

# Program of **The Organization** of Afro-American **Unity (OAAU)**



February 21, 1965

*This document was originally to be delivered on February 21, 1965 at the Audubon Ballroom. On that day, Malcolm X was assassinated shortly after he began to speak at 3 p.m.*

***We, Afro-Americans, people who originated in Africa and now reside in America, speak out against the slavery and oppression inflicted upon us by this racist power structure. We offer to downtrodden Afro-American people courses of action that will conquer oppression, relieve suffering, and convert meaningless struggle into meaningful action.***

***Confident that our purpose will be achieved, we Afro-Americans from all walks of life make the following known:***

## **ESTABLISHMENT**

Having stated our determination, confidence, and resolve, the Organization of Afro-American Unity is hereby established on the 15th day of February, 1965, in the city of New York.

Upon this establishment, the Afro-American people will launch a cultural revolution which will provide the means for restoring our identity that we might rejoin our brothers and sisters on the African continent, culturally, psychologically, economically, and share with them the sweet fruits of freedom from oppression and independence of racist governments.

**I. The Organization of Afro-American Unity welcomes all persons of African origin to come together and dedicate their ideas, skills, and lives to free our people from oppression.**

2. **Branches of the Organization of Afro-American Unity may be established by people of African descent wherever they may be and whatever their ideology -- as long as they be descendants of Africa and dedicated to our one goal: freedom from oppression.**

3. **The basic program of the Organization of Afro-American Unity which is now being presented can and will be modified by the membership, taking into consideration national, regional, and local conditions that require flexible treatment.**

4. **The Organization of Afro-American Unity encourages active participation of each member since we feel that each and every Afro-American has something to contribute to our freedom. Thus each member will be encouraged to participate in the committee of his or her choice.**

5. **Understanding the differences that have been created amongst us by our oppressors in order to keep us divided, the Organization of Afro-American Unity strives to ignore or submerge these artificial divisions by focusing our activities and our loyalties upon our one goal: freedom from oppression.**

## **BASIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**



### **Self-determination**

**We assert that we Afro-Americans have the right to direct and control our lives, our history, and our future rather than to have our destinies determined by American racists, we are determined to rediscover our true African culture, which was crushed and hidden for over four hundred years in order to enslave us and keep us enslaved up to today...**

**We, Afro-Americans – enslaved, oppressed, and denied by a society that proclaims itself the citadel of democracy, are determined to rediscover our history, promote the**

**talents that are suppressed by our racist enslavers, renew the culture that was crushed by a slave government and thereby -- to again become a free people.**

## **National unity**

**Sincerely believing that the future of Afro-Americans is dependent upon our ability to unite our ideas, skills, organizations, and institutions...**

**We, The Organization of Afro-American Unity pledge to join hands and hearts with all people of African origin in a grand alliance by forgetting all the differences that the power structure has created to keep us divided and enslaved. We further pledge to strengthen our common bond and strive toward one goal: freedom from oppression.**

## **THE BASIC UNITY PROGRAM**

**The program of the Organization of Afro-American Unity shall evolve from five strategic points** which are deemed basic and fundamental to our grand alliance. Through our committees we shall proceed in the following general areas.

### **I. Restoration**

In order to enslave the African it was necessary for our enslavers to completely sever our communications with the African continent and the Africans that remained there. **In order to free ourselves from the oppression of our enslavers then, it is absolutely necessary for the Afro-American to restore communications with Africa.**

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will accomplish this goal by means of independent national and international newspapers, publishing ventures, personal contacts, and other available communications media.

We, Afro-Americans, must also communicate to one another the truths about American slavery and the terrible effects it has upon our people. We must study the modern system of slavery in order to free ourselves from it. We must search out all the bare and ugly facts without shame for we are still victims, still slaves -- still oppressed. Our only shame is believing falsehood and not seeking the truth.

We must learn all that we can about ourselves. We will have to know the whole story of how we were kidnapped from Africa; how our ancestors were brutalized, dehumanized, and murdered; and how we are continually kept in a state of slavery for the profit of a system conceived in slavery, built by slaves and dedicated to keeping us enslaved in order to maintain itself.

We must begin to reeducate ourselves and become alert listeners in order to learn as much as we can about the progress of our motherland -- Africa. We must correct in our minds the distorted image that our enslaver has portrayed to us of Africa that he might discourage us from reestablishing communications with her and thus obtain freedom from oppression.

