

Where Martin Luther King, Jr., Was Going:
Where Do We Go From Here
and the Traumas of the Post-Selma Movement

BY DAVID J. GARROW

THE fall of 1966 was as politically trying and discouraging a period as any that Martin Luther King, Jr., had experienced in the ten and one-half years that he had been publicly involved in the American black freedom struggle. Reaching all the way back to December 5, 1955, when the twenty-six-year-old minister had been drafted by his colleagues to serve as the black community's principal spokesperson in a newly initiated boycott of the racially-segregated public buses of Montgomery, Alabama, the intervening decade had witnessed a remarkable string of triumphs: the December 1956 victory in the year-long Montgomery boycott; the 1960 sit-in movement against segregated dime-store lunch counters all across the South; the terror-ridden but ultimately successful Freedom Rides of 1961 aimed at desegregating interstate bus facilities throughout the South; the internationally newsworthy mass demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, in the spring of 1963, which had directly prodded President John F. Kennedy to put before Congress the landmark legislation that one year later would be passed into law as the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and the strategically brilliant voter registration protests in early 1965 in Selma, Alabama, which led directly to congressional passage of the powerful Voting Rights Act of 1965.

From the vantage point of the summer of 1965, the racial reforms that the civil rights movement had won for black southerners were an impressive list of achievements indeed. But in the course of little more than one year's time, from that summer to November of 1966, when he began work on his last book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, a series of

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painful experiences brought home to King how extremely difficult his post-Selma political struggles would be. For some time before the fall of 1966, King had begun to realize that the second decade of the struggle would prove far more difficult than had the first. He had become increasingly aware that economic inequality and injustice would prove far harder to combat than formal segregation and discrimination and, by the summer of 1964, when black rioting struck both Harlem and Rochester, New York, he saw that meaningful change for northern ghetto residents would be much more difficult to attain than the legal demise of southern segregation.

But the first dramatic indication of how challenging the future would be came only eight days after the Voting Rights Act was signed into law with the violent mid-August eruption of Watts, Los Angeles' black ghetto. Although King was deeply shaken by both the physical devastation and the emotional desolation that he witnessed when he visited the area several days later, he spoke out even more forcefully about the underlying conditions that had produced the rebellion than against the futile violence itself.¹ "It was a class revolt of underprivileged against privileged," he told reporters, involving thousands of jobless people for whom "the main issue is economic" and who had been "bypassed by the progress of the past decade." Only if America took meaningful action to tackle economic privation in the northern ghettos could even more massive eruptions be avoided in the future.²

The second struggle that troubled King concerned America's intensifying involvement in the war in Vietnam. King had been uncomfortable with much of America's foreign policy and military armaments for most of the decade, but his winning of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize significantly strengthened his sense of responsibility in championing the application of nonviolence to international as well as domestic disputes.³ As early as March 1965, King was speaking out against America's war in Vietnam,

¹See Bayard Rustin's important description of King's reaction as quoted in David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1986), 439.

²*Ibid.*, 440.

³*Ibid.*, 104, 114 (concerning nuclear weapons and disarmament) and 118, 224 (regarding Africa).



The signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law (above) was among Martin Luther King, Jr.'s greatest triumphs. But new concerns, doubts, and challenges emerged to make the next year a traumatic one for him. *Photograph from the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.*

but by the late summer of 1965 he was increasing his public remarks about the war, and calling for direct negotiations with the Viet Cong in order to win a speedy settlement.⁴ However, when Democratic party loyalists began to denounce King's criticisms of the war and his implicit opposition to the priorities of President Lyndon B. Johnson, King decided he had no choice but to "withdraw temporarily" from public comment on the war because of the mushrooming political criticism that otherwise would ensue. His private sentiments about the immorality of America's war policy remained strong, however, and his relative public silence on Vietnam throughout the balance of 1965 and all of 1966 weighed more and more heavily on King's conscience as time passed.⁵

⁴*Ibid.*, 394, 422, 428-30, 436-39.

⁵*Ibid.*, 445-46, 449-50, 453, 458-61, 469-72.

King's uppermost concern during the fall of 1965 and the winter of 1965-66, however, was his need, and the need of his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), to undertake a meaningful initiative against urban black privation in a northern city. King and his aides had considered a number of possibilities during mid-1965, but by September and October the SCLC had settled firmly on Chicago as its target city and SCLC staffers began planning a major 1966 campaign in conjunction with local Chicago civil rights activists. By January, King's aides were ready for the public presentation of a campaign blueprint that emphasized the block-by-block creation of tenants' organizations—"unions to end slums"—which could tackle the ghetto's substandard, overpriced housing, the lack of jobs for ghetto residents, and the low-quality, overcrowded, and thoroughly segregated public schools, which were a potential dead end for tens of thousands of Chicago's black children.

