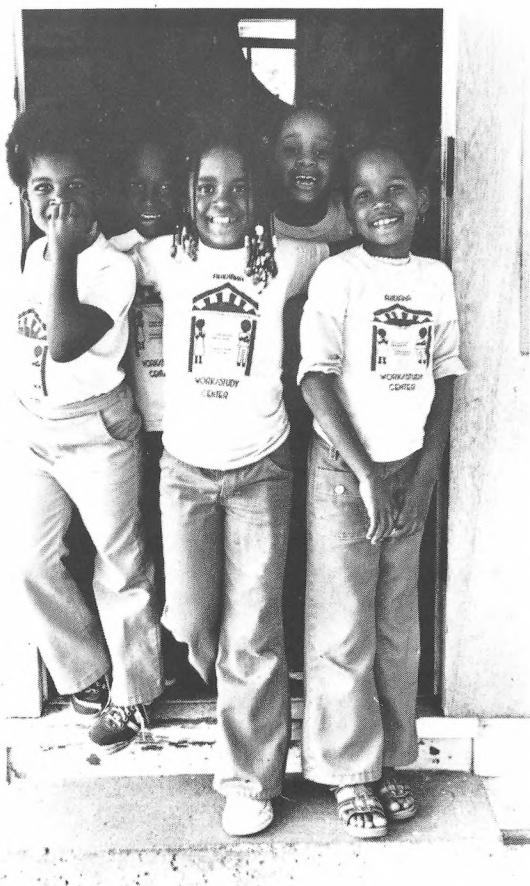


# AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY CENTER



*A Black Independent  
And Affirmative Institution  
Of Vital Education*

**2303 Deslonde Street  
New Orleans, LA 70117  
(504) 949-8891**



Founded in November 1973, **AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY Center** is a **Black independent and affirmative institution of vital education.** We have developed a curriculum of necessary education to meet the academic and social needs of children three to eight years old (approximately third grade).

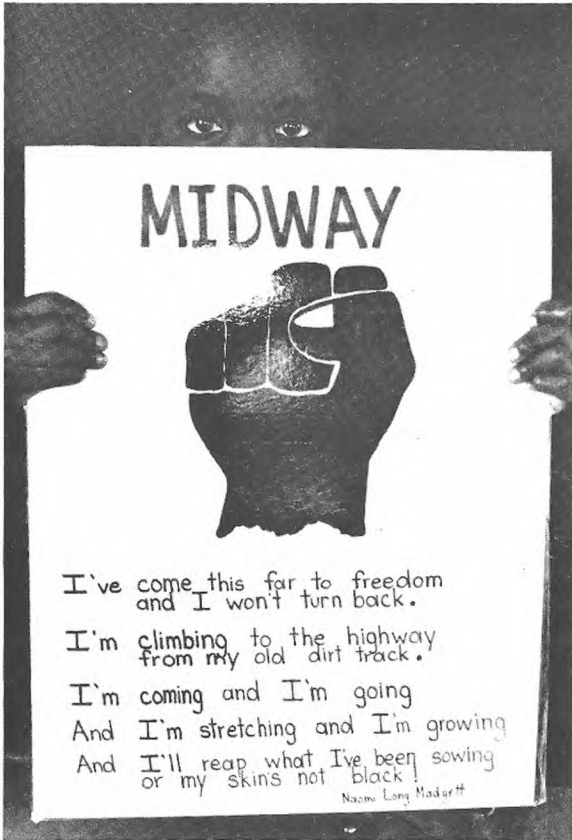


Our program stresses both academic excellence and social responsibility. We prepare our children to excel in public and private school and we teach our children to be committed to the development of our people. **AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY CENTER** is a beacon of consistent struggle for the betterment of Black people.

In the academic areas we particularly stress mathematics and reading, and also include science

and physical development. In the social areas we stress African-American history, culture and values, plus familiarity with national and international people and events. Upon graduation from AHIDIANA, all of our students are able to excel on standardized tests and take their place at the head of whatever private or public school they enter. They are able to read above their age level and perform basic arithmetic computation. They are also able to talk intelligently about themselves, our people and the world, and to recognize and identify differences and similarities among peoples of the world as well as concepts and ideas of the universe. We invite you to visit **AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY CENTER** and experience for yourself the breath and depth of this unique educational process.





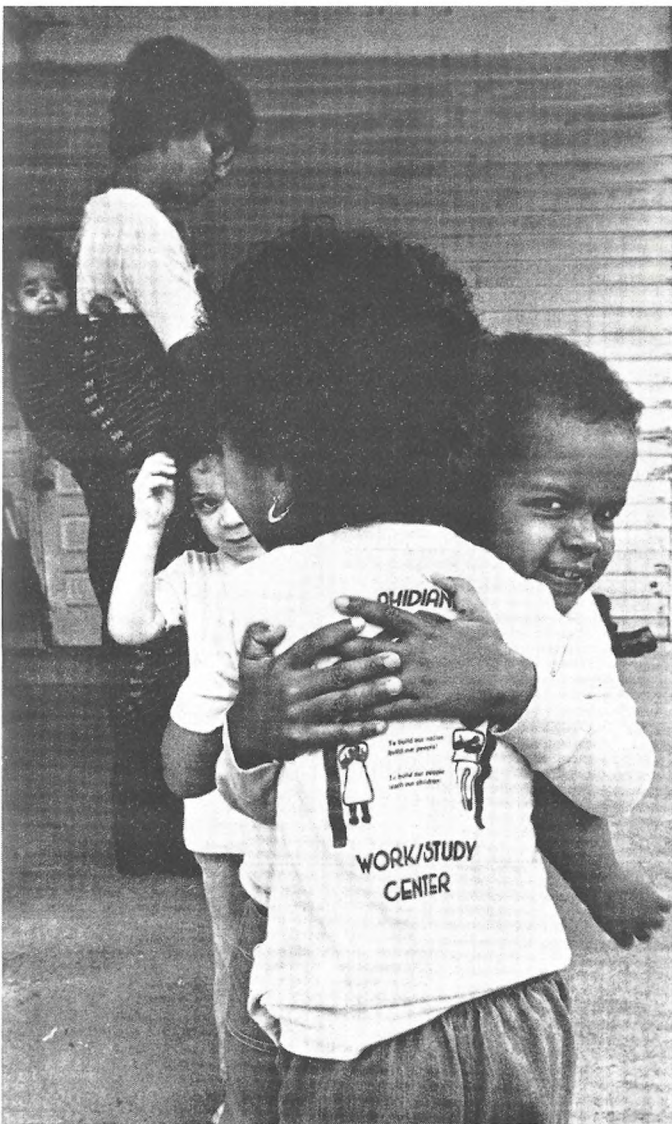
We are **Black** in color, culture and consciousness. We stress not only race, but also lifestyle and commitment to our people. Our Blackness does not exclude nor deny the rights of other people. We welcome visitors of any race or nationality. We simply stress that **what we do best is work for and in the interest of Black people first.**



Our school is **independent** because it is financed and managed by Ahidiana Organization with the support of tuition and pledges from supporters. Our school does not now, nor has it ever, received any grants or special consideration from the federal government nor any major corporation or foundation. **We depend solely on ourselves, our people and our supporters for our survival and development.**

AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY CENTER is **affirmative** because we stress our own identity, purpose and direction as African-Americans engaged in a struggle for power, i.e. the will and ability to self-determine, self-defend and self-respect ourselves. We teach our children to use one basic criterion in their thoughts and actions: Is it good for our people? **We affirm the worth and dignity of Black life and the Black liberation struggle.**





We need your help to solidify, continue and expand this important educational work. We have written important educational texts which have broad application among our youth as a whole. These texts include an alphabet reader, a coloring book and a set of folktales which teach moral principles.

The goal of our upcoming 10th Anniversary is to completely own facilities and equipment (including a new van for transportation) and to publish quality printed, inexpensively priced educational books. **With your help we can make this goal a reality.** We believe that AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY CENTER is a model for community-based education. We encourage you to inspect our school and judge for yourself the importance of this educational program which is specifically tailored to meet the needs of our youth.

Call or write **today** to arrange a visit or to receive more information: **P.O. Box 3472, New Orleans, LA 70177, (504) 949-8891 or 949-7802.**





**OUR PEOPLE'S FUTURE IS DEPENDENT  
ON OUR CHILDREN'S VITAL EDUCATION**

**YES, I Want To Support Black Independent  
And Affirmative Education At AHIDIANA  
WORK/STUDY CENTER. Here is:**

- My donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_**
- \$2.00 - Please send me a copy of *TEACH  
HARD - A Report On The Theory And Practice  
Of Independent And Affirmative Black  
Education.***

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

## AHIDIANA: FORWARD (MOVING AHEAD)

We firmly believe that we are responsible for the education of our children. The founding and continuing operation of our school, AHIDIANA Work/Study Center, is a concrete manifestation of our belief.

Operating an independent black educational institution in postindustrial, capitalist, racist and sexist American society is difficult but necessary. Our struggle to educate our children has led us to assess our history, develop a rationale for our present course of action and project a vision of our future development.

### History/Where We're Coming From

Our school is but one of many independent black schools that have been established since the sixties. Our Work/Study Center is also one of a variety of programs of our organization, AHIDIANA. AHIDIANA is a Pan-Afrikan nationalist organization based in New Orleans, Louisiana. Ahidiana is a KiSwahili word meaning mutual agreement.

As Pan-Afrikan nationalists we are dedicated to the construction of independent alternative and affirmative Black institutions to our present conditions.

In order for institutions to survive and contribute to the development of our people, they must always be independent (i.e., self-determined and self-reliant). They must also strive to be an alternative (i.e., more dynamic and progressive than that which presently exists -- dynamic means that they are characterized by growth and results and progressive means that they are morally superior to that which already exists). And finally, our institutions should be affirmative (i.e., based on and propagating our own interests and ideals).

Any institution of power for our people must also be Black (i.e., controlled by Afrikan-American people who are Black). There are three criteria for Blackness: color, culture, and consciousness.

It is not enough that our institutions are controlled by people who are only Black in color because genotype is only one criterion for Blackness. Genotype is necessary but not sufficient. We must have people who are also culturally Black (i.e., those who constantly and consistently struggle for the unification, liberation and independence of our people). And we must have people who are consciously Black (i.e., those who possess self-awareness which is the emotional commitment to our Afrikan-American identity and self-control which is the discipline necessary to struggle for our people). From AHIDIANA Operating Principles page 5

AHIDIANA started in May of 1973. However, our roots in independent Black education extend back into another school, Dokpwe Work/Study Center.

Dokpwe Work/Study Center was founded on the initiative of Kenneth Ferdinand and Tayari Kwa Salaam. Dokpwe started in January 1971 and is presently operating today. During

the early development of Dokpwe, a serious disagreement developed among the membership. Although everyone agreed that political education was important, the dividing line was the question of whether the process of education should be dominant over political development or vice versa. Specifically, the discussion took the form of questioning the need for an organizational structure which would be a higher authority to the school.

After numerous efforts to work out these conflicts, including a plan whereby one part of the membership of Dokpwe would operate the preschool and the other would operate the primary school, we eventually split into two groups. Those of us who help to the necessity of a political viewpoint and organization being dominant founded and developed AHIDIANA.

In November of 1973 AHIDIANA began AHIDIANA Work/Study Center, our preschool. Since its establishment, our W/S Center has been the primary project of our organization.

In May 1973 when we founded AHIDIANA, we had no building and limited resources, but we were determined to build a Pan-Afrikan nationalist preschool. While at Dokpwe we had developed a vision of the type of institution we wanted to build. This vision was based on the practical work we did at Dokpwe, the example of other schools, particularly CIBI schools (Council of Independent Black Institutions), and the reading we were doing about development in Afrika and other parts of the Third World.

At Dokpwe W.S Center we had begun developing teaching materials and techniques, a basic curriculum outline and a budding political line. Our school staff started from that basis and spent our whole summer studying everything we could find that seemed to offer us relevant example, inspiration or instruction. Our initial staff consisted of three people, all of whom remain active staff members of our school to this day.

We met three, four, sometimes five times a week. We read Black thinkers and activists such as Nyerere, Garvey, Malcolm, Muhammad and many others. We also studied alien educators such as Piaget, Montessori, Neil, Holt, and many others. We began construction teaching materials, cutting, coloring, pasting, and drawing. The summer went by very quickly.

Simultaneously, our teaching staff was also an integral part of our organization and, therefore, we had other responsibilities, other meetings to attend as well as rallies and demonstrations to go to and political study to be completed.

This initial period of intense study proved to be both instructive and politically important. In November 1973 when our preschool was opened, we not only has a clear concept in mind which we moved to put into practice, but we also had a practical foundation in the difficult area of everyday working together, i.e., the process of meshing individual identities to produce a unified group.

During our beginning years our membership in CIBI was a key point in our growth and development. We attended meetings and conferences and in January of 1974 hosted one of the quarterly CIBI central committee meetings. Such activity was expensive and often called for sacrifice and the delay of other projects and programs, but fortunately we made the decision to forego the immediate in order to obtain the distant. We realized that we had to have contact with others who were doing similar work. Contact and communication between ourselves and other, who share the same struggle, is critical not only for own individual growth as a school but also for the growth of the independent black school movement as a whole.

The give and take of comparing notes and discussing school development with people who were and had been very active on both a theoretical and practical basis was both

instructive and inspirational. We noted the similarities and differences between ourselves and others, and among the schools as a whole. We learned from everyone we met and from every school we saw. Some of what we learned simply reinforced the direction in which we were striving to go and made us more determined. Some of what we learned, challenged and/or changed our thinking and caused us to modify what we were doing. The opportunity to see such examples and meet the people moving those schools forward was an overall boost to our belief in ourselves and in our ability to reach our goals.

In our first two years we sorely needed such outside re-enforcement. We were isolated by distance in New Orleans, completely outside the main currents of nationalist activity in America. We ended our first year with five students. We had started with nine. Needless to say, this was a period of test and transition. But the re-enforcement we received from the example of CIBI institutions, along with our own beliefs and resolve to continue struggling, convinced us that we were on the right road, although it was a very long and difficult road to travel.

Another source of inspiration was our study of world struggles. As Pan-Afrikan nationalist we believe that the struggles of Afrikan peoples all around the world are one struggle which have many fronts and that these struggles are interrelated to the struggles of Third World peoples. We studied these struggles and attempted to internalize lessons learned from our study of Tanzania, Guyana, China and liberation movements such as PAIGC, FRELIMO, ZANU, MPLA.

At the end of our second year we were able to get a loan from the Southern Cooperative Development Fund to buy our own building. The house we bought was located within walking distance of our old building which we had been renting. Our organization believed that the acquisition of a building was a big step forward in our efforts to turn our school into a true independent black institution.

All during this period we continued to define and develop our political understanding, our curriculum and teaching methodology. After five full years of struggle we believe that we have built a foundation from which will flower an example of the potential and possibility of independent Black education.

People who visit our school today are sometimes amazed at our simple beginnings. But we always stress that any group of committed people can do what we are doing. We are not exceptional. We started with commitment and developed skill and ability as we worked. None of our beginning staff had a college degree. None of us were formally trained in education. This is neither good nor bad, but rather is a fact of our development. To us it simply means that the only prior qualification necessary is total commitment and a willingness and ability to learn. We encourage all our brothers and sisters to do the same.

Briefly, this is the history of our development.

#### Course of Action/Our Organization is Our Foundation

AHIDIANA is the basis on which we build our Work/Study Center. The fact that we have an organization has made it possible for us to develop to a level of legitimacy, stability and independence that would not otherwise be possible.

The chief advantages of organizational development have been, first, consistency of practice; second, self-reliance; and third, clarity of thought.



A. Consistency of Practice

We have been operating for six years without interruption with a consistent core staff. Having a consistent staff means that our development increases as we build on what we have learned. We are not caught in the position of having to bring in new teachers every year. We believe that this consistency has made it possible for us to develop our teaching methodology to the level that we have.

The social and material support of other members of AHIDIANA give both assistance and inspiration to our teaching staff that works at an unrelenting pace. Our organization helps by offering willing hands and other resources. Everyone helps our organization make teaching materials, helps keep the building clean, babysits, substitutes when someone is sick, and in general has the re-enforcement of people who appreciate although they do not work in the school.

As a result, our practice, as a teaching staff at an independent black educational institution, has been consistent and at very high level.

B. Self-Reliance

We have been operating for six years and, regardless of the number of students or the amount of income from tuition and fundraising, we have continued to follow our plans of development. From the very beginning our organization was committed to supplying the backup necessary to make sure that the school was independent in both theory and practice. The members of our organization monthly contributed a portion of their personal income to the organization for organizational use. During the first two years the bulk of these funds went directly to the school to keep it operating.

We deliberately did not want to start our school based on government or foundation grants. Although, we agree that such monies are monies that are due to our people, as those monies coming in the main from taxes and corporate profits generated from business with an economic exploitation of Black and poor people, at the same time we believe that our foundation for development should be our own labor and the resources that we can save or for which we sacrifice. We believe that there is a big difference between the monies we make directly through our own labor and sacrifice or savings, and the monies that are given to us by others, regardless of their motives for giving it or the conditions under which the money is given.

We have found that accepting grants and gifts, as our capital foundation, effectively and reductively diminishes and/or negates any and all efforts toward true self-reliance and self-sufficiency. In addition to putting us in a posture of dependence on the generosity of others, grants and gifts foster a welfare “give me” mentality.

We have witnessed too many projects, which were solid and worthwhile in conception, “go down the drain” because of a dependence on outside funding. Initially the outside funding makes it possible for the project to operate but eventually the outside funding

ceases, particularly if the project being funded fosters and advocates struggle against the American systematic oppression and exploitation of our people.

When outside funding pays salaries, rent, utilities and other major aspects of any programs, it is almost a certainty that not only is the program not independent, but indeed, once the funding ceases the program also will cease or be thrown into serious crisis. It is not simply a question of control of the program. It is not simply a question of who runs the budget and makes the administrative decisions. It is a question of self-reliant, independent development.

We believe that only the producers develop, as development is a direct outcome of full participation in the process of production. Production, from our viewpoint, is the meeting of human needs and desires through conscious Kazi (labor) and includes all steps from conception to consumption.

The putting together of resources is an integral and inseparable function of the process of production, especially when the production unit is a school or other unit whose output is not commodities but rather values, beliefs, skills and knowledge. For this reason we believe that gifts and grants cannot be used as an adequate or acceptable foundation upon which to build an independent institution.

Self-reliance on the other hand necessitates independence from outside economic forces. This independence is relative and not absolute, because as long as capitalists rule America, none of us that live, struggle and die here can be totally independent. However, our inability to achieve total independence without the eradication of capitalist domination of our lives does not mean that we cannot achieve relative independence. Relative independence is economic bases being built on our own labor, savings and sacrifice rather than the grants and gifts of others. Certainly we are still subject to the dominant economic system but we need not necessarily have our programs and projects subject to the personal and political agendas, the vagaries and inconsistencies of others for the day to day operation of our independent institutions.

The difference is essentially one of welfare versus warfare. While we accept aid and assistance, we in no way consider the enemy the prime source of support. To achieve this relative independence is difficult but necessary. Indeed, we believe that the achieving of relative independence is a step in the struggle and will actually assist and enable us to carry on the struggle against our exploitation and oppression to a higher level of competency and effectiveness.

Actually, what we are doing is attempting to carve out "liberated zones" in the midst of capitalist, post-industrial American society. Every liberated zone, to be effective, no matter how rudimentary or how elaborate, must be a self-reliant base of operation that offers an affirmative alternative.

C. Clarity of Thought -- Nationalism, Pan-Afrikanism, Ujamaa

Without systematic, continuous and concrete analysis and planning, we will inevitably fall victim to opportunism and spontaneity, and eventually will fail in our struggle to unseat the status quo and introduce the new social order we desire and dare to fight for.

1. Nationalism

We are nationalists. This means that the cardinal principle of our struggle is and must be that the correctness and positiveness of our struggle is measured by how well our work defends and develops our own people.

We specifically characterize our struggle as a struggle for national liberation. To liberate is to set free or to bring into existence. To set free is to remove external constraints and controls. In order to liberate anything, from cars and clothes to people and nations, it takes power. So then, when we are asked what are we struggling for we must point out that we are struggle for the power to control our lives. Power is the capability (ability and will) to self-determine, self-defend and self-respect ourselves. Control is the capability to command the use of our productive forces (people, land and tools).

At this point in the development of world peoples the pinnacle of a people's development is the establishment and maintenance of an independent (liberated and self-reliant) nation. This is so because objectively every inch of earth is claimed by one, sometimes two or more, nation/states. Therefore, our claim to control the space we presently occupy, or to control the space we may choose to occupy in the future, will have to be done within a context of seeking sovereignty over that space. In 20th century terms, the struggle to seek this sovereignty is a struggle for national liberation, a struggle to establish and maintain a nation.

We define a nation as a social and material unit determined by people with a national consciousness, sovereign land and self-government. The people need not be homogeneous, i.e., all alike. However, the people must have a national consciousness, i.e., an awareness of their collective selves as a distinct people with a common and distinct future, and a capacity to self-control themselves or to struggle to fulfill their future as best they can. The land area need not be large but it must be defined and dependable. In a word, the land must be sovereign. The government need not be modeled on or similar to any form of government that exists today or has existed in the past, but that government must be representative of and formed by the people the government leads. Briefly stated, this is what we mean by a nation.

2. Pan-Afrikanism

In practical terms this means that we have a responsibility and political imperative to help and assist other Afrikan peoples wherever in the world our people may be found. In addition, we cannot entertain the isolationist folly that we can create an independent nation politically and economically distinct from

the rest of the African world. The continued defense, development and independence of any one segment or nation of African people is dependent upon the struggle for (or actualization of) progressive defense, development and independent for all African people everywhere.

However, we do not believe that romantic Pan-Africanism is a solution. We espouse, instead, the day to day practice of progressive Pan-Africanism in the particular and the concrete. Far away battles are easy to fight in absence. Romantic Pan-Africanists sit in the safety of one locale and lobby for the struggles of African people in another locale, while ignoring and conspicuously abstaining from the struggles of Afrikan people in their very own locale. Pan-Africanism to be positive and progressive must be particular and concrete, i.e., it must have a specific focus and must be an actual engagement in struggle for the defense and development of a particular nationality of Afrikan people.

We are not true Pan-Africanists if we exist in the midst of Afrikan people and do not actively wage struggle with our people against exploitation and oppression, and for the empowerment of our people. We are not true Pan-Africanists if our people are in need of concrete defense and development and we offer only theories and analysis. We believe that to be Pan-African is to be active in our advocacy of the defense and development of the Afrikan people with whom we live, struggle and die. We are not opposed to choosing where and with whom in the Afrikan World we struggle, for clearly, if Pan-Africanism is valid then, our struggle need not be confined to the place of our birth. What we are saying, however, is that while we need not live, struggle and die in the place of our birth, we do need to live, struggle and die in the place of our existence and as part of the people with whom we share that space. Our primary struggle must be wherever we actually are, rather than where we abstractly think we would like to be.

3. Ujamaa

Finally, we are advocates of Ujamaa (Familyhood and Cooperative Economics). To be for Ujamaa means to be communal rather than competitive, helpful rather than exploitative, and socialist rather than capitalist.

Historically, Ujamaa meant communalism. But the necessary preconditions of communalism no longer exist, indeed those very preconditions were destroyed and denied its rebirth by the imposition of imperialism on our lives.

Contemporarily, (for our people who live within a capitalist system), Ujamaa means cooperative economics, i.e., the pooling of our resources and profiting together from the pooling of our resources. At present we have no choice but to be cooperative if we are to advance economically as a people. We cannot go

back to communalism and today, like it or not, we control neither land, major tools of production, nor even our own skilled and technical labor.

However, once we achieve nationhood, then Ujamaa will mean socialism. Socialism, in essence, is basically the ideals of our traditional communalism practiced in a 20th century form and context.

That in brief is the political line that shapes the thrust of our educational program.

### PUTTING POLITICS IN THE LEAD

Many of our schools are debating which should take the lead, technical competence or ideological development. As we have already argued, we believe that ideological development should command the acquisition and use of technical competence. It does make a difference whether the people who are technically competent are political or not. What we are after is developing technical competence among politicized people.

Furthermore, we believe that the absence of conscious political development means that unconscious political values will take root during the process of gaining technical competence. For example, medical doctors are not inherently money or profit-oriented and elitist by nature. However, they are often the products of (1) the circumstances they study and live in, (2) the subliminal political indoctrination that accompanies their acquiring a medical education, and (3) the structure of a capitalist and elitist mentality and reality reinforced by society at large.

Traditional western approaches to education assert that there is a separation of political line from educational development, ideology from technique. But that is false. There is usually a dominance of one element or another but there is never the absence of one element when the other element is actively practiced.

A full appreciation of AHIDIANA W/S Center's educational program requires a simultaneous appreciation (although not necessarily an acceptance of) our political program. For it is our political line that has led the development of our educational program.

That is the basic foundation of our rational program of development to which we have fully committed ourselves. The further clarification of these points will come about as we work and study on them and further clarification is necessary. If we honestly and resolutely work and study, if we successfully wed the ideal to the actual, ideological clarity will result from our efforts and thusly better equip us to win, for we will have both the theory (abstract) and the practice (concrete) as the basis for our ongoing movement. Where we are wrong, reality will contradict and correct us and if we are serious, we will correct ourselves.

