

Same heritage, different viewpoints NOI, Quannell X not only sources of truth about Islam

Last week Quannell X, a representative from the Nation of Islam (NOI), visited the University. Some students believe that Quannell is really the only reliable source of information when discussing the NOI and the religion of Islam.

ANAS BEN-MUSA
Guest columnist

Quannell's comments are his views and perceptions of the problems in his community. While his opinions should be taken seriously, they should not be taken as the only source of information used to understand the current problems of the black community or the philosophy of the NOI.

Many students have expressed negative opinions about the Black Muslim's speech and the philosophy he expounded. I was not surprised by what he said, but I am concerned that some people may begin to associate the religion of Islam with the racist beliefs that the NOI is perceived to hold.

The NOI is a black organization that discusses methods to curtail the current social and economic problems of its community. The organization really has no association with and very little commonality to the Islamic faith practiced by nearly 1.2 billion people in the world.

"Islam" essentially means submission to the

will of God, and "Muslim" means one who submits to the will of God. As you can see by its very definition, Islam does not designate a race or gender as superior or a favorite.

Because of the basic Islamic belief of equality, some people mistakenly believe that the NOI had no racist roots, which contradicts what Malcolm X himself said in chapter 10 of his autobiography.

While still in prison, Malcolm began to learn about the NOI when his brother Reginald visited him and explained the tenets of the NOI.

Reginald said, "The white man is the devil." The racist attitude of the NOI was blatant.

Malcolm joined the NOI after leaving prison in 1952. He began to preach for total segregation from whites and soon became second-in-command of the NOI. With Malcolm's help the organization grew from a membership of 400 to 40,000.

The Nation of Islam was created by Elijah Muhammad, an African-American born in the early 1900s on a Georgia farm. In 1931, Elijah Muhammad said he was given God's message and divine guidance from Master W.D. Fard, God incarnate. Elijah Muhammad said he was told the true history of mankind.

According to this revelation, original man was black, and among those people was a scientist named Dr. Yacub, who created the "devil-race" — the white man. Malcolm even explained in detail how white people were created through the use of recessive genes.

This devil-race soon took over the world and enslaved the black man. Elijah Muhammad said he believed God chose him to help free African-Americans.

Today the NOI has evolved and moderated its views, and I personally have no qualms with the NOI. Because of Elijah Muhammad's efforts, many African-Americans began to show more interest in their heritage. In addition, the NOI helped African-Americans gain a sense of pride and great self-esteem about being black — that "black is beautiful" — and about the great civilizations the African people had created.

But, the NOI has its faults, which cannot be ignored and overlooked. No organization or group is perfect, and the NOI is a legitimate part of African-American history that should be studied, not from one viewpoint or source, but from as many credible sources available. Like Malcolm did, the NOI has changed.

It's time that students begin to educate themselves on topics such as the NOI and the religion of Islam. There is no better time than February, Black History Month.

Don't take every word Quannell or Malcolm said as the complete truth. There are many valuable sources of information at this campus on the NOI and Islam. These sources of information include the Muslim Student Association and various history, religion and English classes. This list is not complete, but it can be a start.

At least talk to a friend and explore your feelings. You might be surprised how different people can have such a different understanding of their heritage.

Anas Ben-Musa is a senior journalism major

PRO CON Should the Confederate flag be used?

In the minds of most Americans, the Confederate flag represents the ideas and images of the Civil War. Those ideas centered around the fight for individual states' rights — particularly the right to legally institute slavery.

The history and tensions attached to that cultural memory of ten evoke attempts to erase or forget that period of our history. Many citizens of all races view that flag as a symbol of racism, bigotry and intolerance. The desire to "forget the bad times" leads some people to desire the eradication of the physical signs of those events.

"[The Confederate flag] is something that has no place in our modern times ... no place in this body ... no place in our society," said Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun, herself an African-American.

The fact that the Stars and Bars did — and sometimes still does — symbolize racial hatred should

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demonstrate the need to hang it out in the open for everyone to see. In fact there is a very prominent place in American culture that the Confederate flag fills.

