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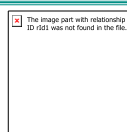
Memorial Day Blessings and 100th Tulsa Remembrance

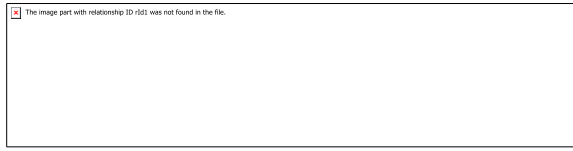
As Executive Director, I am humbled to send blessings on behalf of AMI/USA to all of our nation's fallen soldiers, on this Memorial Day.* Memorial Day is a time when many within our nation show gratitude and reverence for those who made the ultimate sacrifice. There is not one community in our country who have been spared this pain and heartache. There may be many current AMI/USA members affected by the horrors of war, where too many have lost loved ones, whether sons or daughters or husbands or wives, in conflicts as recent as the Afghanistan or Iraqi conflicts.

Additionally, I want to take a moment to make a heartfelt acknowledgement of all of the racially victimized veterans (Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC)) who have lost their lives protecting the United States of America. And, I want to take a special moment to acknowledge the Black WWI veterans who lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Some of these veterans did not die overseas fighting for America, but instead these patriots died, 100 years ago, here in the USA fighting to protect their community (please click the link below for the 100th Tulsa remembrance observation). It is interesting to note that the universal carnage of war is proof positive that our country is capable of coming together around a common goal, unfortunately far too often it has been to rally for war, not peace.

Hopefully, we, as Montessorians, can nurture our children to be motivated and unified to uphold peace/justice. By following the teachings of Dr. Montessori who called for individual, and societal transformation, peace can follow, as opposed to the continued loss of precious life that happens too often in war. Dr. Montessori teaches "that we mistakenly call the permanent triumph of the aims of a war 'peace' [which] causes us to fail to fail to recognize the way to salvation, the path that could lead us to true peace (Montessori, 1949, p.7)." My hope is that those that have experienced the loss of a loved one will find personal comfort in knowing that this nation sets aside this day to remember and thank those, known and unknown, for their service and valor. "The willingness of America's veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them our lasting gratitude" (Jeff Miller). Let us remember that Memorial Day is not just a vacation day, but it is an opportunity for us to remember the ways in which all (Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, Black, White, LGBTQIA, etc.) have fought because they truly hoped to realize a "just peace" (Han and Moquino, 2018) that is ultimately rooted in the truth of the humanity of all.

Now, for those who might be wondering what happened in Tulsa, OK to these veterans, then I'm glad you asked. This year, May 31, 2021, marks the 100th anniversary of a great horror which occurred in Oklahoma, known as the "Tulsa race massacre." On May 30, 1921, a Black teenager, Dick Rowland, was accused of assaulting a White woman (Sarah Page). Though Ms. Page herself later denied that any kind of assault happened, White authorities arrested Mr. Rowland. In a





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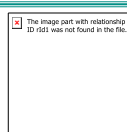
recent Washington Post article, Brown (2021), describes how “[a] White mob gathered outside of the Tulsa courthouse where he [Rowland] was being held...[and]...Black World War I veterans who wanted to protect Rowland from being lynched rushed to the courthouse” to protect the teen. There was a clash and “then the White mob -- armed and agitated -- marched to [Tulsa’s] Greenwood [section]” where they rampaged the thriving Black community. It is said that “as many as 300 dead and 10,000 homeless” Blacks were ravaged and 35 square blocks, of what some called “Black Wall Street,” burned for 48 hours, and yet no one was held accountable (Brown, 2021). Recently, three centenarian survivors of the Tulsa massacre testified in Congress in May, 2021 seeking some semblance of justice, which could possibly be in the form of reparations paid by the United States of America.

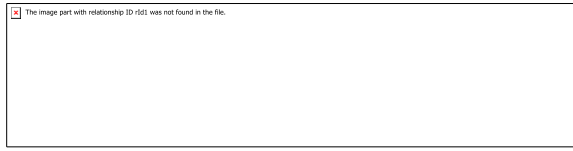
For those interested, I have noted previously (Sabater, 2021) that “Dr. Maria Montessori developed an educational system that is intended to be an ‘aid to life’” and this system is known for its peace education approach. At its best this Montessori approach upholds and affirms the full humanity of all. Dr. Montessori said, “I seek to discover the [human]...in the child, to see in [them]...the true human spirit, the design of the Creator” (Kramer, 1988). Han and Moquino (2018) in discussing our work posit “[i]n Education and Peace, Dr. Maria Montessori shared that if we want real peace, it must be a just peace” and they cite Dr. Montessori to note “Human history teaches us that *peace* means the forcible submission of the conquered to domination once the invader has consolidated his victory...as long as such profound misunderstanding continues to exist, peace will definitely fail to fall within the range of human possibilities” (Montessori, 1949, p. 6-7). Han and Moquino (2018) continue “[i]f we want our children to lead the way in peace, **we need them to understand the truth** of systemic oppression and injustice, and we need to build in them the skills they will need to be peacemakers.” Thus, I posit, that Dr. Montessori’s vision for peace education can only be fully realized when we ground peace in to justice, otherwise it is a superficial peace (Sabater, 2021). Therefore, this Tulsa remembrance is offered in the pursuit of peace and justice.

* Note: Memorial Day is said to have begun in South Carolina on May 1, 1865, in a ceremony called “Decoration Day” by African Americans who sought a ritual of remembrance and consecration for the thousands of fallen soldiers of the Civil War (Blight, 2011). Retrieved from: <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/the-first-decoration-day/>

For educators interested, you can consider using in your Montessori environments, some Tulsa massacre materials which you can guide your students, in an age appropriate way, to understand this often uncommonly taught historical atrocity:

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/burned-out-of-homes-and-history-the-tulsa-massacre/>





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