But then again the real clarity will be the sparkling beauty and force of our concrete creations shining in the sun as the world turns! That will be the real beauty, along with the plans and accomplishments our daughters and sons defend and develop as a result of being raised by what we are able to do in the sphere of politics and education.

From our point of view, the development of independent Black educational institutions is a key aspect of our people's struggle for unification, liberation and independence.

## **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!*

Baba Adwa/Aphidian

Pomona Tutashinda  
Kalamu ya Salaam  
Ahidiana W/S Center

## PRACTICE THE VALUES AND LOVE REVOLUTION

If what we have learned is correct and struggling to apply it, at AHIDIANA Work/Study Center we walimu (teachers) are responsible to develop each mwanafunzi (student) total self. In order to make “our love and responsibility to each other as a way of life,” each of us must unify the four elements of the self or the Afrikan Personality. We teach watoto to give good example and be strong Afrikans by developing:

1. body, that is, exercise daily and eat a proper diet.
2. mind, that is, acquire knowledge and skills useful in our struggle.
3. soul, that is, do right, follow the Nguzo Saba.
4. consciousness, that is, attain self-awareness (identity) and self-control (discipline).

As we can see, values are but a part, an important part, of the total development of the self. We understand that all is relative and values mean little if the body, mind and consciousness are not also developed along with the soul. Here we will be discussing the development of the soul, doing right, following the Nguzo Saba.

The Nguzo Saba, Seven Principles of Blackness, are the values we live and believe in at AHIDIANA. This Black Value System was created by Maulana Ron Karenga and is further developed in A Black Value System by Imamu Amiri Baraka. The Nguzo Saba are our “guide, a code of common morality, a weapon, a shield, a pillow of peace.” The Nguzo Saba are as follows as interpreted by AHIDIANA:

### UMOJA — UNITY

Unity means to come together and work together.

### KUJICHAGULIA — SELF-DETERMINATION

Self-determination means to define ourselves and govern ourselves.

UJIMA — COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY

Collective means to gather together material and resources or people in one group.

Work is to extend energy to get a job done. Responsibility means to take care of or maintain.

UJAMAA — FAMILYHOOD AND COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS

Familyhood means to raise (provide, protect, respect, inspire, educate and socialize) ourselves. Cooperative means to work together in peace and harmony. Economics is the ownership, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

NIA — PURPOSE

Our purpose is to defend and develop ourselves as a people and as a nation.

KUUMBA — CREATIVITY

Creativity means to live and work in our own way to improve or beautify ourselves and the world we live in.

IMANI — FAITH

Faith means to be totally committed. We are totally committed to Afrikan people and the practice of the Nguzo Saba.

The Nguzo Saba is not dogma, not rhetoric  
In fact it is nothing unless we live it  
In fact it is nothing unless we live it  
Nothing, useless until we live it...

The Nguzo Saba, Seven principle, is a way of life defined by action and the clarity of thought necessary to practice it.

Sun People/Kalamu ya Salaam

Upon following this value system, our lives have identity, purpose and direction. Here is the key for our children. By teaching them values, they will be able to function as leaders when they have to step into their mamas' and babas' shoes, making themselves responsible for society.

The purpose (of education) is to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society and to prepare the young people for their future membership of the society and their active participation in its maintenance or development.

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere

And our children must be prepared to do more than we are prepared to do today!

In the 1970's it is not a luxury to be able to read and write, it is a requirement; it is not a privilege to be able to compute the speed of light, measure the distance between two points, or understand the intricacies of tele-electronics, it's a necessity. It is not just for Europeans to be able to navigate the universe, explore the oceans or investigate the beauty of the brain. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is upon us and will demand of our children unknown effort, unknown discipline, unknown dedication — will demand skills and expertise unthought of by the average man of 1972 — will instill in our children the necessary skills and values that will motivate them to serve Afrika and Afrikan people.

Mwalimu Haki R. Madhubuti

How are these values taught to watoto (children) at AHDIANA Work/Study Center?

### UMOJA — Unity

We stress the collective, i.e., we value all of us as a group. We struggle to meet the needs and desires of the group by meeting the needs of everyone in the group. Before moving we make sure everyone is ready. If someone is not ready, we help them. Usually when watoto are not ready it is because they are not following directions or needed but did not ask for help.

We then correct the behavior in the first case and ask why help was not asked for in the second case.

We also begin activities together such as beginning meals with a leader who says, “Tayari! Ketii!” (“Ready! Seats!”) Then once we are seated, “Tayari! Sifa!” (Ready! Praise!) We stress that moving slowly or not following decisions of the group is not helping our unity.

When making decisions, we reach agreement through consensus. This is done in steps by making sure all necessary changes are made to fit the needs of the group. And then when everyone agrees, we move on with the goal to accomplish it. We have group decisions in relation to outside activities. Or if the mwalimu (teacher) is pleased with the group’s behavior and is going to reward the behavior with a special group activity, the group must decide which activity they will participate in.

Once we reach a decision, we struggle to follow it to its completion. By daily practicing the values at our skuli (school), we are learning to get along with each other, our brothers and sisters as well as our mamas and babas (the names given to the teachers at our skuli).

#### KUJICHAGULIA — Self-Determination

The values stressed here are concentration, self-motivation and initiative.

Concentration deals with developing an attention span. In understanding that the pre-school’s job is to prepare the mtoto for further studies, attention span is essential to develop so that one may listen for a given period of time and complete tasks. Discipline is closely linked here because discipline is self-control. Each mtoto must control her/himself to listen and complete tasks, to relax and sit during an activity for a certain time period.



We develop discipline and concentration on an individual basis in Kazi (the work room) and on a group basis in Darasa (the classroom). In Kazi we develop these first finding the child's attention span level, then requiring the child to remain working with an activity to his/her limit, reinforcing that accomplishment with praise and/or reward. The child is required to do this again later in the day or again the next day. Each time we increase the time limit in which the child must work on the activity. In Darasa we require the watoto to be disciplined or they are not allowed to participate in the class at all. Each child makes the decision to participate in the group activity or be isolated from the group. Seldom is the latter needed because part of our responsibility as walimu is to first, help our children understand why their education is important for the benefit of Afrikan people, and secondly, to develop interesting, informative lessons which makes it difficult to do anything but listen.

In developing self-motivation and initiative, the watoto themselves motivate each other. They share activities, encourage and help each other. The prepared environment is also an aid in self-motivation in that it is clean orderly and purposeful. Also, we have periods in the day called Kazi, in which the child is allowed to decide on those activities he/she is motivated to work with. We always say, "Afrikan people have a lot to do. We are always doing Kazi." In instilling initiative or self-reliance, we struggling along with each mtoto and when she/he completes the task, there is much praise and excitement. For example, a brother has been having a hard time controlling his body whenever he disagrees with his brothers or sisters. One particular time the mwalimu may see this brother hold his hand back and control himself consciously. There is great joy. The mama will say, "Brother John, Njema!! Njema sana!! I am so proud of you. You are struggling not to fight your brothers and sisters. Did we see how strong

our brother is? We are strong Afrikan people!!!” Children are then moved to depend on their own strength because they are praised based on their strength.

We teach the watoto to be specific and explicit in naming people, places and objects. We struggle not to say “stuff” or “things” because these words are non-determining words. We require the wanafunzi to name everything and if they cannot, we help them to name that which they could not name. We say that Afrikan people are called brother, sister, baba and mama. All other people are called by their nationality: European, Japanese, and Chinese. People of other nationalities are called boy, girl, man and woman. Another example is that many parents and teachers allow watoto to give what we call “silly” names to certain body parts and excretions. We say penis, vagina, buttocks, rectum, mucus, urine, bowel movement. These body parts and excretions are not silly but functional. We laugh at what is funny and we respect or change that which is not.

We teach watoto to speak in a loud, strong voice and assert themselves in a strong Afrikan manner so that we might all gain from each other’s gifts. We require a sentence or statement to all questions instead of accepting the hunched shoulders or shaking the head. We usually say, “We can’t hear you when you shake your head,” or “...hunch your shoulders.” We speak for ourselves and allow no one to speak for us. We say, “Sister Nia, let Brother Henry speak for himself. Allow him to practice Kujichagulia.”

#### Ujima — Collective Work and Responsibility

The values which are contained in this principle are orderliness, cleanliness, leading/following, to ask for help and accepting it, and finally, accepting responsibility.

Orderliness and cleanliness are inspirational, i.e., uplifting. These two values encourage work and study and give peace and direction. When the watoto have completed a job, we require all tools to be returned to their place in order. Whenever a group activity ends, we all make sure there is order before moving on. If there is something out of order we say, "Is that the way we leave our building blocks?" or "Is that the way our books are supposed to look?" If all is in order, we give praise and are very proud that we made our room look orderly again. Also daily we collectively clean Chakula (the dining room) with each mtoto having a specific job.

At Ahidiana W/S Center we also teach the value of responsibility for leading and following. Understanding our present day limitations as seen in the failure and/or in the ineffectiveness of many black organizations because members can neither lead nor follow, we have tried to instill in our watoto as early as possible the responsibility and ability to lead as well as follow. A leader directs. He/she is a guide who gives good example. He/she is a star to us in every sense of the word. A follower accepts authority and responsibilities. He follows directions in a strong Afrikan way.

Daily we take turns leading. Our leader for the day guides us in reciting our pledge, beginning snacks and our meal, reciting Sifa and passing out tools for the day. We take turns leading in Taburu (exercise period) and in Darasa. For example, we might say, "Who is prepared to lead us in counting today?" Sometimes the mtoto who just gave leadership will raise his/her fist again. The mama will reply, "We believe in collective leadership and one person cannot always lead." Or if no one is prepared to lead, we say, "We cannot move forward without a leader. There is no progress without a leader." We try to keep a balance in understanding the value of collective leadership as well as singular leadership.

We also understand that we are always leaders whenever we give good example.

“Brother Juju, you gave good example by helping Brother Thomas snap his pants. You are a leader and a star. Njema sana!” The watoto take pride in leading and begin to understand that leading is involved on two levels: 1. in the sense of leading a group of followers and 2. in the sense of giving a good example.

We struggle against leadership being competitive. A child may say, “I beat you.” We ask that we say, “I gave good example. I led.”

We give praise to those who are following too: “Njema, Sister Shana, you gave respect to the leader and listened to what he had to say.” Or, “Are we giving the leader respect if we talk when she is talking? Njema, to those who are listening.”

We also teach the wanafunzi to stand up for whatever they do. We question the watoto’s actions by saying, “Did you wash your hands before coming to the table?” or “Did you break the wheel off of the car?” We require a fearless answer by assuring the child that the truth is important. We respect the truth and when watoto speak the truth they are praised and not punished. If a children refuses to speak the truth, they are isolated until they can do so. At first it is hard for children to give a fearless answer because at home a child is usually punished after speaking the truth. Children answer to a question such as “Did you do such and such” is usually no answer or a negative one because they don’t want to be punished for what they did. We feel that the act of correcting by a mama or baba is better than punishment in most cases.

What also helps watoto to be responsible for their actions is by the walimu being responsible for their actions. We humbly take correction from the watoto and stand up for our

mistakes. We willingly admit to not knowing the answer to a question, but add that we will struggle to find out.

Finally, another important aspect of Ujima is asking for help and accepting it. It is our understanding that we Afrikan people can do anything if we have each other's help. We instill this value in the watoto by requiring them to ask for help instead of saying, "I can't." We accept the help from our brothers and sisters understanding that it is their responsibility to give help and our responsibility to accept it so that we may complete our job.

**“ ‘You either serve the people or you use the people.’ There is no in between.”**

UJAMAA—Familyhood and Cooperative Economics

Ujamaa deals with building an attitude about ourselves as a family as a basis for such values as respect of self, others and property; sharing and being non-materialistic. We believe and teach that all Afrikan people are our brothers and sisters. We are a family. What harms one of us, harms all of us; what helps one of us, helps us all. This is the basis of sharing, or caring for each other, of giving respect. To the watoto, we say their peers are brothers and sisters and that their adults are their mamas and babas (mother and father in Kiswahili). We believe we should be just that responsible for each other. There is security in Afrikan familyhood which speaks strongly to our children when they know that not only their biological parents love and respect them but their teachers and all other adults as well. And we know that we must give as well as receive. Our children must be taught this.

Usually sharing is difficult at first for young watoto who are given many examples of us not sharing, but in explaining the concepts we've mentioned here and saying that we will share and/or take turns with a given tool, helps greatly. In acquiring educational tools we will purchase or create one or two of each type so that sharing is necessary in the work we do. Seldom do we have educational materials which are just enough so that each mtoto will have one to him/herself. If a child refuses to share, he loses the opportunity to work with the tool. We explain to him/her that we share and use our possessions collectively and not selfishly.

Sometimes a brother or sister or even a mama or baba may bother a child so that the child will swing out at them or throw a fit. When a fight does occur, we sit down and talk about why the experience happened and where the problem really lies.

"Brother Allen, did you hit Brother Randolph?"

"Yes, Mama."

"Why did you hit him?"

"He hit me!"

"Brother Randolph, did you hit Brother Allen?"

"Yes, Mama."

"Why did you hit him?"

"He won't let me take a turn."

"Brother Allen, was it Brother Randolph's turn?"

"No, Mama."

"Well, maybe if you would have given him a turn, all of this would not have happened.

You could have another turn after Randolph takes a turn. That's how we share what we have.

And Randolph if you could've been a little bit more patient maybe Brother Allen would have given you a turn. Is Brother Randolph your brother, Brother Allen?"

"No Mama."

"Yes, he is. We are all Afrikan people and we practice Ujamaa. What does Ujamaa mean Brother Randolph?"

"Ujamaa means Familyhood and Cooperative Economics."

"Yeabo, njema. We are a family and we respect each other and not fight each other. Brother David and Brother Charles are brothers and if you need help with being strong you ask for help from one of the Mamas."

"Yes, Mama."

"Brother Randolph, if Brother Allen was not prepared to share at the time you were ready to take a turn, you should've ask one of the Mamas for help."

"Yes, Mama."

During this, we sat very close together and gained an understanding about each other, we said, "We fight, but we only fight our enemies. We work out our problems with our brothers and sisters and help each other be strong. If someone refuses to work out the problem with you, ask for help or move away from that brother or sister until he/she is ready to struggle." Then we required each one involved to apologize to each other.

Sometimes children will laugh when someone falls. We then say, "We laugh at what is funny. A family members falling is not funny because they could be hurt. Please help them."

We also give respect by trying to be respectful in our tone of voice with each other and using certain phrases which are more respectful such as, “Would you please...” when making a request.

There are three ways in which we give respect: by acknowledging worth, giving attention to presence and appreciating what is offered. We acknowledge worth by teaching the watoto to give praise and say when something is good. We give attention to presence by making sure we greet everyone correctly and say “excuse me” at the proper times. We appreciate what is offered by saying “thank you” and being grateful for what is given and not greedy by asking for more. We respect ourselves by giving respect to others and keeping ourselves clean and attractive and by giving good example.

#### NIA—Purpose

Nia deals with values as alertness, ability to take criticism, understanding the importance of work and study as well as having a purpose for everything.

Alertness is being ready, prepared, to quickly understand and act. This is a difficult value to instill in the watoto. We reward alertness and encourage those who move slowly to move faster. Thus we stress preparedness. For example, at Ahidiana Work/Study Center one of our responsibilities in nutrition is to introduce the children to the healthful vegetarian diet. At first the children refuse to eat the food by picking at it or not touching it at all. We then give the children a small amount and those who do not finish are required to miss out on ten minutes of outside play. Those who finish are given praise and sent outside immediately. Eventually most of the children begin to enjoy the food and eat at a normal pace. For the particularly difficult



cases, that is, those watoto who do not eat much or are “hooked” on junk foods, we have a slightly different approach because these children will lag behind and slow drag for a longer period of time and the first approach will only reinforce these problems in eating. First we give them a small amount and require them to eat all of their salad at least and then giving them permission to go outside. After the child has accepted eating his/her salad, we then begin to work on the vegetables. Confidence is built when the child does complete the stated amount of the food, the goal and eventually even the difficult cases are enjoying and appreciating the meals. We all are then eating at a normal pace with everyone finishing at the same general time. Then the Chakula period becomes another time where we collectively work together.

We also build alertness by example and by keeping a schedule and rhythm in our daily routine. Eventually the watoto learn the rhythm and move to the pace that is set. This is balanced in teaching the children that rushing is not correct either and taking your time is the most efficient and effective way to move.

It is important to take criticism so that we may improve ourselves. Criticism helps us in the development of all four elements of our personality. We help the mtoto take the criticism by making the criticism group responsibility as well as the child’s. That is, we say that we should help our brother/sister struggle to be strong and do what is correct. Another way we help the mtoto in taking criticism is by giving praise and then giving correction in a respectful tone. For example, “It was correct of you to struggle to help you brother put those building blocks away, but you should not have pushed to make him listen. If he didn’t listen, you should not have pushed him to make him listen. If he didn’t listen, you should say, ‘Mama Tayari, I need help with Brother Axum.’ We don’t fight each other, but we do help each other.”

We also learn to give criticism. First we say that the corrector must know what is being corrected then he/she may give the criticism. A result of this is that teachers are criticized, and also parents at home. Many times parents will proudly tell of the time that their child refused to eat junk food and sat watching their parents “do what was incorrect.” This is one means in which our teaching reaches parents. A child may tell his mama or baba at home, “Mama that was incorrect to shout at my little brother. Would you please struggle not to do that?” Or the child will demand that mama and baba constantly do Kazi and not watch television or lay around. The child will also demand books to read, paper and crayons to write with and to help around the house.

We also teach the watoto that there is a purpose for everything that they do: everything has a place, there is a time to do everything. We often ask, “Why did you write on the table, sister?” or “Why did you pull the leaf off the plant?” Usually the response is: “I don’t know.” (Of course, if the child give a reason, we deal with that too.) Then the Mama will say, “Nia means purpose. We should have a Nia, a purpose for everything we do. You didn’t have a reason for what you did, so you should not have done it.”

We also teach that there is no purpose in just wanting something. We ask for something only when we need it. We teach our watoto to say, “I need this or that.” versus “I want this or that.” After all our needs are met we can then begin to satisfy wants and desires, but needs supersede wants. But at this time we have so many unfulfilled needs that we have little resources to spend on desires. Usually our people today buy what we want and beg for what we need. So we have homes filled with closets of fine clothes and no food in the refrigerator. We have to change up and see that this is backwards.

We teach our children the balance of work and study. Work without study is aimless; study without work is fruitless. We teach that whatever we learn must be functional and useful. If it is not, we don't need it. Once we learn/study, we apply/work. This is why our school is called a work/study center and this is why we are struggling to institutionalize the concept of work (Kazi periods) and study (Darasa periods) in our teaching approach.

#### KUUMBA—Creativity

Overcoming obstacles and finding solutions to problems are values to be stressed here. It takes creativity to build a block tower, or to string a bead pattern or to solve a math problem. "Creativity involves the stimulation of the mind so as to move it from idea to practice" says Mwalimu Haki. Whenever we do something in a functional, positive manner, we are practicing creativity.

One way we help watoto overcome obstacle is by requiring them to struggle with small problems (which are really big ones to children) like putting on and buttoning their coats, putting tools away correctly, helping a brother or sister complete a job after completing the one you were responsible for.

We also encourage our students not to tattle and creatively work out problems they may have with their brothers and sisters in the group. We say, "We should not go outside of those who have the problem and tattle or gossip; we should work it out ourselves with our brother or sister. Ask for help when you really need it."

The watoto understand that keeping order and keeping clean is part of improving our environment. Often we ask the watoto for suggestions in running the skuli. We listen to their

suggestions and struggle to follow them. Several times their input has been very creative and helpful.

Whenever we create a strong Kazi sheet or drawing or painting, it is respectfully placed on the wall to décor and beautify our skull. The watoto take pride in struggling to always create neat, orderly work.

#### IMANI— Faith

Perseverance, patience and struggle are the values linked with faith. Each child who is in need of perseverance has been taught to despair and not believe in his strength to accomplish a goal. What we do is sit with the child and struggle as hard as he/she will, always giving much encouragement for the slightest move toward the goal. We exemplify perseverance by working with the mtoto and not giving up. This process usually succeeds and the reward is tremendous as seen and heard in the knowing laughter of success which bursts from the child at each step by step achievement.

Imani also deals with children valuing their Afrikan self and heritage. They understand that they must struggle so that we will win. They believe that we will win so they struggle. This involves the belief in the ultimate victory of our struggle if we prepare to win.

We teach the value of struggle by giving the children tasks to accomplish of varying degrees of difficulty. At first most of the tasks are easy tasks. At every step, each accomplished task is praised and/or rewarded immediately after its accomplishment. In this manner children are taught confidence in their own ability to succeed and this confidence encourages them to tackle and overcome larger and more difficult problems.

These are techniques we use to teach values, but finally we know that example is the best teacher. Therefore, we require our teachers to exemplify our values at all times. In order to do this, we must develop good work/study habits and be constantly conscious of applying our ideology.

Habits are the result of repeated reinforced actions. Routines are important. They must be established and followed if they are to be effective. However, we do not substitute blind allegiance to dogma for rational application of our ideology. There are always decisions to be made concerning the correct application of our principles.

Our children must be allowed to watch and participate in the decision-making process. This is very important to their development because the practice of our values is not mechanical but is rather a creative process of weighing the relative merit of each and every variable under consideration and then finally reaching a decision based on our assessment of the total problem.

This calls for consciousness on our part. This demands that we always be aware of what we are doing and are requiring the children to do. This also means that we do everything in a disciplined manner which means that we are in full control of ourselves when we move.

The practice of our values is a full time job. We are not interested in simply teaching our children to memorize the Nguzo Saba or to make mechanical movements like little black robots. We are struggling for National Liberation, for our unification, liberation and independence of Afrika and Afrikan people everywhere. We are struggling to raise (provide, protect, respect, inspire, educate and socialize) children who will be able to continue this awesome task and responsibly carry it through to its conclusion.

This is why and how we teach our children to

PRACTICE THE VALUES AND LOVE REVOLUTION NOW.

“We must be value bound, shaping ourselves to fit the value system and not shaping the system to fit us, bound by values, value bound, i.e., ready to commit ourselves to doing what we got to do and not simply just all the things we want to do.”

Kalamu ya Salaam

**Pamoja Tutashinda  
Mama Tayari Kwa Salaam  
AHIDIANA Work/Study Center**

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For those unfamiliar with the Kiswahili words used within the text, the following brief definitions may be helpful:

asante – thank you  
chakula – food  
mtoto – child  
njema – good  
shule – school  
skuli – school  
wanafuzi – student  
yeabo –yes

baba – father  
darasa – class  
mwalimu – teacher  
sana – very  
sifa – praise  
taburu – drill  
walimu – teachers

RAISING OUR CHILDREN TO MAKE THIS  
WORLD BETTER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL

RAISING OUR CHILDREN TO MAKE THIS  
WORLD BETTER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL

Every act is political. Every step is political. Political in that we either follow the culture of alien American society or we follow the culture of liberation and struggle for our people. We, AHIDIANA, have committed ourselves to liberation and struggle, and towards that goal have built AHIDIANA Word/Study Center, an educational institution whose purpose is threefold:

1. To raise revolutionaries, develop young soldiers and warriors, and totally committed workers for the unification, liberation and independence of Afrikan people, especially those Afrikans born in America.
2. To make clear the evils of America to our children and to teach them to creatively build a better and more beautiful alternative.
3. To provide our children with the vital education necessary to equip them to continue their personal struggle for unification, liberation and independence.

Black child development, then, is serious business – both political and vital.

We believe that we as parents and teachers should be aware of and work to develop the aspects of our children's personality: the physical (body), the mental (mind), the spiritual (soul), and the conscious (self-awareness/identity and self-control/discipline).

#### DEVELOP BODY

We believe that the physical self is developed by eating a proper diet and exercising daily. A proper diet is one that supports and promotes our health. Exercise is orderly movement that strengthens and tones the muscles of the body.

A proper diet includes nutritious food, fresh air, sunshine, sleep/rest, and peace. We must have all of these for a healthy body.

Nutritious foods are those foods which are highest in proteins, vitamins and minerals, and are easy to digest. Nutritious foods are not necessarily cooked and are usually naturally grown. Our children should be taught to enjoy nutritious foods and to appreciate the value of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts. A child can live without ice cream, candy and cookies. Lettuce salads, raisins, apples and peanut butter are favorites of our children. Please read Food Guide for Afrikan People by AHIDIANA W/S Center for an in-depth understanding of essential life-promoting foods.

Food is not the only consideration for health in our children. Fresh air is quickly becoming a hard to come by need. Severe pollution lessens a good supply of oxygen and causes some diseases and illnesses we've never experienced before. We therefore teach our children to respect plants both outdoors and indoors because plants inspire life in our houses and neighborhoods. We breathe in their oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. Plants "breathe" in our carbon dioxide and "breathe" out oxygen.



This is a beautiful cycle of life which should be taught to our children. All living creatures support each other's life in harmony with nature.

Sunshine is valuable for Vitamin D and for solar energy directly from the universe. We are the suns. Black folk depend on the sun as a healer, cleanser and source of strength.

