

New Afrikan History Month: A Critical Look at the Past to Rebuild

The following is an unpublished correspondence (1/29/2004) between myself and comrad Yaki Yakubu. He and I often shared frank letters concerning all aspects 'critical issues' of the New Afrikan Independence Movement (NAIM). I miss the comrad – 'long live his critical spirit'.

***Greeting Comrad Yaki:**

As a Republic of *New Afrika Peoples Center Council* representative i was asked to address nation-building at a weekend conference sponsored by the local Black Legionnaires unit. Speaking at the conference my comments reflected my observation as a 20-year participant in the *New Afrikan Independence Movement (NAIM)*.

My comments were general but most were specific based on my organizational experience in Detroit with New Afrikans in the Freedom Network the past 6 years. I started off with a quote from Amilcar Cabral: *"Hide nothing from our people, tell no lies, claim no easy victories; but all the time explain, discuss, debate, argue, learn, and above all lead."* i then stated from an objective perspective as New Afrikans we cannot deny there is very little nation-building taking place in the Republic of New Afrika and nationally in Black communities in general; that we must initiate internal reforms in the RNA if we are going to be effective and make progress.

My comments addressed why there is a lack of nation-building currently in the RNA. i stated that nation-building is a developmental process that begins with building a Nationalist character. Without a New Afrikan character, nation-building will lack substance and follow-through. Once the individual New Afrikan characters are developed to a higher level of maturity through an organized internal rebuilding process of study and struggle (reorientation, rectification) they merge together to form the Nationalist Party.

Furthermore i stated from my perspective in the New Afrikan Independence Movement we have not built a Nationalist Party; the Provincial Government of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA) is still a united front. A true Nationalist Party is not satisfied with just a Flag, a Declaration of Independence, a Creed, an annual Nation Day to recognize its creation, and symbolic Government Officials; Amilcar Cabral stated: *"We are not struggling merely so that we may have a flag, an anthem, and ministers."* Cabral stated a nationalist movement's primary function is to become a 'vanguard party'; he stated: *"The vanguard we need to create, this instrument we have to forge to build the Independence of our Land, as a man builds a house, must be constantly more honed, more sharpened, and more perfect."*

Cabral also remarked that *"the greatest enemy of the oppressed are their own internal weaknesses."* He knew prospective Party members had to be honed and sharpened because of the weaknesses of internalized oppression. The weaknesses that Cabral mentioned are embodied in the Black /

unconscious New Afrikan socialized colonial personality of inferiority complex, self-hatred, dependent personality, dual-identity disorder, invisible man syndrome, and fantasy protection that's pathological and vice producing and self-perpetuates our oppression.

Imari Obadele who spoke after me was extremely angry because i said the RNA had not developed to a true Nationalist Party, a vanguard. The New Afrikan Peoples Organization (NAPO) and the Spear & Shield Collective (SSC) came into existence because their founders believed this also. Imari who from my perspective cannot handle criticism, along with suffering from 'founders- syndrome' and hyper-sensitivity, twisted what i had to say; that i said the NAIM had no character because of his own insecurity.

Feeling threatened, Omari went on a long diatribe trying to refute what I had said. i highlighted a couple of examples of our internal character weaknesses; one was 'Individualism', which has several expressions such as selfishness and opportunism and how these weaknesses undermine nation-building. For example if you have members of a Nationalist group that are selfish and don't want to pay monthly dues internally, you can't rely on them to fund a nation-building project externally or to pay national taxes.

Moreover if you have 'so-called' Black nationalists group members who are opportunists with self-serving agendas they'll abandon the struggle for nation-building with a quickness when an opportunity arises. i also stated there is very little nation-building going on locally because you have professed New Afrikan leaders working more closely with African-American neo-colonial elected officials and so called progressive non-New Afrikans than they do with the New Afrikan masses.

i ended by saying, that until we internally develop strong New Afrikan characters that are an embodiment of the New Afrikan Creed and a Nationalist Party then there will never be any real nation-building, no 'Freeing the Land', we will continue to 'Dream the Land' or wait for some 'Free Land' (national liberation and sovereignty for oppressed nationalities anywhere in the world aint based on no Free Land!).

