

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.

By **Teodrose Fikre**

Ghion Journal



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.

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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.

Hillary Clinton is Now a Victim of 'Socialists'

Hillary Clinton is incapable of coming to terms with her loss and now finds fault with greedy capitalists who are turning young people into socialists, as Paul Street explains.

By Paul Street *Special to Consortium News*



Hillary Clinton's take on "what happened" in the 2016 election is a running tale of victimization. She was the casualty of FBI Director James Comey and of Vladimir Putin and WikiLeaks. She was unjustly loathed by that "basket" of racist, sexist, nativist, and homophobic "deplorables" that is supposedly the American "heartland," white working-class and rural population – people she recently painted (at an elite globalist gathering in Mumbai, India) as a bunch of "pessimistic," slow-witted and retrograde losers. She was victimized by Bernie Sanders, who (Hillary complained) wasn't even a "real Democrat" but had the unmitigated chutzpah to let his primary campaign challenge her prearranged coronation as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate.

Never mind the series of stupid, arrogant, and largely unforced errors that crippled her uninspiring and policy-bereft insider campaign that was under her command. And never mind her own epic unpopularity before and during the campaign – disapproval earned over her many years of functioning as a cold and transparently elitist Establishment agent of the wealthy corporate and financial Few.

Now the endlessly put-upon (yet fabulously wealthy) and eye-rolling Hillary has found some more scapegoats for her epic fail: first, "socialists" in the

activist cadres and primary and caucus electorate of the Democratic Party, then younger voters, and finally greedy corporate chieftains whose greed has turned good Democrats into “socialists.” The “lying neoliberal warmonger” says she was victimized because of her identification as a “capitalist” after big business executives’ have sadly given capitalism a bad name—especially with young people.

In an interview with *Time* Inc. brands executive Alan Murray this month, she said that her economic policies were “probably” a tough sell with primary voters: “It’s hard to know, but I mean if you’re in the Iowa caucuses and 41 percent of Democrats are socialists or self-described socialists, and I’m asked ‘Are you a capitalist?’ and I say, ‘Yes, but with appropriate regulation and appropriate accountability.’ You know, that probably gets lost in the ‘Oh my gosh, she’s a capitalist!’”

Take that, Henry Wallace.

Pity the plight of the poor enlightened capitalist, Hillary Clinton, whose position high in the American Oligarchy’s permanent political class has permitted her to accumulate a net worth of at least \$45 million.

Earlier in the same day as her interview with Murray, Hillary complained to the posh “Shared Value Leadership Summit” that “the reputation of capitalism is pretty much in tatters for young people” since powerful U.S. companies are “disrupting our democracy” (what democracy?) by worsening income inequality.

The way to fix this problem? Vote Republicans out of office in 2018, Hillary said – and vote in the Democrats, who Richard Nixon’s onetime political strategist Kevin Phillips rightly called “history’s second most enthusiastic capitalist party.”

Poor Hillary

Among the many things Hillary left out of her latest “poor me” whine, two deserve special mention here. First, the insufficiently regulated and excessively amoral business behavior that she says turned young people and a bunch of Iowa Dems into “self-declared socialists” is just capitalism being capitalism, not some weird aberration of the profits system.

Contrary to the Clintonian fable of “inclusive capitalism,” an oxymoronic concept the Clinton campaign rolled out in early 2015, the United States’ leading corporations and financial institutions have never placed workers and the public on an equal footing with investors and the bottom line. It was first and foremost the rise of a momentarily powerful and significantly Left-sparked industrial workers’ movement – rooted largely in the special workplace bargaining power of mass-production workers, not some imaginary corporate

benevolence – that created a new and rising floor for working-class incomes during the “Golden Age” of American capitalism that the faux-populist Donald Trump absurdly but effectively promised to restore.

At the same time, the gains enjoyed by ordinary working Americans were made possible by the uniquely favored position of the United States economy (and empire) in the post-WWII world – a reflection (among other things) of Europe’s long suicide between 1914 and 1945. When that position was significantly challenged by resurgent Western European and Japanese economic competition in the 1970s and 1980s, the comparatively egalitarian trends of postwar America were reversed by capitalist elites who had never lost their critical command of the nation’s core economic and political institutions. Working-class Americans have paid the price ever since. For the last four decades, wealth, income, and power have been sharply concentrated upward, birthing a New Gilded Age of abject oligarchy and brazen plutocracy.

This “Great U-Turn” (By Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison) dates from the finance- and policy-designed onset of the neoliberal era in the mid-1970s It goes back to the Carter years. And it marked a return to capitalism’s historical norm, as Thomas Piketty showed in his widely read *tour de force* Capital in the Twenty First Century (2014). The neoliberal era and its current New Gilded Age capstone is the profits system returning to its long and militantly inegalitarian pattern.

Second, the Clintons have long stood precisely in the vanguard of the neoliberal deregulation of capitalism – in the lead of the shift to savage inequality and ubiquitous economic insecurity (the ruthless “betrayal of the American dream”) that has pushed millions of U.S. Americans, younger ones especially, to the left. After graduating from the ruling-class training ground that is Yale Law School, the Clintons went to Arkansas to help “lay...the groundwork for what would eventually hit the national stage as the New Democrat movement, which took institutional form as the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC),” according to writer Doug Henwood. The essence of the DLC was the “neoliberal” abandonment of the Democratic Party’s last lingering commitments to labor unions, social justice, civil rights, racial equality, the poor, and environmental protection in service to the “competitive” bottom-line concerns of Big Business.

