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- African Naming Ceremony
- Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka
- Pan-African Pen Pal Association
- African Vision of the Caribbean

# The journal of pan african studies

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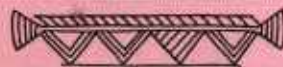
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Cover Photo: (left to right) Dr. Louis G. Marchman, Mrs. Est. Threest and Mr. Fred Jackson of the Pan African Pen Pal Association, Chicago.

# TOWARD AN AFRICAN VISION OF THE CARIBBEAN:

## A Reflective Essay

David L. Covin

This study explores a number of factors which suggest that an operational concept of the African diaspora in the Caribbean region would be beneficial for the area's African descendants. Those factors are the vast numerical, material, and human resources of that population; and their unfortunate objective and subjective conditions. These elements are reviewed by looking at census data, various economic indicators, political conditions, and cultural influences.

The essay also considers a number of serious objections to the practicality of such a conception. Those objections are the great diversity of African peoples even within single countries, the powerful national identities which people actually have, the linguistic differences, the large number and diversity of the countries themselves, and the racial conflict between Africans and mulattoes within the group of African descendants.

Finally, examining diasporan concepts in comparison with classical liberal and Marxist concepts, the essay concludes that constructs of the African diaspora whose ambitions are not overly grand, but which build on ongoing institutions, relationships, and tendencies in the area can have a degree of utility and should be attempted.

### The Objective and Subjective Imperatives

I believe there is a compelling need for an analytical and prescriptive concept of the African diaspora which has utility for the Caribbean region.

There are three overwhelming conditions which lead me to this belief. One is the towering potential of African people in the Caribbean. If we include both the U.S. and Brazil in the Caribbean region, and there are certainly

sound grounds for doing so,<sup>1</sup> the people in the area who may trace at least some African lineage number more than 123,000,000. They include 76,000,000 Brazilians, the second largest national population of Africans anywhere in the world, including Africa. They include 30,000,000 people in the U.S. with a GNP of \$200 billion - which, if those 30,000,000 people constituted an independent country, would have the ninth highest GNP in the world. They include people from thirty-four other countries, in at least twenty-six of which African descendants constitute the majority population group.<sup>2</sup> They include Physicists and Nobel laureates. They include managers and workers, doctors, engineers, chemists, and agronomists. They include farmers and fishermen, nurses, and builders, and soldiers.

They include some of the most perceptive intellectuals in the modern world. Thinkers. Writers. Poets. Dancers. Singers. Composers. They represent a staggering human resource.

The second condition pointing to this need is the objective condition of African people throughout the region. As late as 1983 the unemployment rate for Black youth in the U.S. was 48.3%. In the U.S. the adult Black unemployment rate has remained consistently double the white one. The Black incarceration rate in prisons is 837% greater than the white rate. In 1979, 456,000 Black youths, ages 16-19 were arrested, fifteen percent of the age group. In 1980 Black youth committed 51% of all violent juvenile crimes, more than 2,000 were homicide victims, mostly at the hands of other Black youth.<sup>3</sup>

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These dismal characteristics are not limited to the U.S.. The rest of the region is a full participant in the legacy of disasters.

In the West Indies, "... the situation is desperate - desperate enough to sustain a rate of out-migration which is responsible for the fact that there are now as many West Indians abroad as there are West Indians at home." <sup>4</sup>

Also, "... in the Caribbean... it is not unusual to speak in terms of 30% and 40% and even 50% unemployment..." <sup>5</sup>

For those who do stay the labor situation is often far from tranquil. "Strikes in Trinidad... led to massive police attacks on peaceful worker demonstrations, while in Guyana the state sent in the soldiers to act as scabs and strike breakers." <sup>6</sup>

In the Caribbean, "Imports continue to rise faster than exports, unemployment has been increasing, food production has been stagnant..." <sup>7</sup>

While Africans are the majority group in most Caribbean countries, they do not dominate the economies.

"Foreign capital, mainly U.S. capital, dominates in commodity production and exchange in the Caribbean..." <sup>8</sup>

This situation produces clear-cut negative effects for features of the economy such as balance of trade and domestic prices.

"Monopoly capital employs various techniques... for... underpricing... Caribbean exports and overpricing imports from the U.S. and other capitalist economies." <sup>9</sup>

In the decade 1960 - 70 the average net emigration as a percent of the annual net increase in population was 53% for Trinidad and Tobago, <sup>10</sup> 55% for Jamaica, 78% for Grenada, 87% for Barbados, 124% for Montserrat, and 142% for St. Kitts-Nevis. <sup>11</sup>

In Guyana unemployment stands at about 35%. <sup>12</sup>

In Brazil, "... the lowest socioeconomic class is unquestionably 'black'." Brazil also witnesses, "... a pattern of disorganization within the black social system similar in many of its aspects to the North American black urban experience." <sup>13</sup>

Black people in Brazil "... have suffered racial discrimination in ... unemployment, under employment; economic and social marginalization; police and political repression and persecution; sexual, social and economic exploitation of black women...

pressed of all the region's peoples. Fanon's evocative book "Wretched of the Earth" comes to mind. Universally, this is their objective, their material condition. It is also their subjective condition. They are mentally - spiritually - oppressed, repressed, suppressed, and depressed. That is the third condition crying out for a functional concept of the African diaspora. We do not have a collective, positive vision of ourselves anywhere in the region.

Speaking of the development of Negritude by Damas and Césaire from Martinique, an interviewer from the Association of Caribbean Studies writes, "The term *negre* in French was a perjorative one. It was like an insult." <sup>15</sup>

Zora Neale Hurston, writing of a banquet in Jamaica - attended by mulattoes who had secured themselves declarations as honorary

**People who do not perceive themselves as Africans are not going to organize on the basis of being African.**

subhuman conditions and treatment of black prisoners; subhuman living conditions..." <sup>14</sup>

The objective condition of African peoples throughout the Caribbean is as the most oppressed, repressed, suppressed, and de-

whites - where the U.S. Black scholar John Hope was invited, says that John Hope began a toast by saying, "We Negroes..." <sup>16</sup> The result, she says, was that, "Several people all but collapsed." This was in part because, "John

*Hope was whiter than any of the mulattoes there who had themselves ruled white."*<sup>17</sup>

St. Clair Drake writes, "...there are mixed-blood groups everywhere who deplore their African ancestry..."<sup>18</sup>

Elsewhere we find that, "...the petty bourgeoisie perceived 'Black Power', 'Pan Africanism', and the like as repulsive and subversive."<sup>19</sup>

Subjective oppression is reflected by behaviors such as the following, "... the West Indian petty bourgeoisie... fall all over themselves to organize recreation for the metropolitan bourgeoisie under the guise of tourism."<sup>20</sup>

Of Brazil one learns, "... evident throughout the society is the emphasis given to European values as being superior hence they are the most coveted values." <sup>21</sup> And finally, and most chilling, one observes that, "... virtually all Brazilians, including blacks, adhere to the official whitening process as means of improving their condition."<sup>22</sup>

The upshot of the objective and subjective conditions of African people in the Caribbean is that they have not reached their dazzling potential. On the contrary, that promise has been stood on its head and collectively its heirs have been relegated to the lowest standard of life in the hemisphere.

The momentous and contradictory conditions - of a brilliant promise and a desperate reality - put in relief the specific role required for the analytical and prescriptive concept of the diaspora

in the Caribbean.

