"The Death Side"
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EDITOR’S NOTE

When the name of Spectrum magazine was changed to Uhuru in the fall of 1989, the writers, photographers and editors hoped that the magazine would take on a whole new goal. The goal: to encourage, promote and fight for the freedom of African peoples worldwide through education using the gift of literacy. At the time, it was a revolutionary idea. One that inspired the creativity of the students involved, and even instigated a little controversy, now and then. Semesters went by, different issues came out and it began to seem after a couple of issues that the hardness of the magazine’s content and images were weakening, softening. Some people who were involved did their tasks half-heartedly and as old positions opened up and new people filled in their spots, it sometimes seemed that the magazine, originally re-positioned to educate and liberate African/African-American people, was losing its strength.

Which leads us to the dual theme of this issue.

African people, all over the diaspora of the globe, have dealt with different levels of death. Prior to imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism (all of which were imposed upon people of color by Europeans), Africans lived in a productive and holistic way which was imperative and incumbent upon our survival and evolvement, mentally, spiritually and physically. Different cultures from around the world traveled to Africa to be taught the secrets that kept our continent in such health and advancement (read Stolen Legacy by George G.M. James). But eventually greed and jealously took over the continent and its people in the name of so-called "civilization," and as a result of that "civilization," the people who were the original inhabitants of the Center of the World’s Culture and Education were pushed out, pushed off, stolen, murdered, sold, lied to, enslaved and deceived.

All the lessons of life that were taught were lost somewhere in our collective memories. Africa, the mother of real civilization and advancement, was raped and destroyed. So after several (unfortunate) turn of events, here we are in America, and Africa is now nothing but a place of half-clothed natives and spear-chuckers, in our twisted, reshaped memories.

This is the Death Side. Like the controversial hip-hopper, Ice Cube said on his album "Death Certificate" over a year ago, this is "a reflection of where we (as African people) are today." Many of these images and articles will be familiar to many of us. They are reflections of our communities, our families, and ourselves. Uhuru magazine was created for liberation, not emancipation, which was just another form of slavery minus the iron shackles and ownership papers. It was created to free the minds of African people, not for the comfort and understanding of
Europeans, although like in ancient Africa, we hope that their mental freedom will come from the advancement of our own mentalities. But, like many of the ideologies of the revolutionaries in our history (Marcus Garvey, El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, Gabriel Prosser, Assata Shakur, Nat Turner, and Harriet Tubman), this is for the benefit of those who are the offspring of the individuals who were stolen from that faraway Africa.

As you travel through the pages of this magazine, we hope your wake-up call will come, and perhaps like that famous African, Jesus, the acceptance of your death (or as Cube said the signing of your "death certificate") will lead you to what we call The Life Side. Somewhere in the middle of your journey through this magazine to your symbolic grave, dear Negroes, you will flip, and emerge African. On the other side, the Life Side. It is here where we once again regain our direction of advancement and development. This is where Blackness is a blessing, not a curse; where Africans are not some fictitious, European-created savages, but the knowers and holders of all secrets of life; where our heroes are hand-chosen by us and not by European "scholars"; where we define ourselves and our futures, and risk our lives for the freedom, the uhuru, of the generations of Africans who will follow us. The Life Side is a projection of where we, as African people, need to be.

We hope that this magazine is interesting for all readers, both conceptually and journalistically. But most of all we hope that this will be one more vehicle toward self-awareness and education for African, or for those of you who can't accept that title yet, African-American, people.

In the tradition of those who first re-positioned Spectrum magazine, we bring you Uhuru, in every form of the word. When the struggle is done, peace will come.
Unraveling the Columbus Myth

Tearing Apart the Fabric of Deception
By Renee Richards

Most of the world, especially Spain and the United States, celebrated the 500-year anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s “discovery” of America. Capitalists seized the opportunity to cash in on this holiday by selling coins, posters, and other paraphernalia to commemorate this infamous day. But Native Americans perceived it as a day of mourning, for they know that when Columbus found their ancestors, which he erroneously called “Indians,” he and his crew exploited their land and murdered them. Those who didn’t die by disease, hangings, suicide, or mutilations were sold into slavery. Slavery, however, did not prove profitable, for many of the indigenous people died en route to Spain. This is the same Columbus who is portrayed as some god-like hero in numerous elementary, high school, and college history books. Although Columbus Day has passed, we, the African-American people must understand and unravel the Columbus myth, for it has played a vital part in our history.

The myth of discovery goes something like this: Columbus was a “Christian” man who sailed across the ocean, found numerous islands inhabited by dark-skinned people, and claimed their land for Spain. He then “civilized” the natives and even took a few back to Spain. But, this is Columbus’s first voyage. Most history books leave off here, without bothering to mention the other three voyages he made to the New World. Who could blame historians for not wanting us to know about them? After all, Columbus cruelly mistreated the natives and initiated the first trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Historians claimed Columbus discovered America, but neglected to mention the indigenous people who preceded him thousands of years ago. African explorers, who possessed the mathematics and technology to sail across the globe, were conveniently forgotten. Abubakari II, the emperor of Mali, is one of the many Africans who travelled the New World. He led a fleet of 200 ships to America in 1311–181 years before Columbus.

Nor did Columbus’s trip to the New World to prove the earth’s rotundity. African astronomers and geographers proved this centuries ago, long before European scholars began talking about the earth being flat.

Columbus did not want to sail across the ocean in the name of Christianity, but in the name Mammon. By finding a western trade en route to the Indies, a major trade partner with Europe, he could receive fame and wealth. Since he lacked the money to finance his voyage, he first petitioned King John II of Portugal twice, but without success. Columbus then tried to obtain funds from the Spanish monarchs, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. They had to set his plan aside because they were trying to retake Spain from the Moors—black Muslims—who made trading with Asia difficult. Finally, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella provided him money for his westward trip. They also agreed to his terms—that he be allowed 10 percent of all wealth brought back by him and others and conferred the title, “Admiral of the Ocean Sea” as well as other titles, and he demanded all of it be passed onto his heirs.
After three months on the sea, Columbus and his crew landed on the island of Guanahani. He named it San Salvador, which means Holy Savior. Meeting with the indigenous people, Columbus noted how peaceful they were. He called them "indios" which means "in God." He also believed he found the Indies. Diplomatic relations were far from Columbus's mind. Instead, he was anxious to know how to make the Taino (Arawak) Indians slaves and how to get their gold. He documents in his journal that, "with 50 of my men they would all be kept in subjection and forced to do whatever may be wished." Columbus even penned in his journal that Blacks were in the New World. After sailing from island to island, hoping to find gold, Columbus set sail for Spain in January of 1493. He left behind 39 Spaniards, whose job was "to discover the mine of gold."

As soon as Columbus left the colonists and the natives began to have conflicts. The colonists stole food from the natives, forced the to find gold, and raped the women. A series of the other confrontations would eventually lead to the merciless slaughter and enslavement of the original inhabitants. During his second voyage, Columbus started the tribute system. Every Taino Indian, from age 14 and up, had to fill a hawks' bell (used in falconry) full of gold. Those who did not have any gold had their hands cut off. Many bled to death as a result. Indians were also forced to dive for pearls in murky, shark-infested waters and to work in silver mines with its lethal by-product, mercury poisoning. Like our ancestors, some natives committed suicide rather than become slaves. Others led slave revolts similar to those of Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey. They killed Spaniards in retaliation. Columbus counterattacked with a policy that would serve as the model for Hitler's "collective guilt" policy. If one native killed a Spaniard, thirteen natives were to be killed—twelve for the Disciples and one for Christ. Columbus lived up to every word of this policy. Entire Taino and Carib populations were murdered.

Columbus left a legacy in the Americas that still persists, even in modern times. It was only a hundred years ago when Brazilian entrepreneurs cut off the ears of Indians who didn't fulfill their wild rubber quota. It was less than twenty years ago during the Vietnam war when U.S. general Westmoreland used napalm on the Vietnamese people. He didn't feel sorry about their deaths because he felt, "[Orientals] do not prize their lives like we do." The Spanish used green wood for burning the Indian people to make them suffer and scream longer. Native peoples in America still fight for their lands against "discoverers" of money.

The Native Americans have helped our ancestors resist slavery, especially the slave revolts in Brazil where thousands of former slaves resisted Dutch and Portuguese armies before they were defeated in the late 1700s. Indians helped our people during the Underground Railroad. We helped them fight against the U.S. army during the "Seminole Wars" in Florida, which were expensive—$20 million— for the U.S. to fight. The government abandoned the war in 1842. The Indians helped us in our time of need; now is the time for us to help them. One way is to unravel the Columbus myth which has most of the world in bondage.

For starters you must re-educate yourself about Columbus. Milton Meltzer's Columbus and the World Around Him, Kirkpatrick Sale's The Conquest of Paradise, Samuel Eliot Morison's Admiral of the Ocean Sea, and Ivan Van Sertima's They Came Before Columbus are merely a few of many excellent books which show worldwide perspectives on Columbus, not just the biased European one.

Finally, I don't want to make white people feel guilty about what their ancestors have done. They are powerless to change their past, but like all other races, they too must decide whether to allow the legacy to survive or to change it, thus altering the course of history.
What has happened to the rap industry? It used to be the voice for young Africans in America. Our voice on the everlasting trials of our people in this country. Issues such as racism, genocide, police brutality, and black-on-black crime were all exposed through the voices of the hip-hop industry. It was music by African youth for African youth, but now, this ghetto music, our music, is becoming a gimmick.

By Katika Thomas and Krista Franklin
There are all kinds of people who want to be in the hip-hop industry that don’t even belong. My biggest beefs are with house niggas such as PM Dawn and TRQ. PM Dawn got much disrespect when lead rapper, Prince Be, was quoted as saying, "Black people are lazy and constantly look for someone to blame their problems. I am not a color, I am a spiritual being."

Save the drama for ya mama.

Then there’s TRQ, a pro-life Republican who got his first gig at the Republican National Convention in Houston. In the November 1992 issue of The Source magazine, when asked what advice he would give to the hip-hop nation, this Uncle Tom responded, "Well, I’d say wake up. You’re in America; you’re not in Africa. Face it and stop listening to Jesse Jackson, Ice T and Public Enemy. Recognize that you are an American above anything else." In a fall issue of Newsweek he said, "I love this country, and whoever doesn’t can get out!"

Statements like these are a defacement to the tradition of hip-hop, and individuals like TRQ and PM Dawn are a blight on the face of rap music. The ideals that these so-called rappers are promoting are both counterproductive to the hip-hop movement and counterproductive to African people as a whole. Making statements such as "black people are lazy" and "recognize that you are American above anything else" exhibits not only a tremendous self-hatred, but also a disrespect for hip-hop culture. For those of us who are true hip-hoppers, or true Africans, these kinds of statements should not be excused or tolerated.

