

Malcolm X Warned About These Bourgeois Hustlers

Barack Obama was not an outlier but the norm when it comes to the tokens who are paraded by Democrats to represent faux-progress and counterfeit diversity and Kamala Harris is the next in line, says Teodrose Fikre of the Ghion Journal.

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Growing up, one of my biggest heroes and the person I wanted to emulate when I got older was Malcolm X. This was during my time of militancy and youthful rebellion, when I thought the only way to arrive at justice was through a revolution. The insurgent within me was captivated by Malcolm X's take no prisoner approach and the way he spoke harsh truths to the status quo.

It was not until I matured and learned through hardship and indigence that I realized Malcolm X's power was not his fiery rhetoric but his unifying message after returning from Mecca. However, as much as I've become an admirer of El Hajj Malik El Shabazz's latter days, there are still aspects of his earlier reflections that ring true given the times we live in.

What I'm referring to are not his blistering speeches where he would call "white" people devils or his addresses where he echoed the teachings of Elijah Muhammad—Malcolm X himself walked away from that type of demagoguery. Rather, what intrigued me the most was his dissection of the political and social dynamics that kept "black" folks subjugated.

To this day, one of the most compelling arguments that Malcolm X made about the evils of both political parties is found in a speech he gave about the political and economic state of “black” America. He brilliantly exposed the false-distinction between Democrats and Republicans as a choice between the lesser of the same evil.

“Foxes and wolves usually are of the same breed. They belong to the same family—I think it’s called canine. And the difference is that the wolf when he shows you his teeth, you know that he’s your enemy; and the fox, when he shows you his teeth, he appears to be smiling. But no matter which of them you go with, you end up in the dog house.”

It took a mean mugging by reality—one that shook me out of cognitive dissonance—for me to realize that Democrats are no different than Republicans. They differ in their methods, but in the end they feast on us regardless of their gang affiliation. Both parties are subsidiaries of corporations and oligarchs; our entire political system is based on two factions bamboozling their respective bases while manufacturing dissension on all sides.

Gone When They Get Your Vote

Now that I’ve shed my political blinders, I see how this game is played. I’ll be honest here and admit that Democrats irritate me more than Republicans for this one simple reason. I’ve come to expect Republicans to be malicious—there is honesty in their advertisement. However, it’s the Democrats who smile like foxes as they pretend to

be our allies only to stab us in our backs the minute they get elected. They have maintained power for decades by successfully treading on the pains of marginalized groups as they concurrently enact legislation and regulations that inflame the very injustices they rail against.

If there is one group that has been leveraged the most by Democrats, it's the descendants of slaves and "black" diaspora as a whole. For generations, supposed liberals—who now call themselves progressives—have cunningly used the pains of "African-Americans" to further their own agendas. The Democrat's most loyal voting bloc have time and time again been taken advantage of only to be tossed to the side as soon as Democrats gain power. They talk a good game and pretend to be for us right up until election day, soon as the last ballot is counted, they are nowhere to be found.

It's on this front that another observation by Malcolm X comes into clear focus. One of the things that really grabbed my attention while I was reading his autobiography is the way Malcolm described the dynamic between the impoverished masses and the black bourgeoisie during the Civil Rights Era.

"There are two types of Negroes in this country. There's the bourgeois type who blinds himself to the condition of his people, and who is satisfied with token solutions. He's in the minority. He's a handful. He's usually the hand-picked Negro who benefits from token integration. But [it's the] masses of Black people who really suffer the brunt of brutality and the conditions that exist in this country."

What Malcolm X was describing was the class hierarchy within the construct of race. He railed against the select few “negroes” who willingly stepped on their own people in order to advance their own selfish ambitions. Malcolm X was against integration for this reason; he realized that a modification of a racist system that benefits a fraction of society while keeping the majority repressed was morally bankrupt. This same realization eventually dawned on Martin Luther King Jr when he confided to his closest advisers that he might have “integrated his people into a burning house.”

Fast forward fifty years and it’s evident that the bourgeoisie “negroes” who Malcolm X talked about have been unleashed by the establishment to work against the interests of their people. As the majority of “African-Americans” suffer economic inequalities and are burdened by financial uncertainties, black politicians, pundits and so-called “activists” are enriching themselves while they pretend to be fighting injustice.

Forget Plymouth Rock, the biggest hoodwink of them all that landed on us was a boulder named Barack. After losing a Congressional primary to Bobby Rush in 2000, Obama’s inner circle realized that he was not embraced by “African-Americans” in Chicago because many did not see him as one of them. He quickly adapted and learned the art of duplicity; Obama perfected his ability to talk eloquently about our issues and suffering as a means to an end. The end was his unabated ego. After he scaled the heights of politics, he ended up enacting policies that exacerbated the wealth gap. For his brazen act of betrayal, Obama was rewarded handsomely.

The Audacity of Trope

Barack Obama was not an outlier but the norm when it comes to the tokens who are paraded by Democrats to represent faux-progress and counterfeit diversity. Kamala Harris is the next black bourgeoisie in line who is hoping to use the plight of African-Americans and the tribulations of “black” folk to win the White House. After spending a career locking up brown and “black” folk with impunity and resurrecting the ugly legacy of penal slavery, she is now shamelessly pretending to be the next coming of Sojourner Truth—hers is the audacity of trope.

