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Harlem remembers Dr. King the fighter

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SLL photos: Stephen Millies

A hundred people braved cold winds to honor the fightback legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Harlem on Jan. 18. People gathered at the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building plaza.

A car caravan had earlier started from the Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X was allowed to be assassinated by the CIA and New York Police Department on Feb. 21, 1965. The event was organized by the People's United Front, a new activist coalition initiated by the People-Pueblo Party.



Roger Wareham of the December 12th Movement speaks at Harlem rally honoring Dr. King.

Starting off the rally was Roger Wareham, a member of the International Secretariat of the December 12th Movement. He pointed out how the wealthy and powerful have tried to “McDonaldize” King into a harmless ornament.

Wareham was at New York City’s Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, when King denounced the U.S. war against Vietnam. King was attacked for speaking out and, as Wareham said, told to “stay in his own lane.”

Exactly a year later, Dr. King would be assassinated in Memphis, Tenn.

The rally speakers stood next to the statue of the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell. In the 1930s, the future congressperson led marches in support of Ethiopia after it was invaded by the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

Later, as chairman of the Education and Labor Committee of the House of Representatives, Powell pushed through increases in the minimum wage. Racist members of Congress retaliated by expelling Powell in 1967 — just a few months before Dr. King spoke at Riverside Church.

Across from the rally was the building that housed the old Hotel Theresa, where Fidel Castro met with Malcolm X in 1960.

Police attack marchers

Other speakers at the rally included Betty Davis and Ralph Poynter from the New Abolitionist Movement. Both warned people not to trust the incoming Biden administration.

Baba Zayid Muhammad urged everyone to remember the political prisoners that are still being held in dungeons. He pointed out the case of 84-year-old Sundiata Acoli, who is now in his 47th year of imprisonment.

Acoli was arrested along with Assata Shakur, who is being protected by the people of Cuba from a \$1 million bounty placed on her head by the FBI.

Roger Wareham spoke later on the fight for reparations. He led the crowd in chanting “They stole us! They sold us! They owe us!”

Later that evening, New York cops arrested dozens of people near City Hall. People were [surrounded by the Strategic Response Group](#) goons almost immediately after they had marched across the Brooklyn Bridge.

This was the cops’ answer to being sued by New York State Attorney General Letitia James for their brutality during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

