



Ujamaa

News for International African American Merchants Association Customers
In This Issue: *Proposal for National Black Economic Development Corp.*

"Up You Mighty Race, You Can Accomplish What You Will" - Marcus Garvey

Proposal for a Nationwide Black Economic Development Corporation -- Sponsored by the Black Panther Party Reunion

We propose that the former members of the Black Panther Party establish a nationwide *Black Economic Development Corporation* for the purpose of financing the startups of our community ventures and institutions across this nation.

Finding the money and business know-how to establish small businesses and community institutions has been a constant problem especially for those of us who served the people "body and soul". We returned to our respective cities where sometimes those in positions of influence didn't feel it particularly imperative to listen to the people or assist in any concrete way in the building of an economic infrastructure owned and controlled by our people, that will also support the community programs

necessary for the cohesiveness and survival of the people in our community.

We've been to different conferences and speaking engagements where our young people invariably ask what can they do, how can they struggle, participate in a movement and still provide food, clothing, and housing for themselves and their families.

Let us make one thing perfectly clear, there is no vanguard movement without structure or organization. And if we wait around for someone else to come along and form this structure, we will just see another group born mimicking the Party, or something worse, they'll be coming after us. Who, but the Panthers who survived, can answer and give guidance to these eager young people?

We had elder advisers all across this country, some very earnest and well meaning souls, but they didn't have the experiences and determination of the survivors of the "*Panther Wars*".

A Black Panther Party sponsored nationwide Black Economic Development Corporation (BEDC, BPP) with leadership representing all sections of the country, in constant communications, and with education and training for our youth to groom them for day to day operations. This structure (BEDC, BPP) would be the vehicle by



The Panther

which the grassroots could establish an economic base from which to give voice to their political necessities and aspirations.

—editorial—

U.S. Firms Sued for Slave Reparations

Three top U.S. Companies were named in a lawsuit on Tuesday filed on behalf of black Americans descended from slaves, the first-ever class action seeking reparations from firms for profiting from slavery. Aetna Inc., CSX Corp. And Fleet Boston

Financial Corp. were named in a lawsuit filed in Brooklyn federal court by Deadria Farmer Paellman, a 36 year old black activist, "on behalf of herself and all other persons similarly situated."

The suit may be the harbinger of further legal moves in the campaign by some of the country's nearly 40 million blacks to be compensated for the suffering of their ancestors at the hands of slave holders.

Plaintiff attorneys said the suit was the first class-action seeking slavery compensation from U.S. Companies and said 12 other companies would be getting letters in the coming days requesting a dialogue on a settlement. The other companies were not named.

The lawsuit said the practice of slavery constituted "an immoral and inhumane deprivation of Africans' lives, liberty, African citizenship rights and cultural heritage...and further deprived them of the fruits of their own labor."

Bruce Nagel, one of the lead plaintiff attorneys,

said the complaint did not contain a monetary damage figure.

FleetBoston Financial did not return a call seeking comment and CSX was unavailable.

"We have not been served with a lawsuit," said Aetna spokesman Fred Laberge. "We do not believe a court would permit a lawsuit over events which — however regrettable — occurred hundreds of years ago. These issues in no way reflect Aetna today."

The lawsuit states that over eight million Africans and their descendants were enslaved from 1619 to 1865, many brought to the Americas to work as slaves on tobacco farms, cotton and sugar plantations.

—REUTERS—

Challenges for the African Union

In his keynote speech to the *Symposium on the African Union* in Addis Ababa, Abdul Mohammed of the *InterAfrica Group* spoke of the challenges for the *African Union*.

"The creation of political and economic unity across the African continent has been a dream of Africans for many decades, and realizing this dream is a great responsibility that falls upon African leaders today. For ordinary

Africans unity is a powerful impulse. I hope that this Symposium today, can play a role in identifying how we can move forward on the realization of the African Union", he said.