Driving home from the weekend conference reflecting - i thought about the crisis We face in the PGRNA; i thought about the fact that most of the PGRNA leadership is elderly and some sickly!! I thought about Imari Obadele, that he has a hero ego and still has way too much influence. I thought about due to neglect and discrimination younger New Afrikans lack leadership skills and are not prepared; they don't have the influence or experience to take over and lead; some who are capable don't have a strong enough NA personality. There is a transitional leadership crisis facing the New Afrikan nation that is not being addressed!

Cabral addressed this leadership crisis and the type of conservative status-quo stagnation that has existed inside the PGRNA: "Another resistance which

persisted for a while in the Party was the following: we were the few leaders and no one else could be a leader. Various comrades of ours, good combatants able men who were overlooked; held in their tracks because some of the leadership never gave them the chance to come forward. This is killing the Party as if one suffocated it. For a while we older ones have breathing space, we are getting on but when our breath is failing, there is no one to take our place. The strength of our Party is only effective if we, the leaders are able to open the way for the youth to progress; to take over and to bring the best forward to lead."

Also driving i thought about the relevancy of Lenin's criticism of the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party after the 1917 Revolution and the current internal weaknesses in the PGRNA. Lenin stated that during the revolution heroic actions were necessary by the Party, but heroism alone is not sufficient in the post-revolutionary period because it imposed new tasks and responsibilities. New times required Party members to develop new nation-management skills for the Socialist state to progress. Without these skills he said the Party deserved to be swept away.

Lenin doubted that the Bolshevik old guards were prepared to acquire the new skills for the painstaking reconstruction that lay ahead; most were satisfied with their 'hero' status in the Party. Dialectically, Lenin realized that most Bolsheviks had not changed from pre-to-post revolution – *"that men's virtues are for the most part wrapped up with their vices."* Since most of the Bolsheviks did not acquire these new skills, they had to increasingly rely on the old tsarist specialists who opportunistically joined the Party to run the new Socialist government.

Lenin also realized the Party was contaminated by these petty-bourgeois tsarist forces. He knew the Party's character, tasks, and objectives were influenced by class interests, especially influential members. He also criticized the Party for not developing a revolutionary culture (Mao attempted to address this by initiating the cultural-revolution). In his last writings, Lenin repeatedly emphasized the important factors of personality and character; he said the salvation of the Bolshevik Party would come as a result of members with *'exemplary characters'*.

Let us apply Lenin's analysis to the present weaknesses in the PGRNA. In our struggle against the American empire for Land & Independence, the New Afrikan Independence Movement has its share of heroes who should be honored! However hero veteranism can never be the sole attribute for leadership status! Imari Obadele is one of our heroes, one of the main heroes of the RNA-11.

Imari is also a leading petty-bourgeois personality with intellectual skills which have significantly shaped the tasks and objectives of the PGRNA. From my perspective, any genuine Black Nationalist organization must engage in decolonization through political self-determination and economic self-

reliance. Its foundational task is to eventually develop a Nationalist Party that comes out of nation-building (decolonizing) by creating '*micro-parallel institutions*' that concretely reflects the '*macro vision*' of the new Black Nation. The National focus is internal, the development of the masses and their resources.

Due to the dominant personality influence of Imari Obadele on the PGRNA, the National focus has been external '*Reparations and a Plebiscite*' depending on the United States government and the United Nations. This is a dependent legalistic approach that has resulted in nation-building underdevelopment: no Party and no Institutions after 35 years!!

