

RAINBOW COALITION Blacks need sense of pride

By Kim Spurlock

"Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring. Ring with the harmony of liberty. Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies. Let it resound loud as the rolling sea. Sing a song, full of the faith that the dark past has taught us. Sing a song, full of the hope that the present has brought us. Facing the rising sun of our new day begun. Let us march on, till victory is won."

This is the Black national anthem that has given Blacks the faith and courage to continue onward with strength, determination and pride. When the "American" national anthem was written, it did not include the Black race. Our national anthem is what portrays the Black race.

Blacks were forced to come to America and assimilate into the White culture. Although we are supposedly "free at last," we cannot take ourselves back to Africa and assume Africa will be as it was more than 300 years ago.

When our forefathers were stolen from their rich and harmonious land, Mother Africa, and forced to live in an uncivilized, destructive and racist land called America, we lost our pride, culture and history. Now that we are regaining our pride, and relearning our culture and history, we're a violent people? We did not voluntarily assimilate into the White culture, for we already had what we needed on our own continent.

How can we, as African-Americans, go back to a continent where we do not know which nation we are from? Our forefathers were stolen from their people and their land and forced to become servants of the white man. Our forefathers were forced to take the white man's names, such as "Toby," instead of their African names given to them by their parents.

Why can't Blacks forget about the

past and move on? Because what happened to us in the past is the reason why we are in the situation that we're now in. We were not a violent people. We learned that from the White race. Before the white man snatched our forefathers from their land, there were rarely any single-mother homes. Before our forefathers' hands and feet were bound with the chains of destruction, our brothers were taught they were powerful.

Today, more than 300 years later, the Black sisters are left to single-handedly rear their children. Today, our Black brothers still are presumed powerless to the White male race; those Black brothers who are as qualified as their White male counterparts continue to receive lower salaries.

Why is it that African or African-American history is not required for all students of all ages in school? Is European history the only history that is important? Now that Black people have taken the time to study the history of a great people, Africans, and have taken the time to further their knowledge of these accomplishments, which have been hidden from them for centuries, something is wrong? Why is it when Black people speak of the wonderful joys of being an American, they're special, and when they begin to speak about the truth of what the white people did to a people, they're trouble?

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Affirmative Action office has been receiving calls about the presentation that Sister Souljah of the rap group, Public Enemy, made Wednesday night in the Union Ballroom. It's obvious that people were listening, and if people are upset, they need to ask themselves why. Was it because the Souljah sister was speaking of the truth, or was it because she was making Blacks think and understand why we are the way we are today?

It's funny how many white people think everything is fine and harmonious and then when some black person

stands up and says, "Hey, something's wrong here, and I'm not gonna shut up until something is done," he or she is deemed militant or radical. As Sister Souljah said, Blacks are at war, and if we don't fight against our enemies today, it may be too late tomorrow.

What Sister Souljah gave to Black people was positive reinforcement. She gave us a sense of pride in ourselves. The Souljah lady let us know that we are somebody and we should be proud to be Black.

As Angela Green, chair of UPC African-American Special Events and Entertainment, said, many Black students on this campus have been saying the same thing Sister Souljah said, and had people listened, maybe we wouldn't have had to bring someone from New York to tell us what's wrong in Nebraska.

Sister Souljah was brought to UNL as a part of UNL's Black History Month celebration. The United States has "given" us one month out of twelve to celebrate centuries of our people's accomplishments and one of the reasons why the United States is what it is today. When White people have 365 days a year to celebrate their history and when they also have nine months a year to fill all students' heads with their history, what is wrong with Blacks receiving positive reinforcement from a Sister who knows what time it is?

The school system says it wants students to excel and be proud of who they are. If Sister Souljah can instill Black pride in us, then so be it. . . . At least she admits how she feels about everything and everyone and doesn't hide behind fake smiles.

As long as there are positive Black sisters and brothers like Sister Souljah, as a race, Black people will continue to march on and fight . . . 'til our victory "is won."

Spurlock is a sophomore news-editorial and broadcasting major.