Putting money in the pockets of individuals like TRQ and PM Dawn will only promote the further destruction of one of our purest art forms.

Brothers and sisters in the rap industry speak against crossing over and selling out to the pop charts, but is airing their video on "Yo! MTV Raps" any better? It’s true that "Yo!" helped rap music get off the ground, but is that a positive or negative? Let’s examine that. When MTV first aired they did not give R&B, rap, or any kind of African-American artform any kind of pub. They refused to play any black artists except Whitney Houston, Prince, Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson, the so-called "King of Pop." But once they saw something they could make fat ducats off of, all of a sudden there is a programming slot for rap music. So who is benifiting financially from hip-hop if the artists or the people that it is created for aren’t? The rap industry would’ve survived just by word of mouth. N.W.A.’s "Niggaz 4 Life" album was proof of this. That particular album made millions without airplay or video play.

MTV also chooses what they want viewers to see. Sister Souljah’s video, which showed a re-activation of slavery in 1992 America, was banned. But why don’t they ban videos that show sisters in an exploitative, slutty light? Bottom line: the white boys at MTV, the now defunct "Pump It Up," and the rest of the so-called rap shows are making crazy dividends off our music. It’s obvious that the only way our artists will be compensated for their talent is if we begin to implement a system of self-sufficiency that focuses on the betterment of ourselves and our community. Hip-hop is a black business that has been capitalized on by Europeans. And this is the irony of the situation. Hip-hop was created by African-American men to give themselves a voice in a society that has always sought to silence them. Hip-hop is a culture that was created for children of the ghetto to channel their frustration against the society that oppresses them. It gives African-American youth a sense of belonging and acceptance that they will never be able to receive from a white-dominated society, and allows us to create ourselves and our own style, artwork, language, and music. In an article written by Sister Souljah in the October 1992 issue of RapPages, she stated, "Having grown up with Hip-Hop, I always considered the drums and beats and bass to be strong and moving. It captured the feeling of the energy of our experience in White America and reestablished Black masculinity, rebellion, self-instruction and information distribution." But now the main people getting paid off of our voice and culture, created to fight off our oppression, is our oppressors. Now, that’s a trip. Exploitation in its purest form.

These artists, who are so outspoken about keeping hip-hop from being exploited, need to put something in the communities. We need to start investing in improving the ghettos, buying out so-called major rap labels, and creating our own business out of our own artform. Hip-hop has so much potential as a base for creating an economic and political system for African-Americans. All the black money that is put into Cross Colors, rap tapes and cd’s, and magazines like The Source, should be put into building commu-
After about 14 years of used-gear, cars and move out the temp perform. They're idols. Period. The only time you get close to them is when you pay $20 to see them perform. They're idols. Period. And after about 14 years of a used-to-be underground artform that now makes millions - the black ghettos still look the same: nothing but hairstyles and tennis shoes.

And what's with this separationism in the industry? This posse and that posse, when folks need to do like Arrested Development said, "Come together and unite." The scenario that went down with Roxanne Shante was just wrong. Her big dis album, "Big Mama" was brought on by this quote from her in RapPages from the Women in Rap concert: "This is what happened. I got there and they were like, 'Well this one's going on first cause she's a star; this one's going on last; this one's doing this; this one's doing that; she gets a big dressing room." Huh?

Then Yo-Yo, on the same subject, in the same magazine said this: "They have to sell some albums, like in Shante's case. I think she wants to be down with the sisters more than ever. She can say she doesn't and all that. Her whole gripe was she tried to be our friend. [On the Jane Show] She was telling us why she disussed us, explaining the whole routine. She said she tried to be our friends, and we weren't having it." What's up with that? She should automatically be down cause she's a sista. And same with Dee Barnes (Sista Dee). Did she have to be down with anyone's posse to get some support when Dre (from N.W.A.) jumped her and beat her down in public over something she had nothing to do with? (Check the December 1992 issue of The Source magazine for the whole story on that.) She's a sista and we need to start being more concerned with being a unit of culture, not Head Bitches in Charge.

It seems that rap's purpose has been lost. We used to think rappers were our last hope for a wake-up call. Where are the Gil Scott-Heron's, The Last Poets, Chuck D's, Sister Souljahs, Malays and Garveys? Are we going to allow something that brothers and sisters busted their asses for to be exploited like jazz? In the late Miles Davis' autobiography, he said: "I heard that Max Roach said that he thought that the next Charlie Parker might come from out of rap melodies and rhythms." If one of our own musical geniuses said this about hip-hop culture, what are we doing to make this come true? Rap is not to better blacks anymore, it's to better that pocket. What is going to finally happen to open our eyes to the shit that is going on under our noses?

"I am mad because I understand, and anybody who is not mad does not understand or feels everything is cool cause they have nice kicks and gear and fuck everybody else, as though kicks and gear ever represented any remote form of power in this society. I'm rational because I know I have options, because my intelligence and creativity generates options, and therefore I can help people."

Sister Souljah
"They send us to Vietnam and brag about what good fighters we are. It's legitimate for a Black man to go over there and kill 30 Vietcong and get a medal, but you come back here and kill one racist red-necked, honky, camel-breathed peckerwood who's been misusing you and your people all your life and that's murder. That's homicide, because the white man has the power to define and legitimize his actions. He can legitimize violence. At this point we must address ourselves to defensive measures, something that will counteract that violence."

-"Die, Nigger, Die!" by H. Rap Brown

"Stick 'em up, stick 'em up! I got the jammie to your guts, punk, don't make a move before I chose to make your guts run all over the block 'cause my stomach's in a knot and it grows 24-hours-a-day around the tick-tock..."

-"So Ruff" by Redman

During the time of the L.A. uprising I remember going to meet with a group of friends to organize African-American students on campus to channel their anger in productive ways. While at the meeting we got into a discussion about the taped beating of Reginald Denny, the white truck driver that was pulled out of his vehicle and beat by four young black males.

As the conversation went on, one girl said something about, 'Y'all, I know it was mean, but something about that look that one boy had - that little hop-skip-kick he did..." and as she acted it out, we all busted out laughing. I laughed so hard that my stomach was hurting. But as all the laughter died down and we composed ourselves enough to continue with the organizing, I realized that we had just exercised ourselves; we were purged.

Time has a tendency to make us forget a lot of things. But I never forgot that laughter and I never forgot those four boys, whose faces were plastered on every newspaper for weeks. The L.A. Four, they called them. And unlike the four cops who beat Rodney King down like a dog in the streets, they are currently facing a trial which might put at least three of them in prison for a long time. There were times that I wondered why they will surely be convicted for doing the same thing the L.A.P.D., and other police forces across the country, do on a regular basis (Rodney King's beating isn't the only case of police brutality which is racially motivated). However, I didn't waste my time deliberating it for too long because deep down I already knew why.

At a speech I went to one time, the speaker said, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." White people have a long history of fearing black people. From the time slave ships docked on the 'New World' there has been evidence of that fact. They kept us from speaking our native language for fear that we would plot against them, and they wouldn't know it. (But we did that anyway, in the so-called "Negro Spirituals."). They kept us from learning how to read for fear that freedom and power came in the
The Dichotomy of American Violence

form of literacy (now some of us can't complete a book if we were promised a $100 for the summary.) Sports teams and schools were kept separate for years for fear that Africans would take over and excel in areas that whites had previously dominated. (Now look at the N.F.L., N.B.A., American League, and National League; I wish I could say the same for the school systems, but check out what I said about reading.) The list is endless. White people have lived for years in conscious and unconscious fear of African people; this is why those four young men are facing prison today, and why the police were pardoned for doing what they did to Rodney King.

Nineteen-year-old Damian Monroe Williams, one of the L.A. Four, is allegedly a member of the Eight Tray Gangster Crips. He is also the one, according to media reports, who hit Denny in the head with a rock and did the dance that left me in stitches. It is no secret how many of the communities in South Central live in fear of the gangs which terrorize their neighborhoods. And while Williams may have been dope slanging, gunning black folks down for wearing the wrong colors, and passing out beat downs like government cheese, nobody said anything about these atrocities. Where were the FBI cameras to film all of that? Why didn't America see any footage of Williams, or any other male in the "L.A. Four," popping black folks over the head with rocks? Well, because as it has been said time and time again, "As long as it's going on in the Black community, no one cares." So one fine day in L.A., with the tension running so high we could have probably conducted electricity off of it, those same four males pulled a white male out of a truck and beat him within inches of his life. And the no good niggers even have the audacity to be flippant about it, smiling, doing dances and such nonsense as that. Well, I never.

Precisely. Which is why no one seems to want to address the situation head on.

Sister Souljah explained it to the best of her capabilities when she told a reporter for the Washington Post, "If black people kill black people everyday, why not take a week and kill white people?" Souljah was attacked by the media and by president-elect Bill Clinton for this statement, but I knew exactly what the
sister was saying. She wasn't-condoning the behavior, she was explaining the logic behind it. But white people, in their perpetual fear of Black revolts, thought that Souljah was condemning and encouraging Black people to pull white folks out of trucks and beat them down. To put it as up front as possible, black folks don't put that much thought into plotting the demise of white people. However, if we did we wouldn't have to do it through violence. As discussed in Dr. Frances Cress Welsing's book The Isis Papers, white people make up the minority of the world. There are more people of color across the globe than whites. Therefore, if Africans wanted to annihilate white people, we could do that genetically-through making love. And to prove the legitimacy of this theory, listen to the rantings of the Ku Klux Klan on Oprah, Donahue, or any other talk show. They adamantly fight against this annihilation by telling white women to have more white babies. But that's a whole 'nother article.

Violence pervades American culture. It's in everything we study, and everything we watch. Damian Williams, Henry Keith "Ki-Ki" Watson, Antoine "Twan" Miller, and Gary Anthony Williams were four black males whose livelihood, most likely, was centered around violence. Their police reports, expounded upon in an article titled "Denny Suspects Are Thugs to Some, Heroes to Others" in the May 25, 1992 edition of the Los Angeles Times, showed that criminal acts were not something unfamiliar to any of these males. But they didn't become real public enemies until they beat down a white man. The defense attorneys for these young men have been investigating whether or not Reginald Denny may have provoked his attack by using racial epithets and gesturing to a crowd of protesters. Why didn't anyone question what he was doing by attempting to drive a semi-truck through a neighborhood that was obviously a war zone at the time? There is no question that what those four males did was wrong. But to paraphrase what Souljah said, what makes white people think, and black people for that matter, that those four brothers were going to suddenly be non-violent in the center of anarchy? And what makes white people think that their skin color exonerates them from being a victim of the same wrath that members of their culture dish out everyday?

