

EDITORIAL / OPINION

Vantage point

By Ron Daniels

1990 - The Year Of Malcom X

"No sell out... Malcom X." These words from a popular R & B rap song are taking on new meaning and relevance as a new wave of African-American consciousness rises to confront the continuing reality of racism, racial oppression and economic exploitation on these hostile American shores. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer even within the African-American community. The illusion of progress is being shattered in the face of the raw naked evidence which abounds in the poverty stricken, drug infested, crime afflicted ghettos and barrios in these United States. There are an abundance of Black faces in high places everywhere, but there has been no significant change in the plight of the masses of African-Americans. Somebody has been selling out. And the people know it.

But there is one man who is rising up like a phoenix out of the ashes to symbolize the possibilities for liberation of a downtrodden and oppressed people. No government sanctioned national, state or local holiday or celebrations mark his memory. In fact among the power structure of this nation he is persona non grata. Even the African-American elite barely utter his name. The image makers and mind moulders have tried to bury him, to obliterate him from our collective consciousness. The true believers and devotees of the man and his philosophy never forgot. They have been remembering his life and legacy in memorial observances and birthday commemorations for more than two decades. They know that "truth crushed to earth will rise again".

El Hajj Malik el Shabazz - Malcom X is on the rise. All across country there is a surging interest in Malcom X, the man America wishes African-Americans would forget. They can't suppress Malcom's irrepressible spirit. Book stores can't keep his books and pamphlets on the shelves. Records of Malcom's speeches are in high demand, as are films and video cassettes about his life. Rap groups like Public Enemy sing his praises. Poets are crafting new pieces enshrining his contribution in poetry and prose. Artists are framing fresh images depicting his character, courage and vision. Students on the march again against background and reactionary administrations move forward in his name. Malcom X is on the rise.

On February 21, of this year a group of progressive nationalists issued a call to for the African-American Nation to proclaim May 19, Malcom X's birthday an African-American Holiday. Momentum is building to bring Malcom out of the closet and to place him up front where he properly belongs. Twenty-Five years after his assassination in 1965 and in the year of his 65th birthday, we as African-Americans are going to proclaim a Holiday for "Our Shining Black Prince". 1990 will be the year of Malcom X!

Countless communities, north and south, east and west, have already been on the case. Others are just beginning to climb on board. For 18 years in Washington, D.C. Charles Stevenson, Malik Edwards and Sherry Brown have spearheaded what has come to be the largest Malcom X Day celebration in America. This year the D.C. Committee is sponsoring an entire week of cultural educational and political activities culminating with a huge celebration in Anacostia Park on May 21. The celebration is expected to draw upwards to 70,000 people. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Andrea Brown and a dedicated group of African-American women called Sisters Remember Malcom will be holding their 6th Malcom X. Day observance. Their tenacity is paying off. This year there will be no less than 4 Malcom X Day celebrations in Philadelphia.

In Cleveland, Ohio the Black Coalition under the leadership of Omar Ali Bey will be holding a day long series of activities in honor of Malcom X on May 19 and Dr. Maulana Karenga's Kawaida network will be sponsoring Kuzaliva's (birthday celebrations) in several cities. Preston Wilcox of A.F.R.A.M. in Harlem has formed a Malcom X Lovers Network. Dr. Edward Crosby of the Department of Pan-African Studies at Kent State University has taken time to urge all Black Studies Departments to raise Malcom X up this year. And Dr. James Turner, Chairman Emeritus of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University is co-ordinating a major Symposium on the life and contributions of Malcom X on May 20, at Harlem's renowned Schomburg Museum.

Dr. Turner has also agreed to chair the National Malcom X Day Holiday Commission which is in formation. To date such notable African-American leaders as Richard Hatcher, General Chairman of the African-American Summit, Arthur O. Eave, Deputy Speaker of the New York State Assembly, Haki Madhubuti of the Institute for Positive Education, Charshee McIntyre, President of the African Heritage Studies Association, Rep. David Richardson, President of the National Conference of Black State Legislators and scholar activists Bill Strickland, Ron Walters and Manning Marable have endorsed the effort. The list of endorsees is expected to grow rapidly in the coming months. Malcom X is on the rise.

The tenor of the times dictate that we reclaim and resurrect a leader who was an outspoken critic of America's system of oppression and an uncompromising champion for the liberation of the African-American masses. His example of unflinching courage and commitment even in the face of death is a source of inspiration which needs to be held high. Malcom X is on the rise. 1990 will be the year of Malcom X!

For further information on the Malcom X Day Holiday Commission contact Dr. James Turner (607) 255-4625.

Running for a change

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

September 12 is primary day in New York City. Most of our people will not bother going to the polls--not because they are "apathetic" but because, while we may have the right to vote, in most cases we still don't have a reason to vote.

