

Afrikan "nameless slave" movement not a protest weapon

by Joma Nyakorema Nkombe

The Nakumbuka movement was launched in November of last year, when a group of Afrikan (Black) students from Canada, Afrika and the Caribbean marched in chains from Osgoode Hall Law School to Nathan Phillips Square.

Our mission was to free the mind and heart of "nameless slaves" from museums around the world, where they have been apparently frozen in time and space, or buried in a "nameless" grave. We give them the name Nakumbuka, then build them into New Afrikans, not robots but moun-



Joma Nyakorema Nkombe speaks at York

by wearing the Nakumbuka buttons. This was during the mass student protest against racism in March, 1992. However, problems started after students read the literature linking Nakumbuka with the demand for public inquiry on "race" relations practice at Osgoode Hall Law School, and York University in general. Without trivializing the injustices that prompted the linkage, it was a serious mistake on the part of the movement's leadership to use the concept of Nakumbuka as a protest weapon. The philosophy of Nakumbuka is not about protest. Nakumbuka is a demand on ourselves for complete self-emancipation, physical as well as cultural. Our freedom, dignity and equality can not be realized through declaration by an external power. This must come from within.

For example, are we going to continue accepting second class status in the world we have contributed so much to? Too often we seem to fear that if we displease our "hosts" by insisting on full rights of citizenship, they will ask us to leave "their" country. Over the centuries, we have been enslaved, persecuted, suppressed in and uprooted out of countries that we helped to make great.

Even if our fears are understandable in light of our collective experiences and the misguided perceptions of some who regard themselves as "hosts", these fears do not serve any one. Instead they hold us back from claiming what we produce. Too often we let our warriors fight racism while benefit goes to other peoples, and also to those among us who are too comfortable to put their bodies on the

line for anything Afrikan. It is not those within the community, who are now reaping the profits by selling Malcolm X on T-shirts, baseball caps and what have you. Few years ago we were scared shitless to claim X let alone associate with what he stands for. Now the future Malcolm fought for is left cold and penniless while others capitalize on his popularity.

The painful reality is that we are not pushy or assertive enough for our own good and for the good of those more technologically vulnerable here and on the continent. Despite our LL.Bs and PhDs, deep down we see ourselves as second rate citizens, condemned to the status of perpetual spectators to history.

Clearly the time has come for us to shed our self-imposed second class status, drop our defensiveness, and strike out of our vocabulary the pathological fear of offending so-called hosts. Just as we no longer accept exclusion from the legal, medical, business, and other professions — an exclusion that earlier generations took for granted — we must no longer accept as inevitable that North American presidents, prime ministers, supreme court judges and creators of jobs must have a "white" skin and pointed nose.

The historical truth is that there is nothing that Afrikans cannot accomplish

in Canada and the world, unless we choose not to strive for it. This does not mean there is no racist constraints against Afrikans. Indeed, it is because of racist violence that many Afrikans hold back from assertively demanding equality. Instead we commit violence against each other, grieve, criticize, pray and worry too much about rocking the boat whose owner we fear may ask us to disembark.

We must awaken those long suppressed Afrikan gods and goddesses from within the depth of our hearts. We are talking about the kind of inner strength that once parted the Red Sea. It also enshrined in American constitution the Commandment that "all [human beings] are created equal". Afrikan slaves

were the only people who had the reason and moral right to assert this truth as self-evident.

The time is ripe for major reassessment of the Afrikan situation in North America and the world. We must place demands on ourselves for a change in our attitude towards ourselves, others and

in the attitude of others towards us. This is the central message of Nakumbuka. It is a call for us to seize control over our own destiny in order to ensure that future experiences will not mirror the violent past and oppressed present.

(Joma Nyakorema Nkombe is an Osgoode Hall Law student.)