I know that many of my African elders may be upset with me for coming to the defense of these brothers, because, inherently, Africans are non-violent people. We don't appreciate or accept violence for the sake of violence. At least not deep inside; it doesn't sit right with our souls. And perhaps this ideology is a generational thing. Perhaps this new generation of so-called African-Americans that I am a part of does not take head-whippings with the grace that our ancestors did.

I've heard people say to me that two wrongs don't make a right. Well, that's true, but I think if we look back on history hard enough it's clear to see that there has been more than one wrong perpetrated against people of African descent by white people. And I'm sorry, but one white man getting beat down by four black men does not equal out to 60+ million Africans being affected by the enslavement of them and their ancestors, the numerous black bodies that hung from Southern trees, the numerous, faceless black women raped on slave ships, in slave quarters and in auction, trading centers. It doesn't equal out the deaths of El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Yusef Hawkins, the four girls killed in the bombing of an Alabama church by white supremacists, the four civil rights workers killed in Mississippi during freedom summer, George Jackson and the other Soledad brothers, the many brothers in the Attica uprising, Malice Green, killed by the Detroit police on Nov. 7, 1992... although I could go on, I see no reason to continue. This also doesn't start to mention the number of people like Assata Shakur, Mumia Abu Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Eldridge Cleaver and so many others who have been violated by the racist judicial system in the United States of America.

"One persons terrorist is another persons freedom fighter." No, the beating of Reginald O. Denny by the L.A. Four did not bring me any closer to mental and emotional emancipation in this country, nor did it do that for any other African, in America or world wide. I am not seeking to romanticize the lives of these four black males, but I also refuse to condemn them. People who have been victimized have a tendency to victimize others, and being a victim of white supremacy in this society myself I understand this mentality and strive to obliterate it in my own life. I am well-aware of the brutality that these four black males exhibited on Reginald Denny, but I am also aware of the same brutality documented in text books against my own people. And the sad part is that this brutality continues today in various subtle forms. No, they did not bring me closer to freedom in America, but for five minutes in a small dorm room with four of my friends, the flippancy and anger of those four boys gushed out of our broken spirits in the form of laughter. Laughter that was filled with hysteria, exhaustion, and hostility. And watching them beat down one white man, even though they will pay for it with their lives, prevented me, and probably many other African students in this country, from doing the exact same thing to some other "innocent" white person. So perhaps in a very abstract way those brothers are my freedom fighters.
When enrolling in college, we tend not to think of all the red tape and ludicrous policies that are involved in the process. Of course, in order to be in college, we must fill out applications and sign contracts. But we don't realize the depth to which our signatures will take us. One of those questionable contracts is Kent’s Residence Services room and food plan.

The room and food plan, which is one contract, is familiar to all residents. But what happens when a student claims that the food division of the contract is not feasible - whether it is for financial, religious or health reasons? A lot of students would assume, as many have already, that there would be no problem with being released from the food plan.

That is all but true. Students requesting to be released from this misleading contract are in for a long process that (in most cases) ends in denial.

"Most students ask to be released from the food plan for financial reasons," Joette Siertle, assistant director of Administrative Operations for Residence Services, said.

Bruni Cline, resident director of Koonce Hall, said, "If students provide Residence Services with information proving that they are in a bad financial situation, they would be released from their contracts."

That was hardly the case for one Kent student, Michelle Dale, a junior business major, requested release for financial reasons. She was instructed by Randy Wood, the resident director in Wright Hall, to submit a variety of information regarding her financial situation. She provided Wood with information that proved she was in a financial bind. Two weeks later, she said she received a letter that read, "This letter is to inform you that upon initial review of your petition... the request has been denied. Insufficient funds are not considered acceptable reasons for release from the food plan."

"I don’t understand why the University is so insensitive to our needs," Dale said. "Well, actually, I know why, but it's not fair for them to get away with it."

Another student, who wishes to remain anonymous, was in a similar situation. He wrote a letter stating that his de-registration was inevitable if he was not released from the food plan. He said he received the same letter.

"Now I can’t finish out the semester because all this damn University is interested in is my money," he said.

Siertle, who is also in charge of contract releases, said, "The only way students can be released from the food plan is if they provide information showing unforeseen changes dealing with financial stability. For example, a parent being laid off."

Freshmen and sophomores are required to live in residence halls, and therefore, have no choice but to sign their contracts, or not be permitted to live in the residence halls. If they are not permitted to live in residence halls, then they are not permitted to attend Kent State University.

"In the housing contract, spaces are provided for freshmen and sophomores where they have the option at the beginning of the academic school year not to be placed on the food plan," Siertle said.

But, that is not true. After reviewing a contract, nowhere did it state that students had that option. However, there are spaces provided for juniors and seniors not to be placed on the plan.

In a later interview with Siertle, she said there was a separate exemption form that needed to be filled out for underclassmen to be released. On the phone, however, she said it was on the contract.

"There is yet another glitch: to get the exemption form or to send in another form to get the exemption form. Students do not know that such forms exist because Residence Services does not make the information known to contract signers, except when asked."

Students may also wonder if Residence Services even cares if a student was de-registered because of being denied release from the room and food contract. Siertle's only reply to that question was, "the contract is legal and binding."

She added that if a student's request is denied, he or she is able to discuss it with Constance Foley, director of Residence Services, and that she has seen Foley grant a few requests. She also said students have been told that Foley was available for them to discuss their situations "only if the students requested it."

Though Siertle said her office keeps no record of students who were forced to leave school because of denied requests to be released from the contract, there are about 80 requests, and only 40 percent of those requests were granted.

Many residents may think this does not affect them. But some students realize, unfortunately a little late, that they are in a financial bind. No matter what the situation may be, students should not be forced into signing these contracts without being given the proper information on the process, or other available options.

This is one of the University’s ways to make sure it receives as much of new students’ money as it can get, and in recent years, the cost of the food plan continues to increase. Senior Pan-African Studies and Psychology major Andrea Duvall said, "When I came in the fall of 1989, the food plan cost $595. The following year it jumped to $625, then $665 the following year. Currently the food plan costs $705."

Of course this University needs money to survive, but are the administrators willing to forsake our education for $705?

by Michael Lawrence Dale
Uhuru investigative reporter
The Year 2000 vs. the Black agenda:

the African-centered educational paradigm of survival within the revision of the New World Order

As European countries revise their world objectives and collectively work to homogenize their desynchronized agendas, and systematically eliminate their intraspecies aggression (regarding other Europeans), they are bringing into fruition their vision of a Eurocentric homeostasis politically, socially, religiously and economically. Consequently, this will leave Black America more learned helpless (i.e. conditioning that results in demotivation of behavior) than ever before, due to the fact that America will no longer have ample conditions for its redirected behavior (as with the Cold War agenda between America and the former U.S.S.R.).

For this reason, as Europeans move toward January 1, 1993, and the year 2000 regarding the New World Order (i.e. the unification of European nationalism geopolitically, socially and economically) Black people are in need of an agenda that expresses more than just their dissatisfaction with social, political and economic issues.

Indeed, it is a fact that Blacks are a profound enigma within the eyes of the "powers that be" due to their repeated, profound resilience in the face of adversity (i.e., Eurocentrism). But, nevertheless, resilient does have a threshold and will collapse; indeed, the New World Order is just the catalyst to bring this about.

Therefore, the hostility regarding Blacks vs. Whites must no longer be expressed in literary fashion; in negotiations with the European powers in armaments or in culturally diverse verbiage, but only in the total elimination of the paradigm that is evolving into a New World Order. Then, and only then, will Blacks establish a foundation that will enable them to reestablish their Afrocentric (i.e., African genius and African values, created, reconstructed and derived from their history and experiences in their best interest) paradigm of survival to thwart the destructive variables of the African nations, peoples and culture.

For this to come about African people must be synchronized to balance the scales of injustice, and to effectuate a lasting and profound change regarding their need to express their collective and individual rights inherited as a people that can manifest equity, and the healing balm that can return African people back to their rightful place in this world: as children of Moa.

For this situation to manifest itself, Blacks must revolutionize their minds away from Eurocentrism and its passive, soothing rhetoric of persuasion, and reconstitute the African-centeredness that has become a dry Sahara, so to speak, within the minds of many Africans and Africans in America. The reason why this is one of the most productive options for African people is that Eurocentrism is an eclectic catalyst, due to the fact that there are dimensions within it that can right all the wrongs that Africans have undergone, repeatedly, as Europeans have revised their agenda throughout our diaspora.

In contrast, Afrocentrism is useless if Africans do not use it as their shield and buckler, so to speak, to offensively and defensively maneuver their way out of the clutches of this Beast: The New World Order.

Truly if Africans are desiring emancipation from the deprivations of America they must exercise their African right and educate themselves toward an African-centeredness.

This issue of education is truly the most viable and tangible option in order to prepare ourselves for an Afrocentric agenda because Africans will not become Afrocentric via osmosis. Thus, those African Americans that are revived back to their aboriginal psyche (Afrocenteredness) must systematically formulate an educational curriculum that will enrich their laggard, de-Afrocentric people.

Indeed, we can no longer leave our future into the hands of those who do not have our best interests at hand. Truly, the New World Order is based upon the foundation of 10 European countries, and their fraternity of European-controlled countries.

Therefore, educate yourselves, Africans in America, regarding the New World Order. Find out where you belong within this agenda, and for how long, and under what circumstances, because your life may depend on it.

by Ovahdayah Israel
DEATH

Photo Illustration

Photos by
Robin Christman
"I see America through the eyes of a victim. I don't see an American dream, I see an American nightmare."

Malcolm X
Number one, we want to know what we are. How did we get to be what we are? Where did we come from? How did we come from there? Who did we leave behind, and what are they doing there where we used to be? This is something that we have not been told. We have been brought over here and isolated.

-Malcolm X

The above passage is excerpted from an address Malcolm delivered, December 20, 1964, to a regular meeting of the then fledgling Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). It is no small irony that, as a people, we may be more isolated from our past and cultural heritage today than at any other time during our prolonged odyssey as Africans living in forced exile in America. This, in the face of a time when more authentic information about that heritage is available in mass circulation than ever before in our history.

Our isolation today is no longer physical, although contemporary American domestic colonialism definitely maintains a physical component; this is to say urban bantustans or so-called ghettos are physically removed or made invisible vis-a-vis "mainstream" society. Our present isolation is more mental and spiritual. Conditions in our communities today attest to the extent to which we have become a deadly danger to ourselves.