Those who are on the bottom are Africans. Everywhere, this is true in thirty-five separate countries, in the Northern hemisphere and the Southern hemisphere, on the North American continent and the South American continent, on the islands of the Caribbean and the Central American isthmus. The people occupying the lower reaches of the social structure are of African origin. Perhaps it is an accident. I don't know. I suppose someone could work it out by probability theory. Except that it would probably be impossible to calculate such odds, that collectively - everywhere - by accident - Africans are on the bottom.

The reason for their being the cesspool of every political and social system in the hemisphere must be their African ancestry. It is certainly not because they are U.S. nationals, or Bermudans, or Jamaicans, or Bahamians, or Nicaraguans, or Peruvians, or Colombians, or Guyannans, or Martinicians, or Trinidadians, or Brazilians. Those are all separate nationalities and Africans do not have them in common. It is not because they are Catholic, or Jewish, or Protestant, atheists, or Candombles. Those are all separate religions and Africans do not have them in common. It is not because they speak French, English, Spanish, or Portuguese. The languages are differences between them, not elements which they share. There is only one element this incredible diversity of peoples has in common, their African origins.

Hence, it is that commonality

which provides a basis for their cooperation and for relieving their shared condition. Julius Nyerere said it - as long as the worldwide denigration of Black people remains, black people have tasks of mobilizing against racism that demand unified or coordinated action that cuts across all other divisions.<sup>23</sup>

## The Central Riddle

In order to understand how the kind of cooperation that Julius Nyerere alluded to must be focused, what its primary objectives must be, it is necessary to address a central conundrum. Put simply, how is it, that with the amazing array of talents diasporan Africans possess, they are at the rock-bottom of every political, social, and cultural order?

The answer which emerges from the data is itself a prescription for action. Diasporan Africans are abused everywhere, because now here are they in control of their own resources. The same condition does not universally apply to others. They often control their collective resources. Those who are in control of their own resources are also able - by virtue of their collective position - to control the resources of those who don't control their own. Part of this - though only part of it - is a matter of organization. Africans everywhere are at the mercy of every organized group in part because they are not collectively organized - as Africans - to control their own resources. They may be organized, but they are not organized as Africans.<sup>24</sup> And

they are not organized as Africans to control their own resources.

Reviewing some of the conditions cited above should reveal how this clearly is the case.

The objective conditions of Black people in the U.S. provide a fruitful subject for such analysis. One of the reasons why Black unemployment rates in the U.S. are so high because the Black people don't own enough productive enterprises to hire themselves. They don't control their own labor. Indeed, they own no substantial, productive part of the U.S. economy. They are almost entirely consumers. They do not contribute to their own wealth. They contribute to their own impoverishment and to the wealth of others. While money in the Vietnamese community in the U.S. turns over eight or nine times before it returns to the wider economy, and so does money in the Chinese community, and the Italian community, and the Irish community, in the Black community it turns over 1/6 of a time. Not once. Not 1/2. Not even a quarter of a time, but 1/6. Other racial or national groups reward their own people between forty-eight and fifty-four times as much as Black people do.<sup>25</sup> Black people reward others. This act of rewarding others inescapably impoverishes themselves. They give to others what they have taken from themselves. They give their rent, food money, clothing money, luxury purchases, and their savings, to others.

Black people in the U.S. are criminals because they do not control their own lives. They do

*How is it that with the amazing array of talents diasporan Africans possess, they are at the rock-bottom of every political, social, and cultural order?*

not control their lives and they do not control their children's lives. The rules which they are supposed to follow are both made and enforced by others. The newspapers, magazines, and books which they read are written and published by others. As are the movies and TV programs they watch. The clothes they wear and the cars they drive are not only produced, but also designed by others, as are the places where they live and work. Even the food they eat is produced by others. They work for other people and pay their taxes to other people.

They send their children to other people to be educated and cared for, to be treated for illness, and to acquire heroes from. They submit themselves to the leadership of others. It is no wonder that they are disorganized and confused, their life is a human wreckage.

Yet Africans in the U.S. are not the only ones who have experienced this frightful toll. How can it be explained in independent Black nations - where ruler and subject alike trace families across the Atlantic to the sub-Sahara? How in lands where the very tillers of the soil and fishers of the sea

who hail from mother Africa explain the prostration of the population?

We can explain it the same way we explain it in the U.S. There is unemployment, there is outmigration, because these Africans, too, do not own productive enterprises. The productive enterprises are owned either by nationals of non-African ancestry<sup>26</sup> or by people outside the countries - in the great metropolises of the world. As Hilbourne Watson told us - foreign capital - mainly U.S. capital - dominates commodity production and exchange in the Caribbean. The African populations in the Caribbean only serve them. They constitute a labor pool which continually sloughs off a cheap supply of labor to those who own the productive engines of the world.

Independent Black states oppress their own people because they cannot give them anything. They do not produce anything to give them. Even when they own a country's internal enterprises, those enterprises are entirely subsidiary and both their markets and their profits are controlled by others. They are merely adjuncts to the capital economies which

dominate them and they cannot operate independently of them. They have to import more than they export and the per unit cost of imports is higher than the per unit cost of exports. As a result their trade deficits compound themselves and accelerate the national impoverishment.

In Brazil there are enough similarities to the U.S. and just the right differences to make the case even worse for Africans there than it is in the U.S.

In none of these instances are the diasporan Africans in control of their own resources - material or human.

## The Singularity of the African Perspective

It is to remedy the deficit of an absence of African control - it is to place diasporan resources in the hands of diasporan Africans - that the analytical and prescriptive role of the diaspora as a concept emerges. It is a role of critical historical dimensions.

It is critical in part because the conception enables a particular perception of the Caribbean quandary. That is the one discussed above: That the most powerful explanatory factor for the condition of diasporan Africans is that they do not control their own resources, and that this condition calls for the remedy that they take control of their own resources.

There are certainly other ways to see it. One is the liberal view that conditions in the Caribbean cannot be understood in gross, racial terms, that one must exam-

ine how those conditions have affected individuals. When one does this, it becomes clear that there are Africans descendants in every Caribbean setting who are wealthy, that there are some in every setting who are political leaders, some who are cultural leaders, some who are scientists, who are journeyman workers. It becomes apparent that to make broad generalizations about the oppressed character of Africans throughout the region is both to ignore significant achievements that Africans have made and indeed to occlude the objective - and differentiated - character of African life in the area.

Another way of looking at these circumstances is through Marxist eyes. Such a perspective enables us to see that the primary contradictions in the region - while certainly influenced by race - are class contradictions. While there are Africans in the ruling classes, there are certainly more in the exploited classes. A great danger is that racial differences will be used to fracture working class solidarity as has already been done in a number of specific instances. Economic relationships in the Caribbean can be explained as part of the center/periphery dynamics. The Caribbean's economic status can largely be explained as labor and imperialism developed. The same is true for the role of Africans - wherever they are - as member of the working class.<sup>27</sup>

In neither of these interpretations would diasporan concepts play a dominant role in searching for solutions to the Caribbean's

problems. That is true at least in part because these interpretations would not identify the same factors as problems that the diasporan one would.

For example, while either conceptualization might recognize a brain drain as being included in the export of Caribbean labor, neither would recognize such a phenomenon as being involved in Black U.S. physicists going to work for the Atomic Energy Commission, Black engineers going to work for IBM, Black historians going to work for Princeton. Yet for U.S. residents of African descent, that is precisely what such patterns constitute - a brain drain. African contributions are to the greater well-being of the AEC, IBM, Princeton, not that of their own people. At the great universities, the students of African scholars are primarily the children of white elites, not their own. Such scholars are teaching others' children and not teaching their own children. This is the brain-drain at its most destructive. Members of the Black intelligentsia are not only renewing others' intellectual resources, they are failing to replenish their own.