Throughout the spring of 1966, however, the SCLC's Chicago staffers and their local allies learned the hard way that the difficulties of sustained, large-scale urban grassroots organization-building were far greater than they had envisioned, and perhaps insuperable. As the midsummer months progressed, the SCLC's efforts shifted away from the ghettos toward a more tactically familiar series of protest marches held in all-white areas of Chicago, intended to break down the segregated real estate practices that barred black tenants and home buyers from scores of Chicago neighborhoods. Neither King nor his aides were surprised when the peaceful demonstrations were greeted by hostile and sometimes violent white opposition, but the tactical success of these initiatives created a serious law enforcement crisis for Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley, whose police officers found themselves protecting King's marchers from many of Daley's own political supporters in white ethnic neighborhoods. In conjunction with the city's liberal church leadership, which had initially endorsed King's Chicago efforts, the Daley administration succeeded in persuading King and his local allies to sit down at a "summit conference" with a hurriedly drafted set of policy change demands to which Daley could then respond. After a series of meetings, movement negotiators came to the

reluctant conclusion that an extensive list of paper promises to eliminate segregationist practices and discriminatory policies from city government, and from other Chicago associations such as the Real Estate Board, was the best that the Chicago movement could achieve. A slightly ambivalent King agreed, and the Chicago campaign came to an effective end, although there was some public and much private complaint that the settlement actually represented far less than King wanted to believe it did.⁶ When the ensuing weeks witnessed an apparent news media consensus that King's Chicago efforts had fallen short of success, King himself became "greatly disturbed," as one close Chicago friend put it, by the widespread perception that he had failed.⁷

On top of the Chicago events, King's summer months had witnessed another struggle—one even more tense, public, and painful—involving the firestorm of debate that had sprung up around the new battle cry of "Black Power." Although the phrase itself was not totally new in 1966, its repeated usage by militant young SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) activists Willie Ricks and Stokely Carmichael during the latter stages of the June 1966 Meredith March in Mississippi had created as serious a public relations crisis as any King had encountered. King had immediately appreciated the political danger that the new slogan represented, and had stated when the new call was only four days old, that "the term 'black power' is unfortunate because it tends to give the impression of black nationalism."⁸ The more serious problem, however, was the widespread belief, encouraged by the extensive news coverage devoted to the new term and its users, that "Black Power" also represented a rejection of nonviolence.

In his public statements King sought to highlight the desirable connotations of "Black Power," especially pride in one's race and skin color, while simultaneously rejecting any and all suggestions that the phrase meant either the end of nonviolence's dominance within the black movement or a significant surge toward black separatism. In late July, King and the SCLC

⁶See *ibid.*, 501-23, for a far more detailed account of these negotiations; 524, 527-30.

⁷Edwin C. "Bill" Berry, in *ibid.*, 530.

⁸*Ibid.*, 473-82.

placed a paid ad in the *New York Times*, explicitly calling "Black Power" an "unwise" choice of words that had proven "dangerous and injurious" to the movement and optimistically asserting that the popularity of the phrase would "rapidly diminish."⁹ The next several months disproved King's prediction. By mid-October, worried both by the growing rifts within the black community that had placed SNCC and CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality) at loggerheads with the NAACP and the National Urban League, and by angry signals from white America such as the Democratic gubernatorial primary victory of racist candidate Lester Maddox in Georgia, King was increasingly depressed about the political situation and wondered whether a more forthright denunciation of "Black Power" might somehow help matters. After intense discussions with his closest advisors, King decided that "Black Power" was already drawing too much popular attention and that a further attack on it would only exacerbate matters. Instead of debating "Black Power," King told reporters, emphasis ought to be placed on the fact that "America's greatest problem and contradiction is that it harbors 35 million poor at a time when its resources are so vast that the existence of poverty is an anachronism." When press coverage of his remarks nonetheless portrayed him as fully endorsing an anti-"Black Power" statement that had been issued by the NAACP and the National Urban League, King was forced to issue a potentially confusing clarification that drew even more attention to the unwanted controversy.¹⁰

Thus four major setbacks—black riots, beginning with Watts; the moral trauma of Vietnam; the perceived failure of the Chicago campaign; and the debilitating debate over "Black Power"—had staggered but not stopped Martin Luther King, Jr., in the fifteen months between August 1965 and November 1966. Gradually he was moving toward an explicit decision that issues of economic justice would be the main focal point of his future work. Economic inequality had long troubled King; even

⁹*Ibid.*, 491-92, 497.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 532-34.