The commercialization of Malcolm X must be seen within the dynamic context of what Nigeria's chief Fela Sowande previously called, "the battle royal for the mind of the Negro in America." Put another way, the current commercialization of Malcolm, or the X-factor, illustrates the alarming degree to which African-American popular culture is now being used as a primary weapon in the continuing "psychospiritual" assault on black people in this country.

This was never more evident to me than during those tense televised scenes from South Central Los Angeles showing the uprising of young black men dressed in Malcolm tee-shirts and X-baseball caps beating a defenseless truck driver senseless. That bit of unedited insanity presented the image of Malcolm "mainstream" America has always chosen to depict. The X-factor is a humbling example of our collective failure to teach our young people the true lessons of our history. Our young people appear before us as strangers today, the result of our own bankruptcy. We have unwittingly thrown our young people into the "bloody jaws" of the international commercial marketplace wolves. Most glaringly, we have entrusted the education of our children to a system that does not operate in our best interests. We need to ask ourselves, what is it about us that would suggest to merchants from Asia and the Arab world that they can profitably merchandise African-
American popular culture in American black communities? Rather than blaming another so-called "them" for contributing to our economic exploitation, we need to ask ourselves some extremely painful, and often unflattering questions. We need to look in the mirrors of our private selves to find saving answers.

More than 25 years have passed since Malcolm's assassination. In that time, his words have remained steadfast. His wisdom and insights seem even more relevant and riveting today. We need the clear memories of Malcolm X in these still-troubled times. Malcolm's message that December day in 1964 rings now with an amplified urgency. In that talk, he also pointed out that now we don't even know that there is somebody who looks like we do...(it's) a shame... I mean our own people—we see our people come here who look exactly like we do, our twins, can't tell them apart, and we say, 'those are foreigners.' Malcolm called us to task then. His words are still here, calling boldly to us now. We are in desperate need of his voice today.

In my visits with students of all ages, it seems my opinion on the X-Factor is always the most asked question. Oftentimes, the question is posed in tones of derision, as students take sides on who is wearing what, and what their peers do or do not know about black "history." I think, too, the X-factor is often dismissed or derided by adults who fashionably lament the ignorance of our young people, as if they became ignorant without our complicity. In both cases, I always respond that now, more than ever, is a time for serious teaching and serious study. As adults, it is our responsibility to share our experiences and to teach. It is the responsibility of our young to be willing to listen and to study. If our young people are in crisis, it only reflects our larger crisis as a people. Our boys and girls are at risk. The focus on our men is misplaced. We are an endangered people. In a real sense, the X-factor is compelling us to finally respond.

The X-factor phenomenon is our most shrill siren signal telling us that we must move to de-mystify our recollections of Al Hajj Malik Al Shabazz. We must do so by first placing the former Malcolm Little within the context of the larger historical African experience in the so-called New World. He is neither the hate-filled advocate of violence "mainstream" America insists he was, nor is he the tragically pigeonholed, "By Any Means Necessary," rifle-wielding portrait on tee shirts and buttons that has been X-factor'd into our contemporary collective consciousness.

One of my favorite admonitions to my college students is: We need a tee shirt that says, "It's a black thang, and even WE don't understand." Those frightening scenes from South Central LA and some of the searing hostility coming from some of our young rappers indicates far too many of our young people are already primed to act out their ignorance. Like it or not, rap music is the common language of our young people today. And, like its 1940s predecessor bebop, today's hip-hop culture also has a revolutionary cultural implication.

In terms of Malik Al-Shabazz, our study cannot be limited to The Autobiography of Malcolm X. His autobiography should not be mistaken for a history book. Its purpose is to introduce readers to a sense of Malcolm's authentic voice; a glimpse into his perception of himself. It is him telling his story to Alex Haley. In addition to the autobiography, we have excellent sources to consult. We must understand that first and foremost, he was a man; no more, no less. Although his image has been elevated to the level of cultural icon, we cannot permit that fact to blind to his essential reality as a man, husband and father. Writing in the book Malcolm X: The Man and His Times, edited by John Henrik Clarke, Betty Shabazz states, "I suppose people who only knew Malcolm from his public appearances and fiery speeches couldn't even imagine what he was like as a father... the gentleness he showed was really so profound." He stood as a symbol of the greatest potential of our collective black manhood in the rugged face of the too often stifling consequences of our systematic oppression.

Again, Clarke's Malcolm X provides a necessary focus. The Rev. Albert Cleage writes, "I think brother Malcolm the man is in danger of being lost in a vast tissue of distortions which now constitute the Malcolm myth...I can understand how the life of a man dedicated to the people can so easily become a focal point for the things people want to make that life mean." The whole controversy surrounding Spike Lee's epic film of Malcolm's life has been X-factor'd into a degenerating spectacle of competing ill-advised personal agendas. In fact, the battles being waged over control of the images of both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. will determine how we enter the next century. It has been said that "He who controls the image, controls the mind." Whomever controls the images of these two African-American giants will be in a position to influence future generations of black minds.

Returning to his article, "Myths about Malcolm X," Rev. Cleage goes on to offer this telling observation: "We have a great tendency to turn our leaders over to somebody else. Who is the custodian of Malcolm's tradition? Who is the custodian?...If we want to preserve our heroes, we have to become the custodians of that tradition. Who is the custodian of DuBois? Black people? No, we don't have one thing that he wrote...We have got to become custodians of our own heroes and save them and interpret them the way we want them interpreted. And if you don't do it then you have to accept what somebody else says they said." Toward this end, the absolute integrity of Malcolm's life demands that our interpreters approach their work with that self-same integrity; that selfsame honesty. We cannot distort his legacy in the name of so-called blackness.
More than consulting even the best sources, however, Malik Al Shabazz remains his own most reliable source of information. We can check the accuracy of even our most distinguished interpreters by simply reading him in his own words. Contained in both his printed and his recorded speeches is the true measure of his thinking and his philosophy. At this level, the serious study of Malcolm X becomes an appropriate point of departure to begin a thorough investigation of an expansive African-American heritage. He worked tirelessly to reconnect our experience to the larger world African experience. He died teaching us that we are an African people, still. At bottom, his message was essentially cultural. He understood that the issue of culture placed politics, economics and our social movement in proper perspective.

Listen. Speaking to the gathered delegates of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at a summit conference held in Cairo, Egypt, on July 17, 1964, Shabazz stated:

"Your problems will never be fully solved until and unless ours are solved. You will never be fully respected until and unless we are also respected. You will never be recognized as free human beings until and unless we are also recognized and treated as human beings. Our problem is your problem. It is not a Negro problem, nor an American problem. This is a world problem; a problem for humanity. It is not a problem of civil rights, but a problem of human rights."

Speaking to Carlos Moore, during a taped telephone interview on February 9, 1965, in London, he clarified his position on violence. He responded, "I don't advocate violence and I'm not a racist, and I'm against racism and against segregation. I'm against anything that is immoral and unjust. I don't judge a person according to the color of his skin. I judge a person according to what he believes, according to his deeds and his intentions...the violence I constantly refer to is the violence that the Negro in America is the victim of, and I have never advocated our people going out and initiating any acts of aggression against whites indiscriminately, but I do say...it is time for our people to organize and band together and protect ourselves..."

Ultimately, we must determine the real value and significance of the X-factor in our lives. It can only be negative if we remain passive and continue as willing objects of other people's intentions. It can only be negative if we continue to allow others to shape and define our cultural heritage and identity. On this level, the X-factor is a challenge to our sense of our own collective self-image. It can be a positive development only if we realize that we must determine and control our own cultural icons. We must seize the power to define ourselves. In the final analysis, culture is the primary means through which people determine their own unique ethnic identity. Toward this end, the creation of cultural celebrations and/or observances like Kwanzaa, Juneteenth and Pan-African Festivals, as well as the annual African-American History Month, point us in the right direction. This is to say, cultural workers must necessarily be in the vanguard of our struggle.

The legacy of Malik Al Shabazz is not his alone. Martin R. Delaney. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner. Marcus Mosiah Garvey. The Hon. Elijah Muhammed. Bro. Shabazz did not emerge out of a vacuum. He exists as a part of the larger legacy of New World African resistance and self-determination. In closing, I would return to Rev. Cleage's article, "Myths About Malcolm X." He writes, "He did not want reverence—he wanted people...who could organize, who believed in action, who were willing to go out and sacrifice; and he didn't have them...We didn't have organization enough to protect him...We let him die. The message is the same today, and still we are not organizing, we are not doing the work that has to be done." Our legacy remains alive today only to the degree that we the living keep it alive in our own lives and memories. Does X mark the spot? Have we allowed our young people to become nothing more than unsuspecting, walkman wearing, moving targets. Or, will the X continue to represent our continuing quest to render our collective unknown knowable. For the former Malcolm Little, the X marked the beginning of his awakening, his coming of age. The choice is still ours. He would have us move toward the black light shining brightly inside this seemingly impenetrable white darkness.
**KUUMBA**

**Third-Eye Check-up**
by Hamida Kinge

A plot for ghetto buffering
And tools used on fools
are not only in the courtrooms,
are not only in the courtrooms,
are not only in the courtrooms,
G
cause every truth
K
cause every truth
cause every truth
cause every truth
cause every truth
wheat
wheat
wheat
wheat
wheat
Right down to the food we eat!
(There’s a lie in almost every-
Right down to the food we eat!
(There’s a lie in almost every-
Right down to the food we eat!
(There’s a lie in almost every-
Right down to the food we eat!
(There’s a lie in almost every-
thing we buy...
thing we buy...
thing we buy...
thing we buy...
thing we buy...
Have you checked your fridge
Have you checked your fridge
Have you checked your fridge
Have you checked your fridge
Have you checked your fridge
today?)
today?)
today?)
today?)
today?)

**Go’rei**
by Keita Saad

There is a door that opens to the sea, where hope steps through like a desolate soul and drowns. The pasty colored walls choke back the moans and cries from the upstair’s stolen fruit.

The afternoon stillness is punctuated with a cracking whip and exclamations of terror and pain from below the smell of misery and excrement rises from the holding pit and basics on the warm Atlantic air.

From the rainy season in the rainy season the ramrods join the dropping wine of suffering that plays on the wind like the distant drums.

While the sailors pass the time with card games and rum.

Then by and by a shout is raised from a rock cut perched in the branches of a waving palm.

And with a rattle of chains the herder gathers his stock and everyone waits for the longships that will take them to the NEW WORLD...

Swinging through the links...

So much agony inside...

but he can’t because they need him to pain, to run, to hide...

he wants to erase the tear, the pain, the everyday strain.

