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Decolonizing the African Mind

Further Analysis and Strategy

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The central objective in decolonizing the African mind is to overthrow the authority which alien traditions exercise over the African. This demands the dismantling of white supremacist beliefs, and the structures which uphold them, in every area of African life. It must be stressed, however, that decolonization does not mean ignorance of foreign traditions; it simply means denial of their authority and withdrawal of allegiance from them.

-Chinweizu-



Introduction

This paper presents a framework for discussing the psychology of African liberation by using the political terms “colonialism,” “colonization” and “decolonization” as vantage points for contextualizing African American oppression. Over the past 500 years, European ruling elites perfected a method of psychological manipulation and control first discussed from an African perspective by the Nigerian scholar Chinweizu (1987) in his classic *Decolonizing the African Mind*. I call this method “mental” colonization.

Introduced during the era of American slavery through a process 17th, 18th and 19th century English-speaking slaveholders called seasoning, today mental colonization is achieved through deculturalization. Deculturalization is the fuel that drives the engine of mental colonization; both processes turn on a companion process called “mis-education,” and all three are examined in this paper along with their instruments, agents and goals.

Because the African population born and bred in the United States is the classic example of a mentally colonized people, this paper references the 40 million people of African descent in the United States. However, much of what is discussed is applicable to African populations residing throughout the Atlantic diaspora and beyond.

This two-part essay begins with an overview of European colonialism, deculturalization and mis-education. And it concludes with a review of African centered liberatory practices and orientations such as reAfrikanization, sankofa, ma’at and intellectual disobedience. Internalizing these concepts is essential for decolonizing the African mind.

Part I

Typology of European Colonialism: 1645 BCE to Present

Around 3,000 BCE, Aryans (later known as Caucasians) began to settle in the region of Asia known to the modern world as Europe. Over the past 2,000 years, their descendants (today’s Europeans) have practiced consistently and have now perfected three basic types of colonialism. They are: territorial, intellectual, and mental. This section will cursorily address them all.

Perhaps the dominant feature of world history these past five centuries has been the “rise” to world dominance of the Caucasian peoples of western Europe, North America and Australia. In spite of their current “lofty” station, today’s undisputed “lords and masters” of the earth are from very humble origins. They first entered the pages of history as barbaric, nomadic tribes whose sole talent was warfare. Their only early accomplishment of note was the destruction of the Dravidian civilization of ancient India. Later their descendants plundered, pillaged and finally sacked the Roman Empire.

Possessed by demonic forces (Brown, 1998; Ickes, 2001; Mutwa, 2001), the Anglo-Saxons, Gauls and Teutons of England, France and Germany over the past five centuries developed the weaponry and logistics, the justifications and rationales and the strategies and tactics to conquer and colonize the land, knowledge and minds of the indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia, America, Australia and the Pacific. In the 20th century, to decide who would exploit this vast

multitude, Europeans fought two devastating world wars – 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 – that squandered millions of their lives nearly destroying their civilization.

When we focus our attention on Africa, historian Chancellor Williams (1974) tells us that the first Aryans to colonize African territory were the Hyksos (Hebrews) who invaded Kemet (Egypt) in 1645 BCE long after the pyramids were built. Over the centuries, other Aryan/European invaders followed. The Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Portuguese, Spanish, British, French, Dutch, Germans and Italians all came to Africa as conquerors and colonizers with only one intent: to plunder African people of their wealth.

The European “scramble” to colonize Africa did not reach its zenith, however, until 1884-85 when German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck (1815-1898) organized the Berlin Conference. Attended by the French, British, Dutch, Germans and Portuguese, who over the course of several meetings, debated and then formulated the ground rules for conquering and colonizing the whole of Africa. These five, small European states “planned their work and worked their plan” so effectively that by 1915, all of Africa, save Ethiopia was a European colony.

In addition to colonizing African land, Europeans also colonized African knowledge not just to claim it as their own, but also to disconnect Africans from their heritage and culture. Why? Because people who are cut off from their heritage and culture are more easily manipulated and controlled than people who are not. Adisa Ajamu (1997) calls this “intellectual colonialism.”

