

# Why Blacks Didn't Celebrate Bin Laden's Killing

Understandably, the killing of Osama bin Laden unleashed strong emotions among Americans – relief, satisfaction, fears of retribution, denial, and even exuberance.

But, there was something distasteful about the raucous celebrations that took place outside the White House, in Times Square and at Ground Zero. The late night news coverage gave us a one-night affair of fists pumping in the air, jubilant cries of “USA! USA!” and demonstrators singing that famous post-game victory song “Na Na Na, Hey, Hey, Hey, Good-bye!”

The next morning, a Muslim Community Center in Portland, Maine reported that it had been attacked by graffiti artists overnight. Scrawled across the base of the building, which serves mainly Somali Muslims, were the words: “Osama Today, Islam Tomorrow” and “Long live the West.” Those hateful words underscore the fact the war on terror is not over. And, neither is the war on ignorance and hate.

## NAACP

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A week later, American Muslims have been given a chance to respond with a mix of relief, anxiety, and perhaps naïve hope that anti-Muslim sentiment will let up. There has also been a great deal of media buzz about whether or not the public celebrations among a small minority of people were appropriate.

One obvious point that has been missed in the commentary is that those celebrations were mostly devoid of Black people. The fact is that in Harlem and the Black sections of Brooklyn there were no spontaneous gatherings full of chanting, cussing, flag waving, chest bumping, carousing, and singing with strangers. There was no loud collective orgy of national pride and triumphalism in any other Black public squares across America.

Now, why is that?

It's not that Black Americans,

whose patriotism is often undervalued, do not feel some of the same emotions as those who took to the streets last Sunday night. Our quiet response speaks to our long-held understanding of what struggle is – our domestic struggle as a marginalized community is ongoing. We know that the war is not over and that neutralizing Osama bin Laden was a goal but

to this fact. In fact, Black America's rather solemn response is actually congruent not only to the President, but of most White Americans.

I have to give the majority of White America its due. Those frat party celebrations overwhelming do not represent the norm reaction among most Americans, many of whom have been vocally critical

of those spectacles. A plethora of outspoken liberal voices have aptly described what those scenes really represent – opportunistic pockets of America that see bin Laden's death as a reason to boost

American exceptionalism and to reclaim hegemony on the world stage at a time of domestic instability and uncertainty.

Yet some pundits have that the raucous celebrations aren't a bad thing and that their triumphant nationalism is somehow healthy for our national psyche.

Garrett Quinn, a writer for the Boston Globe, illustrates my point:

“As Americans we've been down and out for a few years. The economy is in the tank, we're involved in three wars, we're in a severe budget crisis, and for the first time we are uncertain about our future as the world's lone superpower. This victory over our national enemy gave us a moment, however brief, to thump our chests, wave our flags, and shoot off fireworks. It gave us a moment to carouse with strangers and sing songs in crowded public spaces. Public Enemy Number One was vanquished and it was time to celebrate and feel good about ourselves. And there isn't a damn thing wrong with that.”

Thankfully, our President, Black America and most of White America see it differently. The “triumphant nationalism” and arrogance is coming mostly from armchair pundits who haven't set foot on the battlefield or near a uniform. For the rest of us, we are resolute in our understanding that the struggle continues.

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## African Americans well understand the destructive impact of ignorance and hate

only as part of a war that is not over.

Perhaps Black America took its cue from President Obama's coolness about the ordeal. He did not, unlike his predecessor, descend atop a naval ship and declare “MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.” Thursday's ceremony and quiet conversations with those directly affected by the 9-11 attacks speak

# The New Black Awakening: It's Reparation Time

You get your freedom by letting your enemy know that you'll do anything to get it - Malcolm X

So, where were all Malcolm's fans on Thursday, May 19, when the faithful celebrated the 86th anniversary of his birth? Each year, people dedicated to the principles Malcolm X championed gather in Westchester County, New York at his Ferncliff Cemetery gravesite, although many profess to embrace Malcolm's teachings, the sad truth is that the actual number of practitioners are few. It's regrettable that so few Black Americans define “freedom” the way that Malcolm did. African Americans have fallen prey and acceptable of America's institutional racism. In America and every country that benefitted off the backs of slaves, descendants of slaves continue to allow themselves to be held at bay regarding reparations.

Ask yourself: “If Malcolm were alive today, would he be “for” or “against” reparations? Or, if you are a “Mainstreamer” ask yourself if “the freedom” Malcolm spoke of was “freedom to associate and assimilate with Whites?” There needs to be an awakening among those Blacks with mainstream mindsets about the importance of reasoning and rallying for reparations compensation. Until now, Blacks have allowed themselves to be bamboozled by an illusion of inclusion in American society. Mainstream forces keep most Blacks' minds off the daily doses of racism they experience and cause us to focus the energy we should be using toward our freedom on the symbolism of keeping Obama in the White House.

Instead of striving toward the freedoms Malcolm sought, “Mainstream Blacks” are happy to entrust traditional institutions to look out for our interests. Given the frightening state of affairs in the White world, mainstream ori-



## BUSINESS EXCHANGE

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ented Blacks have to admit that nothing is improving for Black people in general. Just when “Black Mainstreamers” thought it was safe to sneak out of the struggle, a movement called Exodus Two emerged. The movement promotes a new philosophy for Blacks “to rise up and act in our own behalf.”

Our current level of “empowerment” is not working for us, so instead of continuing to allow White peoples' interest to determine our agenda, Blacks need to take a “timeout” from the mainstream and make time to make a difference in our own communities. If we continue to blend in, our race will literally rot in the ghettos of America. Whether you live on Malcolm X Boulevard, or in a gated community, it's time to represent descendants of the slave trade against the injustices that destroyed Blacks and their forbearers' lives. Isn't it time that concerned Black Americans admit that nothing is improving for us under this system? This system was built based on Blacks providing free labor. It's also time we each demonstrated on behalf of the descendants of slaves and against the U.S. government for its complicity in the slave trade and the impoverishment, misery, distress, and bigotry that continues to this day.

Isn't it time to make the American and European governments accountable for stealing human beings off of the continent of Africa and enslaving them for 400 years? The debt from that

period is simple: more than 100 million Blacks lost their lives, at the same time; White-run nations that acquired wealth and power from one generation to the next continued to thrive; while slaves and their descendants lived in wretched chattel squalor. Sadly, most Blacks seem satisfied with this status quo.

Newly awakened Blacks could

be an enabling force during the upcoming months and years by scheduling local lectures and study groups on reparations. The Exodus Two movement's goal seeks passage of a bill for reparations. Toward that end, Exodus Two is mounting two public rallies: the first on June 15, beginning at 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., in front of The United Nations in New York

City. The second rally will be held on June 20, beginning at 6 a.m. until 5 p.m., on the steps of U.S. Capitol. It's time to get on the list. E-mail: Yehudah ben Yaacov at MilzAhead@aol.com or Tziona Yisrael at Afraqueen@aol.com.

William Reed is available for speaking/seminar projects via BaileyGroup.org

## Week on the Web

Shuttle Endeavour is now on its final mission in space... in “Breaking News”



because of pedophilia. Really. Critics question the validity of the report ... in “National News”

Bumbling FBI agents have left behind documents about their investigation at the site of an anti-war activist's home after a raid ... in “National News”

Local theatre masters BaseRoots are performing a choral exploration of the African Poetic lineage ... in “Music Reviews”

A report says that the tens of thousands of abuse cases by Catholic priests weren't because of the church's celibacy requirements or

Mt. Hood Community College's president makes some compelling arguments for tuition equity ... in “Opinion”

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