

UNDERSTANDING WHERE WE ARE
(Making it Plain!)
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Ideology: A systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture; a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture.*

Ideologist: An advocate or adherent of a particular system or doctrine of ideology.*

Nationalism: Loyalty and devotion to a nation; a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups.*

Nationalist: An advocate or believer in nationalism; a member of a political party or group advocating national independence or strong national government.*

*Webster's 7th New Collegiate Dictionary

“Kawaida defines nationalism as the concept and conviction that we are a distinct people with a distinct historical personality and that therefore, we should unite in order to gain the structural capacity to define, defend, and develop our interests as a people.”^

“Kawaida defines Pan-Africanism as the totality of theories and practices designed to define, defend, and develop the interests and image of African people throughout the world.”^

^ Kawaida Theory: An Introductory Outline, 1980; Maulana Karenga

Most people are familiar with the fact that there are a wide variety of religions in the world, and that the largest among them have numerous denominations, sects, and variations in practices. This is true of all the “major” religions, but especially so of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Yet all generally agree that there can be only one creative force in the Universe, though referred to by many names. All religions seek to explain existential quandaries: Who or what are we? Where did we come from? Why are we here? How did we get here? When did we arrive? Different beliefs about answers to such questions have led to the different religious beliefs and practices among the Earth's people today. As it is with religion, so it is with ideology. Indeed, ideology can be considered secular religion.

The two largest and best known divisions of the Christian religion are Roman Catholicism and Protestantism; less well known are Eastern Orthodox and Coptic. There are literally dozens of denominations under the Protestant category. Judaism has its orthodox version, as well as Reform and Modern; while Islam has Sunni, Shiite, and Wahabi as examples.

At the height of the civil rights and Black liberation movements, Ebony Magazine produced an edition which became a classic. Emblazoned on the cover was the question: “Which Way Black

America, Integration, Separation, or Revolution?" The article posited that the choices then facing Black Americans were 1) to integrate with White Americans; 2) to separate from White Americans; or 3) to revolt against the White American establishment with violence. The NAACP, Urban League, and Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) were presented as advocates of integration and assimilation with Whites; the Nation Of Islam (NOI), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and Republic of New Africa (RNA) as advocates of separatism; and the Black Panther Party for Self Defense based in Oakland, California as the leading advocate of revolution by violent means. At the time of the article in question CORE had transitioned from an integrationist to a Black Nationalist ideology under the leadership of Attorney Floyd McKissick, who was later deposed by Roy Innis. It is the second of these schools of ideology (separatism) that is the subject of this paper.

Most if not all Black Nationalists believed in some form of separatism, though there was disagreement over what form separatism should take. Some believed Blacks should completely separate themselves from Whites by physically leaving America in favor of Africa or a Black island nation in the Caribbean. Others (NOI and RNA) believed we should demand five southern states in America as a homeland for people of African descent. Still others believed the separation should be conscientious, cultural, and spiritual rather than physical, similar to the type of ethnocentrism usually associated with Jews.

Today, the dividing line between Black Nationalists tends to be cultural or theoretical on the one hand, and practical or applied on the other. Cultural Nationalism is dominant, and has become associated almost exclusively with certain preeminent scholars at America's mainstream universities, most notable among which are Maulana Karenga, Molefi Asante, Na'im Akbar, Asa Hilliard, Frances Cress-Welsing, Wade Nobles, Leonard Jeffries, and Runoko Rashidi. The best-known and most successful practical Black Nationalists in America's history were Marcus Mosiah Garvey and Elijah Muhammad. In recent years the only practical Black Nationalist of national consequence and influence had been Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation Of Islam, but he and his organization have gradually moved away from Black Nationalism and toward a more orthodox practice of the religion of Islam. The result is that as of this writing there is no practical Black Nationalist organization of national scope, effectiveness, or consequence. The Movement to Bring Back Black is determined to correct that deficiency by creating the Nationalist Black Leadership Council (NBLC).

