

## **The Right and Responsibility to Educate Black Children Is Finally Ours Alone!**

In 1974 there are those who charge that “independent Afrikan schools” are elitist, private, non-productive institutions as far as the masses of our people are concerned and that these institutions should be abandoned so that we can instead concentrate our efforts on changing public school system because this where the masses of our people are.

But how can you help others if you cannot help yourself? Most of our critics are frustrated because they either could not or choose, for whatever ideological reasons, not to operate independent Afrikan schools. Operating an independent school calls for a commitment and dedication that is often far more than we know. Many are called, few are chosen and only a handful can stand the pressure!

Secondly aren't we part of the people too? Aren't we the masses too? We are not shuck-time entrepreneurs trying to get rich by babysitting or we doing this because we are bored with sitting home watching TV all day. The differences between us and others of our people (African people in America) is in what we do, not in who we are. We are all here together, just struggling along different paths trying to shake loose and advance ourselves. We are part and parcel of the masses of Afrikan people. Although our responses to this European domination we labor under is often distinctively different, still we are born to the same conditions.

Or course we recognize that it is true that most of our people send their children to public schools to be (mis)educated. But this is not by choice but rather by force of circumstance. First of all in most cases Black parents have no choice, no alternative to PS 000

and secondly because the majority of us have to work every day we must send our children somewhere.

Now this does not mean that this is what we prefer but rather this is just the way it is. Our contention is that this is not the way it has to be. We can change this situation. Some of us believe that we can begin here and now to build alternative Black educational institutions sufficient to meet our needs.

The big question always raised is how we can successfully educate our own, how can we build these Black educational institutions? We can educate our own by starting from the beginning at home. On the collective level we can institutionalize Black education by building Black preschools (Black in color, culture and consciousness). We start with preschools because of two basic reasons. One is that this is a child's most impressionable period and two, we have the resources readily available to build, instruct and maintain preschools. This is where the first formal and collective training must begin at the very latest!

The second big question is always where will the money come from? The money *must* come from us! Black preschools are within the reach of any serious Black organization of ten or more. If we can afford cars, clothes, dope, boggie music and rip-off movies WE CAN AFFORD PRE-SCHOOLS. Besides we "poor-mouth" too much. We're not half as poor as we pretend we are. The deepest poverty pocket we have is that empty space between our ears. As we said earlier, ten to fifteen brothers and sisters organized and committed can start, run and maintain a successful pre-school. That is the first step which we must institutionalize. No outside funding is needed, no immense capital financing required, only the work and commitment of bloods

dedicated to self-reliance and pulling together our resources to stand up where we are and be strong.

*Working* models exist today. It can be done and we can do it *without* alien aid or technical and ideological assistance!

Meanwhile our critics are asking us to throw up our hands in defeat and dissipate our energies struggling entirely within the framework of the so-called “public” school system simply because that “is where the majority, the masses of Black children are.” This is a case of faulty logic. If the masses shoot up, wear see-thru clothes, call their women whore, drive hogs, swallow swing and get high on reefers and wine, do we do that too? Do we go there too, do we believe those thoughts? Do we be like the masses or do we be like what we believe the masses should be like? We should not concentrate simply on where we are but we must look deeper. We must look at how we got where we are, we must look at who put us here, what forces are at work to keep us here and we must decide whether or not this is the condition we wish to be in. We therefore stress this point: While it is true that the majority of Black children are in public schools, the deeper truth is that the majority is there because there is no choice, no alternative.

What Black people (the masses, the elites, the minorities, the majorities, all Black people) need are clear examples of alternative institutions that work. Again our critics tell us it is impossible to build true alternative institutions while this system remains intact and they offer up their own failures as proof of this. Our answer is our successful institutions which continue to exist and grow stronger. We answer with work and programs not with debate and theory (although we can do that too). We are not, however, idealists or romantics. We know

that we cannot build an independent system large enough to serve everyone overnight. We know and accept that our beginning thrusts, of necessity, must be small and at a low level. But we must begin! We know that what we are doing is real and we will continue.

We do not see these alternative institutions that we create today as an end in themselves. They are only intermediary (although necessary) steps in our march forward to nationhood and true Black public educational systems. In reality what we are doing is struggling with our oppressors for the minds of our children. The success of ever independent school is a clear cut victory and advancement in this struggle. And this is what our people are looking for: *victories and advancements!*

Black people are looking for clear alternatives to what presently exists. Our job is to begin providing alternatives and not excuses and rationalizations about why we can't build. We need organized development and not floundering, frantic, futile "public" demonstrations and picket lines that do little more than raise a short fuss, a small cuss and a whole lot of dust! Picketing the school board and city hall is fine but building schools is infinitely better.