SCLC efforts in Chicago in early 1966 pointed up numerous difficulties of bringing the "movement" to the urban North. Those problems were in part the inspiration for King, shown above speaking to a Chicago crowd in May, to write his final book. *Photograph courtesy of the Chicago Sun-Times.*

when still in graduate school he had manifested explicit discomfort with the maldistribution of wealth generated by American capitalism. He had touched on the theme in his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom* (1958), but his exposure to the economic realities of black Chicago during 1966 had significantly intensified King's concern that meaningful economic opportunity simply did not exist for tens of thousands of Americans, particularly black Americans.¹¹ The Chicago experience had heightened King's commitment to economic equality, but the end results of that campaign, like the other events of 1965-1966, left him with no special optimism that significant change could quickly be won.

Political pessimism aside, what King most needed in the fall of 1966 was a respite from his wearying daily schedule of travels

¹¹*Ibid.*, 43, 46; Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (New York, 1958), 90, 93-94.

and speeches and the opportunity for serious reflection on the strategic choices that lay ahead. The SCLC also needed such an opportunity, and in early November King called a three-day, full-staff retreat for November 13-15, on South Carolina's St. Helena Island.¹² King's preparations for his major speech to his staff—given on Monday evening, November 14—forced him to sit down and begin some of the serious reflection that he wanted to pursue at greater length during December and January. It also allowed him to begin mulling over a thought that had been in his mind since at least early July, when his long-time friend and advisor Stanley Levison had broached it to him: that perhaps the time was right for King to publish another book, that perhaps a comprehensive treatment of the movement's post-Selma evolution would be helpful both for King and for his potential readers.¹³ In the end, what began as a two-stage draft outline for the November 14 speech also became the initial outline for a book and supplied the volume's title: *Where Do We Go From Here*.

In his initial handwritten notes for that speech, King set down his starting point: "Introduction: From whence we have come; Where we are now; where do we go from here."¹⁴ This was not the first time that King had used that final phrase; earlier it had served as the title of the penultimate chapter in King's first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*.¹⁵ In the speech itself, King sought to explain to his staff that political progress cannot be attained without periods of setbacks and false starts, but that with the movement now making demands for economic justice and raising "class issues," resistance would be all the more intense. At the heart of things, King told his aides, "we are saying that something is wrong with the economic system of our nation . . . something is wrong with capitalism . . . there must be a

¹²See Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 536.

¹³*Ibid.*, 490.

¹⁴Two successive outlines of the speech exist. The first, a six-page, single-spaced draft handwritten on paper from a stenographic notebook, was then typed up double-spaced on four sheets of paper and in turn further annotated in handwriting by King. Copies in Garrow's personal files.

¹⁵King, *Stride Toward Freedom*, 189.

better distribution of wealth, and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism."¹⁶

What King would say within the quasi-private confines of an SCLC staff retreat went beyond what he would say before news cameras, but the emphasis on economic justice remained in the front of his mind as he gave more thought to the book project and, with Stanley Levison's help, prepared a formal statement of testimony for an invited appearance before a U.S. Senate subcommittee on urban affairs. On December 13, two days before his Senate appearance, the SCLC issued a statement saying that King would be taking a two-month leave of absence from organizational responsibilities in order to devote full time to a book.¹⁷

Like his speech at the staff retreat, King's Senate testimony, which advocated that the federal government guarantee a minimum annual income for the poor, served as a précis for the upcoming book. Although in his testimony he spoke of "inequality" and "relative standing" rather than "class issues" and "democratic socialism," King's position was clear. "The attainment of security and equality for Negroes has not yet become a serious and irrevocable national purpose. I doubt that there ever was a sincere and unshakable commitment to this end," he maintained, even at those times when white America had been most outraged by the segregationist violence of Birmingham and Selma. To date, he said, "the civil rights movement has too often been middle-class oriented," and had done far too little that spoke to "the deep despair and the deep frustration and the deep sense of alienation" that devastated the lives of tens of thousands of black Americans trapped in urban ghettos.¹⁸

Except for one brief trip to Chicago, King spent the two weeks of the Christmas holiday season following his Senate appearance resting at home and making plans to get away for all

¹⁶Transcript of November 14, 1966 address, p. 19, Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers, Series III, Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, Ga. (hereinafter cited as King Papers).