Practical: Of, relating to, or manifested in practice or action; being such in practice or effect; capable of being put to use or account, useful.*

Theoretical: Abstract, confined to theory or speculation, speculative; existing only in theory.*

* Webster's 7th New Collegiate Dictionary

Whereas we Nationalists are very proud of the fact that "our" (cultural Nationalist) scholars are by far the wisest and greatest among their peers in the academic community, our people cannot afford to have the only ideology that elevates their image and interests confined to the realm of higher education. Black Nationalism cannot be allowed to exist in theory only, it must become the practice of people of African descent; our very way of life! Therefore it is essential that a viable organizational structure be put in place, and that such organization be of national scope and consequence and have international influence! In other words, our organization, the NBLC,

must develop the capacity to influence U.S. government policy toward Africa and other Black nations in much the same way Jews influence government policy toward the State of Israel. It is the mission of the NBLC to lay claim to the legacy of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), and Elijah Muhammad's (and Malcolm X's) Nation Of Islam in its Black Nationalist manifestation.

This is not to suggest that we do not acknowledge or respect the vestiges of the UNIA and NOI which still exist today, indeed, it is the intent of the NBLC that these three organizations will recognize that we have more in common than in adversity, and that the needs of our people call out for operational and functional unity among us. NBLC intends to have official liaisons (ambassadors) to both the UNIA-ACL and NOI if those groups are receptive to such enlightened arrangements.

Black Nationalist scholars prefer to use the term "Afrocentric," or refer to themselves as "African-centered" rather than "Black Nationalist," and they draw their impetus more from ultra-eminent elder/scholars such as Cheik Anta Diop and John Henrik Clarke rather than practitioners such as Marcus Garvey or Elijah Muhammad. In fact, many of them have taken to referring to themselves as "Diopians" in recognition of Cheik Anta Diop as their most highly esteemed ideological theorist. As a consequence, Afrocentricity has become an academic term, while Nationalism is the term preferred by grass-roots ideologues. Our scholars have done an exceptional job of elevating their term Afrocentricity to general acceptance and proud use, even by us grass-roots activists, but we practitioners have failed to sustain the credibility and appreciativeness of Nationalism as had been achieved by Mr. Garvey and maintained by Mr. Muhammad. In fact, we have allowed Black Nationalism to be "kicked-to-the-curb" and treated with shame, derision, and avoidance, even by grass-roots race-activists who have settled for a homogenized form of Nationalism that does not focus on the concept of Nation-hood or nation-building, which after all, is what Nationalism is about! The NBLC will correct this failure as well.

Practical Black Nationalism is the distinguishing feature of the Nationalist Black Leadership Council's approach to our ideology. We are determined to apply the theories and concepts underlying the ideology to the real-life circumstances of Black people. Our scholars, past and present, have done an exemplary job of developing theoretical bases on which to construct an organization capable of fulfilling the needs of our people; now it is up to us practitioners to accept the baton and carry it through the next leg of our journey toward reclaiming our humanity and restoring our greatness! Black Nationalists are the Black ideologues who love and want the best for Black people, but loving our people is not sufficient of itself. We must demonstrate that we understand what Nation-hood means, and that we are capable of organizing ourselves into an effective force for needed and desired change. We can no longer allow ourselves to be viewed by our people as "rhetoricians," people given to much-talk-and-little-do, or as Mwalimu Seyoum Lewis terms it: "rapolutionaries."

Black Nationalists view Black Americans as a "nation-within-a-nation" (just as Jews in America view themselves). As such, we have not only the right, but the responsibility and duty to have our own governmental structure(s). The NBLC is designed to do just that. We will have ten (10) divisions, which will correspond generally to the departments of the U.S. government, the

ministries of major foreign nations, and subject-area units of Jewish organizations of national scope and international influence. We will have our own political party, and elect our own President of Black America! We take our cue from the immortal words of the Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey who asked: "Where is the Black man's government? Where is his King and kingdom? Where is his President, his country, and his ambassador, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs? I could not find them, and then I declared, I will help to make them." We of the NBLC are determined to bring Mr. Garvey's declaration to fruition, and will do so in the current generation's lifetime!

