

OVERTURNING OURSELVES:
The Move From Mystification To Meaningful Struggle

by Maulana Ron Karenga

Read into revolution what you will, it is essentially a question of enduring and expanding, of transforming discontent into organized and effective action, defying and defeating the enemy and building alternative solidarities that assure the defense of our interests and the development of our potential. And regardless of what was thought or hoped, prayed for or promised, revolution and liberation will not be handed to us by history; nor can it be sloganized, talked or televised into existence. Neither can we, disoriented by frustration or imagined defeat allow ourselves the luxury and lethargy of withdrawal. Our commitment must be continuous; our moral fiber and internal strength great enough to sustain us in our struggle to turn sound and fury into substance and fulfillment. This is an age of quick transition and profound transformation, a time like no other in terms of the depth and dimension of peoples aspirations and demands. It is a time of turmoil, tumult and overturning. "Countries want independence, nations want liberation, and the people want revolution." But it is not enough to want these things, one must will them and work to make them into a reality.

The Year of the August Revolt, 1965, marked a turning point in our struggle. It altered the fundamental character of the Movement and suggested an alternative way of dealing with oppression and its attendant problems. But it and the period after it was more defensive than developmental, acquired the aspect of protest rather than programmatic change and finally became bogged down in subjective formulations and empty acts rather than becoming a catalyst

for a broader and more definitive struggle. Out of this period came the Black Power Movement initiated by SNCC, the mass party projection of the Panthers and the resurgence and beginning consolidation of cultural nationalism formulated and projected by US. What was attempted during this period was a series of earnest-though at times illadvised-methods to alter fundamentally the power relations between Blacks and whites, giving Blacks the institutional strength they determined was necessary to realize and extend their aspirations. But the period of extensive possibilities passed leaving less than it could have if the energy expended in pronouncements had been invested in programs of change and slogans and symbols had given way to substantive analysis and concrete acquisitions. It is no doubt difficult for some-even many-of us to accept this fact, but it's true, and if we cannot admit it we cannot alter it. And if it goes unaltered so will our incorrect approaches and the terribly inhuman condition in which we find ourselves.

Let us look at ourselves seven years after. We are weak in crucial areas, scattered, coopted and corrupted, disillusioned, in exile and in captivity, conscious of our needs without the means to satisfy them, meditating and expanding on what might have been. But this is check, not checkmate and if we will it, we still can win!!! It is said that one has to play the hand dealt by history, but this is only half true. For we only have to play the hand history has dealt until we can reestablish the rules and deal from a deck of our own choice. It is naive politically and intellectually to imagine us without contradictions, without setbacks and periodic impasses. Every people has contradictions and weaknesses as well as strengths, revolutionary as well as reactionary elements and we are not in this

aspect different. What is essential here is to distinguish the subjective from the objective conditions and possibilities of our struggle and to move within that awareness. Each struggle or successful revolution offers lessons to the others of the same period or afterwards, but neither one is the final word in change. Each raises questions as it solves them and leaves more questions for other generations and peoples to struggle with and solve. So it is with our struggle; it is instructive as well as augmentative, teaching us new ways to win, extending our perspectives and thus raising the level of our aspirations and the method of our realizing them. But in order to grasp the lessons learned, consolidate and keep our gains, we must engage in constant reassessment both of the internal and external conditions of our struggle. We cannot afford to allow our opposition to interpret our history, pass political judgment on the effectiveness of our acts or contentions and disguise his racism and repression as proof of the futility of creative struggle. Every movement in the struggle of a people for the right to determine its destiny and realize its aspirations has its meaning, each acts its importance and every experience some value. It is a question of who is interpreting it and for what reason. And regardless of what is written or said or felt in silence, the period of struggle between 1965 and now had and has its meaning and message and it is up to us to assess and absorb it so we can transcend it and promote transformation on a higher level. What is demanded now is a strong readjustment vitality, a flexibility that will allow us to view every experience we encounter as a lesson not a let down. Only then can we claim to have the profound grasp and commitment this struggle demands.

We cannot deny that we indulged in an overabundance of subjective formulations that often obscured or erased from view objective conditions that had to be confronted and overcome in the pursuit of our goals. We submitted to symbols and slogans, believed that a beret and luba, black leather jacket and dashiki had some intrinsic value, some ingenious and incisive answer to our problems. We engaged in empty arguments, enervating internecine struggles, self-diminishing discussions of personalities and imagined power and the opposition watched and waited. Then when we had alienated the masses and dismantled the incipient system of mutually supportive institutions we had built in spite of ourselves, he came and with little or no serious, collective resistance, drove us into hiding and exile and put us in captivity. We could not extend ourselves beyond our immediate circles of interests, could not expand to include the broad base of people essential for the kind and extent of change we knew was necessary. We talked about the Revolution as if it were already a reality and as if power was as much our possession as the inadequate analysis we used to explain it. "Black is beautiful" we shouted as if it had some magic meaning and could in an instant overthrow ignorance, undo centuries of mental and physical damage and defend us against the diabolical forces that gathered to protect themselves from the televised image of rantin' and ravin' and recently aware nationalists and episodic revolutionaries. We did not bother to extend the slogan beyond its subjective and obvious esthetic implications so that it would carry with it a social significance also, a social significance that emanated from the high level of achievement this awareness should and could engender if we made it an objective reality rather than, or as well as, a subjective reference.

Instead of objectively increasing the range and roots of Black Power, we held up our fists for the six o'clock news and shouted "right on" or "habari gani" and went right on making the same mistakes. And one of the most damaging debates that occurred during this time was the one that emanated from the false distinction between Revolutionary Nationalism and Cultural Nationalism. It was unnecessary, debilitating and time and energy consuming. But it was as much our fault (the US leadership) as anyone else, for we never issued a comprehensive statement on just what Cultural Nationalism was and this left it open to be misinterpreted and manipulated by anyone who wished to and even those who didn't want to but had no choice in the absence of definitive information. We make this open admission in response to the requirement imposed by our history as well as future movement. For as we have said until we admit, we cannot alter and until we alter we cannot advance and realize our collective aspirations. The scope and content of our struggle-if it is to be successful, real and not reflective of an unproductive past-must be this: 1) to overturn ourselves, 2) struggle against our collective weaknesses and 3) defy and defeat the enemy - in this order of importance and through this progression of levels of awareness and increasing strength.

We say the debate over what was erroneously called revolutionary nationalism vs. cultural nationalism was false, because the division in reality does not exist. Revolution, like national liberation is as Cabral says an act of culture, an organized political expression of a given culture. And if as has been admitted in revolutionary circles around the world that nationalism is a precondition for revolution, it is culture that is the primary vehicle

for achieving this national awareness and commitment. But culture was confused conveniently or ignorantly with song and dance on one level and manifestations of African origins on another. It was not conceived as the crucible in which the struggle took form and the context in which it ultimately succeeded and blossomed into continuous reconstruction. When we talk of cultural revolution, we're talking essentially about cultural reconversion, the conscious and programmatic restructuring of attitudes and relationships that aid us in our aspiration for national liberation. We are recognizing and responding to the fact that the first resistance in any national struggle is cultural resistance and that as we said elsewhere, the crucial struggle is to win the minds of our people, for if we lose this struggle we cannot hope to win the political one. Also, what we were and are about is the task and responsibility of distinguishing between popular and national culture, between the fluid everyday culture of groups within a people and the culture of a nation, conscious of and committed to its role and responsibility in its own liberation and its contribution to human history. The essential character of a culture is determined by its values, for culture is simply that, a system of values reflecting ways of doing and looking at things on seven levels, i.e. in terms of mythology (religion), history, social organization, economic organization, political organization, creative motif (art, music, literature and technology) and ethos.

What was and is needed now is to give popular culture a national dimension, giving us a consolidated set of national attitudes and aspirations—in a word a collective vocation of nation building. We overturn ourselves and admit that culture imposes

limitations, but go on to say it also provides infinite possibilities. That is why constant reassessment is so necessary, for each element of culture must be eventually measured for its worth and need for change or reinforcement. Cultural revolution is a record of successive adaptations and adjustments reflecting a culture's flexibility and capacity to expand and grow. Culture cannot remain static, it must produce, direct and determine the intensity and level of struggle even as struggle acts in a mutually supportive role of producing culture and heightening its level. Moreover, culture must and does give a moral dimension to the struggle, establishes rules and systems of association and behavior as well as resolving contradiction among its people and harmonizing diverse yet interdependent interests. And the stress on the moral element of the struggle is essential for without it we turn on ourselves, arguing abstracts and forgetting or frowning upon the needs of the people. Power, undefined and not placed in its proper perspective cannot be advocated, for it not only frightens people unfamiliar with power, but raises serious questions concerning the use of it once it's obtained. And given these conditions, our people will deny us support for fear once we obtain our objective, we use it to impose our own brand of oppression. In order to create a new faith, a new positive force for our people to support and promote, we must emphasize not the physical or pure political force, but rather the moral and humanistic basis of our struggle, authority and legitimacy. And the worth of any act or idea must ultimately and always be determined by its moral and social benefit to our people as a whole not to distinct and contending groups. For national liberation requires political and moral unity, a confluence of all aspects of our culture, tying together each group and level

of our people into a knot that will not break or unravel in the stress and strain of constant struggle.

Involved at the very heart of cultural reconversion is each person as well as the people as a whole. Each person must overturn himself before he can struggle against our collective weaknesses and defy and defeat the enemy. For as we've said and continue to say the first step to national unity is internal unity, the process of getting ones' self together. This is not an advocacy of abstract individualism, for the individualism that claims the right to ruin and resist the aspirations of the masses is invalid and definitely unneeded. What is urged here is the acceptance of man's infinite capacity to expand and grow, his increasing ability to endure and overcome subjective controls and objective conditions. It is here we get a clear distinction between the determinism of some western leftists and the voluntarism of African and Asian theorists, leaders and activists, between the dialectical materialism of Marxists and what the Boggs' call dialectical humanism. We must believe in man, in our people's capacity to achieve and overcome if we are to be more than little men with big grudges equally divided among our hate for the enemy and dislike for each other.

Cultural reconversion moving from the personal level extends to the mass level as a struggle against our collective weaknesses- leaderism, groupism, technical ignorance, economic and political vulnerability and undeveloped perspectives. Leaderism is one of our most vulnerable weaknesses, a contradiction that so often cripples us. It is a sickness that comes from poor self concepts and/or the obvious lack of collective values. Leaderism and leadership struggles are widespread because of the feeling of powerlessness in relation to the

external opposition and so an internal enemy is identified and attacked. Also styling for T.V. or liberals and the imagined possession of charisma all play their part in obscuring the real meaning and direction of the Movement. Again we overturn ourselves and revise our position on the singularity of leadership. We have been known to say that leadership is singular but decision making is collective. By this we meant that within a given group there should not be a multitude claiming equal authority, that once a collective decision was made only one person needed to announce the consensus. But again we made the mistake of not explaining in detail that this did not mean one-man leadership in the western sense of dictatorship but was a political necessity in terms of organizational requirement of having a head, and that in fact we saw each member of the ruling Circle and ultimately each member of our organization as a potential, if not actual, leader. For leadership essentially involves innovation and initiative and our struggle demands that everyone increases his capacity in order to be able to assume that role as the situation requires it. But the concept of the singularity of leadership has become a liability, for it allows for more antagonistic arguments (even though it can be explained in terms of organizational requirement) and gives uncommitted and unqualified people a chance to claim the right to rule others without adequate check and critical and creative input and to make mistakes in the collective name of the people without giving them the chance or channels to decide and act collectively. All good leadership is collective whether in name or not, for the depth and political and moral dimensions of the struggle requires the minds, hearts and energies of the maximum number of people and is a burden no honest and informed person wants to bear alone. And collective

decision-making is really collective leadership for it provides an organization or political entity with the collective and substantive innovation and initiative it requires to realistically confront and deal decisively with objective conditions. Therefore, to avoid useless argument and unsettling antagonism over terms, we overturn ourselves and concede the need to advocate as well as practice collective leadership.

Groupism on a certain level is no more than tribalism, specious and spurious claims to having the only secret to success. It emanates from external and internal conditions, reflecting the influence of our enemy and the absence of collective and consolidated values and approaches to our common problem. It is also on another level a result of our unfamiliarity with political struggle and the absolute and unalterable need for unity. We have, as a people, refused in the past to recognize one of our most fundamental and ancient values, the complementarity of all things- the unity even of opposites. We have advocated grandiose concepts of all Blacks in one group when the people in our separate groups were struggling among themselves and challenging the viability of that very approach by their every act. We have maintained in the past and find no reason to change now the concept and practice of Operational Unity - unity in our diversity. We need many organizations to reflect and deal with the wide range of interests and aspirations of our people. And it is naive and non-productive to advocate total or organic unity of all groups. What is essential, even indispensable, is a system of mutually supportive relationships between all groups on both local and national level for defense of our interests and development of our potential. Unity is not an abstract, it is a concrete need that must be translated and

transformed into reflective and real examples on institutional levels.

National liberation requires organized and unified responses to oppression and anything less than this leaves us at an almost total loss. We must somehow transform our needs into collective structure and movement, and not be satisfied with a national system of slogans and other subjective formulations. What we need is a system of institutions that house our aspirations, that defend us and insure our development. An organization is not and must not come to mean a group of people in leather jackets and dashikis, berets and bubas shouting the same slogans. A real organization is a base of commitment, a method and an instrument. It is a base in which a non-productive and/or neutral body of people are transformed into conscious committed and active advocates; it is a method of arranging relationships and roles and creating and maintaining a model to be emulated; and it is an instrument to realize our will through the acquisition, retention and exercise of power. We must have permanent structures that engender lasting loyalties not loosely-knit clusters of brittle brothers that break under stress and never express anything more than episodic allegiance to both structures and our struggle. Organization implies common identity, purpose, and direction and speaks of a viable and expansive structure that can absorb, transform and utilize the latent and untapped talent and creative potential held in check misused and misdirected by oppressive measures.

In terms of our technical ignorance and the undeveloped level of our daily life the evidence is obvious and yet not discouraging, for our grasp of what is needed for our success certainly indicates educational and technical advancement. We, like all developing people of the Third World, must create not only a national culture

but a scientific one. For only in this manner can we seriously hope to overcome our collective weaknesses and defy and defeat the enemy. We must think rationally as well as be emotionally involved in the struggle. The objective conditions of our struggle involve clear political, technical and scientific requirements if we are to formulate and effect the profound changes we know are necessary. And a shift in our ethos and image from physical education and soul to education, revolution and soul seems to be in order and much needed. Still we cannot sell our souls for money and machines, cannot forget our original aspiration even though we gain new ones. Our first and fundamental aspiration is our profound unalterable commitment to our people's expansion and growth, to create and consolidate a body of people capable of and committed to internal and external transformation. We want a body of committed people, men, women and children, capable not only of physical courage, but of mental and moral expansiveness, a revolutionary solidarity capable of confronting and dealing successfully with problems on various levels in the struggle, a nation, conscious of and committed to its role and responsibility in terms of human history, actively and emotionally associated with the continuous evolution of mankind.

Our undeveloped perspectives plague us constantly, especially on the political and economic levels which at given points take on moral significance. The question of class and its validity as a tool of analysis, the question of alliance and coalitions in relation to electoral and community politics, the question of types of structures and the rigidities they establish to increase our skills and to counter programs of political pacification and cooptation, the question of priorities in terms of transitional and real and perma-

nent interests and the question of the articulation of our interest all must be answered if we are to defend our interests and develop our potential. Our analysis and choice of program and priorities are profoundly affected by the transitional nature of our situation with its shifting alliances, instability of structures, ephemeral interests, episodic allegiances and the wider range of possible developments that have occurred in recent times. But our constant search for real areas of interests, for the source and center of our energies and commitment, can and must be answered by an ideology based on our values and intellectually and emotionally appealing as well as applicable.

Cabral has said that at one level we were not suffering from any lack of ideology in the struggle but from an overabundance. This is what modification of context, true; for we here, in this country suffer not so much from overabundance of ideologies but from the national system of slogans and imported concepts that are often mistaken for ideology. The advocacy of defense, civil rights, electoral politics or territorial separation is not an ideology. An ideology as Imamu Clyde Malisi clearly states is a system of the thoughts and beliefs that give a moral and meaningful interpretation to life. It is in a word, a rationally arranged and articulated aspiration. And Kawaïda, the moral and meaningful interpretation of our life, rationally arranged and articulated by US is such an ideology. National slogans without attendant substantive programs confuse and cripple us, substitutes words for work and pronouncements for programs. They do not offer the critical analysis necessary for a successful struggle and encourage the counterproductive practice of summing up our needs in a single answer and being satisfied that it

requires no more. This attachment to single answers is reflected in the slogans of the sixties that were never actually or extensively translated into programmatic or structural expressions. We need slogans but they cannot stand alone; they must emanate from and be rooted in real structures and programs and meaningful movement. For all questions of an objective nature are ultimately answered empirically.

It is the lack of correct ideological orientation and a clear expression of an undeveloped economic and political perspective to advocate black capitalism and/or electoral politics as the single solution to our problems as a people. The pack rat perspective of capitalism is a contradiction to the collective nature of our struggle and the collective needs of our people. A man who is merely a surplus in this economy and who has no real capital cannot seriously or sanely talk about being a capitalist, for he can neither compete nor protect his interests alone. Raw and crude materialism is a contradiction in terms of our value system and only promotes deeper distributive inequalities among us at the same time we are contesting those inequalities imposed by the oppressor. We do not deny we struggle for sufficient goods and adequate services, but we struggle for ideas and principles at the same time, for moral as well as material improvement. For material improvement without values can make us little more than a pack of pigs with full bellies, grunting, shoving and grasping for more-even at each others expense. It would be a troublesome acquisition to obtain an abundance of goods and services without any system or structure to avoid or eliminate the distributive inequalities we struggle now to abolish. This must not drive us to import theories of redistribution, however, and apply them mechanically.

For each struggle of a given people requires a particular approach and those who import ideas at random reveal an obvious ignorance of the particular nature of each struggle and will suffer serious setbacks from such a policy. We must think seriously in terms of Ujamaa, collective and cooperative economics, and begin to build structures that reflect our attachment to it as the mode of production and distribution most suitable to our needs and in harmony with our values. Cloaking ignorance and reactionary ideas and acts in revolutionary terms and titles and the insistence on stressing "class" distinctions among Blacks is counterproductive and tends to deepen the many and varied divisions that already exist. There are no classes among Blacks as President Toure says for we all belong to one class, the "class of the dispossessed." The middle sector of the Black community has none of the standard attributes of a class and, the sectoral behavior it engages in is but a pale imitation of its imagined white counterpart. This sector has neither the attitude, access or ability attributed to class. It has no mission vis a vis society except to lose itself and its political loyalties are externally oriented, both of which are un-class like postures. Nor does this middle sector have privileged access to production, distribution, marketing and decision-making. Moreover, it has no ability to impose, shape, and enjoy key values of the society and it lives in constant threat of losing its tenuous and mostly technical relationship with the ruling class of whites.

But though we find no applicability of the class analysis to the Black community now, we cannot deny the reality of the possibility of the middle sector's behavior evolving into a rigid and reactionary class posture and its attempting to acquire real power in order

to imitate in more concrete terms its imagined white counterpart by exploiting and oppressing. History will not let us claim Africans or Blacks in general never had the desire for acquisition and are exempt from exploitative tendencies. That would be a very naive and unnecessary contention, for we know that contradictions exist in all societies. But what is essential here is the extent and origin of the contradictions and the structural methods and moral urgency to check it. It is true that the rationalization for acquisitiveness was devised and developed in Europe and that communalism existed in Africa, Asia and pre-European America before Marx or his ancestors. But Europe extended into these areas and did not leave without leaving a legacy. This is a reality we cannot run away from in order to satisfy some subjective need to claim an unnecessary purity. And even if we do not read the daily literature that proves the legacy was left, a rational approach to history would lead us down the same road. Likewise, we are in America, the most extensively imperialistic and capitalistic country in history and we cannot pretend this has not had its historical and present day effect on us. Therefore, we must reject mystification of our capacity for good and accept and respond to the fact that without structures and principles to prevent us and continuously reconvert us, the blackest among us would be as cradely acquisitive as the coldest capitalist or caveman.

Politically we need also to develop our perspectives in the framework of nationalist ideology. We must understand that our fundamental struggle is for space. We must occupy and control space in every area that serves our interest. Space is essentially an institutional concept and can be defined as an area or unit of identifiable interest. Wherever our collective interests are involved

we must have the power to protect them and we cannot do it if we do not occupy and control adequate space. Space can be viewed on three levels; vital, developmental and strategic space. Vital space is space that is necessary for survival, an irreducible area of definite use and value to a people. Homes, schools, religious, social, economic and basic political institutions all fall within this realm. Developmental space is tied up with the notion of expansion, of a people extending itself in the ocean of infinite possibilities available. It involves building alternative solidarities, systems and institutions whose main function is to develop as opposed to defend or simply to survive. And strategic space is defensive space, an extension into alien and often hostile areas to secure an avante-garde position, to seek out and identify the oppositions intentions, weaknesses and attitudes and to take advantage of them.

It seems to us that the debate on the value of the electoral politics is best resolved by seeing them as one aspect of the larger movement toward national liberation, another move to occupy and control space. But one of the main drawbacks of electoral politics is that the majority of the Black politicians do not have the aspirations of the people at heart nor do they have a grasp of the dimensions and needs of our struggle. They fake it off until elected, then, go off searching for an institutional alternative to the constituency that elected them. Moreover, there is some serious questions about the viability of a numerical minority in parliamentary politics especially when that minority is politically unsophisticated and can be easily manipulated by the opposition as example of how well his system works. But though occupying an elected office does not insure in itself power or contribution to the struggle, it seems in all fairness to those

Black politicians who are sincere, conscious and trying to be committed that we should support them and at the same time attempt to remould them, by restructuring our relationships with them and helping to develop their perspectives. It is a secret to no one that traditional politicians do not have any serious respect for nationalists as a whole. And really we cannot condemn them on that level, for our general projection has not been as sophisticated and impressive as we might want to think. Most of us are known for interrupting meetings, not for controlling a constituency and if one deals in parliamentary politics it is the constituency that counts. Therefore, the embarrassed politicians make a public concession in our presence and alters his posture in our absence. What is needed is a mutually supportive system of relationships between Blacks who deal in parliamentary politics and those that deal in extra-parliamentary politics, and acceptance of the fact that both approaches are valid and useful if properly designed and directed. Moreover, it is not enough to expect traditional politicians to be responsive to us or the people in general if there are no established structures to hold them accountable. Morality is fine among men with the same values, but it is somewhat absurd to believe that moral arguments alone, to people of different persuasions and with different values are going to convince them to change their posture or behavior. Finally, it must be realized that electoral politics are a means, not a panacea, and are conditioned objectively by so many limitations. They can, if properly analyzed, designed and directed provide educational, organizational and at times economic advantages to the community. But what is crucial here is the maintenance of the constituency and structures used in the election to insure accountability and constantly remind and direct us and the

electd official of our original aspiration by urging and working for the establishment of institutions that reflect that aspiration.

The struggle ahead of us on the long road to reconversion and reconstruction will be an intense and extensive one. But the most important battle is still the one for the minds of our people and thus cultural reconversion is indispensable. Moreover our efforts must be directed to a given collective end, not at random and, therefore, an achievement ethic based on collective good must be established, not a simple Calvinistic work ethic or one that advocates abstract activism. For work and action without direction and design can be counterproductive and time and energy consuming, no more than a series of empty acts, a labor without love. We must be continuously committed to the creation of new and more positive realities and believe in the infinite capacity of man, and our people to transform themselves. Finally, we must constantly reassess our positions and postures, eliminate our weaknesses and reenforce our strengths, always committed to the principle that subjective formulations are no substitute for objective achievements. If we can overturn ourselves, we can struggle against our collective weaknesses and if we overcome our collective weaknesses, we can defy and defeat the enemy. And when we win this struggle against our oppressor, we must continue the battle for the mind and heart on a higher level, for our real commitment to reconversion and reconstruction is not simply to defeat the enemy, but is a profound and perpetual commitment to the continuous development and expansion of man.

ESSAYS ON STRUGGLE:

POSITION AND ANALYSIS

M. RON KARENGA

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Dr. Karenga has a long and distinguished history of community service and professional activities. An active community organizer, Dr. Karenga is founder and former national chairman of US, and advisor and theoretician for the New Afro-American Movement, both social change organizations which pose cultural struggle as fundamental to meaningful change in society. Moreover, he is founder and co-planner of all three

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POSITION AND ANALYSIS

Dr. M. Ron Karenga, Ph.D. Perhaps Dr. Karenga's most widely recognized contributions are his creation of the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles), a fundamental value system for Black community development and Kwanzaa, a Black holiday celebrated thruout the USA by millions.

A leading theorist of the Black Movement, Dr. Karenga has authored numerous scholarly articles on various aspects of Black life and struggle which appeared in journals and anthologies dealing with the life and struggle of the Afro-American people. He is also the author of Kwanzaa: Origin, Concepts, Practice; Beyond Connections: Liberation in Love and Struggle and Names For A New People: An Authentic African Notebook. Dr. Karenga's book Afro-American Nationalism: Social Strategy and Struggle for Community is scheduled for publication by Third World Press in the Fall, 1978.

Dr. Karenga has lectured on most of the major campuses of the country, among which are Stanford, Yale, Howard, Shaw, USC, UCSB, UCLA, UCI, Morehouse, Tuskegee and Boston University. He is included in Who's Who's Black Americans, Men of Achievement, Dictionary of Black Culture, Black Power, and has been the subject of major articles in New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Life, Newsweek, Time, Ebony, and Washington Post.

Dr. Karenga's international travel include trips to Nigeria, China, and Cuba. In January, 1977, he served as a speaker at the Colloquium on Black Civilization and Education at the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture. In July, 1977, he served as spokesman for the Independent Black Schools Tour in the People's Republic of China and lectured on the Afro-American Liberation Struggle at Nanking University, Peking Teacher's University, Kiangsu May 7th Cadre School and the Central Institute for Nationalities in Peking.



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Finally, Dr. Karenga's international travel include trips to Nigeria, China, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Mexico and Canada. In January, 1977, he served as chairman of the USA delegation to the Colloquium on Black Civilization and Education at the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture. In July, 1977, he served as spokesman for the Independent Black Schools Tour in the People's Republic of China and lectured on the Afro-American Liberation Struggle at Nanking University, Peking Teacher's University, Kiangsu May 7th Cadre School and the Central Institute for Nationalities in Peking.

P R E F A C E

This collection of essays is presented as a contribution toward an on-going and necessary analysis of the Black Liberation Movement within the socio-historical context in which it occurs. Its aim is a multi-dimensional critique of the Movement in light of its history, aspirations, weaknesses and strengths and the critical identification of demonstrable tendencies which will lead beyond the existing state of things. The collection is both analytical and prescriptive, for it evolves from the basic assumption that social theory must contain both a critical and practical content in order to insure its relevance and correspondence to reality.

These essays, except for the last one, were written in captivity and all appeared in The Black Scholar from 1972 to 1975. Note should be taken of the development of the analysis from one which focused essentially on the racial (ethnic) factor to one which includes both race and class as factors vital to a critical analysis and understanding of the problems and possibilities of the Afro-American people and American society. Such an analysis reflects not only the dual character of Black oppression, i.e., racial and class, but also points to the dual thrust our struggle must assume, if we are to liberate ourselves and step back on the stage of human history as a free, proud and productive people.

M. Ron Karenga, Ph.D.

San Diego
September, 1977

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IDEOLOGY AND STRUGGLE: SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES

by MAULANA RON KARENGA

Reality for once receives a total understanding. On the objective level as well as on the subjective level, a solution has to be supplied.

