



The True Spirit of Kwanzaa

Among Bill Clinton's numerous despicable distinctions is the fact that he is the first occupant of the Oval Office to extend official recognition to the ersatz holiday called "Kwanzaa," a seven-day annual "African" festival that runs from December 26 to New Year's Day. Clinton has described Kwanzaa as "a vibrant celebration of African culture" that "transcends international boundaries ... link[ing] diverse individuals in a unique celebration of a dynamic heritage." In fact, Kwanzaa is a product of violent black separatism, and it was designed to foment insularity and a sense of racial grievance.

The founder of Kwanzaa is a petty criminal named Ronald Everett, alias Ron Karenga. In the mid-1960s, Everett created a Los Angeles-based black militant group called United Slaves (US) for the purpose of igniting a "cultural revolution" among American blacks. Toward that end he created Kwanzaa (named after a Swahili term for "first fruits") as a way of evangelizing on behalf of his revolution. In his book *Kwanzaa: Origins, Concepts, Practice*, "Karenga" claims that the spurious holiday offers blacks "an opportunity to celebrate themselves and history rather than simply imitate the practice of the dominant society."

However, "Karenga's" so-called *Nguzo Saba* (seven principles) for his "new black value system" are little more than Marxism transposed into an afrocentric key: *Umoja* (unity); *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), which, according to "Karenga," refers to afrocentricity; *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility); *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), which "Karenga" describes as "essentially a commitment to the practice of shared social wealth"; *Nia* (purpose), which refers to "collective vocation" for black people; *Kuumba* (creativity); and *Imani* (faith).

To provide a tangible symbol of his seven principles, "Karenga" appropriated the menorah from Judaism, adorning it in Kwanzaa's seasonal colors (red, black, and green) and re-christening it the "kinara." No Kwanzaa celebration is complete without the recitation of the Kwanzaa pledge: "We pledge allegiance to the red, black, and green, our flag, the symbol of our eternal struggle, and to the land we must obtain; one nation of black people, with one God of us all, totally united in the struggle, for black love, black freedom, and black self-determination."

This is the stuff of parody; it is a photographic negative of the rites conducted by bedsheet-bedecked white supremacists who cavort around burning crosses, or neo-Nazis who offer oblations to their pagan deity Odin. Yet "Karenga" and his black nationalist holiday have been eagerly embraced by the apostles of multiculturalism and tolerance. In his presidential messages commemorating Kwanzaa, Bill Clinton has stated that "Karenga's" seven principles "ring true not only for African Americans, but also for all Americans ... bring[ing] new purpose to our daily lives." In recent years the mainstreaming of Kwanzaa has proceeded at an astonishing pace. The U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp in 1997, and the Smithsonian Institution sponsors an annual celebration.

Christian activist Carlotta Morrow, whose sister was lured into "Karenga's" United Slaves organization in the 1970s, is much less enchanted with the observance, describing its message as "anti-Christian, anti-Jewish, and black separatist" in nature. To the extent that the holiday bears the impress of its creator, it should also be seen as a celebration of depravity and violence.

On several occasions, factional quarrels between "Karenga's" US organization and the Black Panthers erupted into open gunplay, which resulted in the death of several people.

In 1970, "Karenga" and two of his followers were arrested and charged with conspiracy and assault in



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the torture of Deborah Jones and Gail Davis, two of his female followers. Believing that the women had tried to poison him, “Karenga” forced the women to disrobe at gunpoint and had them beaten.

“Vietnamese torture is nothing compared to what I know,” he informed his victims, whereupon he forced a hot soldering iron into the mouth of one while the other had a toe squeezed in a vice. Both women were also forced to consume detergent and a caustic liquid as part of their “discipline.”

According to the July 27, 1971 *Los Angeles Times*, a psychological profile of “Karenga” described him “as a danger to society who is in need of prolonged custodial treatment in prison.” The profile noted that “Karenga,” while legally sane, was “confused and not in contact with reality.” Neither his criminal record nor his insuperable difficulties with reality has impeded “Karenga’s” career prospects, however: He is presently professor and chair of the department of Black Studies at California State University-Long Beach.

While some might consider Ron “Karenga’s” implausible triumph to be an illustration of P.T. Barnum’s axiom regarding human gullibility, there is something much worse than foolishness at work. Kwanzaa offers a potent illustration of Communist theoretician Antonio Gramsci’s strategy for overthrowing Western society by conducting a “long march through the institutions” of culture, including educational and religious institutions. It is this urge to destroy and defile our Western patrimony that represents the true spirit of Kwanzaa.



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