We should always remember that eleven states rebelled against the government of this country — the same government which is still in power.

Perhaps more importantly, over half a million soldiers died in the struggle to preserve, or leave, the Union. The Confederate flag flew over those battlefields — and so did the flag of the Union.

That Union flag, to which far fewer people object, also should stand out as a reminder, in part, of tragic and regrettable acts. The U.S. Army slaughtered American Indians on their tribal lands — or the other territories which our government had "given" them.

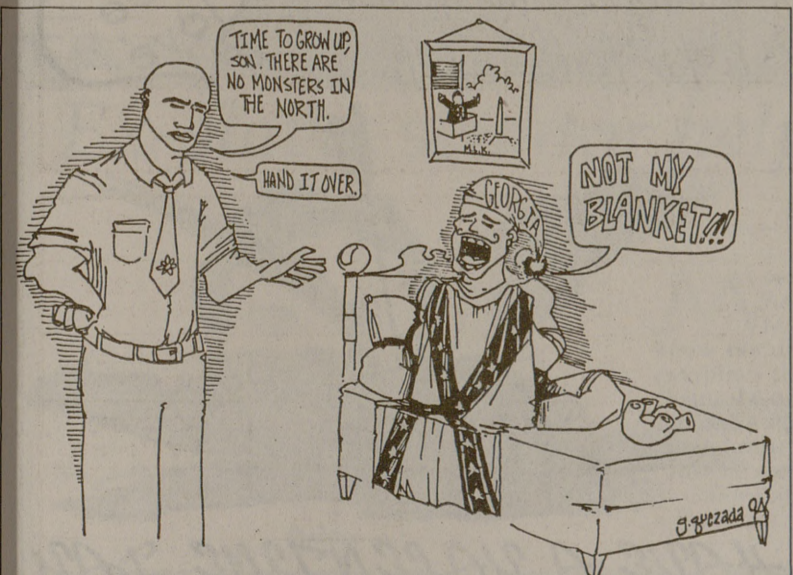
This country's Supreme Court sat in its chamber, under the U.S. flag, and upheld the doctrine of "Separate but Equal" — which institutionalized racial segregation for over 50 years. The Stars and Stripes also flew over both the troops who fought in World War II and the forces that interned Japanese-Americans here at home in virtual prisons.

The Confederate and Union flags would tie each other if they entered a contest of shameful pasts — the important thing to remember is that they stand for more than atrocious ideals.

As American society attempts to recognize and promote its various cultures, Americans should not cop out on remembering the worst time in our collective history. Every day we should all remember what our "united states" once fought for. The Confederate flag will never let us forget.

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Jackie Stokes is a sophomore journalism major



argue that it is an important part of the grand tradition of the South. Unfortunately for many African-Americans the past doesn't include cottons and sipping mint juleps. To many African-Americans the Confederate flag represents death, being counted as three-fifths of a human being, sitting at the back of the bus and only being able to drink from certain water fountains.

There is no argument against hanging a flag in your home, your office or your dorm room, as long as the money for that flag came out of your own pocket.

The problem occurs when public tax dollars are used to pay for a symbol that for many represents such a painful past. If tax money is to be spent on maintaining a symbol in public places such as government buildings, schools, libraries or major athletic arenas, the symbol should represent the history of all members of that public, not just the dominant section.

Several valid arguments are presented by supporters of the flag. One argument is that it represents hundreds of thousands of brave southern men who died in the attempt to win their freedom. While this is true, there were thousands of men that were just as willing to fight for their freedom, but it was predetermined that because they were black, they were only allowed to pick cotton

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and tend to fields. How can someone be expected to honor and pay for a flag that they were not even recognized by?

Still another argument is that when the west was being settled, millions of American Indians were slaughtered, yet no one calls for the American flag to be changed. The American flag is a symbol of an entire country; it is a recognized symbol of freedom around the world. Although the United States has yet to reach all the goals idealized in the American flag, it functions as a reminder of those goals.