While, clearly, Marxists do not favor the persistence of the AEC, IBM, or even Princeton as currently constituted, their long-term solutions provide little immediate or near-term relief for Africans. This is a problem which Harold Cruse addresses most acutely - what to do before the millennium arrives (whatever it might be).<sup>28</sup> It is also a problem which is at the heart of the diasporan approach. What do we do to address these

execrable conditions which enmesh us right now?

The diasporan approach is valuable because it identifies problems Africans experience as Africans and requires that Africans address them as Africans.

The final selling point of this perspective is that no one is addressing African problems in the region in a way that is working.

That is why they persist. The problems, though formidable, are not insuperable.

Nor is the diasporan approach either new or unrecommended. Its

spirit inspired W.E.B. Dubois and underlay the Pan African Congresses which heralded the beginning of the century. It was the singular genius which enlightened Marcus Garvey's vision of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). It was the daemon the Caribbean thinkers Cesaire and Damas invoked when negritude sprang full-blown from their brows. Kwame Toure, born in Trinidad, reaching maturity in the U.S., now residing in Guinea, formed his All African People's Revolutionary Party on its underlying assumptions. St. Claire Drake suggests it to us, as does C.L.R. James. This is not some faddish-freakish-escapist idea.

It is, instead, an idea, a perception, an approach which originates from particular historical,

cultural, and material circumstances. An important set of evidence concerning both the validity and the analytical power of the idea rests in two undeniable factors: 1) its persistence over time, which gives credence to its analytical strengths; and 2) its appearance in every sector of the region, which attests to its internal validity. It has appeared inde-

particular vision of the problems faced by Africans inhabitants of the Caribbean region. It enables one to hypothesize that a major difficulty faced by Africans in the region is that they do not control their own resources.

It is also critical because it implies a solution to at least that set of problems, ie, for Africans to take control of their own re-

sources.

This is not to address the question of what forms Africans' control of their own resources is to take. That is not the subject of this inquiry.

*The diasporan approach is valuable because it identifies problems Africans experience as Africans and requires that Africans address them as Africans.*

pendently in every part of the region it is intended to encompass: the U.S., Jamaica, Martinique, Trinidad/Tabago, Haiti, Grenada. Like the conditions experienced uniformly by Africans throughout the region, this, too, is no accident. Again, one could lay at the door of statisticians the probability of such an idea's occurring randomly across a population in such divergent circumstances, stretching over a hemisphere, without the presence of an underlying stratum of consistency. But there is little need. Even to the untutored eye it is evident that more than blind chance connects these widely separated - both in space and in time - manifestations of the same vision.

Therefore, the concept is critical, first, because it enables a

Since, however, it is a question of considerable and crucial proportions, a word about it is in order. The nationalist position is frequently misrepresented as daishiki-wearing capitalism in Black-face. Very few nationalists who take the designation seriously espouse such a position. Most of them adopt a socialist position, that is, one which calls for collective or cooperative ownership of the dominant forces of production and egalitarian patterns of wealth distribution. Indeed, that is the only orientation which makes sense given the huge proportion of the Black population in the underclass.

Therefore, though in this essay I do not address the question of the form of ownership and distribution of wealth to be incorporated into Pan African nations, I find a



capitalist conception incompatible with Pan Africanism itself. Indeed, a capitalist Pan Africanism is pointless. When the overwhelming majority of Africans are oppressed and exploited it makes absolutely no difference who is doing the oppressing and exploiting.

## Objections to the Imperative

Where the concept of the African diaspora meets with no little difficulty is suggesting a reasonable means whereby its vision might be accomplished. This is a problem of considerable dimensions.

It is composed of not one, but a number of towering obstacles. The first rests in a condition already referred to extensively above, the divided presence of Africans in the Western hemisphere. We have located them in thirty-five separate countries, on both sides of the equator, in every conceivable physical circumstance. Yet even when we restrict our scrutiny to one country, we are not looking at a unity.

Africans in the U.S.A. form a population larger than most countries in the Western hemisphere, exceeded only by the U.S.A., Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina. They are not only a group of enormous numbers, but also of immeasurable complexity.

Their physical circumstances range from shanties in the South hardly distinguishable from the slave quarters occupied by their ancestors just three generations

distant, to mansions in Beverly Hills and vast estates throughout the southern and Eastern states. While millions inhabit virtually all Black, poverty-stricken slums, rampant with crime and social pathology, hundreds of thousands reside in comfort within suburbs scattered across the land and populated mostly by whites.

While forty percent of the country's Black population is functionally illiterate, some of the country's most outstanding scientists and intellectuals are Black.

Black people in the U.S.A. speak different regional dialects, some almost mutually unintelligible.<sup>29</sup> They serve on oil rigs off the coast of Louisiana, mine coal in Kentucky, cut cane in Georgia. A Black astronaut, a Ph.D in Physics, was incinerated in the Challenger shuttle. Still, many Black people do not work at all, but live off the fruits of crime, or off welfare extended by the state.

Politically, Black people in the U.S. are conservative Republicans, liberal Democrats, and everything in between. They are Communists, Socialists, Pan Africanists, Black Nationalists, and anarchists. Religiously, they are Protestants - and many many Protestant denominations; Catholics; Muslims; Jews; Buddhists; Atheists; Agnostics; Hindu; and Bahai.

They are far from a unity of condition.

Within one country - without even considering the whole of the Caribbean - Africans in the Western hemisphere are strikingly divided. Within the U.S. alone

there are tremendous obstacles to the functional role of any conception of the African diaspora.

Nevertheless, in this regard, Africans in the U.S. constitute perhaps the most fertile ground in which the concept can be planted. As St. Clair Drake put it,

*"By the mid - 1970's... the black community in the United States represented the largest, most compact, and best organized group in the hemisphere that considered itself 'black'..."<sup>30</sup>*

For the most part, people of African descent in the U.S. consider themselves Black. Whether to the human eye they are racially indistinguishable from Ronald Reagan or Marilyn Monroe, from an Ibo of Nigeria or a Mandinke of Gambia, or anything between such appearances, people of African descent in the U.S. consider themselves Black. When asked their racial identity, most of them will reply, "Black." And most of those who do not say Black, will say Afro-American, African, Negro, or colored. All these names refer to the same, explicit racial designation. Even if one parent is Asian, European, or Native American, if the other is of African heritage, most children of such couples will identify as Black.

The roots for this condition are long and lie in the particular form of slavery and racial identification developed in the U.S., but their results are uniform. Most Africans in the U.S. consider themselves as inextricably part of the African continuum. This does not mean that Black people in the U.S. are without color prejudices.

They certainly have them. But they are prejudices which do not constitute separate racial categories. Black people in the U.S. will often think, 'I'm a higher class Black person than you are.' But it is 'I'm a higher class Black person' - recognizing that the differentiation is between people who are members of the same racial group.

This huge group of people of extraordinary diversity constitutes the group in the hemisphere with the most uniform perception of its racial identity, rooted in Africa. It provides the most receptive ground for the planting of Pan Africanism.

