

An Open Letter To Black Americans

It Is Time To Bring Back Black

In recent years some nationally prominent Black leaders have complained that they resent being known as Black leaders, they say they want the world to know they are capable of leading anybody. Rather than demonstrate that leadership by leading their own people to the necessary levels of self-sufficiency and competitiveness, these leaders have abandoned the critical issues facing Black people and have begun to chase an ambiguous romanticized notion of alliances with other groups without any demonstration or even an explanation as to how these alliances will actually empower Black people.

For decades these leaders have stood on the shoulders of the Black community to challenge and threaten corporate America in what we were told was a struggle for economic justice, and while the Black community is still being exploited by corporate America these nationally prominent Black leaders acknowledge that their operating budgets are now sustained by their corporate sponsors. It appears as though these leaders, a small cluster of their friends and, in some instances, members of their own families are the only ones to have received concessions from the nation's major corporations. This mis-leadership is precisely what noted sociologist Max Weber warned against when he made the distinction between living off politics and living for politics, Weber contends, "He who strives to make politics a permanent source off income lives off politics as a vocation, whereas he who does not do this lives for politics."

Leaders not only examine issues and point out inherent problems; they also craft solutions and lead by example. These nationally prominent Black leaders and organizations have actually abandoned the specific needs of Black people, Case in point: Black Americans have never received proportional benefits for the time, energy, and resources that they have devoted to voting. No major party or candidate has delivered benefits to Black people in return for their votes. Still these nationally prominent Black leaders tell Blacks simply to vote, while politicians hide behind mythical concepts and broad groupings, like people of color, minorities, poor people, multi-culture, and diversity in order to justify doing nothing specifically for Blacks in return for their votes. Unless the politician or political party is committed to repairing the damage done to Blacks by centuries of historical inequities, telling Blacks to just vote is to engage Blacks in nothing more than a keep busy activity. Too often these nationally prominent leaders have engaged in a flawed analysis of the problems

confronting Blacks, and as a result have offered inadequate solutions.

Black people are offered a meaningless covenant with America that leaves all the power and resources firmly in the hands of white power brokers. These leaders have cooperated with major white developers in securing huge development contracts to build anything they please, from Stadiums in downtown Brooklyn to a \$1 billion urban riverfront in Cincinnati, Ohio. Rather than secure the development project itself for a consortium of Black developers they, on behalf of the white developers, urge Black people to accept temporary dead end jobs as the Black benefits, jobs they would never allow their own children to accept.

These prominent leaders argue that unemployment is so high among Blacks that any job is of value. When you consider that unemployment among Asians is 0%, among Arabs 0%, Hispanics 4.6%, with Hispanics receiving 41% of all new jobs since 2004, and among whites unemployment is 4.5%, it is clear that other groups have an economic plan working in and for their communities. With unemployment at 48 to 50% in Black urban centers throughout the country and thereby making any job acceptable, the real question becomes, how is it that under their watch unemployment among Blacks remains twice the national rate that it was for all Americans during the Great Depression of the 1930's. Black leaders, where is your economic strategy to empower Black America?

While ignoring the work being done to revitalize Black communities by lesser known Blacks in various cities, and in some instances even moving to block and discourage those efforts, these prominent Black leaders have agreed to become the mouthpiece for other groups in order to make the agendas of those groups sound like an extension of the civil rights movement. Black leaders should be taking Black people to the next level, addressing the unfinished business of our civil rights movement, which will then make our people politically and economically competitive and self-sufficient.

Allowing any and all groups to use broad terms like diversity, people of color, and minorities is a ploy to avoid addressing the specific needs of Blacks, and to equate the grievances of these groups to the historical suffering of Black people does Blacks and history a great disservice. For over a century and a half, Blacks in America have marched and protested against every perceived affront. Blacks have marched and sued for equal rights, minority rights, women's rights, poor people's rights, gay rights, workers rights, voting rights, and now immigrant rights. Blacks have held hands, sung songs, prayed and swayed with everyone, yet have barely moved an inch economically and politically in terms of real power and influence.

Blacks have the strongest legal and moral grounds for justice due than any other group, but have not enjoyed the full support of any of these other

groups. Given our history of struggle we are offended by these national Black leaders and organizations that scold and chastise us for not embracing their newest gimmick to impress white power brokers, that of immigrant rights. They don't seem to understand that there are still critical issues unresolved that have particular consequences for Blacks.

Enough is enough, Black people are in need of leaders who without apology are committed to the very real needs of Black Americans, We urge the leaders who feel trapped by their Blackness to go quickly to the task of providing leadership for all these other groups so that we can get away from their mis-leadership long enough to get out of our current political and economic ditch.

It Is Time To Bring Back Black, and hundreds of thousands of us are ready to do just that. What about you?

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