Francis James

To criticize one's worldliness, therefore, is not to make it coherent and unified, and to destroy it is the great mission of the

I. "IDEOLOGY AND STRUGGLE: SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES"

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ally due to ignorance of the historical reality which these movements seek to transform—constitutes one of the greatest weaknesses of our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all." If we dare to struggle, we must dare to confront and overcome our weaknesses. If we dare to win the struggle against the oppressor, we must dare to win the battle against ourselves, against that in us which destroys our strength and deforms our struggle. To overcome our ideological deficiency, we are forced to pose and answer the fundamental question of what ideology—coherent system of theories and value system—can give us a correct worldview and analysis of our situation, pull us together and weld us into the conscious and progressive social force we need to be in order to achieve in struggle and alliance with other oppressed and progressive people, the liberation of ourselves and all people.

Revolution begins in the minds of men, women and children who want it, study and plan it, then carry it to its conclusion. Progress in thought remains the basis for pro-

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Reality for once requires a total understanding. On the objective level as well as on the subjective level, a solution has to be supplied.

Frantz Fanon

To criticize one's worldview, therefore, means to make it coherent and unified, and to develop it to the point reached by the most progressive thought anywhere in the world.

Antonio Gramsci

SURELY CABRAL SPOKE for us too when he said that "The ideological deficiency, if not to say the total absence of ideology, within the national liberation movements—which is basi-

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gress in struggle. And objective transcendence (i.e. revolutionary victory) on the political level is impossible without its subjective counterpart (i.e. a profound knowledge of ourselves, our allies, our oppressor and our tasks) on the ideological level. Without theory, there is no revolution, only thoughtless action, false hopes and tragic failure. And even though theory alone does not insure automatic success, there can surely be no success without it and history has ample proof of this.

THEORY—SCOPE AND FUNCTION

Experience, it is said, is the best teacher. But this is at best only half-true. In order for us to benefit from our experience, we must know what to look for, how to evaluate what we find and how to apply most effectively what we've learned. This requires thought and theory. To experience is not to automatically understand and learn. People go through life each day not seeing, and then, not understanding when they see. To believe that living in the ghetto gives us inherent insight into American society or unchallengeable knowledge even of the ghetto is to lie to ourselves and leave ourselves ill-equipped to deal with society and the world as they *really* are.

Experience, then, is not sufficient in itself, does not automatically inform us on the level we need to know. Feeling pain does not make us doctors or give us knowledge of its cure. Suffering does not make us saints; making war does not mean in itself we'll become miniature Maos and neither does coming to our own conclusions mean we thus become each a Cabral. Perception is not conception; and feelings, however noble, are *not* the kinds of facts or foundations on which we should build a worldview and strategy for struggle.

Knowledge of reality and struggle requires more than simple experience, more than suffering and superficial conclusions, more than *ghetto assumptions* and having soul. Here, then, is a clear need for theory to inform our experience, make it active and turn it into revolutionary social practice. Experience can

be either *passive encounter* or *active and informed assertion* (conscious social practice). We can let things happen to us or make things happen. We can pretend street life is the ultimate in awareness and achievement or we can reject that life, its lowliness, lies and self-illusions and begin to challenge and change the conditions of our existence through active and informed struggle.

However, even as we talk of the role of theory in raising experience to the level of conscious social practice, it must be also understood that theory is dependent on practice for the test of its correspondence to reality—in a word, its validity. The point, then, is that theory and practice are linked in a mutually supportive way and neither can come into fullness or succeed if not joined with the other. In his essay, "On Practice," Mao lays heavy emphasis on practice, identifying it as the "criterion of truth," the indispensable action and method for understanding and changing the world. But at the same time he attacks the "vulgar practical" people who "respect experience, but despise theory and therefore, cannot have a comprehensive view of an entire objective process, lack clear direction and long-range perspective, and are complacent over occasional successes and glimpses of truth." The point again is to join the two, to link theory with practice, knowing with doing and understanding with action. For only in this way can we change passive encounter to rational and revolutionary resistance to existing reality and begin to change the way we live and think and are forced to feel.

A basic function of theory, then, is to deal with problems posed by practice, to inform and refine practice and be completed and tested by practice. But the basic function of theory, the fundamental function upon which all other functions depend is its providing a *critique of reality* and a method to continue and expand that critique. To offer a critique of reality—critical analysis, descriptions, definitions, concepts and assumptions about it—is to raise and answer questions about its basic and general characteristics, its essence and forms, its structure and basis. It is also to expose and explain the glue that holds a

given reality together, its masks and myths, its relations and their basis in *ideological deception, bribery and force*. Moreover, to critique reality is to identify and deal with tendencies and possibilities inherent in it; the tendencies toward stability and instability, self-correction and self-destruction and the possibilities for change offered by the contradictions inherent in reality. Finally, it is to identify forces of change, cite their role in the revolutionary process and offer them a correct worldview, an incisive analysis of their social situation and a guide to action to disassemble reality at its very roots and restructure it.

THUS THE BEGINNING and basis of revolutionary theory is and must be reality. If theory is not rooted in reality, if its starting point is in the stars or other unreal and irrelevant places, and if it does not reflect reality with *mirror accuracy*, it will certainly fail those who follow it and betray and mislead those who look to it for answers and guidance. People have argued that reality was everything from god to the Good Humor man; that it was a divine plan of spooks and spirits and overseas idols; that it was in tea-cookie fortunes and the daily horoscope. But reality is none of these and one of the main functions of theory is to cut through and cut down the dense forest of common-sense assumptions, dissolve all superstitions in the heat and fire of objective and coherent facts and provide a worldview and critical consciousness that corresponds to reality not fantasy, to the actual not the imagined.

Whatever else is argued or included, a correct conception of reality must contain within it an understanding of the structure and aspects of reality, its foundation and basic building blocks, its scope and content. This requires that reality be seen as it really is: as (1) a totality; (2) social; (3) material; (4) historical; (5) contradictory; (6) knowable and (7) changeable.

If reality is the starting point of revolutionary theory, the conception of reality as a *whole* is the beginning critical elaboration of what reality is. Reality is a *concrete totality*, a

unified diverse whole. And as reality is a whole, so is the truth about it. Therefore, partial perceptions and partial approaches can only yield at best partial answers. Each part of reality must be understood by its function and position in the whole. For "only in this context which sees the isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process and integrates them in a totality can knowledge of facts hope to become knowledge of reality." (George Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*)

An elephant is not his ears, nor his trunk, but rather a concrete functioning whole. A school is more than its students, teachers, books and desks and is best understood by its position and function in society, the whole. Blacks are more than their music and color. They are what they've come to be through life, labor and struggle in American society and even more important, they are what their possibilities and potentials are. The whole shapes the parts and gives them function, but the parts also give meaning to the whole and make it a functioning system or alter it. Society has shaped us, given us our identity as workers, captives, veterans, students, etc., but we have built society and given it a meaning. It is certainly in part by the consent and suffrage of the majority of society that it exists and functions; and it will be by the conscious and collective struggle of the majority that it is changed. There is thus structured interdependence here, relatively stable and defined interrelations, interactions, development and movement.

THE ULTIMATE TOTALITY is the world and all the relations, processes, conditions and parts which make it up. But a more modest, manageable and, on an important level, more meaningful totality to study is a given society; in our case, the USA, the *heart and gut* of the capitalist world. Only by understanding this totality can we understand ourselves, one of its parts. Self-knowledge becomes no more than self-deception if it does not include a thorough knowledge of the society that shaped us, affects us and transformed our basic social and historical identity. Regard-

less of obvious reservations, we were "made" in America, in the USA, and this has conditioned our consciousness, set limits to our ambitions and provoked us to resist and rebel and contemplate revolution. It is the USA which has shaped our views on race and class and posed problems we are compelled to solve. Knowing the role of the whole, society, in shaping us, the limitations and constraints it has imposed on us, we can develop a theory that corresponds to reality and points the way to our victory, past our present deformation and alienation to our possibilities and potential for complete liberation.

Reality is not only a totality; it is also social—i.e. societal, human, relational. Everything that happens to us or among us does not begin in heaven or in any other mythical place, but in a given earthly context and under given earthly, actual conditions. These earthly conditions are social conditions, conditions of a given society and the world—in a word, human conditions. We are not poor or oppressed because of monsters in the sky. People don't die daily because the heavens are angry; and rulers don't rule by divine right or impose their power by the grace of god, but with *gun*, *gift* and *ideological game*.

Our poverty, illness, polluted rivers and millions dead and dying in open and undeclared wars are not called forth by the left or right hand of god, but by the hands of other humans—regardless how depraved—definite individuals operating in definite social systems and under definite social conditions. Real, actual, earthly humans have created reality and brought us, ourselves, ideas, institutions, laws, prisons, churches, tithes and taxes into existence. And as Lukacs argues, "Only when the core of existence stands revealed as a social process can existence be seen as the product, albeit the hitherto unconsciousness product of human activity."

To say that reality is social is to say at the same time that it's relational—i.e. based on and a product of relations between people. Any group, any two people united in any activity suggests a relation to carry out that activity. From the beginning people formed relations for survival. They got together to pro-

vide themselves with food, clothing and shelter. Later when they amass a surplus (more than they need to survive), their relationships change, expand and become more complex and exploitative. Chiefs and kings come into being, as well as priests, slavemasters, feudal lords and ultimately the bourgeoisie. All of these begin immediately to throw bones on the ground and sand in the eyes of the masses to mystify and blind them to the nature of their real relations; to mask the fact that the oppressor and exploiter—regardless again of how deformed and degenerate—are still real live human beings who bleed, have a bladder and come to unholy ends also.

IF IT'S HUMAN, it's social; and if it's social, it's rooted and reflected in relations. Laws, institutions, ideologies and activities all involve and express relations between people—not between ghosts and gods, but between real, live, active and productive people. Laws represent, reinforce and insure definite relations between the ruled and the rulers and so do institutions and ideologies. In capitalist society, law, stripped of its cultural costume, its mystifying Latin and its pomp and ceremony, can be seen as it is—the will and right of the ruling class raised by force to the level of sacred observance. Ideologies of the ruling class justify relations between the ruled and rulers and institutions perpetuate these relations. Every custom, rule, association, political and economic form is a reflection of definite relations and no matter how much these relations are masked and palmed off as something else, mystified and made into cold and unbelievably bloodless things, they are relations between humans and only by understanding this can we begin to change their form and content. If we understand reality as a social process, we can then begin to understand its material and historical bases, its unfixed and fluid character, its changeability and the challenge which confronts us in light of this awareness.

To say reality is material is not just to say it's objective, made up of matter in motion. This material content of reality is already es-

established when we accept reality as a social process, as the activity and product of real, actual human beings. The material content of reality at this point must be understood as the economic base on which reality is built. To talk of human history is to presuppose human existence, to assume that humans have found a way to survive, that they have entered into definite relations under definite conditions to do this. At the heart of every effort to survive is material activity, the form of activity upon which all other forms of activity depend. Before one poem or one passage from a holy book was written, read or recited, people banded together to feed themselves, to clothe and shelter themselves. Before one chief or priest pretended divine sanction and support, the material conditions to make these positions and titles possible had to exist.

Art, science, philosophy and every other advance beyond animal existence is dependent on material development, on the productivity of labor. "In the last analysis," as Ernest Mandel argues, "every step forward in the history of civilization has been brought about by an increase in the productivity of labor." (*An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*) This essentially means that until people get beyond the basic three—food, clothing and shelter—until they are assured of survival, they cannot turn their attention and efforts to higher levels of human activity. Hunger and homelessness are definite limitations on thought, and philosophy comes into being only after there's a surplus to support it. "It is not men's consciousness that determine their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence which determine their consciousness." No, we don't live by bread alone, but we can only come to this conclusion after we've eaten. Words won't feed us; ideas aren't meat, milk or vegetables; and hope is not the kind of material out of which houses and clothes are made.

So then, at the very base and center of human history, human existence and reality is material activity, material production and the relations, contradictions and struggles that this activity gives rise to and contains. Through the productivity of labor, people

satisfy their needs, transform nature and their fear of it and build societies and the world. Through increase in the productivity of labor, they move from survival relations to relations brought about by surplus, from production for use to production for sale, from communal production to mass capitalist commodity production. A ruling class comes into being at the first sign of surplus, seizes it and builds structures to protect and insure its hold on that surplus. Labor is divided, fragmented into mental and manual labor and this division already expresses the division of the instruments and products of labor. Ownership of the means and products of production is violently established by a few; and suffering and sacrifice are imposed by equal and simultaneous force on the many. Thus, economic antagonisms take root and expand and class struggle is assured.

CLASSES ARE FORMED and consolidated now; large social groupings whose power, social position and interests are determined by their relation to the means of production, by their ownership or propertylessness, their having or not having. The disintegration of communalism means that slaves and slavemasters come into being; feudal lords and serfs follow and afterwards, the bourgeoisie and wage-slaves—i.e. the working class—appear. We live in a class period of history and in a class society and thus we are members of a given class, whether we like it or not or think white folks made this up and that, therefore, we should reject it. If there are classes in the USA, all of us who live here, who work, struggle, dance and die here are members of a definite class. The whole (society) has shaped the parts (us), has conditioned our consciousness, imposed on us a *position* and *function* in the overall system—a capitalist class system. Thus a class analysis—an analysis of class structure, class forces, class interests, class history and class struggle in the USA and the world is of vital importance if we are to understand the *whole of who we are*, our history, our strengths and weaknesses, our friends and enemies and our potential and possibilities.

Reality is not only a social totality with a definite material base, it has a historical character also. Reality is not forever and was not always here. It is a product of historical evolution, the result and reflection of a definite historical process, a definite historical motion and movement. Nothing comes into being by itself. Everything is a result of a definite process of development. Reality does not come into being by itself or all at once, but develops historically and becomes a product of a given historical epoch.

To view things historically then is to put them in their proper perspective, to grasp their historical character and conditioning, to perceive them as they are shaped and given form and function, by the time, place and conditions in which they are found. History is a process of continuous change and transformation. In the process of history, reality is revealed as not fixed but fluid; not accidental but a result of definite conditions and definite kinds of motion; not the result of cyclical motion, but of onward and upward motion; not fragmented but made up of interconnected and interactive parts.

Society develops, conditions change and the world is not what it was even yesterday. This is a basic lesson of history. Old forms fall apart and new ones rise and nudge or dramatically drive the old ones out of existence. Truths are not eternally valid for all times, in all places and under all conditions. They are real and relevant only in a particular social order, in given historical context shaped by a definite system of production, definite economic realities. The capitalist reality with its private property, its alienation, oppression and exploitation will *not* last forever. Class division and class struggle will likewise be brought to an end. As Cabral taught, "Eternity is not of this world, but Man will outlive classes and will continue to produce and make history. . . ." The police will not kick down our doors forever, not always crawl through cracks in the mind and morality of American society to murder, maim and misuse us. This cave level of life and behavior will disappear when the ruling class that requires this is disarmed and done away with.

HISTORY MUST NOT happen behind our backs. We make it and must understand it. To understand history is to understand the evolution of things. To understand evolution is to understand the basis and possibilities of revolution. To understand the history of reality is to understand how the present reality came to be. And to understand what actually is is to begin to understand what can be; what must be, what will be, if we consciously and voluntarily work and struggle to bring it into being, if we dare to do more than wolf and wait.

Reality is also in its very nature contradictory—that is to say, from beginning to end in everything, in all phenomena and processes, in all thought and life, there are contradictions. It is contradictions which give history and social life their motion. Contradictions are basically *conflictual differences*, differences that demand confrontations and solutions. To go further, contradiction is the conflict between two opposites, each struggling for dominance. We could talk about the simple obvious contradictions like up and down, plus and minus, negative and positive, etc., but it is social contradictions which are basic to life and struggle and it is these we should and must study and understand.

Contradictions are not only *universal* (everywhere) and *absolute* (in all things), they are also *particular* (specific and distinct). They are particular in their motion and essence, particular to given societies. Classes are in all societies and yet how these classes are formed, interact and struggle is qualitatively different in (particular to) each society and must be studied and dealt with differently. It is certainly incorrect to argue total exception for American society, but not to see and respond creatively to the qualitative difference of American society, its particular contradictions, its particular forms of motion is equally incorrect. Different contradictions demand different solutions and we make a serious mistake not to understand this and act accordingly.

There are internal and external contradictions, but it is the internal contradictions of a

thing which give rise to its motion, determine its essence and provides the basis for its development and change. The development and change of a thing can be seen as its "internal and necessary self-movement." Mao is, of course, correct when he says, ". . . external causes are the conditions of change and internal causes are the basis of change." ("On Contradiction") Taken on a particular social level, this means essentially that no one and nothing can change the USA but the broad masses of the American people. The world situation of chaos and disorder can only create conditions, and it is from within that the fate and future of the USA will be decided. On a larger level, it means that to act at large in the world with no base is at best abstract and useless, that an internationalism not concretely applied, not demonstrated by the struggle for socialist liberation and construction *within* one's own society is only sound not fury, rhetorical not real.

In every society, there is a principal, fundamental or major contradiction and secondary ones. By principal contradiction, we mean, the contradiction which determines and influences all other ones. The principal contradiction in every capitalist society is the one between the social (Collective) character of production and the private character of ownership, between those who produce and those who pocket the wealth; those who work and those who walk away with the profit. The concrete form this contradiction takes is in the struggle between labor and capital, between the working class and the capitalist class, between the have-nots and the haves.

FINALLY, TO UNDERSTAND and study contradiction, we must raise and answer these questions: (1) What is the *position* of a given contradiction, principal or secondary; (2) What *concrete form* is it expressed in—labor vs. capital, oppressed vs. oppressor, etc.; (3) What is the nature of the contradiction—antagonistic (irreconcilable between the people and the oppressor) or non-antagonistic (reconcilable between the people themselves); and (4) What is the *method of solution* of given

contradictions—class struggle, socialist revolution and national liberation to deal with contradictions between the people and the oppressor and criticism and self-criticism, education and persuasion to deal with contradictions among the people?

Reality is, finally, knowable and changeable at the same time. To begin to know reality is to begin to change it. For to begin to know is to begin to eliminate ignorance and to acquire a consciousness that is a definite loss to the oppressor and a definite gain for the oppressed. To know and change is again the link between theory and practice, understanding and action. In order to know, we must act, but in order to act, we must also know. It is another correct contention by Mao that, "If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality" and again, "If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution." ("On Practice") Put another way, if you want to learn to swim, eventually you'll have to get in the water; and if you want to learn how to defeat the oppressor, eventually you must dare to defy him and engage him directly in struggle.

Real knowledge begins with knowing that there is nothing unknowable, only things unknown and that *all* mysteries are temporary and will eventually be unravelled, not by revelation from on high, but by *work, research* and *struggle* below. To know is to begin to take charge of our lives and end the hold mythology has had on us. A correct and serious grasp of reality clearly shows that mythology, spookism and metaphysics come from our failure to understand and master nature and society. We need gods because we don't have each other, because we feel alone and alienated and powerless before the artificial majesty of capitalist might. The fact that people only ask their gods for what they can't do themselves or can't do with others and that they turn to their gods for security and solace proves this feeling of powerlessness and this alienation from each other. This also clearly points to our need to reach out and form real and strong relationships so that we can give up all Charlie Brown blankets and other illusions of security and solace and

begin to change ourselves by moving to change society. In a word, "The demand to abandon illusions about our condition is a demand to abandon a condition which requires illusions."

WE ARE SOCIAL BEINGS, creatures, not of any power in heaven or overseas, but of society and this world; and if we want to change the world, we must remain in it and stay out of the stars. To understand ourselves is to understand our history, not our horoscope, our class and national situations, not the non-

sense of ghetto assumptions and homespun metaphysical interpretations of reality. To know is to acquire a responsibility to act. If we know the laws of society and yet don't move to apply this knowledge, to *actively* and *audaciously* change society, we shirk our responsibility and deserve the fate that befalls us. There is no need knowing the world if we don't move to change it. If we don't practice, preaching is of little use. Ten thousand theories cannot save us if we, ourselves, don't dare to struggle, to go against the tide and do as Cabral urged,—“act audaciously and with great initiative.”

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OVERTURNING OURSELVES: FROM MYSTIFICATION TO MEANINGFUL STRUGGLE

READ INTO REVOLUTION what you will, it is essentially a question of enduring and expanding, of transforming discontent into organized and effective action, defying and defeating the enemy and building alternative solidarities that assure the defense of our interests and the development of our potential. And regardless of what we thought or hoped, history, not our own will, has

televised into existence a new era, one oriented by frustration or imagined defeat allow ourselves the luxury and lethargy of withdrawal. Our commitment must be continuous; our moral fiber and internal strength great enough to sustain us in our struggle to turn sound and fury into substance and fulfillment. This is an age of quick transition and profound transformation, a time like no other in terms of the depth and dimension of peoples' aspirations and demands. It is a time of turmoil, tumult and overturning. "Countries want independence, masses want liberation, and the people want revolution." But it is not enough to want these things, one must will them and work to make them into a reality.

The Year of the August Revolt, 1963, marked a turning point in our struggle. It altered the fundamental character of the Movement and suggested an alternative way of dealing with oppression and its attendant problems. But it and the period after it was more defensive than developmental, acquired the aspect of protest rather than programmatic change and finally became bogged down

in subjective formulations and empty acts rather than becoming a catalyst for a broader and more definitive struggle. Out of this period came the Black Power Movement, initiated by SNCC, the mass party projection of the Panthers and the resurgence and beginning consolidation of cultural nationalism, inspired and supported by US. What was a series of ill-considered and ill-advised — methods to alter fundamentally the power relations between blacks and whites, giving blacks the institutional strength they determined was necessary to realize and extend their aspirations. But the period of extensive possibilities passed leaving less than it could have if the energy expended in pronouncements had been invested in programs of change, and slogans and symbols had given way to substantive analysis and concrete aspirations. It is no doubt difficult for some — even many — of us to accept this fact, but it's true, and if we cannot admit it we cannot alter it. And if it goes unadmitted we will our incorrect approaches and the terrible inhuman condition in which we find ourselves.

LET US LOOK at ourselves seven years after. We are weak in crucial areas, exhausted, mangled and corrupted, disillusioned, in debt and in captivity, conscious of our needs without the means to satisfy them, meditating and expanding on what might have been. But this is check, not checkmate and if we will it, we still can win! We must realize that one has to play the hand dealt by history, but this is only

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READ INTO REVOLUTION what you will, it is essentially a question of enduring and expanding, of transforming discontent into organized and effective action, defying and defeating the enemy and building *alternative solidarities* that assure the defense of our interests and the development of our potential. And regardless of what was thought or hoped, prayed for or promised, revolution and liberation will not be handed to us by history; nor can it be sloganized, talked or televised into existence. Neither can we, disoriented by frustration or imagined defeat allow ourselves the luxury and lethargy of withdrawal. Our commitment must be continuous; our moral fiber and internal strength great enough to sustain us in our struggle to turn sound and fury into substance and fulfillment. This is an age of quick transition and profound transformation, a time like no other in terms of the depth and dimension of peoples aspirations and demands. It is a time of turmoil, tumult and overturning. "Countries want independence, nations want liberation, and the people want revolution." But it is not enough to want these things, one must will them and work to make them into a reality.

The Year of the August Revolt, 1965, marked a turning point in our struggle. It altered the fundamental character of the Movement and suggested an alternative way of dealing with oppression and its attendant problems. But it and the period after it was more defensive than developmental, acquired the aspect of protest rather than programmatic change and finally became bogged down

in subjective formulations and empty acts rather than becoming a catalyst for a broader and more definitive struggle. Out of this period came the Black Power Movement initiated by SNCC, the mass party projection of the Panthers and the resurgence and beginning consolidation of cultural nationalism formulated and projected by US. What was attempted during this period was a series of earnest — though at times ill-advised — methods to alter fundamentally the power relations between blacks and whites, giving blacks the institutional strength they determined was necessary to realize and extend their aspirations. But the period of extensive possibilities passed leaving less than it could have if the energy expended in pronouncements had been invested in programs of change, and slogans and symbols had given way to substantive analysis and concrete acquisitions. It is no doubt difficult for some — even many — of us to accept this fact, but it's true, and if we cannot admit it we cannot alter it. And if it goes unaltered so will our incorrect approaches and the terribly inhuman condition in which we find ourselves.

LET US LOOK at ourselves seven years after. We are weak in crucial areas, scattered, coopted and corrupted, disillusioned, *in exile* and *in captivity*, conscious of our needs without the means to satisfy them, meditating and expanding on what might have been. *But this is check, not checkmate and if we will it, we still can win!* It is said that one has to play the hand dealt by history, but this is only

*notes:

by RON KARENGA

half true. For we only have to play the hand history has dealt until we can reestablish the rules and deal from a deck of our own choice. It is naive politically and intellectually to imagine us without contradictions, without setbacks and periodic impasses. Every people has contradictions and weaknesses as well as strengths, revolutionary as well as reactionary elements and we are not in this aspect different. What is essential here is to distinguish the subjective from the objective conditions and possibilities of our struggle and to move within that awareness. Each struggle or successful revolution offers lessons to the others of the same period or afterwards, but neither one is the final word in change. Each raises questions as it solves them and leaves more questions for other generations and peoples to struggle with and solve. So it is with our struggle; it is instructive as well as augmentative, teaching us new ways to win, extending our perspectives and thus raising the level of our aspirations and the method of realizing them. But in order to grasp the lessons learned, consolidate and keep our gains, we must engage in constant reassessment both of the internal and external conditions of our struggle. We cannot afford to allow our opposition to interpret our history, pass political judgment on the effectiveness of our acts or contentions and disguise his racism and repression as proof of the futility of creative struggle.

Every movement in the struggle of a people for the right to determine its destiny and realize its aspirations has its meaning, each act its importance and every experience some value. It is a question of who is interpreting

it and for what reason. And regardless of what is written or said or felt in silence, the period of struggle between 1965 and now had and has its meaning and message and it is up to us to assess and absorb it so we can *transcend* it and promote transformation on a higher level. What is demanded now is a strong readjustment vitality, a flexibility that will allow us to view every experience we encounter as a lesson not a let down. Only then can we claim to have the profound grasp and commitment this struggle demands.

WE CANNOT DENY that we indulged in an overabundance of subjective formulations that often obscured or erased from view objective conditions that had to be confronted and overcome in the pursuit of our goals. We submitted to symbols and slogans, believed that a beret and buba, black leather jacket and dashiki had some intrinsic value, some ingenious and incisive answer to our problems. We engaged in empty arguments, enervating internecine struggles, self-diminishing discussions of personalities and imagined power, and the opposition watched and waited. Then when we had alienated the masses and dismantled the incipient system of mutually supportive institutions we had built in spite of ourselves, he came and with little or no serious, collective resistance, drove us into hiding and put us in captivity. We could not extend ourselves beyond our immediate circles of interests, could not expand to include the broad base of people essential for the kind and extent of change we knew was necessary. We talked about the Revolution as if it were

already a reality and as if power was as much our possession as the inadequate analysis we used to explain it. "Black is beautiful" we shouted as if it had some magic meaning and could in an instant overthrow ignorance, undo centuries of mental and physical damage and defend us against the diabolical forces that gathered to protect themselves from the televised image of rantin' and ravin' and recently aware nationalists and episodic revolutionaries. We did not bother to extend the slogan beyond its subjective and obvious esthetic implications so that it would carry with it a social significance also, a social significance that emanated from the high level of achievement this awareness should and could engender if we made it an objective reality rather than, or as well as, a subjective reference.

Instead of objectively increasing the range and roots of Black Power, we held up our fists for the six o'clock news and shouted "right on" or "habari gani" and went right on making the same mistakes. And one of the most damaging debates that occurred during this time was the one that emanated from the false distinction between Revolutionary Nationalism and Cultural Nationalism. It was unnecessary, debilitating and time and energy consuming. But it was as much our fault (the US leadership) as anyone else, for we never issued a comprehensive statement on just what Cultural Nationalism was and this left it open to be misinterpreted and manipulated by anyone who wished to and even those who didn't want to but had no choice in the absence of definitive information. We make this open admission in response to the requirement imposed by our history as well as future movement. For as we have said until we admit, we cannot alter and until we alter we cannot advance and realize our collective aspirations. The scope and content of our struggle—if it is to be successful, real and not reflective of an unproductive past—must be this: 1) to *overturn ourselves*, 2) struggle against our collective weaknesses and 3) defy and defeat the enemy—in this order of importance and through this progression of levels of awareness and increasing strength.

