

opinions

BLACKS ON BLACK

CHAINS OF SLAVERY WE LET BIND US

In an era of consciously aware generation, young Black adults are clamouring for a host of changes. We want a curriculum reflective of our achievements and contributions. We want equal access to those institutions that have historically been opposed to Black participation. We simply want a world that is colour-blind in terms of opportunity but recognizes the fact that "Blackness" is a statement of who we are. But is the greater society to blame for the racism that permeates our lives? Or must we too accept part of the responsibility for our present condition?

Indigenous Black Nova Scotians have been subjected to a school system that promoted slavery as our

beginning, among other stereotypical images. We know the story: Europeans discovered the Black man in Africa; we then were taken hostage but our lives began in North America. Egypt was never part of Africa, and our African Queens always looked like Elizabeth Taylor. While all evils at some point are addressed, a lack of positive culture content was seen as adversely affecting young Black minds. Some time later however, there remains a significant complaint because implementation is not as swift as we would like. But why must we wait for a watered down account of our history?

Too often we become too complacent with those in institutional

power. Unfortunately, we look to others to affect change and we wait. And consequently we end up waiting too long. Ignorance is not bliss! We must take the responsibility upon ourselves to seek the truth. Black interpretation of Black history overwhelmingly contrasts others' interpretation of Black history. Give yourself the power by making a commitment to your Blackness. Cry "BLACK PRIDE" but have a basis for your resolve.

If you were to question any Black person what the key to change is, no doubt the majority of respondents would cite 'economic independence.' Our oral history tells us that life was grand when we owned and operated hair salons, convenience stores, daycares, nightclubs. When the dreadful concept of integration was introduced, we were only too willing to patronize white establishments. The result - our businesses and ultimately our people, failed. While that was then, not much has changed and apparently, we have yet to learn from our mistakes.

How many of us have been turned away from downtown clubs because we did not have an ID? How many of us were turned away because our gold chain was deemed a possible weapon? How many of us paid a five dollar cover charge when the 'man' behind us paid three? And how many of us end up standing in the corner because we cannot get off house music for three straight hours?

I have yet to understand why we frequent overt and covert, racist bars. There once was a time when we had no options BUT to go downtown. Then there is the argument that Blacks have the right to go wherever we want. I have even considered the idea that "downtown's changed. It

kicks now and everyone goes." But if economic independence is truly the key, why not put our money where our mouths are?

In order to control our access, finances and ultimate independence, we must re-invest in the Black community. When you re-invest in the Black, you slowly cut those chains that bind us. Passivity is not becoming us. Blacks must start taking an active role in addressing all the chains that WE let bind us. Give the edge to Black. And while you are at it, next time you reach for "GQ" at the newsstand, think about picking up "EM" instead.

Quenta Adams

Letters

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who have the means to ignore punishment? What kind of skewed justice has the DSU accomplished by closing off any possible avenues of education and awareness, when the individual happens to be a student? It is both obvious and disturbing that the DSU places undue importance on an individual's level of power, thereby unfairly tipping the scales of justice.

Viven DeCoste

Violence disqualifies conscience

To the editors:

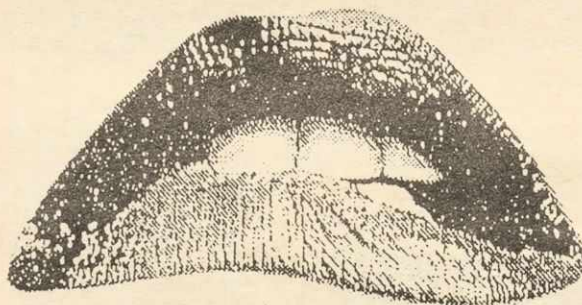
In Alex Boston's recent review of the Robert Redford movie "Incident at Oglala" he makes certain claims about Amnesty International's recognition of Leonard Peltier which I must correct.

Amnesty International does not use the term "political prisoner"; any person detained for his or her peacefully held political beliefs, religion, ethnic origin or sex is a prisoner of conscience. The American Indian Movement of which Mr. Peltier was a leader did commit acts of violence, therefore Amnesty International does not consider him a p.o.c., but does have concerns over irregularities in the proceedings which led to his conviction, extradition from Canada on the basis of evidence which the F.B.I. admitted fabricating, and the withholding of evidence. These and other factors have led Amnesty International to conclude that justice would best be served if the US authorities were to grant Leonard Peltier a retrial.

In the recent publication "Human rights violations against the indigenous peoples of the Americas" outlining

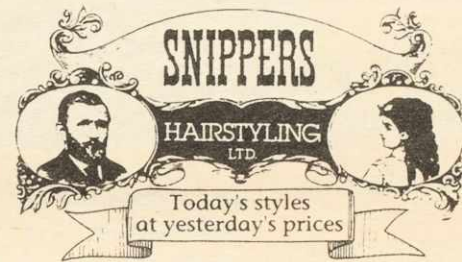
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