

OPINION

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Why Now is the Time to Celebrate Malcolm X

His gift to American history

BY E.D. MONDAINÉ

It must have been a very sad and difficult day for those who insisted on believing the world was flat to discover that the world is indeed round. But round it is, and this radical paradigm shift reminds us that throughout history the illusions of human culture must at times give way to proper alignment with the demands of the real world.

The legacy of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) represents one such shift, and today his legacy is more relevant than ever. Because like the discovery of our spherical Earth, his life and his work represented a movement away from the tired and unjust distortions of human ideology, and toward a restorative relationship with the truth that sets all



people free.

his can be summed up in the three critical components that Malcolm X believed would strengthen and fortify the African-American community. They were: 1) the need for blacks to become educated, 2) the rights of blacks to defend themselves, and 3) the urgent requirement of economic development in the black community.

In his critically acclaimed autobiography, Malcolm X recites his own journey to these positions. He reflects on his life and the lives of his various personas (like “Detroit Red,” and “Hustler”) recounting how he dated white women, lied, cheated and became a drug-selling brawler, all to remove himself from the pains of poverty he had experienced as a child.

Climbing from the pit of oppression, Malcolm X eventually converted to Islam while serving time in prison for burglary. Upon his release from prison in the 1950s he became a steadfast disciple of the Honorable Elijah Mu-

hammad, and overtime he became a bitter taste in the mouth of white America, unleashing unabashed criticism of classism and white supremacy.

Naturally this gave momentum to a white backlash already moving against Martin Luther King’s gentler and less radical criticisms of American public life. Adding insult to injury, Malcolm X’s polished, pearlized echoes of Muhammad’s “blue-eyed devil dog” (the myth of Yacob’s portrayal of white people) and his frequent insistence that black communities had to be protected “by any means necessary,” marked him as a threat to white society. Soon the name “Malcolm X” represented a rebel force that white nationalists feared as an imminent danger to the United States.

But Malcolm X’s thinking continued to evolve. In 1964, he began to question the Nation of Islam’s leader. Unearthing the truth of Muhammad’s improprieties, and pushing back against what he saw as a flawed ideology, eventually he parted ways with the Nation of Islam. This break led him to a pilgrimage in Mecca -- a requirement

of all Muslims who are physically able — after which Malcolm X rejected the racially divisive teachings of the Nation of Islam.

In a letter written at the time, he said that seeing Muslims of “all colors, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans,” helped him to see the Islamic faith as a way in which racial problems could be reconciled. But it also helped him distill the critical components listed above, and this refined focus, and his dedicated example, became his great gift to American history.

Malcolm X spent the rest of his life trying to build a new organization, all the while being harassed by serious and credible death threats. Ultimately, on Feb. 21, 1965, at the beginning of an Organization of Afro-American Unity meeting in Manhattan’s Audubon Ballroom, Malcolm X was gunned down by assassins affiliated with the Nation of Islam.

Later, in eulogizing Malcolm X, the great African American thespian Ossie Davis dubbed Malcolm X, “A prince... our own black, shining prince, who didn’t

hesitate to die because he loved us all.” But I am even more moved by Malcolm’s own words in the conclusion of his autobiography: “If I can die having brought any light, having exposed any meaningful truth that will help destroy the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America, then all of the credit is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been mine.”

This is why we celebrate Malcolm X. He reframed the work of empowering marginalized communities not just as a dream, but as an imminent reality that must be lived into in the here and now. Today our survival depends on seeing the world in its three-dimensional, rounded, and fully realized existence — understanding that are all of us are the same distance from its luminous center. In the name of righteousness, now is the time we must walk the unbroken circle that binds us together, joining our commitment as we join hands around this miraculous, shared, and collective globe.

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America’s Cruel Treatment of Palestinians

No words can describe my anger and anguish

BY RAZAN AZZARKANI

On May 14, Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner, and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin smiled for pictures in front of the new U.S. embassy in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. “Big day for Israel,” Donald Trump tweeted. “Congratulations!”

Meanwhile, just miles away in Gaza, Yazan Ibraheem Mohammed Al-Tubassi lay dying after repeatedly being shot by Israeli troops during protests at the Gaza border fence. Elsewhere, relatives of Taher Ahmed Madi — another shooting victim — carried his body home from the hospital to prepare for his funeral.

No words can describe the anger and anguish I feel as a Palestinian in America watching this unfold.

Along the Gaza fence, Israeli

troops have gunned down thousands of unarmed Palestinian protesters, killing 60 and injuring over 2,700 in a matter of days. Many were teenagers, women, and children.



The protests weren’t about the relocation of the U.S. embassy. They began several weeks ago to mark the anniversary of the Nakba, or “catastrophe” — the mass exodus and ethnic

choose this day for the relocation of the embassy while Palestinians were being murdered just 60 miles away is horrendously cruel. The United States has proven that it isn’t only indifferent toward Israel’s treatment of Palestinians, but has actively green lit the violence of the past few weeks.

In 1948, my grandparents, whose families had lived in Palestine for hundreds of years, were forced out of the only home they ever knew. Practically overnight, they were made into refugees and forced to make the almost 200-

Palestine, never saw it again. They passed away in Jordan, leaving the key to their house in Palestine with my family. We still have it today, serving as a reminder of our roots — and of the abuse my family and so many others have suffered under Israel.

Still, I’m reminded that my grandparents were fortunate enough to make it out alive. The millions who have been forced into Gaza cannot say the same. They aren’t free to come and go as they choose, but remain locked in the world’s largest open air pris-

cent live in poverty. They get only a few hours of electricity a day. Not to mention the psychological effects of living under siege, and the daily fear of attacks by Israel.

Now, politicians across the U.S. are voicing their support for the embassy relocation, while other countries announce their decision to follow America’s lead.

It’s infuriating to see my own country actively condoning brutal violence against my people while other countries sit back and watch. How can Palestinians ever trust a “peace process” led by an administration that degrades them this way?

I keep hearing people say that Gazans need to “protest peacefully” as Israeli snipers gun them down methodically. They’re being given two options: Either suffer inhumane treatment or get killed protesting it. It’s not much of a choice.

No one would passively accept a life like this. Why should Gazans?

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cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians since Israel’s founding in 1948.

Every year, while Israelis celebrate the establishment of their state, millions of Palestinians mourn the end to their existence as they knew it.

For the Trump administration to

mile journey to Jordan on foot.

Leaving behind their belongings, family, and memories, they settled in Jordan, hoping the international community would help them one day return to their homes.

My grandparents, who never stopped talking about their life in

on — cut down if they so much as approach the “border fence” with Israel.

Inside they suffer unimaginable conditions.

Only 10 percent of Gazans have access to safe drinking water, almost half of the population is unemployed, and over 70 per-