## II. Reorientation

In order to keep the Afro-American enslaved, it was necessary to limit our thinking to the shores of America - to prevent us from identifying our problems with the problems of other peoples of African origin. This made us consider ourselves an isolated minority without allies anywhere.

**The Organization of Afro-American Unity will develop in the Afro-American people a keen awareness of our relationship with the world at large and clarify our roles, rights, and responsibilities as human beings.**

We can accomplish this goal **by becoming well-informed concerning world affairs and understanding that our struggle is part of a larger world struggle of oppressed peoples against all forms of oppression. We must change the thinking of the Afro-American by liberating our minds through the study of philosophies and psychologies, cultures and languages that did not come from our racist oppressors.** Provisions are being made for the study of languages such as Swahili, Hausa, and Arabic. These studies will give our people access to ideas and history of mankind at large and thus increase our mental scope.

We can learn much about Africa by reading informative books and by listening to the experiences of those who have traveled there, but many of us can travel to the land of our choice and experience for ourselves. **The Organization of Afro-American Unity will encourage the Afro-American to travel to Africa, the Caribbean, and to other places where our culture has not been completely crushed by brutality and ruthlessness.**

## III. Education

**After enslaving us, the slave masters developed a racist educational system which justified to its posterity the evil deeds that had been committed against the African people and their descendants.** Too often the slave himself participates so completely in this system that he justifies having been enslaved and oppressed.

**The Organization of Afro-American Unity will devise original educational methods and procedures which will liberate the minds of our children from the vicious lies and distortions that are fed to us from the cradle to keep us mentally enslaved. We encourage Afro-Americans themselves to establish experimental institutes and educational workshops, liberation schools, and child-care centers in the Afro-American communities.**

**We will** influence the choice of textbooks and equipment used by our children in the public schools while at the same time encouraging qualified Afro-Americans to **write and publish the text books needed to liberate our minds.** Until we **completely control our own educational institutions,** we must supplement the formal training of our children by educating them at home.

## IV. Economic security

After the Emancipation Proclamation, when the system of slavery changed from chattel slavery to wage slavery, it was realized that the Afro-American constituted the largest

homogeneous ethnic group with a common origin and common group experience in the United States and, if allowed to exercise economic or political freedom, would in a short period of time own this country. Therefore, racists in this government developed techniques that would keep the Afro-American people economically dependent upon the slave masters --economically slaves -- twentieth-century slaves.

**The Organization of Afro-American Unity will take measures to free our people from economic slavery.** One way of accomplishing this will be to maintain a technician pool: that is, a bank of technicians. In the same manner that blood banks have been established to furnish blood to those who need it at the time it is needed, we must establish a technician bank. We must do this so that the newly independent nations of Africa can turn to us who are their Afro-American brothers for the technicians they will need now and in the future. Thereby we will be developing an open market for the many skills we possess and at the same time we will be supplying Africa with the skills she can best use. This project will therefore be one of mutual cooperation and mutual benefit.

## **V. Self-defense**

**In order to enslave a people and keep them subjugated, their right to self-defense must be denied. They must be constantly terrorized, brutalized, and murdered. These tactics of suppression have been developed to a new high by vicious racists whom the United States government seems unwilling or incapable of dealing with in terms of the law of this land. Before the emancipation it was the Black man who suffered humiliation, torture, castration, and murder. Recently our women and children, more and more, are becoming the victims of savage racists whose appetite for blood increases daily and whose deeds of depravity seem to be openly encouraged by all law enforcement agencies.**

Over five thousand Afro-Americans have been lynched since the Emancipation Proclamation and not one murderer has been brought to justice!

**The Organization of Afro-American Unity, being aware of the increased violence being visited upon the Afro-American and of the open sanction of this violence and murder by the police departments throughout this country and the federal agencies -- do affirm our right and obligation to defend ourselves in order to survive as a people.**

**We encourage the Afro-Americans to defend themselves against the wanton attacks of racist aggressors** whose sole aim is to deny us the guarantees of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights and of the Constitution of the United States.

**The Organization of Afro-American Unity will take those private steps that are necessary to insure the survival of the Afro-American people in the face of racist aggression and the defense of our women and children.** We are within our rights to see to it that the Afro-American people who fulfill their obligations to the United States government (we pay taxes and serve in the armed forces of this country like American citizens do) also exact from this government the obligations that it owes us as a people, or exact these obligations ourselves. Needless to say, among this number we include protection of certain inalienable rights such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In areas where the United States government has shown itself unable and/or unwilling to bring to justice the racist oppressors, murderers, who kill innocent children and adults, the Organization of Afro-American Unity advocates that the Afro-American people insure ourselves that justice is done --whatever the price and by any means necessary.

