

Back to Black?

Written by William Reed

Wednesday, 11 November 2009 15:35

Why am I fighting to live, if I'm just living to fight
Why am I trying to see, when there ain't nothing in sight
Why am I trying to give, when no one give me a try
Why am I dying to live, if I'm just living to die?
Someone tell me.- Tupac

What constitutes Black identity and voice in America today? Does the majority of Black Americans still identify with President Barack Obama and voice the post-racial idioms that the nation has rid institutionalized racism? Or, are growing numbers of discontented African Americans ready to re-define their political and economic identities?

Barack's identity is not only under question by Americans seeking his birth certificate. A coalition declaring "Black Is Back" recently gathered in Washington questioning his identity with Blacks, "We need to remind people of the absolute lack of 'progress' since new faces assumed leadership". The Coalition's chief organizer says "Concerns of Black and working people remain insufficiently addressed". Omali Yeshitela, who heads the Uhuru movement said at a Washington march and rally, "The political paralysis toward righting the ills of Black Americans suffers from lack of a Black-led movement to counter 'post-racial' politics".

To fill the breach, "Black is Black" seeks to bring back the "Fight the Power" tradition historically used to create structural change. The Coalition's "Call to Action" is consistent with those of masses of Black and Brown Americans: "Black and Brown people continue to suffer the brunt of un/under-employment and predatory loan scandal crises". The Coalition also counters Obama on the military spending and warfare that continues on his watch. Citing The Coalition cites that mass incarcerations, police brutality and political imprisonment remain rampant among African Americans., the Coalition seeks to wake an ethos of Black identification and enjoin millions to take the movement to next levels. In November 2008 Obama got 93 percent of the Black Vote. Since election, Obama's popularity has declined among Blacks as well as other ethnic groups. In a May 2009 poll 60 percent of Blacks felt that Obama met their expectations, while just 46 percent of Whites did. The country's economic stagnation and America's first Black President's hesitation to make a move on Black issues provide fertile ground for Yeshitela & Company. The October 2009 Labor Department figures show the Black unemployment rate at 15.4 compared to an average 9.8 percent for other groups. "Black is Back" may have more takers than most think. A 2008 poll found only 49 percent of Whites felt racism was widespread in America compared to 72 percent of Blacks. Most Black Americans are: poor, working-poor, and working-class, and substantially segregated. The core population of Blacks' historical resistance is now the college-educated, white-collar middle class. This Black population segment is American race relations' "good news", but is likely to live, study and work with Whites.

Historically, Black independence and nationalist movements have not only sought racial pride and dedication, but have been directly tied to struggles for economic and social equality as well. "Black is Back" Coalition co-organizer Glen Ford, Executive Editor of the Black Agenda Report, makes the point that as the US Government is bailing out banks, Blacks Americans should be asking, "Where's the bailout for us"? Ford points out that the bank rescues and other economic lifelines could end up costing the nation as much as \$23 trillion. While national discussions on reparations for descendents of slaves have been circumvented because the nation could not

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endure the exorbitant costs, the staggering amount of bank and financial industry bailouts nearly doubles the nation's entire economic yearly output. That amount could be more than the federal government has spent on any single effort in America's history. People who oppose the "Black is Back" agenda include media types like : Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, et al, have the ears of millions - many of whom are Black Americans. The pivotal question is: "Will Blacks buy into just false choices of "post-racial" rhetoric, or that of "status quo" conservatives; as opposed to Yeshitela's vision: "To free our people's hopes and dreams from oblivion"? - www.Blackisbackcoalition.org

(William Reed – www.BlackPressInternational.com)