

Eldridge Cleaver's story shows dislike for Communism

December 6, 2018

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I've been writing about the book *The 5000-Year Leap* by W. Cleon Skousen, so why write about Eldridge Cleaver? Well, Skousen talks about him in the book, and the book was written during the time when Eldridge Cleaver had become well known during the turbulent 1960's and 70's.

Cleaver, who was black, was born in 1935, and in his teenage years he became involved in petty crime. After serving time in a youth detention center, he was convicted of a felony drug charge and spent time in Soledad Prison. Later he was convicted of rape, assault and intent to murder. He spent time in Folsom and San Quentin for those crimes.

While in prison, Cleaver became acquainted with the Communist Manifesto, and wrote a number of essays that were eventually published in his book *Soul on Ice* that would later become very influential in the black power movement. During his prison time he transformed into a radical black liberationist who admitted to being a serial rapist of white women, which he described as an "insurrectionary act." He later rejected this concept when he wrote his book.

After being released from prison in 1966, Cleaver joined the newly formed Black Panther Party in Oakland, California, and became their Minister of Information.

In 1968, he ran for president, though he was too young to qualify, and in the same year he led an attack on some police officers in Oakland. Two officers were wounded, as was Cleaver, but 17-year old Bobby Hutton, a Black Panther member, was killed. Cleaver was charged with attempted murder, and after posting bail, fled to Cuba.

As one might expect, Cuba treated him like royalty, giving him a penthouse suite and personal staff in Havana. However, the welcome was short-lived – Castro had discovered that the CIA had infiltrated the Black Panthers, and he no longer trusted Cleaver.

So Cleaver fled again, this time to Algeria, where he set up an international office for the Black Panthers, but in 1971 he was expelled from the Panthers and made his way to France. This is where Skousen picks up the story.

Skousen described Cleaver as one who had been "trained in Marxist philosophy and tactics while serving a 15-year sentence in a California state penitentiary... In his books, Eldridge Cleaver describes the rationale behind their philosophy of violence. It was to destroy the whole economic and social structure of the United States so that blacks could enjoy equal rights under an American Communist regime... The crescendo of violence increased year after year. During the summer of 1968, over a hundred American cities were burning. But the burning was always in black ghettos. The idea was to put the blacks in direct confrontation with the police and state militia in order to solidify their apparent need to become a racial bloc for the coming revolution.

“But the burning and fire-bombing backfired. The black population began to realize it was only the homes of blacks that were being burned.

“After nearly eight years as an exile in Communist and Socialist countries, Eldridge Cleaver asked to be allowed to return to the United States and pay whatever penalty was due on charges pending against him. He and his wife were no longer atheists. They were no longer communists. Those bitter years behind the iron and bamboo curtains had dispelled all the propaganda concerning ‘equality’ and ‘justice’ under Communism. Cleaver told the press: ‘I would rather be in jail in America than free anywhere else.’”

Skousen gave another quote from Cleaver that was even more indicative of his disillusionment with Communism:

Cleaver said, “I was wrong and the Black Panthers were wrong... We (black Americans) are inside the system and I feel that the number one objective for Black America is to recognize that they have the same equal rights under the Constitution as Ford or Rockefeller, even if we have no blue-chip stocks. But our membership in the United States is the supreme blue-chip stock and the one we have to exercise.”

There is a scripture that says that there is nothing new under the sun. At a time when the Black Lives Matter movement is gaining momentum and negatively influencing our entire culture (along with an outright rejection of the Constitution by the Democrat party, and to a lesser degree, even the Republican party), perhaps it is time for all of us – whites, blacks, Hispanics, and all of the rest of us who have made America our home – to come to the same realization that our Constitution is one of the greatest gifts God ever gave to mankind.



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