DLC: Origins in Attacking Arkansas Teachers

The Clintons helped launch the New (neoliberal corporatist) Democrat juggernaut by assaulting Arkansas’ teacher unions (Hillary led the attack) and refusing to back the repeal of the state’s anti-union “right to work” law – this while Hillary began working for the Rose Law firm, which “represented the moneyed interests of Arkansas,” Henwood wrote. When the Arkansas-based,

community-organizing group ACORN passed a ballot measure lowering electrical rates for residential users and raising them for commercial businesses in Little Rock, Rose deployed Hillary to shoot down the new rate schedule as an unconstitutional “taking of property.” Hillary later joined the board of directors at the low-wage retail giant and union-busting, Chinese import platform Wal-Mart.

During the Clintons’ time in the White House, Bill Clinton advanced the neoliberal agenda beneath fake-progressive cover, in ways that no Republican president could have pulled off. Channeling Ronald Reagan by declaring that “the era of big government is over,” Clinton collaborated with the right-wing Congress of his time to end poor families’ entitlement to basic minimal family cash assistance. Hillary backed this vicious welfare “reform” (elimination), which has proved disastrous for millions of disadvantaged Americans.

Mr. Clinton then earned the gratitude of Wall Street and corporate America by passing the arch-global-corporatist North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), by repealing the Glass-Steagall Act (which had mandated a necessary separation between commercial deposit and investment banking), and by de-regulating the burgeoning super-risky and high-stakes financial derivatives sector.

‘Tell Me Something Interesting’

Hillary took the lead role in the White House’s efforts to pass a corporate-friendly version of “health reform.” Along with the big insurance companies the Clintons deceptively railed against, the “co-presidents” decided from the start to exclude the popular health care alternative – single payer – from the national health care “discussion.” (Barack Obama would do the same thing in 2009.)

Who can ever forget Hillary’s weary and exasperated response – as head of the White House’s health reform initiative – to Harvard medical professor David Himmelstein in 1993. Himmelstein was head of Physicians for a National Health Program. He told the First Lady about the remarkable possibilities of a comprehensive, single-payer “Canadian-style” health plan, supported by more than two-thirds of the U.S. public. Beyond backing by a citizen super-majority, Himmelstein noted, single-payer would provide comprehensive coverage to the nation’s 40 million uninsured while retaining free choice in doctor selection and being certified by the Congressional Budget Office as the most cost-effective plan on offer. “David,” Hillary said as she dismissed Himmelstein, “*tell me something interesting.*”

Mrs. Clinton’s service to the rich and powerful continued into the current millennium. As a U.S. Senator, she did Wall Street’s bidding by voting for a

bill designed to make it more difficult for consumers to use bankruptcy laws to get out from crushing debt. As Secretary of State (2009-2012), she voiced strong support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – a secretive, richly corporatist 12-nation Pacific “free trade” (investor rights) agreement that promised to badly undermine wages, job security, environmental protections, and popular governance at home and abroad.

Out of Step with the Majority

There's nothing new about Mrs. Clinton and other neoliberal Democrats standing to the de facto moderate, Republican right of “socialist” (well, progressive and left-leaning) public opinion that has long been exhibited, not just by most Democrats but by most people in the U.S. Poll after poll in the current millennium has shown that most U.S. citizens are egalitarian social democrats, not capitalists, and certainly not neoliberals. Majorities have long backed single-payer health insurance, seriously progressive taxation, the restoration of workers' right to organize powerful unions, collective bargaining rights, sound climate policy, strong environmental regulations, major reductions in the “defense” (empire) budget, and an expansion of the public social safety net.

This is the majority sentiment that Bernie Sanders ran in accord with in 2016. He would have won the Democratic presidential nomination and very possibly defeated Trump but for big-money Hillary's corrupt and advance control and rigging of the Democratic National Committee, the primary race, and the Democratic National Convention.

Hillary is likely no longer a threat to poison the waters with another presidential run. The bitterness of her recent, Middle America-shaming remarks in India suggest that she's finally thrown in the towel. Even a political figure as arrogant and removed from ordinary working people as Hillary Clinton must know that such comments (which Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) had to rush to distance his party from) do not square with another run for the White House.

While Hillary may be political history, however, the Democrats are still ruled by the same neoliberal and Clintonite ideology that Barack Obama was able to channel and sell in charismatic and outwardly likable ways that icy Hillary could not match. Under the cover of Russia-gate, launched by Clinton and Obama Democrats to provide an external, conspiratorial, and neo-McCarthyite explanation for the failures of their own right-wing corporate and imperial politics (and to keep the fires burning under the New Cold War), the party's leadership continues to stand well to the starboard side of majority progressive (“socialist”) opinion. The dollar-drenched Dems' candidate roster for the upcoming Congressional mid-terms is loaded with right-wing Democrats (including

an unprecedented usual number with military and intelligence backgrounds) masquerading as progressives.

Another Fake Progressive Leader?

Do the corporate and imperial Democrats have another Obama or young Bill Clinton in the wings, someone with the silver-tongued charm to manipulate populist sentiments on behalf of corporate and financial elitism? If so, their next faux-progressive pretender has yet to make his or her identity known.

Iowa progressives should start keeping an eye out Democratic Senator Kamala Harris, backed by neoliberals Clinton, Obama and Nancy "We're Capitalist and That's Just the Way It Is" Pelosi (net worth of \$83 million) The money is on Harris, I am told by people in-the-Wall-Street-know. She should attend this year's Iowa State Fair, where she can talk about Ethanol subsidies and listen to hog and soybeans farmers' issues.

Young people, meanwhile, must deal with the ferocious economic disparity, abject plutocracy, permanent imperial war, and deadly environmental destruction passed on by older corporate and imperial, capitalist Democrats as well as radically reactionary and regressive capitalist Republicans – “two wings of the same bird of prey” (as Upton Sinclair said in 1904).

No wonder a majority of 18 to 29-year-olds tell posters they do not support capitalism.

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