Turning from them to the rest of the region would require a listing of no less than thirty-four countries, with African populations totaling no less than 93,000,000 people. Just the number of countries and separate national identities associated with each underscores the magnitude of the problem. A Dominican and a Haitian, though sharing the same island, perceive each other as belonging to different countries, as having different nationalities. Moreover, they don't even speak the same language. People have political loyalties and identities which are national in character - as Peruvian and Colombian and Haitian and Jamaican and Bermudan.

We must address the reality of how people experience their lives. The African diaspora, like the "working class", is powerful as a conceptual tool. But it is a conception, like the working class, a very high level of abstraction,

## *Most Africans in the U.S. consider themselves as inextricably part of the African continuum....*

very much removed from the ways people live their lives.

Despite the internal logic and consistency of the international working class, one of the major reasons why the idea has not had practical effect equivalent to its suggestive power is that it is too far removed from how most working class people experience their lives. They live and feel as French, Italian, Chinese, Canadian, Cuban, Japanese. Whatever their material reality, their consciousnesses are very much conditioned by affective factors and by those elements of their lives they can see, and touch, and know on a first hand basis. Even when and where people have gone beyond a trade-union mentality, their attachment to national consciousness has proved much stronger than historical-materialist logic would expect.

The African diaspora is a similar kind of construct. It runs head-on into Bahamians, Virgin Islanders, Grenadans, Trinidadians, Martinicians, Guyanese. It is in no position to supercede their existential realities.

Nor is nationalism the final barrier faced by the prescriptive dimensions of the diaspora in the

Caribbean. One at least equally formidable problem is the distinction between people classified as Africans and those classified as partial Africans, or for our purposes, partial Europeans. This barrier, not found in the U.S., is an integral component of African life in every other part of the region. In this classification scheme partial Europeans are perceived as a different people, a different race, from Africans. The separate 'races' perceive themselves as mutually antagonistic. So perceiving themselves, they are mutually antagonistic. There is no basis for unity between them.

How can a conception of Pan-Africanism bridge such a gap-include the literally millions of people with African ancestry who not only do not consider themselves African, but cringe at the possibility of being considered African, and run and hide from the slightest intimation that they might be considered African?

Africans in the region live lives which find them within each country in different class, regional, geographic, religious, and political circumstances. Moreover, they inhabit different coun-

tries and identify with separate nationalities. They do not speak the same language. Millions of them actively disassociate themselves from any conceptual identification with Africans and self-consciously identify with Europeans.

The obstacles for bringing such a disparate - and contradictory - people under the aegis of a pan-African ideology appear prohibitive.

Here, then, we must come at last to the question of how a conception at such a high level of abstraction as the African diaspora can be functional.

## Operationalizing the Imperative

In answering this question for how to make this specific high-level abstraction functional, one recognition must be made at the outset: not every African in the Caribbean will have to accept or be influenced by the concept for it to be functional. Not all Africans in the hemisphere accept Christianity, but it is certainly functional as an organizing principle among them. Even fewer accept Islam, but it is also functional as an organizing concept. The same observation may be made about capitalism, socialism, and various manifestations of the state. What is necessary for a concept to be functional among a people is not universal adherence to it, or even majority adherence to it, but the reaching of some critical mass. What this critical mass is - what the numbers are that are required

to reach it - we must admit, are a complete unknown. But on the basis of the widespread evidence that people actually do organize on the basis of ideas, we can hypothesize that there is such a critical mass, and that it falls far short of the majority of any respective population. Certainly, two people of a small clique can organize on the basis of an idea. Our analysis, however, would not consider such cultist arrangements as functional. For a concept of the diaspora to be functional, it would have to be utilized by significant population groups across national lines. Though I don't mean the term "*significant population groups*" to refer to any specific numbers, I do mean it to refer to a collection of people among any given national population of African descendants which an objective observer would recognize as significant. As I indicated above, I have no idea as to the numbers which might constitute a critical mass for functional organizing to occur, but it is unlikely that an organizing concept which has resulted in the organization of less than one to two percent of any national population has reached a critical mass. That is, for purposes of this analysis, such a concept has not become functional among the people for whom it is intended. That does not mean that it cannot become functional or will not become functional, but that it has not become functional. For purposes of the diaspora the absolute numbers will vary according to the populations involved. The critical mass for a functional diasporan concept

applying to St. Kitts, Martinique, and Trinidad/Tobago would be several powers smaller than one for a spread of countries that included the U.S. or Brazil. So, the first recognition is that in order for the concept to be functional, what is necessary is not universal or majority adherence to it, but the reaching of some (undefined) critical mass among its adherents.

The second recognition is that concepts at such a level of abstraction can be functional. This is evidenced by those instances cited above: religious concepts, economic concepts, political concepts.

Probably the first and most critical step required for any high level abstraction to be functional is for someone(s) to use it as an organizing principle. People have to believe in it, and use it as the basic principle by which they organize themselves and direct their efforts. For the process to spread, these efforts must meet with some appreciable level of success.

Because of the importance of belief in such an undertaking, the root of any such effort is cultural. The cultural question includes the notion of how people perceive themselves in the world, whether or not, in essence, they perceive of themselves as a people.

People who do not perceive of themselves as a people are not going to organize on the basis of being a people. People who do not perceive themselves as Africans are not going to organize on the basis of being African. On the other hand, just because people do perceive themselves as having a

common identity does not mean that they will use that identity as a basis for organization, but it means that they can use it as a basis for organization.

On the question of Pan Africanism in particular, as suggested earlier, this business is very much complicated by the national question. One would have to be a fool or blind to the material circumstances of life not to realize that national differences among Africans in the Caribbean are significant in and of themselves.

Whether these differences are great enough to inhibit organization on the basis of Pan Africanism depends in part upon the level or degree of organization one posits as a goal. Certainly, if the initial effort is to organize this diverse aggregation of people into a single nation, it will fail. Not even one national group of Africans in the region is entirely organized within its own country as Africans. Therefore, to speak of the whole region undertaking such a project is to speak of the fantastic.

Nevertheless, it is possible to envision with at least a modicum of realism, the cooperation of people throughout the region on the basis of shared Africanness. Though it is not necessary and certainly not desirable to ape Europeans, one certainly can learn from them as one can learn from anyone. It is apparent that despite significant national differences Europeans are able to cooperate through the world on the basis of their shared European culture. Jews are, too. So are Arabs. Chinese somehow manage it, as do Sikhs.

For Africans throughout the Caribbean to cooperate on the basis of common cultural dispositions does not mean that all Africans in the region will participate in such sharing. Nor does it mean that those who do participate will do so on the basis of surrendering their independent national identities. It simply means that among some of the region's people who are organized nationally as Africans, on grounds rooted in being African, can find cooperation with other people in the region who are organized as Africans.

African nationalists in Brazil. Waiting would forestall many of the benefits that international cooperation is intended to produce. Both national organizing and international cooperation should go on simultaneously. The efforts in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe should be instructive in this regard. Not only was extensive international cooperation going on before any of the national liberation efforts had achieved a revolutionary victory, such cooperation was also going on while the forces

*Diasporan Africans are abused everywhere, because nowhere are they in control of their own resources.*

Nor is this an either/or proposition or a first step, second step proposition. Such organizing tasks are not mutually exclusive. Nor is one a prerequisite for the other. People do not have to organize nationally or internationally. They can do both. People do not have to complete national organization before they begin international organization. Both efforts can, indeed, should go on simultaneously. It is not necessary, for example, for African nationalists in the U.S. to complete and consolidate African nationalist organizing in the U.S. before they can cooperate with

engaged in revolutionary struggle within a single country were not themselves united, and consisted of separate, often even hostile, revolutionary organizational efforts.<sup>31</sup>

Cooperation between nationalists in various sectors of the region can be quite limited and still be effective. Not every African nationalist group in every country has to cooperate with every nationalist group in every other country. It is much more likely that each African nationalist group in each country will be selective in its cooperative efforts, will, in fact, cooperate with

those organizations with which they are most compatible or with which - by chance- they happen to have connections.