You will note that many of the present critics of independent Black institutions are the same "soothsayers" who a few years ago had us electing Black officials and battling to take over school boards. And now with our many big time Black mayors we still have not been successful at changing the conditions of our people. In fact the plight of African people in America is worse now than in the sixties when we started pitching bricks. So now once again we are being asked to do what we already did.

So what is it that we will do different "within" the public school system this time? Will we struggle to become teachers there? Will we fight for community control there? Will we

become principals there? Don't we remember that this is where we came in???? Don't we remember that the precise reason that our most recent wave of independent Black institutions evolved was because of the futility and fruitless frustration of trying to change the public school system, a system which in truth got worse the more we wrestled with it. Don't we remember yesteryear?

Some of us forget what being Black in America means. Our enemies don't. Who controls the so-called public school system? Certainly the Black parents of black pupils who attend these white run systems of miseducation do not control the public school system. Nor will we ever take over the schools as teacher's aides, or as teachers, or as enraged parents, or as concerned community folks, or as principled revolutionaries. We have tried to do that before. We will not take over the schools unless we can take the whole city, all the cities where we live. We will not overturn the rule of white America as long as we are emotionally committed to white America (no matter whether it is America in its present racist form or as some utopian, dreamed of multinational socialist-democratic state). Here we must point out for those who have forgotten, or maybe never knew, being socialist does not exempt a state from being white "ruled."

The depressing and seemingly endless vacillations of many of our "leaders" in terms of representing "us" and our interests, representing our race, representing we Afrikans born in cold North America; our so-called leader's shakiness about placing us first if often due to the fact that they have been educated by Europeans (America, French, German, English, etc., etc.) to aspire to be Europeans or even worse they have been educated and influenced by Blacks who want to be like Europeans. These same white aspiring Blacks are controlled by Europeans and are themselves totally emotionally committed to the GNP, Democratic Centralism, Ford,

Rockefeller, Marx, Lenin, Shirley Temple, Jane Fonda, Serpico, Che, Princeton, Rutgers...etc., etc...and utopian European ideas and ideals about life, civilization and society, none of which have advanced Europeans.

Face it, we cannot and we will not have true Black leaders until we educate our youth to accept the responsibility of being a Black leader. And to do that we must raise our children to be emotionally committed to Black people first.

Can Harvard educate our children to be Black leaders, can PS 007, can government financed and Negro run "Kiddieland" do it? No they cannot. We must teach our own leaders and once educated they can walk through hell in gasoline underwear and snatch bananas out of gorillas' hands without being turned around! Or even attend Black colleges without turning out Greeks and attend white colleges without becoming Black militant integrationists. They will be able to do this because they will be clear on who they are, what they are doing there and where to go once they leave.

Educated Afrikaans are a sight to behold, a force to reckon with and this is why we stress education. But let us be clear what we mean when we say education. Education is a process that first, gives identity, purpose and direction. Our identity is Afrikaans born in America, a unique people with a unique destiny. Our purpose is national liberation through gaining the ability to self-determine, self-defense and self-respect our lives, i.e., power. Our direction is straight ahead guided by the Ngubo Saba and our commitment to our people. We always ask two questions: Is it in keeping with the value system and is it good for our people? Education is a process that second, defines needs and shapes wants. It has been said of the Negro that he buys what he wants and begs for what he needs. Clearly, this neurotic way of life

must be terminated. A true Black education will define our needs as a people so that we can prosper and return to our traditional greatness. A true Black education will shape our wants so that we master our desires and not let our desires master us. Education is a process that third, passes on knowledge and skills useful in our struggle. Knowledge and skills without reason and understanding are either useless and/or dangerous. We learn to advance, we do not learn for the sake of learning. If we have already received the first two aspects of a Black education then we can move forward and go anywhere to get the last phase. We stress educating our own in order to make sure that phase one and phase two are complete.

For us Black education is a must and although it may be expensive, it is an expense we cannot afford to forego. However high the initial investment may be, it is clear that the dividends will far exceed what we put into the education of our youth.

So finally, it boils down to two questions. One, do we want a Black education for our children and two, are we willing to pay the cost? A number of our people are answering no. No, we don't want a "Black" education and no, we are not willing to pay the cost. Nevertheless, there are many of us that stand fast in our conviction that whatever the cost, Black education is a must and we will do whatever we must to build Black institutions. We know and accept the truth that the right and responsibility to education our children is finally ours alone!

*To build a nation,  
Build a people.  
To build a people,  
Teach the children!*

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