

How is the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. connected to a guaranteed income?

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BACKGROUND

- It is important to recognize MLK’s contribution to the history of a guaranteed income
- This history shows the connection between civil and economic rights
- It features his visionary strategies for addressing inequality and poverty
- It highlights a less known role in MLK’s fight for civil rights

METHODS

1. Collected and analyzed speeches, books, and essays by MLK related to economics and social welfare
2. Compared accounts of MLK’s interest in guaranteed income in autobiography and biographies
3. Reviewed secondary sources regarding MLK and a guaranteed income

WHAT LED MLK TO EMBRACE GUARANTEED INCOME?

- Achievements and limitations of Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Cost of Vietnam War disproportionately borne by Black communities
- Plight of Black urban poor in the US
- The Moynihan Report
- Henry George
- National Welfare Rights Organization

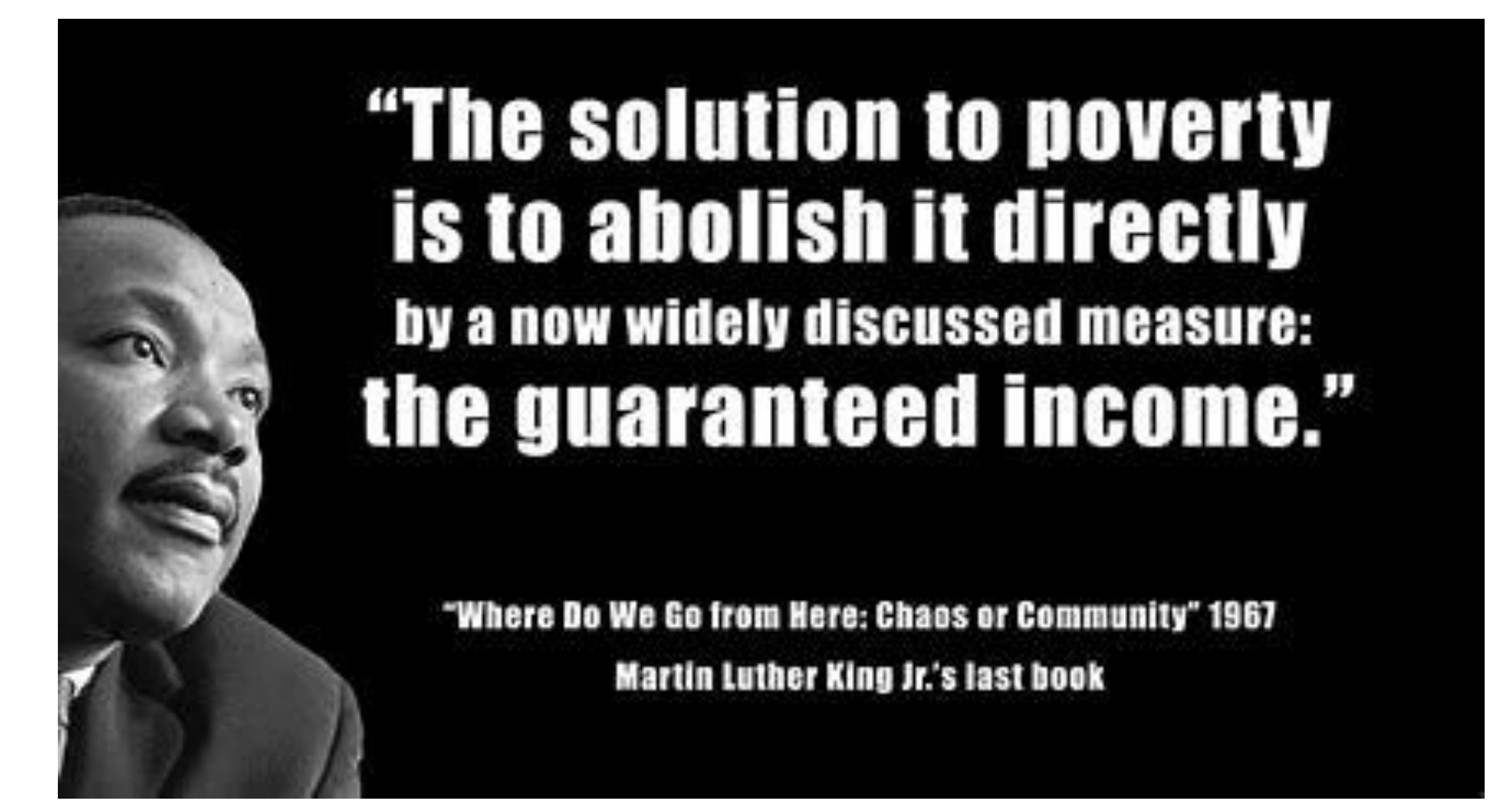
MLK advocated for a guaranteed income — but only as part of a wider anti-poverty agenda



MLK working with union leaders in the fight for more employment opportunities and helping oppressed workers



Martin Luther King Jr. conversing with Johnnie Tillmon and Ralph Abernathy, two guaranteed income advocates who worked with King



WORK OF MLK REGARDING GUARANTEED INCOME

- Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- National Welfare Rights Organization
- Operation Breadbasket/Poor People’s Campaign
- Unions/Education equality
- MLK advocated for a expansive set of anti-poverty and welfare programs, not just a guaranteed income

SCHOLARLY DISCUSSION

- MLK's advocacy for a guaranteed income was the result of many factors including The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, The Vietnam War, poor cities in the US, in addition to many other influences
- MLK saw guaranteed income as merely one aspect of a wider anti-poverty policy
- Supporters of basic income today should note that he did not see guaranteed income as a standalone economic cure



MLK giving his “Beyond Vietnam” Speech