Let's look at a specific for instance. Before Maurice Bishop was murdered and before Reagan invaded Grenada, the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) in the United States had developed warm ties with the New Jewel Movement and both were trying to develop a program of mutual cooperation and, in fact, had carried out some minimum activities in that regard such as travel tours NBIPP sponsored to Grenada.

While NBIPP was a small nationalist formation in the U.S., it did have valuable resources it could share with the New Jewel Movement. It had its members' interest in travel - which though meager - was some addition (as opposed to none) to the Grenadan national treasury. In addition, many NBIPP members had skills which simply arose from living in a technological society which could benefit Grenadan revolutionary efforts: using typewriters, fixing cars, installing plumbing and electricity, organizing filing systems, setting type. In Grenada, which was sending people around the world asking for filing cabinets, 3 X 5 cards, chairs, tables, paper, and other such basics, the kinds of resources NBIPP had to offer were not negligible.

On the other hand, Grenada was an equally valuable resource for NBIPP. It was a place it could send its cadres to engage in revolutionary work which could help consolidate their consciousness.

It was a place where NBIPP people could associate freely with other progressive peoples from not only Grenada, but also Cuba and other parts of the world. It was a place where NBIPP members could see ideas in practice which they could bring back to their ongoing work in the U.S. The cooperation was mutually beneficial - though neither NBIPP nor the New Jewel Movement had consolidated its internal position.

Despite the not inconsiderable obstacles a concept of the African diaspora within the Caribbean region can be functional. Part of the utility of the concept will arise from a conscious and organized exploitation of patterns which are already much in evidence.

Some of them have already been discussed. There is a strain of Black consciousness in the region stronger than that in most of Africa. There are reciprocal relations between Africans in the U.S. and the West Indies. One of the crucial ones arises from the business of labor exporting and labor importing. A lot of nationals from the West Indies wind up in the U.S. Because of racial patterns within the U.S. they become identified by the country - whether self-identified as such or not - as Black people. As such they have made - and continue to make - a valuable contribution to Africans in the U.S. A few names should suffice to indicate the scope and magnitude of the tale: Prince Hall, Claude McKay, Marcus Garvey, Roy Innis, Sidney Poitier, Mervyn Dymally, Hazel Scott, Ivan Van Sertima, Louis Farrakhan, Kwame Toure,

Jan Carew, legions of champion boxers and major league baseball players. U.S. national life and particularly U.S. African national life is as it is because of the presence of Africans from the West Indies. Not only is this the case in terms of the impact of outstanding figures, but West Indian immigrants in general have a particular influence on the character of African life in the U.S. They are high achievers. They contribute mightily to the economic base of the African community.

Nor is this a one-way street. Many emigrants from the West Indies return to their home countries. Some U.S. Africans emigrate to the West Indies. Indeed, as St. Claire Drake tells us,

*"... in Trinidad... villages of black migrants who came in the 1840's still call themselves 'Americans.'"*<sup>32</sup>

The out-migration patterns of Caribbean countries generally indicate that there is much movement within the region.

It is also true that actions taken by the Africans in one part of the region have a striking effect on Africans in another. The original Haitian revolution was the first and probably the most influential of such occurrences. Writing of the Haitian revolution, Drake puts it this way, "... the most important political event in the Western Hemisphere diasporan history occurred in the Caribbean."<sup>33</sup>

In contemporary times, events of singular influence throughout the region were the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the U.S.<sup>34</sup>

It is clear that those events

would not have produced the effects they did were it not for the shared sense of indentity among African peoples. The ground for utilizing a functional diasporan concept is fertile.

## The Here and Now

Since the condition of Africans in the hemisphere, qua Africans, is at root a cultural one, the cultural arena is where it must repeatedly and insistently and relentlessly be addressed. That is why this paper is presented to this forum. It is a cultural one. It is composed of a group of people whose primary impact is upon the mind. They are also people who are disposed to interaction within the Caribbean region, and among whom such presentation is likely either to encourage ongoing efforts, or to spark new ones, and to

contribute to conceptual clarity.

While the African vision of humanity is not a universal one, it is much closer to the universal than the world most people experience - where African battles African, worker battles worker, and even daughter and son battle mother and father. Let us proselytize an African vision whose practicality, conceptual power, and clarity render it useful for our people.



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## FOOTNOTES

1. The U.S. comes in both by virtue of the Florida peninsula whose southernmost keys are less than 100 miles from Cuba, and by virtue of the placement of islands traditionally considered part of the Caribbean - the Grand Bahamas are further North and Fort Lauderdale or Miami, and Bermuda is north Charleston, South Carolina. Brazil is traditionally considered part of the region at least because of the reach of her northern extensions.
2. UNESCO STATISTICAL YEARBOOK 1984
3. All the figures above are from an unpublished paper by Troy Duster for the Institute of Social Change, UC Berkeley, March, 1984, entitled, "Social Implications of the 'New' Black Urban Underclass." 4. Walter Rodney, "Contemporary Political Trends in the English-Speaking Caribbean," *The Black Scholar*, vol. 7 # 1, Sept., 1975, pp. 19. 5. *Ibid* 6. *Ibid*, p. 21. 7. Hilbourne A. Watson, "The Political Economy of U.S. - Caribbean Relations," *The Black Scholar*, vol. 11, # 3, Jan./Feb., 1980, pp. 32. 8. *Ibid*, p. 33. 9. *Ibid* 10. See, for example, Rodney, op. cit., p. 17, where he talks about the role of Syrian, Jewish, Chinese, and French Creole proprietors in Trinidad/Tobago. 11. Watson, loc. cit. 12. The Working People's Alliance, "Towards a Revolutionary Socialist Guyana," *The Black Scholar*, vol. 11, # 3, Jan./Feb., 1980, p. 48. 13. Niani (Doe Brown), "Black Consciousness vs Racism in Brazil," *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 11, # 3, Jan./Feb., 1980, p. 61. 14. *Ibid*, p. 68. 15. Association of Caribbean Studies, interview with Leon Damas, *Journal of Caribbean Studies*, vol. 1, # 1, Winter, 1980, p. 63. 16. Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse* (Turtle Island: Berkeley, 1983) p. 18. 17. *Ibid* 18. St. Clair Drake, "The Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective," *The Black Scholar*, vol. 7, # 1, Sept., 1975, p. 3. 19. Rodney, op. cit., p. 17. 20. *Ibid* 21. Niani, op. cit., p. 61. 22. *Ibid* 23. Drake, op. cit., p. 10. 24. In an address at CSU Sacramento, February, 1986, Kwame Toure referred to the plethora of organizations among Black people in the U.S. One of the problems associated with them, he said, is that 95% of the people whose needs they are geared to address do not belong to them. 25. Minister Louis Farrakhan in a speech at Los Angeles, 1985; also "Tony Brown's Journal," 1985. 26. Rodney, op. cit., p. 17. 27. The Watson and Working People's Alliance articles cited above draw heavily from this perspective. 28. Harold Cruse, address to the "Working Conference on the Black Political Party," October 16, 1980, Red Lion Inn, Sacramento, California. 29. The Gullah and Georgia Sea-Island dialects represent the more extreme range of speech variations among Black Americans, but Black dialects native to Louisiana differ markedly from those native to Ohio and Pennsylvania; indeed, such regional variation is the norm. Moreover, big-city argot tends to differ from that spoken in the country and in small towns. 30. Drake, op. cit., p. 2. 31. The role of the OAU, for example, in forcing separate revolutionary organizations within the same colonial territory to collaborate, or at the very least to suspend hostilities between them, is well-known. 32. Drake, op. cit., p. 9. 33. *Ibid* 34. See, "Revolution in Grenada: An Interview with Maurice Bishop," *The Black Scholar*, vol. 11, # 3, p. 51 for the effects on events in Grenada and in Trinidad. Also see Niani, op. cit., p. 67, for a discussion of the effects of the movements in Brazil.