The current lineup of major party contenders vying to move into Gracie Mansion next January says why. The seven aspirants for the job of mayor of New York--with one exception they are all well-to-do white men--are not an impressive group (speaking as a psychologist, the word that comes to mind is "depressive").

That is why I have decided to run for mayor of New York on the independent New Alliance Party line in November. I am supporting Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins' bid for the Democratic Party's mayoral nomination because I believe that an African American mayor with a history as a reformer would be a vast improvement over a racist bully like the incumbent, Ed Koch, and preferable by far to any of the other major party candidates. If Mr. Dinkins wins, I will put all of my resources into helping him become the next mayor-- something Dave Dinkins, first and foremost a loyal party man, has already said he will do.

This "inside-outside" plan--supporting the most progressive candidate in the Democratic party primary while preparing to run as an independent in the general election if he is denied the party's nomination--is not a gimmick. And it's not rhetoric. Independent politics is a weapon and a tool to empower our people.

Why independent politics? Because while a handful of our sisters and brothers may have "made it" into the middle class, the notion that the Democratic party is a vehicle which can carry the vast majority of our people into the economic, political and cultural mainstream now stands exposed by the experience of the last 25 years for what it is--a myth. The truth is that the Democratic Party has brought our people to a dead end.

That painful but important lesson has been very hard to learn. The contrivance of my Presidential campaign, of the New Alliance Party and of independent politics in general has everything to do with the profound miseducation--I believe it amounts to brainwashing--of the American people on the subject of democracy means the two party system and only the two-party system,

and that within the system it is the Democratic Party and only the Democratic Party which is "ours"--the party of the people.

Both of Reverend Jesse Jackson's Presidential campaigns played a very important role in re-educating our people to the realities of the two-party system and of the Democratic Party. An African American progressive, campaigning on an explicitly pro-working class platform, in the heart of the American political process--a Presidential election--seemed to embody every democratic promise ever held out to us. You see, the system seemed to be saying, what did we tell you! We are fair, we are inclusive, there is room for you, you are welcome. But then we all saw, with our own eyes, that it was a lie. There was no fairness; there was no inclusion, there was no room for us, we WEREN'T welcome. They treated Reverend Jesse Jackson like a dog! And they made it clear that they didn't care if we knew it! They went further. They rubbed our noses in their racism.

But in 1988 there was an independent option--a serious, viable alternative to an arrogantly racist party that for half a century has taken the Black vote for granted, a party that we as Black people have taken for granted as the only party we could vote for.

And on election day the African American electorate staged a small but highly significant rebellion at the polls against a political party that has rejected the Black Agenda for social and economic justice, a party that ignores our community and insults our leaders. Despite the efforts of some Black elected officials to disparage my history-making campaign, two percent of the national Black vote went to me--an independent Black woman who is not beholden to white corporate America and so is free, as the major party politicians are not, to speak out and stand up and fight for the Black Agenda.

The independent new leaders who are building the Coalition for a Progressive New York that is coming together around my mayoral campaign represent the millions of people in our city who get left out when the major party bosses cut their deals: rank and file labor; the black and Puerto Rican communities; lesbians and gays; students. These leaders are stepping into the vacuum left by the establishment leadership; together we are working to push open the doors of political power for our people to come through.

To the Editor:

This letter is concerning your last issue Volume XIX, Number 19, dated May 18, 1989. On the front page is a salute to one of Portland's best student athletes.

This is a nice gesture by the Portland Observer. However, you have made one large error.

Bosco AniAnabil Kante is indeed a very talented young man. You did record and list many of his accomplishments which included his academic achievements, scholarships, and extra-curricular activities. However, Bosco has attended Grant High School NOT Jefferson for four years. Our school is very proud of this young man and would like to set the record straight. He does have two music classes at Jefferson this year only. He is a Grant student, soon to be a Grant graduate, on his way to the University of Southern California.

Brenda G. Bennet, Counselor



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CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

RACE AND VIOLENCE

by John E. Jacob

The horrible attack on a young woman jogger in New York's Central Park made headlines all over the country, and the story continues to be played out in terms that shed light on some of the nastier sides of our national life.

The nastiest, of course, is the attack itself-- a vicious assault on a defenseless person by a gang of kids bent on destruction and pursuing their twisted notions of "fun."

The first-- and lasting -- impression was that this was a racial attack. The young woman is white; the teenagers, Black and Hispanic.

But the same gang is alleged to have attacked African Americans and Hispanics who crossed their path that fateful night, and we know that black-on-black crime is among the African American community's most urgent problems. So while no one can say what went on in those kids' minds, there's no evidence to suggest the assault was racial.

But that's how the public perceived it, which tells us a lot more about racist stereotypes and assumptions than it tells us about what actually happened.

Those racist stereotypes were reinforced by aspects of the way the media handled the story. Headlines about "wolf packs" sent coded signals to equate young black males with animals. We didn't read about "wolf packs" when white youths in Howard Beach assaulted three black men who wandered into their neighborhood, leading to the death of one of them.

