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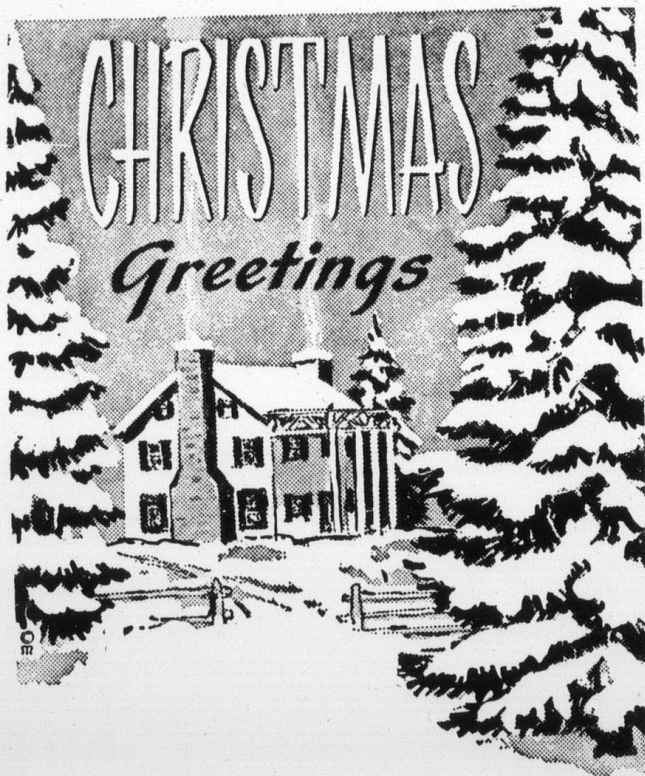
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Belafonte Speaks Out

Harry Belafonte is much more than a "performer." He is a major influence in the civil rights movement in the United States.

In this exclusive article, Mr. Belafonte reflects on the rising Negro unrest in this "long hot summer" in America, and considers some of its implication.

BY HARRY BELAFONTE

The white community has done the civil rights movement an incredible disservice.

Had they been capable of responding to the humanist theories and expressions of Dr. Martin Luther King, had they shown some good will and worked to alleviate the problems of the black community and the ghetto life, we would be in a much more favorable position today.

But the white community has frustrated Dr. King's non-violent efforts and now there is more repression than before. Although we have some legislation on the books— we can stay in certain hotels, eat in certain restaurants— it still doesn't begin to touch the real problems of political and economic destitution that the Negro community faces. Until the Negroes have their own political and economic power, this legislation means nothing.

Once the Negro community tried valiantly to apply the techniques of non-violence but they were fully rejected and now many of our young men are finding they have no other course but violence.

I would rather see it work in other ways: I'm not for the violence, but I understand why it happens.

As far as the Negro is concerned, I still don't think it is too late to reach understanding, because the Negro would be willing to accept an honest program toward alleviating the pressure and pain of second-class citizenship. But I think it's too late for the white community.

I think the white community is unfolding an incredible sense of immorality, of selfishness, of decay. And I don't know how much of that cancerous body of greed can be repaired. I don't know what the salvation of the white community can be at this point.

This is going to be the longest, hottest summer we've had to date and the hotter and longer they get, the more repressive will be the measures applied by the federal state and local governments.

I mean the military and the police are going to be much more repressive in their behavior and the Negro community is going to resort to stronger means of retaliation.

Mohammed Ali (Negro heavyweight fighter Cassius Clay, recently convicted of refusing armed service on religious grounds, as a Black Moslem, and sentenced to five years in prison) has taken an incredibly courageous stand.

It would have been so much easier for him to go into the service and follow some sort of public relations career as other athletes of his stature have done. But by his behavior he has exposed the double standards that exist for both Negroes and whites.

Although there are many things in Mohammed Ali's philosophical code that I cannot lend myself to—because his is a separatist philosophy and I am not a separatist—I nevertheless embrace him fully on a moral basis.

I must admit that I am not surprised by the severity of his sentence. I am sure that if the statutes had permitted an even greater penalty, the courts would have imposed it.

For when the Establishment is threatened, it is capable of anything . . . of dropping atom bombs, of escalating war . . . even capable of turning its back on the terrible miscarriage of justice where Negroes have been destroyed in many southern and northern cities by racists.

The halls of justice have been so silent at a time when Negroes needed them most.

But I think that his conviction and sentence will have ramifications other than those intended. He is respected by so much of the Negro youth, his stand will encourage a more intense response from them to the issues.

What would happen now if 10,000 black men marched on Washington to burn their draft cards and declare themselves before the White House? Would the government imprison all 10,000?

They might very well. But then they would have to imprison 100,000 and more and more until it would become such a scandal that I don't believe even the pretenders to a Jeffersonian concept of democracy could swallow it.

And, believe me, such a thing is being considered very strongly by some Negro leaders.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the majority of Negroes regard the Vietnam war as a further extension of American racist practices.

Remember there are 500,000 or more American troops in Vietnam and almost 30 percent of those are Negroes, although they represent only 20 percent of the population.

The reason for this imbalance is easily seen: Very few Negroes qualify for exemptions from the draft because they are not in institutions of higher learning, nor are they employed in what are considered strategic industries. And how easy it is, rather than giving redress to the grievances of the Negro, to take him and ship him off to the Vietnamese front.

I am an American and I would not choose to be anything else. But I will not try to whitewash our warlike conduct, our immorality. This is the America of Jefferson and Lincoln, of an amazing Constitution and of the potential and resources to do magnificent things.

If we who call ourselves Americans can bring this part of America to the fore, then we will have served the cause of humanity as well as the nation.

I must admit that I have thought of leaving America to give my children a place where they can grow up understanding what it is to be a fully-fledged, free human being. America does much to rob the Negro of his dignity and to distort him psychologically as a human being.

I have thought about coming to Canada to live, or going to the West Indies, while the children are growing. I could do this and still earn a good living.

But there are some who look to me for commitment in America. I don't know that I could abandon Dr. King, or the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee, or the Peace Movement. I am needed more here, for what little I can contribute, than I am anywhere else in the world.

HIS WHITE BEARD,
RED SUIT ARE
RECENT GARB

Genial, jovial, red-cheeked and white-bearded. As any child can tell you, that's how Santa Claus looks.

But the benevolent giver of presents has not always been pictured like this, nor has he always travelled by sleigh or brought his gifts on Christmas Eve. In fact, he has not always been named Santa Claus!

"Santa Claus" is in truth a child's euphonic way of expressing the Dutch "Saint Nikolaas," or St. Nicholas, says The Encyclopedia Americana.

St. Nicholas, a four-century bishop, was later honored, in Europe, as a friend to children. Legend finds him making his rounds on December 5th, the eve of St. Nicholas Day, with gifts to reward children for good behaviour.

Instead of a jolly red suit, St. Nicholas wore a robe, or tabard, and for that reason he really didn't need a sleigh, or even a horse. His robe enabled him to travel from place to place, instantly.

In Holland, however, he was said to use a horse for his journey at night over the roofs.

Dutch settlers brought St. Nicholas to the New World, where he gradually changed his name to Santa Claus and traded his horse and robe for reindeer and a red suit.

It was Clement C. Moore, in his poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas," who made Santa into a jolly elf "Saint Nick," who rides "in a miniature sleigh drawn by eight tiny reindeer."

In more recent years, St. Nicholas in his new guise as Santa Claus has journeyed to many parts of the world, becoming the most widely known of gift givers.

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