(c) The Nobel Foundation.

**Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka**

Nobel Laureate in Literature

# AKINWANDE OLUWOLE SOYINKA

A Bio-bibliographical Review

Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka (1986 Nobel Laureate) was born on 13 July 1934 at Abeokuta, near Ibadan in western Nigeria. After preparatory university studies in 1954 at Government College in Ibadan he continued at the University of Leeds, where later, in 1973, he took his doctorate. During the six years spent in England he was a dramaturgist at the Royal Court Theater in London 1958-59. In 1960 he was awarded a Rockefeller bursary and returned to Nigeria to study African drama. At the same time he taught drama and literature at various universities, at Ibadan, Lagos and Ife, where, since 1975, he has been professor of comparative literature. In 1960 he founded the theater group "*The 1960 Masks*" and in 1964 the "*Orisun Theater Company*", in which he has produced his own plays and taken part as actor. He has periodically been visiting professor at the universities of Cambridge, Sheffield and Yale.

During the civil war in Nigeria Soyinka appealed in an article for cease-fire. For this he was arrested in 1967, accused of conspiring with the Biafra rebels, and was held as a political prisoner for 22 months until 1969.

Soyinka has published about 20 works - dramas, novels and poetry.

He writes in English, and his literary language is marked by great scope and richness of words.

As dramatist Soyinka links the traditional popular African theater with its combination of dance, music and action. He bases his writing on the mythology of his own ethnic group - the Yoruba - with Ogun, the god of iron and war, at the center. He wrote his first plays during his time in London - *The Swamp Dwellers* and *The Lion and the Jewel* (a light comedy), which were performed at Ibadan in 1958 and 1959 and published in 1963. His satirical comedies are *The Trial of Brother Jero* (performed in 1960, publ. 1963) with its sequel *Jero's Metamorphosis* (publ. 1973, performed 1974), *A Dance of the Forests* (performed 1960, publ. 1963), *Kongi's Harvest* (performed 1965, publ. 1967) and *Madmen and Specialists* (performed 1970, publ. 1971).

Among Soyinka's serious philosophical plays are (apart from "*The Swamp Dwellers*") *The Strong Breed* (publ. 1963, performed 1966), *The Road* (1965), *Death and the King's Horseman* (publ. 1975, performed 1976). In *The Bacchae of Euripides* (1973) he has rewritten the *Bacchae* for the African stage and in *Opera Wonyosi* (performed 1977, publ. 1981) bases himself on John

Gay's *Beggar's Opera* and Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*. Soyinka's latest dramatic works are *A Play of Giants* (1984) and *Requiem for a Futurologist* (1985).

Soyinka has written two novels, *The Interpreters* (1965), narratively a complicated work, in which six Nigerian intellectuals discuss and interpret their African experiences, and *Season of Anomy* (1973), which is based on the writer's thoughts during his imprisonment and confronts the *Opheus and Euridice* myth with the mythology of the Yoruba. Purely autobiographical are *The Man Died: Prison Notes* (1972) and the account of his childhood *Aké* (1981), in which the parents' warmth and interest in their son are prominent. And his literary essays are collected in, among others, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (1975).

Soyinka's poems, which show a close connection to his plays, are collected in *Idanre, and Other Poems* (1967), *Poems from Prison* (1969), *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (1972) and in the long poem *Ogun Abibiman* (1976). ■

'...I am my mother's daughter, and the drums of Africa beat in my heart.'  
-Mary McLeod Bethune



# African Naming Ceremony

An Introductory Outline by Ilbari M. Zulu

## Adult

Welcome  
Unity circle  
Words of inspirational wisdom 1

Call of the Ancestors 2  
Officiant speech

Call of the Elders  
Introduction of the family

Call of the women

Words of inspirational wisdom

Community testimony

Officiant call person to be named

Women form symbolic womb 3  
Male plant symbolic seed 4

Person to be named back into symbolic womb  
Symbolic umbilical cord is attached to person to be named 5

Rebirth: person to be named move head first thru symbolic womb  
Symbolic umbilical cord is cut

Purification wash

Officiant direct person to be named in four directions 6  
Libation for the Ancestors  
Libation for the Elders  
Person to be named sip libation

Officiant whisper name to person  
New born person shout name to community  
Officiant explain origin and meaning of name  
New born repeats name to community  
Community repeats name  
Elders place necklace on new born

Words of inspirational wisdom  
Ancestral meal served  
Unity dance  
Community celebration

(footnotes)

1. Concerning African culture and consciousness 2. We call our ancestors to bless our activity and to honor and respect their wisdom (moment of silence) 3. Women form two adjacent lines with hands interlocked in air to form a standing semi-pyramid (the mother may participate) 4. Father of person to be named may participate 5. A red ribbon or string can be used as the symbolic umbilical cord 6. To symbolize human harmony with the universe (north,south,east,west and all points between).

## Infant

Welcome  
Unity circle  
Words of inspirational wisdom 1

Call of the Ancestors 2  
Officiant Speech

Call of the Elders  
Introduction of the family

Call of the mother  
Call of the women

Words of inspirational wisdom

Community testimony

Mother and women form symbolic womb 3  
Father give symbolic seed to mother

Father hand infant to designated women to carry thru symbolic womb  
Symbolic umbilical cord is attached to infant 4  
Infant is given to mother

Symbolic umbilical cord is cut  
Mother hand infant to father head first  
Purification wash  
Officiant turn infant four different directions 5  
Libation for the Ancestors  
Libation for the Elders  
Infant sip libation 6  
Officiant whisper name to infant  
Officiant whisper infant name to parents  
Parents shout name to community  
Officiant explain origin and meaning of name  
Infant approval of name 7  
Parents repeats infant name to community  
Community repeats infant name  
Elders place necklace on infant

Words of inspirational wisdom  
Ancestral meal served  
Unity dance  
Community celebration

(footnotes)

1. Concerning African culture and consciousness 2. We call our ancestors to bless our activity and to honor and respect their wisdom (moment of silence) 3. Women form two adjacent lines with hands interlocked in air to form a standing semi-pyramid 4. A red ribbon or string can be used as the symbolic umbilical cord 5. To symbolize human harmony with the universe (north,south,east,west and all points between) 6. With the aid of an adult (water) 7. Infant approve name via voice.

# African Naming Ceremony

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# The Pan African Pen Pal Association

*An Interview with Dr. Louis G. Marchman*

By Iubari M. Zulu

**Before we get into what the Pan-African Pen Pal Association is, tell us something about yourself and how it led to the founding of the association?**

My initial introduction to the concept of Pan-Africanism was through my formal studies at Merritt College in Oakland, California in 1969 and 1970, and the University of California at Berkeley in 1970 thru 1972. I took many courses related to Africa and Swahili. On campus, I met many brothers and sisters from Africa who taught me as much about Africa as I had learned in the classroom. I learned that I must visit Africa, and that I was African.

