

MELODY MICERE STEWART

In the spirit of Ma'at



Up, you mighty race

1997 is a critical year

"In the Spirit of Ma'at"

is dedicated to the practical application of African American historical lessons for the purpose of empowerment. Benefiting from our historical experiences requires that the lessons be placed in our consciousness; this will be the focus of Ma'at in this critical year of 1997.

The Nguzo Saba- Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith- combined with the ancient African value system of Ma'at: Truth, Justice, Righteousness, Harmony and Balance provides an African foundation of values. Their utilization will help us do the inside work necessary for the next level of outside change.

Beginning with Umoja - Unity, it is time to de-mystify the concept and make it practical. The Million Man March is a perfect example of the political power of unity. Not only did the nation become nervous, the whole world looked on in awe. Black people must stop romanticizing the concept of unity and realize that unity takes work. Unity is a process consisting of race-love, working compromises, sacrifices, forgiveness and historical understanding for the benefit of the entire race. It is mature work to be accomplished by a mature people.

Marcus Garvey, the consummate "race man" once said, "Up, up you mighty race. You can accomplish what you will!" Will is the keyword here. As a people who generate over \$400 billion yearly, we have acquired considerable resources but must still cultivate the will (read - unity) to use them to "uplift the race."

Individual African Americans must make a conscious effort and work hard to unify with people who look like us, but have a vast variety of different experiences which have served to separate us. Those different experiences include educational and socioeconomic attainment, religious and fraternal affiliations, upbringing, outlook for the future and even the hue of one's blackness.

How can we individually promote and practice unity? We might reconsider our participation in aspects of our culture which do not serve to cultivate unity and race love. Examples to consider: playing the dozens, listening to misogynistic rap lyrics and other manifestations of intra-race disrespect. We might also consider a conscious decision to be kinder in word and more courteous in deed to others who look like us, for no other reason than they look like us.

The work of unity will require reconciliation: vision, forgiveness, maturity, working compromises, sacrifices, race love, commitment and historical understanding for the benefit of the entire race.

Officer cleared; debate isn't

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"All the evidence we have supports the version of events Officer Marlow described," Nowicki said, after outlining the results of a police Chain of Command Review Board investigation which recommended no disciplinary action against Marlow.

Nowicki made the final decision not to discipline the officer.

"The outcome of the internal investigation only upholds the dire need for Black Monday," said the Rev. Kojo Nantambu, Black Monday coordinator. "Black Monday offers the concerned citizens of Charlotte the opportunity to express concern over the inhumane behavior of the dominant society as it manifests itself in our community."

Cooper was shot once in the right side by Marlow after a traffic stop on Commercial Avenue off The Plaza in east Charlotte.

Cooper's four-year-old daughter was in the car when the shooting occurred and at least one bullet narrowly missed the child as it passed through the back windshield.

In Marlow's account of the shooting, he pulled his .40 caliber automatic pistol after

Cooper "fished" around in the front of his pants and shot the 19-year-old after he bent into the backseat of his car and began to turn toward the officer. Police found Cooper's daughter in the backseat after the shooting.

Marlow told investigators he fired two shots as Cooper turned, then three more after he felt something brush across his face.

Nowicki said he had no explanation for why Cooper would reach into his pants when he had nothing there. No weapon of any kind was found at the scene, through several rocks of crack cocaine were found in Cooper's jacket pocket.

Nowicki said the police investigation determined that Marlow's first two shots missed and that one of the three final shots struck Cooper in the side. The bullet entered under his right arm and traveled horizontally through his body, piercing the lungs and heart before lodging in Cooper's left arm.

The bullet had fragments of Cooper's jacket on it, leading investigators to believe that the jacket was swung at the officer by Cooper and that the bullet which killed him traveled through the jacket, Nowicki

said. Cooper ran after he was shot, falling about 130 feet away from his car, Nowicki said. Cooper carried the jacket, which had a bullet hole in it, with him.

According to Nowicki, Marlow fired all five shots without seeing Cooper's hands, twice as the suspect turned toward him from the car and three more times when, according to Marlow's statement, he was blinded by something brushing across his face.

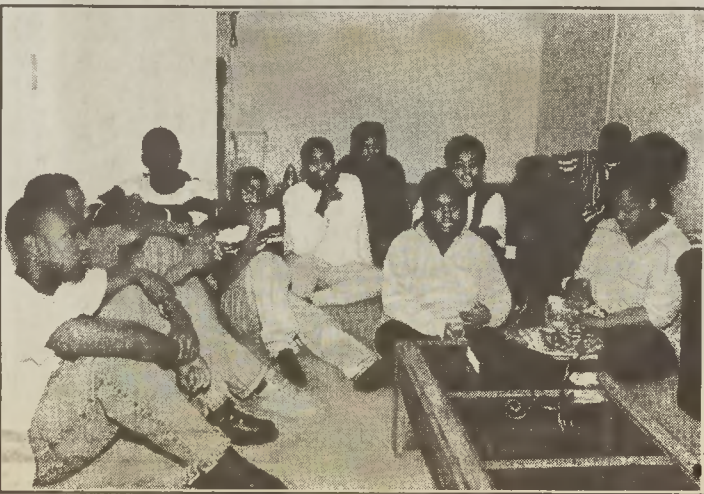
The officer could not recall which of Cooper's hand was "fishing" inside his pants, Nowicki said.

The only statement by Cooper, according to Marlow's account, was "I've got something," said as he turned back toward his car.

There are no other witnesses to the actual shooting, though several witnesses reported hearing an exchange of words as the officer either directed Cooper to get back in his car or get out of the car when he leaned back into it.

Nowicki said Marlow's initial actions were based on his assumption that Cooper was driving while impaired. Marlow thought Cooper was about to run away, Nowicki said, and was not afraid for his life until Cooper reached into his pants.

Young lead grassroots efforts



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Members of Jihad prepare for a strategy session in preparation for Black Monday on Jan. 27.

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which include rallies and a parade.

CFJ member Robert Muhammad estimates membership at about 100.

Central Piedmont's BSO has been active on campus for several years. Members say recent developments have sparked a desire to do more in the community. The group boasts 30 active members.

"Our main purpose is to get this organization on the map," BSO president Talathia McAdams said. "We want to be more involved in the community and in school than the old group was."

From a modest lounge in the Van Every Building at CPCC, BSO members plan protests and strategies. Despite a national lament that Generation X lacks social conscience, members of BSO, where the average age is 20, is trying to prove the opposite. Since the Cooper shooting, the organization has worked with CFJ to help videotape police and organize Black Monday in addition to rallies.

"We had decided because we had joined with CFJ," executive

board member Ted Harrington said. "We needed more of a collective thing to get all of this (the shooting) out of the way."

"We have to educate ourselves before we go out into the community," McAdams said. "We need hands on training and discipline. We need to make sure we have within our club a close knit family."

Some BSO members also belong to Jihad, which is organizing youth for Black Monday.

"We are God implemented and influenced," Glover said. "Charlotte is a sleeping giant that needs to be awakened."

Glover envisions Jihad, which is Arabic for "holy war," as a defender of the poor. The group distributed a survey in the Dillehay Courts neighborhood off North Tryon Street to gauge residents' sentiments on issues ranging from day care to the way management maintains apartments. According to Glover, residents appreciate the group's efforts.

"They are crying out for help," he said. "It is time to roll up our sleeves and go to work."

Muhammad is excited about the new groups, which he says will bring new ideas and energy to the table.

"I am looking at the larger symbol of what this means," Muhammad said. "There has been a resurgence. More of our youth are concerned with the health of the community."

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