As a political science professor Imari's political-legal academic skills has shaped the tasks and objectives of the RNA for over 30 years, from the "Anti-Depression Program" (1972) to "An Act to Stimulate Economic Growth in the United States and Compensate, in part, for the Grievous Wrongs of Slavery and the Unjust Enrichment which Accrued to the United States Therefrom" (1987).

In this reparation appeal the U.S. Congress would be obliged to pay out not less than three billion dollars annually to Blacks. One-third would be paid directly to Black families; another one-third would go to the duly elected government of the Republic of New Afrika. The remaining one-third would support a National Congress of Organizations composed of churches, Black civic organizations, and community-based movements committed to ending the scourge of drugs and crime in New Afrikan communities and advancing the social, economic, educational, and cultural progress and enrichment of New Afrikan people.

Instead of a domestic decolonization nation-building plan that relies on the New Afrikan masses, Imari's '*Free the Land*' strategy is based on a plebiscite petition that would be dependent on the oversight by judges appointed by the president of the United States, the United Nations, along with the PGRNA. The plebiscite vote would determine whether or not Blacks favored a separate nation-state.

From my perspective why would Blacks vote in favor of an abstract nation on paper that has never met their concrete needs? Why would they have any confidence in this nation? It would seem to me that you would first create nation-building parallel institutions that address the needs of the Black masses to build confidence and support, and then you would request a plebiscite.

For me, Imari's nation-building model based on legal appeals is very similar to the legalism of the NAACP; that somehow New Afrikans will win freedom through the courts; that the oppressor is the liberator too. Like the old-guards of the Bolsheviks, the old-guard of the PGRNA have refused to develop new skills for nation-building.

Yaki, another critical area that has not been adequately addressed by the PGRNA is its Ministry of Culture and its neglect to develop national cultural competency: the development of specific New Afrikan calendar, cultural practices, and rituals; the lack of rituals that reminds us of our identity, history, purpose, and direction resulting in superficial New Afrikan '*kinte coated*' characters. Mao referred to this surface identity as revolutionary '*gold-plating*' which is only dipped covering the dominant old behavior; a New Afrikan character requires ritual tempering, a daily process. Tempering is reinforcement of beliefs and values (NA Creed), ritual reminders, and social practice.

Everyday Americanism reminds us through institutional imposition (politics, economics, media, education, religion) that reinforces false-consciousness; to counter this daily propaganda We must have New Afrikan rituals that reminds us of our historical mandate. Every day We are surrounded by unconscious New Afrikans / African-Americans, including family and friends who influence and reinforce the African-American inside of the New Afrikan personality (dual-identity disorder, split loyalty).

The major problem i have witnessed in consolidating and advancing a '*study and struggle*' group is a lack of daily ritual reinforcement practiced by members who are surrounded by unconscious New Afrikans the majority of their time, with the exception during group sessions (every 2 weeks). In general, the NAIM has failed to develop our own rituals that can be practiced both collectively and individually.

For example, Muslims have ritual prayer 5 times a day to remind and reinforce their beliefs. From my perspective, We need daily rituals that rejuvenate us, which reminds us of our priorities – '*keeping our politics in command*'. Simply saying '*Free the Land*', '*Rebuild to Win*', or saying the New Afrikan Creed once and a while won't get it!!! Being a conscious New Afrikan is much-much more than '*rhetoric*' being '*cerebral*' and '*celebratory*', it's about '*applied theory*' and cultural practice.

For me developing New Afrikan rituals is an important aspect of the Black cultural revolution that Malcolm X said was a prerequisite. i have developed a New Afrikan calendar and some NA specific rituals. These NA rituals have become very important to me, they have become a source of strength; they have kept me together in a period when things are '*falling apart*' as superficial New Afrikans fall back into opportunism or the '*wayside*'.

i end with a quote from Lenin: "*But we are out to rebuild the world. Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are lothe to cast off the 'dear old' soiled shirt. But it is time to cast off the soiled shirt and to put on clean linen.*"

*Rebuild to Win - Comrad *Cinque Moyo Kinaya*