We say the debate over what was errone-

ously called revolutionary nationalism vs. cultural nationalism was false, because the division in reality does not exist. Revolution, like national liberation, as Cabral says, is an *act of culture*, an organized political expression of a given culture. And if, as has been admitted in revolutionary circles around the world, nationalism is a precondition for revolution, it is culture that is the primary vehicle for achieving this national awareness and commitment.

But culture was confused conveniently or ignorantly with song and dance on one level and manifestations of African origins on another. It was not conceived as the crucible in which the struggle took form and the context in which it ultimately succeeded and blossomed into continuous reconstruction. When we talk of cultural revolution, we're talking essentially about cultural reconversion, the conscious and programmatic restructuring of attitudes and relationships that aid us in our aspiration for national liberation. We are recognizing and responding to the fact that the first resistance in any national struggle is cultural resistance and that as we said elsewhere, the crucial struggle is to win the minds of our people, for if we lose this struggle we cannot hope to win the political one. Also, what we were and are about is the task and responsibility of distinguishing between *popular* and *national* culture, between the fluid everyday culture of groups within a people and the culture of a nation, conscious of and committed to its role and responsibility in its own liberation and its contribution to human history. The essential character of a culture is determined by its values, for culture is simply that, a system of values reflecting ways of doing and looking at things on seven levels, i.e. in terms of mythology (religion), history, social organization, economic organization, political organization, creative motif (art, music, literature and technology) and ethos.

WHAT WAS AND IS NEEDED NOW is to give popular culture a national dimension, giving us a consolidated set of national

attitudes and aspirations—in a word a *collective vocation* of nation building. We overturn ourselves and admit that culture imposes limitations, but go on to say it also provides infinite possibilities. That is why constant reassessment is so necessary, for each element of culture must be eventually measured for its worth and need for change or reinforcement. Cultural revolution is a record of successive adaptations and adjustments reflecting a culture's flexibility and capacity to expand and grow. Culture cannot remain static, it must produce, direct and determine the intensity and level of struggle even as struggle acts in a mutually supportive role of producing culture and heightening its level. Moreover, culture must and does give a moral dimension to the struggle, establishes rules and systems of association and behavior as well as resolving contradiction among its people and harmonizing diverse yet interdependent interests. And the stress on the moral element of the struggle is essential for without it we turn on ourselves, arguing abstracts and forgetting or frowning upon the needs of the people. Power, undefined and not placed in its proper perspective cannot be advocated, for it not only frightens people unfamiliar with power, but raises serious questions concerning the use of it once it's obtained.

Given these conditions, our people will deny us support for fear once we obtain our objective, we will use it to impose our own brand of oppression. In order to create a new faith, a new positive force for our people to support and promote, we must emphasize not the physical or pure political force, but rather the moral and humanistic basis of our struggle, authority and legitimacy. The worth of any act or idea must ultimately and always be determined by its moral and social benefit to our people as a whole, not to distinct and contending groups. For national liberation requires political and moral unity, a confluence of all aspects of our culture, tying together each group and level of our people into a knot that will not break or unravel in the stress and strain of constant struggle.

INVOLVED AT THE VERY HEART of cultural reconversion is each person as well as the people as a whole. *Each person must overturn himself* before he can struggle against our collective weaknesses and defy and defeat the enemy. For as we've said and continue to say the first step to national unity is internal unity, the process of getting one's self together. This is not an advocacy of abstract individualism, for the individualism that claims the right to ruin and resist the aspirations of the masses is invalid and definitely unneeded. What is urged here is the acceptance of man's infinite capacity to expand and grow, his increasing ability to endure and overcome subjective controls and objective conditions. It is here we get a clear distinction between the determinism of some western leftists and the voluntarism of African and Asian theorists, leaders and activists, between the dialectical materialism of Marxists and what the Boggsses call dialectical humanism. We must believe in man, in our people's capacity to achieve and overcome if we are to be more than little men with big grudges equally divided between our hate for the enemy and dislike for each other.

Cultural reconversion moving from the personal level extends to the mass level as a *struggle against our collective weaknesses*—leaderism, groupism, technical ignorance, economic and political vulnerability and undeveloped perspectives. Leaderism is one of our most vulnerable weaknesses, a contradiction that so often cripples us. It is a sickness that comes from poor self concepts and/or the obvious lack of collective values. Leaderism and leadership struggles are widespread because of the feeling of powerlessness in relation to the external opposition and so an internal enemy is identified and attacked. Also styling for T V or liberals and the imagined possession of charisma all play their part in obscuring the real meaning and direction of the Movement. Again we overturn ourselves and revise our position on the singularity of leadership. We have been known to say that leadership is singular but decision making is collective. By this we meant that

within a given group there should not be a multitude claiming equal authority, that once a collective decision was made only one person needed to announce the consensus. But again we made the mistake of not explaining in detail that this did not mean one-man leadership in the western sense of dictatorship but was a political necessity in terms of organizational requirement of having a head, and that in fact we saw each member of the ruling Circle and ultimately each member of our organization as a potential, if not actual, leader.

For leadership essentially involves innovation and initiative and our struggle demands that everyone increases his capacity in order to be able to assume that role as the situation requires it. But the concept of the singularity of leadership has become a liability, for it allows for more antagonistic arguments (even though it can be explained in terms of organizational requirement) and gives uncommitted and unqualified people a chance to claim the right to rule others without adequate check and critical and creative input and to make mistakes in the collective name of the people without giving them the chance or channels to decide and act collectively. All good leadership is collective whether in name or not, for the depth and political and moral dimensions of the struggle requires the minds, hearts and energies of the maximum number of people and is a burden no honest and informed person wants to bear alone. And collective decision-making is really collective leadership for it provides an organization or political entity with the collective and substantive innovation and initiative it requires to realistically confront and deal decisively with objective conditions. Therefore, to avoid useless argument and unsettling antagonism over terms, we overturn ourselves and concede the need to advocate as well as practice collective leadership.

GROUPISM on a certain level is no more than tribalism, specious and spurious claims to having the only secret to success. It emanates from external and internal condi-

tions, reflecting the influence of our enemy and the absence of collective and consolidated values and approaches to our common problem. It is also on another level a result of our unfamiliarity with political struggle and the absolute and unalterable need for unity. We have, as a people, refused in the past to recognize one of our most fundamental and ancient values, the *complementarity of all things*—the unity even of opposites. We have advocated grandiose concepts of all blacks in one group when the people in our separate groups were struggling among themselves and challenging the viability of that very approach by their every act. We have maintained in the past and find no reason to change now the concept and practice of *Operational Unity*—unity in our diversity. We need many organizations to reflect and deal with the wide range of interests and aspirations of our people. And it is naive and non-productive to advocate total or organic unity of all groups. What is essential, even indispensable, is a system of mutually supportive relationships between all groups on both local and national level for defense of our interests and development of our potential. Unity is not an abstract, it is a concrete need that must be translated and transformed into reflective and real examples on institutional levels.

National liberation requires organized and unified responses to oppression and anything less than this leaves us at an almost total loss. We must somehow transform our needs into *collective structure and movement*, and not be satisfied with a national system of slogans and other subjective formulations. What we need is a system of institutions that house our aspirations, that defend us and insure our development. An organization is not and must not come to mean a group of people in leather jackets and dashikis, berets and bubas shouting the same slogans. A real organization is a *base of commitment a method and an instrument*. It is a base in which a non-productive and/or neutral body of people are transformed into conscious committed and active advocates; it is a method of arranging relationships and roles and creating and maintaining a

model to be emulated; and it is an instrument to realize our will through the acquisition, retention and exercise of power. We must have permanent structures that engender lasting loyalties not loosely knit clusters of brittle brothers that break under stress and never express anything more than episodic allegiance to both structures and our struggle. Organization implies common identity, purpose, and direction and speaks of a viable and expansive structure that can absorb, transform and utilize the latent and untapped talent and creative potential held in check misused and misdirected by oppressive measures.

In terms of our technical ignorance and the undeveloped level of our daily life the evidence is obvious and yet not discouraging, for our grasp of what is needed for our success certainly indicates educational and technical advancement. We, like all developing people of the Third World, must create not only a national culture but a scientific one. For only in this manner can we seriously hope to overcome our collective weaknesses and defy and defeat the enemy. We must think rationally as well as be emotionally involved in the struggle. The objective conditions of our struggle involve clear political, technical and scientific requirements if we are to formulate and effect the profound changes we know are necessary. A shift in our ethos and image from physical education and soul, to education, revolution and soul seems to be in order and much needed. Still we cannot sell our souls for money and machines, cannot forget our original aspiration even though we gain new ones. Our first and fundamental aspiration is our profound unalterable commitment to our people's expansion and growth, to create and consolidate a body of people capable of and committed to internal and external transformation. We want a body of committed people, men, women and children, capable not only of physical courage, but of mental and moral expansiveness, a revolutionary solidarity capable of confronting and dealing successfully with problems on various levels in the struggle, a nation, conscious of and com-

mitted to its role and responsibility in terms of human history, actively and emotionally associated with the continuous evolution of mankind.

OUR UNDEVELOPED PERSPECTIVES plague us constantly, especially on the political and economic levels which at given points take on moral significance. The question of class and its validity as a tool of analysis, the question of alliance and coalitions in relation to electoral and community politics, the question of types of structures and the rigidities they establish to increase our skills and to counter programs of political pacification and cooptation, the question of priorities in terms of transitional and real and permanent interests and the question of the articulation of our interests all must be answered if we are to defend our interests and develop our potential. Our analysis and choice of program and priorities are profoundly affected by the transitional nature of our situation with its shifting alliances, instability of structures, ephemeral interests, episodic allegiances and the wider range of possible developments that have occurred in recent times. But our constant search for real areas of interests, for the source and center of our energies and commitment, can and must be answered by an ideology based on our values and intellectually and emotionally appealing as well as applicable.

Cabral has said that at one level we were not suffering from any lack of ideology in the struggle but from an overabundance. This is, with modification of context, true; for we here, in this country suffer not so much from overabundance of ideologies but from the national system of slogans and imported concepts that are often mistaken for ideology. The advocacy of defense, civil rights, electoral politics or territorial separation is not an ideology. An ideology, as Imamu Clyde Halisi clearly states, is a system of the thoughts and beliefs that give a moral and meaningful interpretation to life. It is, in a word, a rationally arranged and articulated aspiration. Kawaida, the moral and meaningful interpretation of our life, rationally arranged and

articulated by US is such an ideology. National slogans without attendant substantive programs confuse and cripple us, substitute words for work and pronouncements for programs. They do not offer the critical analysis necessary for a successful struggle and encourage the counterproductive practice of summing up our needs in a single answer and being satisfied that it requires no more. This attachment to single answers is reflected in the slogans of the sixties that were never actually or extensively translated into programmatic or structural expressions. We need slogans but they cannot stand alone; they must emanate from and be rooted in real structures and programs and meaningful movement. For all questions of an objective nature are ultimately answered empirically.

It is due to the lack of correct ideological orientation and a clear expression of an undeveloped economic and political perspective to advocate black capitalism and/or electoral politics as the single solution to our problems as a people. The pack rat perspective of capitalism is a contradiction to the collective nature of our struggle and the collective needs of our people. A man who is merely a surplus in this economy and who has no real capital cannot seriously or sanely talk about being a capitalist, for he can neither compete nor protect his interests alone. Raw and crude materialism is a contradiction in terms of our value system and only promotes deeper distributive inequalities among us at the same time we are contesting those inequalities imposed by the oppressor. We do not deny we struggle for sufficient goods and adequate services, but we struggle for ideas and principles at the same time, for *moral* as well as material improvement. For material improvement without values can make us little more than a pack of pigs with full bellies, grunting, shoving and grasping for more—even at each others expense. It would be a troublesome acquisition to obtain an abundance of goods and services without any system or structure to avoid or eliminate the distributive inequalities we struggle now to abolish. This must not drive us to import theories of redis-

tribution, however, and apply them mechanically. For each struggle of a given people requires a particular approach and those who import ideas at random reveal an obvious ignorance of the particular nature of each struggle and will suffer serious setbacks from such a policy. We must think seriously in terms of Ujamaa, collective and cooperative economics, and begin to build structures that reflect our attachment to it as the mode of production and distribution most suitable to our needs and in harmony with our values. Cloaking ignorance and reactionary ideas and acts in revolutionary terms and titles and the insistence on stressing “class” distinctions among blacks is counterproductive and tends to deepen the many and varied divisions that already exist. There are no classes among blacks as President Touré says for we all belong to one class, the “class of the dispossessed.” The middle sector of the black community has none of the standard attributes of a class and, the sectoral behavior it engages in is but a pale imitation of its imagined white counterpart. This sector has neither the *attitude*, *access* nor *ability* attributed to class. It has no mission vis-a-vis society except to lose itself and its political loyalties are externally oriented, both of which are unclass-like postures. Nor does this middle sector have privileged access to production, distribution, marketing and decision-making. Moreover, it has no ability to impose, shape, and enjoy key values of the society, and it lives in constant threat of losing its tenuous and mostly technical relationship with the ruling class of whites.

BUT THOUGH WE FIND no applicability of the class analysis to the black community now, we cannot deny the reality of the possibility of middle sectoral behavior evolving into a rigid and reactionary class posture and attempting to acquire real power in order to imitate in more concrete terms its imagined white counterpart by exploiting and oppressing. History will not let us claim Africans or blacks in general never had the desire for acquisition and are exempt from exploitative

tendencies. That would be a very naive and unnecessary contention, for we know that contradictions exist in all societies. But what is essential here is the extent and origin of the contradictions and the structural methods and moral urgency to check them. It is true that the rationalization for acquisitiveness was devised and developed in Europe and that communalism existed in Africa, Asia and pre-European America before Marx or his ancestors. But Europe extended into these areas and did not leave without leaving a legacy. This is a reality we cannot run away from in order to satisfy some subjective need to claim an unnecessary purity. And even if we do not read the daily literature that proves the legacy was left, a rational approach to history would lead us down the same road. Likewise, we are in America, the most extensively imperialist and capitalist country in history and we cannot pretend this has not had its historical and present day effect on us. Therefore, we must reject mystification of our capacity for good and accept and respond to the fact that without structures and principles to prevent us and continuously reconvert us, the blackest among us would be as crudely acquisitive as the coldest capitalist or cave-man.

Politically we need also to develop our perspectives in the framework of nationalist ideology. We must understand that our fundamental struggle is for space. We must occupy and control space in every area that serves our interest. Space is essentially an institutional concept and can be defined as an area or unit of identifiable interest. Wherever our collective interests are involved we must have the power to protect them and we cannot do it if we do not occupy and control adequate space. Space can be viewed on three levels; vital, developmental and strategic space. Vital space is space that is necessary for survival, an irreducible area of definite use and value to a people. Homes, schools, religious, social, economic and basic political institutions all fall within this realm. Developmental space is tied up with the notion of expansion, of a people extending itself in the ocean of

infinite possibilities available. It involves building alternative solidarities, systems and institutions whose main function is to develop as opposed to defend or simply to survive. And strategic space is defensive space, an extension into alien and often hostile areas to secure an avante-garde position, to seek out and identify the opposition's intentions, weaknesses and attitudes and to take advantage of them.

IT SEEMS TO US that the debate on the value of electoral politics is best resolved by seeing this as one aspect of the larger movement toward national liberation, another move to occupy and control space. But one of the main drawbacks of electoral politics is that the majority of the black politicians do not have the aspirations of the people at heart nor do they have a grasp of the dimensions and needs of our struggle. They fake it off until elected then, go off searching for an institutional alternative to the constituency that elected them. Moreover, there are some serious questions about the viability of a numerical minority in parliamentary politics, especially when that minority is politically unsophisticated and can be easily manipulated by the opposition as examples of how well his system works. But though occupying an elected office does not in itself insure power or contribution to the struggle, it seems in all fairness to those black politicians who are sincere, conscious and trying to be committed that we should support them and at the same time attempt to remould them, by restructuring our relationships with them and helping to develop their perspectives. It is a secret to no one that traditional politicians do not have any serious respect for nationalists as a whole. And really we cannot condemn them on that level, for our general projection has not been as sophisticated and impressive as we might want to think. Most of us are known for interrupting meetings, not for controlling a constituency and if one deals in parliamentary politics it is the constituency that counts. Therefore, the embarrassed politician makes a public concession in our presence

and alters his posture in our absence. What is needed is a mutually supportive system of relationships between blacks who deal in parliamentary politics and those that deal in extra-parliamentary politics, and acceptance of the fact that both approaches are valid and useful if properly designed and directed. Moreover, it is not enough to expect traditional politicians to be responsive to us or the people in general if there are no established structures to hold them accountable. Morality is fine among men with the same values, but it is somewhat absurd to believe that moral arguments alone, to people of different persuasions and with different values, are going to convince them to change their posture or behavior. Finally, it must be realized that electoral politics are a means, not a panacea, and are conditioned objectively by so many limitations. They can, if properly analyzed, designed and directed provide educational, organizational and at times economic advantages to the community. But what is crucial here is the maintenance of the constituency and structures used in the election to insure accountability and constantly remind and direct us and the elected official of our original aspiration by urging and working for the establishment of institutions that reflect that aspiration.

THE STRUGGLE AHEAD OF US on the long road to reconversion and reconstruction

will be an intense and extensive one. But the most important battle is still the one for the minds of our people and thus cultural reconversion is indispensable. Moreover our efforts must be directed to a given collective end, not at random and, therefore, an achievement ethic based on collective good must be established, not a simple Calvinistic work ethic or one that advocates abstract activism. For work and action without direction and design can be counterproductive and time and energy consuming, no more than a series of empty acts, a labor without love. We must be continuously committed to the creation of new and more positive realities and believe in the infinite capacity of man, and our people to transform themselves. Finally, we must constantly reassess our positions and postures, eliminate our weaknesses and reinforce our strengths, always committed to the principle that subjective formulations are no substitute for objective achievements. If we can overturn ourselves, we can struggle against our collective weaknesses and if we overcome our collective weaknesses, we can defy and defeat the enemy. And when we win this struggle against our oppressor, we must continue the battle for the mind and heart on a higher level, for our real commitment to reconversion and reconstruction is not simply to defeat the enemy, but to a profound and perpetual commitment to the continuous development and expansion of man.

*notes:

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A STRATEGY FOR STRUGGLE

These forests are not just a source of timber for our country. They are a source of life, a source of beauty, a source of peace, a source of strength. They are a source of pride, a source of honor, a source of glory. They are a source of love, a source of hope, a source of faith. They are a source of life, a source of beauty, a source of peace, a source of strength. They are a source of pride, a source of honor, a source of glory. They are a source of love, a source of hope, a source of faith.

III. 'A STRATEGY FOR STRUGGLE: TURNING WEAKNESS INTO STRENGTH'

WHATEVER PLAN WE ENTERED ON, we will alter or overthrow, we will not remain until we first alter and overthrow our own ignorance of ourselves and acquire a profound knowledge and understanding of the nature of our oppression. Until we achieve a comprehensive consciousness of ourselves, we cannot identify or engage creatively in our historical tasks or achieve the level and extent of unity we need to win in this bitter and heroic struggle to which we have sacrificed so much.

We are a people, an African people, a national community struggling to come into political existence. We are Africanists and it is useless to argue or deny the dual historical character of our identity. We grew out of two soils and two societies and went to the end beyond both sources and ally ourselves with all the world's progressive people if we are to make the kind of profound and far-reaching contribution to human history of which we are capable. This is not some insidious argument for abstract humanism that denies any national identity.

These forests are not just a source of timber for our country. They are a source of life, a source of beauty, a source of peace, a source of strength. They are a source of pride, a source of honor, a source of glory. They are a source of love, a source of hope, a source of faith. They are a source of life, a source of beauty, a source of peace, a source of strength. They are a source of pride, a source of honor, a source of glory. They are a source of love, a source of hope, a source of faith.

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A STRATEGY FOR STRUGGLE

These forests are now a real strength for our people, for our struggle. Before, they were a weakness, because we were afraid of our forest, sacred bastions of irans and every kind of spirit. Now we are afraid no longer: we have conquered and mobilized the spirits of the forests, turned this weakness into strength. That's what struggle means: turning weakness into strength.

Amilcar Cabral

WHATEVER ELSE WE INTEND or decide to alter or overthrow, we will not succeed until we first alter and overthrow our own ignorance of ourselves and acquire a profound knowledge and understanding of the nature of our oppression. Until we achieve a comprehensive consciousness of ourselves, we cannot identify or engage decisively in our historical tasks or achieve the level and extent of unity we need to win in this historic and heroic struggle in which we have sacrificed so much.

We are a people, an African people, a *national community* struggling to come into political existence. We are Afroamericans and it is useless to argue or deny the dual historical character of our identity. We grew out of two soils and two societies and must in the end extend beyond both sources and ally ourselves with all the world's progressive people if we are to make the kind of profound and far-reaching contribution to human history of which we are capable. This is not some insidious argument for abstract humanism that denies any national identity,

purpose or creative capacity. Nor is it one for vulgar individualism that idiotically assumes individual ability can overcome collective oppression, or for the escapist humanism that emanates from a minority mentality and seeks to be anything but black, from anywhere but Africa, a part of anything but one's self and one's people. This is a revolutionary humanism with its roots in national identity and struggle for liberation and its branches in world socialist revolution whose practice is the conscious and creative promotion of the historical prospect of human freedom from want, toil and domination.

So, we are an African people, Afroamericans, products and participants of and in two historical processes and realities, a national community struggling to come into political existence. We are a cultural and physical reality, but we do not exist politically. Our history and historical tasks are the same but the unequal and repressive context of our development divided us along lines often embarrassing to enumerate. Our arguments seem infinite over who we really are, over the spelling of our name even and our need to recognize this reality or the next depending upon the political direction and interests of our assumed instructor. But Muslims, Christians, Kawaidists, Simba, Panthers, potential patriots and committed Pan-Africanists all live on the same street, encounter daily and dramatically the same oppressor and will ultimately suffer the same fate or share the same victory because we are all inseparably linked with each other. *This is*

*notes:

by RON KARENGA

a basic and enduring truth and try as we will we cannot escape it. Therefore, we must confront this truth, analyze and make use of its meaning in the understanding and advancement of our struggle. We as a people are like others in our human strengths and weaknesses, our human contributions and contradictions and yet we are different and it is this difference that defines us and gives us our identity and historical vocation as a people.

In the Sixties we began to define and accept ourselves and to negate the historical monopoly the oppressor had on our minds. And we actually changed reality by this defiantly proud acceptance of ourselves. But that was only a beginning; *we must now move from the mere announcement of our existence to building and protecting the basis for it.* And that basis must be a political one, one of power; power to defend and develop, to create and expand. In a word, we must come into political existence by becoming a power recognized and respected beyond the confines of the community, a power conscious of its historical tasks and committed to the revolutionary ethic and aspiration of the comprehensive and continuing transformation of society and ourselves.

IT IS NO LONGER ENOUGH to take refuge in rhetoric, symbolic associations with the Movement's saints, traditional dress and hair styles and social withdrawal into mysticism. We are confronted with the chance and challenge to regain our historical personality as a

productive and creative people and contribute definitively to the development and achievement of the progressive social forces of human history. And this is only possible thru real struggle, thru liberation and revolution, *thru the negation of the actual and the pursuance of the possible.*

In order that we not reduce this serious struggle for liberation and revolution to the recitation of magic formulas, slogans and mystical solutions, we must objectively analyze our concrete situation and historical alternatives and evolve from these realities strategies and programs that are reflective of our commitment and commensurate with our historical capacity. Only in this way can we become a force *for ourselves and for history.* It is not enough to make hagiographical references, symbolically associating with the saints-killing concrete action with a poorly selected quote from Malcolm or Cabral, lacerating the enemy with Lumumba, tearing him apart with Toure and Nyerere, exposing him with Nkrumah and Fanon, but unable to extract from these great teachers and revolutionaries applicable analyses and answers and enough inspiration to radically confront the oppressor and decisively end his reign of terror and repression.

What we must do then, is overturn ourselves, reassess and remould ourselves and relations with each other as a priority and precondition to our moves to alter and restructure our relations in society and the world. Moreover, we must end the systematic suppression of our history by the oppressor and

extract from it its *subversive content*, i.e. its heroic and instructive images, events and issues that provide viable and valuable alternatives to the oppressive realities to which our people, ignorant of these historical possibilities so often bow. Our approach to history must be above all analytical—not simply descriptive and/or evocative with an isolated account of the lives of heroes and an invoking of their names as if it were part of some mystical and magic slogan that will slay the twin dragons of racism and capitalism and miraculously save us without obviously needed struggle. Our history must be taught and studied with an eye and ear for interconnections, for contradictions as well as contributions to human history. In this way, we avoid a *reductive translation* of our life and struggle and project history as it is and must be—an oppositional force to present fact, a negation of the actual and a call for the continuous pursuance of the possible.

We as a people have never accepted our enslavement and oppression and have always searched for historical alternatives to this narrow and repressive reality assembled by our oppressor. But sometimes, we choose incorrectly from the historical alternatives open to us, because of the continuing confusion created by the contradictions inherent in the crippling context of our development. These contradictions are expressed in the ambiguous quality of our existence, in the oppressor's dual approach of *gift and gun*, in the legal fiction of our rights as opposed to the daily repression which refutes them and in our obvious identity as human and the reality of our race and the blatant limitation this imposes in a racist society.

In spite of these contradictions and our different approaches to them as a people, freedom has always been our major goal. But freedom as a historical objective has opened itself to different interpretations and these interpretations reflect the historical alternatives open to us to achieve it. Three *strategic models* have dominated the history of our struggles and development, in spite of the seemingly infinite variation of each. They are separation, integration and national liberation. And any attempt to devise and develop

a strategy for our freedom must rise out of serious reflection and analysis of these traditional models which are both products and approaches of our historical struggle to end our enslavement and rise above the crippling effect of this system of repressive relations—economic, social and political.

THE INTEGRATION MODEL as a solution to our "problem" based on our assumed solubility and willing acceptance in society by a racist majority is historically obsolescent—perhaps already obsolete. It has become historically illegitimate as a result of our heightened consciousness and the strategic lessons learned in our constant struggle. Therefore, it has been abandoned as a collective approach by the masses of our people. Its end as a collective approach came in the definite and tumultuous decade of the Sixties with its conversion of SNCC and CORE to nationalism and the national call to Black Power, the urban revolts and the rise of cultural nationalism, the Simba and the Panthers and the dramatic re-orientation of the masses toward Africa and black consciousness.

Integration was never a viable means to achieve real freedom. It was an illusion created for a people starved for human acceptance, a people who had been dehumanized so long they often doubted their own humanity. It was a maintaining mechanism of an exploitative and repressive system that kept us relatively quiet by repeatedly feeding us fantasies about final acceptance and the ultimate coming of a chariot called equality.

The basic weakness of integration as a strategic model was its refusal to deal with the question of power and its central function in substantive social change. It could not see that until we gained power as a people, we could neither decide our destiny nor meaningfully influence or affect others' decisions on it or us. As a result it found itself fostering the false notion that we could and would be granted our freedom without serious revolutionary struggle by simply making a moral appeal to the conscience of the protectors and promoters of an amoral system

whose very existence is the negation of human freedom. The acceptance of this notion set us outside of history by depriving us of our historical initiative as a people and making our development and destiny dependent on others—a dependence based on the *insane assumption* that our former slavemasters and present oppressor had or could develop the moral and politically perceptive capacity to change and concede our human identity and rights if we could somehow miraculously act, speak, think, smell, look, live and lie to ourselves exactly the way he wanted us to.