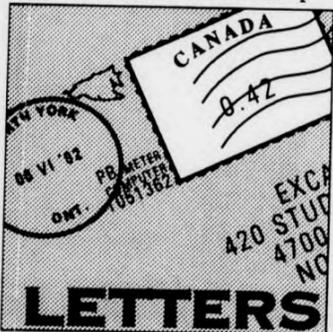
tains capable of raising above personal and regional differences. We vow to defend their freedom and dignity "by any means necessary". The launch has now evolved into the Nakumbuka Education and Action Foundation (N. E. A. F.) with a mandate to spearhead the movement.

Many Afrikan students here at York University embraced the idea



Anti-ISU protest off the mark

We are responding to the anti-ISU protest organized by YFS recently. We on the pro-ISU side were happy to see the good turnout in favour of ISU. Simply because YFS is against ISU does not mean that most York students are against ISU. On most political issues YFS simply represents the views of the so-called left-wing minority on campus. Remember that the current YFS President, V.P. Internal and V.P. Finance all got elected last year on the support of less than 2.5% of the 35,000 undergraduates here at York. The only winner in last years' election who did not repre-



sent this left-wing, Ron Stubbings, was booted out of office by the other YFS executives. On most political issues YFS simply mirrors what we are all going to hear from the York Socialists anyway, the only difference is that YFS workers get paid over \$100,000.00 of student money to tell us. For this reason, it seems that YFS should instead be called HPYS (Highly Paid York Socialists).

Therefore, if these Highly Paid York Socialists are going to take an anti-ISU stance, since they are getting so much of our student money they at least owe us some intelligent arguments to support their stance. For example, we have heard the same abominably stupid argument over and over again that ISU is bad be-

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cause the scientific research done there might be used by the military (and of course the military is bad, very bad). Yet research done in any country has three potential of being used by that country's military. Does that mean that scientific research and progress should be halted? If someone invents a new computer program that is used by hospitals to save lives, but is then perverted by the military into a tool of war, should the research have been banned? Furthermore, we now have the opportunity to have a research and educational institution which is not controlled by any one government but is rather open to scientists from around the world (it is an "international" space university). Is not keeping scientific advancements open to all countries the best way of preventing any one country from using it for war? Unlike the image that HPYS portrays, the ISU board of directors is not just made up of bad (very bad) American businessmen. Americans represent only 9 of the 23 board members. The others are from Russia, Japan, Canada and the United Nations among others.

Another "brilliant" HPYS argument is the one about the evil Ontario and Federal governments offering to pump millions of dollars into the ISU project while students here at York are in a financial crunch. Well wake up and smell the marijuana HPYS! If the government did not invest money in research and development, then we would really be in a financial crunch

when we enter the workforce to find that the only jobs available are at McDonald's and Burger King. The future of Ontario's economy depends in part on the creation of an infrastructure that will better enable us to develop and utilize high-tech. We would like to challenge anyone at HPYS to an open debate on this issue which could be arranged through the York Debating Society or some other student club.

Yours truly, Royal Morton
Adam Woodward
Matt Judge
Brian Lee
Takato Yamashita

Improve services to the disabled

I read with interest Sara Singer's article about Judy Rebick (Sept. 30 1992). When the issue of decreased services to the disabled under the new Constitution was suggested, it hit a strong nerve.

I spent two weeks in Montreal this August, and discovered that many severely disabled children and young adults lack support services which are present in Ontario and Manitoba.

As the principal care giver for a 19-year-old youth (my son), I am always looking for additional programs and services which might benefit him. In Quebec, many people like my son do not have the opportunities, and the therapeutic programs, he has participated in since the age of seven.

I have spoken with other families from Alberta, Quebec, Manitoba and New Brunswick through the Canadian Mental Health Association networking. I've learned that Manitoba has the housing facilities badly needed in the other provinces; and that the work offered to the handicapped in New Brunswick pays practically nothing, while in Ontario they get at least minimum wage; and that throughout Canada the exploitation of the handicapped, not to mention the neglect and the stigmati-

zation, is dreadful.

In all provinces, the support services, housing, education and recreation programs, transportation and employment opportunities are sadly lacking. Maybe with a "Yes" vote, we

can bring the provinces to work together in harmony to provide those services for all disabled Canadians.

I. B. Iskov
Part-time mature student



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