

A tribute to Historian Manning Marable

Professor William Manning Marable's contributions to African American history remind all of us of how important it is to get the best possible education and then to use our education to advance the cause of freedom, justice, equality, and empowerment for all. This was the life and the struggle of Dr. Manning Marable. Manning was not only a great analytical historian of the plight of African people all over the world, and in particular here in the United States, but also my longtime friend and comrade, who was a diligent, consistent, thought-provoking visionary and champion of the liberation of the oppressed.

We all mourn his untimely passing and pray for the spiritual sustainability of his devoted family through this period of bereavement. I am dedicating my column this week to the life and living legacy of Dr. Manning Marable in hope that among the millions of young African Americans there will be many who will be inspired to take up Marable's scholarly pen to preserve his legacy and to continue to advance the progressive cause of freedom.

To be a historian is a noble and important profession. But, to be a historian in the vein of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, Dr. C. Eric Lincoln, and Dr. John Hope Franklin is a distinct honor. Professor Manning

EDUCATION SERVICES

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Marable was a genius historian like Woodson, Lincoln, and Franklin who dared to do unprecedented research, publish numerous books, and to expose and challenge the complications and insidious facts about the nature and history of human oppression. In 1983, Dr. Marable wrote the landmark book, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*. From 1991 to 2003, Marable authored nine more books: *Race, Reform and Rebellion*; *On Malcolm X: His Message & Meaning*; *Beyond Black and White*; *Speaking Truth to Power: Essays on Race, Resistance, and Radicalism*; *Black Liberation in Conservative America*; *Black Leadership*; *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*; *Freedom: A Photographic History of the African American Struggle*; and *The Great Wells of Democracy: The Meaning of Race in American Life*.

It is interesting that today too many of us still get too nervous whenever we hear the "race" word used. It is as if some of us are

ashamed to admit that our struggle against racism and class discrimination still exists. Dr. Marable was fearless in his social critique of not only the issue of White supremacy in all of its institutionalized forms, but also he was critical on the issues of the growing class stratifications within the African American community that either hindered or propelled contemporary grassroots struggles for liberation. I have personally known Dr. Manning Marable for

History informs us how we got to where we are today.

Manning worked on the emerging National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) in the early 1980's and wrote weekly columns, "Above the Color Line," for the National Black Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA). He helped me to better understand and to apply the universal principles of progressive thought of W.E. B. DuBois while I was Executive Director and CEO of

Jealous stated, "Dr. Marable's contributions to the struggle for freedom of African Americans will never be forgotten."

Dr. Manning Marable's greatest book, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, was released this week just three days after he died. Marable worked on this book for 20 years or more. No doubt his latest 600-page book will have a dramatic impact on the public consciousness about the leadership and enduring legacy of Malcolm X. Manning Marable was 60 years old, but leaves a lifetime of historical scholarship and national leadership that is so inspiring. The penetrating and empowering spirit of Marable's intellectual discourse is still very much alive in his family, his graduate students at Columbia University, and within the masses of millions of African Americans and others that he touched with his unique scholarship. Professor Marable's wife, Leith Mullings, said it best: "I think his legacy is that he was both a scholar and an activist. He believes that history could be used to inform the present and the future." The pen is mightier than the sword. Dr. Manning Marable surely proved that to be true for generations to come.

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more than 30 years. He had a passion for the truth unabridged. Manning Marable was a freedom fighter who used his skill as a historian to present the truth to people who cried out for a better quality of life. In the Bible it says that "The truth will set you free." Marable was about the task of setting people free to the extent to which people are given more of the truth about their social, political, and economic circumstances.

the NAACP in 1993-1994. Dr. Marable supported the Million Man March in 1995 and the National African American Leadership Summit (NAALS). Professor Marable was a member of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN) Board of Directors from 2001-2011 and promoted intergenerational activism using hip-hop culture for positive social change. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin

Thousands Killed in Ivory Coast as World Looks On

While the world's attention is fixed primarily on turmoil in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, thousands of Ivorians are being murdered in fighting that pits supporters of Côte d'Ivoire incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo against challenger Alassane Ouattara. Both men claim to have won the disputed election in a country already torn by a nine-year civil war.

President Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the United Nations have recognized Ouattara as the duly elected president of Côte d'Ivoire, which is

THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry



former president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and I visited Abidjan two months ago and were stunned to see how widespread news reports failed to mirror the reality we wit-

nessed on the ground.

One-sided reporting is reflected in reporters, who routinely refer to Gbagbo as the nation's "strongman" and Ouattara as the "internationally recognized" president. As I have written in this space, few reporters have read the Ivorian constitution that puts into place a two-step process that determines how national leaders are elected.

Under Article 32 and Article 94 of the Ivorian constitution, ballots are tallied and results are announced by the Independent Electoral Commission. The second and less publicized step is the final declaration of winners made by the Constitutional Council, the

equivalent of the United States Supreme Court. In the case of the disputed presidential election, Ouattara was declared the winner of a run-off on November 28, 2010 by the Independent Electoral Commission, a decision that the U.S., France, and the European Union cited as the basis of their support for the challenger.

Pierre Sane, the Paris-based former general secretary of Amnesty International, notes that the so-called Independent Electoral Commission is anything but independent. Of the 31 members, 20 are from rebel groups and their political supporters.

"One way or the other, the 'Independent Commission' is in point of fact controlled by the opposition," Sane wrote in an analysis. "Its chairman is a senior member of the opposition coalition, and a former PDCI minister in the Gbagbo cabinet."

three are appointed by the president of the National Assembly. Sarkozy should be one of the last people to complain because, as he knows, the Ivorian constitution is modeled after the French constitution. In a January interview with me, Gbagbo said the Ivorian judicial system is not unlike the one in the U.S. where the president appoints Supreme Court justices, subject to Senate confirmation.

On March 9, when most of the world was looking at dramatic events in Libya, President Obama issued a three-paragraph statement deploring violence in Côte d'Ivoire that he blamed on "security forces loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo."

He added, "As we have said since the election results in Côte d'Ivoire were certified, the people of Côte d'Ivoire elected Alassane Ouattara as their President and Laurent Gbagbo lost the elec-

tion. Former President Gbagbo's efforts to hold on to power at the expense of his own country are an insult to the universal rights of his people, and the democracy that Côte d'Ivoire deserves... It is time for former President Gbagbo to

heed the will of his people, and to complete a peaceful transition of power to President Ouattara."

President Obama is wrong. It's time for the United States, France, and even some African countries to stop trying to force their will on a sovereign country. Democracy can often be a messy process and the U.S. can't intervene in every country that elects a leader it opposes. Clearly, mistakes have been made by supporters of both Gbagbo and Ouattara. Regardless of which side one favors, Ivorians followed their constitution in choosing Gbagbo over his challenger and that process should be respected.

Considering the sharp political divisions in Côte d'Ivoire, it is unlikely that either Ouattara or Gbagbo could be an effective leader under current circumstances. Therefore, the so-called international community should stop favoring one candidate over the other and instead call for an immediate halt to the killing. Once that's accomplished, a new election should be held with each candidate obliged to honor the outcome.

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French for Ivory Coast. What's loosely referred to as the international community has accused Gbagbo of assorted human rights violations, including killing some of his political opponents.

Recently, however, the U.N. was forced to acknowledge that both sides have been guilty of killing civilians. Aid workers said that as many as 1,000 people were killed by Ouattara's forces in Duekoue, a Gbagbo stronghold in western Côte d'Ivoire.

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After examining challenged ballots, the Constitutional Council declared Gbagbo the winner by a margin of 51.45 percent to 48.55.

Sarkozy, among others, cried foul because of the seven justices, four are appointed by Gbagbo and