¹⁷*New York Times*, December 14, 1966, 42; *Bearing the Cross*, 539.

¹⁸The testimony appears in full in U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Government Operations, *Federal Role in Urban Affairs: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization*, 89th Congress, 2nd session, 2967-99. For press coverage of King's testimony, see *Washington Post*, December 16, 1966, A1, and *New York Times*, December 16, 1966, 33.

of January and February in order to concentrate on the book.¹⁹ In New York Stanley Levison, along with King's long-time literary agent, Joan Daves, made arrangements for publication with Harper & Row and secured the free-lance editorial assistance of Hermine I. Popper, who had worked extensively on King's book manuscripts ever since *Stride Toward Freedom*.²⁰ They planned on King's having a complete first draft of the manuscript ready by the second week of February, and on January 3, King, accompanied by his regular traveling partner, Bernard Lee, flew to Los Angeles to try to begin sustained work on the book in the relative solitude of the Hyatt House Motel. Developments in New York concerning anti-Vietnam War initiatives and the political controversy engulfing long-time Harlem congressman Adam Clayton Powell repeatedly interrupted King, and by the time he returned east eight days later, he had made little headway on the book.²¹

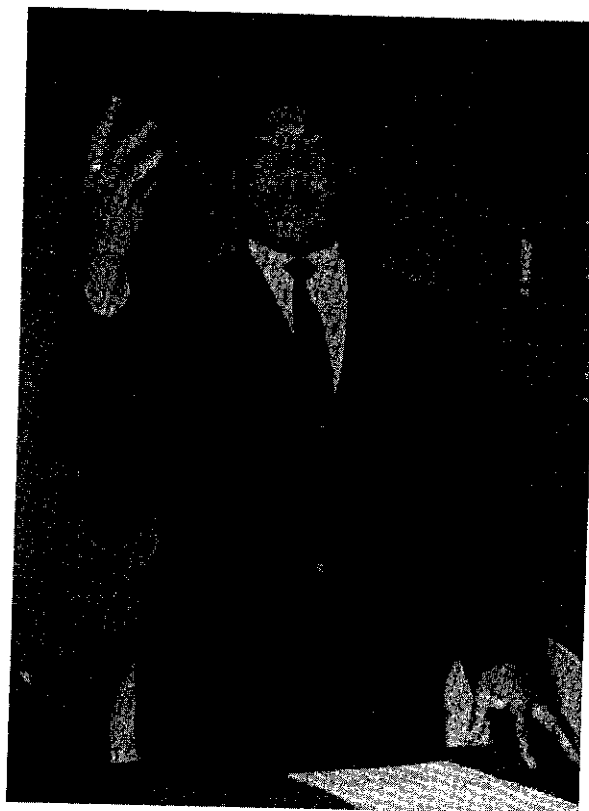
After brief visits to New York and Atlanta, King and Lee flew to Jamaica on January 14 for the serious escape from daily interruptions that King had wanted for over a month. King took with him several suitcases full of books, journals, and other potential reference material, and quickly settled in at the sparsely furnished Ocho Rios home—"Villa LaSano," owned by Dr. Percy Jayse, an English surgeon—that had been rented for his one-month stay. With no phone in the house, King was able to get down to work on the manuscript, writing out page after page by hand. A few days after King and Lee arrived, King's devoted personal secretary, Dora McDonald, arrived from Atlanta to begin typing King's manuscript.²² Chapter 1—an introductory statement entitled "Where Are We"—came out at thirty-one manuscript pages, but the second chapter, King's treatment of Black Power, proved far more time-consuming and ended

¹⁹Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 541.

²⁰See Marie Rodell to Joan Daves, December 19, 1966, Hermine I. Popper Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass., Folder 17. Popper, a 1936 Radcliffe graduate who was born in New York City in 1915, had worked for *Theatre Arts Magazine* (1936-48) and as an assistant editor at Harper & Row (1953-56) before becoming a full-time free-lance editor. She outlived King by hardly seven months, passing away on November 18, 1968, in White Plains, N.Y.

²¹Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 541-42.

²²*Ibid.*, 542-43; "MLK's Tropic Interlude," *Ebony* (June 1967), 112-19.