### "Genesis"

T. David Watson

Two little girls  
walked down a country road  
looking for a place to play;  
One spotted a baby boy sitting in the sun  
and went to put him in the shade  
of an old rosebush;  
but an old lady, older it seemed than time  
spoke up  
angrily.  
"Put him back  
so the sun can get to him"  
she said in age-mellow voice,  
"don't you want him to grow up strong?"  
"Yes, ma'm"  
one of the two finally replied  
"but won't he get sun stroke  
if you keep him out there too long".  
The old woman smiled toothless  
and said  
"Our people have been sun-people  
since Creation,  
leave that baby in the sunshine  
and  
one day  
he will have the power  
to move this world."

Our children, between the ages of one and five years old, should get a one hour or two hours daily nap and ten hours of sleep at night. However, let's also be aware of how soon we sleep or rest after our meals. Digestion is work for our bodies. Our children cannot rest well while their bodies are working to digest food. It is best not to lie down immediately after eating a full meal.

Peace is social and material harmony. Noise, pressure, tension, abuse, plasticity are the trim for this sexist, materialist, white supremacist culture. We need peace! We need our Black life to be a pleasing whole with each part in agreement, giving unity to our lives. Are our homes havens of peace, supportive of our Afrikan personalities? Can we settle down in our homes (minus television and “munchies”) and accomplish some inspiring reading or quiet work for our self-development and our collective struggle? Our children should have a special place for themselves to do their work, too. We are a peaceful people in need of peaceful environments supportive of our Afrikan identity.

Daily exercise is the other essential. A properly planned exercise program practiced daily will significantly increase both our health and longevity. We often do not realize that in order for our bodies to function properly, our muscles must work. Exercise daily. Start with head/neck movements and move down to the ankle/feet movements. Exercise shoulders, arms, torso, hips, legs. Twist, turn, stretch. Parents and children should try to exercise together. Try five minutes a day.

Running or jumping rope is also very healthful. Start with one block a day. If daily exercise seems hard to begin with, try weekly or bi-weekly exercise sessions for the family. Exercise promotes a positive personality.

Another consideration for physical development is enrolling your child in karate, gymnastics, or dance classes. All of these involve exercise.

## DEVELOP MIND

We develop our minds by acquiring knowledge and skills that are useful in our struggle. For our children, language and reading are key to gaining knowledge and skills.

Our children learn language from their environment. Language should be a natural part of our homes. If our children are not spoken to or not allowed or required to speak, when they need to speak outside the home, in school or with their peers, they will not be able to. Our children will only be frustrated because we parents/teachers have refused to teach them to express themselves.

Language teaches values. Our children develop likes and dislikes from what people in their environment say. They learn what is important or valuable and what is not.

Our children’s viewpoint concerning themselves and the world about them is also affected by the language used around children. What effect does name-calling have on your child’s viewpoint of the person called out of name? Are body excretions called by their rightful name or by sounds or by numbers? Do we generally speak to others in a respectful warm tone of voice and smile? Being aware of our example and doing correct actions will improve our children’s language twofold.

Ask and answer questions of your child. Require your child to follow verbal directions. Discuss places you've gone or places to which you are planning to go. While at the supermarket or department store talk about what is happening – talk about sights, sounds, smells. The senses are our tools of learning; let's be especially aware of them.

Enunciate and use correct grammar. Require your child to use language. Encourage children to verbalize their wants.

With babies encourage sound. With toddlers encourage words. With one year olds encourage sentences. With two year olds encourage conversation. With three year olds encourage total use of language.

Reading is an essential skill in acquiring information. To develop early confident readers, first, our children need correct models, good examples of the use and importance of reading. Seeing their parents, older brothers and sisters, and other adults reading daily is a powerful reinforcement. When cooking or cleaning, painting or repairing around the home, read the directions on labels out loud so that our children can experience the usefulness of the reading skill. Parents referring to books for information concerning instructions or skills, such as electronics, carpentry, sewing, art, and graphics, help our children understand the value of reading.

Parents should read with and also read to their children daily. Vocabulary increases with each reading session. Discuss what you have read. Use the knowledge gained in your life and relate it to your child's and family's experiences.

A home should have a special place for all books to teach respect and the value of books. Children should have a small library of books that they can refer to and read at will. When a book is torn or written in, this should be looked upon as a serious mistake and the child should be corrected.

Trips to the library, bookstores and newsstands also reinforce the importance of reading.

All these experiences will bring your child and words together. For further development of reading skills, send your child to a pre-school that teachers reading to children who are ready to read.

Toward the development of handwriting, develop our children's manipulative skills by allowing them to fold towels, dress themselves, button their clothing, tie their shoes, wash their faces and brush their teeth daily. Have plenty of paper, crayons, felt pens and scissors for other manipulative work such as doing free/independent drawing and coloring, coloring inside of a shape, tracing simple patterns, cutting on lines (zigzag, straight). There should be a special place to store these tools and in easy reach whenever they are ready to be used.

Praise our children's successes. Be patient with our children's efforts. Praise and patience are essential for positive development.

The following are suggested for parents/teachers in developing our children's minds:

### Places To Go

For each place, prepare a lesson beforehand explaining where you will be going and why. These trips should be natural parts of your day or a special activity done for a special occasion. You are also interested in these places, too. You and your child can learn and study together. Discuss major concepts while there and those aspects that most interest your child. Listen to your child's sounds and watch your child's reactions. Upon returning, review the experience, give your impressions and allow your child to do the same. Here are some examples of places to go:

library	the levee
zoo	museums
parks	green houses
street car ride	pet shops
the lake, the river, the bayou	ferry ride

Our culture and history are integral parts of New Orleans. Teach our children about:

Mardi Gras Indians	Congo Square
Jazz and the Second Line	New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival
Ujamaa Afrikan Market	French Quarter and Market
House of Suma/New Afrika Books	

### Music To Hear

In listening to music, ask your child what message is being given or what mood is being set. Is the music fast or slow, loud or soft? What instruments are being played?

Our children should be aware of all types of music and if possible become involved in music at an early age. Music is our breath of life, our juju, our Black spirit forever free. Listen to blues, soul as well as rhythm and blues. Be conscious of the positive aspects of our music. Any music played by Black folk will not do. A list of positive musicians are listed below:

Bob Marely and the Wailers	Stanley Clarke
Bernice Reagon	Andy Bey
Ella Jenkins	Doug Carn
Gary Bartz	Pharoah Sanders

Books To Read – See attached Suggested Reading Lists.

After reading a book to your child or for your own development, ask what lessons were taught in this story. What concepts were taught in this book? Then try to link this to your family and its experiences or our people and our experiences.

## DEVELOP SOUL

We develop our souls by doing right and practicing values. We at AHIDIANA practice the values called Nguzo Saba/The Seven Principles of Blackness:

(See attached paper of Nguzo Saba, The Seven Principles of Blackness)

We have outlined the teaching of values to our children in an article called “Practice the Values and Love Revolution,” Black Books Bulletin, Volume 2, Winter 1974. Read this for an in-depth discussion of values for our children.

Briefly we would like to stress several values of the Nguzo Saba which we believe to be of importance in our children’s development. Being orderly and clean are necessary for healthful living and strong work. Require your children to be responsible for making up their beds first thing every morning followed by a morning routine which should include wash up in the bathroom, getting dressed and combing their hair. By setting routines, order is inevitably taught. Your children should be taught to organize their materials after “playing” in their room or on a desk or table. A daily household job as a part of housekeeping teaches our children to desire and appreciate cleanliness. Our children will feel responsible for themselves and their surroundings.

Respect of self, others and property and sharing are necessary for strong societal relationships. Our children will be able to work with and work among our brothers and sisters if they possess these values. Teach respect by requiring and rewarding respectful behavior and correcting disrespectful behavior.

Having a reason for our every act is purposefulness. If we are not sure why we are doing something, we should not do it. Teach our children to have a purpose for everything by questioning their actions and by promptly and truthfully responding to their questions about our actions.

Patience and perseverance will help our children develop the skill to overcome obstacles and be strong in the midst of struggle. We help them develop patience and perseverance by encouraging them to complete the tasks they can do and by helping them complete tasks they cannot do alone. In either case, we should always stress “struggle,” for there are many tasks that require only a little extra effort in order to be successful.

Truthfulness is most important, especially today. How can our children defend and develop themselves and our people if they are armed with lies and falsehood rather than truth and reality.

Call all things by their rightful name. Give an honest answer to your children's questions. Rather than suppressing truth through punishment, praise our children when they stand up for the truth.

And finally, we must teach our children to value our Afrikaness, our heritage. We must never again turn on or against each other, hating ourselves. We are an Afrikan people committed to our own unification, liberation and independence.

The practice of our values is a full-time job. We are not interested in simply teaching our children to memorize the Nguzo Saba or make mechanical movements like little Black robots. We are struggling for National Liberation of Afrikans born in America. We are struggling to raise (provide, protect, respect, inspire, educate and socialize) our children who will be able to continue this awesome task and responsibility as well as carry it through to its conclusion.

### DEVELOP CONSCIOUSNESS

We develop consciousness by attaining self-awareness and self-control.

We can help our children be self-aware by simply asking or reminding them about their actions. Many times we are not aware of what we are doing with our hands or our tone of voice or personal outlook.

Self-control is hard to accomplish, but worth the work in attaining it. Can we discipline ourselves at the dinner table with the amount and type of food we eat? Can we control ourselves and not waste water, paper, time? Can we discipline our bodies, minds, soul and consciousness toward self-development? Parents' and teachers' examples are the best teachers in developing our children's consciousness.

Consciousness stresses self-awareness and self-control but also awareness of our people, our beliefs and our goals.

We should help our children understand our collective condition as a people. At the same time we must make clear our commitment and direction in reaching our goals.

We teach our children that the only way to create unification, liberation and independence of our people is by gaining, maintaining and using power. Power is the capability (will and ability) to self-determine, self-defend and self-respect ourselves. Today, the most effective technique of gaining, maintaining and using power is building independent Black institutions, Black in color, culture and consciousness. We teach our children to understand that our people's needs are food, clothing, shelter, transportation and also a nation. We need a nation, a land of our own, to control for our defense and development. We teach our children that there are four parts to a nation: government, education,

economics and defense. We define these and ask our children in what part of the nation will they work. This is essentially ideological development for our children.

We therefore see that today our immediate goal is building and maintaining independent Black institutions and our long range goal is nation-building.

Let us then see our role as Afrikan parents and teachers as one linked to our people and our collective needs and condition. Let us study our past, analyze our present and develop a vision of our future. If we do, we will become examples of what we wish to see our children become.

Respectfully,

Tayari Kwa Salaam  
Kwanza 1976-77

## DARASA: PASSING ON KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Darasa is a Kiswahili word for “class”. Darasa at Ahidiana W/S Center is that time period in which our children are trained in classroom protocol and taught knowledge and skills that will defend and develop themselves and our people. It is a controlled and structured session led by the teacher. Darasa is a formal teaching and learning situation in which our children are taught and trained in relating to a teacher, educational aids/materials and concepts.

How is Darasa structured? First, there is a prescribed protocol. Each class, no matter the curriculum area or the teacher, begins with a standard exchange of questions and answers which includes greeting, what day it is, what class and group it is, and the definition and rationale for the curriculum area. Second, our seating positions are the same daily with students sitting with good posture, hands in lap and feet on the floor. Third, generally, there is no talking and if one wishes to speak, we raise our hand in a fist to get permission to do so. Fourth, the teacher is the leader setting time limits, activities, and format.

We prepare our children to function in Darasa in several ways. The total school environment is well organized. Routines and schedules are set. Limits are implemented from day first to the last. Our students are secure in what is going to happen and when. Standards are clearly taught early in the program so that our children will not ramble from one thing to another or show little interest in learning. We have also developed techniques for instilling values, building trust and following a prescribed protocol. We are constantly reinforcing behavior that we view as positive and ignore behavior that is negative.

Key in this preparation to function in Darasa is keeping our teaching staff well trained politically and technically to insure that we move as a teaching team with each teacher supportive of the goals and objectives of our program and teaching philosophy.

Formal preparation to function in Darasa begins in an Orientation program of four to six weeks at the beginning of each school year. The Orientation period enables teachers and students to familiarize themselves with the routine and schedules, the protocol and each other. Teachers make clear their expectations and protocol is introduced and taught. Each child’s manipulative and academic skills are tested for grouping. The social development of each student is also observed, that is,



how does this child relate to peers and relate to adults, is this child self-motivated and outgoing, is this child able to wait for a turn and share. Once this Orientation period is completed, we begin our classes in communications, science, culture, math and physical development.

Every day we begin class with stating the definition of the curriculum area and why we study it. We are constantly reminding ourselves what we are about and why. The following are our definitions and rationales.

What is Communications?

Communications is the study of understanding symbols, exchanging information and expressing ideas.

Why do we study Communications?

We study Communications to gain and pass on knowledge and skills that are useful in our struggle.

What is Culture?

Culture is the study of the material and social conditions and practices of our people and the world.

Why do we study Culture?

We study our Culture to develop our own identity, purpose and direction. We study world cultures to better understand and live in the world.

What is Mathematics?

Mathematics is the study of quantity (How many? How much?) and connections as well as relationships.

Why do we study Mathematics?

We study Mathematics to enable us to build, plan and analyze with precision.

What is Science?

Science is the systematic study of the laws and order of the universe.

Why do we study Science?

We study and apply Science for the defense and development of our people and the improvement and beautification of the world.

What is Taburu?

Taburu is physical development.

Why do we do Taburu?

We do Taburu to prepare our bodies for protracted struggle.

### **DARASA Teaching Steps**

Each Darasa involves one of four steps in teaching a concept introduce, state, drill and test.

#### **Introduce**

The purpose of this step is to make the child aware or prepare the child for understanding the concept. The teacher begins teaching the concept by building a solid foundation. There are three main techniques we employ to introduce a concept:

- A. Use the child's body. In introducing a concept, plan activities that will cause the child to physically move and/or use the senses. Body movement can include picking up objects and carrying them to another place. It may be a dance imitation of what you will be presenting. Body movement also includes the manipulation of real objects or tools. Be aware of the senses as our children's tools of learning. How can we get our children to use their eyes, ears, nose and/or tongue? What can we do to get them to see, hear, smell and/or taste? The sense of feeling is a particularly unique and often misunderstood sense in that one can feel all over our skin both outside our bodies as well as feel inside our bodies. Helping our children use their senses will develop their perceptual skills.
- B. Use the child's environment and experiences. Choose examples, objects situations and events that are familiar to our children. This is one of those consistent spots where we can bring in political/cultural experiences and examples. Also move out of the classroom by taking walks and field trips.

- C. Experience Chart. After such experiences, have a discussion and list key words. When listing key words put the more correct words toward the top of the list. Help the children write an experience chart by recording their words about the experience in an orderly manner. The experience chart should summarize key points related to the concept and is a good concluding activity for this step in teaching a concept.

### **State**

The purpose of this step is to tell or to say the concept. After reviewing what happened in the introduction step, use some form of visual reinforcement (a chart, bulletin board, picture cards or posters) to aid in stating the concept or as a visual reminder of the concept.

Use symbols to aid our children in understanding abstract concepts. Symbols enable our children to sense abstractions, those concepts which are beyond the physical, the concrete. Often traditional African symbols are perfect for this use.

Bold print the key words related to the concept and write definitions, which state the concept and its political use or purpose.

The children can complete projects such as their own charts or booklets about a concept. Books and charts should be completed with the use of at least one or two of the motor skills, such as cutting, tracing, pasting, threading, and coloring. Books and charts should also include the use of a wide variety of materials: leaves, burlap, construction paper, yarn.

### **Drill**

The purpose of this step is to employ the use of rote, rhythm, repetition, rhyme and review to develop and deepen the child's understanding and/or skills in relation to the concept.

Rote is saying or doing without thinking. Rhythm is regular reoccurrence of beat and/or movement. Rhyme is repeating similar or same sounds. Repetition is doing over and over again. Review is practice in developing and retaining knowledge and skills.

- A. Finger plays, songs, chants and poems are useful for oral drill.

- B. Shelf work, manipulatives and “work jobs” which are boxed organized neatly on shelves are useful in drilling manipulative skill and perceptual skill. Shelf work activities would make use of real objects, felt boards, classification boards, pegboards, matching activities and various textured materials such as woods, papers, fabrics. The activities should be collective in nature. They should also aid in the children applying what they have learned in everyday situations through conversation, problem solving and decision-making.
- C. Seat work such as wipe-offs, work sheets and work books are also used in this step of teaching a concept. Writing activities involving listing words or copying phrases or a sentence are also excellent drill activities.

### **Test**

The purpose of this step is to measure how well the child has mastered the concept taught. A test can be oral, manipulative or written. It can also be an independent project, which proves that the child has accomplished the terminal behavior of the lesson steps for a particular concept.

Homework is an invaluable activity for all four-lesson steps. It brings school to the home and home to the school in that parents participate in their child’s schoolwork. Socially, the child develops responsibility in completing work and brings parent and child together around experiences that are important to the child.

Our goal is to create students who are academically excellent. Such students are not fearful of theoretical knowledge (as in the sciences), are skilled in communicating ideas in speaking, writing, art, music, dance and any other varied median and are competent in gaining knowledge and skills.

We are trying to develop students who are socially advance. Such students are committed to our greater collective good rather than exclusively to individual desires or pleasures and are respectful of our total environment rather than destructive of it.

Finally, we need students who are politically progressive. Such students have a sense of identity (know how to accomplish their life purposes). Students who are committed to our people first and are conscious of our history, our collective

condition and our hoped-for future. Students who are conscious of an ideology of liberation and are capable (possessing the will and the ability) of being activists, leaders and workers for our people. Politically progressive students seek the truth and base their ideas on reality rather than metaphysics or fatalism.

We know that our educational program is rigorous, but it takes pressure and persistence to produce diamonds. We are African people struggling in America under conditions of oppression and exploitation. We are not trying to raise “cute” (simply black and beautiful) children or “smart” (high IQs) children who will feed into and become a part of the American system. We are trying to raise soldiers and warriors, future leaders in our people’s struggle for power and national liberation.

Power to our people must start with positive education for our children. We are proud to be able to make this contribution to our people’s struggle. Prepare our children to take the lead. Give our children an education that will be useful in our struggle. Raise soldiers and warriors. Tomorrow will belong to us, only if we educate our children today. Power to our people, education to our children!





## AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY CENTER

### Definitions & Rationales

PRAXIS: the practice of an art, a science or a technical skill or occupation.

What is Communications?

Communications is the study of understanding symbols, exchanging information and expressing ideas.

Why do we study Communications?

We study Communications to gain and pass on knowledge and skills that are useful in our struggle.

What is Culture?

Culture is the study of the material and social conditions and practices of our people and the world.

Why do we study Culture?

We study our Culture to develop our own identity, purpose and direction. We study world cultures to better understand and live in the world.

What is Mathematics?

Mathematics is the study of quantity (How many? How much?) and connections as well as relationships.

Why do we study Mathematics?

We study Mathematics to enable us to build, plan and analyze with precision.

What is Science?

Science is the systematic study of the laws and order of the universe.

Why do we study Science?

We study and apply Science for the defense and development of our people and the improvement and beautification of the world.

What is Taburu?

Taburu is physical development.

Why do we do Taburu?

We do Taburu to prepare our bodies for protracted struggle.



CONSCIOUS KAZI, STILL THE BLACKEST OF ALL  
TEACHING WORK AT AHIDIANA WORK/STUDY CENTER

Kazi is a KiSwahili word for work. Kazi at Ahidiana Work/Study Center is that part of the day which balances Darasa. Darasa is a controlled and structured class session in which the teacher makes the decisions and determines which activities will be done. Kazi is a structured series of tasks in which the students make decisions.

During Kazi the students are leaders while the teachers are the observers and/or aids. Kazi is structured in that the teachers have set limits by:

1. establishing protocol, prescribed procedures, guidelines necessary to help students work in a disciplined (self-controlled) and orderly manner;
2. creating work activities that are self-corrective, self-instruction and self-reinforcing; and
3. preparing a planned environment.

Kazi is not “play” time for our students nor is it “rest” time for teachers.

Kazi is for self-motivated and self-directed learning. Kazi is for intense and critical evaluation. It is that part of the day in which our children practice Kujichagulia (Self-determination) and Kuumba (Creativity). Students struggle to actualize, on their own and with their peers, those values, knowledge and skills they have learned. There is encouragement from teachers to help our students follow the direction expected of them. There is experimentation on the part of our students to test the value of that direction. In Kazi we see the depth of our teaching. The students lead in Kazi and the teacher usually observes and helps when asked to help. Teachers can see where we need to reinforce concepts and which concepts have actually been learned.

What is Kazi? Kazi is a series of tasks created by the teacher to stress independence, discipline and responsibility in students. Kazi can take place in any room. There are boxes of various sizes, shapes and colors containing activities which reinforce concepts already taught or that may challenge students to learn on their own. Some students decide to work at tables while others work on the floor using the classroom’s walls to help them lineup activity cards and/or group pictures or objects. Some children are putting their work away. Some are busy working alone or with a partner or partners. Others are busy deciding on what to work on next. One or two students have their fists up to show that they need help or have completed their work and are ready to discuss it with the teachers. There is general quietness with gentle reminders from the teachers or quiet discussions between a student(s) and a teacher or among students about an activity.

Kazi does not mean just letting children “loose” on their own. Our children come into this world working, that is, spending energy to get a job done, constantly learning, hungry for knowledge. We adults too often and unconsciously kill this energy or allow it to develop randomly, so that, by the time our children enter preschool at two or three years old, their energy and hunger to know must be reawakened or redirected. We rekindle or redirect children’s natural need and desire to work and study by beginning each year with an orientation period in which basics are clarified and stressed.

The purpose of the orientation is to teach our students who we are, what we must do and how we must do it. Once the answers to these are learned, security and confidence begins to grow in our children. They begin to gain identity, purpose and direction. They become more serious about school and learning. Through repeated drill our students begin to see themselves in a total plan with a specific and valuable role.

We teach our students respect for self, others and property. We believe that respect is one of the first signs of conscious life. It is imperative that our children are taught to pay attention to the presence of themselves and others. They must learn to appreciate what they themselves and others have to offer and to acknowledge the worth of themselves and others. We respect property by being clear on the use and/or function of property and reminding each other about its use.

One of the ways we develop respect is through requiring protocol. Our protocol in Kazi is very simple, direct and basic.

1. Work quietly and cooperatively.
2. Use materials in the correct manner.
3. Raise your hand in a fist when you need help.
4. Raise your hand in a fist when you complete a job.
5. Be orderly. Return all tools and activities to their proper place.

This protocol helps structure Kazi and keep it from being a random, liberal, “do anything, it’s alright” part of the day.

Our materials used in Kazi are teacher-made or purchased commercially. These materials are (1) inspirational, (2) functional and (3) in keeping with the values and academics advocated by our school. Inspirational materials are colorful, orderly and clean. When we say materials are functional we mean that they have a specific purpose in our children’s development. The materials are also clear in concept and durable, made to hold up under steady use and not constructed in such a way that it breaks or tears after repeated use. Finally, the materials are operable. We are not interested in plastic doo-dads that do essentially nothing nor are we interested in complicated fan-dangles that are frustratingly difficult for our children to operate or work with.

We are very careful about materials we purchase for use in our school. Because conscious African-Americans do not create some of the materials that we buy, so often ideas, aspirations and concepts embodied in and emphasized by these materials are not what we need and sometimes run directly counter to what we teach. We must be especially careful with so-called “academic” materials. Many of the newer educational materials heavily push integration or humanism while the older ones push white supremacy. The newer ones, however, are potentially more destructive because if you look closely you will find Europeans/white people taking the lead with Black and Third World people looking on or neighborhoods and schools that working people do not live in with well-dressed “negroes” and their white friends talking about their pets doing “funny” things. Thus, such materials are actually more pervasive and perpetuate and promote white supremacy, classism and sometimes male dominance. Books are particularly very difficult to choose because often there may be excellent and attractive illustrations accompanied by backward and negative texts.

Educational materials should also teach the socialization process, that is, cooperation, sharing and respect. When we buy or make materials we usually purchase or produce one or two of a given tool or game. We struggle to set up situations which will teach our students to wait their turn and/or share and work tougher. Also this is less expensive and teaches us to make the most of our limited resources.

We believe the importance of Kazi cannot be overemphasized. Kazi is a complement to Darasa. Hence, our teaching approach is called Darasa/Kazi.

Kazi is important.

1. It is a time for our students to struggle to practice the values, to creatively apply what they know and to become aware of their capabilities.
2. It is an observation and testing time for the teachers to witness the development of each student socially and academically and thus make improvements in lessons, materials as well as clarifying values and concepts.
3. It is an opportunity to promote positive social development. Through Kazi our children are not just simply told that they must work together, but rather through daily experiences they actually participate in and eventually internalize experiences that actively promote the working-together process.

During Kazi our students have the opportunity to satisfy their interest and aspirations. They can tell themselves and challenge themselves while working in a nonthreatening environment which promotes sustained and concentrated activity. They can practice what has been routinely learned in Darasa. Teachers try to have materials in Kazi that directly relate to and reinforce the values and academic concepts currently taught in Darasa.

During Kazi our teachers have a time to reinforce concepts and values. This is also a noncompetitive testing part of the day during which our students are given an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and then strengthen their weaknesses.