Beginning with the Hyksos Invasion, the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans each during their period of African occupancy seized control of Kemet’s temple-schools and captured her priest-teachers. Then they plundered her libraries and archives and “borrowed” African philosophical and religious ideas, practices, beliefs and customs, which they later claimed as their own.

The Hebrews, for example, during their stay in Kemet adopted Kemetic names like Moses, customs like circumcision, and beliefs like monotheism. Plato (427-347 BCE), the “father” of western philosophy and tutor of the military leader Europeans call Alexander the Great, was a regular visitor at the great library at Rhakotis, later called Alexandria, from where he “borrowed” numerous books. And Herodotus (484-425 BCE), the father of European history, who actually traveled to Kemet, wrote that the Greek (and later the Roman) upper-classes sent their children to Kemet for higher education and “borrowed” many of their religious ideas from this African nation.

As a consequence of Europe’s successful colonization of African lands and African knowledge, she was able to successfully colonize African minds, and thereby complete the conquest of African people. The 20th century witnessed the globalization of European consciousness and the planetary-wide imposition of European worldviews and life styles as the human norm. No where has this imposition been more thorough than in Africa among the Christianized, western-trained, African intellectuals and other members of the ruling class. The same holds true for Africans in the Americas, and especially the United States.



Deculturalization and Black America: 1500 to Present

Deculturalization is a method of pacification and control perfected over the past 500 years by European ruling elites. This practice involves first the systematic stripping away of the intended victim's ancestral culture and then systematically replacing it with European culture. According to educators Felix Boateng (1990) and Joel Spring (1997) Africans, Asians, Native Americans, (and I would add Native Australians and Pacific Islanders), have all been the victims of this form of psychological and spiritual abuse. Early American slaveholders called this practice seasoning. Today, the academic community calls it deculturalization, but the popular term is brain-washing.

As it affects Africans in the United States, deculturalization is a three-stage process. First, African Americans are quietly taught to feel ashamed of so they will reject their African and Native American heritage. Next, they are taught in schools and churches to admire and respect so they will adopt and practice only their European heritage. And finally, if they obediently submit to this indoctrination, they are rewarded with opportunities to receive even more indoctrination. And ultimately once they have been effectively indoctrinated, they are allowed an opportunity to compete for a "professional" job in the "main stream." And a rare, handpicked few of the most thoroughly indoctrinated (brain-washed) are allowed access to the inner sanctums of White power, prestige and privilege.

The American system of deculturalization has been an extremely effective process. It has successfully brain-washed the majority of African Americans to accept the dominance of Europeans and European institutions over their lives. History teaches us that African prisoners of war (POWs) were subjected to a vicious, European-orchestrated, three to four years of seasoning during which the most important expressions of their African heritage were brutally stripped away from them and brutally replaced with the European colonizer-slave master-oppressor's cultural practices and beliefs.

Africans enslaved in the North American British colonies, for example, were forbidden to use their original African names, languages and religions. They were forced to use their European colonizer-slave master-oppressor's names, language and religion. This is why most Africans born in the United States have European surnames, speak English and practice some form of Christianity. Slavery imposed these European cultural practices on their African ancestors and their descendants blindly continue them unless they take steps to open their eyes to and free their minds of all remnants of European slavery.

Both Boateng (1990) and Spring (1997) identified the public school as a major agent of African American deculturalization (brain-washing). I agree; however, I would add that nearly all American educational institutions – Black, White, public, private, day care to college – must be placed along side the public schools as agents of deculturalization. In fact, no aspect of American education is free of this curse except the African centered independent school whose sole mission if it is functioning properly is to decolonize or re-Africanize Black students and their families.



Mis-Education and Black America: 1933 to Present

The major 20th century instrument of deculturalization was and remains mis-education. Mis-education is the term coined by historian Carter G. Woodson (1933) to describe the destructive effects on the Black mind by schools that use a pedagogy and curriculum that deliberately omits, distorts or trivializes the role of African people in and their seminal contributions to world history and culture.

