

From One Fascist to Another

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan has once again praised President-elect Donald Trump. Speaking to a gathering at the State of the Black World Conference in New Jersey, the sinister minister proclaimed, "The white man is going to push. He's putting in place the very thing that will limit the freedom of others. That's what you need," he added, implying that Trump will make conditions so harsh for Blacks in America that they will embrace Farrakhan's separatist worldview.

Farrakhan said: "My message to Mr. Trump: push it real good. Push it so good that black people say, 'I'm outta here.'" The predominantly Black audience actually cheered and applauded this nonsense. Such is the seductive charm of a charismatic demagogue.

Farrakhan was invited to be the keynote speaker at this conference. This is largely because Farrakhan is widely regarded throughout Black America as a strong (patriarchal) Black male leader. Many believe that Black people are in dire need of such leadership.

Black humanist scholar Anthony Pinn has long discussed the highly problematic phenomenon of redemptive suffering. That is the notion that God wants people to suffer to make them strong and morally upright. Obviously, those people embracing this view have not thought deeply about it, nor do they understand the depressing implications of the idea. For if God wants (Black) people to suffer, then suffering is ultimately good and necessary, and oppressors are only doing what God wants them do. Therefore, Jim Crow, apartheid, slavery and so forth are ultimately good and necessary for building strength and character among Black people. That, of course, is a sick and twisted notion.

However, Black theists must have some way to rationalize their plight, because they believe in a perfect God, even though nothing in nature makes the existence of such a Being likely.

People are always shocked to learn that “strong” Black leaders often form alliances with raving White supremacists. Marcus Garvey invited Klansmen to speak at his rallies in the 1920s. The Nation of Islam has formed alliances with the American Nazi Party, the White Aryan Resistance, Holocaust deniers and other White bigots. This is because all of these groups are/were united in the belief that Blacks should separate from the United States. That is something *major* that they have in common.

However, they have much else in common. They are reactionary to the core, and they hate Jews with a passion. Indeed, in March 2016, *U.S. News and World Report* ran a story in which Farrakhan applauded Trump for not receiving money from the “Jewish community,” and thus being free from Jewish control. When Farrakhan applauds Trump, this is simply a case of “game recognizing game,” as young African Americans used to say. Or as they used to say back in the 1970s, “it takes one to know one.”

In the name of Black unity, Farrakhan is embraced by Black people all over the United States. Malcolm X was the most eloquent spokesperson on the supposed need for Black people to unite despite their “petty differences.” (His most famous speech, “Message to the Grassroots,” brilliantly addressed this theme.)

The problem, however, is that many of these differences are not so petty, and Martin Luther King recognized this fact. For example, the differences between progressive and reactionary worldviews are hardly petty. With the advent of talk about the importance of intersectional politics, progressives must feel morally and intellectually obligated to oppose reactionary ideas and leadership. The difference between patriarchy and women’s rights is not petty. The difference between homophobia and LGBT rights is not petty. The difference between social democracy and fascism is not petty. The difference between secularism and theocracy is not petty. On the contrary, these kinds of differences are quite insurmountable. To believe that people can unite mainly on the basis of a common enemy, as Malcolm believed, is pure folly. People have to unite on common aims and objectives, and there is simply no hope for humanity under a reactionary agenda.

Someone like Farrakhan should never be invited to speak at any gathering in which the participants are genuinely concerned about human liberation. Those

obsessed with the supposed need for a conception of Black masculinity should strive to come up with a progressive conception. It is unwise and unfair to equate patriarchy with true Black manhood. Moreover, history shows that some of the greatest leaders in Black history have been women.

Let Farrakhan praise Trump all he likes. It is to be expected. Fascists of a feather flock together. If Farrakhan can praise Trump despite their "petty differences," progressives from all backgrounds should be able to come together to promote a common agenda geared toward bringing about freedom and justice for all.