

Economics and Dr. King: collecting on the 'bad check.'



(AFP/AFP/Getty Images)

When Dr. King speaks of the 'bank of justice,' how can we get justice?

In today's economy the answer is: jobs for all who want them. Dr. King fervently defended this position:

"For the civil rights leaders, the fight for justice was not limited to providing equal voting rights for all Americans and abstaining from discriminatory practices against African Americans. A federally funded Job Guarantee program was a central theme articulated by Martin Luther King and Bayard Rustin (the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, and one of this year's recipients (posthumously) of the Presidential Medal of Freedom)."

-Professor Fadhel Kaboub, Denison University economist.

Can we afford jobs for all?

Gold standard thinking of pre-crisis economics said no, but the US is not under a gold standard and today the answer is yes.

"Unfortunately, mainstream economists have been successful in spreading their deficit phobia in Washington and have kept the U.S. from implementing one of the most socially and economically transformative policies since the New Deal program. The so-called 'sound finance' advocates (deficit hawks and deficit doves) fail to understand the meaning of financial sovereignty, recognize the difference between currency issuer and currency users, and accept the logical implications of the sectoral balance analysis."

-Professor Fadhel Kaboub, Denison University economist.

Making the economy too small and then blaming poor people is like giving two treats to three cats: one third will always go hungry, no matter what. Expecting anything else is what Dr. King called the '**bootstrap philosophy**' in which African Americans who found themselves in '**an island of poverty**' were expected to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps when they had no boots.

See sources and more at CantrellAvenue.com

Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) entails what Dr. King called for:

"a revolution in values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies."

What jobs will people do if jobs are to be had by all?

New kinds of employment relations will have to be conceived of. As Dr. King said:

"we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

Some sensible wealthy people like the economist John Maynard Keynes (though he did not particularly love the poor) realized what Dr. King pointed out, that

"I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be."

But most feel more secure continuing the logic, though more restrained in its expression thanks to the struggle led by Dr. King, of running society by the chain (credit scores, criminal records, and incarceration - replacing traditional racism), the whip (undemocratic workplaces with constant fear of unemployment-- a consequence of extreme materialism), and the sword (constant war and a war economy-- militarism). Overcoming this calls upon moral force, but also moral arguments to defeat the false economic arguments that protect the system of hierarchy and domination as did the false concept of race that was invented to try to rationalize slavery.

We Can Overcome.

The moral arguments of Dr. King and the demands of the March on Washington for *Jobs* and Freedom CAN be realized in practice. The theories denying it have failed spectacularly and the theories explaining how are well worked out. America can replace networks of prison with networks of jobs. We can allow those who have, through one path or another, come within the shelter of our sovereign protection to live in dignity and security. We can take care of our own.

See more at the economics links on CantrellAvenue.com