The American public school, as we previously noted, is a major mis-educator (brain-washer) of African people, and has been since its inception in the 1890s. But it is only one of three agents of mass mis-education used by the White ruling elite to manipulate and control African Americans over the past century. The other two carry equal weight. They are the popular media (print and electronic) and the traditional, mainstream Christian church that proclaims non-Africans as "God's chosen people" and a White Jesus as its "personal savior."

The end goal of mis-education is three-fold: First, to produce African people who identify with and embrace as their own European history, traditions and culture, but who are ambivalent or indifferent toward African history, traditions and culture. Second, to produce Black people who have been what political scientist Jacob Carruthers (1994) calls diseducated, meaning people who have had their intellectual development arrested by the public schools. And, the third and ultimate goal of mis-education is mentacide, a term linked to genocide and diseducation coined in 1984 by Bobby Wright as a label for the European-orchestrated campaign to destroy the African mind as a prelude to destroying African people.

Literally from birth to death, African Americans are awash in a sea of European-designed, mass media disseminated disinformation, misinformation, half-truths and whole lies about the people, history, culture and significance of Africa. This, of course, is no accident. It is part of a finely crafted, century-long campaign to stop African Americans from connecting with their rich ancestral homeland and developing a Pan African worldview. While at the same time, it serves as a cloak under which Europeans can hide from African Americans their plunder of Africa's mineral and biological wealth. Our White rulers and their Black supporters clearly understand that Black mis-education is the backbone of White domination.

Careful analysis of Black institutions that uphold mis-education and Africans who have been crippled by it reveal a number of highly identifiable features. First, these institutions will favor and their patrons will embrace what psychologist Wade Nobles (1986) calls conceptual incarceration. Conceptual incarceration is the term for Black imprisonment in White belief systems and knowledge bases.

When it comes to defining themselves and the world, mis-educated Blacks restrict their range of thought (and action) by their habit of drawing exclusively from their European background. By limiting themselves to this one, small facet of their vast, tricultural heritage, they confine themselves to a tiny, narrow corner of the world where they sit locked in a mental prison (colony) with only one set of lenses (European) to see the world.

By embracing European perspectives exclusively, Africans cut themselves off from self-knowledge. And when that occurs, deculturalization claims another victim. Fortunately, Black conceptual incarceration in large measure is self-imposed. Africans in America can choose to expand their cultural frames of reference and consciously embrace their African and Native American heritages. And when this happens, their conceptual incarceration ends.



Another feature of Black institutions that mis-educate and mis-educated Blacks is what Mwata X (1996) calls learned indifference, which is a pervasive and self-destructive psychological disorder marked by disinterest in issues, causes and organizations that promote the political and economic liberation of African people. By this measure, most of our established Black churches and prestigious Black schools mis-educate, and nearly all of our multi-millionaire Black athletes and super-star Black entertainers are mis-educated, (right along with nine out of ten Black Americans). As casualties in a war they don't even know is being waged, the Black elite have been captured with wealth and fame by the forces of deculturalization.

A third feature of Black mis-education is what I call utangano. Utengano is a Swahili word meaning "disunity" and refers to the deeply entrenched, intergenerational predisposition among Africans to accept dysfunctional divisions in the African family and community as normal. Utengano afflicts Black people who expect and tolerate teen pregnancy, absent fathers, inferior schools, run-down buildings, ineffective leaders and dirty, unsafe streets filled with illicit drugs, alcohol and x-rated music as normal and thus acceptable. But if they were truly educated, they would be outraged by these perversions and committed to changing these wretched conditions or die trying.

Part II

Decolonizing the African Mind: Action Steps

In the American context, decolonizing the African mind means reversing the seasoning process. For those millions of African POWs who survived the horrors of the middle passage, seasoning was a three to four year period of intense and often brutal slave making at the hands and feet of their European captors and their agents. Because it capitalized on our innate, human fear of pain and death, seasoning was so effective as a pacification method that North American slave owners gladly paid a premium for "seasoned" Africans from the Caribbean. For enslaved Africans, seasoning, when successful, laid the foundation for a lifetime of faithful, obedient service to their master and his children.

