

The TRUTH about Kwanzaa

BLACKS IN AMERICA have suffered an endless series of insults and degradations, the latest of which goes by the name of Kwanzaa.



Ron Karenga (aka Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga) invented the seven-day feast (Dec. 26-Jan. 1) in 1966, branding it a black alternative to Christmas. The idea was to celebrate the end of what he considered the Christmas-season exploitation of African Americans.

According to the official Kwanzaa Web site -- as opposed, say, to the Hallmark Cards Kwanzaa site -- the celebration was designed to foster "conditions that would enhance the revolutionary social change for the masses of Black Americans" and provide a "reassessment, reclaiming, recommitment, remembrance, retrieval, resumption, resurrection and rejuvenation of those principles (Way of Life) utilized by Black Americans' ancestors."

Karenga postulated seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith, each of which gets its day during Kwanzaa week. He and his votaries also crafted a flag of black nationalism and a pledge: "We pledge allegiance to the red, black, and green, our flag, the symbol of our eternal struggle, and to the land we must obtain; one nation of black people, with one G-d of us all, totally united in the struggle, for black love, black freedom, and black self-determination."



For more information about African tribal violence and a real look at Black Africa visit: [Welcome to Africa](#)

Now, the point: There is no part of Kwanzaa that is not fraudulent. Begin with the name. The celebration comes from the Swahili term "matunda yakwanza," or "first fruit," and the festival's trappings have Swahili names -- such as "ujima" for "collective work and responsibility" or "muhindi," which are ears of corn celebrants set aside for each child in a family.

Unfortunately, Swahili has little relevance for American blacks. Most slaves were ripped from the shores of West Africa. Swahili is an East African tongue.

To put that in perspective, the cultural gap between Senegal and Kenya is as dramatic as the chasm that separates, say, London and Tehran. Imagine singing "G-d Save the Queen" in Farsi, and you grasp the enormity of the gaffe.

Worse, Kwanzaa ceremonies have no discernible African roots. No culture on earth celebrates a harvesting ritual in December, for instance, and the implicit pledges about human dignity don't necessarily jibe with such still-common practices as female circumcision and polygamy. The inventors of Kwanzaa weren't promoting a return to roots; they were shilling for Marxism. They even appropriated the term "ujima," which Julius Nyrere cited when he uprooted tens of thousands of Tanzanians and shipped them forcibly to collective farms, where they proved more adept at cultivating misery than banishing hunger.

Even the rituals using corn don't fit. Corn isn't indigenous to Africa. Mexican Indians

developed it, and the crop was carried worldwide by white colonialists.

The fact is, there is no Ur-African culture. The continent remains stubbornly tribal. Hutus and Tutsis still slaughter one another for sport.

Go to Kenya, where I taught briefly as a young man, and you'll see endless hostility between Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya and Masai. Even South African politics these days have more to do with tribal animosities than ideological differences.

Moreover, chaos too often prevails over order. Warlords hold sway in Somalia, Eritrea, Liberia and Zaire. Genocidal maniacs have wiped out millions in Rwanda, Uganda and Ethiopia. The once-shining hopes for Kenya have vanished.

Detroit native Keith Richburg writes in his extraordinary book, "Out of America: A Black Man Confronts Africa," that "this strange place defies even the staunchest of optimists; it drains you of hope ..."

Richburg, who served for three years as the African bureau chief for The Washington Post, offers a challenge for the likes of Karenga: "Talk to me about Africa and my black roots and my kinship with my African brothers and I'll throw it back in your face, and then I'll rub your nose in the images of rotting flesh."

His book concludes: "I have been here, and I have seen -- and frankly, I want no part of it. By an accident of birth, I am a black man born in America, and everything I am today -- my culture and my attitudes, my sensibilities, loves and desires -- derives from that one simple and irrefutable fact."

Nobody ever ennobled a people with a lie or restored stolen dignity through fraud. Kwanzaa is the ultimate chump holiday -- Jim Crow with a false and festive wardrobe. It praises practices -- "cooperative economics, and collective work and responsibility" -- that have succeeded nowhere on earth and would mire American blacks in endless backwardness.

Our treatment of Kwanzaa provides a revealing sign of how far we have yet to travel on the road to reconciliation. The white establishment has thrown in with it, not just to cash in on the business, but to patronize black activists and shut them up.

This year, President Clinton signed his fourth Kwanzaa proclamation. He crooned: "The symbols and ceremony of Kwanzaa, evoking the rich history and heritage of African Americans, remind us that our nation draws much of its strength from our diversity."

But our strength, as Richburg points out, comes from real principles: tolerance, brotherhood, hard work, personal responsibility, equality before the law. If Americans really cared about racial healing, they would focus on those ideas -- and not on a made-up rite that mistakes segregationism for spirituality and fiction for history.

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