

# The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r

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African Americans and the African world.

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## **The Purpose of Education for Black People Worrill's World By Dr. Conrad W. Worrill, PhD BlackCommentator.com Columnist**

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The issue of the purpose of education for Black people should be reviewed over and over again given our continued struggle to control our educational destiny.

The current public school crisis in America demands that the African Community in America aggressively play an assertive role in the movement to make changes in one of the most important institutions in this country - the Public School System. However, in participating in this movement, it is imperative that we re-examine the definition of education and its relationship to power and specifically, Black Power.

Education is the process of instilling the values of a society, group, nation, race, or ethnic group. It is the method by which people are taught the relationship to their families, communities, nation, race, and the world. Further, education defines the function of society and strives to help one become an active participant in the growth and development of a given society, nation, race, and ethnic group. It is in this context that we understand that education is an important process in helping a people acquire power for the perpetuation of their interests.

In this case, the education we should pursue is the kind of education that will enable African people in America to organize to achieve Black Power.

It should be obvious by now that most African children in America who attend the public schools of America are not receiving an education. At best it can be called

training. That is, learning the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. In many instances, this kind of training is occurring on a very minimal basis with African in America children.

It is important that we consult one of our great educators, Carter G. Woodson, in helping to sum up this awesome problem of education that keeps Africans in America in a constant state of mental captivity. Brother Woodson stated in his great book, published in 1933, [\*The Mis-Education of The Negro\*](#) , that, "The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of others." Woodson made it clear that Africans in America being educated in this manner is a hopeless liability to the race. This is still at the heart of our educational problem today.

Therefore, our task becomes one of the continued struggles to re-conceptualize the mission of education for our people. This re-conceptualization must be based on the premise that Woodson set forth when he said, "The race will free itself from exploiters just as soon as it decides to do so. No one else can accomplish this task for the race. It must plan and do for itself." We will never acquire real power if this does not happen.

Essentially, our mission should be that of establishing our own educational agenda that is based on creating a new educational ethos. The present ethos instills in African children in America the idea that if you go to school and get an education you will get a job. We should know by now that there is not necessarily a correlation between going to school and getting a job. It definitely has nothing to do with the upliftment of our race.

The task of re-conceptualizing a new educational ethos is to understand that the mission of our education should be to make a whole people again as the Reparations Movement is demanding. Making us whole again is a process that defines education in the context of our own political, economic, cultural, and spiritual needs.

This new educational ethos must rest on the idea that the group interests of our race are more important than those of any individual. Dr. Anderson Thompson calls this the "African Principle." In other words, the only way we will become liberated and independent is through group thinking and group action C not as individuals. We must work to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number.

Succinctly stated, our purpose for becoming educated should be one of helping to build a movement to liberate us from the oppression of white supremacy and racism so that we can build a new social, political, cultural, economic, and spiritual order for ourselves as we struggle to link up with African people around the world.

This kind of education must facilitate the re-stimulation of the extended African in American family foundation as we struggle to become an economically self-sufficient people who produce, process, distribute, wholesale and retail like everyone else in the world.

Finally, this new educational ethos must instill in us the spirit of producing, the spirit of building, and the spirit of controlling what we create. Anything short of this will merely


mimic the education of our oppressors and we will continue to be their subjects, to do and be whatever they choose.


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