du Bois' greatest virtue was his committed empathy with all the oppressed and his divine dissatisfaction with all forms of injustice. Today we are still challenged to be dissatisfied. Let us be dissatisfied until every man can have food and material necessities for his body, culture and education for his mind, freedom and until rat-infested, vermin-filled slums will be a thing of a dark past and every family will have a decent, sanitary house in which to live. Let us be dissatisfied until the empty stomachs of Mississippi are filled and the idle industries of Appalachia are revitalized. Let us be dissatisfied until brotherhood is no longer a meaningless word at the end of a prayer but the first order of business on every legislative agenda. Let us be dissatisfied until our brother of the Third World- Asia, Africa, and Latin America- will no longer be the victim of imperialist exploitation, but will be lifted from the long night of poverty, illiteracy, and disease. Let us be dissatisfied until this pending cosmic elegy will be transformed into a creative psalm of peace and "justice will roll down like waters from a mighty stream."

HISTORIC DOCUMENTS

- [Magna Carta](#)

- [The Letter of Columbus to Luis De Sant Angel Announcing His Discovery](#)
 - [The Mayflower Compact](#)
 - [Pennsylvania Charter of Privileges](#)
 - [Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Death](#)
 - [The Declaration of Independence](#)
 - [Articles of Confederation](#)
 - [Constitution of the United States](#)
 - [Bill of Rights and Later Amendments](#)
 - [Petition from the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery](#)
 - [To those who keep slaves, and approve the practice](#)
 - [Washington's Farewell Address](#)
 - [The Star Spangled Banner](#)
 - [The Monroe Doctrine](#)
 - [Harkins to American People](#)
 - [Daniel Webster's "Seventh of March" Speech](#)
 - [Lincoln's House Divided Speech](#)
 - [Lincoln's First Inaugural Address](#)
 - [The Emancipation Proclamation](#)
 - [Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address](#)
 - [The Gettysburg Address](#)
 - [The Pledge of Allegiance](#)
 - [The American's Creed](#)
 - [FDR's Infamy Speech](#)
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 - [Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You](#)
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EXHIBIT C

Trump becomes first president to skip MLK Day proclamation

Story by J.D. Wolf • 49m • (MSN.com January 19, 2026)

Donald Trump has become the first U.S. president since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established to not issue a proclamation honoring the federal holiday, breaking a tradition observed for nearly 40 consecutive years.

At the time of publication, there is no Martin Luther King Jr. Day proclamation from Trump posted on the White House's official website, its social media accounts, or in the Federal Register. These proclamations are usually signed days in advance of a holiday and even if Trump signed one late, his administration isn't making the proclamation public in a timely manner. Therefore, for all intents and purposes, Trump is skipping the presidential emphasis on the MLK holiday.

The absence marks a sharp departure not only from presidential precedent dating back to Ronald Reagan, but from Trump's own first term, during which he issued MLK Day proclamations every year from 2018 through 2021.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1983 and first observed as a federal holiday in 1986. In his 1986 proclamation, Reagan said, "Dr. King's activism was rooted in the true patriotism that cherishes America's ideals and strives to narrow the gap between those ideals and reality."

For 40 years, every president from Reagan through Joe Biden issued annual proclamations recognizing the holiday, making this year's omission unprecedented.

Ronald Reagan: "Dr. King's activism was rooted in the true patriotism that cherishes America's ideals and strives to narrow the gap between those ideals and reality."

The move aligns with a broader pattern from Trump and his administration that has deemphasized or rolled back federal recognition of civil rights observances. During Trump's first term, his administration removed both MLK Day and Juneteenth as fee-free entry days at national parks, replacing them with alternative dates including Flag Day on June 14, Trump's birthday.

At the time, the Department of the Interior described the new list excluding the MLK holiday as a list of “patriotic fee-free days.” Additionally, last year, Trump removed the MLK bust that has been in the Oval Office for years.

Trump’s record also stands in stark contrast to King’s legacy. Legislation inspired by King’s civil rights activism, the Fair Housing Act signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, was later used by the federal government to sue Trump and his father for discriminatory housing practices against Black renters in the 1970s.

Meanwhile, Trump’s MAGA movement has become more hostile towards King and have increasingly attacked the civil rights leader’s legacy outright. Charlie Kirk, founder of Turning Point USA and a major promoter of Trump’s campaigns, argued that King was a “bad guy” unworthy of a federal holiday or statues and has labeled the Civil Rights Act a “mistake.”

TPUSA, his organization now led by Erika Kirk, has removed MLK-related merchandise from its stores, and Kirk was rewarded with an Air Force Academy Board of Visitors appointment under Trump and given the medal of freedom posthumously.

Taken together, the absence of an MLK Day proclamation, after four decades of uninterrupted presidential recognition, represents not just a symbolic omission, but a calculated choice, a clear political statement that MLK and his fight for equality and justice and his opposition to white supremacy and bigotry have no place in Trump’s current MAGA movement.