What integration posed was an ongoing illusion and compromise that not only reduced the struggle to its lowest level, but also determined the area, means and procedures of conflict and confrontation. We could protest, petition and pray in public, but we could not break the rules and resort to defense when attacked, or raise embarrassing examples of the unviability of once agreed upon means or pose critical questions about the nature of the system itself and the need, overwhelmingly obvious, for a historical alternative to negate and supplant it. There was always a depressing and frustrating contradiction between the integration movement's historical aims and its current achievement, between what blacks knew they needed and what they were forced to agree to accept. Because of this there were always desertions from the movement even by frontrunners.

Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, one of the most profound thinkers of the 20th century was an avid integrationist in his earlier days. But in 1916, provoked by the lynchings and destructive disregard for the rights and lives of blacks by white racists, the brother called for blacks in Florida to answer the mob "by effective guns in hands." And Dr. Martin Luther King, the foremost integrationist leader of our times, realizing the limitation imposed by mere moral appeals to a racist and amoral system, was organizing black workers in Tennessee in 1968 as a revolutionary alternative when the oppressor, understanding the *power possibilities* in this new and much needed approach, brutally assassinated him. In committing this ruthless act,

the oppressor shamelessly fell down on all four, decisively and dramatically announced the real area of his fears and nailed the coffin shut on a historical con game he had almost perfected.

The real question was always power; the rest was a sideshow, ultimately harmless acts allowed to create and cultivate the myth of meaningful struggle and achievement. Power is central to any meaningful struggle for serious social change, and influence and moral suasion are no substitutes. Realizing this fundamental truth, it fell upon the Black Power Movement to raise the question of power regardless of how inadequately it was done. The raising of this critical question led to the simultaneous raising of the consciousness of the masses, thus breaking the monopoly the myth of integration historically held on the majority of black people's minds and paving the way for real reassessment of our strategies and the redefinition of the nature of our oppression.

THE STRATEGIC MODELS of separation and national liberation evolve from the same philosophical framework of Black Nationalism. Nationalism, in brief, is the concept and conviction that we are a people with a distinct historical personality and that therefore, we should unite in action to acquire and extend the means to defend our interest and develop our potential as a free and productive people. It poses this historical task as a collective vocation and calls on all sectors of our people to join in it. The basic difference between the two models, however, is the ongoing disagreement as to *how* and especially *where* this collective vocation is to be carried out. Separation as a strategic political model maintains that our defense and development as a people are impossible in the U.S. and therefore proposes withdrawal from it. Advocates of national liberation on the other hand, argue for recognition of and creative response to the objective conditions of our social existence and calls for struggle here and now, alliance with Africa, the Third World and all progressive people and the revolutionary engagement of blacks

in constant confrontation and negation of the oppressive conditions which every day in a merciless multitude of ways cripple and kill them.

The four major areas of emphasis among advocates of separation are economic nationalism, cultural atavism, acquisition of land and exodus to Africa. Economic nationalism essentially calls for black control of community economics. The call may be for cooperative or capitalist ownership, but its central contention is that community control of business enterprises is essential to the real development and growth of the community itself. But economic nationalism—in spite of a few cooperative exceptions mostly in the South—has been coopted and confiscated as a program for collective economic development and vulgarly translated to mean exclusively black capitalism, an economically shoddy and shackled showpiece for government and private corporations. But the embarrassing and exploitative reality is that black capitalism is no more than a myth, another illusion of promised progress and achievement, a fantasy fed to us in hopes we will forget our real hunger for freedom from want, toil and domination. Capitalism demands an industrial base, ownership of the means of production and no blacks can claim this; and thus they are frustrated in their efforts, even if their aspirations are capitalist.

So, there are no black capitalists, only a shrivelling amount of shopkeepers in the quixotic business of competing with or at least trying to escape the always eminent death blow of mass merchandisers and multinational corporations who control the bulk of the world's wealth. Blacks own approximately three percent of the total business in the U.S., have the combined banking assets of less than one-half of one percent of the Bank of America and have an annual purchasing power of \$30 billion compared to G.M.'s annual sales of \$30 billion. Therefore, it is overwhelmingly obvious that black businesses can neither compete nor stay afloat indefinitely given the context of increasing capital concentration by corporate institutions. In view of this and corporate control of production and marketing, it seems silly for blacks

to talk seriously of capital gain and growth and secure investment while they are obviously withering away like the last leaves of a painfully prolonged autumn. And therefore, all this repeated rantin' and ravin' about free enterprise, open market and individual ownership as viable economic realities is as much and as incredibly absurd a fantasy as Snow White and seven African dwarfs getting married in Mexico.

Ujamaa, cooperative economics, cannot compete with corporate enterprises either, but is the only realistic, rational and humanistic way to increase the relative wealth of the community and deal—at least in part and as a *transitional* program—with the basic unsatisfied needs of the people which emanate from the blatantly unequal distribution of wealth inherent in the capitalist system. In addition, *Ujamaa* is a beginning communal step toward socialist transformation; a transitional program that serves both the *material* and *moral* interests of the people by providing goods and services in a collective context and in the *process of practice*, altering negative attitudes and behavior acquired in a context of scarcity and economic insecurity created by capitalism's inherent distributive inequalities.

Realistically, however, there can be no real cooperative or socialist economics in one sector of society only, even as there can be no real socialism in one country only, for hostile capitalist encirclement is a continuing threat to its existence. The socialist idea and attitude must extend beyond its original base and be accepted by a majority if it is to escape its constant vulnerability and become a viable and vigorous alternative way of life for our people. Therefore, even as we advocate cooperative economics, we must remain aware that it cannot exist or be advocated in isolation. We must understand always its transitional character and vulnerability and constantly seek expanding support for it. Until the capitalist alternative is eliminated from the lives and minds of the people, cooperative economics as a developing socialist ideal and actuality will remain stunted and threatened. Therefore, socialist transformation of society is essential, for our

struggle is not only for survival and satisfaction of basic material needs, but also for the survival of values central to the moral development of man and woman—both of which are important in their constant quest for freedom and fulfillment.

CULTURAL ATAVISM IS A serious and continuing weakness among us as a people and of separation as a strategic model. It is cultural retreat from reality, thru mysticism and spookism and group withdrawal from the social and political process. Cultural atavism was and continues in certain levels to be mistaken for cultural revolution and the historic efforts of US Organization since 1965, the Year of the Revolt, as well as other revolutionary cultural nationalists, to build a basis for resistance in culture and in the process of cultural reconversion extend the struggle to other areas. For we agreed with Brother Cabral that "it is generally within culture that we find the seed of opposition which leads to the structuring and development of the liberation movement." But we never refused to recognize positive acquisitions from the cultures, nor did we ever deny that struggle was a *determinant* as well as *product* of culture. We struggled to ease the error of imported and mechanically applied ideas of revolution, and to re-establish interests in and respect for our historical roots, because it is through the revelations of history that we can most clearly perceive and appreciate our collective capacity to create progress. We sought and still seek to check the oppressor's vulgar envelopment of us, to teach the masses to deny the validity of his anti-human values, to reject resolutely his racist oppression and ultimately challenge at critical economic and political points of power, the very basis of his exploitative and repressive rule.

We must develop values in the expanding framework of a national community and create out of the confluence and synthesis of old and new values, a system reflective of and responsive to the collective needs and nature of our struggle. Only in this way can we achieve the moral and political unity and authority we need to liberate ourselves and

step back on the stage of human history. For cultural atavism is on a long list of other unrevolutionary views and values that must be rooted out and rejected. We must attack and eliminate mysticism and spookism and reject the use of soul as a substitute for concrete and substantive achievement and place more emphasis on mass and higher education and less on sports and musical showmanship as vocation. Recognizing and fully appreciating the *grass-roots richness* of the values of our popular culture, we still must make a *selective analysis* of our values and choose those that more correctly reflect our needs and the intensity and extent of our experience and development in struggle.

The argument for the acquisition of land is an old and perennial one. Land has always been important to people everywhere as a *base* for defense and development and a *symbol* of their identity and achievement. And when people, for one reason or another lack or feel they lack a land that provides an adequate context for their defense and development as a historical personality, they advocate and struggle for the acquisition of land and the establishment of a base reflective of and responsive to their aspirations. But advocacy of land in isolation irrespective of objective conditions is unrealistic and in incredible disregard for historical evidence of the oppressor's intransigence in conceding anything without serious struggle. Furthermore, land is no longer the basis for struggle in an advanced capitalist context. And it is encouraging to see YOBU, (Youth Organized for Black Unity) show its ideological flexibility and modify its prior position that land is the basis of struggle. This, as YOBU correctly states now, is true only in parts of the world where land "exists as the essential means of production. But where land and feudal relationships have been replaced by capital-labor relations, then this theory no longer applies." Land in this context is not the primary means of production and therefore, not the primary means of control and power.

It becomes important then to shift from the emphasis on the acquisition of land to the acquisition of *critical space* in economic and political institutions that control land and

people. Even ownership of land does not insure control of it, for ultimate control in society emanates from crucial economic (corporate) and political (government) institutions that exist in mutually supportive roles of production and protection. But even if land were essential and indispensable as once it was historically, it is still naive and at points nonsensical to imagine our oppressor granting us five states or even a half of one, given the present pattern and nature of power in this country and the world. And religious reference to the Hebrew myth of exodus from ancient Egypt adds nothing but an unneeded mystification of a ruthless reality that needs to be altered and eliminated, not mystified and made into a future project for sky-chariots.

THE APPEAL FOR EXODUS to Africa is often confused with the advocacy of Pan-Africanism. The call for exodus is essentially a call to return to Africa and help build it to be a world power so that it can, as Garvey urged, demand the respect for African people the world over. And Pan-Africanism can be summed up in the contention by Brother Owusu Sadaukai, "that all of us are people of African descent, that our ultimate objective is freedom and liberation of African people wherever they are and that crucial to our struggle is an independent and unified Africa, united under a socialist government." It is important here to stress the dual emphasis of Pan-Africanism which makes fundamental the struggle for liberation of African people *wherever* they are. Pan-Africanism is not limited to allegiance to Africa and it is not nor can it be a substitute for nationalism and the liberation of our people in this country. Therefore, it is a clear contradiction and counterproductive to advocate wholesale exodus or engage in long-distance simulated struggle for African liberation and abandon the real struggle here.

We should not interpret our historical link with Africa to mean that we should abandon our struggle for Afroamerican Liberation and lend our efforts exclusively to or in the

greatest portion to the continental African liberation struggle. All our struggles for freedom and fulfillment are dialectically linked, inseparable and complementary, not only those of blacks but those of all people struggling against oppression. And if we are really Pan-Africanists, we owe it to ourselves and Africa to build a power base in the U.S., to occupy and control crucial economic and political institutional space, and to build and strengthen African support committees and a *liberation lobby* in Congress and at the corporate level.

It is absurd and/or intellectually dishonest to deny that this is a key country, that its corporations control the bulk of the world's wealth and that our liberation *here* will lead to a greater liberation everywhere. It is here in the U.S. that the growth of our power to curtail and eventually eliminate the cancerous expansion and aggression of imperialism will aid and insure the victory of African Liberation and World Revolution. For it is because our power in the U.S. is minimal that African and other Third World freedom fighters find their revolutionary tasks so ponderous and protracted. Therefore, our relationships with Africa and all struggles for freedom from oppression and exploitation must be *simultaneous* and *complementary*. As an African proverb in Zulu says—*izandla ziyagezana*—one hand washes the other.

LIBERATION AS A STRATEGIC model is essentially a call and push for Black Power. And though it may be called "national" liberation or "revolutionary" liberation, its basic aim remains one of power, power to defend our interests and develop our potential as a people and to transform and transcend this society of which we have become willingly or unwillingly a real and recognizable part. Philosophically and functionally, it seeks to synthesize the best from nationalist, Pan-Africanist and internationalist thought and practice and weld this wealth of information and experience into a strategy for our struggle in this country, and thereby turn our historical weaknesses into growing strengths.

Historically, liberation as a model and movement draws its images and assertions from the *full and informative* past of our people, accepting the contradictory possibilities and contributions inherent in it. It recognizes both Malcolm and Martin Luther King as fundamental to the direction and development of our struggle for human freedom and analyzes with equal interest the tendencies of integration and separation in order to extract meaningful material from them for its own strategic perspective. Advocates of liberation argue that neither full integration nor separation is feasible or in the historical interest of our people, that there is a dual historical character to our identity and that our historical tasks rising out of this identity demand that we struggle collectively here in the U.S. to free ourselves from those repressive relations and other realities that limit, deny and deform our creative capacities as a people. Thus, the call and push for Black Power is first and foremost to realize our will to be free, creative and productive in the U.S.; for only then can we truly extend ourselves and meaningfully insert ourselves in the world struggle for human freedom and peace.

We struggle here against racial oppression and class exploitation—against racism and capitalism, at home and in its imperialist extension. And because of this dual character of our oppression, our approach must be dual—one of nationalism and social revolution. The nationalism we refer to here is not of the separation model, but of the liberation model and takes up as a primary task the negation of racism's suppression of our history and its denial and deformation of our development as a people. We are referring to the nationalism that revives and re-enforces our positive self-concept as a people and poses for us the *revolutionary project* of accepting our historical personality and tasks, and becoming and being other than the organized lies of the oppressor have led us to believe we were and are.

But we must at the same time recognize that nationalism can only negate racism in a relative sense and cannot root it out or deal effectively with the question of class exploita-

tion. Only a broad and profound social revolution can root out racism and resolve decisively the question of class exploitation. For racism and class exploitation have their roots and center of power beyond the community and are national phenomena necessitating a national response. Class exploitation emanates from an economic system of exploitative relations whose basic expressions and origins are in the private ownership of the means of production and the inordinately unequal distribution of wealth. It is a system wasteful and irrational in its workings, ruthlessly inhuman in its mania to accumulate continuously, regardless of its cost or consequences in terms of human life and development and world ecology. The fundamental element of this system is capital which is, in addition to its quantitative dimension, both a social relation and artificial right of exploitation. Capital is not simply money as some little league would-be community "capitalists" imagine, but is the concrete basis for exploitation, both a means to buy labor and a means of production. And since it is obviously exploitative and oppressive both in its one-sided accumulation and assertion of control, it must be protected by massive force, and this means the coercive apparatus of state power.

This, therefore, poses a question of national dimensions, a question outside the power of the black community and beyond the realm and reach of any historical force less than a broad and inclusive social revolution. That is why we say "national" liberation (i.e. community control) for us, as well as other minorities, is at this stage no more than a relative concept and relative possibility, and realistically can become no more than a nominal liberation unless the struggle for liberation continues its historical and social tasks behind respective communities and turns into a broad and inclusive social revolution. Community control, Black power, Red and Brown power remain tenuous, temporary and conditional phenomena until society can be profoundly transformed and the historical reasons and basis for our oppression and exploitation are removed and replaced with a more human alternative.

IN ORDER FOR US TO meet the objective requirements of our struggle, it seems there are certain areas in which we must consciously and constantly apply ourselves. What immediately comes to mind is a list including an ideology and system of values, an expanding circle of conscious and committed intellectuals, a national black party, a genuine nationalist youth movement, an alternative press and media and basic alternative institutions. The struggle is in search and need of an expanding circle of intellectuals who are capable of critical and creative *alternative thought*, for a body of capable and committed men and women who can provide a logic and language of real alternatives based on historical and practical proof. *Progress in struggle is inseparably linked to progress in thought*. And practice uninformed by theory is as empty and meaningless as abstract theory without proof through practice. We talk constantly about the ongoing and increasing need for political education, but how can we educate politically if we have nothing to communicate except a *catechism of impossibilities*, a list of praises and proof of the oppressor's power to coopt, contain and kill. *Political education must above all be an education in alternatives, a comprehensive recognition of reality, but a categorical refusal to accept it as permanent and all powerful*. What we need then is serious research and analysis of our concrete conditions—communal and societal, the development of revolutionary alternatives to the existing order and new ways to win over an old oppressor, in a word, a strategy for our struggle that turns our weaknesses into strengths.

After ideology, we must turn to structure and the building of alternative institutions and organizations that house and promote our aspirations. This leads us to the need for a national black party, for there can be no national liberation without a national party to direct the struggle and defend its gains. Such a party must be a multi-issue oriented party, rooted in and rising, not from a collection of notables and big names, but rather from local initiatives and struggles of the people and capable of centralizing our collective efforts

for power as a people and thus, offering a national coordinated response to national oppression. The advocates of a national party must recognize the radical possibilities inherent in each local community and region and lend themselves to local struggles around issues that the people themselves pose as important, real and rewarding. The people in each community must be organized to struggle for themselves to make choices and meet challenges in collective spirit and action. In a word, they must become *conscious* and *committed* agents of their own liberation. This is not an argument for the anarchist contention that everyone is a leader, but rather a sober recognition of the fact that until serious and extensive work is done among the masses, the party cannot and will not come into being and assume its central tasks and role in the struggle for liberation and revolution.

In the Sixties, the national media tended to take us away from the work needed to be done in our communities and to reduce our struggle to empty rhetorical challenges to the established power which did no serious damage to the system and thus, left all the oppressive and exploitative structures intact. Now, we are faced with the urgent need to revive our Movement and turn it into a real social revolution, to go back to our local communities and again come in revivifying contact with the people we claim to struggle for. This, in the end, is the real "Back to Black" movement, the return to the roots from which all revolutions rise, from the people themselves—in spite of the "spectacles" created and then crushed by the media.

Finally, it is obvious that the party can be no simple vote getting machine, active during the election and hanging loose and in limbo all the time between. It must be constantly active in every level of life, meeting with people where they live, work, play and study, recognizing and responding effectively and imaginatively to their immediate demands and needs. This is not an argument against the relevance of elections, but an attempt to place them in their proper perspective as only one way to gain power. And if we invest ourselves and hopes totally in parliamentary politics and refuse to explore the

possibilities of extra-parliamentary politics, we limit ourselves to the area and means of confrontation (i.e. elections) endorsed by the oppressor and deny ourselves the real and radical alternatives that will lead to our liberation.

THE NEW VALUE SYSTEM we seek to bring into being is to overcome our internal inadequacies and then move to contribute to and take advantage of external conditions that lead to comprehensive and serious social change. We must begin to deal with our internal inadequacies or we'll never be able to collectively defy and defeat the oppressor. Especially must we stop denying our women their full and heroic role in the history and development of our struggle. There were, are and will be again countless Harriet Tubmans, Sojourner Truths, Mary McLeod Bethunes and Fannie Lou Hamers. It is destructive and divisive of our strength and struggle, vicious and in clear contradiction to revolutionary values to assert, sustain and support the twin myths of matriarchy and emasculation attributed to black women. These myths have their roots in the rationale and method of the oppressor's rule. He divided us, destroyed structures and allegiances and thus, minimized the potential of revolt by attacking at their roots relationships that could create the collective consciousness necessary for effective and expansive resistance.

The black woman does not have now nor has she historically possessed the power to create a matriarchy and exercise decisive authority over the black man. Even if she had the will—and history argues the opposite—the oppressor would never have allowed any black power of political entity to constitute and consolidate itself, for such power would have challenged the very nature and structure of his own; and thus it could not be tolerated. Our families have traditionally been more egalitarian than we give ourselves credit for; and decisions of major importance have historically been made collectively, even if they have often evolved from processes and procedures full of hassles and numer-

ous headaches and totally outside the realm of the nauseating niceties of Robert's Rules of Order. This egalitarianism grew out of the brutally equal role our women were forced to assume in the slave labor force and in the exploitative and oppressive economic arrangements afterwards, in the space and place they have won in our hearts and history, thru their heroic resistance to slavery and the systematic oppression that followed it and because of their efforts and successes in keeping our families together against all odds.

Black women have always been equal to black men in oppression and resistance, in production as well as progressive thought and struggle and we are greatly unjust to ourselves to claim otherwise. There can be no real argument against the human equality of man and woman, against the need for liberation and revolution to reach and raise to a higher level of life each and all of us, man, woman and child. To argue otherwise is to undermine and remove the human content and strength from our struggle and deny ourselves as black men an abundant and indispensable source of love, inspiration and power. We will never liberate ourselves as a people unless and until we liberate ourselves from reactionary and repressive attitudes and behavioral patterns like sexism, male chauvinism and parasitic and perverse pimpism in our relations with each other, and unless and until we build an expanding *real of freedom* in our homes and in society in which man and woman, together in commitment, contribution and *creative complementarity* can realize themselves fully and stand and walk in a warmer sun.

FINALLY, WE MUST TURN our attention to and direct our efforts against one of the most serious contradictions to emerge and envelop the Movement during the Sixties—character assassination. Character assassination is such a serious contradiction among us because it in fact, assists the oppressor in his organized and vicious efforts to undermine and eliminate all leadership, all threats, potential and real, to his racist and repressive rule. And it

is destructive because it poses as political criticism and ideological struggle, and thus reduces the serious need for creative controversy to vulgar name calling and labelling and spuriously relieves one of the responsibilities of critical thinking. James and Grace Boggs argue correctly that it is "the general political backwardness of this country which makes it much easier to deal with one's political opponents by character assassination and physical force than by political criticism and ideological struggle." But going beyond this we can also say that it represents a certain cultural and psychic sickness in the Movement and community, a destructive and divisive product of an oppressed mentality which frustrated in its efforts to overcome its oppressor turns on itself and those around it.

Also, there are character assassins obviously motivated by money and promises of audiences and attention and those that harbor some perverse and persistent need to be dominated and directed by outside sources, blandly assisting the oppressor, asking nothing but to be near him. Tackwoods are possible because of the community's susceptibility to their kind of cultural and psychic sickness, because there are those among us who feel some tawdry and twisted sense of joy to hear rumors and false reports that undermine and discolor each other's character, and because for many of us brotherhood and sisterhood begin and end in slogans and do not extend to defense and development or to any constructive expression of this fashionable claim of love and allegiance to our people. Therefore, Tackwoods can come to the community trading on feuds and tragedies, gaining a dollar and a half-opened door to the oppressor and some opportunistic minor league ultraleftists who, unable to gain an audience or claim any achievement in their own community, seek to pimp and pander the petty minds in ours. Political pimps are like any other pimps—perverse and parasitic, vulgar and without values. Therefore, they can claim to be on the Left but will join at convenient junctures with the Right to muzzle and miscast, undermine and eliminate political opponents without feeling any sense of contradiction or compunction.

Tackwoods and company must be resisted not repeated, exposed not supported, isolated and shunned not showered with attention and given time and space to spew forth their perversities and lies without limit in number and nauseating viciousness. We must raise critical questions about rumor-mongers and character assassins, questions about their motives and motivations, their interests and objectives, their personal grudges and the groups they belong to and link themselves with in and outside the community. And we must raise the same or similar questions about ourselves if we can let these people and the enemies of our freedom give us vulgar fantasies for facts, trumped up charges for truth, and then we wallow with them in the swill and mud of their malicious misinformation and enjoy it. Every time we hear a brother or sister condemned or character assassinated and we, without valid supporting information or investigation, agree or spread it further, we establish and reinforce a standard which will eventually turn on us and find us vulnerable and victims to the same kinds of attacks. We instruct by our assertions and actions, and if we engage in, encourage or accept without challenge character assassination of anyone, we at the same time teach others the same method and thus design our own undermining and destruction.

Character assassination must not be ignorantly or conveniently confused with political criticism or ideological struggle which are both legitimate and imperative. We seriously need to criticize and struggle ideologically and politically against reactionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies in the Movement, but we cannot allow character assassination to pose as or become a substitute for critical thinking and creative controversy. And we must not permit character assassins to undermine the morale and unity of the Movement, divide us and divert our energies and efforts from the struggle to witch hunts and wipe-outs.

THE STRUGGLE AHEAD is a long one and cannot be posed in terms of months and years.

The Vietnamese have been fighting for their freedom for hundreds of years and so have our own people. How then can we of this generation talk in terms of five, ten, or fifty years or grow weak and wander from the struggle, abandoning our original aspiration? It is important that we who struggle seriously recognize the long time it takes real revolution to mature and come to fruit. And we must stop looking for the illusive "great leap" and work toward bringing it into being. We struggle here in the U.S. for liberation, a liberation that in its full social and philosophical sense offers and organizes an expanding realm of freedom, freedom from want, toil and domination, freedom to love, grow and create. We struggle for a new vision and value system summed up in the *Nguzo Saba*, our Seven Principles: Umoja (Unity—in love and struggle), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics and its socialist extension), Nia (Purpose—the collective vocation of liberation and revolution), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith in ourselves and in the human capacity to overcome and achieve). And again we struggle against two evils—racial oppression and economic exploitation. These two forms of denial and deformation of our development are inseparably linked. For whereas the economic answer to questions about our enslavement, oppression and exploitation is central, it must always be viewed in clear relationship to its reinforcing agent, racism.

We could not have made such an assertion concerning the dual nature of our oppression in the Sixties. The dynamics of the decade argued against it. We were forced into defensive formulations and protective postures by both the Left and the Right—by the Right thru its increased repression and by the Left thru its not so subtle social imperialism, evident in its refusal to accept cultural nationalism and cultural revolution as legitimate forces of serious social change and thus its challenge to our right of self-definition and self-determination as a people. This forced us into a narrowness we didn't need and limited us in our aspirations to project and practice

openness and revolutionary internationalism. But things are in a continuous process of movement and change and full of contradictions, which when solved lead to higher levels of thought and struggle. And now that the tumult and turmoil of the Sixties has toned down and tapered off, rage is being tempered by reason and the loud rhetoric of revolt is turning into quiet and serious study and analysis of the subjective and objective requirements of real social revolution. This is the point we're at now, one of redefinition and reassessment and the conscientious removal of all irrelevancies and those things that obviously restrict our analysis and vision and thus our revolutionary effectiveness.

Therefore, we have come to accept a modified (to deal with racism) class analysis of history. For if history can be viewed as a record of struggles for greater freedom from needs and for fulfillment, we are then led inevitably to critical consideration of class struggle and the struggle for control of the means of production—in a word, to the central role of economic forces in history. We are attempting here a more objective approach to the identification of our enemy and oppressor, a more workable and realistic definition of who we are to defy and defeat, a perspective clearly reflective of an objective analysis of and response to our concrete conditions. This is not an abandonment of our original position, but rather an extension and rational refinement of it—*modest but meaningful evidence of our attempt to remain expansive and unconfined by restrictive concepts*.

The racist remains our enemy and the enemy of human freedom, but unless we mystify racism, there is a material basis for it, an economic and social system that fosters such attitudes, ideas and institutions and profits economically and politically from the division of people whose unity could write its epitaph. Thus it is clear that our struggle must solve economic as well as political and social problems, removing the *profit* from our oppression and the *structures* which support it, as well as altering the *psychic perversion* of poor and ignorant racists who imagine their real interests are served, regardless of

the degrees of their exploitation and ignorance, by being able to say "at least I'm white."

Finally, when Cabral told the world that the people of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands are not fighting against the Portuguese people, but against the corrupt, reactionary Portuguese government and its imperialist allies, this was not mere propaganda and verbal tactics, but rather indicative of a certain ideological orientation vital to revolutionary struggle. It was a putting of things in their proper place, an expression of the realization that every revolution, every struggle for human freedom and development needs allies from everywhere in the world, even—and perhaps especially—allyes that live and work among the enemy himself. We cannot turn inward and pretend power in isolation, or erroneously equate community control with ultimate liberation. We must invest ourselves in larger areas of social purpose including all progressive peoples in revolutionary opposition to the established order. We must learn to link issues and struggles and see that the issue of welfare is connected to imperialist wars and with the struggle at Wounded Knee and that peace and freedom, Coachella Valley and Vietnam, Spanish Harlem and Johannesburg and all the struggles for liberation, independence and revolution in Africa, Asia and Latin America are all interconnected and interrelated, all historical and heroic opposition to the same source of oppression and exploitation.