After the political triumphs of 1964 and 1965, King came to take a far more critical stance toward America's economic injustices and the federal government's failure to deal with them, themes that dominate his *Where Do We Go From Here*. Photograph of King in 1966 courtesy of Amistad Research Center, New Orleans.

up being considerably longer—seventy-four pages in McDonald's typescript—than King had envisioned.²³

Parts of the writing came relatively easily for King, for, with the aid of the research materials he had brought along, he was able to set down passages that he had used so often in his speeches and sermons that he knew them by heart. Occasionally this practice caused unintended problems of repetition for him, as he recognized and apologized for in an early February letter

²³Popper Papers, Folders 23 and 24.

to Popper after McDonald's typescripts of the early chapters had been mailed to Popper, Levison, and Daves in New York. "In one section," King wrote, "I made a definite literary mistake which I am aware of. I lifted a great deal of what I had said in the last chapter of *Why We Can't Wait* [King's previous book of 1964] because I felt it was so relevant at this point. We will either have to quote it directly or re-word it."²⁴

As Popper went through the typescripts of King's drafts, she not only eliminated language that too closely paralleled comments King had made in *Why We Can't Wait* or in *Stride Toward Freedom*, but also did a considerable amount of rewording, virtually all of which appeared in the final text of the book.²⁵ In addition, in some places, such as chapter 5, Popper reorganized King's initial materials while at the same time eliminating substantial amounts of text which she found repetitive.²⁶ Although even a painstaking reader of the original typescript would be hard pressed to argue that Popper's newly chosen wordings introduced any substantive alterations in or additions to King's text, on at least some occasions the extensive deletions that she made deprived eventual readers of the final version of the book of some of the richness and detail that King had originally wanted to present to his audience. Perhaps the most important example is the following extract from the initial draft of chapter 5, beginning at page 21 of the original typescript and corresponding to the much abbreviated two paragraphs that now appear on the lower half of page 157 of the book. Although virtually all of what appears in the book's text was also present in King's initial draft, what was edited out, both in the forthrightness of its language and in its very personal commentary on accusations that had been directed at King himself, eliminated much of the meaning and poignancy of the passage:

While the existence of a militant morale is immensely important, a fighting spirit that is insufficiently organized can become useless and even hazardous. There are weaknesses in the organi-

²⁴King to Popper, n.d., *ibid.*, Folder 17.

²⁵See for example the typescript of chapter 2, *ibid.*, Folder 24. See also David L. Lewis, *King: A Critical Biography* (New York, 1970), 364.

²⁶See the twenty-seven-page initial typescript in Popper Papers, Folder 27; a similar copy is in Box 12, Series III, King Papers. Also note Popper's editing in the initial typescripts of chapters 3 and 4, Popper Papers, Folders 25 and 26.

zational life of the Negro which have not received adequate attention. Too many opportunities were unrealized in the past ten years to be ignored or to be attributed only to effective resistance. Negroes have defeated themselves on a number of fronts. Any mature analysis of contemporary events cannot avoid recognition of the frailties of Negro civil rights organizations. To attempt radical reform without adequate organization is like trying to sail a boat without sails and a rudder. Prominent among the significant weaknesses of our organizations is disunity and petty competition. Whenever a movement is too weak to fight its adversaries it tends to fight within its own ranks. I am not discussing differences of opinion which can be salutary and constructive. It is not dismaying that several tendencies have emerged in our movement. It would lack creativity and vitality if all sectors parroted the words of a few prominent leaders. I have never been sensitive to being called "De Lawd" by many younger activists denoting their healthy refusal to canonize me. I heard, even sympathized with and kept my silence when some older leaders described me as an "upstart," implying that the tendency of the press to give over-attention to me denigrated their long records of service. These are natural reactions and serve not alone to properly balance credit for achievement but keep a cult of personality from engulfing our movement and stultifying its motion and its inventive features.

The disunity that is destructive is that which embodies misrepresentation and distortion. When false rumors are circulated that some leaders have "sold out" to the power structure or are opportunistically making alliances with one or another major political party to gain individual advantage, the whole movement suffers. If the criticism is true it is not destructive: it is a necessary attack on weakness. But often such criticism is a reflex response to gain organizational advantage at the expense of another group. Too often a real achievement, instead of evoking universal commendation to imbue everyone with a sense of accomplishment, is condemned as spurious and useless. The victory is turned into a disheartening defeat for the less informed observer. Our enemies will adequately deflate our accomplishments; we need not serve them as eager volunteers.²⁷

By mid-February, when King, Lee, and McDonald left Ocho Rios and King stopped off to spend five more days working on the manuscript in the relative privacy of Miami's Dupont Plaza

²⁷*Ibid.*, Folder 27, 21-22. See also page 31 of the second, King Center typescript of chapter 5 (Box 12, Series III), which follows the truncated book text exactly.