In 1975, my wife and I took our honeymoon touring Africa. In Kenya, I met some brothers from the Samburu tribe who spoke no English. They were my first exposure to non-Western, indigenous Africa with whom I could discuss cross-cultural experience. I was to them, speaking in Swahili, their first encounter with Black-America. I bartered with one member, Fanteri Leturrol, over my Timex watch in exchange for his weapons and his posing for a picture with me. It ended with his promise that he would correspond with me as long as I answered his letters. This was my first serious commitment

toward pen pal correspondence.

After eight years of writing, I returned to Kenya to visit my pen pal. I stayed in a large hut in rural Kenya. I, being a high school history teacher, was asked to make a presentation at Munyu Secondary School in Thika, Kenya. I talked, in English (their third language), about the Black experiences in America. Afterwards, many students asked questions which reflected many misconceptions they had heard or read about concerning Blacks in America. One student, therefore, asked if he could write to one of my students as a pen pal. Then, the whole class expressed an interest in having pen pals. James Kinuthia Muruku, the teacher, and I, agreed we would develop a pen pal system. Thus, from Kenya, East Africa, the concept of the Pan-African Pen Pal Association was developed.

**Would you give us a brief description and history of the Pan-African Pen Pal Association?**

The Pan-African Pen Pal Association (PAPPA) is a not-for-profit, charitable, educational organization created through the united efforts of Africans and African-Americans. The purpose of this organization is to develop an international correspondence

network, which is composed primarily for people of African ancestry. The main objective is to eliminate the many distortions and misconceptions about African people throughout the world.

PAPPA's formal development evolved from the structural ideas of Fred Jackson, the National Executive Director. And the experience of community organization supplied by Woullard Lett, the Regional Director. Thus information about PAPPA was easily disseminated throughout the Black community. Board members Leticia McCullom, Charles Boadu, Uwe Uche, Morris Ewing, John Long, Joan Gray, George Arrington, Dane Chambers and Norris Roberts gave that needed insight and direction. The much needed secretarial assistance was supplied by Mary Cunningham and Sharon Everett. We have an international secretariat section, headed by Rev. Dr. Kwaku Lartey, who translates our English documents into French for the French-speaking African nations and Serverian Nyetabula, from Tanzania, who is our Kiswahili consultant.

**What are the membership requirements?**

There are three categories of PAPPA membership: (1) Individual; (2) Institutional; and (3)

Humanitarian. The individual membership involves people of African ancestry over 18 years of age. Its objective is to provide newspapers and other items which will inform members about contemporary Africa. An annual membership fee is required. The institutional membership basically concerns schools and youth-oriented community organizations. There are elementary school, high school and college coordinators, Esi Threet, Hannibal Afrik and Henry Harrison, respectfully, who direct PAPPA institutional activities. These groups do not pay annual fees. They have in-school and out-of-school activities.

The third category involves the churches, the mosques and soon - the inmates. These groups are concerned with the humanitarian aspect of PAPPA. They send items to various African nations, but they receive notification through pen pal correspondence when items have been received. This seldom occurs in other humanitarian organizations. The church coordinator is Abraham Akrono who is from Ghana, but resides in Chicago.

#### **How many students are involved in the association?**

It is difficult to ascertain how many students currently are participating in PAPPA for these four years of our existence. When students graduate, we have not requested them to notify us. However, in the Chicago area we have about 600 new participants from 5 schools. The PAPPA

clubs number about 150 students. Internationally there is about 1000 students from Ghana, our continental headquarters. PAPPA total student participation, nationally and internationally is estimated to be about 2,250 students.

#### **Why do you think students participate in the association and what has been their general impression?**

Initially student participation in the project primarily resulted from the teacher's enthusiasm. Students generally had little or no interest in writing to African. Rather, they preferred to write to England or France. There is generally a significant increase in their interest after receiving the first response. With the continuance of correspondings there is less need for teachers to encourage writing. Many discontinue after a year, but others have had the same pen pal throughout high school and beyond. Thus pen pal correspondence is excellent in exposing students to Africa and Africans, many of their values were not significantly affected after one year of correspondence, but a change becomes apparent after the second year of correspondence.

Students were generally impressed when they read that English was, perhaps, their pan pal's third language. They were surprised to learn that their pen pal knew of Michael Jackson, Prince and other entertainers. They were confused when their pen pal used

the metric system, and that 4/1/87 meant the fourth day of January, rather than the first day of April. As one may guess, the most interesting item of exchange has been photographs. This has been the first personal contact that evokes a lasting image for most students. They often compare their pictures to someone they know in Chicago. Gifts of currency are discouraged, nevertheless students send money to make comparisons.

#### **I understand that you have done research on the attitude of students regarding their views on Africa, and have found some controversial information. In brief, tell us what is the nature of your research and some people think it is inappropriate?**

We gave a pre-test to students from several high schools to see what kind of values and or knowledge they may have about themselves and Africa. These students included a wide spectrum of academic levels and social interests. Our findings show that about 81% of these high school students would not consider marrying someone from Africa. Through discussion we learned that most felt that Africa and Africans have an image of poverty and ugliness. It was discovered about 73% of these students do not believe that their ancestry goes back to Africa. Their reasoning was that no one told them exactly what is their ancestry. About 52% had no idea where Egypt is located. The results of this pre-test were noteworthy.

There are several ways in which we attempt to measure the worth of our PAPPa project. These may be as objective and subjective evaluation techniques. However, there are respected members of the community, mostly college professors who do not feel comfortable with our research. They refer to our research as "victim analysis". They feel that our research may do more damage than good because it may be used by others who desire continual fragmentation of the African family.

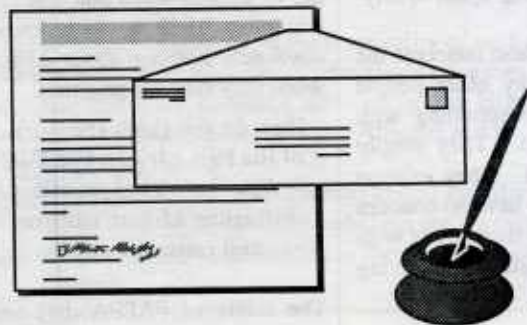
**According to PAPPa literature, the association has scheduled an international conference in Ghana in 1990. What will be the objective of the conference and what do you expect to be the results of the conference?**

Yes, PAPPa plans to have its first international conference in Accra, Ghana in August 1990. The main objectives of this gathering are to (1) bring together the various PAPPa nations in brotherhood (2) discuss topics involving educational and humanitarian activities, and (3) to develop necessary strategies to improve the PAPPa program.

**Tell us about the PAPPa trip to Ghana in August 1986?**

In August 1986, seven PAPPa representatives from Chicago went to Accra to develop the preliminary groundwork for the future conference. This, by far, was the most rewarding experience I have had in the PAPPa program.

We stayed with individual families who shared all aspects of their culture with us. We met important dignitaries with surprising ease. We were interviewed by the press and went on radio programs. We were treated with much kindness and respect. Several traditional chiefs donated land to our



PAPPa program for future use. Charmione Patterson, the president of Chicago Vocational High School's PAPPa Club, earned the opportunity to accompany us and to visit her pen pal in Ghana. She stayed with the teacher of her pen pal. Charmione was surprised when she learned that not only was the home in which she stayed large and modern, but it had a color television, a microwave oven, video equipment and other modern conveniences. Charmione was also interviewed many times and was asked to discuss her impressions of Ghana on the Ghanaian national radio. All of us saw the trip on a video cassette, which was taken by Fred Jackson our National Executive Director.