Foundational to all that we must do to accomplish our goal is the need to establish and build a strong economy of our own derivation and suited to the needs and aspirations of our people. To assure that such an economy will last in perpetuity, we must establish and finance our own system of education and training to equip future generations with the mindset and skills they will need to protect our posterity. This recognition of and focus on the centrality of a self-sustaining economy is another feature which distinguishes our NBLC from all other existing Black organizations, Nationalist or otherwise. In this we are guided not only by the example of Mr. Garvey's UNIA-ACL, and Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute and National Business League, but the subsequent writings of such wise and insightful self-determinists as Chancellor Williams, Amos Wilson, and Claud Anderson, all of whom called for what is now being brought to fruition under auspices of the Nationalist Black Leadership Council (NBLC). The NBLC was created on paper at a meeting of Nationalists from around the country held in Atlanta, Georgia on April 20 & 21, 2007; and we will hold our "Birth-Giving" Convention in Kernersville, North Carolina on October 13, 2007.

To paraphrase from the Bible, NBLC "...has come that they (Black people) may have life, and have it more abundantly." We are not seeking to convert anyone to our belief system; rather, our mission is to identify, rally, and organize for effectiveness, those Black folks who already share our love for and belief in Black people, and who have been longing for a substantive organization to lend their efforts to in the redemption of our race. Therefore, if you the reader consider yourself to be a Nationalist, by whatever term you have embraced for yourself; if you are convinced of and committed to the need for Blacks to be self-reliant and self-determining; if you lean more to the practical than the theoretical; but most importantly, if you truly love Black people and want to assure the best for them, the Nationalist Black Leadership Council is the organization for you, and you should begin now to make plans to be with us in Kernersville, North Carolina from October 12-14, 2007!!!

Another feature which distinguishes the NBLC from some elements among Nationalists is that we harbor no desire to "destroy America," nor do we waste valuable energy hating White people (or anyone else for that matter.) We are as aware as anyone of the less-than-stellar history of White supremacy and the destruction it has heaped on people of African descent, and we harbor no fanciful illusions about "brotherhood" between Black and White people. However, we reject the contention that to love Black people means we must hate White people. Hatred does most of its harm to the one doing the hating, often having no deleterious effect at all on the object of the hate. Black folks have suffered long and intensely enough already at the behest of White supremacy, and we do not need to turn that powerful emotion inwards onto ourselves and one-another. We put the past in proper perspective, and get on with the business of rebuilding our

people and their sense of self-worth. We are convinced that the best protection against continuation of the past pattern of White supremacists and racists abusing Black people, is for Black people to strengthen ourselves to the extent that it would no longer be wise or safe for racists to choose us as their victims. Force them to look elsewhere for their next victims.

If we Blacks continue to operate from a victim mentality, even if White folks were no longer to find it in their interest to continue abusing us, we would seek out another entity to service our need to be victimized! It would be the racial equivalent of “battered-wife syndrome.” Our people need to heal, and healing requires restoration. No one has an interest in restoring us, but us, and if we don’t do it, no one else will. We must solve our own problems, and in ways that suit our needs, with little or no regard for what others may think of it. Accuse us of being “racists-in-reverse” if you will, but we will not let that define us. We are Black people, the only people who have been enslaved, degraded and debauched as a race, and we owe no explanation or apology to anyone for whatever means we choose for purposes of restoring ourselves and protecting our posterity.

If America is to be destroyed, it will be because its leaders have seen fit to destroy it, not because of anything that can be blamed on Black people. In fact, the current federal administration seems hell-bent on destroying what’s left of this country before turning the residue over to the Hispanics and Latinos. What should concern Black folks most is the prospect (even the likelihood) that Africa is the next place White supremacists and their racist vanguard intend to relocate to and occupy! This is borne out by the genocide and “racial-cleansing” being committed against Africans via the introduction of diseases such as AIDS and Ebola; internecine strife and civil wars; and most recently the announcement that the United States is creating an Africa Military Command similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This does not bode well for the continent of Africa or its native people.

For additional information about our Movement to Bring Black Back to prominence and respectability, and restore pride in our race, we invite you to visit our web site at www.bringbackblack.org. For ongoing insights and to get to know the leaders and “Do’ers” of this movement, tune in to our weekly radio program which airs on www.harambeeradio.com on Tuesdays from 8:00 to 9:00 PM, hosted by Brother Saadiq Mance. Be prepared to join and become active on one or more of our task forces, which are:

Spiritual Life & Assistance
Economics
Education
Communications
Community Services
Intelligence & Security
Public Policy
Pan-African Affairs
Youth Affairs
Technology

May Peace and Blessings continue to abound for you and those you love.

It's NATION TIME Again!

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