Hotel, most of his work on chapters 1 through 4 had been completed. He was aiming to have a complete draft of all six chapters ready by March 1, but Popper, Levison, and Daves were all expressing some concern with the manuscript so far. Popper in particular was worried that some of the small manuscript additions that Levison had been giving her for insertion into King's text were incompatible with King's own remarks, but both Levison and King forcefully—and correctly—told Popper that no inconsistencies existed.²⁸ A quick New York airport meeting between King, Popper, Levison, and Daves resolved most of the editorial disagreements, and by the first week of March a full manuscript had been approved by Popper, retyped in full, and submitted to Harper & Row.²⁹

From that point on, as a copy editor prepared the manuscript for typesetting and as the proofs were readied and then corrected, very few alterations, either cosmetic or substantive, were introduced into Popper's edited text. One of the few, by an unknown hand, involved the depersonalization of a winsome story that appears in the second through fourth paragraphs of page 160 of the book. King's original draft, which had survived Popper's editing, related the story as one that had happened to himself rather than to an anonymous "local leader," as it appears in the final text:

²⁸Only three Levison additions to the book's text, perhaps made several weeks later, are presently identifiable: (1) three sentences at the very bottom of page 54 (beginning "I must make it clear . . .") and the very top of page 55; (2) two sentences (beginning "My answer . . .") at the start of the third paragraph on page 63; and (3) some fourteen lines (beginning "Though there . . .") starting with the fifth line of the first new paragraph on page 163. See Levison's three handwritten notes on these in the Popper Papers, Folder 25. Also, a three-paragraph addition to chapter 6 written by Andrew Young (beginning "There is the . . .") appears at the bottom of page 175 and the top of page 176; see the handwritten text in Popper Papers, Folder 28. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 544, and FBI New York Levison File wiretap log 100-111180-9-1221A, February 20, 1967, Garrow Papers, Schomburg Center, New York, N.Y.

²⁹That second-generation typescript, incorporating all of the editorial deletions and alterations Popper had made in the initial King-McDonald typescript, is available in two unlabeled folders in Box 12, Series III, King Papers. See Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 544-45, and Genevieve Young (Harper & Row) to Joan Daves, with four-page enclosure, March 9, 1967, Popper Papers, Folder 17. Apropos of King's usage of "socialism" in private but not in public, he and Levison discussed possibly using "socialized democrat" in the book. "I was trying to avoid the word 'socialism,'" King told Levison. "People have so many hangups to it and respond so emotionally and irrationally to it." FBI New York Levison File wiretap log 100-111180-9-1228A, February 27, 1967, Garrow Papers, Schomburg Center. The book itself (see page 187) ended up using "a socially conscious democracy."

I learned a lesson many years ago from two good friends who had come with another to Atlanta to confer with me at the airport. Before we could begin to talk, the porter sweeping the floor recognized me and drew me aside to talk about a matter that troubled him. After fifteen minutes passed, one of the two waiting for me bitterly said to his companion, "I am just too busy for this nonsense. To come a thousand miles and sit and wait while he talks to a porter is pretty insulting." The other replied, "When the day comes that he stops talking sincerely to porters, on that day I will not have time to come one mile to see him." When told of this conversation, I knew I was being told something I should never forget.³⁰

In the period between early March and the book's mid-June publication date, King did not have to concern himself with the book's progress. Instead he was preoccupied by his reintensified public opposition to America's involvement in Vietnam, a decision he had come to in Jamaica while he was working on the book. Beginning with a February 25 speech in Los Angeles and a March 25 address in Chicago, King denounced Lyndon Johnson's war policies with a vigor and a harshness that clearly outstripped his 1965 and 1966 criticisms. Culminating with his now-famous April 4 speech at New York's Riverside Church and his April 15 remarks at the massive Spring Mobilization demonstration against the war outside United Nations headquarters in New York, King's castigation of America's war policies went beyond what much of mainstream opinion—as reflected in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Life* magazine—was willing to accept from a black civil rights leader. Stung but not surprised by the barrage of criticism, King vowed to continue his opposition to the war at the same time that the SCLC was attempting to initiate a major new 1967 organizing campaign in Cleveland.³¹

On June 18 and 19 King began a round of media appearances—ABC's "Issues and Answers" and the Merv Griffin and Arlene Francis talk shows—to promote the publication of *Where*

³⁰See pages 26-27 of the chapter 5 transcript in Popper Papers, Folder 27, and pages 34-35 of the subsequent typescript—with the alterations marked in—in Box 12, Series III, King Papers.

