

FROM RHETORIC TO ACTION

(Calling Nationalists to Accounts)

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By

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For purposes of this paper I will use the term “Nationalist” to refer to those of us among the Black collective who accept and use any of the following designations to refer to ourselves and others who share our ideological and philosophical point of view:

- Black Nationalist
- Pan-Africanist
- Garveyite
- Diopean
- Afrocentrist
- Africentrist
- African-centered
- Conscious Black
- Race Patriot
- Self-Determinist

From my perspective the opposites of Nationalists are Integrationist/Assimilationists, or “I/A’s” as I will refer to them in this paper. Nationalists and I/A’s have contested for influence with the Black collective in America since the days of Reconstruction after the U.S Civil War. Except during the height of the Garvey Movement in the 1920’s, I/A’s have maintained dominance in the competition for influence with the rank-and-file of Black Americans. As a result, they are responsible for the condition we are in today, for better or worse. The 1960’s brought resurgence in Black pride reminiscent of the Garvey era, but the influence and eloquent oratory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. kept I/A’s on top. Nationalists nearly regained the ascendant position with Minister Louis Farrakhan’s massive success in calling for the Million Man March, but the Minister’s failure or refusal to declare that event a Nationalist accomplishment resulted in a missed opportunity for our forces. Our cause was further undermined when the Minister chose to appeal to a ‘rainbow’ of races, creeds and colors to attend the follow-up fifth anniversary celebration of the MMM in the year 2000 (One Human Family March); and was destroyed completely when he chose to court I/A’s on the march’s tenth anniversary in 2005 (Millions More Movement).

His success with the MMM catapulted Minister Farrakhan into the “Paramount Chief” position among Black leaders, supplanting Rev. Jesse Jackson for that distinction. From that vantage

point he could (and should) have recaptured the hearts and minds of Black people for the Nationalist Cause. But in allowing I/A's to dominate the organizing and conduct of the Millions More Movement, Minister Farrakhan ceded preeminence in the Black movement back to the I/A's. As a direct result, he has now been supplanted from the Paramount Chief's position by Tavis Smiley, who cemented his coup by elevating his Covenant with Black America above and beyond the Minister's reach and influence. At present, the only challengers for Tavis' Paramount Chieftaincy are other I/A's, with Rev. Al Sharpton posing the greater threat, and Dr. Michael Eric Dyson probing for the right opening. No avowed Nationalist is currently 'ranked' among those viewed as viable competitors for Paramount Chief among Black leaders. This must change!

For all effective intents and purposes, whoever is viewed as Paramount Chief among Black leaders and spokespersons, is the equivalent of "President of Black America." We can criticize Black folks' penchant for a "messiah" all we want, but it is in the nature of people of African descent to want a "chief!" It is folly to ignore this fact about ourselves. Someone is going to be Chief whether we Nationalists think there should be one or not! And whoever is perceived as being The Chief influences how Black folks think and the course of action they are inclined to follow. If Nationalists want Black folks to pursue a course leading to self-reliance and self-determination, we had BETTER vie for and WIN back the Paramount Chieftaincy! Making excuses for our failure to do this will assure that the status-quo is maintained with the I/A's setting the Black agenda, to the obvious detriment of our people.

We Nationalists have allowed ourselves to be maneuvered into a position as "loyal opposition" to our I/A counterparts. They are the 'party in power' that can make things happen; we are the 'minority party,' left to criticize from the sidelines what they choose to do that we disagree with, or not to do that we would agree with. We are like the Broadway critics who pass judgment on the work of producers, directors, and performers, but possess no talent, ability, or willingness to mount the stage themselves. It is time for us to adhere to the proverb that: "It is not necessary to condemn a dirty glass; just put a clean one down next to it, and let the difference speak for itself."

Thanks to Tavis Smiley, the I/A's have a vehicle to rally the troops around: It is his "Covenant with Black America." Nationalists have heaped criticism on this document, its content, and intent, and justifiably so. Nonetheless, Black folks throughout America are meeting in homes and public venues and discussing Tavis' Covenant! If we Nationalists believe the Covenant is the equivalent of the proverbial "dirty glass," then why do we not put a clean one down next to it? Why don't we abandon our critics' role, and mount the stage and present our own production? It just so happens that we Nationalists do have a vehicle of our own, if we would but drive it!