Kazi, then, helps teach our children how to function in a controlled environment, how to make decisions, how to creatively arrive at solutions to problems. Remember, in Kazi our students are on their own and only require a teacher's input to check work that is completed or to give specific aid if and only if that aid is asked for. By following the protocol during Kazi and being self-motivated, our children, at an average age, begin to develop the ability to observe and analyze materials and situations they learn to decide, on their own, how work should be done. Finally, they actually carry their decisions through to completion.

We are teaching our children to be soldiers and warriors, willfully active in our people's liberation struggle. Kazi provides them with an early opportunity to work on what they learn, so that later in life, they can actively contribute to the betterment of Black life in a meaningful, positive, forceful and ultimately, decisive manner.

We will not "luck up" on strong committed leaders. In order for our children to have the capability, that is, the will and the ability, to continue our struggle for unification, liberation and independence, we must consciously and consistently work to set for them an excellent example of active struggle. We must pass on to our children the knowledge and skills that will be necessary, not only to defy and defeat the enemy, but also and most importantly, to defend and develop ourselves. This commitment, this capability, this knowledge and these skills cannot be taught to our children in the abstract by words in the air, but rather must be taught in the concrete through day to day practice. Conscious Kazi, that is, the work of self-aware and self-controlled black people, is still the Blackest of all.

TEACH OUR CHILDREN TO TAKE THE LEAD!!!

## **YOUNG SOLDIERS AND WARRIORS RAISING EMOTIONALLY COMMITTED BLACK LEADERS**

We believe that our people have a great need for a leadership that has identity, purpose and direction. Our people need leaders who can actively organize our people to gain, maintain and use power. In an article of the Council of Independent Black Institutions newsletter, Kalamu Salaam has stated:

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

How do we begin to “raise our children to be emotionally committed to Black people first”? One valuable method is developing discipline in each child. Discipline is self-control. Without self-control our children cannot develop positively because they will be orderless and aimless. Without discipline our children will be slaves to simply acting/moving. With discipline our children will be free enough to analyze, make decisions and act on those decisions.

To develop self-control we are developing a system of behavior we call protocol, the correct and conscious way of doing. Protocol is the broad backdrop of our school program which sets the approach we, teachers and students, use in saying and doing everything. We say our protocol is correct for us because it aids us in developing along a purposeful path in keeping with our ideology. We say that our protocol is conscious because we are aware of what we are doing. We struggle to consciously learn to do what we must do.

Why do we teach protocol to our children? We believe that we have been programmed to act in an unconscious manner, devoid of identity, purpose and direction. We are aware and appreciative of the need for the example of Africans striving to act in a conscious and correct manner. We believe that we should always struggle in a positive manner. Finally, we believe that following a protocol is the most efficient and effective method of attaining a desired goal or fulfilling a particular purpose.

Protocol may be a specific series of steps to get something done. For example, the way we wash our hands or the way the children leave the table after eating. Or it is the manner in which we speak to each other while correcting behavior. Protocol can also be an action that the whole group does for the benefit of one. For example, before moving to another group activity, every child is ready. Protocol can also be an action one does for the benefit of the group. For example, we ask and encourage each child to set the correct example and thereby be a leader when in line, or in class, or during outside play. Once one child receives recognition for being a leader, another child will follow that example and do it, too. Before you know it, the whole group is standing in line correctly. The actions of the first child giving good example helps the group as a whole follow the protocol.

Of course, when our children first enroll in our school they are not always disciplined youth ready to learn. Some of our students come to us crying to go home. Some come fighting, physically revolting against the school. Some children come wide-eyed in a mild “shock” afraid to do anything because they sense the seriousness of our school.

The needs and personalities of our children are widely varied and each child is a new challenge in the process of raising our children to be Black in color, culture and consciousness. How do we begin to shape a group of children into Black youth with positive values and discipline (self-control) able to learn, understand and accept their role as future leaders of our people?

### BUILDING TRUST

The first way we develop discipline is by building trust. Securing our children's trust is important in our teaching process and we build it in five ways:

1. touching our children,
2. respecting our children,
3. praising our children,
4. struggling with our children and
5. demanding truth and telling the truth.

Touching our young children communicates stronger than any words. Our children are very physical, i.e., they experience and learn best through their bodies (senses). You can firmly touch a child on the head with the palm of your hand to communicate love and concern. You can grab a child's arm and move the child to a certain place and, thereby, communicate correction of behavior. You can pull them close to you and hold them. This one action can fill an empty space inside the child that needs to be filled.

We are aware that when we touch our children it should be done out of love and respect and not out of anger. When we allow our children's behavior to upset us and we lose control and patience, we try to be especially aware of keeping our hands to ourselves and away from our children. When we praise our children or are pleased by their strong actions, we try to be especially aware of touching them in a definite manner with a hug, a squeeze or some other way. According to our children's needs, personalities and the situation, touching is used to build their trust in our staff and in our whole school by communicating care, security and respect.

We also understand that our school's environment should be prepared to secure our children's trust. Children should be able to touch the "new" school and the "new" school should touch our children. In the beginning, our children have a need to touch everything, to find out about everything. When school first starts in the fall, new students will reach out for something and stop, look at the teacher as if they were doing something wrong. Or a child might say, "Oh, look at him, he's foolin' with that". But we not only allow our children to touch, we in fact encourage them to do so. We have consciously prepared the shelves so that all materials are for our children's use. In this way our children are able to both overcome the fear of a new environment and feel secure enough to open up.

A school environment that is well planned will help our children feel secure because there is purpose, order and cleanliness about the rooms. Colors are used for warmth. Plants and pictures are used for inspiration. The furniture is simple, sturdy and functional. This beautiful positive atmosphere is maintained throughout the year by keeping order, by cleaning the building everyday and by creating a sense of permanence.

Touching our children and encouraging our children to touch helps to build trust.

Respecting our children is given in three ways:

- a. paying attention to their presence
- b. acknowledging their worth
- c. appreciating what they have to offer

Paying attention to our children's presence. Ask our children how do they feel daily or say "good morning" to them. When a child falls accidentally, ask if they are alright and show concern. When bringing our children home for the day or when they leave school for the day, share a little special thought about the next day. "See you tomorrow, Cyrena. Remember, you're the leader tomorrow."

Or if a child has missed a day or two of school, acknowledge their presence, "We missed you yesterday, Brother Kadri. We're so glad to have you back."

Never unconsciously ignore a child. Give an answer to our children in a clear patient manner. If you are busy at the time a question is asked, say that you are busy and let the child know you are listening by saying a few words, "One minute, Brother Shujaa, I'll be right with you" or "I can't help you now; I must finish this."

Acknowledging our children's worth. Having faith in our children's capability (will and ability) to accomplish every task is a first step of recognizing our children's worth. We understand that all children, for various reasons, have limits to what they are able to understand and do. Out of a true and deeply rooted love for our children, we say, "you can do it and you will do; all you need is some help!" or "No, Sister Kiini, let Brother Kamau do it himself. We must learn to do for ourselves." We show our willingness to take time with our children by helping them and talking with them.

Appreciating what our children have to offer. Children offer a lot all the time. Many times we adults stress and look for negative behavior by constantly correcting those who are doing "wrong". The most important offering our children give is positive behavior. Praise our children whenever they help each other. Say "thank you" whenever they help by getting something or opening a door.

But above all, listen and respond to the conversation and suggestions of our children. Explain to them why and what they have said is strong or silly, correct or incorrect. Thank our children for good behavior.

Pay attention to our children. Appreciate what they have to offer. Acknowledge their worth. Respect builds trust!

Praise the positive. "Look at Brother Kenyatta, he's helping without being asked to help. He saw he was needed so he is helping." When a child is following a direction, praise should be given, "Isn't this beautiful! Look at Sister Twinette! She's cleaning up and we only said it once!" Or, "Brother Jamahl, you are a leader because you are giving good example. You are standing in line with your fists at your side and your feet together! You are a star, brother!" Always look for the positive. Always stress the positive and the positive will increase because each child will want to be rewarded with praise for their strong behavior.

We believe give praise where praise is due. We try not to use praise like candy or some other form of bribe. We do not give praise before the job is completed although we do encourage our children as they work. Praise is reserved for a job well done.

“Struggle is what it’s all about! It’s something we just can’t do without.” This is what Brother Bear teaches Brother Rabbit in WHO WILL SPEAK FOR US (Ahidiana 1974). By taking time and painstakingly getting our children to line up, march, eat correctly, toilet correctly and so on, our children will know that we care for them. In the end, our children are proud because they can take care of themselves and they appreciate being taught to be self-reliant. Faith in each child’s worth will aid teachers in struggling to meet the needs of each child.

Some children need patient, quiet prompting. Some children need strong, firm commands. Never give up on our children because children have a finely tuned sense which lets them know when they are being rejected. After positively and resolutely struggling with our children, they will accomplish.

Helping our children look back on their accomplishments, “You know what I’m feeling really good inside because you have tried to stand in line like soldiers and warriors, you spoke in loud strong voices when we were in class and look how well you’re eating your lunch! I’m really proud of you!”

We let our children know that we expect many strong actions from them and we are disappointed when they are weak and pleased when they struggle to be strong. Persistently struggling with a child or a group of children teaches struggle by example. If our love for our children is strongly expressed and genuinely felt, our children will return our love by doing what they have been taught.

Struggle with our children based on the faith we have in them. As our children witness this faith shown through our struggle with them, our children will trust us.

Truth is the core of building trust. If you are a “fairytale” then everything you say and do will be make-believe to our children. Teachers too must struggle to be examples.

Always tell the truth: “I don’t know the answer to that question right now, but I’m going to struggle to find out.”

Demand truth from our children. Truth is what is. Truth is reality. It is not a moral judgment. For example, it is true that we are oppressed, but that doesn’t mean oppression is good.

Standing up for the truth is important in our children’s moral development. How can our children struggle with their individual and our collective weaknesses if they have a problem standing up for what is true? Do not accept excuses or evasions for answers to direct questions.

Mama: Did you hit Malaika, Asante?

Asante: She won’t let me...

Mama: No, sister. I didn’t ask you what happen. Did you hit Malaika?

Asante: Yes, Mama. She won’t let me sit down.

Mama: Thank you for standing up for the truth, but if you need to sit you should first talk to Malaika about it.

Value truth more than tattling or being an informant. When a child anxiously reports some negative behavior of another child, ask if they talk to the child about their behavior first. When trying to find out who did some negative act, never allow another child to inform the group that a certain child did it. Encourage the children to stand up for the truth by making it safe to do so. Once our children know that they will be praised, hugged, given “dap” or some positive response given for the truth, they will gladly offer the truth.

Make promises and keep them. If we do not keep a promise, acknowledge it and say that we are wrong. It is important for our children to understand why we do and don’t do certain actions. In this way they learn to make decisions on their own and willingly stand up for what is true. We don’t need robots busy trying to please adults; we need aware leaders.

### ROUTINES

The second way we shape our youth into disciplined soldiers learning to understand their role as future leaders of African people in America is by establishing routines. Routines set limits and give order to the school day. We follow the same specific routing throughout every school day. Once our children learn the routine, along with being comfortable in the school environment and with their teachers, they are more secure because they know what is going to happen and when.

Creativity blossoms in each child because the environment is controlled, the work periods have time limits and each activity has its own set of rules. Children need limits, for without limits, they will ramble from one thing to another or show little interest in anything and not be able to complete tasks. With limits our children have standards. We believe standards are necessary to the process of being creative, i.e., improving and beautifying.

### STRUGGLING TO BE CORRECT

Even after our first two steps of building trust and establishing routines have been tried, there are times when our children need to be encouraged to follow the protocol. At this stage we introduce them to what we call struggling to be correct. It is a three-step process practiced by our staff and children follow the protocol. The three step process is:

1. Discipline - getting the child(ren) to decide to do the task by appealing to the child(ren)’s values.
2. Force - getting the child(ren) to do the task by standing over them, making them do the task or asking the child(ren) to choose between doing the task or being denied a privilege or desire.
3. Punishment - inflicted pain or discomfort by isolation or denial of a desire or by a physical slap on the hand, buttocks or legs.

In correcting a problem, we criticize the behavior and not the child. We should always criticize behavior rather than the child who displays the behavior. Try as much as possible to speak in terms of the behavior rather than feelings and/or attitudes. In other words “what you did was not correct” rather than “you are a bad child.” Our major concern should be the cause of the behavior and not the symptom.



We punish only in extreme situations. The most important aim of this whole process is to get our children to accomplish the task. When a child is punished, the task is not accomplished. So, why do we punish?

We punish to prevent negative and/or disruptive behavior. Behavior which holds back the progress of the group is an extreme offense. This must be understood by each child.

Another aspect of punishment which teachers should be aware of is that a child may do a certain action just to “test” you to see what you are going to do. Be aware of this and make a decision again based on what was done, and the needs and personality of the child.

Whenever we punish it is swift and decisive. Our isolation is complete, our slaps are firm. We struggle not to act out of anger, but out of concern. We are not liberal with small or minor infractions. We attempt to correct every incorrect behavior through discipline or finally force. If that fails and the incorrect behavior is detrimental to others (either disruptive or establishing negative precedents) we move quickly to punish. The deterrent force of punishment is measured not simply by its severity, but also by its certainty. This means if punishment is to be used, it must be used immediately or as soon as possible after the negative behavior, and it must be sure, i.e., do not punish a child for a deed that you did not witness. Punishment can easily become injustice and this we must guard against. Again, we must emphasize, punishment does not teach and is, therefore, an indication that the teaching process has failed. After punishing a child, we must still teach that child, otherwise, we only encourage ignorance and a false belief in “might is right”. We teach our students to constantly struggle and look at every experience as a lesson.

We are firm with our children. Everyone is required to lead. Everyone is required to follow. Everyone is given a job which is important to the functioning of the school. Each child is valued and taught to be accountable and responsible for self, brothers and sisters and the total environment of the school.

We know that our educational program is rigorous, but it takes pressure and persistence to produce diamonds. We are an African people struggling in America under conditions of oppression, exploitation and subjugation. We are not trying to raise “cute” simply Black and beautiful children or “smart” (high IQs) children who will feed into and become part of the American system. We are trying to raise soldiers and warriors, future leaders in our people’s struggle for power and national liberation. Power to our people must start with positive education for our children. We are proud to be able to make this contribution to our people’s struggle.

Prepare our children to take the lead. Give our children and education that will be useful in our struggle. Raise revolutionaries, leaders and workers. Tomorrow will belong to us, only if we educate our children today. Power to our people, education to our children!

Teachers / Parents: Restorers of Black Social Organization  
Educational Forum sponsored by CIBI  
Chicago, July 25, 1983

It is hard to struggle today in a society that is anti-us;

in a society that stagnates our capacity to respond / to act (wage requirement);

in a society that is structured to live, survive and thrive on the ill health of the majority;

in a society that “seasons” / acculturates us in backward behavior and concept (power corrupts, “don’t rock the boat,” “do your thing,” rude to fight back, individual over collective, profit over people)

all of these causing confusion and lack of direction.

But it is possible to be less overwhelmed and frustrated and more energetic and committed to change, if we:

- be creative in and deepen and sharpen our analysis of this society and the world and how forces, institutions and people operate and the role we play in continuing the status quo. We need to read and study.
- reinforce ourselves, our history and future aspirations so as to counter destructive images on TV, in movies, on billboards, in print
- live our beliefs and values in relation to self, family, community and in all social relationships
- concretize and institutionalize our ideas, concepts and visions
- daily practice: do, act, and respond. Be a worker about the things you believe should be done.

This discussion is irrelevant if we cannot give a strong affirmative to the following two key concerns:

QUESTION 1: Do we love our people? Do we have a deep emotional commitment to what is best for our people? Do we truly love ourselves?

Without this vital love we cannot accomplish anything beneficial to advance ourselves or our people and will only add to the hurt and confusion that already exists among us.

QUESTION 2: Do we believe that we can win? Can we really make a difference? Are there solutions? Can we be problem-solvers creating and working through solutions?

Without this ardent belief in ultimate victory, what we will only become alienated, isolated and frustrated with life itself.

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So we must start with ourselves and bring to our discussion love for our people and belief that we will win. One of the key concerns of the Black Liberation Struggle today is Black female/ male relationships, the crisis in the Black family, and the raising of our children.

There is a vital need for we African-Americans to live out a new social order in all our social relationships. There is a vital need for us to create a social/political style of organizing ourselves and empowering ourselves.

Black social organization is a critical aspect of African-American life and it is being eroded and attacked daily by America's institutions, so-called professionals and intellectuals. The key activists in countering this attack are we parents and teachers.

There is crisis not only in the Black family, but also in our schools, our communities, our organizations and all other social groupings that stabilize the total structure of Black social organization. This crisis is for real and the solutions have more to do with us than with anyone or anything else.

Black social organization, as defined by Dr. Maulana Karenga, is "essentially the structure and functioning of the Black community as a whole, as well as the various units and processes which compare and define the Black community, that is, families, groups, institutions, relations, views, values, economics, politics, conflict and change, and so on."

With the whole organization of our people at stake, it is vital that we as teachers and parents transform this reality. We'd like to suggest a four-step plan for changing our social reality.

Step One: Belief in ourselves and our people rooted in our history of resistance, struggle and creativity.

Step Two: An understanding of the forces that are working against us.

Step Three: A willingness to struggle against our enemies both internal and external.

Step Four: A precise plan to insure that Black social organization is rescued, revitalized and reconstructed.

## STEP ONE: Belief in Ourselves and Our People

We already talked about possessing a love for our people and a belief in the victory of our (Afrikan-American) struggle, but what is this love and belief rooted in?

1. a strong self-identity (answers the question: Who am I?)  
a sense of self-worth (knowing that you are valuable and that you have a needed role to play)  
self-love (otherwise, how will we be able to love others?)
2. the will and ability to make change
  - a. will – the power to make conscious, deliberate choices; a strong determination rooted in a deep emotional commitment; being zealous, ardent, passionate, earnest and intense about accomplishing goals
  - b. ability – knowledge and skill; experience and expertise; also involves rearranging our lives to enable us to be mobile and available for liberation work, that is, less dependent on job and other system-oriented responsibilities
3. daily practice of our beliefs
  - a. daily – every day/all day
  - b. practice – do/act, but not blindly; rooted in past practice and ideas that we have perceived, reflected upon, tested, tried, applied and finally evaluated
  - c. beliefs – values and ideas that we know are true, that are in tune with reality, and have benefited us in making decisions and coming up with solutions; if you are not sure about a belief, live it / practice it – if it holds true, keep it; if it doesn't, get rid of it

#### 4. transforming reality

- a. transforming – changing for the better; beautifying; improving
- b. there is much to be done; key areas for transformation:
  - i. self (body / mind / soul / consciousness) – a lifetime process
  - ii. our homes (more about this later)
  - iii. our social relationships (this is what we can change now!)
- c. language is a powerful reality-shaper: we need new definitions, new thinking and a reshaping of how our lives are described

#### STEP TWO: Understanding the Forces

Four examples that show how directly we African-Americans are being attacked socially:

##### Example 1:

American society is divided and organized along class lines, racial lines and sexual lines. The ideology and social theory that rules academic and social circles is the ruling sex, race and class. Intellectuals and professionals institutionalize these theories and thus aid in maintaining the status quo rather than critically analyzing it. The political propaganda pushed and promoted in educational institutions and mass media are cornerstone principles such as the one we just mentioned: the pathological (that is, due to disease) and/or the pathogenic (that is, causing disease).

##### Example 2:

The Black family as a social unit is under constant attack so as to completely confiscate the minds and souls of our children. The so-called welfare system reinforces the breakdown of the Black family rather than its unity.

##### Example 3:

Family functions of raising (educating, socializing, inspiring, protecting, providing, respecting) our children have been taken over by government and/or big business.

Education = public schools and television

- public schools teach our children to be unconscious consumers and unconscious workers, and to accommodate and be abstract
- television is racist, amoral and physically detrimental

Health = big business and not about well-being of clients

- public hospitals across this country are noted for using our people as guinea pigs and offering extremely poor health and medical practices

Example 4:

This culture “seasons” us to accept our condition and the status quo.

We mentioned earlier why it is hard to struggle. It is hard because we are rewarded for individualistic behavior and we are fed fear and threats for struggling to make life better for ourselves and others.

We are talking about the restoration of Black social organization. The key restorers are we parents and teachers. We are sharing a four-step method that will better enable us to do Black liberation work.

### STEP THREE: Willingness to Struggle Against Our Enemies

There are two levels of enemies:

- A person who harms us and/or blocks our self-determination and development
- Our own internal weaknesses

While external forces influence and shape us, it is our internal strengths and weaknesses that actually determine who we are, what we will be and what we will do.

Our enemies have three major characteristics: capitalist, racist and sexist. Whether we are talking about ourselves or our external enemies, most of our disunity and lack of commitment to ourselves is rooted in these three characteristics. When we manifest these, we call this internalized oppression.

What do we mean by capitalist?

- Those who own to live rather than work to live
- Those who espouse an economic system that profits from the suffering, poverty and surplus labor of others
- Those whose life goal is the accumulation of private property and capital
- Those who believe that one can anything (social relationships, knowledge, etc.)

What do we mean by racist?

- Those who want to entrench their race as the rulers of the world
- Those who oppose our, or any other people's, empowerment
- Those who continue to oppress and exploit Black people (or any other race) as a valid/valuable social ideal for their own race's advancement

What do we mean by sexist?

- Those who attempt to institutionalize the concept that men are made to dominate women
- Those who resist the necessary self-criticism and the overturning of false ideas regarding women and our ability to function as equals
- Those who allow the head of their sex organ rather than the head on their shoulders to lead their role in their social relationships with women

The greatest force we can use to challenge our enemies is action-guided IDEOLOGY – that is, political thought and progressive morals: a system (not a random collection) of beliefs and values which, when accepted and practiced, acts as a guideline for specific judgements and attaining goals.

Now we come to the hard part: putting into practice what we believe should rescue, revitalize and reconstruct Black social organization.

STEP FOUR: Reconstructing Our Homes, Schools and Communities

We want to share tangible solutions. Solutions we can apply now. Solutions that will reap results. Solutions that are within us, right at our fingertips.

Let us:

1. State the role of the home, school and community
2. Discuss their relationship in raising us
3. Offer a definite yet simple process for building community organization

### Role of the Home

- to reflect our identity, our purpose and our direction
- to develop all aspects of the family members' personality: strong bodies, alert minds, advanced souls, and well-developed consciousness
- to strengthen us against alien environment and culture
- to reinforce our goals and aspirations
- to inspire us to continue fighting for our empowerment
- a place where we are in control and can create
- (in summary) base camps for inspiration, development and strength

### \*\*\*Décor

- How are our homes decorated?
- How many symbols of our struggle are on the walls?
- Are Black people, working people, women and children shown in positive progressive scenes in pictures and paintings?
- Are there famous quotes from our ancestors on the walls?
- The liberation flag?

### \*\*\*Body

- Are we aware of our diet and hygiene?
- Do we exercise?
- Do we open up our house for fresh air and sunshine?
- Do we take time to meditate and/or relax daily?

### \*\*\*Mind



- Do we have many books in our homes and of a wide variety to interest everyone?
- Are books and knowledge revered?
- Do our children see us reading?
- Is reading something we do as naturally as eating?
- Do we listen to Great Black Music and appreciate its essence?
- Are there special areas for each family member to work and study?

### \*\*\*Soul

- Do we teach our children a sense of what is right and what is wrong?
- Are we finding new ways to teach them self-reliance, orderliness, cleanliness, responsibility, purposefulness, patience, respect and collectivity?

### \*\*\*Consciousness

- Are we aware of aspects of our culture that should be symbolized and institutionalized?
- Do we discuss various current events and issues in a context of what is best for Black people?
- Do we teach our children to love Black people first?
- Do we constantly try to discipline/self-control our excesses and teach our children to aim for progressive perfection?

Our homes should be: places where we are in control; places where we can create; base camps for inspiration, development and strength.

### Role of the School

First, let's get a picture of what is happening with the majority of our children today. It is in understanding this reality that we will commit ourselves to building and maintaining our own schools.

Present Role:

- does not educate, but trains/indoctrinates our children to be unconscious laborers and compulsive consumers

- our children are trained by public education and television, which is controlled by government and big business/major corporations
- no wonder our children are being taught:
  - individual economic advancement
  - backward ideas about themselves and people of the world
  - public education and television dulls their social sensitivity and responsibility and encourages social relationships that erode rather than development women and men
- ensures the survival of America, mainly by promoting what we call The Three Pillars of Enemy Power: racism, capitalism and sexism

We need to build and maintain schools:

- to extend what our homes initiate
- to develop academically excellent (high standards), socially advanced (value-bound) and politically progressive (ideology/worldview) students
- to provide vital education for our children
  - political education
  - education that empowers
  - education that is controlled by conscious African-Americans
  - that defines our needs and shapes our wants
    - in our own interests and
    - on issues of our own choosing
- to teach our children to become revolutionaries, leaders and workers for our people
- to teach our children the true nature of America, and that we must build a better, more beautiful alternative society
- to teach our children a commitment to both their individual self-development and our collective self-determination and self-reliance as a people
- a place where social living is learned in a formal, structured, collective environment

Our schools should be liberated zones, free from enemy control or influence, and should teach our children self-awareness and discipline.