³¹Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 543-63.

Do We Go From Here.³² The book itself devoted far less attention to the Vietnam War—only “six passing references,” one reviewer, Robert F. Drinan, reported³³—than King himself had been doing over the preceding four months, and the book’s discussions of America’s economic ills and injustices were generally couched in somewhat less harsh and forceful language than was the case with some of King’s extemporaneous speeches and sermons. Instead, reviewer reaction to the book often focused on one or both of two points: first, the sharp language that King directed at “Black Power”—“a slogan without a program,” “a nihilistic philosophy”³⁴—and, second, what Father Drinan termed “a certain weariness and bewilderment” in King’s outlook for the future.³⁵ Some reviewers commended King’s “stately faith and compelling hope” and praised his “moderate, judicious, constructive, pragmatic” tone,³⁶ but others concluded that the series of shocks that King and the movement had absorbed since 1965 had thrown him “into great confusion and doubt” and had resulted in a book that “seems to be groping for something which it never finds.”³⁷ The few reviewers who noted King’s appendix on “Programs and Prospects” were generally not impressed; historian Martin Duberman, writing in the *Washington Post*, gently complained about King’s tendency “to substitute rhetoric for specificity” and to speak in “stock generalities”; “his discussion of future prospects contains more exhortation than sustained analysis.”³⁸ By far the harshest appraisal of both the volume and its author was offered by journalist Andrew Kopkind in the *New York Review of Books*, who declared that King had been “outstripped by his times, overtak-

³²*Ibid.*, 567-68, and Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound* (New York, 1982), 543-44. Pre-publication excerpts from the book—“first serials”—appeared in *The Progressive*, June 1967, 13-17 (“A New Kind of Power,” drawn from pages 32-66 of chapter 2), and the *New York Times Magazine*, June 11, 1967, 26-27, 93-99, 102-103 (“Martin Luther King Defines ‘Black Power,’” drawn from pages 136-47, 159-61, and 148-57 of chapter 5).

³³*America*, July 22, 1967, 88-89. See, for example, Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York, 1967), 35, 182, 188.

³⁴King, *Where Do We Go From Here*, 18, 44.

³⁵*America*, July 22, 1967, 88-89.

³⁶Eliot Fremont-Smith, *New York Times*, July 12, 1967, 41; Milton R. Konvitz, *Saturday Review*, July 8, 1967, 29-30.

³⁷David Steinberg, *Commonweal*, November 17, 1967, 215-16.

³⁸*Washington Post Book World*, July 9, 1967, 1-2.

en by the events which he may have obliquely helped to produce.” King’s leadership in the movement had lost out to the proponents of Black Power and “he is not likely to regain command. Both his philosophy and his techniques of leadership were products of a different world, of relationships which no longer obtain and expectations which are no longer valid.” King’s book, Kopkind said, unfortunately reflected the fact that its author “had simply, and disastrously, arrived at the wrong conclusions about the world.”³⁹

Since 1967 most of the reactions to *Where Do We Go From Here* have been much less critical. Indeed, a consensus has emerged among King scholars that King’s increasingly harsh post-1965 views of America’s economic ills and governmental policy shortcomings are among the most important elements of his legacy for American citizens today.⁴⁰ Even if at times the