Why, oh why is there (is I can’t), He’s torn, He’s scrapped.

Their screams? Their screams? Their screams?

There, without a care, to only scare the audience who hear.

out. Very strong. Too strong, because the limbs want him

weight, but strong when he (they) want to chip down and

so supply and plant-willing to take his weight, their

(they) want (they) want (they) want (they) want (they) want

Up in a tree with his brothers (that), In despair, (but they

Human Zoo

**By Zaneal Foster**
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EDITOR'S NOTE

When the name of Spectrum magazine was changed to Uhuru in the fall of 1989, the writers, photographers and editors hoped that the magazine would take on a whole new goal. The goal: to encourage, promote and fight for the freedom of African peoples worldwide through education using the gift of literacy. At the time, it was a revolutionary idea. One that inspired the creativity of the students involved, and even instigated a little controversy now and then. Semesters went by, different issues came out and it began to seem after a couple of issues that the hardress of the magazine's content and images were weakening, softening. Some people were involved did their tasks half-heartedly and as old positions opened up and new people filled in their spots, it sometimes seemed that the magazine, originally repositioned to educate and liberate African/African-American people, was losing its strength.

Which leads us to the dual theme of this issue.

African people in all the diaspora of the globe have dealt with different levels of death. Prior to imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism (all of which were imposed upon people of color by Europeans), Africans lived in a productive and holistic way which was imperative and incumbent upon our survival and evolvement, mentally, spiritually and physically. Different cultures from around the world traveled to Africa to be taught the secrets that kept our continent in such health and advancement (read Stolen Legacy by George G.M. James). But eventually greed and jealously took over the continent and its people in the name of so-called "civilization," and as a result of that "civilization," the people who were the original inhabitants of the Center of the World's Culture and Education were pushed out, pushed off, stolen, murdered, sold, lied to, enslaved and deceived. All the lessons of life that were taught were lost somewhere in our collective memories. Africa, the mother of real civilization and advancement, was raped and destroyed. So after several (unfortunate) turn of events, here we are in America, and Africa is now nothing but a place of half-clothed natives and spear-chuckers, in our twisted, reshaped memories.

This is the Death Side. Like the controversial hip-hopper, Ice Cube said on his album "Death Certificate" over a year ago, this is "a reflection of where we (as African people) are today." Many of these images and articles will be familiar to many of us. They are reflections of our communities, our families, and ourselves. Uhuru magazine was created for liberation, not emancipation, which was just another form of slavery minus the iron shackles and ownership papers. It was created to free the minds of African people, not for the comfort and understanding of Europeans, although like in ancient Africa, we hope that their mental freedom will come from the advancement of our own mentalities. But, like many of the ideologies of the revolutionaries in our history (Marcus Garvey, El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, Gabriel Prosser, Assata Shakur, Nat Turner, and Harriet Tubman), this is for the benefit of those who are the offspring of the individuals who were stolen from that faraway Africa.

As you travel through the pages of this magazine, we hope your wake-up call will come, and perhaps like that famous African, Jesus, the acceptance of your death (or as Cube said the signing of your "death certificate") will lead you to what we call The Life Side. Somewhere in the middle of your journey through this magazine to your symbolic grave, dear Negroes,
you will flip, and emerge African. On the other side, the Life Side. It is here where we once again regain our direction of advancement and development. This is where Blackness is a blessing, not a curse; where Africans are not some fictitious, European-created savages, but the knowers and holders of all secrets of life; where our heroes are hand-chosen by us and not by European "scholars"; where we define ourselves and our futures, and risk our lives for the freedom, the uhuru, of the generations of Africans who will follow us. The Life Side is a projection of where we, as African people, need to be.

We hope that this magazine is interesting for all readers, both conceptually and journalistically. But most of all we hope that this will be one more vehicle toward self-awareness and education for African, or for those of you who can't accept that title yet, African-American, people.

In the tradition of those who first re-positioned Spectrum magazine, we bring you Uhuru. In every form of the word. When the struggle is done, peace will come.
WHAT—177m—
ing room struggling to stay awake
I paced from the kitchen to the living
room trying to stay awake
as I awaited the arrival of the rest of
my relatives at my aunt's quiet,
neat home. My aunt's home was
filled with lots of books and other
reading materials, almost to the
point of cluttering the place. The
sofas were plush and lived in, seem-
ing to have my aunt or uncle's
names etched in the wood. It was as
if you knew you were intruding
and the furniture let you know. One
piece had several pillows propped
up on top of each other so as to
allow my petite aunt to easily stand
from a sitting position. As a result,
folks shuffled around adjusting
themselves and the chairs to get
comfortable. Any furniture with a
cane leaning against it was obvious-
ly off-limits...that was uncle John's
rest haven. The kitchen was immac-
ulate. Every piece of silverware,
every pot and pan, had a specific
place. In preparing the food, the
men had no part. According to my
aunt, our mere presence in the
kitchen was a burden. The television
was older, but in good condition,
like mostly everything else in the
house. As the last relatives arrived,
the house was filled to capacity; all
of twenty people.

My father lay half-asleep on the
sofa, tired from the three-and-a-half
hour drive from Akron to Dayton
compounded with a week of twelve
hour work days. As we waited, my
aunt paraded around, proudly
sporting a Sarah Lawrence sweat-
shirt, a gift she received from my
cousin who was soon graduating
from there. She also spoke of my
other cousin, Cheryl, who was soon
graduating from Harvard. Aunt
Mary, like her sisters, is small in
stature but a 'take control' person.
Her size meant nothing, because
even her loving husband, Uncle
Jack, feared her wrath. She had this
resource of nervous energy that only
five-year-olds have. I wondered
where she got it from; her age cou-
pled with cancer could not take it.

My Uncle Jack complemented
my Aunt Mary perfectly. Her sheer
aggressiveness and his stern ratio-
nale with kind words of encourage-
ment created an atmosphere of
security in previous times of tur-
mol. Uncle Jack always looked you
in the eye and left no room for
guessing. Like Aunt Mary, he is
short, but stocky with a killer smile
and laugh that reaffirms his sincer-
ty. He is a man's man and, like his
wife, could not be slowed by sick-
ness. It was ironic that the times I
recall seeing him were always in
Akron. He would visit and greet us
at Grandma's on Thanksgiving with
a chuckle I could hear from outside.
Now we were visiting him and the
inevitability of death loomed over
my head. My uncle struggled to find
his cane in order to stand because
he wanted to appear strong and in
good health as he greeted the newly
arrived family.

The air was filled with small,
individual conversations and laugh-
ter followed by the clearing of
throats, for hearty laughter makes
older people cough. My attention
shifted to my grandfather as he
explained that he could not con-
sume his usual large amounts of
coffee due to an eighty-year-old
bladder, and a long car ride which
did not allow him to relieve him-
self... Grandad started in with his
anecdotes for which he is famous
city-wide. He was affectionately
called "Slicky," for reasons rightfully
unknown to me, and always had a
gift for conversation. Whether it be
stealing home base in his softball
playing days of old with his broth-
ers, or his induction into the KSU
Hall of Fame, he was never boastful.
In my dealings with people I had
never seen a person command so
much respect from peers and the
young without ever once raising his
voice. Everyone was settled and
Slicky sensed that it was time for his
sense of humor to kick in. "Our total
numbers of the combined chair out-
ums that of the entire congre-
gation," he exclaimed. That bit of
insight stirred up more coupling
Lying on the couch, Dad sort of
noded occasionally when spoken
to and added to the conversation
periodically so as not to seem unin-
terested. Betty, my grandmother
gazed into space, regretting to her-
sel that she could not help in the

kitchen with the preparation of the food. Her walker stood close by, ready for service and served as a constant reminder, not only to her but to us that she was not the same.

As a child, I recall my grandmother having the body of some dark-skinned colored girl with muscles rippling through her opaque skin. Like her sister Mary, she was small and without any noticeable body fat. I recall her teaching me to slow dance and vividly remembe how firm and toned her athletic body was. At that time she was running, heading club meeting, cooking, chastising and spanking me and even grabbing my ankles once when I was younger, turning me upside down and shaking me until a piece of candy became dislodged from my windpipe, saving my life. Though incapable of out-dancing or out running us as often as she used to, Grandmother's probing, pertinent life of questioning let everyone know that it was only the "physical" which had somewhat deteriorated. "What classes are you taking?... Are you working?... When will you be graduating?" An unsatisfactory answer, then and now, would lead to a serious rolling of her eyes unseen by any African anywhere.

It had been years since I had visited my aunt's home. The backyard, which appeared to beckon us, the children, to play as I remembered, seemed as vast as a small park back then. Now, it was much smaller with just sparse patches of grass. Before it would have taken me at least twelve somersaults to cover the width of the yard. Now, three adult-sized steps would have me in the neighboring yard, and I could also grasp the clothesline without leaping, a feat virtually impossible in my younger years. I came to the realization that much time had passed and there was more revealing in store for me.

Dinner was cooked as only OUR mothers can with chomping dentures and clanging silverware as a testimonial. Uncle Paul said a short, eloquent prayer and closed it by mentioning all those who were affected by the riots in his hometown, Los Angeles. This was followed by my aunt's declaration: "You all have working hands, serve yourselves!"

I saw smiles despite physical pain and immobility. I also sensed in their eyes and in their strong resounding voices personal satisfaction in that they could commend themselves for a job well done. They raised children in times that were harder than we could ever conceptualize, and their silky grey hair and crows feet were a confirmation of this.

During dinner I glanced at each of my mothers and fathers and I saw more than just sweet-smelling elderly people enjoying one another's company. I saw smiles despite physical pain and immobility. I also sensed in their eyes and in their strong resounding voices personal satisfaction in that they could commend themselves for a job well done. They raised children in times that were harder than we could ever conceptualize, and their silky grey hair and crows feet were a confirmation of this.

The night descended on the day. Everyone had seconds and thirds of the fowl and trimmings. It was time to embark on our short journey home. Being aware of the late hour, my aunt began packing meat and salads in small containers and distributing them to relatives to take home. During the handshakes and kisses, I stood up and leaned over to hug my Uncle Paul. He nudged me away, grasped my hand and shook it vigorously. He and I both knew that there may not be many more hugs like that, but men, particularly we, should keep our feelings harnessed. We agreed. I looked at him and a feeling of urgency swept over me. Slowly and deliberately, he said, "O.K., Troy, good seeing you; good luck..." But what he meant to say was "Take care of the family, do your share, and I love you."