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The most challenging aspect of Black social organization today is the community. Challenging because:

- 1) we allowed our enemies to convince us that our creativity in social living is pathological and pathogenic;
- 2) of our own internalized oppression;
- 3) we allowed our enemies to dismantle the historic relationship between Black women and Black men that has assured our very life today; and,
- 4) community is the vital link in the social organization chain. Without social organization, it is almost impossible to succeed in making life better in our homes, schools or any other social grouping we may have.

Before stating the role of the community, we need to define/re-define community. Language is a powerful reality-shaper. By using language to express our “new” thinking, we are actually beginning the first step toward transforming reality.

When we say community, we are talking about:

- 1) a group of socially and politically interrelated people
- 2) persons who share values and lifestyles
- 3) the collective group that has common interests, common goals and common commitment
- 4) the larger extended family that raises (that is, provides, protects, respects, educates, inspires and socializes) its members to a higher level of social unity and life
- 5) the major determiner, influencer and support in our lives
- 6) a way of getting and staying together / organized to attain liberation / getting together and fighting together so that change will happen
- 7) COMMUNITY is the most effective/efficient way to make our lives better because there is little we can do individually

Another word for community is multi-organizations. In our political state we must form organizations to meet our social and political needs. One organization, of course, will not be enough. We need specialized organizations to meet our needs. Specialized organizations can join as multi-organizations or communities.

Yes, we should be part of or busy about building an organization that will:

- maintain our collective development and movement as a people through struggle, daily work and action
- institutionalizes our ideology rather than individualize and personalize it
- insures collective work, responsibility and commitment for the unity, liberation and self-reliance of our people
- encourage creativity in rearranging reality to make life better and more beautiful for the defense and development of our people
- reinforce our belief in ourselves, the righteousness of our struggle and
- inspire us to struggle beyond belief, practicing our beliefs daily

Our organizations and communities are our power base that supports, influences and determines our social organization, and aids in our empowerment as a people.

The relationship of the home, school and community is vital to resolving the crisis in the Black family, and the restoration, revitalization and reconstruction of Black social organization.

Getting our homes together is less of a challenge than organizing schools and communities because:

- everyone lives in a home or household
- controllable environment: space, people, decision-making
- requires less planning, training and organizing
- schools must have organizations/communities to survive

But, each (that is, the home, the school and the community) is weakened by the absence or ineffectiveness of the other.

So, why can't we come together and work together to build and maintain schools?

- to collectively support/counsel each other in the midst of the pressures and stress of America?
- to run bookstores and information centers to make available the time, place and opportunity to read and study?

- to found performing companies that teach and reinforce Black thought and creativity in drama, dance, music, art and writing?
- to initiate and maintain printing companies producing posters, pamphlets, brochures, program books for forums, teach-ins, conferences and workshops?
- to found health clubs that can institute exercise, nutrition and other physical development activities in health centers?
- to start business cooperatives/collectives that can figure out ways to insure profit, maintenance development and usefulness?

These are the beginning steps if we ever will move on to more involved institutions of power in economy, politics, education and ideology. Some of us are busy working in these areas, but there is so much more that needs to be done.

The reason we have trouble coming together and working together is that we tend to focus on our disagreements rather than our agreements. We allow our differences to lead to divergence rather than diversity and mutual respect. We need to emphasize what we do agree on. Once we are clear on that, we can begin to concretize those agreed-upon ideas and we can live with diversity that will encourage creativity.

Reflecting on the essential role organizations/community plays in our lives and believing that the answers to our needs lie within ourselves, we can come up with solutions. We'd like to share a process for building organizations/community.

- It requires work and struggle.
- It requires creativity and testing.
- It is a place to begin...

### Step One: REACHING OUT

As we move around daily on our jobs, while entertaining ourselves (movies, nightclubbing, concerts, and parties), exercising or sports, community meetings and programs, REACH OUT.... Keep conversations centered on sharing ideas on your interests and on finding out other people's interests. This takes skill, but with practice, we can develop our know-how. If there is potential for working with that person, jot down their name, address and phone number.

## Step Two: STAY IN CONTACT

Call each other. Go out together. Spend time together. This is how we build trust.

## Step Three: SOCIAL POLITICAL GATHERINGS

Give social gatherings that are purposeful, pulling together people who are concerned and conscious:

- Pot lucks that double as book parties
- Brunches that double as discussions of a shared article or an agreed-upon book

## Step Four: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Put on political educational programs which address some issue and allow you and others opportunities to do media work, organizing work, studying a topic and doing public speaking.

These community programs would have a twofold purpose:

1. To offer the community some needed information
2. To develop the organizing skills of the people putting it on

This is a risky step in the process because you can get frustrated and discouraged.

- Define what success is for the group
- Set feasible goals
- If the program succeeds, do another
- If the program does not succeed, find out why and then do another

These programs will aid in developing a group consciousness.

## Step Five: COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION

At this point what should begin to happen is a clarity of common values and common interests.

Now it may be possible to become an organization:

- defining who you are and what you will be about.
- creating an ideology
  - o that will reflect the group
  - o that will help make judgements
  - o that will support the “family bonds”
- struggling to put on programs and build institutions that will support the “political bonds”

Taken from Hoffman and from Harding in two recent magazine articles:

\*We need to rebuild trust and seek truth.

\*We need to deepen our understanding of the word responsibility – our capacity to respond/to act.

\*We must view and value our individual self-development and our collective self-determination as one struggle – both must be worked on for the other to be actualized.

\*We must find ways to enrich our powers of creativity and responsibility.

\*We have to realize that all of this will take time, energy, reading, discussion, study, meditation and a fundamental commitment that we can succeed.

\*We also need to pose new questions, think of new possibilities and have a new dissatisfaction with the old answers.

\*We ourselves are the political leaders in the struggle for justice for our people.

\*We are living in a word-drenched society and need less words and more visions that we concretize.

\*Let’s start to think in terms of answers. We are problem-solvers rather than problem presenters.

\*We need to develop an informed worldview – of how it operates and the part we play in it.

\*Be a spark plug! Believe in yourself and your beliefs! It's contagious.

\*Be conscious, capable and committed. Be a Black expert in all you do!

\*

We teachers and parents are the restorers of Black Social Organization. This is our role in our national liberation struggle.



A. WHAT SHOULD BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INDEPENDENT BLACK SCHOOL (IBS) CURRICULUM AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM?

The distinctive difference is that the IBS puts politics in the lead and consciousness in command.

I. POLITICS IN THE LEAD

Education is not neutral (i.e. void of value judgments and class or cultural interests) for education not only passes on knowledge and skills, the process of education also, and most importantly, shapes our attitudes and gives us values. Therefore we say that the education we provide for our children must be vital. Vital education is political because it empowers our children, physically, mentally, socially and consciously. We are an oppressed and exploited people in need of power. In this context, education for our children potentially empowers our people because our children are our people's future revolutionaries, leaders and works. Vital/political education for our children can exist only when we put politics in the lead.

What is the essence of politics? The essence of politics is ideology. Ideology is a system (not a random collection) of ideas and values which when accepted and applied by our people act a guidelines to make judgements and to attain goals.

Putting politics in the lead is using our ideology in the following four ways:

a. STUDY IT: KEEP OUR IDEOLOGY ON OUR MIND

We study our ideology by reading it every day, by discussing it with our brothers and sisters, by grasping it so that it can be a guide for our life and finally by evaluating and revising it to meet ever changing conditions.

b. QUOTE IT: STRUGGLE TO PROMOTE OUR IDEOLOGY

We quote our ideology by introducing it in our everyday speech; decorating the spaces where we live and work with ideological phrases; inserting the ideology into everything we write and finally giving credit to our teachers.

c. APPLY IT: USE OUR IDEOLOGY AS A TOOL OF ANALYSIS

We apply our ideology by systematically solving our problems, by observing our social and material reality, by identifying the forces at work, by developing solutions and applying them and finally by evaluating our practice.

d. BE IT: BE EXAMPLES OF OUR IDEOLOGY

We "be" our ideology by developing consciousness (self-awareness and self-control), by acknowledging our weakness and our strengths, by struggling to resolve our weaknesses and building on our strengths, and, finally, by dedicating our lives to principled struggle.

## II. CONSCIOUSNESS IN COMMAND

Only a committed, conscious and capable teaching team can insure that politics will take the lead in independent Black schools and will insure growth and results. Regardless of degree or training, expertise does not insure that teachers will be politically advanced. We need committed teachers who are Black (conscious) and expert (capable). Otherwise the very essence of vital education is lost. For how can our children advance politically and academically if their teachers are not politically and academically advanced?

**WHO ARE COMMITTED TEACHERS?** Committed teachers are those who do what is right and necessary regardless of obstacles. They are those who struggle to transform themselves by overturning negative aspects of their socialization and who struggle to put our ideology into practice. Committed teachers believe in our people's potential and capacity to transform themselves and our communities. They set new priorities, giving up comforts and pleasures, as they grow stronger in their commitment to their own self-development and the collective power of the masses of our people.

**WHO ARE CONSCIOUS TEACHERS?** Conscious teachers put politics in the lead by using ideology, that is, political thought and morals, as a guide for living and studying, for developing analysis and plans and for growing to higher levels of work and study. Conscious teachers consistently analyze, practice and evaluate, for they understand that change is a constant and new contradictions are always arising. Conscious teachers are armed with an identity of self and of our people that is rooted in our history and present reality. They are disciplined, that is, self-controlled and are committed and able to struggle beyond belief. Conscious teachers pass on vital education that our children need to become activist of change.

**WHO ARE CAPABLE TEACHERS?** Capable teachers have the will and the ability to study and struggle in the realm of political organizing and education. Capable teachers are willing to create the type of environment and make the type of social associations that will re-inforce rather than tear down their full participation in improving Black life. Capable teachers are able to participate in creating conditions for change.

Consciousness in command means that committed, conscious and capable workers, those who have grasped the ideology and daily practice it, are in control, Black and expert workers are in command. Thus, correct implementation of our ideology is insured because the implementers are ideologically advanced, disciplined and work unceasingly for our people.

## B. HOW DOES OUR VALUE SYSTEM RELATE TO OUR CURRICULUM AT AHIDANA WORK/STUDY CENTER?

Values are rules that help us know what is right and what is wrong. In our school values guide our actions and attitudes and guide our choices and decisions. In our actions we struggle to be respectful and stress the value of socially advanced relationships. In our

attitudes we stress the positive and see every problem as a lesson rather than a letdown. In our choices we try to create educational materials and a school environment that is supportive of our values. In our decisions we do what is best for the collective good rather than our own individual wants. Our values guide our practice. Values thus guide our teaching of the curriculum, helps us decide what to emphasize in lessons and aids us in choosing what is relevant to our children's needs.

Using the NGUZO SABA as a guide, the following values are instilled in our children at AHIDIANA:

UMOJA (Unity) – stressing the collective and the needs of the group; decisions based on consensus.

KUJICHAGULIA (Self-determination) – concentration, self-motivation, initiative.

UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility) – orderliness, cleanliness, leadership, respect for leadership, accepting help, willingly asking for help, helping others, accepting responsibility.

UJAMAA (Familyhood and Cooperative Economics) – respect of self, others and property, sharing, being non-materialistic.

NIA (Purpose) – alertness, criticism and self-criticism, value of work/study, purposefulness.

KUUMBA (Creativity) – overcoming obstacles and problem solving.

IMANI (Faith) – value of struggle, self-awareness, self-control.

The practice of our values is not a mechanical but rather is a creative process of weighing the relative merit of each and every variable under consideration and then, finally, reaching a decision based on our assessment of the total problem.

The practice of our values is a full time job. WE are not interested in simply teaching our children to memorize the NGUZO SABA or make mechanical movements like little Black robots. We are struggling to raise, that is, provide for, protect, respect, inspire, educate and socialize, children who will be able to continue this awesome task and responsibility carrying it through to its conclusion.

## C. WHAT KIND OF STUDENTS ARE WE CREATING?

### 1. Academically excellent students who:

- are not fearful of theoretical knowledge, especially science.
- are skilled in communicating ideas through music, art, dance, but more importantly, communicating through speaking and writing.
- are able to compete with high academic standards of excellence.

2. Socially advanced students who:

- are committed to our greater collective good rather than limited individual goods or pleasures.
- advocate moral development over material development.
- are able to build positive social relationships supportive of our people’s identity and struggles.
- are respectful of our total environment rather than destructive of it.

3. Politically progressive students who:

- have a sense of purpose.
- are committed to our people first.
- are conscious of our history, collective conditions and hoped for future.
- are capable, that is, possess the will and the ability to be revolutionaries leaders and workers for our people.
- seek the truth and base their ideas on reality rather than idealism; on rationality rather than fanaticism; on truth rather than metaphysics.

This is the type of students who we are attempting to create at AHIDIANA Work/Study Center.

## **The Importance of an African Centered Education Kalamu ya Salaam**

This topic requires us to ask a question first, not just the obvious question of “What is an African centered education?” but what is required is posing the even more profound question: “An African centered education for whom and for what purpose?”

I do not presuppose that a hypothetical African centered education is in and of itself of major value unless we know whom and what we are speaking about as both the subjects and the objects of that education, and unless we are clear on what is the purpose of such an education. My contention is that audience and purpose are the two least discussed sides of the African education triangle, whose third side is the content or curriculum of African centered education. Except for a brief comment at the end, I will focus my presentation on the questions of identity and goals.

The dominant society Euro-centric educational modality presupposes that their education system is good for everyone, and if not good for everyone in the abstract, is de facto required of everyone over whom they have dominion, which is a large percentage of the world. Second, the dominant society presupposes that their education is a requirement of civilization. Unfortunately, many of us who reject Euro-centric educational information, often adopt Euro-centric educational methods and philosophy. We presuppose that audience is not a major question and that a dominating intent is a given.

In addition to defining African centered education in terms of philosophy and curriculum, when we address this issue of African education it seems to me to be important for us to also clarify who the “we” of African education is and what is our purpose in obtaining an African centered education. Answering those two concerns, i.e., the identity of the audience and the intended goal of achieving education, will enable us to realistically define “African centered education” grounded in the context of functionality rather than abstracted into the context of rhetoric and fantasy.

### **Audience/Identity**

Let us first, then, consider the question of the identity of our audience, which, of course, presupposes, that we identify ourselves. First of all, my concern for Africa is defined by Africa the people and not simply Africa the land. Wherever we are and whatever we do, taken in its totality, that defines what Africa is.

Our ancient civilizations are important but they are not the sole criterion. Indeed, to the degree that our traditional life did not enable us to withstand the blows of the empire, to the degree that our traditional gods did not enable us to reject the missionary impulses or at the very least incorporate the new god into our beliefs rather than having the new god dictate the rejection of our traditions, to the degree that our traditional values and beliefs collaborated with the

European invaders, to that same degree I suggest there are African traditions which at best, need to be modified and, perhaps, even ought to be discarded.

My first position is that I celebrate people and my second position is that I am critical not just of my historic enemies but also I am, and indeed must be, self-critical.

I do not buy the myth of race, the myth of racial universality, the myth of dualism, i.e., a thing, a person, an action is *ipso facto* either good or bad, and is not subject to transformation nor contextualization. I believe in the traditional African dialectic, which recognizes that everything is contextual and all things are capable of transformation.

Moreover, I believe, nationalism as currently practiced is not only a dead end in terms of social development, I believe nationalism as currently practiced is ultimately a socially negative philosophy that inevitably invites the demarcation of territory and the raising of the flag of individual ownership of the earth.

There are no African countries in Africa. Each one of those countries is European defined entities which, at best, are administered by Africans, and usually Africans who are European educated. In fact, the concept of African as we speak of it, is itself a European concept, a bundling together of various peoples and beliefs under a racist label to facilitate colonialism. There will be no true African nationalism until the nation states of Africa are redesigned to facilitate the development of African people rather than maintained as a leftover form of colonial domination, forms which were established to serve the interest of English, French, Portuguese, and to a lesser extent German and Belgium colonizers.

So, I suppose, now is as good a time as any to deal with the question of what do we mean by African. What is an African? Is this a racial definition? Is this a cultural definition? Is this a political definition based on historical relations of the last five or six hundred years?

Obviously, whether we want to or not, we must confront this issues of self-definition head on. For example, are mulattos, i.e., mixed blood Africans any less African than those who are unmixed? Be careful how you answer, because it is not our way to exclude. If we look around the room it is obvious that we African Americans are a mulatto people - not by choice in most instances, but regardless we are mixed. Does that make us a mulatto people any less African than continental Africans?

The first task of an African centered education is to help us define what being African is. I believe that Africans, and all other people, are defined by color, culture and consciousness.

Color is a racial definition, race in the sense of breeding population, a group of people with common genetic roots. I also believe that rather than create sub-categories, and sub-categories, and breakdowns to the point of absurdity such as quadroons, octoroons, etc., we should acknowledge quite simply a normative standard. For me, African is inclusive. One can racially claim Africa if some (although not necessarily all) of one's ancestors are racially African

and if one chooses to continue that racial identity. My qualifying “and” quite simply recognizes that if a single person who is racially African decides to dissolve him or herself into another group, be they Asian or European, then, over generations, the individual’s Africaness will cease to be an issue. In fact, my caveat is that color is not an individual definition but is a group and generational definition.

Culture is a way of life, again defined by normative or group standards. The culture one exhibits is the culture that defines the person. We can learn, understand, and relate to many different cultures, but in the final analysis it is our social living which determines which culture we are. Most human beings are born into a culture, but it is also possible to adopt a culture, and over generations become native to the adopted culture.

Consciousness is the critical element, particularly in the context of liberation. We must be aware of our people and culture, accept our people and culture, and immerse ourselves in our people and culture. Awareness means more than simple experiencing. Indeed one can witness and not understand, just as one can understand without being a witness. The best is to both witness, i.e., experience, and to understand, i.e., critically reflect on the culture. Given the reality of colonialism and neo-colonialism, it is impossible to be African in the modern world without being socially conscious of what it means to be African, what racism means, what colonialism means. To be African is to be self-reflective.

Thus I define African in terms of color, culture and consciousness.

### **African Identification within the Context of the United States**

I believe that there are three major categories of social identification for African Americans in the context of the United States in the last quarter of the 20th century. First, there is the question of race, and more precisely, the question of racism. Racism has undeniably affected every area of our lives, and to the degree that an education does not address or avoids addressing the reality and effects of racism, to that same degree such an education risks being irrelevant, regardless of its nomenclature or subject matter. So then in a modern context, an African centered education will analyze and offer methods of coping with, if not out and out destroying, racism.

Second, there is the question of class stratification and class identification. Class stratification refers to a person or group’s economic identity vis-a-vis the economic or productive forces of that society. It is not simply a question of income. It is also a question of where one fits in relation to maintaining the economic status quo. A professional, a public school teacher or corporate secretary, may make a smaller hourly wage than a carpenter, but the professional has had to undergo specific social training in addition to skill development.

The professional is expected to be more “civilized,” more “mannered” than the laborer. What does that mean? It means quite simply that part of being a professional is identifying with and adopting the social values of the dominant society. Indeed, the professional is responsible for propagating those values. In many ways the professionals are priests of the status quo. So

then when we talk about a class analysis, income alone can be misleading. We should make an analysis of the relationship to and function on behalf of the economic status quo. An African centered education must attack capitalism, the economic philosophy which elevates the bottom line (or material acquisition) as the measure of social development rather than social relations within a society as the measure of social development.

Third is the question of gender relations. I believe that the establishment of the patriarchy, i.e., male domination of women, was the first battle waged by Europeans in their attempt to colonize the world. Indeed, their whole mythology begins with overthrowing matriarchy wherever it existed. Greek legends of the gods, Zeus raping Europa, or giving birth to a female god sprung from his forehead, are all nothing more than mythological rationalizations of patriarchal dominations.

Christianity and Islam continue this trend introduced by the Greeks. Christianity goes so far as to propagate the myth that a man is a "mother," specifically that Adam, a man, through the intercession of god, gave birth to Eve, a woman. Furthermore, most classical Christian theology does not recognize women as fit to act as intermediaries to and representatives of god. Islam's virulent strain of misogyny is even more oppressive. This question of gender relations also raises the issue of heterosexism in the form of violence against homosexuals for no other reason than homosexuals are different and not like normal people. An African centered education would elevate matriarchy and attack patriarchy.

Although anyone of these three strains could be explored at some length that is not the focus under consideration here. I simply wanted to identify the three major lines of social demarcation in the contemporary context.

Before moving on, I do think it important to point out, that one can be anti-racist but be capitalist and sexist, or could be anti-capitalist and be racist and sexist. I am saying that a progressive position on one side of the triangle, does not guarantee a progressive position on the other sides -- and, yes, I am defining as progressive, ideological and social struggle around anti-sexism and opposition to heterosexism, particularly opposition to so-called homophobia.

## **Goals**

Finally, on this question of relevance, my basic contention is that in order for an African centered education to be meaningful it needs to be focused on development, meeting the needs of the working class masses of our people, both the employed and the unemployed, rather than focus on the career development of African American professionals, particularly those professionals whose day to day work is within the context of predominantly, dominant culture, educational and business institutions. Moreover, African centered education should definitely be opposed to the development of a Black bourgeoisie, a Black class of owners who profit off the exploitation of the African masses.



If an African centered education does not specifically address itself to the needs of our people then it has failed to be relevant to the struggle although it may have great relevance to individuals in their quest for tenure, for promotions, and for political office. As Sonia Sanchez so eloquently noted a number of years ago in evaluating a position put forth by some well-meaning brothers, we should respond to all advocated of ungrounded and non-contemporary Afrocentricity with this phrase. "Uh-huh, but how does that free us!"

How does that free us is precisely the question to ask -- especially when we are clear on who "us" is. I am not interested in joining any atavistic, nostalgic society that knows more about what happened four thousand years ago, four thousand miles away than it does about what happened forty years ago within a four mile radius of where we meet today. The purpose of calling on our ancestor is to sustain life in the present and insure life in the future, and not simply nor solely to glorify the past.

Our people have very real needs today. We are faced with very real problems. For instance, as quiet as it's kept, African American women are quickly becoming the number one victim of AIDS. This coupled with the dramatic rise in breast cancer deaths among African American women suggests a fundamental area of struggle far more important than arguing whether Alice Walker is dipping her nose in other people's business in her crusade against female sexual mutilation.

At the same time, I must note, that quite clearly, a contemporarily grounded African centered education would not only support the struggle against female sexual mutilation, it would also offer an analysis of that phenomenon and point out that sexual mutilation is strongest in those areas of Africa where Islam is the strongest. Part of what we are witnessing is the brutality of male domination of women, regardless of the fact that, on the surface it may seem like, women are willingly participating. We African Americans surely can understand self-collaboration in oppression, we who have a long and regrettable history of house negroism.

I reiterate the need to be self-critical and the need to be grounded in the lives of our people. Far too many Afrocentrics are petit bourgeoisie professionals who are based at predominantly Eurocentric educational institutions. Far too much of the focus of contemporary Afrocentrism is on the long ago and far away. Where is the community base? Where is the focus on the needs of the community? To a certain extent, much of what we see in some narrow Afrocentric theorists is an attempt to compensate for years spent suffering under the constant and withering intellectual onslaught of formal education teaching Black professionals that Black people are intellectually inferior. After one has invested so many years in academe, one sometimes spends an equally inordinate amount of time researching to prove to Whites that Black people are not only as smart as Whites, but indeed that we were the world's first smart people. "Uh huh, but how does that free us?"

The issue is not about proving anything to Whites. The issue is meeting the needs of our people, being grounded in our people. Furthermore, the inordinate amount of energy devoted to the study, praising, and admiration of African kings and pharaohs displays a serious sense of

inadequacy and disdain for the common woman and man. What difference does it make to me how smart the leader was if the majority of the people are kept in ignorance? I don't care what the priests knew about life, what did Ayo and Kwaku know, what did Bertha and Joe know?

I don't care how intelligent and spiritually refined the royal order was, what were the conditions, relative level of educational achievement and qualitative life of the people who were like you and I? Tell me about the lives of the masses, what we didn't, what we did. Let us learn from our mistakes and build on our achievements in the context of building serious social relationships among ordinary people rather than this almost mystical interest in kings and things.

I agree with Amilcar Cabral that the focus of the African professional ought to be to commit class suicide. Rather than identify with the dominant society via a focus on developing professional skills for the purpose of being a more productive professional or for self-aggrandizement, professionals ought to focus their skills on the uplift and development of the African American working class (whether actively employed or unemployed). This is what DuBois had in mind as a mission for the so-called "talented tenth." Today, too many who would qualify as talented tethers on the basis of education have deserted the mission and it was the mission, and not the level of educational attainment, which defined the talented tenth in DuBois' perspective.

Mission fulfillment is not a question to be taken lightly, because it is no small not straight forward task to work in the interest of one's people if most of the work opportunities are controlled by our oppressors and exploiters, and if the remuneration, both monetarily and socially, are so meager when one works in a predominately and/or all Black setting, that one is not able to sustain one's self. We are faced with the task not only of waging political struggle but also we must engage in the very real struggle of economic support for one's self and for those whom one has the responsibility of sheltering, rearing, or otherwise nurturing, not to mention economic support of the struggle itself. There is a subjective reality of survival involved in committing class suicide. But greater than the subjective question of individual survival is the objective question of group direction.