He further stated, "The quest for unity in Africa is what brings us here. Unity in Africa has a deep historical resonance: It was the goal of the fathers of independence and has remained the basic aspiration of African citizens across the continent. Political and economic unity in Africa is not an alien idea, or a program imposed from outside. On the contrary, it springs from the very roots of African identity, which has long resisted being arbitrarily divided into national citizenship.

"Africa has seen many false starts in the last few decades. How do we know that this is not just another focus for misplaced enthusiasm? Will the current initiatives fall by the wayside? Will the world continue to mock Africa

as the land of broken promises, of criminalized and failed states that inevitably subvert the best intentions of their peoples and their development partners? There are some good

reasons to hope that things may be different this time around. The decisions of greater unity, for better governance, for improved economic management, for greater democracy, are made because of inescapable pressures, both internal and external, that really force us to come to terms with the collective realities that we are facing".

"The root of our recovery at the national and subregional and continental level is recognizing what has gone wrong, and accepting these realities. Societies that have solved their basic problems of conflict and misgovernment have done so, first and foremost, by allowing free debate and open exchange of ideas. Where there is secrecy and censorship, there we see that

corruption, conflict and complacency thrive. Sunlight, they say, is the best disinfectant".

"Across Africa, there is genuine commitment to solving the most pressing problems facing us. Africans are supremely skilled at surviving. Our people have managed to not only survive, but even to build businesses and preserve vibrant communities, in countries whose states have collapsed such as Somalia, or where the formal economy has disintegrated, such as much of the Congo. If we look at the economic statistics for the continent most of us should have starved to death long ago. But we are resourceful and resilient: we have a habit of confounding the worst predictions. The HIV/AIDS pandemic will test those survival skills to the limit, but I have no doubt that Africa will overcome this pandemic, hopefully sooner rather than later.

"But how are we to transform this expertise at coping into the economic and governance capacity necessary to put Africa on the road to conquering poverty and achieving democracy and human rights, as well as integration and unity?" "The real challenge we face is the practical application of these

principles. How can these be scaled up to bring effective, sustainable change to the whole continent? This requires institutional capacities and effective coalitions. We know all-too-well that statements of intent are not enough on their own. The history of modern Africa is littered with failed institutions and initiatives that have not been followed through to completion, of promises that have been broken. Building an effective *African Union* will have a tremendous impact in breaking this cycle of raised hopes and then disappointment.

—ALL.AFRICA.COM—

The Need for a Common Marketplace Strategy - Wm. Brown

As African American entrepreneurs, we exist at a time, in a world of great flux and transformation. We have witnessed the influx of various ethnic intrusions into our community's economy. Resulting in further outside control of our financial resources. These outside elements have emerged as the stronger force, able to dictate the process of our community's growth.

We also see in our community the grave lack of economic cohesion and cooperation,

underdevelopment, unemployment, homelessness, disease and black on black crime that plagues our community.

This situation confronts us as struggling minority entrepreneurs with the challenge of organizing ourselves into a Collective Marketing force in our own communities, to define and erect new structures for our economic growth and development that can empower our community to begin to sustain itself into the future.

If we as minority entrepreneurs and consumers, fail to get strategic control and direction of our community's resources, if we fail to attain more advantageous control of the businesses in our community, we cannot create the jobs that will be needed to employ our people, at least on a subsistence level to sustain us into the future.

Our challenge as African American community entrepreneurs is to organize ourselves, prepare, plan and position ourselves to have input into what will happen in our community's economy.

Our task is to begin to take more responsibility, a larger measure of responsibility for our destiny and community's

economic future in a world where economic numerical strength rules. It would be unpardonable in this particular time, in this new millennium to continue to bicker on the need for the integration of our economies, through the creation of a *Common Marketplace Strategy*.

The absence of this type of strategy of economic integration has made us externally vulnerable and others have been allowed to take advantage of our vulnerability, manipulating our community's economy.