I then went over to where my grandmother was sitting. She looked up as if she were ready to go. I helped her to her walker and then to the door. One hand on her, the other filled with a coat and some food. I looked back and there was Aunt Mary standing behind Grandmother as she struggled to keep her balance. "Go on, be sure not to fall," and I wondered if the latter piece of advice was for my grandmother or for me, for at that moment I knew that there had been a rites of passage. My grandmother was no longer responsible for me. I was responsible for her and the others.

The reunion had a general feeling of finality to it. Some of my relatives were not well and may not have the strength to complete another clan gathering; and it seemed that everyone was cognizant of that fact. So goodbyes were longer than usual to allow for the older family members to get a good look at the youth who were venturing into adulthood.

Everything and everyone were loaded in the car and I looked back and contemplated giving Uncle Paul another hug. He looked back at me as if to say "no need."

We waved, said "see you soon" and drove off. I stared out of the window, pressed "play" on my headphones and wished to myself that I had not outgrown the backyard.
I am sitting in a large and elaborately appointed theater in Lorain. But I am far removed from this setting, transported by the words of the ancient and wise ones who first inhabited this land that we desperately know as America. On stage, a tall Native American stands, two long, wrapped braids fall across his shoulders. Dressed in black, his shirt is adorned with red, gold, and green in a pattern that reflects the art and legend of his culture; he is the vehicle through which the ancestors speak tonight. His name is Wabun Inini (a.k.a. Vernon Bellecourt) and the message that he brings is colored with the blood of the martyrs and the spirit of survival and resistance that lives in the hearts and souls of our Native American brothers and sisters.

In a voice that echoes with emotion and commitment, he gives us the wisdom of the fallen warriors, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph. Through his words we are reminded of those who still fight and sacrifice in the struggle for Native American rights--Vine Deloria, Dennis Banks, Leonard Peltier--and when the lights finally come up you know that you will never look in quite the same way on what our government has done and continues to do against the people who graciously were their hosts just a few hundred years ago.

Who is this man who carries the light of inspiration ceaselessly throughout the Americas and as far away as Africa? Following his lecture a television reporter waits for an interview prolonging further an already long day. I can't help but admire the strength and forthrightness of this brother as he answers the interviewer's questions. Questions with answers that are hard sometimes to take and that cause the interviewer to squirm just a little from time to time.

Finally, the taping is over and this longtime warrior stretches himself out on a chair next to mine. He seems very weary, but you can still feel the current of energy which comes from those committed to the struggle. He ponders out loud about whether or not the channels were clear and if his message came through, if the spirits of the ancestors were given proper expression tonight. My co-chair-- Kabir-- and I reassure him that indeed their presence was felt. But we are all tired and hungry and one more interview must be given tonight. The following is that interview, so kindly offered by our brother and tireless fighter for the rights of his people and the oppressed, Wabun Inini.
Interview with Bro. Wabun Inini on Sept. 24, 1992. Location: Lorain, Ohio

U: Brother, thank you for consenting to do this interview for Uhuru Magazine. One of the questions that a lot of the students ask because you are known on our campus is where was the spark that created this drive, that inspired you to tirelessly strive in this struggle?

W: Well, like most people born into this struggle from being an indigenous person, having come from parents, who lived on the reservation and experienced discrimination on a daily basis. Especially as a child when we were bussed out of the community, into a predominantly white community with predominantly white faculty and teachers. And, of course, we were the victims of racist taunts by some of the children of the farmers who had occupied our land and exploited our resources. So there is a tremendous amount of racial intolerance which exists in that setting. Later on in my formative years, I sensed the... disparities between the Indian people and Indian life and the fact that our people remained locked into chronic cycles of poverty. You could see that our land base was continuously eroding, our resources were exploited not to our benefit while our people remained locked in poverty. So you begin to develop a consciousness even as a child.

U: We can certainly understand that, which brings us to your organization-- the A.I.M. I have the feeling that a lot of African people, even though we have had our own movements, are not aware of how long AIM has been going and what it's actual role is. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

W: First, it is a spiritual movement, a religious rebirth and then a rebirth of dignity and pride in a people. [In] the A.I.M., people have returned to the old religious and spiritual traditions of their tribes, away from the confused notions of a dominant society that have made us slaves in our own unguided lives. So a movement that is first of all, rooted in sacred Mother Earth through our spiritual, social, economic, cultural, philosophical, and political roots. It is a movement that has a solid foundation. And it is a land base struggle-- it's a struggle. The tree of life of our nation as I said is rooted deep in Mother Earth. Through those roots again I will repeat the spiritual, cultural, social, philosophical, economic, and political root, and so if the roots are strong and deeply rooted in the land base struggle, then the tree of life of our people is strong.

U: That brings us to the indigenous people, not only in North America but in Central and South America. What do you see as their main goal? Their wants and achievements is this tied basically to the land?

W: As this colonial pirate that was lost and discovered by the indigenous people of Central America, we see that our oppressor came by way of the Spaniards and the Portuguese to Central and South America. The fact that today from Mexico down there are as many as 85 million people of the population of indigenous people and so, consequently, as our oppressor came from Central and South America-- we know that we had been almost totally wiped out in North America. At the turn of the century, our population figures were down to about 250,000. Of course we knew that there were many more of us than that because the government and the census takers play number games to try to minimize the fact that we are still here. We know that today there are probably as many as 3 million of us in the U.S., 2 million in Canada, but from Mexico on down 85 million. Of the 7.4 million in Guatemala, 85% are Indian, Bolivia the same is true, Peru, incidently, is where a lot of the struggles are going on right now for liberation. So we know that our hopes for the future hinge for the most part on our ability to form a powerful alliance-- a strategic alliance with the indigenous people of North America, the Chicano/Mexicano people, the Compadino movements, the working class movements, and the masses of poor and oppressed movements, including the Indians of Central and South America. Couple that with the millions of African-Americans in North America, the Caribbean and millions in South America. Our task is to forge a powerful strategic alliance of all people of color, then our liberation will be guaranteed.

U: That brings me into our next question. How do you see that interrelationship between the indigenous people and the transplanted people who are (the African people) and what to you feel, if any, should the role of African people in the struggle for liberation of our indigenous brothers?

W: Well, first of all, as you are well aware, we have been building powerful alliances with many of the progressive African-American liberation movements. Not only have we developed ties in Central, South America, North America, but we are also strongly aligned with the PAC, The Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, and the ANC. We know that it is our duty to develop these ties with Africans stolen from Africa and enslaved in the Americas. Basically, they stole the land from us, they continued to build it and exploit the resources on the backs of Africans in all of Central, North, and South America. That makes us natural allies.

U: I know that you've answered this question many times, but could you explain to our readers the vital importance of doing away with the myth of Columbus as well as other historical myths that have contributed to the exploitation of indigenous people as well as your campaign “People not Mascots”? 

W: Well, of course, the landing of Columbus in Central America in 1492 in reality began the Holocaust against the indigenous peoples in their lands. The tens-of-thousands and millions of indigenous people were destroyed in the first 100 years of Columbus and the Columbus legacy. This was the catalytic course that brought about the slave trade
from Africa. We realize that for people to want to celebrate Columbus is like asking the Africans in Azania to celebrate the racist apartheid regime of South Africa, or for that matter to ask the Jewish people to celebrate the rise of the Nazi Empire and Adolph Hitler, or for that matter to ask the Palestinians to celebrate the occupation of their national territory. So we have to destroy the Columbus myth. It is very important because to often in elementary educational curriculums children are taught that Columbus was some kind of great human being, which he wasn't. Part of the process in our liberation is to bring about a new consciousness on the part of the American people about the culture, spiritual traditions, the value system of the indigenous people. In regards to the mascot issue, while there's nothing wrong with the terms Indians, or Braves, or Warriors, or Chiefs-- we, that Columbus described as people of such love and compassion that we would give our hearts if we could-- it seemed [to Columbus] that we were a people "In Dios," in God, and this is where we got the label of being Indians, but collectively we've been oppressed as Indians for 500 years and as Indians we are rising. Many times we accept those words and those labels, but what happens is when you attach that to mascots and professional football, major league baseball, colleges, universities, high school amateur athletic programs-- then we are reduced to demeaning, degrading, stereotypical logos and images. This is a further distortion of our true history. It belittles our culture in a way that we cannot gain the respect of the dominant American culture. The dominant American society-- how are they going to be able to understand the broader issues of water rights, land rights, treaty rights, the rights to give our children a quality education, health care, proper housing, and the rights to control our territories and recover land, break the cycles of poverty. So it's a very important issue in that sense that we're human beings and we no longer can tolerate being mascots for America's fun and games.

**U:** I have one last question. There are many on the campus who are familiar with your work. Your efforts are extended not only in the U.S., but also outside of the U.S. [Nicaragua, Ghana, Mexico], and you seem to go from sun up to sun set 24/7; to what do you attribute the energy and dedication that keeps you separated from home and family from where do you draw your strength?

**W:** Well, first of all, I draw it from the prophecies and the teachings of our great leaders-- many of them martyred in the cause of our struggle. I remember some words of Dr. Martin Luther King who said, if a man or a woman is brought into this world and they don't do anything for their people they might as well have been dead the minute that they were born. I think that makes a lot of sense, because we are in this world for just a short period of time. We are the vital link with whether or not we will survive into the future, whether our children are going to have a better way of life. I think that many of us feel that we have to do as much as we can while we're here in this world, and that's what we need for our children, grandchildren, and the future generations.

**U:** Maybe I should have started with this, but when I've heard you speak you give a greeting in your own language, can you give us the benefit of that now?

**W:** Surely, you know many people don't know anything about our culture-- they don't even know that we have a language. They think that this is our natural tongue, but whenever we speak, and particularly when we share the words of our great leaders who have gone on before us, we always give a greeting in our own language. It goes "buju, oninįį indinuway mugonidu Wabun Inini, indushaynicas shagogi indodain gawababay conicog Onashanabay indaynikowii. What I essentially said was, "Greetings, dear friends. My name is Wabun Inini and I come from the Crane Clan of the great Onashanabay Nation. And I come from a place called White Earth where the Onashanabay or Chippewa people live." And so that's a standard greeting that we give to people whenever we speak.

**U:** Thank you very much, I know that this will prove enlightening to our readers, Peace to you.
“Remarkably human-like, the doll begins to take shape in his hand. The demonic wild-looking man (burnt bacon brown in hue) laughs maniacally as he takes hair, long blond hair, from a comb and plasters it to the doll’s head. A long pin, fired by coals, is stuck into the doll. An agonizing scream sounds in the background.”

The accurately depicted scene described above is: (a) an uncanny resemblance to African magic; (b) a visit to Voodoo in the Americas on late night t.v.; (c) an expose of African retention in the Americas; or (d) both (b) and (c).

The answer is none of the above.

