

The unfinished mission of Martin Luther King

by EIR Staff

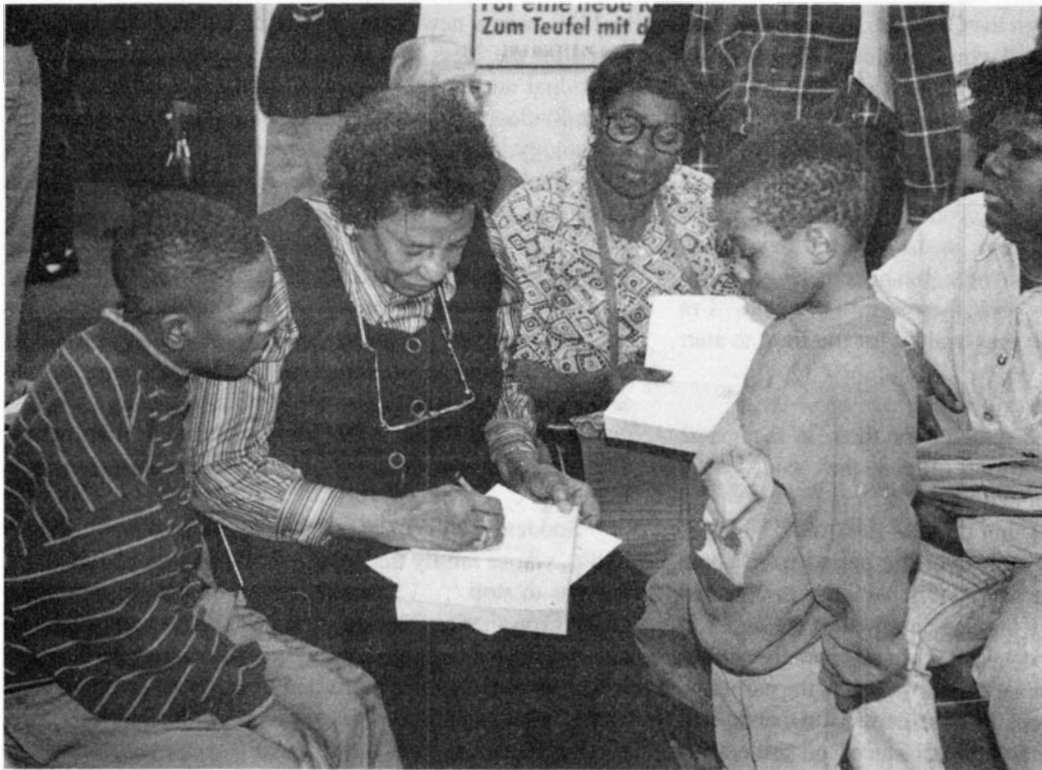
In a series of conferences and theatrical performances in Washington, D.C. during the month of January, the Schiller Institute celebrated the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by rallying forces for the next stage of the fight for economic development and civil rights for all people. "We are not here to reminisce," said institute representative Lynne Speed to a meeting on Jan. 16, held at the D.C. mayor's office building. "We are here to find strength in the history of what has been achieved and to continue to expand that achievement."

The institute sponsored a Martin Luther King Conference on Jan. 18, the fifth in a series of national conferences on economic development and the science of physical economy. On Jan. 14, more than 1,700 people attended a performance at Howard University of the play *Through the Years*, written in 1936 by Schiller Institute Vice Chairman Amelia Boynton Robinson, a heroine of the civil rights movement who catalyzed Dr. King's intervention into Selma, Alabama in 1964 (see interview, p. 17).

Economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche, addressing the Martin Luther King Conference, emphasized that during the next 18 months, we are facing a turning point in world history. "The conflict between good and evil," he said, "the impulse for progress and the impulse for the satanic, oligarchical tradition of the gods of Olympus, are in a conflict, and they can no longer peacefully, pragmatically, cohabit the same planet. The system in its present form is doomed; and therefore, the opportunity exists to introduce a change. These are going to be times of trouble, times in which not only institutions will collapse, but *ideas* will collapse."

To address the question of how this crisis is to be solved, LaRouche painted five images, starting with that of Martin Luther King himself.

"I want to bring Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King back to life, in a sense," LaRouche began, "in the sense that there is a part of him I probably know better than many people who were close to him while he walked the Earth. I never had the chance to speak to him, never even the chance to shake his hand, though I



Amelia Boynton Robinson, a friend and collaborator of Dr. King, autographs copies of her autobiography, "Bridge Across Jordan," in Chicago, in February 1994. The message of Dr. King's movement was to create justice and economic development for all people, worldwide. As vice chairman of the Schiller Institute, Mrs. Robinson is continuing that fight today.

lived through the same events through which he lived. And yet, I know him in some ways better than most of the people who were close to him, because I know his *development*. I know a transformation from a dedicated young preacher coming out of Atlanta going to Boston, coming out of Boston University, going from there to take up a parish, then being elevated by a happenstance, almost, to assume a position of leadership, and going through succession of crisis after succession of crisis. . . .

"In making the last public address of his life, in reflecting upon the cup of Gethsemane, he walked to the podium, before thousands of people, and said, 'I am drinking the cup. I wish to live, but I am drinking the cup.' And he laid forth a mission.

"The difference between Martin and many other people who might envy his position, is that they don't understand one thing: that they would have had to give up something in themselves, *a reluctance in themselves*, to make each of those successive steps by which he stepped upward. Faced with a challenge from which many people would pragmatically have retreated, he moved ahead. He found the next higher level of action to carry out. And he not only decided to carry it out, because many of his associates also decided to carry out the action with him; but what he decided, was *to present the conception of the action to the people in ways that the people would grasp the idea*.

