



## **BlackEconomics.org**

### **“No Longer a Credible Threat”**

The 2019 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was preceded and followed by many commentators highlighting the lingering inequities that Black Americans and poor people face in the US. They recall Dr. King’s struggle to equalize America, and his nonviolent action efforts that were designed to motivate change. They note that because of Dr. King, the people who supported him, and other events of the day, the US government was motivated to enact laws that pointed toward greater equality: improved education, housing, voting rights, and economic opportunity. While not perfect, Dr. King is venerated because by many measures he was successful in achieving much of what he and other Black Americans sought to achieve.

Unfortunately, not many commentators have explored Dr. King’s success. Which factors contributed to his success? There were a few key factors: (1) he was able to organize Black Americans successfully; (2) he captured the imagination of the American media and the wider American population; and (3) he gained support from the international press.

In our view, the latter two factors were secondary. The primary reason for Dr. King’s success was his ability, with help from those who supported him, to organize Black Americans successfully. By initiating a thrust for equality, he stimulated action on the part of a coalition of Black organizations with similar interests. These Black organizations did not all agree with Dr. King’s methods, but they “went along with the program.” This massive organizational effort and the cooperation that was realized, were sufficient to create a credible threat to the US Government and social system. We all know what J. Edgar Hoover said about Dr. King. Dr. King was a threat because of his ability to organize Black Americans who constituted the actual threat.

Fifty years later, the US Government has been careful to not allow any Black man, or any man who poses a credible threat to the American social system *status quo*, to rise. Accordingly, it has assured that Black Americans and poor people remain occupied with infotainment that keeps us blind or unconcerned about the increasing inequality in the nation.

Instead of finding joy in ownership, progress that is measured by growth, and greater control of our lives and areas of influence, we get high on food, sports, music, cars, sex, drugs, and alcohol. We seldom, if ever, think about organizing. If we do, we quickly dismiss the prospect with the conclusion that it cannot be done. We know too well about infiltrators and others means that are used to squelch organizational efforts. Our willingness to resign ourselves to the *status quo* is unfortunate.

We are moving deeper into the 21<sup>st</sup> century where AI, other technologies, and the extension of the police state are making it increasingly difficult to organize for change. The US Government is comfortable with that. Last month, we reviewed a newly released Government Accountability Office report entitled, “National Security, Long Range Emerging Threats Facing the United States as Identified by Federal Agencies.” Keeping a long story short, it is sufficient to say that Black American social or other actions are not listed as a threat. Simply put, Black America has become an insignificant afterthought for the nation. We are so well programmed and controlled that we have become unimportant to think about—let alone to warrant changes in political, social, or economic policies that will produce improved outcomes for us.

If Dr. King were alive today, his saddest realization would be that we have become so disorganized, and that we do not constitute a threat to the nation’s *status quo*. If anyone understood the path to progress, he did. He knew that progress could be made as long as we were a credible threat. So, as we move through 2019 and toward the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, let us all work to ensure that we help motivate change and improvements in our outcomes by becoming and remaining a credible threat: individually and collectively.

B.B. Robinson  
01/21/2019  
### --- ###