CHRIS HALLIGAN

Half-truths form white identity

Probably one of the most difficult tasks in the human ordeal of life is the act of finding one's true identity. We all look for it in various places.

Some of us look for it in our friends, others look for it in our various involvements, such as the Greek system or student government. I realized early on that one's identity can be found in only one place — the past.

My family knew exactly what sort of identity they wanted for me. My grandfather would set me down on his lap and tell me glorious stories about my family. He told me about our direct involvement in the Revolutionary War. He told me about the Navy ship that was named after my great-great-grandfather. World War II seemed a source of unlimited adventure stories of heroism on the part of my relatives.

My parents sent me to beautiful suburban schools, where history was friendly and clean. Everything taught to me had an air of nobility and respect. By the time I was in high school, I was convinced that there couldn't possibly be a country in the world that practiced equality and democracy with as much vigor as the good ol' United States.

By the time I graduated from high school, my identity, fully molded and perfected by my clean-cut environment, was complete. I came to college expecting to meet many other people with the same identity as I had.

What I found at college, however, was a very different scene. I found a situation that I was not used to; a sort of tension loomed over the campus like a dark cloud. That tension, I was to eventually find, was the result of the tension created when white people realize that maybe they have been lied to — lied to about their identities.

This semester is the first time in my entire life that I have been taught by a black person. This person has taken the opportunity to give me a different sort of education, an education that is, instead of clean and happy, soiled and ugly. This person has taught me about a part of my identity that I never heard of in school or on Grandpa's lap — the part of my identity that is inherently racist.

This professor has introduced me to terms such as "racist institution"



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and has provided me proof of the white legacy of slavery that, like a cancer out of control, engulfs anything good this country has done and turns it into ugly hypocrisy.

Suddenly I found myself dealing with a sort of "identity crisis."

At first I was very angry. I couldn't believe that this professor had the gall to stand in front of the class — my class — and tell me that I was racist, that I have benefited from a racist institution and that virtually everything I do is a blatant act of racism.

However, after great thought, I realized that she was right. She was not telling me that I was a conscious racist, but that my identity had been manifested in racism. I found myself to be a very lost individual.

All of the pieces began to fall into place. I began to remember the stories. I began to remember the education. I began to see how my family was telling me only half-truths about my noble history. I began to realize that my education was actually pro-American propaganda that didn't reveal the entire truth.

My grandfather never mentioned the hundreds of people my ancestors enslaved when he told me of the glorious plantations we owned in Virginia. He never told me about the separation of blacks and whites in the Navy when he spoke of the glory days at sea during "the war." He never told me that black people weren't even allowed at Annapolis when he attended in the '30s.

Inside the white schools I attended while growing up, I was never taught about our sickening legacy of slavery. It was mentioned, but never actually studied. I was never taught about the Ku Klux Klan and the atrocities committed against black people in the early half of this century. I had to learn that from a movie.

When we learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and his peaceful activities in those radical '60s, somehow Malcolm X's more aggressive approach was skipped over.

So, indeed, I am a man with a new identity, and it hasn't been given to me by my family or my expensive education. It has been given to me by a black professor, who seemingly carries a great deal of anger toward white people in general.

I guess what angers me the most is that I had a right to this information, that possibly decisions I have made in the past would have been different if this large part of my identity were different.

I wonder how many generations of Halligans have been railroaded by the glory stories. I wonder how many Americans have been manipulated by the lack of information given in our education system.

It is up to us, the new generation, to ensure that our children's identities are factual and complete, so they do not have to deal with the problems facing our nation today — problems manifested not through racism, but through an anger created by neglect.

It was America's mistake — neglecting to provide identities to all of its citizens, neglecting to provide a sense of pride for an entire slew of contributions made by people who haven't had the benefit of happy chats on a grandfather's lap or squeaky-clean educations at nice suburban schools.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste and when false programming begins at an early age, we are indeed faced with a wasted mind. A mind is useless when it is not open, and I had to learn the hard way that my identity is only half true. Through the anger of one person, my mind has been opened.

Unfortunately, I now find myself part of a small minority.

Halligan is a junior political science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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