Effective seasoning, therefore, was the key that opened the door for 350 years of mental colonization of the African American people. Moreover, it allows for present-day Black pacification, manipulation and control by the European ruling elite and their agents. But, if African POWs were taught to be Negro slaves, it is reasonable to believe (like Elijah Muhammad (1897-1975) that a fair number can be re-taught to be free African women and men. Reversing the seasoning process is a constructive way to frame a psychoeducational approach for cleansing African minds of European or Arab cultural infestation

Toward this end, beginning in the late 1960s, perhaps the first African Americans to initiate systematic decolonization were small groups of youth, awakened by the Maroon spirit resounding in the voices of Malcolm X, Kwame Ture, Maulana Karenga, Amiri Baraka and host of others. These decolonizing youth initiated projects of self-discovery intended to remove the European mind set (colony) implanted in their psyches as a result of living in a European dominated society.



To effect sweeping change in their value and belief systems, these young truth-seekers practiced self-definition, self-determination and self-defense. As a way of liberating themselves and others from the shackles of mis-education and diseducation, many established independent schools dedicated to developing African centered curriculum and pedagogy while others established research organizations dedicated to recovering traditional African knowledge bases.

The Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI) established in 1972 (www.cibi.org) and the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization (ASCAC) established in 1984 (www.ascac.org) are prime examples, indeed symbols, of this search for the deeper meaning of being African in the late 20th century. CIBI is an educational association and ASCAC is a research association. Both were established by this community of freedom seeking, culturally conscious, African men and women.

As CIBI and ASCAC founders quickly discovered, the first step toward decolonizing the African mind is to identify a re-placement worldview on which to frame a liberated African future. In other words, once the forces of mental colonization are defeated and their colonial government expelled, its infrastructure razed and the battle site cleansed, what type of structures do we install in this newly liberated space to unleash genius and thwart re-colonization efforts? The remainder of this essay will begin to answer this question.

Decolonization is a journey of self-discovery culminating in a reawakening and a reorientation. It involves a conscious decision to first uncover, uproot and remove all vestiges of slavery imposed European or Arab values and beliefs ingested over centuries of mis-education that are detrimental to present-day African family stability and African community empowerment. Next, as the colony is being dismantled, Africans must fill the liberated spaces with those life-sustaining social values, beliefs and customs that enabled their ancestors to establish stable, autonomous families and communities prior to the Arab or European invasions and conquest of their societies.

Like all transforming, libratory states, decolonization is actually a protracted process demanding constant vigilance and intense dedication to task. It cannot be achieved in a single evening by reading a single book or by attending a single lecture or even by taking a single course. However, reading, lectures, courses (along with study groups and conferences), are critical to the success of any decolonization project. Because it is an effort to recover and reconnect with the best of traditional African culture as a means of ending European dominance of the African psyche, for Africans in the Americas, decolonization is Re-Africanization.

Re-Africanization is a term popularized by President Ahmed Sekou Toure (1922-1984) of Guinea and PAIGC-founder Amilcar Cabral (1931-1973) of Guinea-Bissau to promote a return to traditional African values and institutions among their citizens. In the American context, reAfrikanization (Akoto & Akoto, 2000) is a long-term, transgenerational, family project. Among other things, it demands family-wide embrace of select African centered values, beliefs and practices regarding the family and how it organizes and allocates its financial and human resources. To pull all of this together takes years of immersion in traditional African cultural values and daily living in an African centered mental space practicing traditional and liberatory African values, beliefs, orientations and perspectives.

Over the past 30 years, CIBI and ASCAC activists and others seeking to reAfrikanize have found Maulana Karenga's seven-part value system, the Nguzo Saba, to be a highly effectively decolonization tool. Other useful tools are Mukasa Afrika's, five pillars of Afrikan spirituality, the Miamba Tano and my six jewels of African centered leadership, the Johari Sita.