In her Newsweek Magazine column, Meg Greenfield put her finger on the way such racial stereotyping creates other victims.

She writes of "a whole other class of innocent victims. These are the poor black youths and their families... who do not commit crimes, who are living honest and hardworking lives against tremendous (and unfair) disadvantage. They are the

ones who get slandered, disregarded and terribly damaged by the mindless generalities in which the rest of us insist on discussing episodes such as that in Central Park."

It is instructive too, that similar instances of rape and attempted murders directed against African American women do not get much attention. In one case, a woman attacked and thrown off a rooftop was saved by catching on to a cable wire -- just the kind of story the press feeds on. But since this was a black-on-black crime, it was largely ignored. One has to wonder whether the Central Park story would have got off the back pages if the victim had been black.

That double-standard suggests that racism is alive and well in America's newsrooms and in the public's mind. And it also suggests that the lives and dignity of African American women are devalued in those same newsrooms and minds.

Feminists have pointed out that rather than being a black-white tragedy, the Central Park assault typified anti-female violence, and many African American women agree.

What is clear is that in our society, the dignity of women, and especially of black women, is at risk. Too many men have macho notions of what "manhood" consists of, and teenagers often absorb attitudes that devalue the dignity of women.

There can be no positives from this terrible crime, but we can salvage something from it -- if it causes us to re-examine racial attitudes, makes people understand the consequences of dehumanizing young black men as "animals" and "wolf packs," and focuses our attention on the outrageous attitudes that make women more vulnerable to bodily violence.

Most of all, there's a clear message to every parent in the country -- to instill in our kids the values and controls that enable them to reject violence and inflicting pain on others. And the message to the nation is to give our young men something positive to look forward to -- jobs, careers and programs to get them into the mainstream.

Straight talk

By A. Wali Muhammad

Grand Solutions Haven't Worked

"Get right down to the real nitty" is an approach generally ignored in our attempts at problem-solving in the Black community.

Accepted Black leadership has a tendency toward grand, all encompassing solutions which require the federal government to do some thing, or spend some money. To date, these grand schemes have yet to solve the "problem."

Integration was one such solution, the Voting Rights Act, forced busing and housing, welfare, all were grand solutions aimed at solving the "problem" suffered by Black people in America.

With the evident failure of that approach to problem-solving as evidenced by the deteriorating Black condition in 1989, leadership now must come to grips with properly defining the "problem" and chart a course for the Black community in line with that clearer definition.

At the African America Summit '89, Minister Louis Farrakhan declared that "Time dictates agenda. If you know the time, then you will adopt the right agenda."

In the May 13-19 edition of the Economist magazine, published in London, an ad for Rolex watches featured Dr. Richard Leakey, Director of Kenya's National Museums, claiming that he and Rolex were linked by "a reverence for the majesty of time."

The advertisement credited Dr. Leakey with redefining the origins of modern humanity through his discovery in Kenya of fossils of the earliest remains of man. Leakey proved true the tenet which the Honorable Elijah Muhammad laid as a cornerstone for Black self-improvement, that Black people were the "original" people, the father and mother of all races.

This truth alone can serve as a catalyst for self-development: "Know thyself" ancient pyramid writings instructed; "Love thy neighbor as thyself, -- Jesus identified as the sec-

ond of the two great commandments.

The drug/violence/murder continuum is filling jails and prisons with our youth, but that is not the problem. Eighty percent of births in the Black community are to unwed mothers, but that is not the problem. The Black family is on the verge of dissolution, but that is not the problem.

All of these conditions are effects, not causes. The cause, as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and now Minister Louis Farrakhan, and others, have been shouting is that Black people as individuals have been robbed of a healthy self-esteem based on a knowledge of themselves.

Any solutions not directed at reconstructing a positive and healthy Black psyche will prove ineffective. But to accomplish this, personal solutions aimed at the individual suffering from these effects must be implemented, not solutions aimed generally at the effects, and the effects of the effects.

To dismantle the increasingly complex drug networks, for example, the youth operating this not-so-underground empire must be presented with some viable alternatives to attaining the "American Dream" fed to them via mass media. They are taught that their personal value is measured by the gold they wear and the car they drive; that's the American way.

To begin integrating their own disjointed personalities, Black people, especially our youth, must gain a "reverence for the majesty of time," knowing that they are the fathers and mothers of civilization, as old as time itself, and that they have unlimited potential transferable to good-paying jobs, fine homes, nice cars, all earned through honest hard work. The over \$200 billion in aggregate Black personal income could serve to finance the creation of employment.

The time for community-based personalized solutions has arrived. Let's "get right down to the real nitty gritty" before it is too late.

Mr. Muhammad is the editor-in-chief of the Final Call newspaper, published by the Nation of Islam.)

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