The upliftment of the masses does not mean that our task is to turn our brothers and sisters into "junior Europeans" (to quote Kgositsile). The upliftment of our people does not mean that we are trying to civilize anyone, or to teach them how to wear business suits and ties, or to show them how to pay taxes and speak properly. In fact, it means quite the opposite. The upliftment of our people means securing and returning to the hands of our people the power to define and determine our own lives. Upliftment quite simply means to end outside domination and exploitation, and to reintroduce our people as the subjects, the makers and shapers of their own destiny.

In order to fulfill the mission the petit bourgeois, the professionals, the educated, will have to physically and psychologically reintegrate themselves into the day to day life of the people who they hope to uplift. They will have to speak to and with working people about an expanded sense of the world and our ability to actively participate in building the future. Additionally, they

will also have to listen to and respond to the concerns, aspirations, and ideas of the working people. In short they will have to be organizers who both bring information and skills to serve our people as well as receive sustenance and inspiration to keep on developing. In short, we are talking about the particular (the professional) and the general (the people) engaged in a dialectic of self-development and self-empowerment that neglects neither and enriches both -- properly speaking a European language is not a prerequisite of this process.

Note: This paper was first presented in the early 90s at a Gwen Brooks Writers Conference.



*Asante sana to Dada Bonnie Bart for the illustrations. Cover  
by Tayari kwa Salaam.*

# WHO WILL SPEAK FOR US

## *YOU BETTER BELIEVE WE BETTER SPEAK FOR OURSELVES!*

This collection of stories is meant to be used to teach values and as such helps fulfill one of the major tasks of education which is to define our needs and shape our wants. What does your child need and want out of life? You better speak up now. Speak up now before Captain Kangaroo, Miss Jenny and that atrocious big, ugly bird from Sesame Street catch your child's mind with both eyes now. Wide open in wonderment children sit for hours before television sets and we don't even talk to our own children anymore.

"Chile, children today don't listen to nuthin you tell them!" Why should they? The only time we usually talk to children is to tell them what or what not to do. How about discussing our ideology with our children i.e. our system of beliefs which should at least give us identity, purpose and direction. How about talking with the babies even before they can talk while they are still interested in what we have to say and still love to hear the sound of our voices talking to them. Well anyway you get the idea.

The point of this book is to offer six new Afrikan folktales that you can read and *discuss* with your child (of course we believe, that all Afrikan children are our children, regardless of whether we physically bore them or not). Folktales are part of our traditional way of teaching. However we believe not only in tradition but also in reason, so therefore the tales are created to meet the needs of the time. So then these stories are not throwbacks to the past but rather are projections for the future meant to be used here and now.

Where did these tales come from? Five of them are recreations of folktales that have been handed down from generation to generation. Some of the stories have been published in a book edited by Julius Lester. Each of the five were rewritten by Mama Tayari Kwa Salaam in order to inject and infuse a conscious element of values into the stories. Some of them you may recognize, some you may not. The title story was created by Kalamu ya Salaam to meet specific needs, it too, is value bound. The final copy writing was done by Kalamu ya Salaam and the final editing by Tayari kwa Salaam. All six of these stories have been used and reused time and time again at Ahidiana Work/Study Center. They work.

In closing we want to make note of the artwork of sister Bonnie Bart which is right on time. Each illustration captures the positive essence of each story. We sincerely acknowledge the importance of this contribution. The cover is by Mama Tayari kwa Salaam who is constantly creative. We have tried to make this book totally enriching from idea to appearance.

Everybody is talking about SAVE THE CHILDREN! The question is how can this be done? For certain if we are to save the children then we have a tremendous responsibility for in order to truly save the children, *WE MUST TEACH THE CHILDREN*. Our hope is that this book aids in the ongoing process of education. The education of our children is our job, no one else's and most certainly we can not afford to continue letting our enemies teach our children. So come on Black parents: Speak up! Who will speak for us?

Brother/Sister we can and we must!!!

Asante sana (Thank you very much)  
Kalamu ya Salaam/AHIDIANA

THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THIS BOOK WILL BE USED TO PUBLISH OTHER EDUCATIONAL TEXTS. WE THANK YOU FOR HELPING US CONTINUE THE WORK OF EDUCATION FOR A NATION!

# MWALIMU 'TEACHER' GUIDE

If what we have learned is correct and struggling to apply it, based on our experiences at AHIDIANA Work/Study Center a pre-school in New Orleans, we have found great value in telling the watoto of our school stories which teach them Afrikan values and important facts about the world. We tell stories in a special way. We use drama, a felt board and felt figures and, of course, our story. Afrikan folk tales are the most exciting for the watoto because these folk tales usually use animals moving and talking (teaching) in a drama which keeps their interest.

How is this activity actually done? We read and study the story and decide which characters and places should be duplicated for the felt board. A felt board can be made from a sturdy piece of cardboard, a sheet of wood with felt fabric tacked onto it, a piece of felt fabric tacked to the wall or placed on the floor or table. The felt characters are made by drawing the shapes of the people, animals or things needed in the story on different colors of felt fabric. These may be shaded and outlined with felt tipped markers and pens. When these felt characters are placed on the felt board, they stick and stay. Another possibility for those characters which are stationary is to use paper or other materials backed with masking tape to make it stick and stay on the felt board. This adds more color and variety to the visual effect the story characters give.

Now we are ready to tell the story. We move a felt rabbit into a colorful paper house where the rabbit lives. The teacher continues telling the story with great drama and realism moving the characters all over the board as the story unfolds. Repetition is important in story telling. The children will begin repeating important phrases in the story. When the story is read the second or third time, the teacher may ask the watoto what is going to happen next. They will easily remember because of the way the story was told the day before.

Understanding the importance of young pre-school children's sensual and physical development, we see how this activity helps them to use their eyes, ears and mouth. Listening skills are developed along with memory skills.

We have used this teaching method not only with Afrikan folk tales, but with city life stories, science stories, math stories, all stories.

Kazi Pamoja  
Ahidiana W/S Center



# STRUGGLE IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

One day Brother Rabbit was walking down the road when he met Brother Bear. Brother Bear was out taking his morning run of two miles to keep physically fit. Brother Rabbit was just out walking around because he was tired of being at home.

"Habari gani, Brother Rabbit?"

"I got trouble, Brother Bear," Brother Rabbit said shaking his head.

Brother Bear stopped to help his friend. "Trouble?" said Brother Bear. Brother Bear always struggles to see things in a positive way. He saw a lesson in everything.

Brother Rabbit continued, "I got so much trouble. I don't know what I'm going to do. I've got trouble with my children and trouble with my house and just all kinds of trouble, Brother Bear. What am I going to do? What in the world am I going to do?" Brother Rabbit had his lip stuck out and he sounded like he almost wanted to cry. Brother Rabbit always saw the negative in everything. Everything that happened was a letdown for him.

"What do you mean what are you going to do?" Brother Bear was confused. He didn't understand. It was clear to him what Brother Rabbit had to do. "What do you mean. You got trouble?"

Brother Rabbit cut Brother Bear off before he could finish. He jumped straight up in the air. "What do you mean, what do I mean? I just told you. I got trouble!"

"I heard what you said, Brother Rabbit, but just what is trouble?"

"What!!!!" Brother Rabbit was shocked. He leaped up into the air again. "You don't know what trouble is? Haven't you ever had trouble?"

Brother Bear spoke the truth, "I don't think so. If I did have some trouble, I didn't know anything about it."

"Where have you been, Brother Bear, that you've never had trouble?"

"Well you see, anytime we have a problem, we struggle to use that problem as an opportunity to improve our lives. For instance, when cold weather sets in, our family would have a problem if we had to be out in the cold all winter. But we prepare for the long cold winter. During the long winter we fast. We don't eat anything and we lay very still and when winter is over and it warms up we come out of our hibernation and begin our kazi. During the summer and fall we spend most of our time in the woods with each other collecting food for the long cold winter that we know is coming. Sometimes the work is hard, but that's the way of the world." Brother Bear looked straight at Brother Rabbit. He paused a minute to prepare his thoughts and then he said, "But to tell you the truth, Brother Rabbit, I can't remember ever having trouble."



Brother Rabbit smiled, "Brother Bear, I'm going to do you a favor."

"What's that, Brother Rabbit?"

"I'm going to show you what trouble is," said Brother Rabbit.

"Oh, yes, sir! Njema! I am prepared to learn," said Brother Bear.

"Brother Bear, it is my pleasure believe me."

They were near a grassy field. Brother Rabbit said, "I want you to lay down over there in the grass and go to sleep for a little while. When you wake up, you'll know what trouble is!"

So, Brother Bear lay down and was soon resting comfortably. He had Imani (faith) in Brother Rabbit. The minute he was resting Brother Rabbit set the grassy field on fire. Brother Bear smelled the smoke and woke up immediately! He leaped to his feet and efficiently and effectively looked all around for a place to run out of the danger. He looked to the left and then he looked to the right very quickly and carefully. He struggled to find a place to run away from the fire. Finally he saw a small place that hadn't begun to burn and he ran to that spot, jumped high over a log and leaped through to a clear safe spot in the field.

Brother Rabbit was laughing so hard at Brother Bear that he was rolling all over the ground. But what he did was no joke. He almost killed Brother Bear trying to teach him what trouble is. And that's incorrect. When we teach, we should help and not hurt.

Brother Rabbit said, "Now, Brother Bear, you know what trouble is!"

Brother Rabbit was still laughing because he thought that he had fooled Brother Bear. But Brother Bear said, "Trouble? Brother Rabbit, you are very silly and that is why you have so much trouble. You see, trouble is not trouble to me. It is only struggle. And struggle is what it's all about! It's something we just can't do without!"

# UJAMAA

Long ago Brother Dog and Sister Cat used to be friends. A friend is someone close to you that helps you struggle and that you help struggle. Good friends always work together. Brother Dog and Sister Cat were struggling to become the best of friends. Brother Dog and Sister Cat began to work, play and sometimes eat together. And even though they liked to work together more than anything in the world they also liked to eat together. And believe it or not, their favorite food was cheese.

One day they were coming back from a meeting where they had seen a film and heard a fellow animal speak about the struggles of animals in other parts of the world.

Brother Dog said, "Sister Cat, I'm hungry. How's about some cheese?"

"Yeabo! Yes, indeed, most certainly so!" Sister Cat said.

"Since we got a ride with Brother Chameleon and did not catch the bus, we have some extra money." Brother Dog was figuring out how to buy the cheese. "Now neither you nor I have enough money to get a small block of cheese."

"You're right Brother Dog," Sister Cat said. "And you know that prices are so high today for we animals! This inflation is getting to the point of extremes! Our life is hard enough already without inflation too!"

Inflation is the rising cost of food and goods and services, but at the same time there is no increase or rise in the amount of money that you get paid for working. So the cheese costs more today than it did yesterday.

Brother Dog had an idea. He was very excited and happy because this was a good idea. He began talking very fast. "Let's buy the cheese from the food co-op and practice Ujamaa (Familyhood and Co-operative Economics). Let's put our money together and we'll have enough money to get the cheese."

So they went to town and bought the small block of cheese at Duka ya Ujamaa, the food co-op. The block of cheese they bought was bigger and heavier than it would have been if they had bought it at a regular store.

Brother Dog and Sister Cat had to take turns carrying the cheese back home. Brother Dog said, "Brothers have a responsibility to lead; so, I'll take the first turn. And sisters are completers; you can take the second turn."

As Brother Dog carried the cheese he sang out in a strong voice, "Our cheese! Our cheese! We're going to share our cheese!"

When it was Sister Cat's turn to carry the cheese, she sang in a very silly and selfish voice "My cheese! My cheese! I am going to eat all the cheese!"

Brother Dog heard what Sister Cat was singing but he didn't say



anything. He knew that before correcting someone the corrector should know exactly what he or she is talking about. Brother Dog thought maybe Sister Cat was joking.

When it came to be Brother Dog's turn to carry it again he sang, "Our cheese! Our cheese! We're going to share our cheese!"

But when Sister Cat carried the cheese she sang, "My cheese! My cheese! I am going to eat all the cheese!"

Brother Dog listened very hard and he heard the truth this time. He asked Sister Cat about it. "Tell me, Sister Cat, why do you sing, 'My cheese! My cheese!?' It is *our* cheese, isn't it? We bought it pamoja (together)."

Sister Cat did not give respect. She ignored Brother Dog, turned around and didn't say a word. She just kept on singing her silly song.

And Brother Dog continued to have Imani (faith) in Sister Cat. He continued to give good example. He continued to sing, "Our cheese! Our cheese! We're going to share our cheese!"

When they were almost home, Sister Cat was carrying the cheese. All of a sudden she ran up a tree and sat down on a limb and gobbled up *all* the cheese *by herself!* She ate it all without sharing. Brother Dog was very angry and he barked and jumped and growled and snarled but he couldn't climb a tree so there was nothing he could do.

"Sister Cat, Sister Cat what did you do? Why didn't you share our cheese?"

All Sister Cat had thought about was eating the cheese all by herself. Sister Cat was being greedy. And in her greed she forgot about the value of their friendship.

"Brother Dog I was hungrier than you were and that was such a small piece of cheese. . .so I ate it all by myself." Sister Cat was not telling the truth. She had forgotten to practice what Imamu Baraka teaches us "Everything that exists in life should be shared naturally."

Brother Dog told Sister Cat, "We had *Imani* in what we said we were going to do. But you did what you wanted to do and not what was needed. Part of that cheese was for me but you ate it all. You did not practice Ujamaa. From now on I will have to watch you closely and remember not to make any more alliances with you. We do not have an alliance now. WE do not have a union of interests. We have no more unity. You are not as strong as your true self."

Sister Cat just smiled. She patted her stomach and said "So what? I got all the cheese and you didn't get any, nah, nah, nah!"

That made Brother Dog very sad because he knew that Sister Cat was really being silly and that one day she would be very sorry for what she did but then it would be too late. When you hurt a friend you really only hurt yourself.

Brother Dog just shook his head. He didn't call Sister Cat names or anything like that. He simply said, "Sister Cat whether you know it or not you are losing more than I am. I have only lost a little cheese but you have lost a friend!"

# MY FEAR IS FOR YOU

There was a drought on the plains this year just like the drought in Afrika today. A drought is when there is no rain for a very, very long time. Plants and animals need rains to live because rain is water. And water is essential to life. When there is no water there is no food. Even the trees has no leaves. This drought was not as bad as the one in Afrika today because the one in Afrika has been going on for over five years and that's a long time. But this drought still was bad.

All the animals on the plain were thirsty and hungry. In order to find food or water they had to struggle very, very hard and look high and low, near and far. Sometimes they would search all day and barely find enough to eat.

The animals were so hungry and thirsty. They moved very, very slowly. Some of the animals just sat still waiting patiently for the rain. They felt too tired to struggle. But most of the animals, no matter how tired they were, got up every day to look for food and water.

Brother Chameleon was searching a tree for bugs or insects to eat. At the same time, Sister Hen was out looking for food to eat. When she came to the tree that Brother Chameleon sat on, she sat down to rest.

Sister Hen spoke softly to herself, "It is so hard trying to find food these days. It's hard to find even scraps."

"Habari gani, Sister Hen?" It was Brother Lion who was passing by. Brother Lion was looking for food also.

"Njema, asante. Habari gani?"

"Things could be better," said Brother Lion. "I am so very hungry!"

"Yes, everyone is hungry, my brother. My little chicks have been peeping for food and water for many days now. . ."

Brother Lion said nothing. Sister Hen went back to looking for food. Lion watched Sister Hen for a little while. Then he started to think of himself first. He stopped believing what Maulana Ron Karenga has taught us: "If everyone accepted 'my fear is for you', when something happens, you will not think about yourself, but about the other one." Brother Lion decided to eat Sister Hen!

"My sister, I have decided to eat you to satisfy *my* needs. I am too hungry to be patient and I'm too tired to look anywhere else!"

Sister Hen quickly looked at Brother Lion. She saw that he was serious. It was hard to believe that a brother said this. She was afraid, but she was strong and did not show how afraid she was.

"What about my baby chicks at home who depend on me to live?"





"There are other chickens to take care of them. They will become accustomed to being without you. I AM HUNGRY!"

All of a sudden a voice was heard, "Brother Lion, you seem to need help in being strong. We will help you struggle to be the brother that you really are."

Lion was shocked. But he would not listen to the advice, just like some of us do not listen today when our brothers and sisters give us good advice.

"I thought only Sister Hen and I were here. Who else will know of my wrong doing? I thought I could hide the truth of what I am about to do!"

Everyone knows that the truth can not be hidden.

"Who is looking at me." bellowed Lion in a loud voice.

Brother Lion refused to understand that whether you can see someone around or not you are supposed to do what is correct. True brothers and sisters always struggle to be conscious and correct no matter where they are.

"Do you need help, Brother Lion?" The voice spoke again.

Lion looked all over. He looked to the right, to the left, up to the sky, down on the ground, around the tree, behind the tree. He looked everywhere. "Who said that? Where are you? Come out so that I can see you!"

But there was no answer.

Lion thought about it a moment. "I must've been hearing things. If I eat Sister Hen right now, no one will know who did it!"

Lion went toward Sister Hen determined to eat her up right then and there!!

"IF YOU TOUCH SISTER HEN, YOU WILL BE SORRY, VERY SORRY BROTHER LION!"

Lion ignored the voice.

All at once he felt something wet and sticky touch him.

"I SEE THAT WE MUST TEACH YOU A LESSON BROTHER LION!"

This really frightened him and he ran as fast as he could afraid for his life!

Sister Hen was safe. "Who protected me from Brother Lion? Asante sana. May our ancestors keep you!"

"It is I, your brother, Chameleon! I have the power to change colors. I am on the tree. I am the same color as the tree, so that Brother Lion could not see me!"

"Asante sana, Brother Chameleon. You saved my life. You protected me."

"Si kitu. It's nothing. I was only doing what strong brothers are naturally supposed to do! Tutaonana, Sister Hen."

"Asante. Tutaonana."

# SISTER ANT'S KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

One day Sister Ant was unhappy. She had been thinking about herself all day. She decided that she did not like herself because she was too small. Her body was too small. Her voice was too small. Everything was too small about her. She wanted to be big like the other animals. So she went to Brother Dog.

"Habari gani, Brother Dog? Nisemehe, excuse me, but can you tell me how can I get to be big like you?"

Brother Dog said, "Well, eat a whole lot. Then run around alot. After a little while you'll be big as I am."

Sister Ant did just that. She ate so much her stomach hurt. She ran until her legs hurt. But she didn't get any bigger. So, she decided that Brother Dog had told her something wrong. She decided to ask Sister Turtle.

"Habari gani, Sister Turtle? Nisemehe, excuse me, but can you tell me how can I get to be big like you?"

Sister Turtle said, "Spend a lot of time in and near the water. The first thing you know, you'll be as big as I am."

Sister Ant spent a lot of time by the water. But that didn't help because ants are land animals. Sister Ant didn't get any bigger. So, she decided that Sister Turtle was all wrong, too.

Sister Ant began to worry herself sick. She was getting so sick thinking about how small she was that she couldn't even sleep. Now, everyone knows that worry does not make anything better.

Now that she couldn't get bigger what was Sister Ant going to do? She didn't know who else to ask. So one night while she couldn't sleep she heard Brother Owl hooting and she remembered that he gave good advice. So, she went to Brother Owl.

"Brother Owl, habari gani? Nisemehe, excuse me, but can you tell me how can I get big like Brother Dog and Sister Turtle?"

"Why do you *need* to be big?" Brother Owl asked.

Sister Ant answered Brother Owl's question in the loudest and strongest voice she could, "***I WANT TO BE BIG SO THAT WHEN I GET INTO A FIGHT I CAN BEAT UP EVERYBODY!***"

Brother Owl said, very wisely, "If what we have learned is correct and struggling to apply it, what you *want* is not as important as what you need. We must do what our struggle demands. We must first meet our needs. And anyway, don't you have pinchers to bite with in order to defend yourself?"

Sister Ant sat down quietly and thought a minute, "Yes, sir; you're correct, I do have pinchers."

Brother Owl continued, "Well, then, if you can defend yourself, that's all the fighting you need to do. You only need to defend yourself when attacked; otherwise, you should make peace with those who make peace with you."

"But oh, Brother Owl," insisted Sister Ant, "I need to be big so that I can see far off into the distance!"

Brother Owl asked Sister Ant another question, "And for what purpose do you need to see far off into the distance? If you climb to the top of the anthill where you live or on top of a big rock, you can see as far as you need to see."

Sister Ant was quiet for a minute. "Well, I hadn't thought of that."

Brother Owl said again, "And that's what is wrong, Sister Ant. You hadn't done any thinking about the real problems of our animal family. You were only thinking of yourself."

Just then Brother Dog came by with a problem for Brother Owl to help him solve. Brother Dog said, "The Dog family needs help. We are in need of food and we just don't know where to begin."

Sister Ant spoke up quickly, "Brother Dog, does your family have any land?"

"Yes, Sister Ant, we have land, but it is covered with trash and rocks and bushes."

Sister Ant smiled, "Well, then that's not even a problem. You should be very proud that you have land. You know that there are animals that do not have land. All the Dog family needs to do is come together using the principles of *UMOJA (Unity) and UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility)* and apply them step by step, one by one to clear the field. You can organize one group to root up tree stumps, another group to carry away the rocks and the trash and another group to cut the grass and bushes. And the best way to do it is to set a production schedule collectively to decide on how much work your family will do each day and then do it. That's all you have to do!"

Then Brother Dog gladly gave praise where praise was due, "Asante sana, Sister Ant. We didn't even know where to start. You have organizational skill. It is really appreciated."

This made Sister Ant feel bigger, not bigger in size, but bigger in her own worth as an ant.

And then along came Sister Turtle just a boo-hooing and crying. "Boooooo-hooooooo, booooo-hooooo!!! Everything we do turns out all wrong. Oooohhh boooo-hooooo!"

"Habari gani, Sister Turtle," said Brother Owl, "surely nothing is so bad that you must cry like that about it. And besides haven't we been taught that crying does not change anything?"

"Habari gani, Brother Owl and Sister Ant. Oh, you just don't know. The Turtle family took a trip to visit our cousins who live by the oceans and we saw them doing so many wonderful things and we wanted to do them,



too. So, when we got back from our trip, we tried to do the same things that they were doing. And it didn't work. And now the whole family is fighting each other and blaming each other for all the failures. Oh, it's so bad!"

"But Sister Turtle," Sister Ant spoke up quickly, "that is only a small problem. Our Ant family use to have that same problem until we learned that you can't imitate other ways of doing things even if it is the way your cousins do it. They live in a different place under different conditions. If you want to improve your life, look around you and use what is available. Use the principles of *KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination)* and *KUUMBA (Creativity)*. You should be inspired by the progress that your cousins have made, but you should not try to imitate them tit for tat. Instead the Turtle family should work to improve their lives where they live. That is the rational method! Why you don't see us Black Ants imitating Red Ants, do you; even though, we are inspired by the work of Red Ants?"

"Maybe that is our problem," said Sister Turtle. "This is good advice. Asante sana. I feel better already. Sister Ant, you have a lot of knowledge packed into your little head!"

As Sister Turtle walked away, Brother Owl said, "Sister Ant you are much bigger than you believe you are. You have knowledge and skills that are useful in our struggle. And that is truly njema, njema, njema (good, good, good)!"

And then Sister Ant smiled a great, big ole smile.

# PAMOJA TUTASHINDA

It was a hot day on the savannah. Savannah is the Afrikan grasslands where the animals live. The animals had a lot of work to do. But they were doing nothing. The animals in the forest were busy preparing to put together a political party that would gain, maintain and use power for the betterment of the forest animals. But the savannah animals had forgotten about their past. It's a foolish thing to forget your past. So they did not know who they were, what they had to do and why they had so much work to do. And worse of all, they didn't have any unity; so, they were always fighting each other!

Brother Lion was angry. He walked over to Sister Turtle and said, "I am angry with you because you are so slow!"

Sister Turtle was angry. She looked up at Brother Elephant and said, "I am angry with you because you are so big!"

Brother Elephant was angry. He looked down at Sister Ant and said, "I am angry with you because you are too small!"

Sister Ant was angry. She looked up at Brother Giraffe and said, "I am angry with you because you are too tall!"

Brother Giraffe was angry. He looked at Sister Snake and said, "I am angry with you because you are too quiet!"

Sister Snake was angry. She looked at Brother Hippopotamus and said, "I am angry with you because you are too fat."

Brother Hippopotamus was angry. He looked at Brother Lion and said, "I am angry with you because you are too loud!"

Now, we all know what goes around comes around. No one gave respect; so, no one was able to get respect. All the animals were so angry they were ready to fight! They moved in close and put up their fists.

Suddenly, inspirational Sister Green Bird flew down from the sky to visit her brothers and sisters. She was returning from a long journey.

"Habari gani?" said Sister Green Bird. No one answered. They did not give respect. All the animals were so busy fussing that they did not even hear her or see her! "Would you please tell me what is happening?"

"Lion, did not respect me. He said that I move too slowly." Sister Turtle was really upset.

Brother Elephant shouted, "Do you think you respected me when you said that I am too big!"

"Elephant, you can't talk," Sister Ant said, "you called me too small!"

All the animals were shouting and talking at one time.

