

# THE BLACK AMER

*(Editor's Note: This article is reprinted by popular request from the May 24, 1968 edition of Muhammad Speaks. The great wisdom contained in this illuminating article by Messenger Muhammad, has stood the measure of time, as though it were written just this morning.*

*And yet, in the five years since this article was written The Honorable Elijah Muhammad has brought into reality for us, a truly great BANK FOR THE BLACK MAN,—The Guaranty Bank and Trust Co., 68th St. at S. Stony Island Ave., Chicago, Illinois—though the wealthy of our kind have yet to come forward and help Him.*

*LET US NOT wait another five years before we recognize the wisdom of Messenger Muhammad's Divine Leadership for us.)*

By Elijah Muhammad  
Messenger of Allah

According to statistics there are between 20 and 30 million of us, the people who are members of the Original Black people of our earth. This census of our people here in America means that we are a Nation. We are no longer a few people to be sold on blocks from one plantation owner to another.

We are a Nation that should be dusting off the slave dust from our "new educational garments." But there are so many of us who refuse to whisk this dust off our educated brains and stand up like other men of other nations to strengthen and preserve our Nation.

WE MUST think of providing for ourselves. And this means to take our place as the provider for our many millions of people. We have not taken the responsibility of trying to do any economically worthwhile work for ourselves.

Suppose the whole earth was given to us to operate for our own benefit. It would soon go back into the previous owner's hands, because of our carelessness in doing something for self.

The white man has done a bad and a good job for us. The good job is giving us a chance at education. You do not have equal education with them, but you have enough to go for self. We have many, I would say, proud educational figures in America. What is lacking here in the educated figure is the knowledge of self (his kind), and other than his kind. This is all he needs now, to master the key to his own, with tens and hundreds of millions of dollars that the wealthy among us have turned over to the white man to use for themselves for only a few nickels of interest.

YOU COULD use those hundreds of millions of dollars that you have in the banks of white people for your own,

instead of allowing them to use it to build what they want for themselves.

As I said in this paper a few years ago, let us build a Black bank.

You would have a mighty strong bank, if you would take your money that you now have in the white man's bank and put it in your own bank, you would be surprised at the powerful and wonderful things you could do for yourself with that money.

THIS WAY of thinking that the white man owes it to you to care for you and think for you is slavery thinking. No nation will take your responsibilities, then allow you to enjoy equal freedom, justice and equality with them if you do not have anything for yourself. This is actually the general law of nature.

We cannot say to our superiors "you step down and be like me," as long as they are able to stay up where they are and we stay down where we are. This will never happen. The man who is down must pull himself up. The greatest desire of my followers and I is to see the Black man in America doing something for self and staying off his knees begging others to do that for him which he can do for himself.

With a population of 20 or 30 million people, we cannot depend on anyone but God and ourselves to help ourselves.

Who wants to take the responsibilities for 20 or 30 million people, to feed, clothe and provide jobs for them without them doing anything by way of being a creative people in the midst of a creative people? We must remember that we have been here in the Western Hemisphere 400 years. We have not built anything here for ourselves, after 100 years up from slavery.

OUR GREATEST trouble is that we like to be disunited (which is our destruction). Unity of the Black man in America is self-strength and stability.

Let me tell you how to use your money or let me use it for you. By the Help of Allah, I would use your money and set you in heaven at once. Just loan me your millions—no, not your millions, just your hundreds of thousands of dollars—and I

will soon show you that the entire 20 or 30 million people will be living in heaven in a very short while (almost at once).

I know you do not trust me to prove to you that the foregoing words will be true. By our (my followers) hard struggling to try to raise ourselves and others (though you are acting like dead weight, just lying down), we are bound, by the Help of God, to achieve our aims.

Our aims are to do something for self and to get the benefits of doing something for self. We have a program and plan to carry out, designed for nothing but doing something for ourselves and not lying down at the white man's gate, begging him to do that which we can do for ourselves, if we are given a partial chance. Do not be lazy. Be industrious. Seek education—the best of education—wherever you can. Stop being white actors on shows (T.V.) and making public displays of yourselves in ignorant acts to the world, just for a few dollars paid by white audiences.

In this modern time, you should quit being "Uncle Toms" and "Sambos" and take your place as a man equal to man and demand respect of man.

BLACK MAN, you are the first and will be the last, if there be any last. The days of slavery are over, but as long as you are too lazy to go for yourself and try to do something for self, you will forever be a slave for someone who has to care for you.

Black man, wash and be clean, externally and internally. Think of yourself as a decent person. Wash your clothes. If you do not have but one change of clothes, keep them clean and iron them. If you are not able to send them to cleaning and pressing establishments, do it yourself, like "ma" and "pa" used to do just a few years ago, before electric washing machines were invented. Never practice filth and foolish actions and think that you have the respect of others.

BLACK MAN, make your wives and daughters pull down their dresses. It was not your Black wife and yourself who set up these present styles. These indecent