WE CAN OFFER NO finished program or final blueprint, but we can deal with guidelines and establish correct political orientations and identify areas of critical importance to the struggle. The real answers will come thru constant movement, and each gain will give us more ground and thus more power to obtain even more. Moreover, the occupation and control of space will change and expand our perspectives and perception of what's possible. Based firmly in the community, we must expand beyond it, beyond local heroes and provincial prophets and link ourselves

with issues and struggles of larger social purpose involving all progressive people. Our hope remains in the masses—not manipulated, but in politically conscious and committed movement. They must be mobilized, organized and nationalized and kept in motion, for it is people in motion and frustrated in that motion that revolt and make revolution.

We have used the words "masses" and "people" many times and it is important to explain what we mean when we use these terms. We use the word and concept people in three basic senses: in the ethnic or national community sense, all blacks; in the social production sense, i.e. black workers, and in the progressive political sense in terms of an anti-racist, anti-capitalist and by extension anti-imperialist black united front made up of different class formations and social groupings and led by black workers. But regardless of what sense we use it, *the essential and decisive role in struggle and history is that of black workers*, not just industrial workers as some ultraleftists insist, but every worker who is engaged in labor essential to the maintenance and development of society and the creation of social wealth. It is black workers—service, agricultural and industrial in working class unity—who will turn our aspiration as a people into actuality—not students, or the parasitic and predatory lumpen or the intellectuals or any other social grouping.

For no matter how militant other social groupings may sound or seem, "most will stop short" as Earl Ofari cogently argues "of a full commitment to class struggle." But "black workers will not. Because they are the most oppressed and exploited with the least to lose." And it is the black workers who thru their leadership in struggle and in the move for a broad working class unity in the U.S. will change the socio-political content of the concept of people and make it mean not only black workers and people, but all progressive peoples in revolutionary opposition to human oppression and exploitation.

Finally, we need to develop a comprehensive worldview and a *science of struggle*, teaching *process* not form, whether in reality

or revolution, *method* not memorization of formulas, and *critical alternative thought*, not catechisms of religionists or revolutionaries. We are moving toward this end, let us continuously encourage each other in our efforts. There is still so much more to learn, analyze, argue and counter-argue before we can overcome critical contradictions and in the process achieve a higher level of organization and struggle. Therefore, this statement is by no means the last word, for there is so much still being written, in every country and down every street where people struggle for the right and space to realize themselves in peace and freedom. These liberation struggles are the motive force of our epoch and will ultimately undermine and overturn every argument and apparatus the oppressor has and constructs in contradiction and opposition to human freedom and fulfillment. Let us intensify our struggle then, further develop our strategy, overturn ourselves and turn our weaknesses into strengths, so that we can increase our capacity to liberate ourselves and create progress; and thus make the profound and far-reaching contribution to human history of which we as a people are capable.



*notes:

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WHICH ROAD: NATIONALISM, PAN-AFRICANISM, SOCIALISM?

by Malcolm X

WHEREAS the struggle for the liberation of the Negro people from the yoke of white supremacy and colonialism is a struggle for the liberation of the entire oppressed people of the world from the yoke of imperialism and capitalism; and whereas the struggle for the liberation of the Negro people from the yoke of white supremacy and colonialism is a struggle for the liberation of the entire oppressed people of the world from the yoke of imperialism and capitalism; and whereas the struggle for the liberation of the Negro people from the yoke of white supremacy and colonialism is a struggle for the liberation of the entire oppressed people of the world from the yoke of imperialism and capitalism;

IV. "WHICH ROAD TO REVOLUTION: NATIONALISM,
PAN-AFRICANISM OR SOCIALISM?"

social conditions
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*notes:

WHICH ROAD: NATIONALISM, PAN-AFRICANISM, SOCIALISM?

by MAULANA RON KARENGA

WHERE THERE IS national oppression, national aspirations, national ideologies and national forms of organization and struggle arise to resist and put an end to that oppression. Black nationalism did not grow out of Marcus Garvey's head, even though his movement was the first mass organized expression of it. Nationalism, like all other social phenomena, rose as a result of definite social conditions, a definite historical development. When Garvey called out, in the 1920's, "Up, you Mighty Race; you can accomplish what you will," blacks responded in great numbers because for centuries their capacity to create progress had been denied

*notes:

and deformed and because they had been forced to think of themselves in terms of a race apart. When he said "I am equal to any white man and want you to feel the same," he struck a responsive chord because he was challenging the racist assumptions sold for centuries and at very high prices to blacks and whites alike that denied human equality. And when he said, "If we must have justice, we must be strong; and if we must be strong, we must come together," blacks understood this call for strength and collective assertion, because they had shared a common powerlessness, oppression and exploitation.

Regardless of its easily assembled list of limitations, black nationalism came into being as a *collective response* to our oppression and exploitation; as a *social corrective* for the structured denial and deformation of our historical personality, development and humanity; by the joint investment and action of capitalism and racism.

Capitalism—the organized, armed and ceaseless search for profits—turned to slavery for cheap and mindless labor. Slavery is begun and sustained in the pursuit of extravagant profits. On the backs of blacks, Europe and the USA see their way through primitive accumulation of capital to extensive industrialization and an extraordinary expansion of their economies. Slavery sets in motion increased investment, insurance, banking, shipbuilding, seaport construction and employment. Eric Williams runs down in his *Capitalism and Slavery* the details of how slavery provided "the capital which financed

the Industrial Revolution in England." And C.L.R. James notes clearly in his *The Black Jacobins* how in France nearly all industries which developed during the 18th century were "fertilized by" and "dependent on" the slave trade. In the triangular trade pattern, trinkets go to Africa, slaves to the planters and staples go to Europe and the white man looks at himself; sees his small number, compares it with his immense wealth and power and comes to some very vile and lethal conclusions about the rest of the world.

SLAVERY BECOMES not just an economic system, but is joined with racism to form a culture of total control, a social system which grows fat in the filth of its oppression and ideological inanities about superior and inferior races. With gun and whip, auction block, rape and rack and other tortures and terror, blacks are broken, dehumanized and totally dominated. To extract the maximum profit and insure the minimum resistance, the black person is transformed into an object, a mindless mixture of obedience, sex and brawn. Borrowing intellectual absurdities from Aristotle and Augustine, David Hume, John Locke and lesser minds about the natural, religious and social basis of slavery, advocates of slavery pull together an elaborate ideological justification for the various atrocities of slavery and get god and governments to underwrite it.

The planters of the South pimped and placated working-class whites by selling them air sandwiches about their supremacy and giving them official sanction for their circuses of racial violence against blacks in order to keep their minds off the reality of their class position and class situation. Even the North, except for rare individuals, accepted the planters' myths. As Harold M. Baron argues, "The planters' employment of racist appeals proved effective on a national basis, especially in the generation prior to the Civil War, only because an underlying acceptance of their assumptions existed in all regions." ("The Demand for Black Labor: Historical Notes on the Political Economy of Racism.")

The basis of this acceptance was not only

material, but cultural and psychological also. Materially, the planters and the economy profited and working-class whites did not have to deal with black competition for jobs and other economic crumbs thrown to them. Culturally, Europeans already possessed a cultural bias against blacks and other so-called heathens. The religious rigmarole about the forces of darkness versus the forces of light and the need to subdue and smite the heathen hip and thigh gave the sanction; and the planters and capitalist played on that and added to it.

David Davis contends that it was during the wars between the Moors and Spaniards when the religious and racial overlapped, when the Moors were seen as black heathen and all sorts of derogatory imagery emanated from this about black and darkness. (*The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*.) Oliver Cox in his *Caste, Class and Race*, states that the year 1493-94 was the decisive year when religious antagonism was transformed into racial antagonism based on economic exploitation. Pope Alexander VI issued a papal bull in 1493 giving, by the grace of an understanding god, the people of color of the world (all considered heathen) and especially their resources to Portugal and Spain and the race was on. Finally, many whites accepted the basic assumptions of racism because it offered a certain psychological gratification to belong to the "master race." For even in the midst of filth and failure, ignorance, illness and poverty, one could still feel a part of the race that ruled the world and thus, always higher than the conquered heathen.

The Northern capitalists fought a four year war with the Southern planters to establish who would have hegemony in the country, not benevolently to free the slaves regardless of erudite assumptions to the contrary. "The abolition of slavery was a by-product of the struggle, not its purpose and Northern capitalism had no intention, despite the interlude of Reconstruction, of liberating (blacks) in any meaningful sense." (Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital, An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*). Given a false freedom with no

economic base, not one mule or acre of anything, with no education and nowhere else to go, many blacks were forced back to the plantations and were resubjugated through peonage, sharecropping, rent tenancy, minimum wage-slavery and all the other schemes their former owners could get together.

RECONSTRUCTION, a federal program to help rebuild the South and help blacks adjust to freedom, began to die for blacks the day it was born and by 1877 it was all over but the shouting. With the federal troops gone as a result of the Hayes-Tilden Compromise, not even a semblance of freedom and protection for blacks could survive. Terror groups of all kinds crawled from the political woodwork then to begin and sustain a racial violence that would keep the blacks in their "place" and reduce them again to a strong back and willing mind. Even in the North racial violence grew to check blacks. John Hope Franklin notes that from 1884-1900, there were 2,500 lynchings and numerous race "riots". (*From Slavery to Freedom.*)

The Federal Government bowing to Northern capitalism which is concerned with its economic interests in the South, sought reconciliation with the South. Confederate leaders were forgiven, allowed in power and federal aid, if any existed, for black upliftment was discontinued. The black problem was classified as a regional problem and Northern and Southern liberals deferred to the South's suppression and reenslavement of blacks. As Harold Baron says, "By 1900 Southern sympathizer and anti-slavery man alike agreed on the rightfulness of the subjugation of the black man. It was accepted as a necessary condition for order in the American state. And order was most essential to the extraordinary expansion of the industrial system." (*op. cit.*)

Jim Crow, American apartheid, came into being with a bang. Blacks were disenfranchised, separated in hotels, trains, theaters, barber shops, schools and other public places. The Supreme Court crawled through legal cracks in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment and rendered them less than ef-

fective, outlawed the Civil Rights Act of 1875 and ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 that segregation was legal. As Rayford Logan contends, "Practically all relevant decisions of the United States Supreme Court during Reconstruction and to the end of the century nullified or curtailed rights of (blacks) which many of the Reconstruction "Radicals" thought they had written into laws and into the Constitution." (*The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901.*)

Labor unions also gave blacks little for which to hope. In an unpublished paper entitled "Blacks and the Early American Left: A Study in History Reconstructed," Earl Ofari shows how the National Labor Union, the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor and other unions as well as the Socialist Labor Party followed policies of overt and covert discrimination, exclusion, sell-outs, oustings and neglect. He is forced by disappointing fact to state that "From 1880 on, white racism became the norm in the organized labor movement."

Thus, then and even today, racism permeated American society and forced a collective response from us, forced us to think race and penalized us with death and violent discomfort if we dared to forget and acted human or American. Racism is more than racial prejudice, more than dislike and disdain for races other than one's own, more than a racial sentiment. It is a violent *imposition*, an *ideology* and an *institutional arrangement*. To divide the world into races, to violently impose on other peoples the views, values and rule of one's race, to develop an ideology to justify this imposition and to construct institutions that consolidate and insure this imposition is racism, regardless of its variations.

ALTHOUGH RACISM came into being during slavery, black people had not come to think of themselves as a collective whole, as a people with a common history and future. They came from different tribes, did not know their numbers or potential and were kept divided, ignorant and isolated to insure the slavemaster's control. It took the false free-

dom made possible by the Civil War, the reversal of Reconstruction, economic ruin and displacement, racial terrorism and exclusion, racial regulation, urbanization and their failure in their attempts to integrate and assimilate in order for blacks to come to the kind of conclusions nationalism requires.

Oppressed, blacks began to organize and protest. Excluded, they began to build their own institutions where they could, gathered in ghettos, and began to believe their uniqueness was a blessing rather than a curse. We are still a minority and we have often, both in the past and present, reacted as an oppressed people generally tend to act. We tried to integrate into American society and failed. We were segregated and tried to make the most of it. We adorned ourselves with a glorious history, a uniqueness and soul, a special kind of perception from our suffering. E. Franklin Frazier argues that "At first the group attempts to lose itself in the majority group, disdaining its own characteristics. When this is not possible, there is a new valuation placed on the same characteristics and they are glorified in the eyes of the group." ("Racial Self-Expression.")

Black nationalism then is a socio-historical phenomenon. It comes about as a result of definite social conditions and a definite historical development. It is both philosophy and movement. It is the *reactive* and *defensive formulation* of an oppressed people who turn inward after having been rejected and refused the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" promised by American society.

Secondly, nationalism takes form as a *social corrective*. No doubt over ambitiously, it seeks to correct errors, exploitation and oppression on the ideological, political and economic levels. It moves to end racism's suppression of our history, to project us in our life, strength and struggle as we really are, to bring order, organization and collective assertion to our daily lives and to free our productive and creative powers so that they can be used in the service of our growth and contribution to human history.

Thirdly, in its attempt to carry out its corrective tasks, nationalism becomes a *collective vocation*. It is thus a call and com-

mitment to unified and permanent collective action to achieve self-determination, to defend our interests and develop our potential as free and productive people. Urging our people to grasp and develop what is great in us, nationalism demands that we free ourselves from the psychology of dependence and become conscious and committed agents of our own liberation.

THIS, HOWEVER, is nationalism as an ideal, not as it is often translated in practice with its contradictions and problematic character. As every social philosophy and movement, nationalism contains within it conflicting tendencies, contradictions that give it its character and dynamic.

First, in trying to correct the erroneous and destructive images rooted in slavery and racism, nationalists tend to mystify the nature of our identity as a people, emphasizing its *organic* or *racial* character rather than stressing its *social basis*. We cannot deny that we are black and are oppressed on one level because of it, but to stop here is to do ourselves a definite disservice. Joined to our racial identity, is our social or class position. It is the recognition of and political response to this class position which will allow us to recognize our enemies and allies and insure the victory of our struggle for liberation.

Secondly, nationalists tend to mask contradictions among blacks in pursuit of an elusive ideal unity. But regardless of chit'lins, fried chicken and soul, dancing, doin-it, and rhythm, there are basic conflictual differences among blacks and those are class differences. "Blacks are divided into classes based upon different relationships to the means of production and capacity to exploit the labor of others." (Abdul Alkalimat, Nelson Johnson, "Toward the Ideological Unity of the African Liberation Support Committee.") We either own and hire or must sell our labor to those that do and hope the sell will last. Johnson, Herdon and Gordy are among those who own and hire, but the vast majority of black people work or wait to be hired or fired.

Thirdly, the "Back to Black" movement by

nationalists, which Cabral calls the "return to the source," is often substituted for real struggle against oppression and exploitation. Often it means getting bogged down in traditional culture and eccentric and archaic lifestyles which Africans on the Continent have already abandoned or seriously altered. The practical and realistic essence of moving "Back to Black" must mean surrendering the safety and comfort of philosophical speculation and cultural contentions, and going to the masses to learn from them, to join their daily struggles and move them to a higher level of understanding and struggle.

Culture must be *transformatory*, not *traditional* if it is to aid the struggle. It must be at the heart of our efforts to transform our weaknesses into strengths. It must teach struggle not resignation, stress our social situation rather than our racial roots; and support revolutionary movement, not bog us down in opposition to "white" culture while capitalist domination and exploitation goes unnoticed and unchallenged. As Cabral argued, "'return to the source' is of no historical importance unless it brings not only real involvement in the struggle for independence, but also complete and absolute identification with the hopes of the masses of the people, who contest not only the foreign culture, but also foreign domination as a whole."

Fourthly, the turning inward in defense and defiance which nationalism involves often leads to isolationism, national narrow-mindedness and exclusiveness; and thus empties our struggle of its humanistic and revolutionary content regardless of our original intentions. Moreover, isolationism and exclusiveness can only make us obsessed with ourselves, insensitive to the oppression and exploitation of other peoples and unable to form in principle and struggle the kind of alliances and united front we will need in order to change the conditions of our life.

Often narrow-mindedness forces us to reject out of hand lessons and theories of other people and revolutionary leaders and to search in vain in the far past for answers arrived at in more similar and significant conditions. *Ain't no need of us nick-naming the truth*. If it's true, it's true; not white, even if

Marx, Lenin or Cornforth said it. We must take it and use it for what it's worth; like we be doin wid dem shoes, rides and rip-off-priced clothes—without regard to racial origin. Only this time, it will benefit our lives collectively in a more profound and meaningful way.

FINALLY, NATIONALISTS tend to be confused about what exactly national liberation is and how it will be achieved. Some mistake national liberation for community control. But community control is never control of a community's economic life and is, in fact, nothing more than a compromise and concession of the oppressor on one level so he can continue his exploitation and oppression on another level. Hatcher punctured the illusion of black community control when he said he could, himself, offer no community services for the people of Gary; for the town was and is actually the property of U.S. Steel. Mayor Maynard in Atlanta can't even beg or bully his police chief into quitting or protect blacks or their right of democratic protest; and Doris Davis of Compton, took over a city with a shrinking tax base and thus diminishing social services.

We do not live or camp on the edge of this country, but are in it and have the historical task of changing it. Thus, nationalism must be seen as only a stage in an oppressed peoples development. There can be no separate liberation, no separate peace with the oppressor. Only when the control of the country passes to other hands will control of communities do likewise. National liberation is not community control, separation or secession, but a fundamental socialist question, raised and resolved by a profound, broad and thorough-going socialist transformation of society and ourselves. Any other solution is absurd or incomplete—or both.

PAN-AFRICANISM

Certainly there are relevant lessons to be learned from the Sixth Pan-African Congress about Pan-Africanism. It is imperative that

we extract and understand them and bear these lessons in mind. The first lesson seems to be that Pan-Africanism is at this point not much more than a vague and varied assemblage of ideological assertions and emotional yearnings. These assertions and yearnings fall into three basic categories.

First, there is *continental Pan-Africanism* which proposes the unification of all African states *organically*, i.e. under one government, or *functionally*, i.e. economically on the model of the European Common Market.

Second, there is the *global Pan-Africanism*, the Old Man of Pan-Africanism, which seeks the unity of all blacks the world over. How this is to be accomplished and the form this unity is to assume is less discussed than that it should be. And it is, no doubt, for this reason that there are no serious proposals available on method and structure.

Third, there seems to arise from the documents and reports from this Congress a new Pan-Africanism; a Pan-Africanism that is and is not Pan-Africanism, a kind of abstract *humanistic Pan-Africanism*. This Pan-Africanism sees itself as non-black, less African and more abstractly as a part of a "universal movement toward human freedom." It is a Pan-Africanism free of its African-ness and ostensibly more concerned with the oppression of all people. It is so general and so selfless in places, it loses its name and need to exist and ultimately seems dishonest.

It is this last Pan-Africanism that posed a serious problem to primitive black nationalists and to true believers in the unity of blacks "at home and abroad"—i.e. in Africa and around the world. And it is this Pan-Africanism that escapes its concrete duty to its people by assuming an abstract responsibility for the world; when in fact every real revolutionary knows that one's contribution to the world is the struggle one wages in one's own society; the imperialist tentacle and chain one chops off in one's own country.

The second lesson is that surely, Africans on the Continent and no doubt others elsewhere, cannot and will not accept the emphasis we as Afroamericans put on race. Samora Machel, the Brother-leader of

Mozambique, frankly told the Bloods from this country that he identified with us not because of our color, but because of our oppression. President Touré of the Republic of Guinea in a speech sent to the Congress, took a very hard line against Negritude and all other racial masks and myths many among us had come to cherish. Although President Nyerere of the Republic of Tanzania admitted that as long as we are oppressed because of race and color, we will act collectively against it; and he, nevertheless, said it was suffering not race that brought the Africans from all over the world to the Congress and cautioned against wasting time defending the fact of our being black. Both Touré's and Nyerere's speeches were unanimously accepted as working documents and guidelines for Congress resolutions.

There is, as Locksley Edmondson contends, "A situational similarity in the economic and psychological spheres" between blacks the world over. ("The Internationalization of Black Power: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.") We are poor, oppressed and exploited by capitalism (at home and abroad) and by racism; and thus, we all seek relief on the economic, political and psychological or cultural level. But this is true for most people of the Third World also; the only difference being the particular form in which this oppression and exploitation occurs. Africans on the Continent and many in the Carribean do not understand, however, the extent to which the fact of how our race rules our lives in the USA and plays a basic part in every act against us. They are the majorities in their countries and are independent or struggling for independence. The nature of and solution to their problems are, thus, qualitatively different. Their struggle against racism is translated as anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-minority rule. They need never mention race, even if it's an underlying question. Moreover, most have multi-racial countries and are interested in cooperation of their citizens, not conflict. It is our duty to explain ourselves and the dual character of our struggle—its class and national content. And it's our duty to divest ourselves of racial references as much as pos-

sible; rid ourselves of illusions about achieving black unity the world over, and begin to unite among ourselves here and join with all oppressed and progressive people in this country to change it.

THE THIRD LESSON seems to be that we as Afroamericans have nothing to offer collectively as a basis for the unity of Afroamericans and Continental Africans. Our appeals for unity from the beginning have been both moral and abstract, ideological and external to the realities Africans on the Continent recognize, respond to and respect. They have states, armies and parties and speak with power; and we meet them as individuals with ideas and skills to sell or give, not as a national personality, not as a collective whole conscious of power realities. Love and brotherhood cannot be sanely attacked, but we can't seriously ask or expect Mozambique or Somalia to denounce the Russians as devils and declare unity with us for just practical reasons not to mention principles.

We must face the fact that until we speak from a position of power, no one will listen; and if they listen they won't hear, i.e. won't take us seriously. Even though Afroamericans spearheaded the calling of the Congress, Tanzania took over the Congress to save it from disintegration, because it had the basic ways and means to do it and we didn't. The guerillas and established governments spoke to us as if we were novices, because we are; as if we were youngsters in politics, and poor in power—and it's so. This is why we've got to stop talking absurdities about Africa is our home and deal with the fact of our being in America. If we want to aid Africa, the act must be initiated and carried out right here at the heart and gut of world capitalism. If we are ever to be respected, we must acquire a power base from which to speak and act decisively. This is the reality of the world, including Africa and we can't wish or voodoo it away.

Finally, though there are obviously other lessons, the fourth lesson seems to be that Pan-Africanism must be removed from the ideological plane and placed on a practical

level. That means, first, that if Pan-Africanism assumes a concrete form, it will be because it has a material basis, because it's an economic necessity and practicality. It will not come into being because Afroamericans want it and African leaders on the Continent use it to mobilize the masses. It will come, if at all, as a serious effort to satisfy the needs Africa has to accumulate surplus in order to end its underdevelopment. As Samir Amin contends, "It is in these terms that the problem of the historical necessity of African unity must be posed. African unity is not sentimental need; it is an objective economic necessity." ("Class Struggle in Africa.")

This also means that real concrete Pan-Africanism will occur only on the Continent and we will then be forced to call global Pan-Africanism what it is—solidarity with Africa, and call humanistic Pan-Africanism what it wants to be—internationalism.

This means further that for Pan-Africanism to be real and of any historical importance, it must be socialist in content. Only socialism can expose and end the foreign control of economies and politics in Africa, pull the cover off the excesses of the elite and mobilize and organize the masses to win and defend real independence. Populism is not socialism; it is only what it means "people-ism"; a political game in which the leaders throw the name of the people in the air and pick the pockets of those who look up. Socialism is also, more than an "attitude of mind" you can turn on and off, and more than communalism. It is an economic system which means the ownership and control by the working class of the means of production; the correct use of surplus; the end of prestige and luxury projects and long salaries for the elite; the reduction of armies and the formation of peoples militias; the rationalization of industry and agriculture and the people controlling and living their lives fully.

SOCIALISM

It must be obvious to us by now that capitalism cannot and will not provide for us, that it is based on the ruthless and endless

pursuit of profit, not on moral principles; and thus, it couldn't care less about the scars and holes it leaves in our lives. Moreover, it must be equally clear that regardless of our claimed connections with gods and governments, prayers and poverty programs will not end our oppression and exploitation. And the cold and convincing fact is this—that regardless of our religious and racial claims, regardless of whether we turn east or west—we are still actually in the USA and our future is directly dependent on how well we grasp this fact and forge from it the correct analysis and conclusions we need in order to end our oppression and make our lives go forward. It is at this point, when in search for a method of analysis, a science of society and struggle, that we of necessity look further left to socialism.

At the base and center of socialist concern and commitment is humankind, human beings as man, woman and child. Socialism is concerned about our life-chances, i.e. our opportunities and access to the cultural and material values of society. Moreover, it is concerned about our life-activity (labor), our life-forces (our mental, emotional and physical powers) and our life-situation (the social conditions under which we live). Socialism carries within it a dual thrust of theory and practice and offers a systematic explanation and a principled and practical answer to social ills and evils where otherwise there would be none. Socialism is committed theoretically and practically to the recognition and realization of human needs, to the definitive elimination of economic and spiritual poverty which these needs under capitalism have come to mean. Thus, socialism is openly and irreversibly the real negation of and alternative to capitalism.

Socialism begins its struggle to negate capitalism by a scathing, ruthless criticism of it, of everything it is and attempts to be. It seeks to correct and clarify the consciousness of the people, to wake the people from their dreams and myths about society, themselves and the world. It seeks to explain patiently and thoroughly to the people the meaning of their own actions and conditions and the need to struggle to change those conditions

and through this, change themselves.

To carry out this criticism of capitalism and this correction and clarification of consciousness among the people, socialism focuses on five basic human concerns: (1) human material needs; (2) human spiritual needs; (3) the perversion and enslavement of labor; (4) human antagonism and (5) the private ownership and control of the means of production. All over the world, human material needs have increased and gone unanswered because of the exploitation and oppression imposed on the world by capitalism. Poverty and pain exist where it could be ended. By USA Government Statistics, over 12 million people in this country are undernourished and hungry, and yet capitalism demands that wheat is burned and milk be poured down gutters to keep profits up. There is enough wealth in the world to feed the world and people must struggle to recapture and control their resources and to use them to feed, clothe and shelter themselves as they determine.

SOCIALISM STRESSES the satisfaction of material needs because it knows that until men, women and children get beyond the basic three—food, clothing and shelter—until they are assured of survival, they cannot turn their attention and efforts to higher levels of human activity. Hunger and homelessness are definite limitations on thought, and philosophy comes into being only after there's a surplus to support it. No, we don't live by bread alone, but we can only come to this conclusion after we've eaten. Words won't feed us; ideas aren't meat, milk or vegetables; and hope is not the kind of material out of which houses and clothes are made.

When Zapata said, "La tierra es de todos como el aire, el agua y el calor del sol y tienen derecho a ella, los que la trabajan con sus propias manos"* he spoke for not just the farm worker, but for the factory worker, the service worker and all workers who create social wealth. He expressed the fundamental

* "The land belongs to everyone like the air, the water and the warmth of the sun and those that work it with their own hands have the right to it."

truth that he who works should have the right to his products. There is enough for everyone but only by the conscious and collective struggle of all oppressed and progressive people will we get it, give it out equally and protect it from reappropriation by the capitalist.

Socialism does not stop with the concern for the satisfaction of the material needs of the people. For as Michael Lerner argues, ". . . meeting these needs is not the defining essence of socialism. It is a necessary condition for a people to be free and self-determining, but it is not a sufficient one. Slaves may be materially satisfied, but they are slaves nonetheless. Socialism is about power over one's life and circumstances; it is about freedom and self-determination. . . ." (*The New Socialist Revolution.*) Thus socialism is concerned not just with conditions, but consciousness also, not just with *freedom from* the burden of unfilled material needs, but *freedom to* grow and develop and realize oneself.

It is for this reason socialism identifies, analyzes and seeks to end human alienation. We are alienated from ourselves, from each other, from humanity as a whole, from our work, from our product and from nature. Alienation is estrangement, the move—consciously and unconsciously—from affection to disaffection, from harmony to disharmony and hostility, from closeness to distance. Capitalism is the source of this, for it is capitalism and the spiritual and material poverty it breeds which forces us apart from each other and from all else of meaning and magnitude in our lives.

