

# Malcolm X, King: Both Appealed For Loyalty

As we celebrate the birthday of another great American, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., it would serve our interest if those of us who lived through his era, who know best the socio-political dynamics that contributed to the success of the civil rights movement which he led, if we would pause and reflect on the realities of that time. The fact of the matter is that there were two distinct movements that reached their zenith among our people in the decades of the fifties and sixties. One movement can best be described as militant integrationist, the other as militant separatist. Martin was the central figure in the leadership of the former, while the latter was headed by the Nation of Islam, under the spiritual leadership of Elijah Muhammad. There were many local, regional, and national spokesmen for the two movements, and Malcolm X was the unquestioned exponent for separatism.

So we had two eloquent orators, Malcolm and Martin, both appealing for the loyalty of our people to their opposing political directions. The call of the separatists was to manhood, womanhood, strong families, and nationhood, while the call of the integrationists was to economical, social, and political equality within the American system. The American government, caught between a rock and a hard place, decided to tilt towards Martin Luther King and the integrationists. This wasn't decided on the basis of their good heartedness, but on the basis of cold pragmatic politics. The government reasoned that if integration was made to appear as

## One-On-One

### Looking Back At King's Birthday

Martin Luther King's birthday. Did it bring us together?

Many white people will still tell you that it just a holiday for black people.

They will tell you that it wasn't their idea--and that if it weren't for politicians courting the black vote we wouldn't have the holiday at all.

These comments and the continuing debate about the holiday remind us that it is too early for King's birthday to be a time to celebrate a victory of justice and harmony over racial prejudice. That battle is still being fought in the hearts of all people--black and white.

So King's birthday should be marked as the real beginning--but only the beginning--of the fight for a just and open society for all of us.

It must also be a reminder that there is much more to do.

There is something most of us don't like to admit. Many of us won't admit it. But it is true.

The ugly confrontations in New York and Georgia remind us even when we would like to forget.

Our racial peace is very fragile.

Are we still afraid of each other? Are blacks still afraid of whites? Are whites still afraid of blacks?

Yes. The fears and resentments of many years have been moderated and concealed. But they are still there.

We should not be surprised. Most nations with people of different races or different religions have a tough time keeping the different groups at peace with each other.

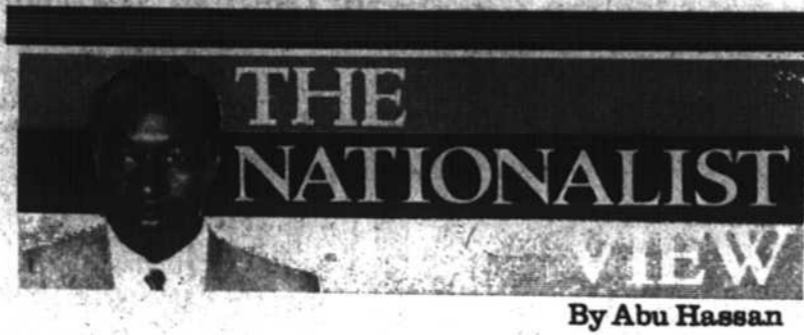
Fifteen years ago we thought that Lebanon "proved" that Muslims and Christians could work and live together in peace and mutual prosperity. Today that same country has shown that such

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By Abu Hassan

a winning cause, we would rally to it and take the wind out of the sail of the separatists whom it feared because the basis of their appeal was national liberation. The government gambled that we would support the apparent winner even though the prize was less than the most desirable. The government won.

In reality, our hard fought-for gains of that turbulent era was facilitated because, from the point of view of the government, they were the lesser of two evils. We had a choice, and we chose the easy course. We forgot that nothing worthwhile and lasting comes easy. We can now see that what the government gave it now takes away. This was their plan all along. The word they used to describe the political strategy of giving for the purpose of taking away at a later time is temporizing. Government chose between Martin and Malcolm, between the granting of civil rights and facing a revolution, and during the period of temporization conspired to rid itself of both men, and did.

The lesson we must learn from this bit of history is that we must have one movement, and every-

one in it must be its leading force. That the responsibility for a successful struggle rests with each and every one of us. Our first battle as a movement must be to make this a struggle of equals--equal in rights, equal in duty, and equal in reward. All for one and one for all. When one ceases to speak, two must speak instead, when one lays down the pen, two must write the words, when one stops to pray, two must watch, and when one drops the sword, two must pick it up. In this way, we will all serve to hold our banner high, so high that if need be, our children will grasp it in their turn. When we are committed to this, we will not fail. On this resolution, I am certain beyond doubt, we will have the blessings of both Martin and Malcolm.

And now as we move to the execution of our strategy to deal with the Howard Beach incident, and beyond, towards the development of a mass organization and movement, let us, each and every one, resolve to be committed to the successful achievement of our highest aspirations, the establishment of our independence, territory, sovereignty and reparations.

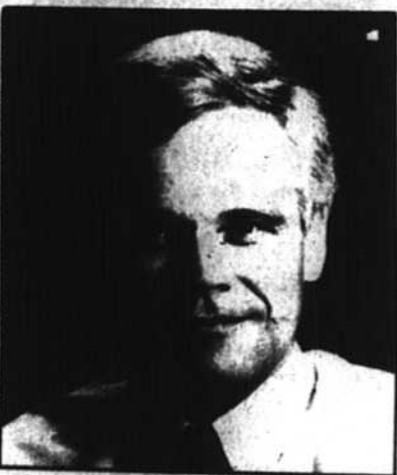
tough to build and keep a community in which blacks and whites trust each other and live in peace.

And then go to work to make it work.

If we don't, we could leave our children less than we have now. Our legacy could be another Lebanon or South Africa or Northern Ireland--and a confrontation between the races. But with tough love and patience and hard work we can leave them Dr. King's dream--and growing progress and commitment to its fulfillment.

Next year, on Martin Luther King's birthday, I won't celebrate a victory that hasn't come yet.

I will celebrate the challenge that people like Dr. King gave us--the chance to work for a community and country where equal opportunity and mutual and genuine respect are more than dreams.



D.G. Martin

accommodations are not always permanent. They can completely break down into civil war.

Could it happen to us? Could it all break down here?

What can we do to hold ourselves together?

First, we should admit that it is

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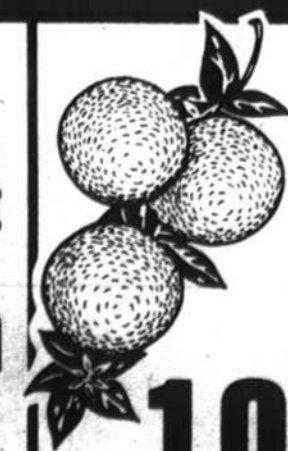
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