

SCLC Challenges FBI: 'Put Up or Shut Up' on King

ATLANTA (UPI) — The head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference says the FBI is still trying to discredit black leaders, and challenged the bureau to "put up or shut up" about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Joseph Lowery, president of the civil rights organization King founded, said yesterday the FBI should make public all its information about King and the SCLC, rather than blotting out the name of a black leader with whom the bureau allegedly conspired to ease King out of the movement.

"I find it incredible that any reputable black leader would engage in a conspiracy with the FBI to 'remove' Dr. King from the civil rights scene," Lowery said in an interview.

"Many, many of us feel that this may be another attempt on the part

of the FBI to raise serious doubts about black leadership and to shift the blame for Dr. King's tragic death from the FBI and racists to blacks," he said.

In Washington, the Center for National Security Studies recently made public files it obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, showing that the FBI sought to promote another black leader in place of King during the 1960s. The other black leader was not named.

Lowery said that if the FBI has the name, it should be released.

"I think further that no good purpose is served by the releasing of tidbits of information that cast shadows of doubts and cause speculation by black leaders," said Lowery. "The FBI, if they have substantive proof of such an involvement, either ought to put up or shut up."