CAPITALISM HAS MADE US abdicate responsibility, fall in love with things rather than each other, and sacrifice ourselves and each other to get those things. We begin to mistake having and consuming for being and becoming. Capitalism creates false needs in us and pimps and panders those needs until it drains us dry and leaves us empty and economically ruined. Only in a capitalist society where people are out of touch with their bodies can a vagina be used to sum up the value of a

woman, can pictures be sold and substituted for the actual pleasure. We absorb and act out our relation with the oppressor on each other. We are dominated and dehumanized by the oppressor and we do it to each other. And only socialism can alter this and give us the conditions and consciousness to regain and realize ourselves in ways which are not exploitive and oppressive of others.

Labor is the basic activity of life, the basic source of life and yet it is, under capitalism, turned into an enslavement. It is through labor that we transform nature and ourselves, reduce distances, build the world and create the basis of higher levels of life. And yet we have lost control of our labor power, we are forced to sell this essential activity in order to survive. It has become now, not a conscious and enjoyable activity, but a mindless, non-fulfilling, exhausting activity, an alien activity which destroys individuality, turns us into objects and alienates us.

Marx summed up this perversion and enslavement of labor when he said, "Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over and exploitation of the producers: They (the capitalists) mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; (and) they estrange him from the intellectual potentialities of labor." (*Capital I.*) Again, only socialism can liberate labor and restore it as a self-directed, self-confirming, self-fulfilling activity.

The question of antagonism and the private ownership and control of the means of production can be treated together, for the basic antagonisms of society, i.e. class struggle, racism and aggressive human alienation emanate from this unnatural arrangement in which a few own the basic means of life and exploit labor power and control other areas of life through this.

Through the increase in the productivity of labor, people move from survival relations to relations brought about by surplus (more

than what is needed to survive). A ruling class comes into being at the first sign of surplus, seizes it and builds structures to protect and insure its hold on that surplus. Ownership of the means and products of production is violently established by a few and suffering and sacrifice are imposed on the many. Thus economic antagonisms take root and expand and class struggle is assured.

When the surplus of a given society was seized and labor was divided, fragmented into mental and manual labor, this seizure and division already expressed the seizure and division of the instruments and products of labor. This meant the simultaneous formation of classes—large social groupings whose power, social position and interests are determined by their relation to the means of production, by their ownership of factories, farms, land mines, etc., or their propertylessness. We live in a class period of history and in a class society and thus, we are members of a given class, whether we like it or not or reject it because we think white folks made it up.

If there are classes in the USA, all of us who live here, who work, struggle, dance and die here are members of a definite class. The whole (society) has shaped the parts (us), has conditioned our consciousness and imposed on us a *position* and *function* in the overall system—a capitalist, class system. Thus a class analysis—an analysis of class structure, class forces, class interests, class history and class struggle in the USA and the world—is of vital importance if we are to understand *the whole of who we are*, our history, our strengths and weaknesses, our friends and enemies, our potential and possibilities. This is a basic lesson of socialism.

TO NEGATE AND provide a real and revolutionary alternative to capitalism, socialism seeks to put truth into action. For it understands that all social problems are solved in the final analysis by social practice and that, ultimately, the most effective argument against the existing order is collective action against it. Socialism as practice seeks then to establish worker's ownership and control of means

of production. It does not seek to appropriate personal property which people use, only private property which capitalists use to buy people and labor and to control other areas of life. Secondly, it seeks to institute an egalitarian distribution of all wealth so that everyone can meet their needs without hoarding, hustling or hiring others. Thirdly, it seeks a planned economy, which the workers plan and execute so that workers can exercise their minds again and waste through duplication and planned obsolescence will be ended. Fourthly, it seeks to establish and guard a real political and industrial democracy in which free and full debate and collective decision-making among the people are real and in which the working class really controls their lives and pushes their lives forward.

Finally, socialism as a science of struggle seeks the unity of all oppressed and progressive people, so that a conscious and committed united front can be formed to end the reign and rape of capital and begin socialist construction. In fact there can be no separate solution, no separate peace with the oppressor. National liberation, women's liberation and all other liberations of necessity means socialist liberation.

In the final analysis, all struggles must become one struggle, the struggle for socialist liberation. It will not be an easy task to merge our struggles or to defeat capitalism, but we actually have no choice if we are ever to end our oppression and exploitation and become—free and productive humans again. Thus, it is our revolutionary duty, "To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things; to base one's program on the logic of class struggle and to be bold when the hour of action arrives." (Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism").

This is just a small part of what we must do, of what the masses will expect from us, and of what liberation and higher levels of life require. Let us move forward then, patient and thorough in our work, conscious and committed in our struggle, and terribly audacious in our example.

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*note: See also III. Suggested Reading

IN LOVE AND STRUGGLE: TOWARD A GREATER TOGETHERNESS

*The length of your Blackness is what loves me in it and makes me wonder if I'll
ever reach the end of you.
That's what you've come to mean.*

From a love poem by Imamu Hala

V. "IN LOVE AND STRUGGLE: TOWARD A GREATER TOGETHERNESS"

Revolution is not an end and unless it is not a collective effort and experience and if it does not reach and raise to a higher level each and all of us. Our freedom as a people is indivisible and to talk of the liberation of less than all is cheap and shallow nonsense. Therefore, it is to us a vulgar vision that conceives and attempts to construct a world of constant war between women and men, diametrically opposed and unalterably hostile to each other. Men and women are not in any real and human sense and the innumerable differences that narrow minds imagine divide us dichotomously are the ones that really unite us. For it is a spiritual and physical fact of no man's importance that where we differ most is where we fit together most profoundly. There is nothing as real or rewarding as human sharing—not individualistic religion or assumed revolution, abstract individualism or imagined isolated achievement. And the sharing of man and woman is based to some in its satisfaction of the deep and unending need, a need that cannot be successfully denied or negated by anti-male or anti-female assertions to the contrary.

We cannot support separatist moves which divide our energies and efforts and attempt

two approaches to liberation. We as a people are dealing with different realities and have different priorities than those who would advocate and attempt to carry out a struggle, sectarian in its course, narrow in its notion of interests, and divisive of our central struggle against our exploitation and oppression as a people. Our central and overriding interest and aspiration is and must continue to be national liberation as a people—not in negation of social liberation of our women, but as insurance and attention of it. For true social liberation of women and men is possible only after we with other oppressed and progressive people have acquired the collective power to dismantle and discard the false social organization imposed on us by the oppressor.

What we do, we must do together as a people. There are no separate solutions. Since the oppressor exploits and oppresses all of us—all of us, men as well as women and children—we must be consciously and voluntarily involved in our struggle for liberation. We diminish and destroy the potential and power of our struggle when we give it names and goals that narrow the scope and content of our vision and when we, fighting fragmentally, to be freed, divide ourselves and

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*notes:

by MAULANA RON KARENGA

our energies and pursue opposite paths. Liberation will never come, nor will any revolution be realized, if abandoning our original aspiration, we establish new and narrowly defined priorities, imported and imposed from a distinctly different context and history.

WE MUST CONTINUOUSLY be aware of and admit our social shortcomings in our relations with each other. But it is a stiff and stubborn fact that we cannot truly eradicate the objective and subjective causes of our undeveloped and deficient relations with each other until we collectively acquire the power to put an end to our exploitation and oppression as a people. In order to overcome and eradicate the false values and distorted world view of which we are historical victims, we must struggle collectively and with other oppressed and progressive people to transform society. For it is in society that we find the major source of our oppression and exploitation—the economic and political structures and relations that deny and deform our development.

Certainly, there are unjust practices among us, and we need not wait until the end of this world or the winning of our larger struggle before we begin to redefine and restructure our relationships. But real redefinition and restructuring can only be taken to the extent and depth to which it must be taken within the context of our larger strug-

gle. And that struggle is the fundamental and far-reaching struggle against our oppression and exploitation in society. Through this struggle we will also learn to struggle against ourselves. And we will ultimately, not only transform society, but ourselves as well. Therefore, we say that the struggle for and achievement of national liberation is a precondition for genuine social liberation of both man and woman. For it is only through collective struggle and the gaining of social power that we can promote social liberation on the higher human level it demands and deserves. It is in this context of national liberation, *struggled for* and *achieved*, that the black woman can and will, as Touré tells us, "become alive to the values and huge creative potentialities she represents."

None of the foregoing argument is to suggest smug satisfaction with our social organization as it is or to propose a delay in the moral and revolutionary demand for the reassessment, redefinition and restructuring of our social roles and relationships. It is obvious that we must right now reassess, redefine and restructure our whole value system and view of ourselves and each other. We must alter the concern and content of our family structures, review and redefine our concept of man and woman, marriage and family and make the *call for brotherhood* extend to, include and complement the *call for sisterhood*. Our struggle requires the collective resources of all of us, and we've lost already if we limit or divide our collective

energies in the name of slogans to save fragile male self-concepts or to mimic and misidentify with an exclusively woman's movement. Regardless of abstract and convenient arguments black men might employ to defend views in obvious conflict with revolutionary and humanistic values, our women are essential to us in every important way we are to ourselves. And it is difficult if not impossible to divide our major interests and aspirations.

Our women are indispensable to our collective struggle as a people and to everything of enduring value that we envision and achieve. This is why we are adamant in our opposition to self-defeating dual approaches to liberation, dichotomous thinking and all other vulgar and invalid approaches to social and family relations. These approaches can only deepen existing differences and create a climate that denies us the beauty and strength which emanate from our *interdependence*. Somewhere between the imposition of submissive silence by men and the aggressive shouting of slogans by women lie authentic answers and expansive possibilities. These answers and possibilities are rooted in our own relationships, in the nature of our need *personally* and *collectively* to share and fulfill ourselves with and through each other.

HISTORICALLY, WE black men and black women have been unkind to each other. We have believed and spread the lies of our oppressor much too often. We have sent each other to hospitals, graves and prison, fought for days like dogs and many times made mad love immediately afterwards. We are confused by our contradictions because we love each other too, and the depth and dimensions of this love are infinitely beyond the words we can assemble to express and explain it. We charge each other; and the list of charges is long and full of falsehoods and also truth. It is true that there are some vulgar and vicious men among us; perverse and parasitic, brutal and embarrassingly unbrotherly toward sisters as well as themselves. And likewise, there are among us women who are equally vulgar, vengeful and deeply devoid of values and who will without

hesitation or headache collaborate with the oppressor to undermine and destroy the image, strength and creative capacity of brothers.

But these brutal and equally brittle brothers do not and cannot represent, indicate or indict the character of black men as a whole, or define the depth of their commitment to black women. It is likewise obviously silly and somewhat insane to claim that all or even the majority of sisters are evil, suffering from the same slave-minded sickness, and are thus engaged in some ongoing conspiracy with the oppressor to undermine and destroy our manhood and capacity for achievement. The fact is that the contradictory nature of our existence evokes contradictory responses to problems and both men and women are sometimes confused in their commitment, shaky in their sharing and many times too weak to do anything but wander. And thus, alienated and alone, they are vulnerable and available for the various divisive and destructive strategies of the oppressor. But we are still a beautiful people, growing greater and stronger through constant struggle against ourselves as well as the oppressor. We've given each other more than we've taken, fought the oppressor more than ourselves and are natural allies, not enemies, in spite of the hassle, hell and heartache we experience in our daily dealings and life with each other.

The systematic destruction of our culture and families threw us into chaos, often confused and misdirected our loyalties and called into question our love. But our love has lasted and we must give ourselves credit for such an achievement against such heavy and horrifying odds. For as Sis. Angela Davis says in an article in the December 1971 issue of *THE BLACK SCHOLAR*, "The strong personal bonds between immediate family members which oftentimes persisted despite coerced separation bore witness to the remarkable capacity of black people for resisting the disorder so violently imposed on their lives."

This is why we accept no dual approaches to and divisions of our history and struggle, and why the model of an exclusive women's or men's movement does not appeal or apply to us. Our history must be told together, for

that's the way we made it—as a whole people, not a people hacked apart into hostile halves. We struggled together as black man and woman, for the oppressor oppressed and exploited us all. And there was no time, place or possibility for black women to lie around lazily and listlessly at home like those white women, who became sickening symbols of luxury and lust, manufacturing and faking fears, screams and moans to inflate the emptiness and egos of their sexually dubious men.

SISTERS WERE OUT there dealing daily with it all, fighting off rape and repression, poisoning masters and putting a definitive end to mistresses, running and raging and revolting side by side with black men. The sight of Sojourner Truth brought joy and peace to numerous slaves anxious to follow her to freedom. Demark Vesey's wife was a vital part of his planned revolt of 1822. Sister Harriet Tubman, the ingenious and most outstanding conductor of the Underground Railroad, went South nineteen times coming back with at least 300 brothers and sisters. And it was she who would stick a piece in a cowering brother's stomach and tell him he could come on or stay there, but he wasn't going back.

After slavery sisters were still *out there in it*, dealing with the demands of our struggle on a continuous and comprehensive basis. And it is incorrect and insensitive, rank and reflective of an undeveloped perspective to believe and/or assert that only few black women made any significant contribution, that Mary McLeod Bethune, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, Ruby Doris Robinson, and the sisters who led and won the historic strike at Oneita are just exceptions. *These are not isolated examples, but reflective of a historical pattern and persistence of partnership in struggle, a brotherhood and sisterhood in rage and revolt.* This is why it is false and unfair, divisive and destructive of our struggle and collective strength to assert or support the myths the oppressor has assembled to undermine and destroy the image, worth and womanhood, contribution and commit-

ment of black women.

Many myths have been created to crush the black woman and destroy her image, to reduce to rubble and raw sex her relationship with her man and to deny and cover up her contribution in our struggle to be a free and creative people. The oppressor has projected her as an overpowering matriarch and emasculator of black men, a wild and willing sex object and a ready receptacle for the filth of domestic and foreign sexual marauders. And the enduring tragedy of all this is that many black men and even some black women have accepted, supported and even added to these invidious images and interpretations. We went and *still* go for too many games, too many lies that undermine our love and life together. As Sis. Toni Cade Bambara says in the November 1972 issue of *Essence*, "let some light-weight myth-maker trot out some two-cent negative nonsense about our men and women and we immediately put it to music and/or film it in technicolor. Seems like we just love to hear the uglies about brothers and sisters."

We must begin to unmask such myths, destroy them and live our lives like we need and want without the interference and imposition of images by the oppressor. The black woman is not nor has she historically been a matriarch, looming and lording over the black man, holding his testicles tightly in her hands and squeezing at will with some deep and undiminishing disregard for his pain and plight. A matriarchy by definition implies power and decisive authority, a power and authority that the oppressor would never have allowed among blacks. For such power could have been consolidated and extended and thus, become a continuous, more conscious and capable threat to his racist rule, exploitation and oppression.

THE IMAGE OF the black matriarch was *invented* and *imposed* by the oppressor, along with the equally damaging one of the black man as shiftless and irresponsible. These images were designed to destroy at the roots relationships which were continuing sources of *collective consciousness* vital to

black resistance and revolt. In order to suppress the potential and possibilities of resistance and revolt, the oppressor moved to divide us, destroy social structures, lives and loyalties and to provoke and promote permanent dissension among us. By being able to indict the black woman and black man and convince them to accept and support such an indictment against themselves, the oppressor was able in great part to divert attention and attacks from himself and turn black rage and aggression, to a large extent, inward.

Hostile to each other, the black man and woman often imagine each other to be the main enemy. Thus, they become vulnerable and victims to all kinds of lies, larceny and cruelty against and by each other. Wounded in our pride and crushed by the oppressor in our attempts to achieve and create, we often blame and strike out at each other, because we are closer to each other and because the real enemy and oppressor of us both seems too powerful to defy and defeat. Therefore, the oppressor can create the image of the black woman as one morally loose and lascivious, rape her repeatedly and convince some black men that she wanted it, solicited it and felt some vulgar sense of honor as he huffed and puffed pathetically on her.

In fact, black women have historically and heroically resisted the white man's sexual war against them. And black men fought and died to defend their women too, even though the oppressor has methodically suppressed such history and sometimes we, too, wonder and doubt. Black men and black women struggled together continuously against these sexual assaults. For taken in its broadest and most significant sense, the rapes and attempts to reduce the black woman to a willing sexual and social slave was never directed exclusively toward black women, even though they were the immediate victims. This was an inclusive war waged against black men too and the black community as a whole. It was a continuing terrorism to teach object lessons, to demonstrate the vulnerability of the black woman and thus the whole community. And it was used to raise serious self-defeating and self-destructive doubts in the mind of the black man about his manhood

and his power to move decisively against the slavemaster in view of his apparent and agonizing inability to protect his woman. This was the hope and calculated intention of the oppressor, but history reveals it did not develop as well as he wished. In spite of the continuous terror by the oppressor, black men rose up and raged on, resisted and revolted—always aided and supported by sisters who were often *out front* in the fight for freedom, as well as *beside* and *behind* their men.

The brutal demands of slave labor, destroyed rigid roles among us, wreaked havoc on home life and placed the black woman alongside the black man in every *area of oppression* and *exploitation* and thus, in every *effort for freedom*. But being outside the house and engaged in daily work and struggle also placed the black woman in greater proximity to the white man and made her more capable of corruption as well as subversion and support of the struggle. As Sis. Mae C. King notes in an article in the March-April 1973 issue of *THE BLACK SCHOLAR*, the black woman's physical access to the oppressor placed her in a position containing within it "the contradictory human possibilities of betrayal and devotion." This predicament, as Sis. King goes on to say, generated suspicion, guilt and degradation and, of course, an unenviable legacy of vicious and invidious images and interpretations of the black woman.

IT IS OUT of this painful predicament of proximity to the oppressor that the concepts of matriarchy and emasculation of the black man grew. For it was in this context that the possibility and fact of collaboration and conspiracy began to take shape and show itself in various ways. Thus, one runs into records and reports of black women helping to thwart revolts, bartering their bodies for food and favors, surrendering themselves for leniency and grinding wearily under the grotesque groans and moans of the slavemaster. But this is obviously a *minority report* and not enough evidence to indict the character or discolor the commitment of black women to black men and to our struggle as a people.

Still, there are those who through ignorance or obviously evil intentions are led to perceive and suggest an ongoing unholy alliance between the black woman and the oppressor. It's from distorted perception that one was once likely to hear the absurdity that two kinds of people in this society have always been free—the white man and the black woman. This is not only untrue of the black woman on every level and in every sense, but is tragic evidence of how well the myths invented by the oppressor have worked in muddling the minds of numerous black men. It is myths like these that often make some black men lie to themselves and deny the collective nature of our oppression and the very real need to struggle together against our common oppressor who dictates our daily lives.

There is no separate or divisible freedom. And none of us—neither black men or women—will ever be free until we collectively and with other progressive people succeed in transforming society. It is both true and tragic that some black women were allowed access to the oppressor, for he hoped through this to subdue them sexually, win them over and use them as agents against the struggle for freedom of their people. Therefore, he offered them a few harmless privileges but never any power. He provided them with a few trinkets and other trivia and made some betray trusts and sacrifice on the altar of their ignorance and insane hopes our collective aspirations to be free.

There were the mummies too, who taking advantage of their access to the oppressor and the vast and various limitations under which black men labored, *roared as if they ruled* and were rough, aggressive and difficult to deal with in their assumed possession of power. These mummies and their “knock-down-drag-out” attitude and aggressiveness are no doubt the historical basis of the myths of matriarchy and emasculation attributed to black women. For it was easy for the politically ignorant to assume their tenuous privileges were power, their conditional and limited access to the oppressor, an honor and achievement and their raucous roaring, some form of rule.

But it is important for us, as a people, to understand that collaboration and mammyism were not the characteristic roles of the black woman during slavery or afterwards. On the contrary, she was characteristically — as we have outlined earlier — active and committed — a vital part of our struggle as a people to gain our freedom from slavery and liberate ourselves afterwards from the infinite forms of oppression and exploitation that followed. It is obvious and unarguable that we as a people could not have achieved even what we have, it not for the commitment and contribution of our women as partners in *love* and *struggle* throughout our history. They are not in any sane or serious sense, Geraldines or Julias — not emasculators or underminers — regardless of the examples the oppressor and his conscious and unconscious allies assemble and offer to the contrary.

It has always been the oppressor who has designed our undoing and destruction as black men and women. It is the oppressor who has devised ways to ruthlessly prove and project our powerlessness and undermine and destroy our aspirations and struggle. Years and generations of lynchings, castrations, rapes, ruined lives and buried black bodies are terrible testimony to the real identity of our enemy. And this history is evidence and agony enough to overturn all arguments that the petty, though admittedly painful, things we've done and do to each other are comparable or commensurate with the long list of inhuman crimes the oppressor has committed and continues to commit against us as a people.

We must not cooperate with, shelter or share the vile and vulgar images assembled and imposed by the oppressor. We must rebel against them as we rage and revolt against the oppressor himself, against his economic exploitation and his racial oppression. For it is with the imposition of these images that he began to divide, undo and defeat us.

IF WE ARE ever to win in our struggle to transform society, we must win the struggle

against ourselves, against old ideas that divide and destroy our strength and deform and undermine our struggle. It is obvious that we must move beyond antiquated and orthodox definitions of man and woman, beyond the homespun and unscientific silliness that a woman's possession of ovaries and a uterus somehow makes her incapable of understanding the intricacies of life and the imperatives of struggle and that therefore, she must mind the home fires and forget about being anything more than a good mother and sensuous wife.

Historically, the black woman has proved there's more to women than being a pink playmate, lying around looking empty and useless and limited in self-assertion to providing sex and sons for her man. The black woman is not nor has she ever been the "weaker sex." *Black men and black women have always been equal*; not just in a human sense but equal also in oppression and therefore, equal in the revolutionary struggle to rid ourselves of it. The collective needs and nature of our struggle placed us side by side, regardless of how some of us would have otherwise wanted it.

The issue of equality is a serious one and must be solved by our acceptance of it, or our energies will be divided and misdirected and we will exhaust ourselves in struggle against each other. We struggle against domination by the oppressor and we must not dominate each other. There is no weaker or stronger sex. We are all equally human and in different times and circumstances are both weak or strong for reasons unrelated to sex or the size of biceps and buttocks. We must be consistent in our claims and reject every inequality, especially those argued on the basis of biology.

The argument for sexual inequality is based on supposed biological differences and so is racism. And if we argue in support of sexual inequality, the argument can be extended to support racial inequality. For they are both based on the tenuous grounds of biology and are irrational, somewhat sick and certainly unsupportable. This is no argument for "neuterization," the elimination of all sexual differences. What is argued is the

elimination of male privileges and false assumptions that speak against a woman's chance to develop according to her abilities and inclination. Moreover, there is no way we can seriously say we're for freedom and social equality as a people if it does not extend to and include our women.

Equality does not mean or imply that everybody is able physically and mentally to do the same things, for there are different abilities among women themselves as well as men. The argument and struggle for equality is one for the removal of inequalities that are *social* as opposed to physical and mental and the overdue end to the idiocy that insists that women are inferior to men and therefore, must be submissive and subordinate. Equality means equal rights, opportunities and treatment. And it means full participation of the woman in any decision-making that affects and involves her, whether at home, in a relationship or in society.

The task now is not to argue male superiority, for on its very face it's false. What we must do is accept the *human equality* of woman and man and redefine our roles and relationships so that they are more in harmony with this realization and the requirements of our struggle. It is important to our struggle that we not take revolutionary postures in terms of our oppressor and find ourselves bogged down in reactionary postures in relation to our women. Whatever dreams of male supremacy or superiority men might intoxicate themselves with, the fact that *no matter how great a man is, he comes from a woman* should sober them.

WE CAN NO LONGER talk of our women being "in back" of us in the old sense of her being a silent, servile supporter. Our women must become conscious and committed agents of social change, as well as men. And this requires that the rituals and relics from the past that provide artificial fortification for fragile male self-concepts be discontinued. In their place, we should establish and extend a new, more promising and productive set of relations. To liberate ourselves from the oppressor requires the full resources of all our peo-

ple and to keep our women in check, *isolated, ignorant and inactive* is to insure and build the basis for our continued failure. As Sis. Joyce Ladner says in an article in the December 1971 issue of *THE BLACK SCHOLAR*, "no developing nation, whether it be black colonies of the United States or the independent nations of Africa, Asia or Latin America, can afford the luxury of keeping its women in bondage."

Bondage does not simply mean slavery with physical chains and shackles. It also can and does suggest—especially in a social sense—systematic restriction of growth and freedom of choice. In this social sense, bondage is the structured denial of movement, meaningful participation and social advancement, even though ability and human justice demand it. We must ask ourselves as men involved in the historical tasks of liberation and revolution what kind of women we want and need in our struggle as a people. Then we must ask ourselves whether we have the internal strength to overturn ourselves on prior counterproductive and counter-revolutionary positions with regard to our women and assume a posture more in harmony with our collective aspiration for full liberation on every level of life.

We cannot use the specious claim of women's need for protection as an argument against their progress. There can be no sane and sensible argument against their gaining a concrete analysis and understanding of the system against which we struggle, and their becoming also a conscious and committed force for our liberation as a people. If we want to protect our women, it must be done with their conscious and committed cooperation. They must be aware of such a need, accept it and aid such an enterprise by being able to deal with aspects of their own defense. Otherwise, they will not understand or appreciate the protection we propose or attempt to arrange for them. But if they are conscious and committed, then even in our absence they can think methodically and act decisively to defend themselves, as well as our collective interests.

To advocate and encourage an infantile and depressingly dependent black woman is to

create a vulnerable one, an inevitable victim of the very attacks against her womanhood from which we propose to protect her. It is impossible to be present all the time to protect each of our women from the swarm and swell of predators that surround and seek them out. Especially is this true in the context of serious struggle, a struggle which insures an increase in the times and length of our absence. We must realistically project and prepare for our eventual captivity, exile and underground existence and take into account our need for constant movement. For the oppressor is always bearing brutally down on us, seeking to undo and defeat us. Even death must be envisioned and projected as an ongoing possibility. For only when we face it can we prepare against it and prevent our falling unnecessary victims to it. And such preparation and prevention requires all of our resources as a people and this automatically negates any nonsense about keeping women barefoot, in bed and in the kitchen.

IT SEEMS, therefore, to be a clear and logical conclusion that in order to protect our women and ourselves from the continuous temptations and attacks of the oppressor, as well as the "enemy" within, we must move to create a context in which they become as *informed* and *responsible* as we claim and seek to be. They must be as firmly—even fanatically—against the oppressor as anyone else and as committed to our struggle and victory as any of our heroes and heroines in the past. Only then will they invest themselves in our collective struggle and become unalterably committed to our victory as a people.

If we believe sincerely in the liberating force of knowledge, we must want all our people to have that knowledge. And if we accept the unqualified need for all our people to know themselves and the oppressor in order for us to win in our struggle, then we can in no way isolate our women and keep them ignorant, undeveloped and uninvolved. It is important that we assist and support the development of the *conscious*,

committed and *capable* woman. For Fanon's contention remains true that the success of any revolutionary struggle depends on the *range* and *quality* of female participation, on women becoming women for action rather than exclusively women for marriage and sex.

Moreover, it is cruel and hypocritical homage to call a sister "queen" and then seek to suppress her in her awareness, growth and participation in meaningful activity, surrounding her with seventh century rules and rituals to build and boost male egos. Mock worship is no substitute for meaningful participation. And honorific reference does not make a reality out of what is obviously a social and political hoax and hypocrisy.

Equally negative and destructive of our struggle and development as a people, is to reduce the black woman's role in life and the struggle to the exhausting indignity of raw sex and to attempt to exalt and glorify such degradation by claiming she's serving the "national interest." The truth and tragedy, however, is that a woman with nothing to offer but a body and some babies which she is emotionally and intellectually unable to educate or care for is a national liability. And she eventually becomes a burden to everyone including the evil and/or empty men and minds that insisted she assume such a posture.