³⁹*New York Review of Books*, August 24, 1967, 3-6. In addition to the five additional reviews cited in notes 35 to 38 above, other reviews of *Where Do We Go From Here* include (in chronological order): *Kirkus Reviews*, April 15, 1967, 541; *Publishers Weekly*, April 24, 1967, 90; *Library Journal*, June 15, 1967, 2426 (Ruben F. Kugler); *Monterrey Peninsula Herald* (Calif.), June 17, 1967 (Bonnie Gartshore); *Milwaukee Journal*, June 18, 1967 (Paul E. Salsini); *Pueblo Star-Journal* (Colo.), June 18, 1967; *Fort Worth Press*, June 18, 1967 (Elton Miller); *Atlanta Inquirer*, June 24, 1967; *Books Today*, June 25, 1967, 6; *Washington Star*, June 26, 1967 (Paul Hathaway); *Augusta Chronicle* (Ga.), June 26, 1967 (Edna Herren); *Atlanta Constitution*, June 27, 1967 (Eugene Patterson); *Christian Science Monitor*, July 6, 1967, 7 (Geoffrey Godsell); *Booklist*, July 15, 1967, 1169; *New Yorker*, July 22, 1967, 88; *Christian Century*, August 23, 1967, 1070-71 (Richard Luecke); *New York Times Book Review*, September 3, 1967, 3, 26 (Gene Roberts); *Choice*, February 1968, 117; *Social Education*, February 1968, 183ff (August Meier); *Antioch Review*, Spring 1968, 117-28 (Bill Goode); and *Kliatt Paperback Book Guide*, April 1968. No doubt other unindexed reviews, principally in other newspapers during June and July 1967, exist as well. Reviews of the identical English edition, published in early 1968 by Hodder & Stoughton under the title *Chaos or Community*, include *New Statesman*, March 22, 1968, 384 (Edmund Ions); *Observer*, March 24, 1968, 28 (Mark Bonham Carter); *Punch*, April 3, 1968, 501-502 (Andrew Salkey); *The Economist*, April 6, 1968, 51-52; and *Times Literary Supplement*, April 18, 1968, 393-94.

⁴⁰See Vincent Harding, “The Land Beyond,” *Sojourners* 12 (January 1983):18-22; Harding, “Recalling the Inconvenient Hero: Reflections on the Last Years of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 40 (January 1986):53-68; Harding, “Beyond Amnesia: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Future of America,” *Journal of American History* 74 (September 1987):468-76; David J. Garrow, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: From Reformer to Revolutionary* (Los Angeles, 1984); Garrow, “Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Cross of Leadership,” *Peace and Change* 12 (Spring 1987):1-12; Garrow, “Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Spirit of Leadership,” *Journal of American History* 74 (September 1987):438-47, which also appears in longer form in Peter J. Albert and Ronald Hoffman, eds., *We Shall Overcome: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Freedom Struggle* (New York, 1990), 11-34. Extremely important to the study of King’s texts is the work of Professor Keith D. Miller; see his “Martin Luther King, Jr., Borrows a Revolution,” *College English* 48 (March 1986):249-65, and “Composing Martin Luther King, Jr.,”

edited text of *Where Do We Go From Here* does not totally reflect the entire vigor with which King criticized both America's war policies abroad and its deep-seated economic injustices at home in still-unpublished addresses such as that significant November 1966 speech to the SCLC staff, *Where Do We Go From Here* nonetheless remains far and away the best starting point in all of King's published writings for the reader who wants to reflect upon where King had come from and where he potentially was going.⁴¹

PMLA 105 (January 1990):70-82; also see Miller's additional comments in *College English* 49 (April 1987):478-80, and *PMLA* 105 (October 1990):1126-27, 106 (March 1991):307-308, (May 1991):530-31, as well as his major 1991 book, *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Sources* (New York). On the issue of King's academic plagiarism, see David J. Garrow, "How King Borrowed: Reading the Truth Between Sermons and Footnotes," *Washington Post*, November 18, 1990, C1, C5; and "Becoming Martin Luther King, Jr.—Plagiarism and Originality: A Roundtable" [articles, documents, and interviews], in *Journal of American History* 78 (June 1991):11-123.

⁴¹This essay originally was commissioned and composed in the spring of 1989, when Beacon Press, paperback publisher of *Where Do We Go From Here*, sought to issue a new edition of the book. Beacon warmly welcomed the introduction, and on May 30, 1989, King's own long-time literary agent, Joan Daves, informed Coretta Scott King that the introduction would "contribute a great deal to the understanding of Martin's work and his place in history, an understanding which younger people would not have without such a guiding introduction." Despite Daves's endorsement, no permission for issuance of such a new edition was forthcoming from Mrs. King, executrix of the King estate, during the balance of 1989. Repeated queries by Beacon elicited no explanation or response from Mrs. King or her Atlanta lawyer until November 21, 1990, when, in the immediate wake of widespread press discussion of King's academic plagiarism in his graduate school essays and doctoral dissertation, attorney Archer D. Smith III informed Beacon that "Mrs. King will not approve David Garrow's introduction."

The essay above is the original text of that introduction. It is not intended to be a fully comprehensive exegesis and analysis of *Where Do We Go From Here's* entire text—for such a full textual review in time ought to be provided by the ongoing work of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project—but were it not to appear now, opposition on the part of self-interested parties to free scholarly commentary and analysis might otherwise be allowed to score one small victory.

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