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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1998 Volume IV: American Political Thought

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## Land is the Basis of All Independence

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.04.07  
by Gary Highsmith

"Go Back to Africa" is perhaps the most racially charged political phrase used in connection with Black people in America today. Most Blacks, as well as most Whites, have probably come to interpret such a statement as derogatory. However, Back-to-Africa political thought has not always been looked upon with such derision. Contrary to popular belief, Black and not White leaders in America were the first ones to raise the issue of Black repatriation to the continent of Africa.

The unit, "Land is the Basis of All Independence," is intended for use in Social Studies, US History or Black history classes in grades 7-12, and discusses the development of American political thought regarding the emergence and significance of Back-to-Africa political thought in America between 1790 and 1850.

The information contained herein is important to know for many reasons. However, what is of primary importance in this regard is that in order to understand Black people and the diverse roles they play in American life today, and the choices that they have had to make in the face of intense racism and White supremacy, all people generally, and students in particular, need a vivid sense both of how passionate many Blacks have been about making better lives for themselves here in America, and also how understandably embittered many have always been about the prospects for doing so here. As a result, emigration or repatriation presented and still present themselves as viable options for Black people.

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