Also useless and eventually sickening is the imitator of T.V. commercials, the toothpaste type, the decorated doll, smiling emptily, flashing soon-to-wither flesh, and lying on her back a whole life time as if she were a permanent invalid. Sex, like soul, is no substitute for concrete achievement. Regardless of how good it seems or gets, it does not compensate for full and meaningful participation in social life or in the historical task of liberation and revolution posed for us as a people. Therefore, it is obviously and ultimately self-defeating and destructive of our collective strength and struggle to encourage our women to value sexual performance as a source of identity, achievement and status. Women, like men, are defined by what they do. Therefore, their actions should not be limited to providing leg to dubious "warriors" who have not even won the battle against themselves and the old ideas that re-

strict the awareness and development of women as well as themselves.

OUR RELATIONSHIPS on the whole are not expansive enough and have often been reduced to pure sexual performance, to sisters **bartering** bodies for a false sense of security and brothers confusing compliments in bed with achievements in life. This follows from our too often putting too much emphasis on our sexuality, on our assumed sexual power at the expense of so much else. But regardless of what we believe religiously and unrepentantly about our sexual powers, this does not relieve us of the responsibility of social achievement. No matter what we have been and will be told by those whom we've made scream and scratch our backs in joy, or moan in mercy and murmur madness in our ears, the "victory" of the vagina is horrifyingly hollow and the "power" of the penis is tenuous and temporary at best.

Our essential fulfillment is beyond the bed, although there are beautiful and wonderfully involving things that can be designed and done there. The brother must not mistake his penis for the source of his personality and power, and the sister should not put an overemphasis on her vagina, believing it to be the singular path to eternal peace and that all those who venture therein are somehow blessed with a greater blackness. Potency in bed does not extend outside, regardless of the lies one might tell oneself when one is locked in the loveliness of another and all the world is suddenly and softly one great and growing goodness and not one thing or thought more.

Our sharing and shaping of joy and life will improve and expand as we learn new ways to satisfy a diversity of new needs. And as we overcome the exclusive obsession with the genitals, we will find a new joy in an expansive erotic exchange that involves the entire body and goes beyond it to all the soft warm and wonder we feel from any thing and thought we share. Apart, we can still feel each other through a letter or call or a mellow memory played back slowly in our minds. Genital sex is not always necessary, and we

can touch in our minds if we are really in tune and if we come to understand that feeling is not an exclusive function of the hands, but is primarily and more promisingly a function of the heart.

Another important point is that we as men must not mistake force and violence for strength. It's a sad and embarrassing testimony against all men that the word "man-handle" means "treat roughly" and does not mean something more human and conducive to happiness. It is essentially a question of values as to whether we use violence and rigidity rather than reason, loving kindness and considerateness in our relations with each other. Values are essentially indicators of the worth we ascribe to each other and a means to remind us of our obligation and commitment to each other. They are principles that *prescribe* certain attitudes and kinds of behavior and *prohibit* others. If we lack the values that prohibit violence and provide an alternative to it in our relations with each other, we will use it and all kinds of irrational and crude constructs to explain and justify such behavior.

One such absurd explanation used by some men, as well as women, is that women like to be brutalized and treated roughly because it shows the man's strength and makes her more secure. This is too inhuman and morally vulgar to be valid and is like all the other unbelievable lies some black men have told themselves as a reason for their cruel and irrational acts and assertions against black women. But even if some sisters were insane or sick enough to advocate and encourage this brutal treatment, it still would be insensitive, cruel and inhuman to act this way toward them. To do so would be, as Sis. Flo Kennedy argues, "like giving alcohol to an alcoholic and dope to an addict." In a word, it would be "criminal to feed the habit."

WE CANNOT dominate women and expect them to develop, be faithful or feel any true sense of fulfillment in the relationships. Women are not faithful in relationships—whether marriage, consensual commitment or involvement—by reason of

con games, children, gutbucket behavior or the size of genital organs. What we imperfectly perceive as fidelity might be fear—fear of the man or the social and economic consequences of separation. Fidelity and loyalty require a foundation and rationale. That foundation is love and the mutual sharing that emanates from it. The rationale emanates from the perception of the relationship as unalterably unique; and this causes one to voluntarily impose on her or himself a self-discipline that enhances and ensures the endurance of the relationship. This self-discipline must be, by definition, one of free choice, not one restrained by the fear of force or quick and brutal abandonment.

Fidelity and loyalty grow best in a context conducive to such behavior. It is not enough for us to announce our love and allegiance to each other. We must become *friends* and *companions* in *common struggle* and hold common values, interests and aspirations. We need common values, interests and aspirations to even be able to claim real and meaningful commitment to each other. But the key factor to the development and endurance of these is *common struggle*. There is no real relationships and no surety of a relationship lasting until it has been tested and tempered in common struggle. *It is in struggle that we are strengthened*. Through common struggle we defend our interests, realize our aspirations and test and temper our commitment to our values and each other.

How can we claim any closeness if we haven't grown together in our struggle against the things that threaten to tear us apart, and if we haven't sacrificed to see our aspirations realized? And how strong is a relationship that is not rooted in a love which translates into more than sex and soul and some vague value for "doing your own thing"? Therefore, if we want our relations to be real and rock-strong, we must, together, confront the oppressor and our own contradictions continuously. In this process, we prove ourselves and grow closer. For we demonstrate how much we will sacrifice and suffer to defend our interests and realize our aspirations.

It is important that we understand that we do not own our women. We say "our" because they say and show it also. But if they express objection through word or act, we lose our claim and must accept it. The word "mine" should not mean "I possess," but rather should mean mutual agreement on a long term relationship, freely decided. All relationships should be based on free choice. Free choice essentially means having the ability to choose without being unduly restricted by ignorance, immaturity, fear or force. Possessiveness must be replaced by mutual commitment, for we cannot claim human lives like the feudalist and capitalist did land, sticking up stakes and denying access to everyone else. If a woman is not committed, she cannot be forced into love or made loyal in the true sense of the word. Coercion cannot replace commitment or substitute for self-discipline and violence cannot obviate the need for values in any real and rewarding relationships.

Finally, we need to eliminate use of the language that rises from self-hatred and hustling and reflects itself in so many of our relationships. How can we love if we call each other names that degrade us and destroy our will to be anything except what we're called? Learning is basically reinforcement through repetition, and if for hundreds or tens of years we've attacked each other with these names, it is no surprise some of us believe we are them. Our women cannot be real mothers, sisters and daughters if they hear everyday from our distended mouths, bitches, nappy tops, ho's, broads, twats, cocks, lazarenes, sapphires, geraldines, julias and jezebels. And brothers cannot be the fathers, brothers and sons they must be if they hear from sisters' mouths each day, broke-ass, lowlife, scurvy, jive-ass, never-gon'-do-nothin'-no-how niggas. We are both equally in need of new ways of relating, of ways to *work ourselves into each other* and find there a love we've always longed for.

WE NEED A NEW family form, for the nuclear family cannot satisfy our personal or collective needs. It is, as Frances Cress Welsing

says, in the October 1972 issue of *Essence*, no more than "survival unit." Therefore, it cannot remain unchallenged if we are to liberate ourselves personally and collectively. Our need then is for new forms of *free association* which can lead to the resourceful and rewarding relationships between black men and women which are vital to the defense and development of our national community.

The nuclear family is limited in power and potential, in ideas, interests and perspective. And because it is limited itself, it limits each of its members. It increases the division between its members and the community and thus restricts the collective activity and exchange that real growth and struggle requires. Finally, the nuclear family limits the child to an inadequate number of adult models, restricts relations with others, fosters possessiveness toward children and wives and thus, limits and deforms the development of both.

We need then, a different family form, an alternative to the restrictive relations of the nuclear family, a family form in which *personal* and *collective* liberation are formulated and fostered, and in which free association and greater growth are cherished and promoted as priorities. As Sis. Jacquelyne Jackson argues, "it is clear that there is not one absolute system of marriage and family which must be adhered to at all cost and under any circumstance." The nuclear family costs too much to keep, in both a psychological and social sense. Therefore, our need leads us to the alternative form of free association and greater growth possible in the extended family. Free association does not mean or suggest moral laxity, unlimited sexual encounters and social irresponsibility. On the contrary, what is meant here by free association is an association that enjoys relief from excessive restrictions caused by ignorance, immaturity, fear and force. But also, free association means—and this is of equal importance—a *principled association*, whether in brotherhood, sisterhood, beginning involvement, simple or consensual commitment or marriage.

The extended family is basically a free association of persons who chose common val-

ues, aspirations and interests rather than biology as the basis for their relationship. It is an essential social statement against the biological barrier that separates and restricts us in our need to relate in more rewarding and ever-expansive ways. And it is, itself, a realm of freedom in which relations and relationships can evolve and develop in the most profound and expansive emotional and social sense, providing emotional, physical and economic security for all members. The extended family form is not really new, for a form of it was practiced in the South with aunts, uncles and others sharing collective responsibility for the children and making their homes and hearts available to those who chose to be with them. Now we need to reinvigorate and revitalize this form of association and add to it new values based on our new knowledge and the collective needs and nature of our life and struggle. For it is in this realm of freedom that we can start to perceive and enhance our spiritual and material possibilities and begin to build the basis for a better *community, society and self*.

In the extended family we would be able to explore and extend human possibilities denied us in the close and narrow setting of the nuclear family. We would be able to strengthen the critical links between man and woman and thus increase our capacity for struggle. Children would then become the *specific responsibility* of the extended family and the *general responsibility* of the community. Parenthood would thus become social rather than biological, and the devious designations of "half," "step," and "foster," which restrict relationships and sharing, would be eliminated. Moreover, old people would be collectively cared for with more love and understanding of their needs, and given a sense of continued worth and belonging—not rejected and locked in lonely rooms or farmed out to strangers and left to die alone and unloved. In this way we could begin to build embryos of the new community and society we seek to bring into being. It's easy to say that the struggle will determine our roles. But the larger struggle in society cannot determine our roles in the abstract or on its own. We must come to certain

basic conclusions, ourselves, about how we want to live our lives together. And we should start with the premise that any role suggested must be supportive of the growth and expansion of the relationship and each person. Moreover, any role proposed must be responsive to the needs of our struggle. This automatically argues against rigid and orthodox roles and argues for *shared tasks* and *collective action*. In general, we can say that the role of both man and woman is one of *shared responsibility* in daily life and struggle. Specific roles in any given circumstance, should be freely determined by both man and woman as with all things.

In the extended family, we will find new ways to relate and satisfy our needs, both personal and collective, and establish a new unity of equals, conscious and committed and increasingly capable. This new and much needed unity will come through common struggle both against our contradictions and against the oppressor, through our common aspirations, values and interests that lead us to collective efforts for liberation in the family as well as the community and society. We cannot assume unity of aspiration and effort because of common color or the formality of a marriage ceremony and license or hasty and superficial commitments made under sexual and social pressure. We must have principled beginnings to our relationships. We should, at the beginning of our relationships, come to a mutual agreement on basic values we will share. And we should state, in *free* and *frank* discussion what is needed, wanted and expected in our relationships. If this is not done, basic disagreements will multiply and insure the disruption and end of the relationships.

WE ARE A beautiful people, but we cannot be smugly satisfied with ourselves, for whatever beauty we possess is minor compared to the beauty possible, the expansive beauty of our continuously becoming in progressive perfection. It is praiseworthy and promising that we have survived, but survival is not enough. Cockroaches have survived longer than any animal or insect, but at what level of

life? Survival is a defensive position and inevitably, unless changed to a developmental one, leads to stagnation.

We don't for a moment believe that a beautiful family life alone will ultimately and automatically lead to total liberation in every area. The reality of life as the requirements of struggle are ultimately more complex and contradictory and cannot be summed up simply as a need for a better sexual and family life. There are larger questions of societal liberation. Although we must seriously address ourselves to these issues, we must begin our struggle against society with the profound struggle against ourselves, against that in us that divides and defeats. By rising above restrictive and unrewarding relationships that deform our development, we become more capable of real liberation on a larger scale.

We cannot lie about the requirements of struggle without disastrous consequences, or about our ability to defy and defeat the oppressor. If our lives are ruled and ruined by sex and soul, we cannot talk of serious struggle. And if our women are backward and our men no better off, but are pretending and trying to prove differently by physical force and dubious claims to ancient and misinterpreted African or Asian empires, we cannot take ourselves seriously and neither will the oppressor. Grandiosity is not greatness and the pretention of power—ancient or modern—is dangerous and ultimately disillusioning and self-defeating. Moreover, to talk of revolution in society and the world and deny the need for revolution in our relations and relationships is not only contradictory, but eventually contemptible. We need, now, a new vision of revolution and freedom and new values that teach appreciation for the human personality regardless of sex and urge

social equality for our women on every level of life.

Moreover, we advocate a realm of freedom that allows and encourages *free* and *principled* association and strengthens critical links between black men and black women so that they, *together in love and struggle*, can become and be a force for good and freedom. Free and principled association implies responsibility in both a personal and social sense, and perhaps many will feel unprepared and unable to assume such a responsibility. Women have been dominated so long, many in the initial period will, perhaps, be apprehensive and unsure about the actual exercise of this new freedom from old restraints. But only by exercising new rights and freedom will they both become a reality and really benefit those who exercise them.

Finally, we must believe that with common values, aspirations and interests and through common struggle against ourselves and the oppressor, we black men and women, can forge a new and needed unity and achieve fully the *togetherness in love and struggle* which is proposed and promoted in our Kawaida marriage commitment:

For you there shall be no longing, for you shall be fulfillment to each other;
For you there shall be no harm, for you shall be a shield to each other;
For you there shall be no falling, for you shall be support to each other;
For you there will be no sorrow, for you shall be comfort to each other;
For you there shall be no loneliness, for you shall be company to each other;
For you there shall be no hassle, for you shall be peace to each other;
And for you there shall be no searching, for you shall be an end to each other.



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VI. "IN DEFENSE OF SIS. JOHNE: FOR OURSELVES
AND HISTORY"

JOANNE LITTLE CASE

IN DEFENSE OF SIS. JOANNE: FOR OURSELVES AND HISTORY

by MAULANA ABU RAHMAN

Sis. Joanne Little is a Black woman who has been unjustly accused of the murder of a young Black man. She is a dedicated and loving mother, and her life and the lives of her children are being destroyed by the actions of a few white supremacists. We are at the mercy of a legal system that is biased against Black people. We must stand up for her and for all Black people who are being oppressed.

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Notes:

IN DEFENSE OF SIS. JOANNE: FOR OURSELVES AND HISTORY

by MAULANA RON KARENGA

SIS. JOANNE LITTLE is on trial in Wake County, N.C., and so are we as a people. We sit at the same defense table, hear the same lies the system has assembled to take her life and deny her right to defend herself against rape and all the psycho-cultural assumptions and violence it represents. The talk of murder and motions, law and other legal niceties, courts, juries and judicial procedures should not make us less aware of what is actually going on in Wake County. Sis. Joanne is on trial for reasons not read in regular newspapers and magazines or recited on TV news, and it is important that we understand this in its fullness and let our people and the world know the real reasons.

It is a black woman who's on trial, but the issues involved have a human scope, significance and content. They speak to the right of women everywhere to be free from sexual

abuse, oppression and exploitation and they raise the question, and simultaneously re-affirm the right, of an oppressed people and each of its members to resist its oppression everywhere and on all levels of life and struggle.

But in order to gain a real and correct understanding of the human significance of the Joanne Little ordeal and trial and its more specific and immediate meaning for black women and black people, we must first free ourselves intellectually and emotionally from the ideological grip and grotesqueness of our oppressor. This means that as a matter of ideological self-defense, we must reject his interpretation of us, the world and this trial and in a rational and radical way, dare to develop our own.

It follows then that we must begin to create new categories, to think and speak in concepts that argue for and assist us in our struggle for liberation. This would lead us beyond the news-media given, beyond the easily assembled "facts" of our oppressor, beyond appearance to the very essence of what's happening here as opposed to its manipulated manifestations. A correct view of things is essential here, for our position on the trial is a position for or against ourselves, our dignity and right to defend it and our very lives. Moreover, a correct view of things and a correct method to arrive at such a view is the basis of a *liberated consciousness*, which is, in turn, a social force itself and an indispensable element in our struggle.

*notes:

THE FIRST requirement for understanding the truth and meaning of the ordeal and trial of Sis. Joanne is to accept and support her account of what actually happened and to reject in *detail, defiance* and *self-determination* the version offered by the oppressor.

We must do this first because she is our sister in nation and struggle, because she is one of us, sharing the same history and oppression and because we know in awful and agonizing detail the history of our oppression and exploitation and the many ways it's been executed, especially against our sisters, mothers and daughters. It is thus a clear choice between the word of a sister against that of the system which oppresses and exploits us daily. There is no third choice; we either support our sister or the system, her truth or the organized and institutionalized lies of the oppressor.

Moreover, there is both historical and current evidence that supports Sis. Joanne's account of the attack on her. Historically, rape and other sexual abuse has been committed with frequency and relative impunity by male members of the oppressing nation against black women, Third World women and other poor and powerless women, not only in the larger society, but especially in captivity where complete control and domination can be exercised over them. Women in a male dominated society are constantly vulnerable to sexual, mental and physical abuse, and in captivity, i.e. jail or prison, this violence is more intense and pervasive, for it is done with a greater degree of impunity and power. One need not be a social scientist to see that when men have unrestricted power over women in a situation sanctioned by law and social custom, they will move to take full and perverse advantage of it, especially on the sexual level. And the evidence—historical and current—argues that this is exactly what the jailer in Beaufort County Jail attempted to do.

Regardless of the ideological and legal mystification the system creates to save itself and its image, the jailer, and by extension, the town, were caught with their pants off. The D.A. can play it off and posture until lions and lambs fall in love and pose for

pictures, but the fact is that it was the jailer who came in the cell and was found on the jail cell cot naked from the waist down, icepick in hand and semen "extending from (his) penis to his thigh." One could not seriously and sanely argue that he had the icepick for anything except to force a sexual concession. Nor could one argue honestly and forcefully that his nakedness, presence on the bed and semen down his thigh was suggestive of anything but a violent and perverse sexual pursuit which met with an unexpected and effective resistance.

MOREOVER, the subsequent actions of the local police department and the D.A. indict them rather than Sis. Joanne, and clearly points to the baselessness and political motivation of the charges against her. There is a visible pattern of cover-up, delay, distortion and feigning involved in this whole humanly repulsive process. The fact that the local police broke its normal procedure for what it considers a major crime and did not immediately call in experts from the State Bureau of Investigation for full examination of the scene gave them time, as many people charge, to clean-up the evidence in the cell against the jailer. Also, the fact that Sis. Joanne was hunted down with dogs and high-powered rifles, that steps were taken to have her declared as an outlaw (which would have allowed any citizen to legally shoot her on sight) indicates how anxious the law officials were and are to be rid of Sis. Joanne and all the embarrassing exposure and political indictment the attack on her has brought and will continue to bring.

Equally significant is the fact that the D.A. ignored his normal procedures of holding a preliminary hearing with Sis. Joanne's attorney present to determine whether or not a crime had been committed, and quickly summoned a grand jury to rubber-stamp his charging her with first degree murder. Moreover, the fact that the medical examiner was not called to testify about his findings although he made himself available and that the law enforcement officials have continuously made it difficult for the defense lawyers

to examine key pieces of evidence, all speak loudly to the falsity of the charge and the uneasiness and apprehension law enforcement officials feel concerning it and the precarious and embarrassing position in which all this places them.

Finally, in terms of current and cogent evidence that supports Sis. Joanne's account of the attack by the jailer is the obvious and pervasive pattern of sexual, mental and physical abuse in the Beaufort County Jail as well as other—no doubt all—Southern Jails. Investigators for Sis. Joanne's defense have massed evidence from interviews with women confined in Beaufort County Jail who have suffered and seen such abuse. They speak of the lack of privacy and security, of being victims of a vulgar "official" voyeurism and sexual exhibitionism by the all-white male staff who for a while watched them 24 hours a day on closed circuit TV while they were on the toilet, taking baths, undressing and in bed. These male jailers, together with other males who were permitted in the jail, often propositioned the women inmates in their corn-pone and pathetic manner, drawing obscenities and twisted fantasies about sexual activity and desperately trying to demonstrate them.

Moreover, it is safe to assume that for every abuse reported, fear, shame, greater oppression and other inhibiting factors prevent as many if not more abuses, from being communicated and exposed. Thus if we are against this assault, this abuse and oppression of women, this deformation of and disregard for the human personality, we must be grateful for Sis. Joanne's active and audacious refusal to lie down and let herself be abused, to suffer silently and passively the perversion which was attempted on her.

SECONDLY, if we are to take a correct and principled position on the ordeal and trial of Sis. Joanne, we must understand that to accept her account of events is to reject not only the lies of the oppressor about those events, but also to redefine the reason she's being tried. To defend oneself against rape and all the psycho-cultural sickness and vio-

lence it represents cannot seriously be misconstrued as murder. If Sis. Joanne were rich and white, she wouldn't even have been in jail; and if she were middle-class and white, her right to defend herself against rape wouldn't be challenged but encouraged. But Sis. Joanne is black and working class and a national embarrassment because she dared to assume a right *reserved by force* for another race and class.

We are essentially talking about relations here, about preferences, privileges and rights assumed by certain segments of society and denied to others, about how law is used to defend some and deny, deform and destroy others. Laws, ideology, courts, jails, prisons and other institutions represent, reinforce and insure definite unequal relations between the ruled and rulers, between different races, ethnic groups and classes. In a class and racist society, laws, ideology and institutions are not neutral. Ideology justifies the unequal, exploitive and oppressive relations between ruled and rulers, owners and workers; and institutions perpetuate those relations.

Law, then, seen in this searing light of class and race and stripped of its cultural costume, its mystifying Latin and its pomp and impious ceremony, appears as it is—the will and right of the people in power raised by force to the level of sacred observance. And the trial, likewise stripped of its masks and mystifications, appears as it is also—a political and self-indicting ceremony by the state to formally deny Sis. Joanne's right to defend herself and, by extension and example, discredit and discourage the right of her people to resist their oppression on every level of life and struggle.

THIRDLY, it therefore becomes our responsibility to resist and defeat the intentions of the oppressor, to refuse his definition of our rights and to struggle constantly and continuously against any and all of his attempts to deny and limit our freedom. That's why it follows that once we redefine the reason Sis. Joanne is on trial and see that it's directed against us as a people too, we must recognize

and vigorously support her right to defend herself against rape and all the psycho-cultural assumptions and sickness it represents. For in doing so, we at the same time defend our right of resistance against our oppression as a people.

The dual character of this defense—of our sister and our people—is even more apparent when we define and discuss the real meaning and magnitude of Sis. Joanne's audacious act of resistance against rape and all it represents. For rape is not just a simple sexual and physical act, but a psycho-cultural and political one also. So that when Sis. Joanne dared to defend herself, she, even unconsciously, at the same time struck a blow against many other exploitative and oppressive relations and assumptions that permeate this society. Rape and attempted rape of a black woman by a white male is first an expression of racism. It is an act resulting from an evil and erroneous assumption by males of the oppressing (conquering) nation that they have the right to all valuables in the oppressed (conquered) nation, among which are the women. It is a raw and ruthless translation of the "spoils" theory and Sis. Joanne cannot be morally indicted or condemned for daring to challenge its assumptions.

Rape is not only an expression of racism, it is also an expression of a brutal and aggressive male chauvinism. It is a product of a perverse perception by men that women desire and deserve to be sexually subdued. Moreover, it is the inevitable outgrowth of the degenerative values of a male dominated and directed society which boosts its deformed and fragile egos by the savage seduction, conquest and control of its female population. Sis. Joanne, even without the vocabulary, understood the violence and resisted it as a natural and necessary response.

Rape of a black woman by a white male is also a historical continuation of a personal and political terrorism directed against black women and the black community since slavery. This terrorism, as we explained elsewhere, (*vid.* "In Love and Struggle: Toward A Greater Togetherness," THE BLACK

SCHOLAR, March, 1975) was to force the black woman and black community into submission, to make the black woman a social and sexual slave and demonstrate to the community and each member their personal and collective vulnerability. And it was designed to raise enduring doubt in the black man's mind about his manhood and ability to rise up against the oppressor given his painful inability to defend himself or his woman. Throughout history black men and women have struggled collectively and personally against this terrorism. And it is in this spirit and tradition of resistance that Sis. Joanne, even unconsciously, dared to defend herself.

ADDITIONALLY, rape, in this case, is a clear expression of the sexual, mental and physical abuse and oppression imposed on women in captivity, especially black and other Third World women, but also all poor and powerless women. The oppression and abuse of women in captivity is a national and human disgrace. Naked violence and vile and vulgar sexual acts and proposals confront women captives everyday and the state and federal authorities support their colleagues and agents against every complaint lodged against them. Given the sexual, mental and physical violence directed against women everyday and given the frustrating fact that there is no acceptable argument or appeal possible against it to higher authorities, how can anyone condemn Sis. Joanne whose natural sense of womanhood and resistance made her refuse to submit or say yes to a farmer with an icepick and an evil and insane idea that his badge and race gave him the right to assault and abuse her in bed?

So, again, Sis. Joanne has the right to defend herself against rape and against the racism, brutal and aggressive male chauvinism, the personal and political terrorism, and the abuse and oppression of women in captivity which it represents. And she has not only the right to defend herself against this particular attack on her person, but also against any violence directed against her. The personal and collective right of resistance are not abstracts, but *conditions of*

existence. And viewed this way, the general right of resistance against all assaults on the human personality is not only a right, but a responsibility.

Resistance—personal and collective—is a human negation of the inhuman assumption that people in power or their agents have the right to take or ruin the lives of others, to attack and appropriate their persons with impunity. It is not a self-defined right or privilege of a particular person, group or people, but a human value, a human law and a human necessity. It speaks directly to the freedom of choice, of safety, of self-determination and of life itself.

As a human necessity and law of universal validity, it extends beyond the scope and jurisdiction of legislatures and judicial bodies of particular places. It is everywhere valid, valuable and vital to human life and development. Thus, courts cannot *morally* deny the right of resistance; they can only deny it *empirically by force*. And the denial, while legal, remains in a real and human sense *illegitimate* and open to challenge by social forces actively committed to the realization of human freedom in its fullest and most profound sense.

FOURTHLY, then, if Sis. Joanne has the human right to resist rape and all the psycho-cultural violence and sickness it represents, it is important that we understand and argue that Sis. Joanne Little is not on trial, but rather the USA and its system of justice which is rooted in and ruled by class and race. Justice based on class and race is not real or responsive to the human need for freedom. It lacks the moral authority to rule without challenge and finds itself increasingly dependent on ideological mystification, bribery and force—i.e. game, gift and ultimately, the gun.

In a racist society, it is morally absurd for any racist or group of racists to pretend to the moral authority to sit in judgment on the victims of racism. Likewise, in a class society, it is a mockery of social and human justice for the rich and powerful or their agents to sit in judgment over the poor and

powerless who have no means to defend themselves.

The human value and social validity of anything can be measured by the kind of relations it creates, by how it supports and extends freedom and assists us in our struggle for human fullness. Law, justice, religion, courts, capitalism, communism, socialism and all other projects, programs and proposals for the ordering of human relations are subject to this acid test. No institution or system is self-validating, but must be judged by its contribution to the struggle for human freedom and fullness. Thus any institution or system that implies or imposes unequal, exploitative and oppressive relations is morally and humanly invalid and cannot rule and ruin human lives without challenge.