Sister Green Bird immediately applied the ideology and called for

order. "Would we please listen and be quiet for a minute? Let's make a unity circle so we can talk about our problem."

All the animals made one big circle. "Let's put our hand up in a fist if we wish to say something." Everybody agreed with Sister Green Bird's suggestion.

"What does our protocol teach us about respect? Did you hear that we stopped calling each other brother and sister?" asked Sister Green Bird.

"Respect is to give attention to presence," said Sister Turtle.

"Respect is to acknowledge worth," said Brother Giraffe.

"Respect is to appreciate what is offered," said Brother Lion.

"Yeabo!" said Sister Green Bird. "It means all of those. But most important, we must know it and practice it. Our protocol has value only if it is applied."

"Why should I respect someone who won't respect me?" asked Sister Snake.

All the animals quieted down to listen because they all believe that everyone else would not respect them.

Brother Hippopotomus thought out loud, "Maybe if we struggle to give respect, then we would get respect. After all, we are all brothers and sisters here."

Brother Lion shouted, "I always have to give in to everyone else. I'm tired struggling!"

"We all know it is hard to struggle. It is hard to be strong when our body, mind and soul and consciousness are not together," answered Sister Green Bird "but if there is no struggle then there is no progress."

Just then Brother Elephant punched Brother Giraffe dead in the face with his trunk!

POW!!! Brother Giraffe moved back struggling to control himself. He looked Brother Elephant in the eyes and said, "Why did you do that?"

"Do what?" said Brother Elephant. Brother Elephant did not know what he had done! He was not conscious of himself.

Everyone was surprised and said, "Brother Elephant, you must be joking. We all saw what you did. You hit Brother Giraffe. Where is your self-awareness?"

"Why did you hit me!" repeated Brother Giraffe. Brother Elephant just hunched his shoulders (like this) and said nothing.

"Do you need help," Sister Turtle asked, "Is something wrong with your shoulders?"

Sister Green Bird spoke, "Brother Elephant, you did not have a Nia (purpose) for what you did. We should always know why we do something."

Brother Hippopotamus made a decision. "Let's come together and work together. If we come together in Umoja (Unity), then we'll be able to stop all of this fighting."

"But how do we begin?" asked Sister Ant.

"Step by step, one by one. Start with the easy first. And be consistent.





When we succeed with the easier problems, the harder ones will be less hard.” Sister Green Bird was truly inspirational with her knowledge of our ideology.

“Alright, I agree,” said Brother Elephant. “From now on I am going to struggle to control myself and respect all my brothers and sisters.” Brother Elephant was listening and all the animals helped him to be strong. Everyone cheered Brother Elephant. When Brother Elephant said that he was going to struggle, all the other animals said that they would struggle too.

“This is a big important day. Asante sana, Sister Green Bird, for your help!” said Brother Lion.

Sister Green Bird was happy with what she saw. “Kazi Pamoja! Pamoja Tutashinda! My visit was njema sana, very good! It is good to see brothers and sisters working together and struggling to solve their problems collectively! Tutaonana.”

“Yeabo! Yes, indeed most certainly so!” called out all the animals pamoja (together). “Tutaonana.”

# WHO WILL SPEAK FOR US

Brother Crab is a very smart animal. He has always been very smart. All of the other animals on the beach really respected how smart Brother Crab was.

Well if someone had a problem, no matter what the problem was, sooner or later they would bring the problem to Brother Crab to seek Brother Crab's advice. Advice is when someone helps you figure out a problem when you need help.

One day Sister Green Bird flew by and saw Brother Crab resting on the beach. "Habari gani, Brother Crab," she said.

"Njema sana," he said. Then Brother Crab asked Sister Green Bird how she was doing. He said, "Habari gani?"

"Njema sana, njema!" Sister Green Bird said. She said "njema" because she was doing fine.

Now Sister Green Bird is very smart too. And soon Sister Green Bird and Brother Crab were having a very interesting discussion. I believe they were discussing the value system and ways to practice the values. You see they both loved revolution.

Just then Brother Alligator was coming along.

"Oh, here comes Brother Alligator," Sister Green Bird said. "Let's call him over so that he can share our conversation. I'm sure he has some valuable words to say."

Brother Crab fell out laughing at that. Oh, he laughed hard and he laughed long. "HA-HA-HA-HA!" Oh, he was really, really laughing. Now Sister Green Bird could not understand why Brother Crab was laughing so hard.

"Why are you laughing, Brother Crab? Did I say something funny?"

Brother Crab was still laughing. Finally he said, "You said that Brother Alligator had some valuable words to say. Well that's funny because Brother Alligator has a big mouth and he is dumb as the day is long. Why he's so stupid he doesn't even know how far away the sun is, or how deep the ocean is, or how the moon stays up in the sky! He's really stupid."

Sister Green Bird said, "He might not know as many facts and figures as you do, but he's not stupid just because he doesn't know everything."

"Aw, he's stupid!" Brother Crab insisted.

Sister Green Bird didn't say a word after that. She just quickly and quietly said "Tutaonana, Brother Crab." And then she flew over to Brother Alligator.

After Sister Green Bird and Brother Alligator had exchanged greetings



they talked about building houses, and getting vitamin D from the sun, and where the river came from and where it went to and, of course, they talked about the ideology.

Well, after awhile Sister Green Bird had to go. She said "Tutaonana" and flew away back home because she had kazi that she was responsible for and she had to do her job.

Now Sister Green Bird did not tell Brother Alligator what Brother Crab had said about him because she knew that carrying gossip and tattelling was totally incorrect. And she did not say any more to Brother Crab because she knew that the best way to stop bad talk from going around is with silence.

So one day, all the animals heard the news that there was going to be a big Congress where all the animals were going to get together to collectively discuss and decide on how to solve some of their many, many everyday problems. The big Congress they were going to have is something like our Sixth Pan-Afrikan Congress where we decide how to solve some of our many problems.

Well, the same week they heard the news all the animals on the beach had a meeting to elect one animal to speak for all of them at the Congress. All the beach animals came together and discussed the problems they were having on the beach where they lived. They also struggled to come up with methods to solve these problems. Afterwards they then had to elect their representative who would speak for them at the Congress.

Now smart Brother Crab just knew it was going to be him because he was so smart.

When it came time to vote Brother Turtle pointed out that "our representative has to be someone who knows who to speak well *and who can accurately and truthfully pass on the messages we send to the Congress.*"

Brother Crab jumped up and shouted out "I AM THE BEST SPEAKER. I KNOW MANY DIFFERENT WORDS AND I AM VERY SMART!" Brother Crab didn't even use protocol. He just shouted out. He didn't wait to be called on by Sister Fish who was chairing the meeting.

Sister Starfish asked to be recognized and she was. Sister Starfish said, "Brother Crab, it's true that you are very smart, but you have to learn to control yourself. You must learn discipline. You must learn how to listen as well as talk. You must follow the protocol and you must learn to respect everyone. You don't have to drag other animals down in order to lift yourself up. You don't have to talk bad about everyone all the time. Brother Crab, you say you love revolution, but if you do not change yourself, if you do not improve yourself, if you do not strive to practice the values *everyday*, then you don't really love revolution. Brother Crab, I am telling you the truth. Don't you know that if you keep acting the way you are acting no one will be able to be around you and everybody will just leave you alone?" Sister Starfish was saying some of the very same words that many of the other animals had wanted to tell Brother Crab, but were afraid to tell him.

But Sister Starfish really cared about Brother Crab and she wanted to help him to struggle to improve himself; so, she told him the truth about himself. She did not pretend that everything was alright because that was one of the big problems the animals had talked about. We should not be afraid to give criticism when we are with our brothers and sisters, but criticism should be used to build up and not to tear down. The problem with Brother Crab was that he was always tearing somebody down.

The animals elected Brother Alligator to speak for them because, even though he didn't talk very much, every time he did open his mouth he had something important to say and everybody would listen. And more important Brother Alligator knew how to patiently listen to what other animals had to say.

After the election Brother Crab was mad. . He said, "Y'all are going to be sorry y'all didn't pick me because I am the smartest animal on the beach. And I can talk the best and Brother Alligator is too dumb to speak for me!"

All the other animals did not like how Brother Crab was always talking bad about someone; so, they left him alone. Brother Alligator on the other hand just said, "Asante sana for the Imani you have in me. I will do my job." And then he sat down to hear what messages he was responsible to bring to the Congress from all the animals on the beach.

And that is how Brother Alligator got to speak for all the animals on the beach at the Congress.

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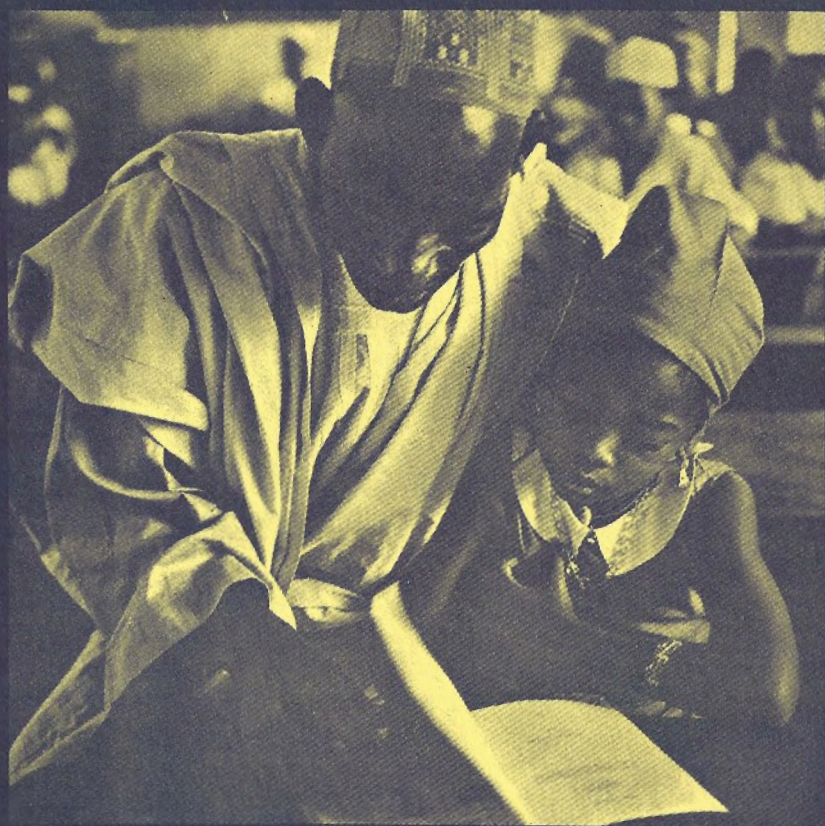


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# HERUFI

**AN ALPHABET  
READER**



We are Afrikan people struggling in America under conditions of oppression, exploitation and subjugation. We are not trying to raise "cute" (simply black and beautiful) children or "smart" (high IQs) children who will feed into and become a part of the American system. We are trying to raise soldiers and warriors, future revolutionaries, leaders and workers for our people's struggle for power and national liberation. Power to our people must start with positive education for our children. We are proud to be able to make this contribution to our people's struggle.

—Kalamu ya Salaam  
Tayari kwa Salaam

*THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO  
THE CHILDREN OF AHIDIANA  
WORK/STUDY CENTER, STEADY  
STRIVERS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR  
NATIONAL LIBERATION.*

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\$1.50

# HERUFI

## AN ALPHABET READER

Text by

Kalamu ya Salaam

WITH

Tayari kwa Salaam



Illustrations by

Kuishi kwa Taraji

AND

Tayari kwa Salaam

# A



---

**A is for AFRIKA, land where our ancestors are from.**

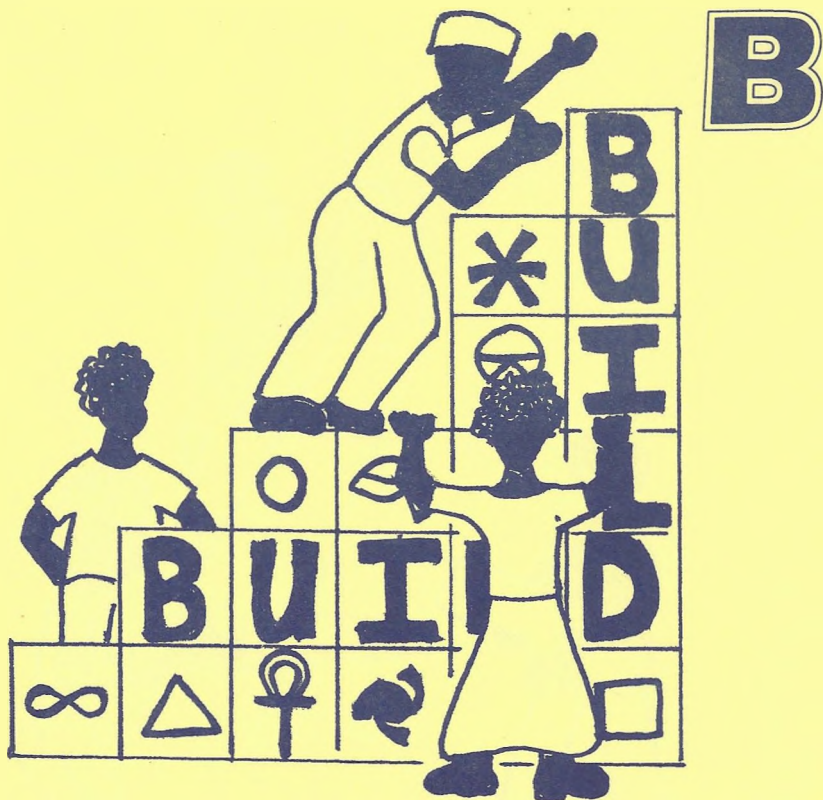
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**AFRIKA** is a very important land because that is where our roots are. Our ancestors are those Afrikan people who lived before we did and who are no longer alive today. Some of our ancestors were taken from Afrika by Europeans and that is how some Afrikan people got to America.

Afrika is the second largest continent on earth. A continent is one of the seven major divisions of land on the planet earth. The seven continents are Afrika, Asia, Australia, South America, North America, Europe and Antarctica.

Afrika is a continent rich in natural resources. Natural resources are valuable materials found in and on land. Gold, silver, diamonds, oil, uranium, bauxite and many other minerals are found in Afrikan soil. Many different types of trees, flowers, food and animals are found living on Afrikan soil. However, Afrika's most important natural resource is **AFRIKAN PEOPLE** who are now living and working all over the world.

It is the duty of Afrikan people to help regain control of Afrika, the land where our ancestors are from.



---

**B is for BUILD, step by step, one by one.**

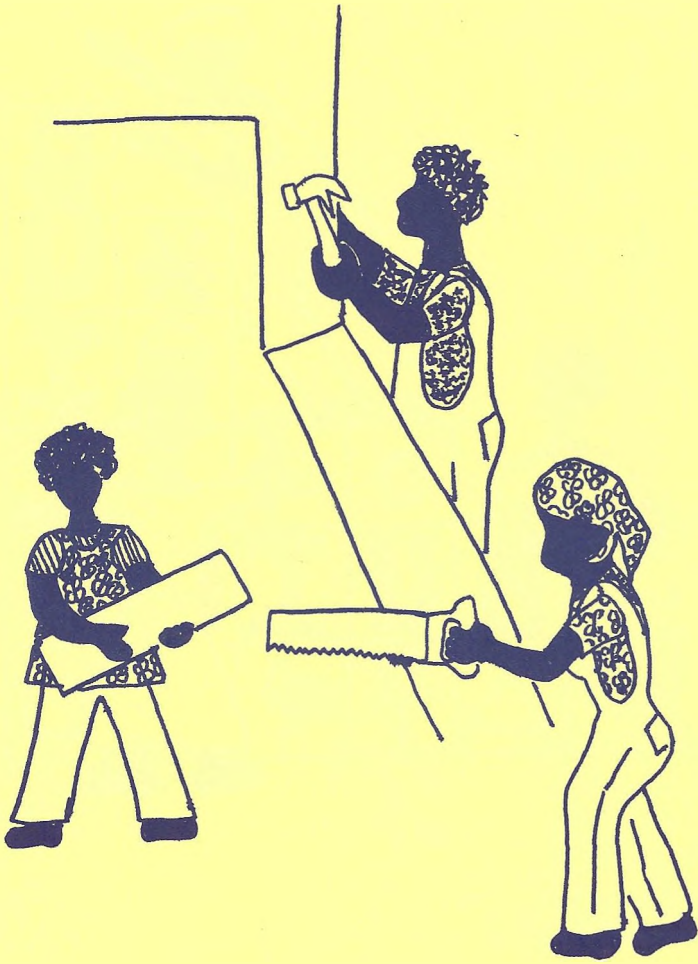
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**BUILD** means to produce the goods and services we need and want to defend and develop ourselves. We build step by step and one by one. There are three main steps in the building process.

The first step of building is learning. Learn means to acquire skills and knowledge. The second step is struggling. Struggle means to practice what we believe and what we have learned. The most important step is purpose. Purpose means to have a goal in mind and a reason for the way that we work toward that goal.

We should always have a purpose for everything we build. We do not build just to be building. We build for the purpose of making our lives better and more beautiful.

# C



---

**C is for CREATE, to make life better.**

---

**CREATE** means to use what we have to make our lives and the places where we live better and more beautiful. Our people have created many good and beautiful objects and ways for living. They are so good and beautiful that everyone knows that they are creations of Afrikan people.

When someone is good at creating, we say that the person has a talent. All Afrikan people have talents but everyone does not use their talent. If we do not use our talents we will lose them.

The world today needs Afrikan people to make it better and more beautiful. We have a talent for doing this. Our job is to improve and beautify through our creations.



---

**D is for DIALECTICS, life goes on forever.**

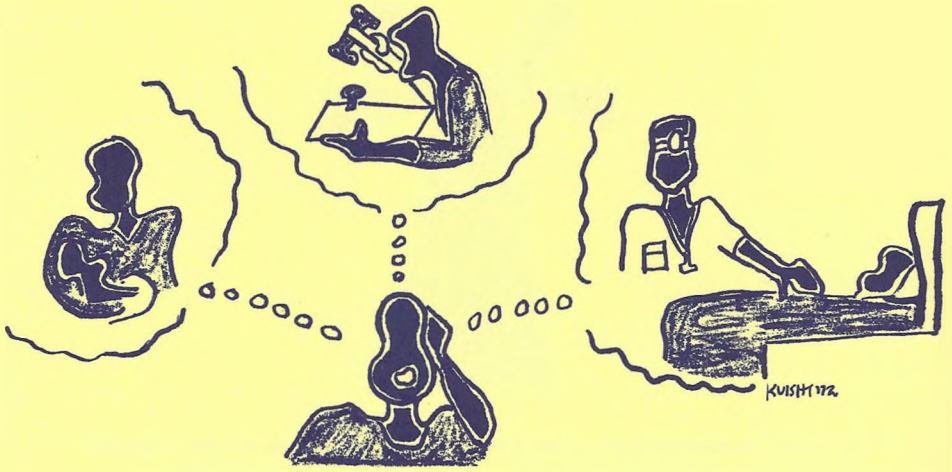
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**DIALECTICS** is an Afrikan method of analysis which helps us see and understand life. When we see and understand life we learn to love and appreciate life.

Our ancestors in their wisdom always attempted to know and understand themselves and the world around them. They understood that all of life was one, that whatever affected one, eventually would affect the other. They understood that time was but a measurement of change and that change was the only constant. They understood that everything is in motion and that some movement is so slow or so fast that we do not easily perceive it. These are some of the basic laws, the foundations of dialectics.

Many people do not know that this is an Afrikan way of viewing life and the world. It is important for us to understand that our ancestors were scientists and artists, human beings who originated civilization. One of the most important concepts passed on to us was that life goes on forever. That means that even after we die, others will live on, and after them others. If we understand this important concept we will then be able to understand our Afrikan proverb "live for yourself, you live in vain; live for others, you will live again"!

# E



---

## **E is for EXAMPLE, to be what we believe.**

---

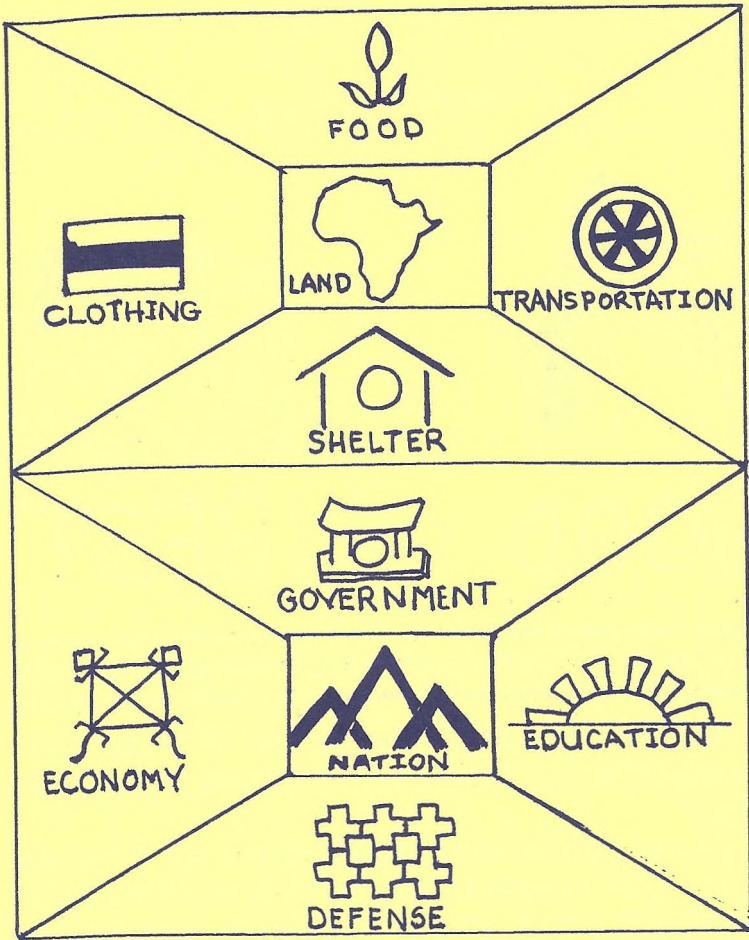
**EXAMPLE** means to be what we believe. We say be a strong Afrikan, give good example.

To be a strong Afrikan we must develop our bodies, minds, souls (social relationships) and consciousness. To develop our bodies we must eat right and exercise daily. To develop our minds we must acquire skills and knowledge useful in our struggle. To develop our social relationships we must practice our values which are the Nguzo Saba. To develop our consciousness we must attain self-awareness (identity) and self-control (discipline).

Many of our people do not know what it really means to be a strong Afrikan. A lot of our people need a good example to emulate. Emulate means to follow the thoughts or actions of someone.

Our people look at us everyday. This is why it is important to give good example by being a strong Afrikan.

# F



---

## **F is for FOCUS, to give attention to our needs.**

---

**FOCUS** means to give full attention. We believe that we should give full attention to the needs of our people.

A lot of our people focus on things that we do not need to live. When we listen to the radio, or watch television or go to the movies we hear and see a lot of foolishness we do not need. We should not pay much attention to such foolishness.

Our people need food, clothing, shelter and transportation. We need goods and services to defend and develop ourselves as a people. We need more positive and progressive social relationships. We also need a nation.

We must always focus on the needs of our people.



# G

change from



to



# GOOD

# BEST

---

**G is for GROWTH, to change from good to best.**

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**GROWTH** means change and development. Development is changing from good to better to best.

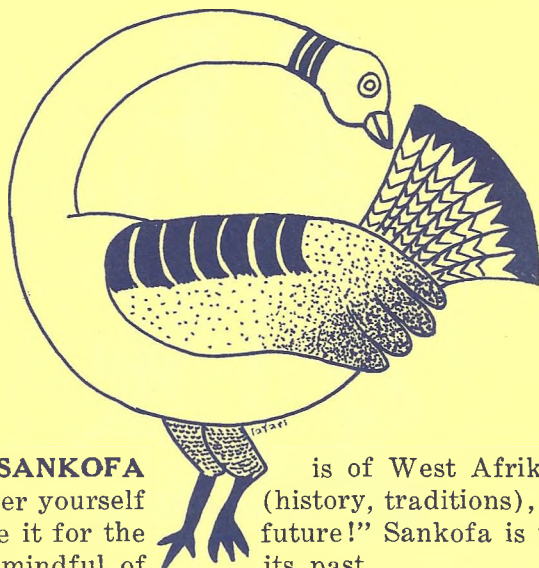
If our people are going to grow we must eat right. That means eating fresh fruits and vegetables and other wholesome foods. Wholesome foods are those foods that gives us all the protein, vitamins and minerals our bodies need to grow and develop.

Our bodies do not need gum, candy, soft drinks, cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. These substances tear our bodies down and make us sick. We can not develop to our best if we do not eat right.

But more important than physical food are correct ideas, food for our minds. We need correct ideas to guide us in creating better and more beautiful lives. Our correct ideas will come from our social practice, the ways in which we live together. We will determine which ideas are correct by judging them after they have been put into social practice. Those ideas which when put into practice defend and develop our people are correct ideas.

Only by correct living can we successfully move from good to better to best.

# H



**SANKOFA** means, “Rediscover yourself present, And save it for the ing forward but mindful of

is of West Afrikan origin and (history, traditions), Live it for the future!” Sankofa is the bird walk- its past.