## NATIONAL CONCERNS



### General terminologies:

**We Afro-Americans feel receptive toward all peoples of goodwill. We are not opposed to multiethnic associations in any walk of life.** In fact, we have had experiences which enable us to **understand how unfortunate it is that human beings have been set apart or aside from each other because of characteristics known as “racial” characteristics.**

However, Afro-Americans did not create the prejudiced background and atmosphere in which we live. And we must face the facts. A “racial” society does exist in stark reality, and not with equality for Black people; so we who are nonwhite must meet the problems inherited from centuries of inequalities and deal with the present situations as rationally as we are able.

The exclusive ethnic quality of our unity is necessary for self-preservation. We say this because our experiences backed up by history show that African culture and Afro-American culture not be accurately recognized and reported and cannot be respectably expressed nor be secure in its survival if we remain the divided, and therefore the helpless, victims of an oppressive society.

We appreciate the fact that when the people involved have real equality and justice, ethnic intermingling can be beneficial to all. We must denounce, however, all people who are oppressive through their policies or actions and who are lacking in justice in their dealings

with other people, whether the injustices proceed from power, class, or “race.” We must be unified in order to be protected from abuse or misuse.

**We consider the word “integration” a misleading, false term.** It carries with it certain implications to which Afro-Americans cannot subscribe. This terminology has been applied to the current regulation projects which are supposedly “acceptable” to some classes of society. This very “acceptable” implies some inherent superiority or inferiority instead of acknowledging the true source of the inequalities involved.

**We have observed that the usage of the term “integration” was designated and promoted by those persons who expect to continue a (nicer) type of ethnic discrimination and who intend to maintain social and economic control of all human contacts by means of imagery, classifications, quotas, and manipulations based on color, national origin, or “racial” background and characteristics.**

**Careful evaluation of recent experiences shows that “integration” actually describes the process by which a white society is (remains) set in a position to use, whenever it chooses to use and however it chooses to use, the best talents of nonwhite people. This power-web continues to build a society wherein the best contributions of Afro-Americans, in fact of all nonwhite people, would continue to be absorbed without note or exploited to benefit a fortunate few while the masses of both white and nonwhite people would remain unequal and unbenefited.**

We are aware that many of us lack sufficient training and are deprived and unprepared as a result of oppression, discrimination, and the resulting discouragement, despair, and resignation. But when we are not qualified, and where we are unprepared, we must help each other and work out plans for bettering our own conditions as Afro-Americans. Then our assertions toward full opportunity can be made on the basis of equality as opposed to the calculated tokens of “integration.” Therefore, we must reject this term as one used by all persons who intend to mislead Afro-Americans.

Another term, “negro,” is erroneously used and is degrading in the eyes of informed and self-respecting persons of African heritage. It denotes stereotyped and debased traits of character and classifies a whole segment of humanity on the basis of false information. From all intelligent viewpoints, it is a badge of slavery and helps to prolong and perpetuate oppression and discrimination.

Persons who recognize the emotional thrust and plain show of disrespect in the Southerner’s use of “nigra” and the general use of “nigger” must also realize that all three words are essentially the same. The other two, “nigra” and “nigger” are blunt and unreceptive. The one representing respectability, “negro,” is merely the same substance in a polished package and spelled with a capital letter. This refinement is added so that a degrading terminology can be legitimately used in general literature and “polite” conversation without embarrassment.

The term “negro” developed from a word in the Spanish language which is actually an adjective (describing word) meaning “black,” that is, the color black. In plain English, if someone said or was called a “black” or a “dark,” even a young child would very naturally question: “a black what?” or “a dark what?” because adjectives do not name, they describe.

Please take note that in order to make use of this mechanism, a word was transferred from another language and deceptively changed in function from an adjective to a noun, which is a naming word. Its application in the nominative (naming) sense was intentionally used to portray persons in a position of objects or “things.” It stamps the article as being “all alike and all the same.” It denotes: a “darkie,” a slave, a subhuman, an ex-slave, a “negro.”

Afro-Americans must re-analyze and particularly question our own use of this term, keeping in mind all the facts. In light of the historical meanings and current implications, all intelligent and informed Afro-Americans and Africans continue to reject its use in the noun form as well as a proper adjective. Its usage shall continue to be considered as unenlightened and objectionable or deliberately offensive whether in speech or writing.