Given the fact that too many are conditioned to think in binary fashion, I must take a pause here to clarify one thing. This is in no way to excuse the pernicious nature of Republicans and the vile racism of Donald Trump. After all, not only are Republicans insidious when it comes to the way they treat “African-Americans” and minorities as a whole, the party of Trump uses the same playbook of feigned concern to dupe their respective side. However, the more I observe the rank opportunism of the Democrat front-runners, the more I appreciate the sagacity of Malcolm X.

It’s not only politicians like Barack Obama and Kamala Harris who traffic in this most insincere form of paternalism, there is a whole cottage industry of black opinion leaders and gate-keepers who actively work against our interests while passively speaking against injustice. They abound on TV, in the press and throughout social media; the surest way to make a name for oneself is to be a part of the “woke” intelligentsia who lull their people into collective comas.

Adding insult to injury is the fact that these same bourgeoisie mouthpieces are not only using the pains of the oppressed to advance themselves, they are now employing the injuries of the masses to deflect well-deserved criticism. Identity has been weaponized, instead of addressing the structural nature of racism and sexism, folks like Kamala Harris, Hillary Clinton and identity politics shysters across the political spectrum are turning the victims of systematic oppression into human shields to intimidate anyone who dares to question their record. Enough is enough!

The Talented Tenth

There is a broader problem beyond these two-faced grifters. The truth is that the “black” community has become bifurcated; the bourgeoisie class feeling the blessings of capitalism and enterprise while the vast majority are burdened by consumerism and debt. DuBois once talked about the “talented tenth”, an educated sector of blacks leading the bottom 90% out of bondage. Sadly, the talented tenth has been convinced to seek self-enrichment and forget about collective wellness.

What is true of “African-Americans” is true of society as a whole. In this richest nation, there exists a breathtaking chasm between the few who have much and the many who have little. Keeping this dynamic in place is a pyramid scheme that transfers wealth upward being kept by the greed of politicians and the indifference of the proletariat. We are being swindled by hustlers to keep this most depraved system intact.

I don't expect leaders to be perfect, very few of us are

guilt free when it comes to the iniquities of the status quo. We all have have our battles as we vacillate between our better angels and the allure of our desires. All we can do in life is seek to do better; after all, Malcolm X's very narrative is one of mistakes followed by atonement. My aim is not to be pious nor pretend purity from people, I have way too many planks in my eyes to demand others act blameless. However, there is a vast difference between those who perpetrate infringements by commission versus the rest of us who transgress through omission.

I would be the first person to applaud Harris, Obama, Trump or any politician who sincerely admit their mistakes and try to make amends. Far from doing so, these con artists pretend to do the right thing as they pour fuel on the fire. There is a reason why hypocrisy is the most egregious sin; it's hard to be forgiven when the offender is lying about his penance.

Malcolm X is painted by many in mainstream media and academia as a firebrand who preached from the pulpit of exclusion. But those who know his history understand very well that who he was when his journey concluded was vastly different than the caricature of Malcolm X that is presented by the institutions of power he spoke against. It never fails, first kill the messengers then co-opt their message. The truth is that he changed his approach, disavowed divisive rhetoric and embraced inclusive justice.

These were the words uttered by Malcolm X as he spoke against the system of inequality that shackles billions around our planet into lives of servitude and bondage. His decision to pivot from friction and instead seek the light

of universal justice is the reason why he was silenced, the status quo rewards charlatans but has a way of killing off unifying voices.

On this front, the status quo has succeeded beyond its wildest imagination. We are now being led by a procession of overseers who pretend to be Moses. This hustle will not work too much longer however, more and more people are waking up to their deception and refusing to be doormats of Democrats, Republicans or anyone else. If we are to find redemption, it will not be from the top nor will the revolution be televised.

As I noted earlier, I've come a long way from my days of would-be revolutionary. Malcolm X had an eye-awakening moment in Mecca upon seeing a broad sea of humanity praying in unison. I had my mecca moment by way of shelters and homeless missions and observing a diverse dissection of Americans made invisible by the malice of the gentry and the indifference of society. It's for this reason that I disavow sectional movements and pray for a day where all of us unite beyond our trivial differences. We have more that unites us than the issues that divide us; when we realize this is the day we will get the change we all have been waiting for. The revolution that matters is not the one of the gun but the one our hearts.

Teodrose Fikre is the editor and founder of the Ghion Journal. A published author and prolific writer, a once defense consultant was profoundly changed by a two year journey of hardship and struggle. Going from a life of upper-middle class privilege to a time spent with the huddled masses taught Teodrose a valuable lesson in the

essence of togetherness and the need to speak against injustice. Originally from Ethiopia with roots to Atse Tewodros II, Teodrose is a former community organizer whose writing was incorporated into Barack Obama's South Carolina primary victory speech in 2008. He pivoted away from politics and decided to stand for collective justice after experiencing the reality of the forgotten masses.