How many people can look at the Confederate flag and see the ideals of equality and freedom for everyone? How many African-Americans can look at the Confederate flag and say that they are a part of what that symbol stands for?

No one is asking the South to forget its past or the struggles that it has gone through. All that is being asked is to fly a flag that everyone can be proud of.



COLLEGE STATION, TX
Feb 4
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MAIL CALL

Beutel should offer "morning-after" pill

In an article regarding the decision that the "morning-after" pill, RU-486, would not be made available to A&M students, Kenneth Dirks stated, "If we were to offer the pill, we would be suggesting to students that we think is OK for them to engage in risky behavior and worry about pregnancy later."

I didn't realize it was part of his mission as director of the Beutel Health Center to legislate morality. I find Dirks' remarks condescending, morally repugnant and unprofessional. There is no reason the health center should not offer RU-486 to the students of this university. The problems of unwanted pregnancy will not go away if we try to ignore them.

Perhaps some campus officials feel that it is in the students' interest to treat them like children and monitor their activities in the bedroom. I, however, do not share that point of view. Part of becoming an adult is being able to make decisions and being responsible for their outcomes.

Paul Herrera
Class of '93

Good Ags and bad Ags

On Friday, Jan. 28, my husband received two messages from Captain John Bell, USAF. Capt. Bell had found my wallet lying on the ground in the huge student parking lot behind Zachary.

I had no earthly idea it had even fallen out of my backpack. My husband and I wanted to show Capt. Bell our gratitude, but since it was the end of the month, we were broke.

If any of you Aggies out there know Capt. Bell, please give him a pat on the back

Nancy Small
Graduate student

Patrick Krawietz
Class of '94

Tune Up Plus provides professional service

I am writing in response to a letter that appeared in Mail Call on Jan. 26 concerning local auto shops. Tune Up Plus worked on my pickup, and I was very pleased with the service I received. They did prompt and professional work and explained everything in great detail. I was also given a six-month guarantee on the work that was done. My truck has been running fine since they repaired it.

Craig Daugherty
Class of '96

Better to win than dunk

In response to the letter saying Aggie basketball games aren't exciting and the players should dunk more — I'd like to say THEY'VE TRIED! Twice against Texas (one of the more exciting games I've ever seen) and once against SMU, Tony Mac missed what should have been easy points. Instead he went for dunks and missed. Had he tried again and missed against Texas, it might have cost the game.

This isn't to rag on Tony Mac. He has done an outstanding job, but I do not believe our players possess the ability to make the kind of dunks that would spark our team. (Prove me wrong, guys!) The bottom line is that our guys are getting it done.

As far as excitement goes, I've found all our wins to be exciting.

Justin Mitchell
Class of '95

and thank him for not only claiming to be a good Aggie, but for acting like one.

Late for a meeting at the MSC, I accidentally dropped my keys on the floor in the women's restroom. Upon realizing my mistake, I rushed back, only to find that my keys — which had my life on them — were missing. I searched everywhere but to no avail. The only thing I could do was go home and hope someone would call to say they found them. Which is exactly what happened.

To Katie Caroe from Kreuger Hall: Thank you so much for finding and returning my keys. You exemplify the true meaning of the Aggie spirit, and I really appreciate it.

To whoever took my driver's license and credit card and then left my keys in the MSC: I sincerely hope that you are not a student at this university. If you are, I hope you don't consider yourself a true Aggie. I shouldn't have to remind you of the Aggie Code of Honor. I don't care that you have my Mastercard (it's canceled) or my driver's license. I'm just disappointed in the fact that there is someone out there who cares so little about their Aggie honor that they have disgraced it like this.

Oh well, I hope it was worth it.

Suzanne Lyons
Class of '96

Sports writers could write about ... sports

In regards to the article about aid for the de-throned fighter, Julio "Chinless" Cesar Chavez, I have a question. Why is "another" Batt sportswriter trying to make a basic sports article into a multiculturalist political satire?