

Rise Up Americans... Poem for Martin Luther King Day. MLK Stood Up against War and Racism

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Law and Justice](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Rise up! Rise up, Americans!

Too long have you delayed!

While imperial-minded presidents

Their cruel wars have made.

The hard-earned coin for which you toil

They waste on wars on foreign soil,

The liberties you enjoyed of late

They club to death in their police state.

Rise up! Rise up, Americans!

Take peace into the street!

Only the Pentagon gains from war

For the rest of us it's defeat.

MLK denounced the war in Viet Nam

As he would today's war in Afghanistan

As King stood up to racism

Let us stand up to militarism.

Rise up! Rise up, Americans!

Take peace into the street!

It is in our hands we hold our fate

Non-violent America, demonstrate!

Sherwood Ross is an award-winning reporter and award-winning poet who walked across Mississippi on James Meredith's 1966 "March Against Fear." Ross served as Meredith's Press Coordinator and, earlier, as News Director of the National Urban League. Reach him in Miami at sherwoodross@gmail.com

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