

BEYOND THE RHETORIC

By Harry C. Alford

Time for a New Black Organization

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, is about to have another annual convention. It is fitting that the venue will be Detroit, a city void of viable Black economic empowerment, education and real political vision.

All in a place that is 83% Black.

As the saying goes “If something is wrong, someone Black did it or let it happen”.

Detroit
is broken.

Black school board, Black politicians at all levels and nothing that amounts to a hill of beans is happening for the advancement of Black folks.

It is also not surprising that the nation’s largest NAACP chapter is located in
Detroit

.

It’s crazy.

I was asked, strangely by a white person, to come and partake in a press conference that will publicly criticize the leadership of the NAACP and demand significant changes.

That would be shameful to the legacy of this institution.

My father was a lifetime member of this organization and my uncle, Fred Brown, ran the Ventura County, CA chapter for decades. We shouldn’t do this.

I have an unconditional love for this great institution.

However, that does not exempt it from scrutiny or constructive criticism.

Everyone seems to be anxious about doing something different in the civil rights arena - not

only nationally but globally.

Now is the time for something different.

Extreme rightists want to return to Jim Crow and we fight it like wimps.

We can't teach our children reading and math skills past the eighth grade level.

Our unemployment remains in the double digits despite the best overall levels in some time for the nation as a whole.

People in our communities are being gentrified and local Black governments seem to be encouraging it rather than preventing it.

Guns and crack are more available than books or good encouraging movies.

In fact, crime, especially drugs, is the biggest competitor to new entrepreneurship as a generator of economic interaction.

Right now, there is no civil rights organization, directed by the Black community that is actually doing progressive and productive work.

Beholding to their few sponsors, they cannot dwell into the arena of pure advocacy for Black communities.

What this world needs is a new self – funded institution dedicated to the civil rights and economic vitality of Black communities everywhere.

We need a major convention.

An organizing convention that will be democratic and well structured to prevent cliques or dictators from manipulating and will allow a fluid movement to address a written Strategic Plan and an understandable mission. No principals from existing organizations need apply.

An organizing committee needs to start in
Washington

,
DC
, the center of the free world.

This organizing committee, if it has any worth and creditability will grow quickly.

If it does not, it will be duplicated and wither away. Another will take its place until we get it right.
Funding?

That's pretty simple. 40 million African Americans have nearly \$1 trillion dollars per year in disposable income.

A membership fee of \$5 should produce millions in contributions if the message and Plan are clear.

A few million dollars with the right structure, management and Plan will be quite sufficient.

The leadership, board and officers, should be few but totally dedicated.

The Strategic Plan, concise but comprehensive or shall we say succinct.

The implementation is key and must be deployed in a very simplistic fashion.

Oh, how sweet was my elementary educational experience.

Our kindergarten teacher was Mrs. Womack who charmed us into wanting to learn and explore.

Our first thru third grade teacher was Mrs. Meyers (that's right, three straight years).

She used repetition to give us the gift of reading, writing, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing.

When she got through with us we all had it down – everyone!

This included the new immigrants flowing in from
China
and
Mexico
.

They had functional English by the third grade.

By the time we got into high school, we could handle anything they threw at us.

By the time we grew up, being unemployed was actually inconceivable to my crew.

The question was “How far do you want to go? How wealthy do you want to be?”

Today, these questions seem so remote.

This new organization can defeat the shameless state of our educational performance as a starter.

From there, we can move to the next shame.

In regards to
Africa
, we can simply drill a water well in every village.

That alone would eliminate the majority of annual child deaths in the continent.

It can be done for about \$100 per well.

I just don't know where the \$billions spent by USAID go.

The answers are right before us.

We just need an organization that is committed to it and geared for it.

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