Constant reAfrikanization undermines the colony's legitimacy and weakens its infrastructure to the point where frontal attacks can be launched against its outposts and command centers. If successful, all external European trappings are discarded and the once deculturated Negro reemerges with an African name, speaking an African language, wearing African fashions and praying to an African God. Once this occurs, the lost child has found his/her way back home.

On a deeper, internal level, however, extreme individualism along with sexism, classism, racism, geocide and other European social practices and cultural orientations that give rise to aberrations like conceptual incarceration, learned indifference and utangano must be expunged from the value and belief systems. Selfish and divisive Europeancentric perspectives and behaviors must give way to wholesome, life affirming, Africancentric, communal values like community service, cooperation, and sharing.

The second step in the battle to decolonize the African mind requires dismantling the instrument of deculturalization and neutralizing the agents of mis-education previously discussed in this paper. In essence, this means rejecting the pro-European/anti-African teachings of the Christian church or Islamic mosque, disregarding the pro-European/anti-African messages conveyed by the popular media and deconstructing the pro-European/anti-African indoctrination of the public schools. It also means implementing the first of three five-year, comprehensive, African centered, self-education program designed to end one's conceptual incarceration, learned indifference, and utangano. A starting point perhaps is the ideas presented in this paper and the books listed as Sources and Essential Readings.

Furthermore, African youth in the United States can rid themselves of time-squandering, resource-draining behaviors like conspicuous consumption of European produced goods and services, over reliance on TV, video games, sporting events and night clubs as entertainment and the other debilitating orientations discussed in this paper with sankofa. Sankofa is a philosophical principle and social custom among the Akan-speaking people of Ghana, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire that holds that wisdom is learning from the past to both understand the present and shape the future. Implicit in sankofa is the deep study/reading of African history and the application of its lessons from 2 million BCE to the present. For 21st century Africans, sankofa is the first step on the road to mental freedom.

Sankofa practitioners understand that Black deculturalization is essentially Black mis-education. And the cure for Black mis-education is to read, discuss, study, learn and then use the lessons of African history along with the best of African culture as offensive weapons in the war against the European or Arab colonial outpost implanted in the African psyche.

To decolonize the African mind, African freedom-seekers must destroy their deeply rooted, interconnecting networks of internalized European or Arab values and beliefs. These are the invisible chains of mental slavery that for centuries have allowed Europeans and Arabs to manipulate and control them, first as slaves and religious converts, and now as pseudo-citizens. Sankofa practice is an indispensable weapon in the war to decolonize or re-Africanize the African mind.

Another powerful weapon against deculturalization-mis-education is to embrace through daily practice the Kemetic principle of ma'at. In ancient African metaphysics, ma'at was synonymous with righteousness. And, it was considered the most important spiritual principle because it sustains the cosmos. Righteousness was thought to permeate the universe as truth, justice, order, harmony and balance.



In the view of ancient Africans of the Nile River Valley, God's will is that human society, as a microcosm of the universe, function in accordance with ma'at. Hence, to do ma'at is to wisely align oneself with the Divine Order. Because the European world order is rooted in isfet or lies, injustice, deception and manipulation, to do ma'at, (always speaking the truth, demanding justice, and bringing order, harmony and balance) eats away the soft underbelly of this wicked global system like steady rain eats away drought.

A fourth weapon in the struggle to reverse the seasoning process is what I call intellectual disobedience, which is the soul-deep belief that Africans have a moral imperative to resist all attempts by the dominant social order to constrict, restrict or regulate the content of their education. In other words, Africans have the divine right to resist all European efforts at mind control. Implicit in intellectual disobedience, which is the 21st century corollary to philosopher Henry David Thoreau's (1860) notion of civil disobedience, is decolonization.

In the late 1950 and early 1960s, it was the notion of civil disobedience that emboldened Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 – 1968) and others to defy the White political establishment's immoral effort to constrict, restrict and regulate African citizenship rights in this country. Similarly, in the 21st century, intellectual disobedience demands that freedom-seeking Africans defy the White educational establishment's immoral effort to constrict, restrict and regulate our right to resist the imposition of Europeancentric worldviews as the norm. Intellectual disobedience is the ultimate act of decolonization. Moreover, it is the hallmark of a liberated mind.

