

The Wheel of the Law Turns without Pause

Frank H. Joyce

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“All over the world, people are laughing at America because they’re so stupid. They don’t know what time it is. This is a late hour for America. America is on her way out.” (Robert Williams at a Detroit press conference following his release on bond from two courts after returning to the United States from eight years of exile.)

Some months ago, some psychologist—whatever that is—by the name of Bruno Bettelheim appeared before one of the many U.S. government committees trying to expose us as the revolutionaries we admit to striving to become.

According to reports, Bettelheim, who made many silly remarks including the allegation that the new left is really like the Nazi youth movement, said that President Ho Chi Minh was a father figure for the Members of the new left.

Presumably this has to do with having been deprived of proper father images because of plastic fathers in TV commercials, or having grown up in the formative years under the administration of Dwight David Eisenhower or having absent fathers who were working two or three jobs to keep the bankers rich or the fact that everyone knows that women really own all the stock and, declare all the wars and lynch all the black people and hold the most important positions in the Pentagon and hence can be said to run the country the result of which was to force some of us to turn to President Ho.

Were we in search of father figures, we could do no better than Ho Chi Minh. In this century, indeed this millennium, there are no men more worthy of emulation.

Like Che Guevara, he was a man who struggled and won not to relax and retire but to struggle again. Every time he was forced to go to war, first against the Japanese, then against the French and now against the United States, the enemy was more formidable than the previous one.

With determination, skill, patience, courage, ruthlessness, tenacity and an abiding love for humanity Ho Chi Minh fought on until the end.

The prerequisite to being a 79-year-old hero is that one not get killed. Thousands have died to make Ho a great man. He didn’t. Nor, however did he ever forget those who did.

But Bettelheim was wrong, nevertheless. He is right of course about the fact that Ho was and remains a revered, awe inspiring figure. It is true that in a society whose authorized “heroes” are spaceocrats, Ho along with Che Guevara, Malcolm X and Chairman Mao, is both a political and existential hero to growing numbers of rebellious young people.

But not as a father or a grandfather.

The inspiring thing about Ho Chi Minh is that he embodied the solution to a problem which faces our Movement and our generation. How will youth make a new society over the period of a protracted struggle? Can there be a 50 year old kid?

Simple. The struggle itself keeps one young and fearless.

That is not to say that Ho Chi Minh represented for us a contemporary. He was too distant in age, culture and accomplishment for that.

In a way, Ho represented the same thing to us that he did to the people of Viet Nam; not a father or grandfather nor a brother either, but an uncle.

History, in its infinite wisdom, did not take away Ho Chi Minh without providing some compensation.

We lost Ho but gained the death of Everett McKinley Dirksen, and the return to the United States of Robert Williams.

The latter is in a word: inspiring.

Whether one agrees with the strict separatist politics of the Republic of New Africa (RNA) or not is beside the point.

Robert Williams is a key figure in our movement. He came before Huey Newton and before Bobby Seale and before Eldridge Cleaver and before Rap Brown, before Stokely Carmichael and even before Malcolm X.

With his formation of a rifle squad—Monroe, North Carolina, 1961, he was the first significant opposition to the passive, non-violent strategy of Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and at that time of SNCC.

He was the first U.S. political fugitive, driven out of the United States on trumped up kidnapping charges, to take refuge in Cuba in 1962.

Others who were involved with him in Monroe remained in this country and played important, although little known roles in the advancement and development of the black Movement.

This is especially true of Mae Mallory, who was among the five who were indicted for kidnapping and whose conviction was overturned by the North Carolina Supreme Court. Now living in Ohio, Mae Mallory is presently a leader in the fight to save Ahmed Evans from his scheduled execution on September 23.

At his press conference held in Detroit on Friday, September 5, Williams stated emphatically that he resented having been forced out of the country in the first place and "I resented every minute of the eight years I was gone."

But in the tradition of many exiled revolutionaries before him, Williams took advantage of his exile to study revolutionary countries and movements throughout the third world in Latin America, Asia and Africa. He lived not only in Cuba, but China and Tanzania and visited North Viet Nam also long before the Movement "discovered" those places.

During the time of his exile, he is not known- to have once appointed himself as the vanguard of either the black Movement or the World Struggle. He stated modestly on his return that he had come back to fight for "justice, power and equality for black people".

His experience and knowledge can only enrich the struggle which he has returned to help lead. In the vacuum of national leadership since the assassination of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King it is likely that he will emerge as an important national spokesman.

We will support the fight to prevent his extradition to North Carolina. We hope he was right when he said, "I don't believe the people of the State of Michigan will let me go to the uncivilized jungles of North Carolina."

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