In our changing world, we should come together and begin to find a way to include and involve all of our struggling community entrepreneurs, because we know that in unity lies strength to build and move our community forward, in this regard we are proposing the formation of the *International African American Merchants Association*.

Through this organizational democratic process we want to arrange an approach whereby all our people struggling for some form of economic self sufficiency can contribute to a collective process.

The International African American Merchants Association in

this regard will be conducting a series of Black Economic Empowerment workshops, "Agenda 2001", that will be designed to develop economic potential and build financial institutions and

community based cottage-industries, manufacturing, distribution-wholesale-retail outlets.

We want to make our community entrepreneurs aware of the need to approach a new frontier in economic cooperation through the management of our socio-economic affairs that will be integrated into those of our own community's economy.

We know there are many talented individuals in our community with self sufficient skills and talents. Through their own efforts, they have achieved a degree of economic independence. What we need to do is create opportunity for their further growth and development, to create a situation that will allow them to contribute and reinvest in their own community.

We want to work toward a process that gathers our community's entrepreneurs to collectively form a Community Economic Development Agenda that sets forth to build Capital

potential, build "African American Common Market".

What we need to do is join together through organizational efforts, such as IAAMA and network together. Providing workshops, seminars, etc., to train our community's struggling entrepreneurs, to provide the one with support groups, and information necessary to build a strong community economic base of black consumer support. Also, vigorously seeking involvement of black merchants and consumers in group economics.

To build a strong internal economy in our community, we must create a situation that will allow us to capture as much of our community's capital as possible. To do this we must be organized as a networking unit, we'll also need discipline and cooperation.

We need to come together as an economic group, upgrading our skills, talents and capital strength.

Part 2 of this article Next issue

Online Resources for Small Businesses

The Internet is full of advice for entrepreneurs, whether you're thinking

about starting a business, need capital to get going, or are seeking assistance with a particular business problem. Here's a list of useful sites for news, business advice and administrative resources. Can't find what you're seeking here? Then check out the list of small business portals.

News, Advice and Support

These sites offer news, business case studies, office equipment reviews, computer technical support, discussion forums for small-business issues, legal advice, interactive guides for everything from getting financing to writing a marketing plan to finding an executive and more. Some cater to specific communities, such as DIV2000, which focuses on women and minority owned businesses.

Bankrate.com

Bizjournals.com

DIV2000.com

Entrepreneur.com

HomeBusinessResearch.com

IBizResources

Idea Cafe'

Inc.com

Nolo.com

PC Support Center

Power Homebiz Guides

Smallbiztechnology.co

m

Smalloffice.com

Commerce

Connections

ADP's Emerging Business Services offers packages for a wide range of business services such as background checks on job candidates, time and expense reporting, payroll processing and more. It also has an online library of tools, tips and links to additional services.

America's Small Business Center contains links to online credit checks, loan applications, insurance quotes, office equipment suppliers and other essential business services.

AtYourBusiness.com provides Web-based tools and forms for employee management, payroll and benefits administration and other services. Along with its online utilities, it offers news and case studies on human resources and administrative issues.

bCentral provides services for small businesses to increase online visibility. These include search-engine registration, turnkey e-commerce solutions and a banner network that lets businesses advertise on other Web sites. (bCentral is owned by Microsoft, a partner in MSNBC.)

BizBuyer.com has a free service that lets small businesses put out bids on the Web for goods and services.

Africa's Hot Spots



This issue's Hot Spot Angola—

Conflict: civil war between leftist government and right wing guerrilla movement with U.N. Peacekeepers in the middle.

Duration: Roots in the Cold War, but recent resurgence of fighting began in 1998 and U.N. Peace accords all but collapsed in Jan. 1999.

U.S. Involvement: During 1970's and 1980's, Angola received Soviet financial support and Cuban military advisors. UNITA rebels were backed by the CIA and South Africa. UNITA now backed locally by African regimes while Cuban advisors may be returning to government's aid.

Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA was recently killed, and the U.N. is calling on his followers to come in and join the democratic process.

IAAMA

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