---

## **H is for HISTORY, we've been put to the test.**

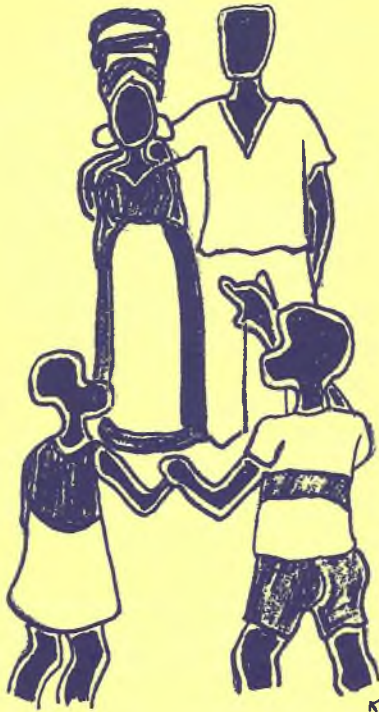
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**HISTORY** is the story of a people. Afrikan history is the story of Afrikan people. The history of Afrikan people for the last four or five hundred years has been very hard but we have survived because we have never stopped struggling.

During the last few hundred years we have really been put to the test. We have had our land stolen from us. We have been enslaved and put into chains and made to work for nothing. Some of us were taken from our homeland and brought to other lands to work those lands which Europeans took from their rightful owners.

We have been oppressed which means that we were ruled by other people who forced us to do what they wanted. We are still oppressed today. We have been exploited which means we were robbed of the fruits of our labor. We are still exploited today.

Our history tells us that we once ruled ourselves and what we did before we can do again. We have passed the test and have survived being oppressed and exploited. Now it is time for we Afrikans to rule ourselves. We must become the controllers of our own history by determining what does and does not happen to our people.



---

## **I is for IDENTITY, Afrikan people are we.**

---

**IDENTITY** is who we are. We are an Afrikan people. There are Afrikan people all over the world. We Afrikan people who live in America are Afrikan-Americans.

Because most of our ancestors came from Afrika we are therefore genetically and historically Afrikan. We are Afrikans by blood and by past experiences. Because our most recent unique history, as well as our present conditions and circumstances are American we are also American. We are Americans by birth and by present experiences.

Afrikan-Americans are only one of many different groups and nationalities of Afrikan people. However, our unity is more important than our differences. We must always work for the benefit of Afrikan people.

It is not easy to be Afrikan today because we have many enemies. But we know that we must be ourselves. We must be who we are. We are an Afrikan people and together we will win.



---

## **J is for JU-JU, black spirit forever free.**

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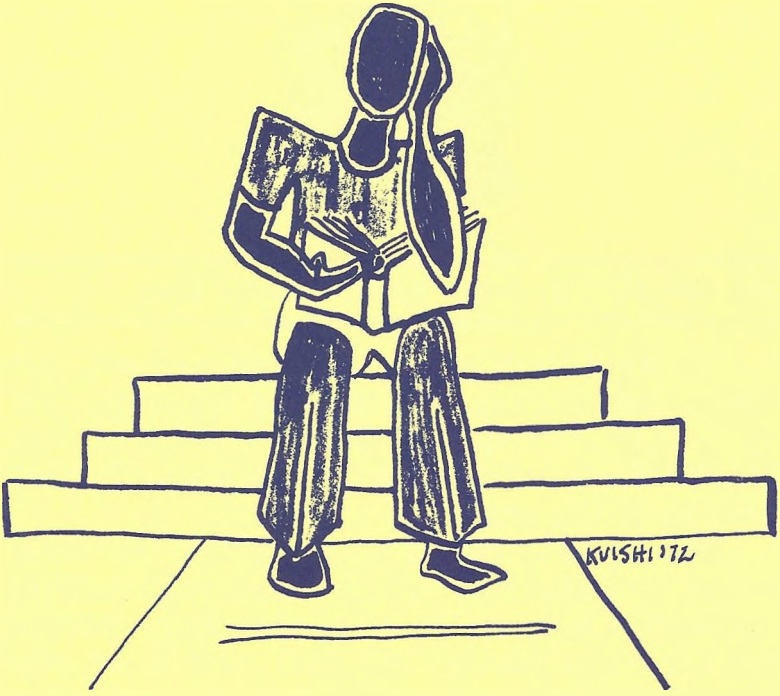
**JU-JU** is black spirit, our style, our art, our distinctive method of living and creating. Our Ju-Ju is distinctive, that means that our art has its own flavor different from the style of other peoples in the world.

Our Ju-Ju is based on 1. putting our total selves into whatever we do; 2. on emphasizing the motion inherent in all matter, some people call our Ju-ju motion, our beat; and 3. on emphasizing the life force through the use of color, this life force comes from the light of the sun which contains all the colors that exist.

Some people say that our Ju-ju, our spirit, is magic because they can not understand where we got it from and why it is ours. Our spirit comes from our ancestors who were the first people to walk the earth. Our Afrikan ancestors were very happy to be the first people on earth. They were so happy that this happiness was passed on to their children. And their children passed this "spirit" on to their children. And so on and so on, and we have black spirit today.

In Kenya and Tanzania, which are two countries in East Afrika, the bones of some of our early ancestors have been found. These are the bones of some of the first people on earth and this is how everyone knows about our ancestors. But we do not need to see those bones to feel our black spirit because our spirit is in our bones and our bodies and our minds and souls too. Ju-ju will always be in Afrikan people.

# K



---

**K is for KNOWLEDGE to fill our minds.**

---

**KNOWLEDGE** is a concept or an understanding of how people and the world work. We want knowledge to fill our minds. We want a full knowledge of everything that exists in the material and social world.

The material world exists on five levels. Those five levels are inorganic matter, organic matter, plants, animals and human beings. The social world consists of the cultures of the peoples of the world. Culture is the way in which people live.

Afrikan people need knowledge. We need to know about the whole material and social universe. We want knowledge to fill our minds and thusly make it possible for us to live better and more beautiful lives.



---

## **L is for LOVE of self and kind.**

---

**LOVE** means to come together and work together. Most of all, we love our people.

When we truly love our sisters and brothers we want the best for them. We struggle to do everything we can to help them.

We also know that we love people and we do not love things. Some people do not understand this and become so attached to things, such as cars, clothes and money, that they forget about their sisters and brothers. While it may be correct to "like" things, we know that it is not correct to love things. We love people not things.

We know that we must love ourselves first before we can love anyone else. This means that we want and always try to have the best possible life for self and kind, for ourselves and our people.

# M



both young and old.

---

## **M is for MANY both young and old.**

---

**MANY** is plenty, almost more than we can count. Some Afrikan people believe that we are a minority which means that there is not enough of us to control our lives. But we know that there are many of us both young and old.

The old among us are living proof that there has always been many Afrikan people. And the young among us are living proof that there will always be many more Afrikan people. A proof is a fact which we cannot ignore. A proof is the truth.

The truth is that there are many Afrikan people all over the world. When Afrikan people all get together we can do anything we need to and nobody will be able to stop us because there will be too many of us both young with strength and old with wisdom and knowledge.



# N

---

## **N is for NATION, our own land to control.**

---

A **NATION** is a material and social unit defined by land, people with a national consciousness and government.

Land is very important because we get the material elements of life, such as food, clothing and shelter, from the land. We should always respect the land. Some people do not really respect the land so they pollute the land. This makes it full of poisons and difficult for people and animals to live or for plants to grow. We respect the land and want to take care of it. All human beings need land in order to live and we want to control the places where we live.

People with a national consciousness are very important because without such a consciousness we will not work together. In order for a nation to grow and develop the people must have a national consciousness. This means that the people identify with the nation and willingly work for the nation. We are proud to work to gain, maintain and develop our own nation.

Government is very important because government is our means of controlling both the land on which we live and the people with whom we live. Control means to be in charge and to keep everything working as it should. We want to control our own lives and control the land we decide to live on.

People who want to control land and build nations are called nationalists. We are Black Nationalists. We want to build and control a nation for our people, our own land to control.





GET

IT

TOGETHER



---

**O is for ORGANIZE, to get it together.**

---

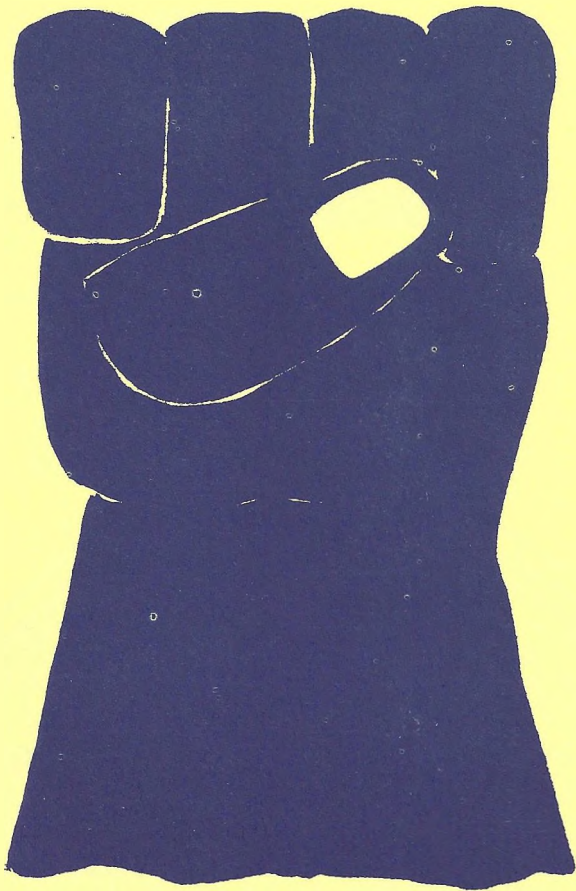
**ORGANIZE** means to get it together. We must organize ourselves and all Afrikan people.

We must first get ourselves together and unify all our beliefs and actions. Then we must organize our own house and home by getting everyone and everything at home together. And then we must organize our people so that we can all move together.

Organizing is not easy. It is hard work putting Afrikan people together. Afrikan people have been torn apart and thrown all over the world just like thieves throw things around a house when they rob someone. So sometimes it takes a long time to find everything.

Afrikan people have been separate for so long that many of us do not remember what it was like to live in unity. Separate means spread out everywhere and not together.

Putting our people back together is hard work but it must be done. We must organize Afrikan people to gain, maintain and use power.



---

**P is for POWER the more the better.**

---

**POWER** means to be strong enough to defend, determine and respect ourselves. Afrikan people need power. Our power will come from working together.

Today we do not have power over ourselves. Other people control our lives. This is wrong. We want to get power so that we can make the wrong into the right. We want to control ourselves.

Without unity there is no power and without power there is no control. We must control ourselves because if we do not control ourselves other people will control us. At the present other people control many aspects of our lives because our own power is weak. That is why we say the more power the better it will be. We want power for our people.

Q



---

**Q is for QUESTION, to know the how, what, where, why and when.**

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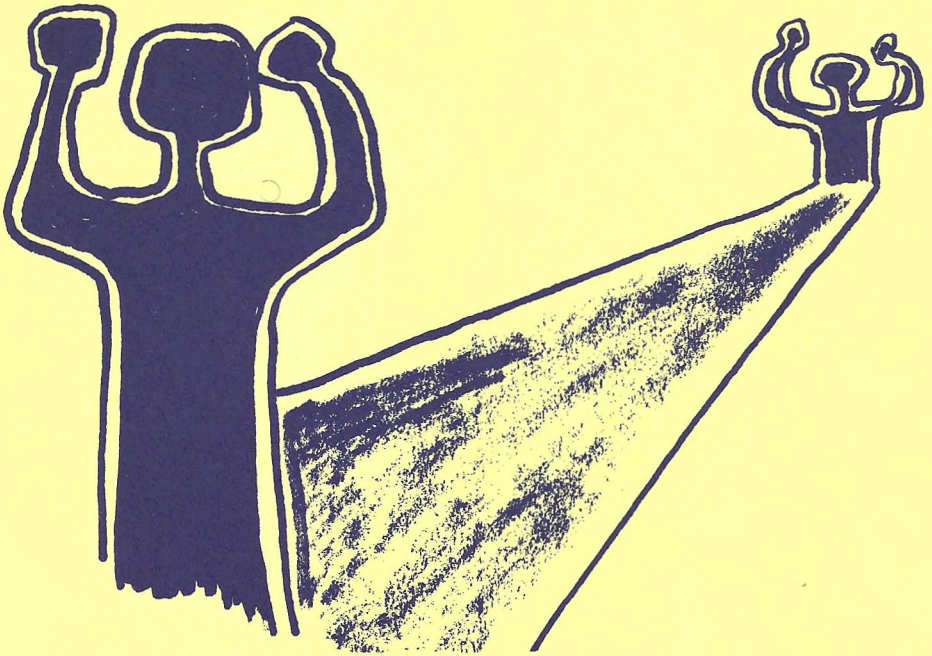
**QUESTION** means to investigate or try to find out about something or someone. There are five basic ways that we question.

We question **How** something works or somebody does something. We question **What** something or someone is. We question **Where** something or someone is. We question **Why** something exists or **Why** someone does something. We question **When** something is done or **When** someone does something.

When we question we question with a purpose and not just to be asking questions. Our purpose for asking any question should be to get information or understanding.

We Afrikan people must question everything. We should not accept anything we do not have information about or that we do not understand. We should always seek to learn the truth about ourselves and the world within which we live.

# R



---

**R is for RELIANCE, to be strong from beginning to end.**

---

**RELIANCE** means counting on something or someone to be strong from beginning to end. We, as strong Afrikan people, must struggle to be reliable.

Our enemies say that we can not be trusted and that we are not reliable. They say that we will always quit before finishing the job. But we know that is not true.

It is not true because we are reliable and if we have a job to do we will do it but we will not let others tell us what to do.

Look at the history of our people's struggle for national liberation. We have never stopped struggling.

Today we need reliable Afrikans to continue the struggle for our national liberation. We need sisters and brothers whom we can count on to be strong from beginning to end. When we count on ourselves that is called self-reliance. We need strong Afrikan people who are self-reliant.

# S



---

**S is for STRUGGLE to fight our enemies toe to toe.**

---

**STRUGGLE** means to practice what we believe and what we have learned to be correct. We are struggling to be revolutionaries, leaders and workers for our people.

We have many enemies both external and internal to struggle against. We know that our external enemies use many different weapons against us such as dope, genocide, crime, alcohol, fear and many others. But our greatest enemies are our own ignorance of who we are, our lack of knowledge and skills necessary to our struggle, and a disbelief in our ability to win. These internal enemies are hard to see sometimes but we must struggle against them. We must fight them toe to toe by following our ideology, by practicing our values, by working and studying and always struggling to be and do the best we can.

We know that the struggle is long and hard. But we will not let our enemies beat us. We will struggle until we win. **PAMOJA TUTASHINDA! TOGETHER WE WILL WIN!**



---

**T is for TEACH to pass on to our people whatever we know.**

---

**TEACH** means to pass on knowledge and skills. Whenever we learn anything we should pass it on to one another.

Sometimes when we first learn an idea or concept we begin to think that we are great or that we are smarter than other people but that is not true. An education does not make us better than any of our sisters or brothers.

All the knowledge and skills that we learn we should be willing to pass on to our people. Helping one another is the best use that we can make of whatever we have learned.

One of our Afrikan proverbs is: "If you do not know, learn and if you do know, teach! Pass it on!"

# U



---

**U is for UNITY, together both day and night.**

---

**UNITY (UMOJA)** is the first principle of the Nguzo Saba. It means to come together and work together.

Unity is first. Without unity there is nothing much that we as a people can do. Our enemies oppress and exploit us based on their ability to keep us divided and separated from each other. Unity is necessary.

Unity is a give and take process. When we unify with other sisters and brothers, we will have to give up some of our beliefs and practices and we will have to adopt other beliefs and practices.

Give and take also means to talk and listen, to lead and to follow. Whenever there is unity we will find give and take.

As strong Afrikan people attempting to give good example we should always be willing to give the best we have and to receive that which is best from all our sisters and brothers. In this way we will achieve unity.

# V



WRONG



KUISHA '22

RIGHT

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**V is for VALUES, to know wrong from right.**

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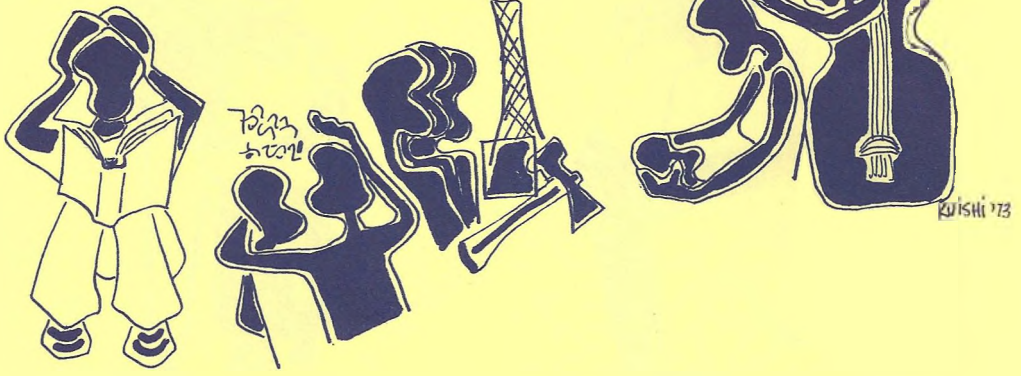
**VALUES** are rules which teach us what is right and what is wrong. Our black value system guides us and helps us to know wrong from right. Our black value system is the Nguzo Saba.

The Nguzo Saba was created by Dr. M. Ron Karenga, an Afrikan-American nationalist of our time. As nationalists our struggle is not just to get control of material wealth but also, and more importantly, to defend and develop our people and the places we live. Our values teach us to put people before products.

The Nguzo Saba are **UMOJA (UNITY)**, **KUJICHAGULIA (SELF-DETERMINATION)**, **UJIMA (COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY)**, **UJAMAA (FAMILYHOOD AND CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMICS)**, **NIA (PURPOSE)**, **KUUMBA (CREATIVITY)**, **IMANI (FAITH)**.



# W



---

## **W is for WORK, which is our best hope.**

---

**WORK** means to expend energy to get a job done. There are many different ways to do work. There is physical work such as digging in a garden or producing steel, and there is mental work such as teaching a class or writing a report. But the greatest work which is our best hope is the work of building a nation for our people.

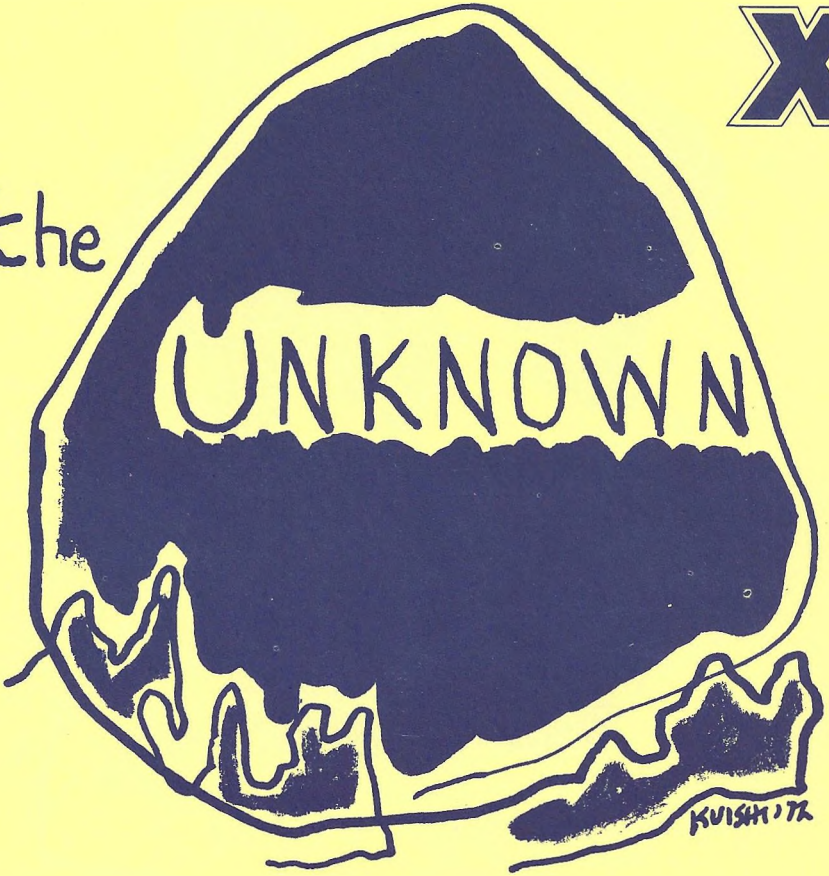
Nation building is hard work. Many, many sisters and brothers have worked very hard to build a nation for our people and to defend and develop our people. It is our job to help by picking up where others have left off.

The work of nation building requires both physical and mental work. It requires that we be able to do both. In order to do physical work we must have skills and in order to do mental work we must have knowledge.

We are not afraid of work. We like to work. We know that work is necessary and is our best hope.

**X**

the



---

**X is for the unknown which is the negro.**

---

In mathematics the letter X signifies that which is unknown. Today the negro is the unknown. Exactly where the negro came from is unknown. We know that we are Afrikan people and that we came from Afrika, but where did the negro come from?

Europeans have tried to tell us that we are negroes. They say that negroes are dumb, lazy, dirty and ugly. But we know that we are intelligent, hard working, clean and beautiful people. Some of our people are not fully aware of this and some Europeans persist in calling us negroes. But that is wrong.

The negro represents the unknown to us. The negro is a concept that was developed by Europeans as a means to control us.

We do not have to work out any formulas or equations to figure out who we really are. We are Afrikan people!

# Y



---

**Y is for YOUTH, the future are we.**

---

**YOUTH** are the future of our people. Whoever or whatever controls Afrikan youth, controls the future of Afrikan people.

We know that many of our young sisters and brothers are controlled by false and slave-making images and concepts. Many of our young sisters and brothers are only interested in trying to "get over". They are controlled by people and objects that mean them no good.

It is very important that we as strong Afrikan youth give good example of all that we know to be right. If we learn to do right today, our future will be good. That is why we follow the Nguzo Saba. We know that Afrikan people everywhere are counting on us and we do not intend to let them down. We will struggle with all our hearts to make the best possible future for Afrikan people.



# Z

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**Z is for ZERO which is all we get free.**

---

There is an Afrikan proverb which says that "Freedom is not free". This means that our people's freedom will not be given to us. We must work for whatever we get.

We know that many of our brothers and sisters have become so dependent on Europeans that they wait for everything to be given to them. Some of our people expect that Europeans will support them with welfare, and other so-called "free" goods and services. But we know that this is bad for us and besides those so-called "free" goods and services are only a part of what has been stolen from us.

We want freedom and not dependency on Europeans. We want to be self-reliant. We know that we will have to work to become self-reliant. Self-reliant means that we count on ourselves for the goods and services we need. It is never good to depend on other people for the essentials of life.

Besides in this day and age, as our sisters and brothers say, "Ain't nobody giving up nothing for nothing". Zero, which is nothing, is the only thing we get free.



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- A** IS FOR AFRICA; LAND WHERE OUR ANCESTORS ARE FROM
- B** IS FOR BUILD; STEP BY STEP, ONE BY ONE.
- C** IS FOR CREATE; TO MAKE LIFE BETTER.
- D** IS FOR DIALECTICS; LIFE GOES ON FOREVER.
- E** IS FOR EXAMPLE; TO BE WHAT WE BELIEVE.
- F** IS FOR FOCUS; TO GIVE ATTENTION TO OUR NEEDS.
- G** IS FOR GROWTH; TO CHANGE FROM GOOD TO BEST.
- H** IS FOR HISTORY; WE'VE BEEN PUT TO THE TEST
- I** IS FOR IDENTITY; AFRIKAN PEOPLE ARE WE.
- J** IS FOR JUJU; BLACK SPIRIT FOREVER FREE.
- K** IS FOR KNOWLEDGE; TO FILL OUR MINDS.
- L** IS FOR LOVE; OF SELF AND KIND.
- M** IS FOR MANY, BOTH YOUNG AND OLD.
- N** IS FOR NATION, OUR OWN LAND TO CONTROL.
- O** IS FOR ORGANIZE, TO GET IT TOGETHER.
- P** IS FOR POWER, THE MORE THE BETTER.
- Q** IS FOR QUESTION; TO KNOW THE HOW; WHAT; WHERE; WHY AND WHEN.
- R** IS FOR RELIANCE; TO BE STRONG FROM BEGINNING TO END.
- S** IS FOR STRUGGLE, TO FIGHT OUR ENEMIES TOE TO TOE.
- T** IS FOR TEACH; TO PASS ON TO OUR PEOPLE WHATEVER WE KNOW.
- U** IS FOR UNITY; TOGETHER BOTH DAY AND NIGHT.
- V** IS FOR VALUES; TO KNOW THE WRONG FROM RIGHT.
- W** IS FOR WORK, WHICH IS OUR BEST HOPE.
- X** IS FOR THE UNKNOWN, WHICH IS THE NEGRO.
- Y** IS FOR YOUTH, THE FUTURE ARE WE.
- Z** IS FOR ZERO; WHICH IS ALL WE GET FREE.