"In this way, Martin Luther King, coming from leadership of an obscure church in Alabama to national leadership

and to his assassination, showed the same quality we recognize as that of genius in science. The difference between Martin and many other people, is that he was a genius. He probably didn't know it at the beginning, but he found it out in each of the steps that he had to take in order to keep the movement going.

"It wasn't just the steps of personal courage; a lot of other people showed personal courage. They moved their body forward. They went out and organized, and they moved their body forward in that way. *But they didn't move their mind forward*; Martin was the instrument who did that for them."

What Dr. King was doing in general, LaRouche added, was not new. "The civil rights movement was not a creation of the late 1950s and 1960s. The civil rights movement has existed as long as there was slavery in the United States. There was always somebody fighting for the same thing; and the level of fight against slavery in the middle of the nineteenth century, was on a higher intellectual level in many respects, than was the fight for civil rights in the twentieth century."

The difference was that Martin "typified for the movement *the message* of the movement. And the message of the movement was a call to Americans and people around the world, to create a condition of justice for all persons by [the 1964 Civil Rights Bill], and not to stop with civil rights."

The ticket to progress

But then what happened?

"As I've said many times, after Johnson passed the Civil

Rights law, or got it through the Congress, people were told that civil rights had won, had won something, anyway. And you could get a ticket, you could get a ticket to progress, because that's what Martin was talking about. . . . So the people got their tickets. They were surprised to have them given to them at the train station, like railroad tickets. And they got on the train. And they could sit in the front or the back or the middle of the train, as they chose, they found; with some argument here and there, but nonetheless, in principle, they could. So they took their seat. They said, 'I'm sitting on my rights.' And they waited for the train to start moving.

"It never moved.

"The dust gathered and settled upon them. A man came through who looked like a train official, they said, 'What happened? When's the train going?'

"The railroad was just shut down—1968-69. There had been a cultural paradigm shift over the period from about 1966 through 1968, a paradigm shift which was centered within the extreme radical movements within the anti-war movement and around it. That cultural paradigm shift changed this nation from a nation committed to the participation of the citizen in the benefits of scientific and technological progress. Instead, what was introduced on the cutting edge of politics, was neo-malthusian post-industrial society, and 'don't be stuck with your own sex, change it at pleasure,' things like that."

The second image that LaRouche presented throws this paradigm shift into sharp relief, describing the current situation in Washington:

"There's a building in this city which is occupied by an institution called the Heritage Foundation, sometimes called the Heretic Foundation. And in this institution, there is a Clockwork Orange facility where they turn elected congressmen into zombies. From this building recently, there emerged a crowd of these glassy-eyed, chanting zombies, marching like the Night of the Living Dead down the streets, toward the Longworth Building on Capitol Hill. And in the front of the procession, there was a knuckle-dragging specimen called Rush 'Bozo' Limbaugh, bumping his knuckles along the street as he led them to intellectual purity in the basement of the Longworth Building.

"These are called the 'neo-conservatives.' Now, these are not going to be very popular people, because they're the first burglars that ever stole grand amounts of money without using burglar tools. They're privateers."

But they can be defeated, LaRouche said, provided we have a clear idea of who they are and what they represent. They are an *instrument* of something that is evil, LaRouche said, developing his third image, the image of all mankind prior to the fifteenth century in Europe. This is oligarchism, in which more than 95% of humanity lived in a condition of slavery, prior to the Renaissance. But what the Renaissance introduced, through the influence of the Council of Florence

in 1439, was a new form of state called a commonwealth, based on the idea, as Louis XI of France put it, that the individual must live for the kind of society which lives for the individual. As a result of the development of science and technology, there was a fundamental change in society's demographic characteristics, and the growth of population zoomed over the past 500 years.

The collapsing world financial system

The fourth image that LaRouche developed is that of the collapsing world system. We no longer have a commitment to scientific and technological progress, to education, he said. "For over 500 years, the general trend in European civilization has been technological progress, until about 1960-65. That was the policy of the United States, from its founding. . . .

"Suddenly, someone comes along from England, Prince Philip, whose family tree is full of monkeys, and says, 'No, this has to stop.' . . . Since about the middle of the 1960s, about 1966, under Johnson, there was a reversal: the introduction of what was called the cybernetic society, or the post-industrial society. And since that time, by 1971, the United States' net expenditure for basic economic infrastructure, was net negative. That is, we spent *less* in maintaining and improving infrastructure, than the cost of maintaining it in its previous state. We've lost railroads, we've lost water systems, we've lost urban systems. Our cities are junkpiles. Why? Because we did not restore, renew, replenish, replace, the things that we were using up."

A personal challenge

In his fifth, concluding image, LaRouche developed "Martin Luther King's idea": that all people are created in the image of God, and that the policy of society must be brought into accord with that fact.

"The moment of truth is approaching," he said. "And when we look at Martin, we remember him not only for his ideas, but we remember him for that which made him a leader, and we try to find in ourselves the equivalent quality.

"When you are faced with a challenge, with the threat of defeat, do you, like Sancho Panza, go practical on us, and do you concern yourself only with your own personal position; *or* do you bring that within you, that creative power which is the distinguishing power of man in the image of God, and do you apply it to the problem that we face, to participate in developing the ideas which, given circulation, can give a movement the identity it requires to do the job which it is destined to do, and must do?

"Can you find in yourself some of that quality of Martin? Can you develop and purify yourself, to find in yourself, something of that quality of Martin, rather than Sancho Panza? If you can, if enough can, then we can win. And the time has come to win. And the time for preparation is growing very short."