The ultimate weapon, however, in the African liberatory arsenal is by far the simplest, but the most lethal. Its power lies in its demand that Africans financially support organizations that build African centered independent schools like CIBI and organizations that promotes African centered research like ASCAC. Each organization is a powerful ally in the collective struggle to decolonize the African mind.

Conclusion

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which freed millions of Africans from chattel slavery, perhaps more than any other presidential act, guaranteed the Union's victory in 1865. By the end of the Civil War, the White ruling elite clearly understood that the time had come to end chattel slavery in the United States and assimilate African people into the lowest level of the American social order. So Congress passed the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, which on paper ended chattel slavery, made Africans citizens, and gave Black men the right to vote.

During the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877) following the Civil War in the south, newly freed Africans used their newly won franchise as their saddle and the Republican Party as their horse to ride into to political office in South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana and other southern states. These Black elected officials improved southern life for all people. One example: they wrote and then enacted legislation that paved the way for the south's first public school systems. This was the heyday of Black American political participation until the 1970s ushered in what historians call the "Second Reconstruction."

Reconstruction One came to a violent, bloody end when President Rutherford B. Hayes (1822-1893) withdrew Union troops from Louisiana and South Carolina in 1877-78. This set the stage for the rise of White terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. And over the course of the next

20 years, they literally drove southern Blacks at gunpoint out of American politics and back into the cotton fields, thereby sparking a Black exodus from the rural south that continued until the 1970s. The U.S. Supreme Court drove the final nail into the coffin of Reconstruction in 1896. Its decision in the Plessy v. Ferguson case to uphold racial segregation provided the legal rationale underpinning the American system of apartheid, 1896-1966.

Today, freedom-seeking Black youth must keep in mind that the brain-washing (deculturalization) of their people in this country has been in progress for the past 350 years. But, it has never been completely successful. There have always existed liberated minds within the African American intelligentsia. Jacob Carruthers (1999) calls these scholar-warriors "intellectual maroons." Men like David Walker (1785-1830) and Martin Delany (1812-1885) in the 19th century and Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) and Malcolm X (1925-1965) in the 20th century are sterling examples of Africans who emancipated themselves from European mental bondage by decolonizing their minds.

It brings clarity (and inspiration) to know that Africans in the United States have a 350-year tradition of resistance to European domination and that deculturalization was only one dimension of a larger cycle of European and Arab aggression against African people. African centered historians call this larger cycle of Black destruction "The Maafa." And for Africans in the United States, it includes 263 years of chattel slavery followed by 140 years of mental slavery.

More important, freedom-seeking African youth must stand up and declare total war on their own colonial thinking. They must attack mercilessly its instruments and agents, deconstruct its intellectual base, and thereby break out of conceptual incarceration. Jacob Carruthers (1999) calls this "intellectual warfare." To win the war for their own minds, African youth must immerse themselves in the knowledge bases that gave rise to Kemet, Nubia and Axum as well as ancient Zimbabwe, Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. This will provide them with a solid foundation on which to construct a historically accurate and healthy sense of themselves as modern, 21st century people connected to the world's first and finest civilizations.

Predictably, African Americans under 25 years of age living in reAfrikanizing households and attending African centered schools are prime candidates to achieve permanent decolonization. From amongst their ranks will come the intellectual maroons of the 21st century. Regrettably, millions of African American teenagers and adults from all social classes and economic backgrounds have been so thoroughly and completely colonized (brain-washed) that nothing short of institutionalize deprogramming would pry loose the bars of their conceptual incarceration, learned indifference and utengano.

For our thoroughly seasoned African leadership class, only a long-term, intensive, decolonization procedure would cleanse them sufficiently to begin preliminary restructuring of their African personalities. And only precision weapons like sankofa, ma'at, reAfrikanization and intellectual disobedience will allow them to victoriously engage their internal enemy and decolonize their African minds.