This scene is not an accurate description of Voodoo. The media, however, attempts to persuade the public into accepting such vignettes as real. An accurate understanding of Voodoo must begin in Africa, where its roots are found.

Traditional African society does not have a religion, per se, that can be isolated and defined outside of all other aspects of the African reality. The African’s way of life is his religion, his service and his worship of God. Communication and harmony are sought with the essence of the universe throughout life, birth, coming of age, initiating a trade, marriage, being an elder, death, post-death and all substantial events in between. Familial, tribal and political policy is governed by the relation to the universal principle.

The African, in understanding there is meaning to his life, strives to comprehend and accomplish the destiny which is his to fulfill. To complete his task, he must maintain per-
tionship to all beings. His concern with nature is called paganic. His respect of the deities is called polytheistic. While the African does refer to all nature (found in rocks, rivers, rain, wind, etc.) as God or Goddess, he appreciates them in their assigned tasks as emissaries of the Supreme Being.

God is recognized by the African as being too wise, busy and removed to concern himself with the everyday worries of the average man. His being is so complex that at least three names are used to refer to him in most African reverence. It is through God's intermediaries that man recognizes solutions to his problems and directions he needs to focus upon. Only in the gravest of situations is the Supreme Being, himself, approached.

Harmony is achieved by regularly consulting the deities. This is done through divination and is performed traditionally, every three days. It determines if one is morally at peace with the world. Focus is adjusted and atonements made, if need be, to regain harmonious and productive alignment.

The union of man and the universe is appreciated throughout traditional Africa, but certain tribes were brought to Haiti. With their arrival came each of their own perspective labelings of their relationships with the universe. These tribes included members of the Fula, Mandingo, Ashanti, Fant, Dahomean, Hausa, Benin, Yoruba, and Congo empires of West Africa.

Each group had a system with its own major deities. Characteristics differed slightly. The Africans needed a system, though, to retain their communal sense within the boundaries of slavery. The deities of the tribes with the most people began to fulfill the needs of the group in some instances. Typically, though, many influences of each nation helped shape the new culture of Haiti, created to serve the African in his hostile surroundings. The new culture was called Vodoun.

"Vodoun," inaccurately called "Voodoo," is a Fon word meaning "God." "Loa" is a Congolese word meaning "spirits" and refers to the deities. Participants dance the Nago of the Yoruban people of western Nigeria. The majority of the deities are Dahomean in nature. The rites performed for the deities are part of a system called Rada, a name that refers to a Dahomean village.

Rada centers around a well-organized, agricultural society that lives and works collectively. The deities serve as protectors against threats against such stability. They are fundamentally benevolent, paternal and passive unless the moral integrity of the group is threatened. Such a defensive posture was found insufficient, though, in a world where nothing remained to be defended. A more aggressive system had to be created to cope with the inhumanities of Haiti.

The Petro system was born out of the desperate struggle for survival the African found himself faced with. It was through the ferociousness of Petro that the slaves escaped to the hills, trained themselves and returned to make Haiti a free colony in 1804. Their freedom was not based on a pseudo-benevolence "given" to them from those oppressors outside their culture. It was a freedom regained through a divine power vested in them.

The aspects of Petro exploited by charlatans are what create the vision of "Voodoo" that most people associate with Haiti today. It is this same debauchery that is called "Hoodoo" in New Orleans today. Some know a few of the secrets and others have only heard of them. Together, they seek to profit from the ignorance of others. Magic spells produced for seekers of love, money, advancement and power are sold for large sums of money or other material gain.

The absurdity of such a travesty is obvious to the African mindset. The price of such manipulation is costly. It affects the future of one's eternal soul. For a group of people who consider life to be the seeking of perfect oneness with God, the price is too dear. Irretrievable time is lost in attempting to regain harmonic stability in a world that has already fallen far below its potential.

It has been suggested that slavery's purpose may have been to bring the African mindset to the New World. The rapid disappearance of the culture in Africa certainly adds credence to the idea.

The African American has never quite fit into the dogmatically technological, left-brain oriented society of America. It is his spiritual sensitivity, though, that is needed to balance modern advancement if the human species is to survive. Ancient ways of cultivating the land-working with Mother Earth—productively as opposed to destructively—needs to be reinitiated. The power that built the pyramid did not contaminate the airs its secrets need to be incorporated into today's consciousness. African Americans have the power to tap into their intrinsic understanding and bring about such change.

African culture is undoubtedly doing its part. Vodoun is strong in Haiti and New Orleans, despite the reputation its negative counterparts have generated. Other African systems are as strong, if not stronger, in other parts of the Americas.

The African American is in a unique position of being able to go home again. His culture has remained intact for him to embrace. It could be through his emergence that an important door is opened, leading a people to the shaping of a new promised land.

For further reading:

The Divine Horseman
by Maya Deren

Ita
by Oba Ecn

Tell My Horse
by Zora Neale Hurston

The Science and Romance of Selected Herbs used in Medicine and Religious Ceremony
by Anthony Andoh

Photo by Liz Malby
Which Way is Up?

Islam. What is this way of life that has been rooted in our history as African people? I don't know what it is that draws so many people to Islam, but it seems that many want a little taste but not the entire meal. Psychological chains and images shackled our minds for deeper than we might think. Our minds have become so adjusted to the manipulative power of the slave masters of old and new that our people have begun to dabble and dabble in a little of this and a lot of that. This is dangerous beyond imagination.

Brothers and sisters are losing their minds trying to mix religions that don't mix. It seems that every one wants a little bit of truth but can't deal with all of it. We have people that mix so many religions that they don't even know which way is up. This is not an attack on any one particular group, but the following are examples of the chaos African people in America face in our spiritual lives.

We have a variety of lost lambs. Some of us are trying to be the Nubian Islamic Hebrew-want-to-be Muslim, but don't quite know how to let go of Massa's form of Christianity-in-bed-with-a-little-bit-of-Judaism-too. Then we have Ron Karenga's I-wish-I-was-a-Muslim-I'll-call-myself-a-Maulana (the Arabic name for an African scholar). I'll bite some concepts from Islam and pull them the Nguni Soho and fool black people into thinking that I created a non-religious holiday Daily Day. Can that be?, but I won't take all of the responsibility of being Muslim. And the best joke is the Furrakhanists. The I-swear-I'm-Muslim-but-don't-practice-a-bit-of-Islam—except-As-Salat-Alaikum. My leader is a hypocrite who declares his belief in true Islam when he's with the Muslims, but professes a different story to us, his followers in the temple (a Jewish thing). Can't trust it!

Now don't get us wrong. We are all for anything, or anyone, that does our people some good. In fact, we love anything that does us some good. But this hodge-podge of confusion that reminds us of how scriptures were manipulated and altered, and how this and that was mixed in order to capture our minds, is worthless. This kind of thinking does more damage than some of the other diseases in this society. It does more harm than alcohol and other drug addictions; it does more harm than Massa's Christianity does to African people. It even does more harm than AIDS.

Confusion kills the soul. It takes the life out of us by murdering that thing that elevates man above animals. It blinds us from seeing the true goal—God. Many of us are so confused that all we can do is walk around looking angry and talking foolish. We are so caught up in the problem that we can't even see the solution.

Uncleared Islam is familiar to African people. Our ancestors on the continent, and a large percentage of the African people who were stolen and enslaved, were Muslims. They weren't Nation Black Muslims, they were Muslims who followed the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (p.b.u.h.). Kunta Kinte, Alex Haley's ancestor in 'Roots,' was a Muslim, and he was enslaved in this country long before Elijah Muhammad was a dream in his daddy's eye. Therefore, one can clearly see that the Nation is something that is relatively new and foreign to African people.

Now that we have established that our people are in a state of spiritual chaos, we find it necessary to shed some light of truth on this disgusting predicament.

Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.),

by

Aisha Abdul-Mu'min and
Alieh Amatullah

Photos by Sandy Young
said Islam is easy, people make it difficult. What he meant was that Islam is practical, logical and reasonable, but the human ego makes it difficult to submit ourselves to the will of Allah. Islam is a complete way of life, and those who submit are called Muslims. There are six fundamental beliefs and five fundamental pillars that qualify a person to call him or herself a Muslim. These are the minimum obligations, and if any one of these is missing the individual is not on the straight way, or, as it is called in Arabic, the "strait of mustagim."

The first fundamental belief is the oneness of God. God has time and again told man that He is one all supreme being. In the English translation of the Holy Quran, Allah says, "Say: He is Allah, The One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, Nor is He begotten; And there is not like unto Him." (Surah 112)

In this verse it is clear that Muslims only worship Allah, who tells us in our Holy book that He is the unseen and that He resembles nothing and none of His creation resembles Him. Therefore, those who follow Farrakhan (who is a fair-kahn) are clearly not Muslims since they proclaim the Farard Mohammed was Allah in human form. This is not only ridiculous and illogical but also in direct conflict with the book they claim to follow.

The second fundamental belief is in the Prophets. Muslims believe in all the Prophets the only Allah has knowledge of. There are 25 Prophets mentioned in the Holy Quran, beginning with Adam (pbut) through Jesus (pbuh) and finally with Muhammed (pbuh) of 1400 years ago, being the seal of Prophet sent to man, which means none will come after him. Please note that this is NOT Elijah Mohammed born in 1890, who was the leader of the Nation of Islam. It does not take a math major to figure out there is a slight numerical difference of more than 1000 years. This is significant since many Farrakahn followers claim Elijah was the prophet of God.

The third fundamental belief is in all of the books sent by Allah. Allah sent the books in a pure form. They contained only the words of Allah. The instant man changed humans will stand in judgement before God. This is the day that every person will be judged by the standards established by the Prophet (pbuh) and the book that they followed. This is also the day that excuses of race, gender, economic background or anything of that nature will have no bearing. God will weigh our good and bad deeds to determine our place in the hereafter.

The sixth fundamental belief is that all things both good and bad came from Allah, the Almighty. This means that all things both good and bad come from Allah, the Almighty. This means that nothing
can happen unless God wills it to happen. Satan, who has no physical form, cannot whisper evil suggestions to you unless God so wills. God, who is all powerful, can make what appears to be evil work for the benefit of good.

Now that we have established the six fundamental beliefs in Islam, we can go on to discuss the five pillars of Islam.

The first fundamental pillar of Islam is Shahada, which means the declaration of faith in the oneness of God and that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), of 1400 years ago is the seal of the Messengers sent to man.