**How many African countries participate in the PAPPa?**

The first pen pal exchange came from a group of secondary students and a church congregation from Thika, Kenya to Chicago in August, 1983. The student participation was a success but there were difficulties with the church participation. That following year Ghana and Senegal joined. In

1985 Nigeria, Zambia, and The Gambia joined from Africa. Martinique and Guyana from this hemisphere, and in 1986 Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zimbabwe

and Malawi joined us.

**What has been a problematic aspect the PAPPa and how has it been solved or compromised?**

There are four main problems that confront PAPPa in its attempt to develop Pan-Africanism through correspondence. As one may assume, the lack of finances is a major problem. In spite of the fact that many proposals have been submitted throughout the nation, not one foundation has offered to assist us. Thus, funding has been achieved primarily through contributions from Chicago's Black community.

The second and third problems deal with the lack of speed in which correspondence is achieved. The cycle of correspondence, which would take six weeks, often takes three or four

months. This delay brings about two problems: (1) Students here become angry and take this delay as a personal attack. They soon add this experience with other negative misconceptions about Africa, (2) Many students who receive the letters simply do not write back. Students in Africa therefore become disillusioned about ever writing again to anyone here.

The fourth problem concerns the apathy that many older people have about corresponding with people in Africa. They simply have no interest. They express clearly that they have no concern for Africans and they do not wish to support our efforts involving Pan-Africanism.

#### How do you see the future of the association?

Though these problems are frustrating, PAPPA is growing every month. Students have expressed their satisfaction learning about

Africa. During African-American History Month many schools give students an opportunity to tell other classes about their pen pal experiences. A few students appear to have become experts on African affairs. They must be reminded that they know only about a small part of one country in Africa. This is indeed rewarding to witness when one realizes that most Black students know absolutely nothing about Africa when they start the program.

#### How do you think the work of the Pan-African Pen Pal Association has or will influence African culture and consciousness?

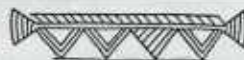
The future of PAPPA may see members help in the technological development of PAPPA nations. PAPPA envisions it members owning property in Africa and having the option to be inducted into a tribe. PAPPA desires that by the year 2000 A.D., people of African ancestry may

correspond in Swahili - a unifying African language. This will be a major step in developing Pan-Africanism into reuniting our fragmented African family.



For more PAPPA information write or call: P.O. Box 438095 Chicago, Il 60643, (312) 779-7292

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## ALKEBU-LAN

Solution to Crossword Challenge

### Across

### Across

5. Missionsaries
11. Benin
13. Koth
15. Turbaktu
17. Om
18. Rod
20. S.A.
21. Axum
24. Nok
25. Ue
27. M.E.
28. Trade
30. Olusa
31. Afm
33. Iendigen
35. Portuguese
36. Etenedaf
38. Chaganis
40. Asserivis
41. Progress
43. Buzansa
44. History

### Down

1. Herbal
2. Indigenasa
3. Kilimanjaro
4. Leaders
5. Mohammed
6. Sook
7. Industrialization
8. Salaria
9. Westphale
10. Equator
12. Raids
14. Customs
16. Iron
19. Mistone
22. Zimbabwe
23. Division
26. Pear
29. Languages
32. Di nd
34. Islam
37. Mazat
39. Ihen
42. Sir

- DB, decibel abbr.  
 ED, education abbr.  
 UL, Underwriters' Laboratories abbr.  
 BAL, balance abbr.  
 ARA, a S constellation  
 DL, demand loan abbr.

### Down

- SB, substantive abbr.  
 RF, radio frequency abbr.  
 AR, Arabic abbr.  
 DO, to perform and action  
 GET, to seize  
 TG, type genus abbr.



## Book Notes

Gyekye, Kwame. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Professor Gyekye (University of Ghana) offers a philosophical clarification and interpretation of the Akan of Ghana and argues that the study of traditional African modes of thought is necessary for the emergence of a modern African philosophy that can be critiqued and developed.

The issues raised question philosophy in African culture and outlines the links of tradition to modernity and of philosophy to other elements of culture. Students of African philosophy will find this study a rewarding reading. The author's knowledge of the Akan are based on his personal experiences and professional background.

The theme of African liberation and expression unite the recent autobiographies of Azania born songstress Miriam Makeba and exiled U.S. African freedom fighter Assata Shakur.

*Makeba's Makeba: My Story* (Nal Books, 1987) and *Shakur's Assata: An Autobiography* (Lawrence Hill & Co., 1987) has added a new insight into how African women who are socially and politically aware grow, live and develop in spite of racial and gender oppression.

Hill, Robert A., ed. *Pan-African Biography*. Los Angeles: Crossroads Press and African Studies Association, 1987.

A collection of essays and proceedings of an colloquium on the lives and contributions of notable men and women of African descent who have help shape the Pan Africanists movement in Africa and throughout the world.

Readers will find this collection an essential tool for understanding the dynamics of the movement, people, and the events that make Pan Africanism a vital part of African history.

Van Sertima, Ivan, ed. *Great African Thinkers, Vol. 1: Cheikh Anta Diop*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987.

An outstanding collection of essays, reviews, interviews and reports by African scholars (works by Diop included) on the life and work of the late great Cheikh Anta Diop (1923-1986). Those who are serious about the African origin of civilization will enjoy this provocative anthology.

Hoskins, Linus A. *The Political Economy of Pan African Nationalism: Historical Origins & Contemporary Forms*. Baltimore: Pyramid Publication, 1987.

An essay on the 15th century origins of Pan African Nationalism, definitions of Pan African Nationalism, the geo-political historical links of Pan African Nationalism to non-alignment and the call for a new international economic order.

# CQ

# CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY

Editor: Prof. the Hon. Rex Nettleford, G.M.

CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY concerns itself with Caribbean culture in all its ramifications. It is an outlet for the publication of the results of research into and considered views on matters Caribbean. Normally an issue contains six to eight articles of original thought, preferably as first publication, as well as of general interest and relevance to the Caribbean islands and neighbouring mainland of Central and South America. The journal comprises prose, essays, poetry and drama criticism and reviews of works by local sculptors, painters, and performing artists (dancers, musicians, dramatists). An overall picture emerges of life in one of the oldest settled parts of the Western Hemisphere in articles devoted to the history, literature, industry, education, sociology, agriculture, ethnology, religion, the creative arts, etc., of the entire group of island states and territories bounded by the Caribbean sea. The journal appears quarterly in March, June, September and December.

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*Brackette Williams*

Women and Crime in Late Nineteenth Century Trinidad  
*David V. Trotman*

Labour and Emancipation in Dominica: Contribution to a Debate  
*Michel-Rolph Trouillot*

Country Preferences of School Children in Seven Caribbean Territories  
*Mike Morrissey*

Public Opinion Perspectives on the University of the West Indies  
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PAPA Board members (left to right), Mary Cunningham, Fred Jackson, Louis Marchman, George Arrington, Letisha McCollum and Sharon Everett.

The seven member PAPA delegation and friends.



Naurice Roberts, Dr. Marchman and Fred Jackson at Radio Ghana interview.

Dr. Marchman, Fred Jackson and Essie Throet and others at PAPA symposium