Glossary of Terms

Aryans (Sanskrit) – Fair-skinned, nomadic, war-like people from southern Russia and Iran (Persia) who invaded much of Europe, southwest Asia and India, 2000-1500 BCE. In the 20th century, Adolf Hitler's Nazis claimed descent from the ancient Aryans and embraced their passion for war and conquest. The White Arabs of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran as well as Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco are the Semitic branch of the Aryan-Caucasian-European family (Rajshekar, 1987).

Deculturalization – Three-part process designed and perfected by Europeans that: (1) denigrates to alienate Blacks from their African cultural heritage, i.e., African languages, religions, customs, etc., (2) teaches them to value only the cultural orientations, i.e., languages, religions, customs, etc., of Europeans or Arabs, and (3) assimilates them into a European or Arab dominated social order as their faithful supporters and defenders. The public educational system, the Christian church and the mass media are the prime instruments of American deculturalization, And the Qur'an, the mosque, and Qur'anic school are the chief instruments of Arab deculturalization (Boateng, 1990; Spring, 1997).

European Colonization (1440 CE – Present) – 500-year-long competition among the Europeans (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, U.S. Americans, Germans, and Italians) to set up and maintain African bases of operations to better steal the human, minerals and biological wealth of the world's richest continent for the development of European civilization. The Europeans have colonized successfully African land, institutions and minds.

Maafa (Swahili) – Term popularized by Marimba Ani to signify the 1300-year-long period (652 CE – Present) of African conquest, enslavement, domination, oppression, exploitation and genocide at the hands of Europeans and Arabs (Ani, 1994).

Goals of Mis-Education

Conceptual Incarceration (CI) – State of African intellectual imprisonment in European value and belief systems occasioned by ignorance of African and Native American philosophical, cultural and historical truths. CI is the goal of miseducation, the end result of deculturalization, and the major obstacle to innovative, creative and liberatory African thought and practice (Nobles, 1986).

Diseducation – Public school practice of arresting and undermining the intellectual development of African students resulting in "pervasive, persistent and disproportionate" academic under achievement. Diseducation is a strategy of deculturalization, the maafa and the source of the Black-White student achievement gap (Carruthers, 1994).

Education For All – Termed coined at a 1990 World Bank conference in Thailand to promote western-style primary education in Africa, which serves to "rob Africans of their indigenous knowledge and language" promoting what Dr. Birgit Brock-Utne calls the "recolonization of the African mind" (Brock-Utne, 2000)

Learned Indifference (LI) – Pervasive and debilitating African psychological state characterized by disinterest in issues, causes and organizations that promote the advancement



of African people. LI is a function of conceptual incarceration and the end goal of deculturalization and miseducation (X, 1996).

Mentacide – Deliberate and systematic European-orchestrated process terminating in the destruction of the African mind with the ultimate objective the extirpation of African people. End goal of deculturalization, miseducation and the maafa (Wright, 1984).

Utengano (Swahili) – Deeply entrenched, intergenerational African American predisposition to accept disunity, division and disorder in the African community as normal. Utengano is an expression of learned indifference, an outgrowth of deculturalization, and a strategy of the maafa (Hotep, 2002).

Liberatory Practices

Decolonization – Process of overthrowing and then removing the Europeancentric or Arabcentric value and belief systems (colonies) implanted in our minds by our public school miseducation, our Christian or Islamic indoctrination and mass media manipulation that keep us psychologically, emotionally, materially and spiritually tied to Europeans or Arabs as their victims or servants. To decolonize the African mind is to cleanse and liberate by re-Africanizing the African mind (Chinweizu, 1987).

Intellectual Disobedience – Twenty-first century corollary to Henry David Thoreau's (1860) notion of civil disobedience that holds that African people have a moral imperative to resist all attempts by the European dominated educational hegemony to constrict, restrict or regulate the content of their education (Hotep, 2000).