In 2001 Dr. Claud Anderson published "PowerNomics: The National Plan to Empower Black America." The PowerNomics Plan is a synthesis of the "Master Plan" put forth by Dr. Chancellor Williams in his celebrated work: "The Destruction of Black Civilization" in 1976, and reiterated by Dr. Amos Wilson in "Blueprint for Black Power" in 1998. Since publishing his plan, Dr. Anderson has criss-crossed America trying to get Black folks to "wake up and smell the roses" before it is too late. As this is written, Dr. Anderson is trying to consummate plans to implement a project to demonstrate the practical nature of his PowerNomics concept in Detroit, Michigan. His "Maroon City" development has the potential to herald a new day for Blacks in

America, and a new way for us to pursue an improved quality of life for our people and future for our children. Nationalists should rally to Dr. Anderson's support in this effort. We should be meeting and discussing the PowerNomics Plan in private homes and public venues in much the same way as, but with greater enthusiasm than, promoters of the Covenant have been doing. Black Nationalists can be found in every nook and cranny in America, and wherever we are we should be promoting the PowerNomics Plan and its implementation. We should be so busy doing our own thing which we hardly have time or the inclination to criticize our opposites for whatever they may or may not be doing.

More than thirty years ago, an I/A acquaintance of mine made the comment in a meeting that: "Nationalism is a beautiful philosophical construct, but totally inappropriate for practical application." It is one thing for I/A's to feel that way about what we believe in, but yet another for us Nationalists to allow the charge to be true. We are the NATION-alists, but we've done no nation-building; one of our foremost scholars invented the "Nguzo Saba" with UNITY as the foundational principle, yet Nationalists are less unified than any ideological or philosophical segment of the Black population. We "talk-the-talk," but have proved to be incapable of "walking-the-walk." I/A's are even beating us to the punch in establishing functional working relationships with developing nations in Africa! Nationalists are settling for cultural events and activities while I/A's are going in and setting up businesses. We do "feel-good" stuff, while I/A's and their European sponsors undertake business and economic ventures which have the potential at least of providing practical economic benefits for the Africans on the ground! Given the level of poverty extant in Africa, which group of us do you expect Africans to appreciate more, us Nationalists who claim them as long-lost brothers and sisters, or I/A's and Europeans who offer them the possibility of employment and business opportunities leading to a better quality of life?

Now is the time for Nationalists to move from rhetoric to ACTION! We must prove that ours is more than a rhetorical concept, and most importantly, that we Nationalists are more than theorists and rhetoricians. We must demonstrate that we are capable of conceptualizing, developing, implementing, and conducting programs and ventures that can improve the living conditions and life chances of our people, those at home and those abroad! It is time for us to become the party IN power, and retire the Integrationists/Assimilationists to the back rows from which vantage point the loyal opposition spews forth its rhetoric in reaction to action taken by the power-wielders.

Let's get it on!!!

Specifics

Review and Study

Committed Nationalists need to review and study the following to get 'centered' and on the same 'page' if we are to make ourselves a force to be reckoned with:

Destruction of Black Civilization: CHAPTER 15, Pgs. 361 to 382
Chancellor Williams; Third World Press, 1976

Blueprint for Black Power: CHAPTER 2, Pgs. 27 to 55
Amos N. Wilson; Afrikan World InfoSystems, 1998

PowerNomics: The National Plan to Empower Black America; Cover to Cover
Claud Anderson, Ed.D.; PowerNomics Corporation of America, 2001

Chancellor Williams proposed an organizational structure comprised of seven (7) divisions, and one "Great Commission," to wit:

1. ECONOMIC Planning & Development
2. POLITICAL Action
3. Public EDUCATION
4. Community SERVICES
5. YOUTH Activities
6. PAN-AFRICAN Affairs
7. INTELLIGENCE & SECURITY, and the
8. Commission for SPIRITUAL LIFE and Assistance

In the PowerNomics Plan Claud Anderson proposes a structure encompassing the following major areas of concentration:

1. Restructuring SCHOOLS for Group Competitiveness
2. Practicing Group ECONOMICS
3. INDUSTRIALIZATION: Using New Paradigms
4. Practicing Group POLITICS
5. A New & Expanded Role for CHURCHES

Dr. Anderson incorporates provision of community services and youth activities into all five major areas as he has identified them, and includes Pan-African affairs into group economics and industrialization. Both these brilliant Black minds concur on how best to structure an organized effort to restore Black people to wholeness and productivity. Dr. Anderson has offered his PowerNomics Plan to Blacks who share his vision for Black people, and are willing and able to "work-the-plan" now that he has "planned-the-work." I hereby propose that we take him up on his offer, roll up our sleeves individually and collectively, and get about the business of organizing our people and resources for group competitiveness. At minimum, we should reach consensus today on an outline for a structure of a national organization to strategically implement the PowerNomics Plan throughout America's Black communities.

A start in this direction has been initiated under the direction of Bob Law, using the name "National Black Leadership Council" (NBLC). Bob's proposal incorporates most if not all critical aspects of both Chancellor Williams "Master Plan," and Claud Anderson's "PowerNomics Plan." We need to ratify the work that Bob has done on this concept thus far, and organize to move it to the next level.