We accept the use of Afro-American, African, and Black man in reference to persons of African heritage. To every other part of mankind goes this measure of just respect. We do not desire more nor shall we accept less.

General considerations:

**Afro-Americans**, like all other people, **have human rights which are inalienable.** This is, **these human rights cannot be legally or justly transferred to another.** **Our human rights belong to us**, as to all people, **through God, not through the wishes nor according to the whims of other men.**

We must consider that fact and other reasons why a proclamation of “Emancipation” should not be revered as a document of liberation. Any previous acceptance of and faith in such a document was based on sentiment, not on reality. This is a serious matter which we Afro-Americans must continue to reevaluate.

The original root-meaning of the word emancipation is: “To deliver up or make over as property by means of a formal act from a purchaser.” We must take note and remember that human beings cannot be justly bought or sold nor can their human rights be legally or justly taken away.

Slavery was, and still is, a criminal institution, that is: crime en masse. No matter what form it takes, subtle rules and policies, apartheid, etc., **slavery and oppression of human rights stand as major crimes against God and humanity.** Therefore, to relegate or change the state of such criminal deeds by means of vague legislation and noble euphemisms gives an honor to horrible commitments that is totally inappropriate.

Full implications and concomitant harvests were generally misunderstood by our foreparents and are still misunderstood or avoided by some Afro-Americans today. However, the facts remain; and we, as enlightened Afro-Americans, will not praise and encourage any belief in emancipation. Afro-Americans everywhere must realize that to retain faith in such an idea means acceptance of being property and, therefore, less than a human being. This matter is a crucial one that Afro-Americans must continue to reexamine.

## **WORLDWIDE CONCERNS**

The time is past due for us to internationalize the problems of Afro-Americans. We have been too slow in recognizing the link in the fate of Africans with the fate of Afro-Americans. We have been too unknowing to understand and too misdirected to ask our African brothers and sisters to help us mend the chain of our heritage.

Our African relatives who are in a majority in their own country have found it very difficult to gain independence from a minority. It is that much more difficult for Afro-Americans who are a minority away from the motherland and still oppressed by those who encourage the crushing of our African identity.

We can appreciate the material progress and recognize the opportunities available in the highly industrialized and affluent American society. Yet, we who are nonwhite face daily miseries resulting directly or indirectly from a systematic discrimination against us because of our God-given colors. These factors cause us to remember that our being born in America was an act of fate stemming from the separation of our foreparents from Africa; not by choice, but by force.

We have for many years been divided among ourselves through deceptions and misunderstandings created by our enslavers, but we do here and now express our desires and intent to draw closer and be restored in knowledge and spirit through renewed relations and kinships with the African peoples. We further realize that our human rights, so long suppressed, are the rights of all mankind everywhere.

In light of all of our experiences and knowledge of the past, we, as Afro-Americans, declare recognition, sympathy, and admiration for all peoples and nations who are striving, as we are, toward self-realization and complete freedom from oppression.

The civil rights bill is a similarly misleading, misinterpreted document of legislation. The premise of its design and application is not respectable in the eyes of men who recognize what personal freedom involves and entails. Afro-Americans must answer this question for themselves: What makes this special bill necessary?

The only document that is in order and deserved with regard to the acts perpetuated through slavery and oppression prolonged to this day is a Declaration of condemnation. And the only legislation worthy of consideration or endorsement by Afro-Americans, the victims of these tragic institutions, is a Proclamation of Restitution. We Afro-Americans must keep these facts ever in mind.

We must continue to internationalize our philosophies and contacts toward assuming full human rights which include all the civil rights appertaining thereto. With complete understanding of our heritage as Afro-Americans, we must not do less.

## **Committees of the Organization of Afro-American Unity:**

**The Cultural Committee**

**The Economic Committee**

**The Educational Committee**

**The Political Committee**

**The Publications Committee**

**The Social Committee**

**The Self-Defense Committee**

**The Youth Committee**

***Staff committees: Finance, Fund-raising, Legal, Membership***

*For further information on the Organization of Afro-American Unity, write:*

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2090 Seventh Ave., Suite 128

New York 27, N.Y.

*For speedier responses, address correspondence to a particular committee. For example, if you are interested in joining or establishing a chapter:*

Membership Committee,

Organization of Afro-American Unity,

2090 Seventh Ave., Suite 128,

New York 27, NY.