The second fundamental pillar of Islam is Salat, which means prayer. Allah constantly reminds Muslims to establish regular prayer. In fact, in the English translation of the Holy Quran, Allah says, "Guard strictly your (habit) of prayers, especially the Middle Prayer; and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind)." (Surah 2, Iyat 238)

Incumbent upon every Muslim are the five obligatory Salats. Salat is a physical prayer that requires Muslims to face in the direction of the Kaaba. The prayers have different positions that require Muslims to physically submit to Allah by bowing and prostrating themselves. In fact, the English translation of what Allah says in the Holy Quran is: "Of those whom we guided and chose whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears." (Surah 19, Iyat 58) Allah did NOT prescribe a sabbath for Muslims because every day, five times a day, we worship. This, of course, would dispel any falsifications expressed regarding a sabbath on Friday or Saturday.

Confusion kills the soul. It takes the life out of us by murdering that thing that elevates man above animals. It blinds us from seeing the true goal - God. Many of us are so confused that all we can do is walk around looking angry and talking foolish. We are so caught up in the problem that we can't even see the solution.

The third fundamental pillar of Islam is Sawm, fasting from sunrise to sunset each day during the month of Ramadan. The English translation of what Allah says in the Holy Quran is, "Ramadan is the (month that Muslims) should spend in fasting." (Surah 2, Iyat 185) It is the responsibility for every Muslim to fast from sunrise to sunset. This means that at sunset Muslims can resume their normal, lawful actions, which include eating and drinking and marital relations between spouses. In the English translation of the Holy Quran, Allah says, "Permitted to you, on the night of fasts, is the approach to your wives... and seek what Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear... Then complete your fast until the night appears... Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to man: that they may learn self-restraint." (Surah 2, Iyat 187)

The fourth fundamental pillar of Islam is Zakat, which means charity. In the English translation of the Holy Quran, Allah says, "And be steadfast in prayer; Practice regular charity; And bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship)." (Surah 2, Iyat 43)

The final fundamental pillar of Islam is Hajj, or the pilgrimage to Mecca. This is a ritual journey that involves prayer, charity and good deeds. This obligation is incumbent upon every Muslim once in a lifetime.

This article has been an attempt to guide people to the truth of Islam. Through this explanation we hope that we have led people to the paths of truth, even though some criticism was used.

All praise is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been ours.
Photos By Robin Christman

FIND LOVE PLEASE!
"Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice...

Our powerful weapons are the voices, the feet, and the bodies of dedicated, united people, moving without rest toward a just goal."

Martin Luther King, Jr.
AFRICAN UPRISING OR SIMPLE RIOT ?
by Idris K. Syed

The dreadlock queen Krista had decided to have a student meeting to discuss the Los Angeles "riots." The meeting produced a visual medium for students to vent frustration and learn about the actual situation in South Central Los Angeles. I remember being glued to National Public Radio, newspapers and other journals to find out what was going on. As usual, and expected, the media focused on the negative. There was negative, but many positive avenues were left completely unexplored—leading to mis-education by all on the subject.

This mis-education perpetuates the status quo in South Central as well as other cities across the country. On Nov. 7, 1992, Detroit police beat a motorist to death. Watch out, there might be "a-burnin' and a-lootin" in Cass Corridor this summer. This is serious. We cannot allow the media to define Africans in America (African-Americans).

Nobody questions the motives for the uprising in L.A. anymore, many stopped thinking about it long ago. It is simply remembered as looting of stores, burning buildings and the senseless beating of white people. We need to break from these stereotypes; we must remember, keep studying and keep working. Forgetting about it won't make it go away.

The phenomenon of a "riot" must be examined. The term "riot" is a questionable phrase used by mass media; uprising, although not perfect, is a more appropriate term. Riots are chaotic; in chaos all kinds of things, good and bad, occur. The roots, or motivating force, behind "riots" tend to be cyclical (i.e. they are based on the same or similar problems.) For example, the State of California Report on the South Central, Los Angeles riots and the Report by the Governors Commission on the Watts riots (1965) were found to be almost identical, but in South Central today, people are more impoverished than people in Watts 27 years ago. The problems which cause these uprisings are numerous and serious. The situation in South Central was not due solely to the Rodney King verdict, the impetus was far deeper than this. A completely failed public educational system, lack of a true social welfare system to provide health care and other vital human services, a brutal, ineffective and often misguided police force and sheer disregard for the community—on a city, state and federal level—shows me that we cannot all get along. If we could, we would not have had a riot at all.

Along with the root problems, there are a series of problems leading up to and following the "riot". In Pan-African Studies there is an article called the "Agitant-Control Cycle for the Strategic Retardation of
Black Political Momenta in America. This piece states six positions which follow one another in a circular fashion. The first stage is radical action/violent outburst, followed by the second—encounter with military/paramilitary organizations (police national guard etc...). After the radical action, in the third stage, analysis, investigation, and study occurs. However, the study is based on evidence provide by a bias, incomplete source such as the media, and, thus, conclusions tend to be incorrect and solutions are incomplete. Corrective programs are initiated, but they are too small and don't allocate enough funding to make any serious progress (State reports, cleaning program etc.).

The focal point which has been neglected by many is the role of the gangs during and after the uprising. Gangs and gang members are very committed to their respective gang; if we could harness their commitment and determination for the struggle of uplifting the oppressed, we would be a veritable force.

During the uprising, there was a call for improvement of Los Angeles. The Bloods and Crips declared a cease-fire and put forth a comprehensive program to rebuild L.A. Only one magazine carried the entire plan, and that was Z Magazine (July/August 1992 issue). The media and the nation have shown such disregard for the positive movement of African people in this uprising that they have perpetuated a stereotype of a completely static, repressive black community. On the contrary, the Bloods' and Crips' plan shows a desire for a progressive, dynamic change benefiting Africans in America.

The plan laid forth five areas which need major improvement: a facelift for L.A., educational reform, law enforcement, economic development, and human welfare.

The facelift for L.A. expresses need for the quick cleaning and rebuilding of burned and abandoned structures. It must be stated that the area of South Central housed more liquor stores than all of Ohio. So rebuilding should include more recreation and counselling centers and should exclude free enterprise which is destructive to the community, and sanitation which will keep the neighborhoods clean.

Education reform proposes a number of areas of reform. There needs to be a Los Angeles Unified School District, with sufficient, updated true materials (e.g. books, computers, etc.). Teachers are to paid no less than $30,000 a year so as to give them incentive to teach well. The Board of Education should be voted upon. There should also be a facelift of the schools; improving outward appearance. Monitors, who are paid, should be stationed in halls and bathrooms. There needs to be stimulus for accelerated education, e.g. stringent tutoring, bonuses for extracurricular education and work, etc. There also needs to be greater focus on curricula which are typically ignored (e.g. Afrocentricity, etc.) as well as the typical English, math, science, and social sciences.

The human welfare proposals are broken down into three subheadings: hospitals and health care centers, welfare reform, and parks and recreation. Hospitals should be more accessible and plentiful in these neighborhoods and that which hospitals can't deal with should be addressed by an increased number of Health Centers which will aid the community rather than make money. Welfare should be disbanded and a state work program, which will employ all able-bodied people, should be instated. The state shall provide only to those out of work. If those without work were put to work there would be no need for welfare. There should also be an increase in the number of parks in L.A.; the need for a physical outlet (playing basketball or swimming) is a must. Also, within this subheading is the need for new stages and theaters to provide non-athletic outlets.

The law enforcement proposal states that ex-gang members would go on patrol with the police and be issued uniforms and video cameras. These ex-gang members must be trained through police training before going out with the force. The police, already on the force, must also live in the areas where they work so as to have more concern and commitment for the community.

Finally, the last proposal is that of economic development. Loans are needed to be given, at an interest rate of four percent; those giving the loans, also, need to lower the criteria for receiving loans. the businesses which exist in the city need at least 90 percent of their employees to be members of that community. If these proposals are met, the Bloods and Crips will put pressure on drug lords to invest their money in businesses within the city, instead of carrying on with their drug trade.

This plan is quite comprehensive.
and will take hard work from all because, as the State of California reported in their evaluation of Watts in 1965, "To travel the long and difficult road will require courageous leadership and determined participation by all parts of our society, but no task in our time is more important." This struggle will also require a great deal of funding. The Bloods' and Crips' proposal calls for $2 billion on the facelift; $700 million for education; $6 million for law enforcement; $20 million on economic development; and $1 billion for human welfare— all totalling $3,726 billion. This is a considerable sum, to say the least, but is needed. When government officials are approached about the need for these funds, the answer is, invariably, "Will throwing money at the situation correct the problem?" The answer is, simply, do not "throw" money at the problem allocate money and energy like what is done for defense. It must be stated, however, that since the government has this condescending attitude towards the plight of urban neighborhoods, it is the duty of the people to correct the problems. We, whether Africans or other people of color, need to organize and come up with our own solutions and implement those solutions ourselves, if the government fails to do so.

To break this vicious cycle of "riots" in our inner cities, we must start to implement hard hitting solutions. We also need to keep abreast of what is going on around us; we need to quit relying so much on "traditional" media sources and turn towards more accurate sources. These sources vary: Listen to National Public Radio (89.7 fm), read journals such as "Vibrations", "Z Magazine", "The Nation", and "Kitabu". These journals are readily available, but if you need more information, leave a note in the Uhuru mailbox at the Department of Pan-African Studies. The next priority is to study—as students, that is our job. What kind of job are we doing? The answer is simple: a poor one. We must have self-determination to excel, we have to do our work-together-in order to unite the masses. We can only do this through education of the struggle. We are contributing to our own demise every time we choose to sit at home and party, or go out and party. We've got to realize that all this partying and procrastinating can only lead to the further destruction of our people. There are a number of different organizations which we must support and be a part of; some of these include Black United Students, Progressive Student Network, All-African People's Revolutionary Party, Uhuru, and Amnesty International. For more information, contact these offices in the Student Center. A luta continua.
Resurrection
by Krista Franklin

What good is it
to worship a man
Whose lifelessons
can't be comprehended?
Brothers be wanting
to claim Christian
but can't even
resurrect themselves.
in their own children.
The Angel of Death
hovers constantly over
the womb from which you
descended and we
continuously kill
ourselves kill ourselves our
souls. Never re-emerging
again. You say "Jesus
was an African," but you
African. Half life

Half death only equals
a quick grave
or a lifetime slave. And
I'd rather be dead than
chained.
You spit into the empty
womb that you once
inhabited. And it is
swollen with the seeds of hate
& rebellion. Lifeless
and barren, just sealing the
doors of your own tomb.
The key that set Jesus
free, buried for an eternity.

Until a Blackman
can show me
how to succumb to death
and return again greeting
me with seduction &
secrets from the ancestral
side
you will forever
be a reminder of
my own breech birth.

(INSPIRED BY HAMIDA KINGE)