Ma'at (Mdw Ntr) – Seven thousand-year-old Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) term for the divine law of truth, justice, order, harmony, balance, in short, righteousness. The restoration, maintenance and preservation of ma'at was considered the highest social ideal by the ancient Africans of the Nile River Valley civilizations. Today, it is the motive and goal of all conscious, African freedom fighters (Karenga, 1986; Hilliard, 1994; Carruthers, 1995; Ashby, 1996).

Re-Africanization – Intergenerational, family-based process of reclamation, revivification and reincorporation of African cultural knowledge and values as the prerequisite for establishing a 21st century African social order rooted in the traditional wisdom of African people (Akoto & Akoto, 2000).

Sankofa (Twi) – Akan concept, symbol and social practice adopted by late 20th century Pan African nationalist scholars and activists, which refers to the practice of learning from the past to build for the future. For African people, this means having the desire to not only to understand the worldview of our ancient African ancestors, but also the wisdom to adopt or adapt their social practices and philosophical beliefs when they will help us establish financially independent, emotionally wholesome and nurturing families and autonomous, sovereign, self-sufficient communities. Sankofa practice demands confronting the Maafa by respecting life, nature and the wisdom of our African ancestors, establishing viable extended families, supporting African centered institutions and organizations, and creating social and economic ties throughout the African World Community (Wase, 1998; Akoto & Akoto, 2000).

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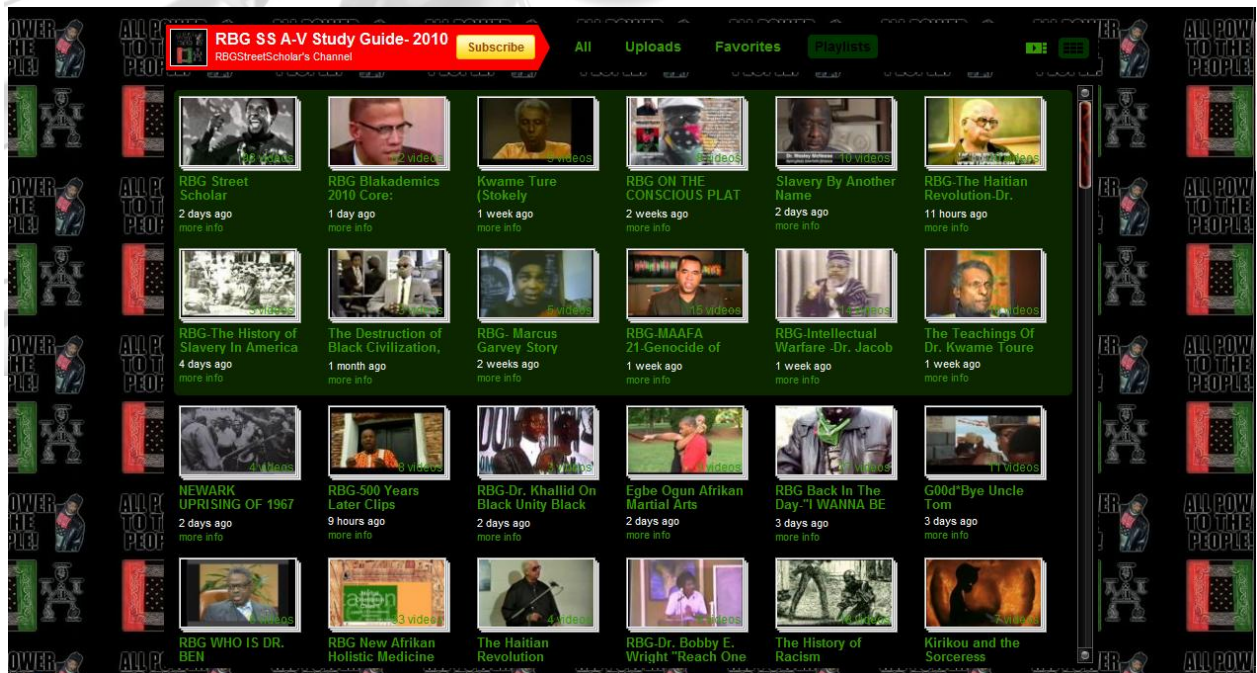
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