Specific Initiatives

There are several initiatives that I know of personally which I believe deserve the support of all gathered here today, and I urge each of you to familiarize yourselves with each of them and their proponents:

1. The “MAROON CITY” Project in Detroit; Claud Anderson, Developer
2. The “BLACK IS BACK” Campaign; Proposed by Bob Law, NYC
3. Communications, Media, and the Law; Bob Law to Explain
4. BlackoNomics Million Dollar Club; Jim Clingman, Creator
5. “Boycott Prisons Campaign;” Proposed by Jim Clingman
6. “Conundrum of Consciousness and Capital: Jim Clingman to Explain
7. “Black Man Think Tank” Revival? Dr. Eric Abercrombie, Cincinnati
8. Afrikan-Centered Schools Network; Proposed by Amefika Geuka
9. “Harambee-to-Umoja” Institutes; Amefika Geuka to Explain
10. “Reviving the SPIRIT of the Million Man March;” Amefika Geuka
11. Neighborhood Revitalization: Pastor Earl Trent, Washington, DC
12. “Get on the Bus” Program; Dr. Rosie Milligan, Founder, Los Angeles

Other Brothers and Sisters here who have initiatives deserving of our support will be given an opportunity to share insights to their venture with participants.

Proposed by Amefika D. Geuka

African-Centered Schools Network: Dr. Chancellor Williams in “Rebirth of African Civilization” states: “And while the educational emphasis should be on the development of better human beings, this will remain a mere ideal unless the individual student is equally prepared by vocational training for participation in those economic activities and add his share to that economic foundation that is the very basis of a finer, fuller life.” Generations before him, Booker T. Washington cautioned Black Americans to “Cast your buckets where you are!” And today, Dr. Claud Anderson advises us that “The traditional role of schools for Black children must be changed in order to make them functional and relevant in the lives of Black Americans;” and that “We will need our schools to produce children who are appropriately trained to implement the PowerNomics plan in our communities.”

To accomplish what these great African minds advocate requires that Blacks take back responsibility for directly educating, developing, and training our children. A network of African-centered schools is required for this to take place successfully. We must control and direct the educational development of our youth. Therefore, I hereby call upon those gathered here today to actively support the creation of such a network. Such schools already exist in communities all over America. Some are private, some operated by churches, some are public charter schools. What matters most is that they are created specifically to effectively educate children of African descent! At present, operators of these schools do not even know of the existence of others. A notable exception is the Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI). CIBI does excellent work, but does not support charter schools even if they are African-centered. That position is unfortunate because, among other potential advantages, public charter schools have access to a measure of financial resources which could be shared with other African-centered educators and institutions, including those under the CIBI umbrella.

An attempt was made by the good Sister Dr. Freya Rivers to promote such a network two years ago, but the effort never got off the ground. The initiative can and should be revived under auspices of today's effort to create an organization to implement the PowerNomics Plan nationwide. For starters we could call it the "African Centered Schools Network (ACSN).

Harambee-to-Umoja Institutes: "Let's Pull Together For Unity" is a series of quarterly workshops we hold in South Florida (Palm Beach and Broward Counties) for the express purpose of identifying "righteous" initiatives being undertaken by our ideological fellow-travelers wherever they may be in the country. A detailed description of this initiative is attached for the interested reader to review. I suggest that similar efforts be undertaken by others here when you return to your respective homes and places.

Reviving the SPIRIT of the Million Man March: Like many of you here today, I am an alumnus of the Million Man March in 1995. You may or may not share my disillusionment with the shift away from the original Black emphasis of that historical phenomenon that took place five years later with the ill-conceived "One Human Family March" (2000); and you may disagree totally with my opposition to the integrationist Millions More Movement in October of 2005. Some of us attempted to persuade the organizers to hold the MMM Tenth Anniversary Celebration in Detroit in support of Dr. Claud Anderson's "Africa Towne" development as it was originally to be called. Our appeals were rejected, and the rest is history.

However, there is still the need to revive and carry on with the SPIRIT of the Million Man March which was so infectious on that day and in the months following which were filled with so much promise. I hereby propose that this assembly commit to resurrect that Spirit by calling for a Million Black Family Pilgrimage to Detroit in August of 2007 to commemorate fulfillment of Dr. Anderson's vision of "Maroon City." This is a project I feel so strongly about that I am volunteering my own services to spearhead the effort. Any of you who agree, and want to help make this happen can give me your contact information before leaving here this evening.

Just imagine a million or more Black families (3 to 5 million people) ascending on Detroit with its 90% Black population on one week-end! The economic infusion alone will make it the greatest gathering ever, surpassing even the MMM itself!! Detroit's Black businesses could in that one week-end realize sales greater than they could from all of America's consumer-oriented holidays combined, and assure themselves a successful sales year; and credit for it all would be owed to of all things, a BLACK NATIONALIST organizational effort!!!

And they said it couldn't be done!