

# King and Gandhi Kindred Spirits

By DREW PEARSON

WASHINGTON—During the summer of 1964 Dr. Martin Luther King came to my home to discuss the civil rights troubles in Mississippi and the question of solving them through a peaceful economic boycott. He talked of the tactics of Mahatma Gandhi, who had helped bring independence to India.

In many ways, King reminded me of Gandhi. The similarity seems even greater today.

I had gone to Gandhi's jail in Poona, during one of his frequent incarcerations by the British government because he was urging boycott against British goods. Lord Lloyd refused to let me in. He talked with mingled criticism and respect about the "spindly legged, little pain-in-the-neck to the British Empire."

That spindly legged little man was assassinated in 1948 by a Hindu fanatic. But he had already won his great goal—Independence for India.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, another staunch believer in nonviolence, will probably win more as a result of his violent death than he could have achieved in life.

He had been considered too reasonable, too pacific, by young Negro radicals. And just as the British aristocrats considered Gandhi a pain in the neck, so the Southern white establishment considered Martin Luther King.

They tolerated him, as a pacific, misguided trouble-maker, not realizing that the Negro revolution was moving

much faster than King himself—so fast that he could not keep it under control.

King's death, in the eyes of Negroes, culminates a long history of Southern violence in which they have been on the receiving end.

THOSE RESPONSIBLE for many of these murders went unpunished.

But recently there have been healthy improvements in the Negro's status in the South.

The Klan, after flaring up in strength, has subsided now. But the Negro's feeling of frustrated justice continues. And when he sees what happens in Congress, you can't blame him—the chopping back of the Headstart Program by \$27 million; the cut-back of health centers by \$27 million; legal services by \$9 million; Community Action by \$30 million; the Job Corps by \$10 million; the Neighborhood Youth Program by \$30 million, and the Work Experience Program by \$25 million.

Only last month every Republican on the House Rules Committee lined up behind Rep. William Colmer of Pascagoula, Miss., to bottle up the civil rights bill in order to give the real estate lobby time to swing votes against the open housing section of the bill.

REP. GERALD FORD of Michigan, the GOP House leader who has demonstrated his ability to line up Republican votes almost at will, did not lift a finger to change a

single vote. One vote change could have got the civil rights bill out of committee, but Ford did not lift that finger. It remains there as of today.

Perhaps, now that Martin Luther King is dead, it will be voted out.

Martin Luther King preached in the National Cathedral on the Sunday before he was killed. The cathedral's dean, Francis Sayre, grandson of Woodrow Wilson, and most of the clergymen in the nation's capital have been ahead of the rest of the nation on human rights. But for years the massive and ornate cathedrals of America were cold and aloof when it came to the plight of Negroes. They did not hold out a helping hand.

AND ONE OF THE LAST proposals of Martin Luther King was to permit welfare recipients to occupy the pulpits of Negro churches on May 5 to explain the plight of the poor.

Perhaps, if this last wish of Dr. King is now granted, the Congress of the United States, which has just seen the Senate rush through a big-profit bonanza for textile manufacturers in the form of import quotas, might also think more generously about health, education and welfare for those who never cut a coupon or cashed a stock dividend.

The lobbyists for iron, steel and oil have been waiting to pass more import quotas to help swell the profits of their industries. Martin Luther King, in death, could be the silent lobbyist to shame Congress regarding its action.