

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

An independent weekly internet magazine —
dedicated to the movement for economic justice,
social justice and peace - Providing commentary,
analysis and investigations on issues affecting
African Americans and the African world.

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Dec 13, 2012 - Issue 498

The Kwanzaa Season and Economics Worrill's World By Dr. Conrad W. Worrill, PhD BC Columnist

Kwanzaa is an African in America celebration based on African agricultural/harvest celebrations and collective principles which contribute to the unity and development our community in the United States. *This is the 46th anniversary of Kwanzaa and the 43rd year of its celebration in Chicago.*

Kwanzaa was created to introduce African people in America to new values. Kwanzaa is a seven day celebration that is held from December 26 to January 1. These new values are called the *Nguzo Saba* or the seven principles of Blackness, that "if practiced would give them (us) a set of priorities and commitments which would enhance their (our) human possibilities and lead to their (our) liberation and a higher level of human life."

The United States economy is suffering from the white supremacy arrogance of centuries of brutal exploitation of the world's resources and its people.

This era of United States history demands that African people in America place a greater degree of emphasis on our collective economic salvation. Once again, the old truth that "Black people are the last hired and the first fired," is surfacing itself throughout the major employment centers in this country.

Given this economic crisis, the Kwanzaa season helps us place the question of economics on the agenda of our struggle. The eradication of our economic slave condition must continue to be a major challenge

as we enter the twenty-first-century.

It cannot be stated enough that we are far too dependent on Europeans and Asians for our food, clothing and shelter.

The principle we commemorate during the Kwanzaa season that speaks to this issue is *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics). This principle encourages African people in America "to build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together." On the fourth day of Kwanzaa, Wednesday, December 29th, this principle is celebrated.

In this regard, it is important, once again, to state Malcolm X's economic philosophy of Black Nationalism. Malcolm said:

"We must be re-educated to the importance of controlling the economy in which we live by owning and operating the business in the community we live in and developing some industry that will employ our people so we won't have to boycott and picket other people in other communities to get a job. We must understand the importance of spending money in the community in which we live."

Malcolm went on to say that, "The neighborhoods in which you spend your money become richer and richer and the neighborhoods in which the money is taken out of becomes poorer and poorer. This creates slums- all the wealth leaves."

Finally, speaking on the topic of economic philosophy of Black nationalism, Malcolm continues by pointing out:

"Even when we try to spend money in our own community we don't. Business is controlled by outsiders who don't live in the community because we don't know the importance of owning and operating businesses ourselves. So money leaves the community in a basket at sundown. We must control our own economy."

One important activity African American people should practice during the Kwanzaa season is doing business with each other, and continue this practice throughout the year.

In next to the final chapter of Dr. Chancellor Williams classic book, *The*

Destruction of Black Civilization, he addresses the issue of "Organizing A Race For Action." Dr. Williams explains that this organizing for racial action should have as a major component, "The Division of Economic Planning and Development." He explains that:

"The Division of Economic Planning and Development should be the foundation of the organized efforts and a principal source of support and promotion of the most important activities of the whole race. A guiding principle should be that all promoted community enterprises shall be cooperatively owned and controlled by the people of the community and that each enterprise be highly trained management and competent service personnel."

In this connection, Dr. Williams makes this observation:

"The second great understanding should be that economic activities are so fundamental in any truly upward movement, so clearly indispensable at this stage in history, that it should be unnecessary to state it even."

If we are ever to become a free and independent people, we must organize the race for action.

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