

# opinions

## BLACKS ON BLACK

If you're afraid of Black nationalism, you're afraid of revolution. And if you love revolution, you love Black nationalism.

To understand this, you have to go back to what the young brother here referred to as the house Negro and the field Negro back during slavery. There were two kinds of slaves, the house Negro, and the field Negro. The house Negroes - they lived in the house with the master, they dressed pretty good, they ate good because they ate his food - what he left. They lived in the attic or the basement, but still they lived near the master; and they loved the master more than they loved himself. They would give their life to save the master's house - quicker than the master would. If the master said, "We got a good house here," the house Negro would say, "Yeah, we got a good house here." Whenever the master said "we," he said "we." that's how you can tell a house Negro.

If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the

master would. If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" We sick! He identified himself with his master, more than his master identified with himself. And if you came to the house Negro and said, "Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate," the house Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? That was that house Negro. In those days he was called a "house nigger." And that's what we call them today, because we've still got some house niggers running around here.

This modern house Negro loves his master. He wants to live near him. He'll pay three times as much as the house is worth just to live near his master, and then brag about 'I'm the only Negro out here. And if someone comes to you right now and says, "Let's separate," you say the same thing that the house Negro said on the plantation. "What you mean, separate? From America, this good

white man? Where you going to get a better job than you get here?" I mean, this is what you say. "I ain't left nothing in Africa," that's what you say. Why, you left your mind in Africa.

On that same plantation there was the field Negro. The field Negroes—those were the masses. There were always more Negroes in the field than were Negroes in the house. The Negro in the field caught hell. He ate leftovers. In the house they ate high up on the hog. The Negro in the field didn't get anything but what was left on the inside of the hog. They call it "chitlings" nowadays. In those days they called them what they were—guts. That's what you

were—gut-eaters. And some of you are still gut-eaters.

The field Negro was beaten from morning to night; he lived in a shack, in a hut; he wore old, cast-off clothes; he hated his master. I say he hated his master. He was intelligent. That house Negro loved his master, but that field Negro—remember, they were in the majority, and they hated the master. When the house caught on fire, he didn't try to put it out; that field Negro prayed for a wind, for a breeze. When the master got sick, the field Negro prayed that he'd die. If someone came to the field Negro and said, "Let's separate, let's run," he didn't say, "Where we going?"

He'd say, "Any place is better than here." You've got the field Negroes in America today. I'm a field Negro. The masses are the field Negroes in America today. When they see this man's house on fire, you don't hear the little Negroes talking about "our government is in trouble." They say, "The government is in trouble." Imagine a Negro: "our government"! I even heard is in trouble." I even heard one say "our astronauts"! "Our Navy"—that's a Negro that is out of his mind, a Negro that is out of his mind.

Excerpt from "Message to the Grass Roots" (1963) El-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz (Malcolm X)

## The agony and the ecstasy

What would you think if we told you that a student group at Dalhousie was displaying material which was offensive and could be seen as hate literature; materials in which the view expressed was that one group of people was inferior to another? Furthermore, when questioned regarding this material it was argued that it espoused the 'Christian view', going so far as to defend the dissemination of this material as being part of their 'religion'? Would you think racism? Anti-semitism...?

In the past week or so the Dalhousie Christian Fellowship (DCF) has set up a table displaying various books. One of them, entitled *Eros Defiled*, caught the eye of a friend. After being told of the way in which this book devalued lesbians and gays, we decided to approach the group at the table, specifically to question them about their position on gays and lesbians. Smiling beatifically, with an aura of Christian smugness, DCF representatives treated us to a treatise on the unacceptability of our relationship in the eyes of 'God'.

Sarcasm aside, the view taken by the book (and in a certain respect echoed by members of the DCF) was insulting to say the least. The book expounded on the notion that gay and lesbian relationships are a twisted form of sexuality. One of the passages entreated 'Christians' to not reject the 'homosexual' but to 'help' him or her lead a life of abstinence. This is what we would term the classic Christian 'love the sinner not the sin' approach.

The stance taken by the members of DCF was equally offensive. To

paraphrase the discussion: Initially, according to the DCF representatives, the argument was that gay and lesbian sexuality was as morally indefensible as pre-marital heterosexual sex. Thus it would appear that the only problem the DCF has with gays and lesbians is that they have sex outside of church-sanctioned relationships (i.e. marriages). After pointing out that the United Church and the Metropolitan Community Church regularly perform services whereby lesbian and gay couples are 'married', members of DCF were asked whether these church-sanctioned relationships were on equal moral footing with church-sanctioned heterosexual relationships. Members of DCF patiently explained that no lesbian or gay relationship could ever be church-sanctioned. When questioned as to why, they responded with the intellectual finesse of four-year-olds, saying: because "the Bible says so".

Although DCF agreed to remove the book after complaints were made to the Student Council, some of the other material on display had comments on lesbians and gays which were in the same genre as that of the removed book. Even though this group of students professed they were upholding 'Christian' truths while defending their views or their right to display the offensive material, the issue is not one of religion. The issue is the dissemination of hate towards a group of people (people being the sum of their actions — our sexuality

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