Sis. Joanne is black and poor, a victim of class and race violence and restrictions on human freedom. Social limitations insure legal defense limitations and if social justice is not a reality, legal justice is just as far-fetched and impossible. Thus, a fair trial for Sis. Joanne would be no trial at all and any talk or attempt of justice must and can only be translated as *freedom now!*

Finally, we must recognize and respect the social reality that Sis. Joanne Little is a symbol of black womanhood in resistance, of Third World womanhood in resistance and of all womanhood in resistance everywhere against rape and against all other dehumanized and dehumanizing acts and assumptions negative to their freedom and human fullness. She is a symbol and hope of women in captivity who each day draw closer to a consciousness of and commitment to resistance against their oppression. She is a symbol of unconsciousness transforming itself through action into consciousness. She expressed this herself saying "I went in as a marshmallow. I was soft, right? When I came out, I came out as a bandit. I was ready to strike at them at anytime, because I saw what they were doing to (the) people."

Likewise, Sis. Joanne is, even unconsciously, an agent of our history and liberation struggle. Even unconsciously, she continues the tradition of resistance which historically our women have shown to rape,

abuse and domination by racists, slave-masters and other exploiters and oppressors. And by her struggle, she brings us, as a people, closer to liberation and a higher level of human life.

MOREOVER, her resistance nails another spike in the coffin of all the dead and dying concepts of the black woman as weak and willing in her oppression and abuse. Her audaciousness can only inspire and encourage the same daring boldness in others, especially given the fact that she is one of the masses with no pretensions to a theoretical understanding of society but, having a socially natural understanding and distaste for her oppression and abuse, had the internal strength to resist it.

Sis. Joanne came too, at a time when we as a people needed her, needed to see some evidence that though the movement was at a lull, our people were still in motion, still resisting in various ways on every level of their daily lives. And it is significant that this assurance comes from the heroic resistance of a black woman. For it reaffirms what has been historically true of black women, re-

ardless of all the denial and distortions by the oppressor and evil minds among us—that our women have always been a vital part of our struggle for freedom and human fullness. This is the real truth of the black woman—a woman in motion and resistance, out front in our struggle for liberation, picking up the slack where needed, showing audaciousness and great initiative.

Thus, support for Sis. Joanne is support for ourselves and our history, support in honor of our past, protection of our present and insurance of our future. It is Sis. Joanne's right to resist oppression and our responsibility to support and extend that resistance. For all personal resistance is ultimately collective resistance—i.e. connected and contributive to the larger struggle for our freedom and human fullness.

Freedom for Sis. Joanne!

Long Live the struggle of Black women to defend and develop themselves!

Long live the struggle of women everywhere to liberate themselves!

Long live the struggle of Black people!

Long live the struggle of Third World people!

Long live the struggle of all oppressed and progressive people of the world!

*notes:

VI. Suggested Reading

- Badillo, Herman and Milton Hayes. A Bill of No Rights: The American Prison System, New York: Outerbridge and Lozand, 1972.
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KAWAIDA INSTITUTE OF PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES

presents

A Major Six-Weekend Seminar

SOCIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

I. SEMINAR OBJECTIVES:

More than ever Afro-Americans in various occupations, at various educational levels and with varying degrees of social consciousness, have discovered the increasing need to be able to make sense out of the vast amount of information on social issues, events and processes which confront and affect them in their daily lives. Moreover, they find themselves unable to take intelligent, correct and consistent positions on key issues affecting Black peoples on the local, national and international level. Most people do not have the time, ability or discipline to design and pursue a method and course of study which would give them this needed knowledge and analytical competence. Thus, this seminar in Social Theory and Practice is designed to provide the maximum development of this competence and knowledge in the minimum amount of time.

II. SEMINAR STRUCTURE AND CONTENT:

A. Major Social Theories

1. The basic "ism's" of today's world demystified, summarized and critically evaluated, i.e., nationalism, socialism, Pan-Africanism, fascism, Marxism, capitalism, etc.
2. Definition of basic terms and concepts in social science.
3. Inquiry into the ideological dimensions of social change and control.

B. Current Issues and Events Analysis

1. A structured approach to the effective understanding of key current social issues and events on the local, national and international level, i.e., Proposition 13, busing, Cuba's role in Africa, U.S. African Policy, Detente, solar energy, the Sino-Soviet conflict, the liberation struggles in Southern Africa, etc.
2. Analysis of the significance of these events and issues to African peoples and other Third World peoples.

C. Afro-American Organizational Theory and Practice

1. A critical analysis of the leadership, ideology and practice of the major Black structures and formations in the U.S. - nationalist, socialist and integrationist - i.e., the Black Caucus, NAACP, Urban League, All African People's Revolutionary Party, CORE, TransAfrica, Kawaida formations such as IPE, The East, Ahidiana, NAAM, etc.

Seminar: SOCIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

2. A comparative analysis of their leadership, ideology and practice.
3. An incisive inquiry into the current lull and crisis in the Black Movement with focus on internal weaknesses and external repression and disruption.

D. Analysis and Evaluation Methods

1. Procedures for abstracting, summarizing, ordering and interpreting significant information from casual reading of articles and books or reading for serious research.
2. Mnemonic devices to enhance retention capacity and keep a wealth of knowledge at your finger tips.
3. Classroom practice of the above.

E. Practicum in Organizational Competence, Development and Formation

1. Specialized attention to effective performance in your organizational and professional context.
2. Methods of forming and developing groups or caucuses.
3. Methods of being effective in meetings, i.e., conducting, intervening, proposing, mediating or lecturing.
4. Directed project geared to your profession or educational interest.
5. Class report on directed project.

III. BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

A. Materials

1. Notebook binder for 8½x11 paper - for notes, outlines of lectures, definition lists and other handouts.
2. Five index subject dividers labelled for the five areas of focus outlined in the section on Seminar Structure and Content.

*These materials are due for the very first session.

B. Text: Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis, Dr. M. Ron Karenga

C. Discipline and Dedication: To get the maximum benefit from the seminar.

IV. GENERAL INFORMATION:

A. Enrollment: By invitation only; recommendations of seriously interested persons are possible. Recruitment is not advisable or desired.

***Call by Wednesday, 21 June 78, and confirm your intention to enroll and recommend only the seriously interested.

In San Diego, call student coordinator, Ms. Tiamoyo Karenga, 477-7617; and in Los Angeles, call student coordinator, Mr. Wesley Kabaila, 672-9862 in the early morning or late evening.

B. Registration Fee: A token \$25; due at first session; no refund after seminar begins.

Seminar: SOCIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

- C. Visitors: None permitted in consideration of the environmental and participatory requirements of the seminar.
- D. Dates: Saturdays - June 24, July 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 1978.
- E. Time: 9:30 am to 2:00 pm, including lunch and intermittent breaks.
- F. Location: (1) San Diego - June 24, July 1, 15 and 22
San Diego Community College District
Educational Cultural Complex
4343 Oceanview Boulevard ROOM 144
San Diego, California 92113
- (2) Los Angeles - July 8 and 29
Facility to be announced in class.
- G. Travel:
 - (1) To avoid lateness, allow for 3 hours travel time between Los Angeles and San Diego, although it usually requires 2 1/2 hours.
 - (2) If you need transportation between cities, call student coordinators.
- H. Handouts:
 - (1) Outlines for every lecture.
 - (2) Definitional lists.
 - (3) Short articles to analyze in class and at home.
- I. Certificate of Completion:
At the successful completion of the seminar, each participant will receive a certificate indicative of this.

V. SEMINAR PROFESSOR:

Dr. M. Ron Karenga is currently adjunct professor of social change at U.S. International University at San Diego and lecturer in Pan-African Studies at Cal State University at Los Angeles. A leading theorist in the Black Movement, Dr. Karenga is the founding theorist of Kwaidia, an ideology of social and cultural change out of which he created the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles) and Kwanzaa, the only nationally celebrated non-heroic Black holiday in the U.S. An activist-scholar of national and international recognition, Dr. Karenga has lectured on most of the major college campuses of this country as well as in Africa, the People's Republic of China and Trinidad on the life and liberation struggle of the Afro-American people. His book, Afro-American Nationalism: Social Strategy and Struggle for Community, will be published this summer, 1978, by Third World Press.

A STRATEGY FOR STRUGGLE

These forests are now a real strength for our people, for our struggle. Before, they were a weakness, because we were afraid of our forest, sacred bastions of irans and every kind of spirit. Now we are afraid no longer: we have conquered and mobilized the spirits of the forests, turned this weakness into strength. That's what struggle means: turning weakness into strength.

Amilcar Cabral

WHATEVER ELSE WE INTEND or decide to alter or overthrow, we will not succeed until we first alter and overthrow our own ignorance of ourselves and acquire a profound knowledge and understanding of the nature of our oppression. Until we achieve a comprehensive consciousness of ourselves, we cannot identify or engage decisively in our historical tasks or achieve the level and extent of unity we need to win in this historic and heroic struggle in which we have sacrificed so much.

We are a people, an African people, a *national community* struggling to come into political existence. We are Afroamericans and it is useless to argue or deny the dual historical character of our identity. We grew out of two soils and two societies and must in the end extend beyond both sources and ally ourselves with all the world's progressive people if we are to make the kind of profound and far-reaching contribution to human history of which we are capable. This is not some insidious argument for abstract humanism that denies any national identity,

purpose or creative capacity. Nor is it one for vulgar individualism that idiotically assumes individual ability can overcome collective oppression, or for the escapist humanism that emanates from a minority mentality and seeks to be anything but black, from anywhere but Africa, a part of anything but one's self and one's people. This is a revolutionary humanism with its roots in national identity and struggle for liberation and its branches in world socialist revolution whose practice is the conscious and creative promotion of the historical prospect of human freedom from want, toil and domination.

So, we are an African people, Afroamericans, products and participants of and in two historical processes and realities, a national community struggling to come into political existence. We are a cultural and physical reality, but we do not exist politically. Our history and historical tasks are the same but the unequal and repressive context of our development divided us along lines often embarrassing to enumerate. Our arguments seem infinite over who we really are, over the spelling of our name even and our need to recognize this reality or the next depending upon the political direction and interests of our assumed instructor. But Muslims, Christians, Kawaidists, Simba, Panthers, potential patriots and committed Pan-Africanists all live on the same street, encounter daily and dramatically the same oppressor and will ultimately suffer the same fate or share the same victory because we are all inseparably linked with each other. *This is*

*notes:

by RON KARENGA

a basic and enduring truth and try as we will we cannot escape it. Therefore, we must confront this truth, analyze and make use of its meaning in the understanding and advancement of our struggle. We as a people are like others in our human strengths and weaknesses, our human contributions and contradictions and yet we are different and it is this difference that defines us and gives us our identity and historical vocation as a people.

In the Sixties we began to define and accept ourselves and to negate the historical monopoly the oppressor had on our minds. And we actually changed reality by this defiantly proud acceptance of ourselves. But that was only a beginning; *we must now move from the mere announcement of our existence to building and protecting the basis for it.* And that basis must be a political one, one of power; power to defend and develop, to create and expand. In a word, we must come into political existence by becoming a power recognized and respected beyond the confines of the community, a power conscious of its historical tasks and committed to the revolutionary ethic and aspiration of the comprehensive and continuing transformation of society and ourselves.

IT IS NO LONGER ENOUGH to take refuge in rhetoric, symbolic associations with the Movement's saints, traditional dress and hair styles and social withdrawal into mysticism. We are confronted with the chance and challenge to regain our historical personality as a

productive and creative people and contribute definitively to the development and achievement of the progressive social forces of human history. And this is only possible thru real struggle, thru liberation and revolution, *thru the negation of the actual and the pursuance of the possible.*

In order that we not reduce this serious struggle for liberation and revolution to the recitation of magic formulas, slogans and mystical solutions, we must objectively analyze our concrete situation and historical alternatives and evolve from these realities strategies and programs that are reflective of our commitment and commensurate with our historical capacity. Only in this way can we become a force *for ourselves and for history.* It is not enough to make hagiographical references, symbolically associating with the saints-killing concrete action with a poorly selected quote from Malcolm or Cabral, lacerating the enemy with Lumumba, tearing him apart with Toure and Nyerere, exposing him with Nkrumah and Fanon, but unable to extract from these great teachers and revolutionaries applicable analyses and answers and enough inspiration to radically confront the oppressor and decisively end his reign of terror and repression.

What we must do then, is overturn ourselves, reassess and remould ourselves and relations with each other as a priority and precondition to our moves to alter and restructure our relations in society and the world. Moreover, we must end the systematic suppression of our history by the oppressor and

extract from it its *subversive content*, i.e. its heroic and instructive images, events and issues that provide viable and valuable alternatives to the oppressive realities to which our people, ignorant of these historical possibilities so often bow. Our approach to history must be above all analytical—not simply descriptive and/or evocative with an isolated account of the lives of heroes and an invoking of their names as if it were part of some mystical and magic slogan that will slay the twin dragons of racism and capitalism and miraculously save us without obviously needed struggle. Our history must be taught and studied with an eye and ear for interconnections, for contradictions as well as contributions to human history. In this way, we avoid a *reductive translation* of our life and struggle and project history as it is and must be—an oppositional force to present fact, a negation of the actual and a call for the continuous pursuance of the possible.

We as a people have never accepted our enslavement and oppression and have always searched for historical alternatives to this narrow and repressive reality assembled by our oppressor. But sometimes, we choose incorrectly from the historical alternatives open to us, because of the continuing confusion created by the contradictions inherent in the crippling context of our development. These contradictions are expressed in the ambiguous quality of our existence, in the oppressor's dual approach of *gift and gun*, in the legal fiction of our rights as opposed to the daily repression which refutes them and in our obvious identity as human and the reality of our race and the blatant limitation this imposes in a racist society.

In spite of these contradictions and our different approaches to them as a people, freedom has always been our major goal. But freedom as a historical objective has opened itself to different interpretations and these interpretations reflect the historical alternatives open to us to achieve it. Three *strategic models* have dominated the history of our struggles and development, in spite of the seemingly infinite variation of each. They are separation, integration and national liberation. And any attempt to devise and develop

a strategy for our freedom must rise out of serious reflection and analysis of these traditional models which are both products and approaches of our historical struggle to end our enslavement and rise above the crippling effect of this system of repressive relations—economic, social and political.

THE INTEGRATION MODEL as a solution to our "problem" based on our assumed solubility and willing acceptance in society by a racist majority is historically obsolescent—perhaps already obsolete. It has become historically illegitimate as a result of our heightened consciousness and the strategic lessons learned in our constant struggle. Therefore, it has been abandoned as a collective approach by the masses of our people. Its end as a collective approach came in the definite and tumultuous decade of the Sixties with its conversion of SNCC and CORE to nationalism and the national call to Black Power, the urban revolts and the rise of cultural nationalism, the Simba and the Panthers and the dramatic re-orientation of the masses toward Africa and black consciousness.

Integration was never a viable means to achieve real freedom. It was an illusion created for a people starved for human acceptance, a people who had been dehumanized so long they often doubted their own humanity. It was a maintaining mechanism of an exploitative and repressive system that kept us relatively quiet by repeatedly feeding us fantasies about final acceptance and the ultimate coming of a chariot called equality.

The basic weakness of integration as a strategic model was its refusal to deal with the question of power and its central function in substantive social change. It could not see that until we gained power as a people, we could neither decide our destiny nor meaningfully influence or affect others' decisions on it or us. As a result it found itself fostering the false notion that we could and would be granted our freedom without serious revolutionary struggle by simply making a moral appeal to the conscience of the protectors and promoters of an amoral system

whose very existence is the negation of human freedom. The acceptance of this notion set us outside of history by depriving us of our historical initiative as a people and making our development and destiny dependent on others—a dependence based on the *insane assumption* that our former slavemasters and present oppressor had or could develop the moral and politically perceptive capacity to change and concede our human identity and rights if we could somehow miraculously act, speak, think, smell, look, live and lie to ourselves exactly the way he wanted us to.

What integration posed was an ongoing illusion and compromise that not only reduced the struggle to its lowest level, but also determined the area, means and procedures of conflict and confrontation. We could protest, petition and pray in public, but we could not break the rules and resort to defense when attacked, or raise embarrassing examples of the unviability of once agreed upon means or pose critical questions about the nature of the system itself and the need, overwhelmingly obvious, for a historical alternative to negate and supplant it. There was always a depressing and frustrating contradiction between the integration movement's historical aims and its current achievement, between what blacks knew they needed and what they were forced to agree to accept. Because of this there were always desertions from the movement even by frontrunners.

Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, one of the most profound thinkers of the 20th century was an avid integrationist in his earlier days. But in 1916, provoked by the lynchings and destructive disregard for the rights and lives of blacks by white racists, the brother called for blacks in Florida to answer the mob "by effective guns in hands." And Dr. Martin Luther King, the foremost integrationist leader of our times, realizing the limitation imposed by mere moral appeals to a racist and amoral system, was organizing black workers in Tennessee in 1968 as a revolutionary alternative when the oppressor, understanding the *power possibilities* in this new and much needed approach, brutally assassinated him. In committing this ruthless act,

the oppressor shamelessly fell down on all four, decisively and dramatically announced the real area of his fears and nailed the coffin shut on a historical con game he had almost perfected.

The real question was always power; the rest was a sideshow, ultimately harmless acts allowed to create and cultivate the myth of meaningful struggle and achievement. Power is central to any meaningful struggle for serious social change, and influence and moral suasion are no substitutes. Realizing this fundamental truth, it fell upon the Black Power Movement to raise the question of power regardless of how inadequately it was done. The raising of this critical question led to the simultaneous raising of the consciousness of the masses, thus breaking the monopoly the myth of integration historically held on the majority of black people's minds and paving the way for real reassessment of our strategies and the redefinition of the nature of our oppression.

THE STRATEGIC MODELS of separation and national liberation evolve from the same philosophical framework of Black Nationalism. Nationalism, in brief, is the concept and conviction that we are a people with a distinct historical personality and that therefore, we should unite in action to acquire and extend the means to defend our interest and develop our potential as a free and productive people. It poses this historical task as a collective vocation and calls on all sectors of our people to join in it. The basic difference between the two models, however, is the ongoing disagreement as to *how* and especially *where* this collective vocation is to be carried out. Separation as a strategic political model maintains that our defense and development as a people are impossible in the U.S. and therefore proposes withdrawal from it. Advocates of national liberation on the other hand, argue for recognition of and creative response to the objective conditions of our social existence and calls for struggle here and now, alliance with Africa, the Third World and all progressive people and the revolutionary engagement of blacks

in constant confrontation and negation of the oppressive conditions which every day in a merciless multitude of ways cripple and kill them.

The four major areas of emphasis among advocates of separation are economic nationalism, cultural atavism, acquisition of land and exodus to Africa. Economic nationalism essentially calls for black control of community economics. The call may be for cooperative or capitalist ownership, but its central contention is that community control of business enterprises is essential to the real development and growth of the community itself. But economic nationalism—in spite of a few cooperative exceptions mostly in the South—has been coopted and confiscated as a program for collective economic development and vulgarly translated to mean exclusively black capitalism, an economically shoddy and shackled showpiece for government and private corporations. But the embarrassing and exploitative reality is that black capitalism is no more than a myth, another illusion of promised progress and achievement, a fantasy fed to us in hopes we will forget our real hunger for freedom from want, toil and domination. Capitalism demands an industrial base, ownership of the means of production and no blacks can claim this; and thus they are frustrated in their efforts, even if their aspirations are capitalist.

So, there are no black capitalists, only a shrivelling amount of shopkeepers in the quixotic business of competing with or at least trying to escape the always eminent death blow of mass merchandisers and multinational corporations who control the bulk of the world's wealth. Blacks own approximately three percent of the total business in the U.S., have the combined banking assets of less than one-half of one percent of the Bank of America and have an annual purchasing power of \$30 billion compared to G.M.'s annual sales of \$30 billion. Therefore, it is overwhelmingly obvious that black businesses can neither compete nor stay afloat indefinitely given the context of increasing capital concentration by corporate institutions. In view of this and corporate control of production and marketing, it seems silly for blacks

to talk seriously of capital gain and growth and secure investment while they are obviously withering away like the last leaves of a painfully prolonged autumn. And therefore, all this repeated rantin' and ravin' about free enterprise, open market and individual ownership as viable economic realities is as much and as incredibly absurd a fantasy as Snow White and seven African dwarfs getting married in Mexico.

Ujamaa, cooperative economics, cannot compete with corporate enterprises either, but is the only realistic, rational and humanistic way to increase the relative wealth of the community and deal—at least in part and as a *transitional* program—with the basic unsatisfied needs of the people which emanate from the blatantly unequal distribution of wealth inherent in the capitalist system. In addition, *Ujamaa* is a beginning communal step toward socialist transformation; a transitional program that serves both the *material* and *moral* interests of the people by providing goods and services in a collective context and in the *process of practice*, altering negative attitudes and behavior acquired in a context of scarcity and economic insecurity created by capitalism's inherent distributive inequalities.

Realistically, however, there can be no real cooperative or socialist economics in one sector of society only, even as there can be no real socialism in one country only, for hostile capitalist encirclement is a continuing threat to its existence. The socialist idea and attitude must extend beyond its original base and be accepted by a majority if it is to escape its constant vulnerability and become a viable and vigorous alternative way of life for our people. Therefore, even as we advocate cooperative economics, we must remain aware that it cannot exist or be advocated in isolation. We must understand always its transitional character and vulnerability and constantly seek expanding support for it. Until the capitalist alternative is eliminated from the lives and minds of the people, cooperative economics as a developing socialist ideal and actuality will remain stunted and threatened. Therefore, socialist transformation of society is essential, for our

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struggle is not only for survival and satisfaction of basic material needs, but also for the survival of values central to the moral development of man and woman—both of which are important in their constant quest for freedom and fulfillment.

CULTURAL ATAVISM IS A serious and continuing weakness among us as a people and of separation as a strategic model. It is cultural retreat from reality, thru mysticism and spookism and group withdrawal from the social and political process. Cultural atavism was and continues in certain levels to be mistaken for cultural revolution and the historic efforts of US Organization since 1965, the Year of the Revolt, as well as other revolutionary cultural nationalists, to build a basis for resistance in culture and in the process of cultural reconversion extend the struggle to other areas. For we agreed with Brother Cabral that "it is generally within culture that we find the seed of opposition which leads to the structuring and development of the liberation movement." But we never refused to recognize positive acquisitions from the cultures, nor did we ever deny that struggle was a *determinant* as well as *product* of culture. We struggled to ease the error of imported and mechanically applied ideas of revolution, and to re-establish interests in and respect for our historical roots, because it is through the revelations of history that we can most clearly perceive and appreciate our collective capacity to create progress. We sought and still seek to check the oppressor's vulgar envelopment of us, to teach the masses to deny the validity of his anti-human values, to reject resolutely his racist oppression and ultimately challenge at critical economic and political points of power, the very basis of his exploitative and repressive rule.

We must develop values in the expanding framework of a national community and create out of the confluence and synthesis of old and new values, a system reflective of and responsive to the collective needs and nature of our struggle. Only in this way can we achieve the moral and political unity and authority we need to liberate ourselves and

step back on the stage of human history. For cultural atavism is on a long list of other unrevolutionary views and values that must be rooted out and rejected. We must attack and eliminate mysticism and spookism and reject the use of soul as a substitute for concrete and substantive achievement and place more emphasis on mass and higher education and less on sports and musical showmanship as vocation. Recognizing and fully appreciating the *grass-roots richness* of the values of our popular culture, we still must make a *selective analysis* of our values and choose those that more correctly reflect our needs and the intensity and extent of our experience and development in struggle.

The argument for the acquisition of land is an old and perennial one. Land has always been important to people everywhere as a *base* for defense and development and a *symbol* of their identity and achievement. And when people, for one reason or another lack or feel they lack a land that provides an adequate context for their defense and development as a historical personality, they advocate and struggle for the acquisition of land and the establishment of a base reflective of and responsive to their aspirations. But advocacy of land in isolation irrespective of objective conditions is unrealistic and in incredible disregard for historical evidence of the oppressor's intransigence in conceding anything without serious struggle. Furthermore, land is no longer the basis for struggle in an advanced capitalist context. And it is encouraging to see YOBU, (Youth Organized for Black Unity) show its ideological flexibility and modify its prior position that land is the basis of struggle. This, as YOBU correctly states now, is true only in parts of the world where land "exists as the essential means of production. But where land and feudal relationships have been replaced by capital-labor relations, then this theory no longer applies." Land in this context is not the primary means of production and therefore, not the primary means of control and power.

It becomes important then to shift from the emphasis on the acquisition of land to the acquisition of *critical space* in economic and political institutions that control land and

people. Even ownership of land does not insure control of it, for ultimate control in society emanates from crucial economic (corporate) and political (government) institutions that exist in mutually supportive roles of production and protection. But even if land were essential and indispensable as once it was historically, it is still naive and at points nonsensical to imagine our oppressor granting us five states or even a half of one, given the present pattern and nature of power in this country and the world. And religious reference to the Hebrew myth of exodus from ancient Egypt adds nothing but an unneeded mystification of a ruthless reality that needs to be altered and eliminated, not mystified and made into a future project for sky-chariots.

THE APPEAL FOR EXODUS to Africa is often confused with the advocacy of Pan-Africanism. The call for exodus is essentially a call to return to Africa and help build it to be a world power so that it can, as Garvey urged, demand the respect for African people the world over. And Pan-Africanism can be summed up in the contention by Brother Owusu Sadaukai, "that all of us are people of African descent, that our ultimate objective is freedom and liberation of African people wherever they are and that crucial to our struggle is an independent and unified Africa, united under a socialist government." It is important here to stress the dual emphasis of Pan-Africanism which makes fundamental the struggle for liberation of African people *wherever* they are. Pan-Africanism is not limited to allegiance to Africa and it is not nor can it be a substitute for nationalism and the liberation of our people in this country. Therefore, it is a clear contradiction and counterproductive to advocate wholesale exodus or engage in long-distance simulated struggle for African liberation and abandon the real struggle here.

We should not interpret our historical link with Africa to mean that we should abandon our struggle for Afroamerican Liberation and lend our efforts exclusively to or in the

greatest portion to the continental African liberation struggle. All our struggles for freedom and fulfillment are dialectically linked, inseparable and complementary, not only those of blacks but those of all people struggling against oppression. And if we are really Pan-Africanists, we owe it to ourselves and Africa to build a power base in the U.S., to occupy and control crucial economic and political institutional space, and to build and strengthen African support committees and a *liberation lobby* in Congress and at the corporate level.

It is absurd and/or intellectually dishonest to deny that this is a key country, that its corporations control the bulk of the world's wealth and that our liberation *here* will lead to a greater liberation everywhere. It is here in the U.S. that the growth of our power to curtail and eventually eliminate the cancerous expansion and aggression of imperialism will aid and insure the victory of African Liberation and World Revolution. For it is because our power in the U.S. is minimal that African and other Third World freedom fighters find their revolutionary tasks so ponderous and protracted. Therefore, our relationships with Africa and all struggles for freedom from oppression and exploitation must be *simultaneous* and *complementary*. As an African proverb in Zulu says—*izandla ziyagezana*—one hand washes the other.

LIBERATION AS A STRATEGIC model is essentially a call and push for Black Power. And though it may be called "national" liberation or "revolutionary" liberation, its basic aim remains one of power, power to defend our interests and develop our potential as a people and to transform and transcend this society of which we have become willingly or unwillingly a real and recognizable part. Philosophically and functionally, it seeks to synthesize the best from nationalist, Pan-Africanist and internationalist thought and practice and weld this wealth of information and experience into a strategy for our struggle in this country, and thereby turn our historical weaknesses into growing strengths.

Historically, liberation as a model and movement draws its images and assertions from the *full and informative* past of our people, accepting the contradictory possibilities and contributions inherent in it. It recognizes both Malcolm and Martin Luther King as fundamental to the direction and development of our struggle for human freedom and analyzes with equal interest the tendencies of integration and separation in order to extract meaningful material from them for its own strategic perspective. Advocates of liberation argue that neither full integration nor separation is feasible or in the historical interest of our people, that there is a dual historical character to our identity and that our historical tasks rising out of this identity demand that we struggle collectively here in the U.S. to free ourselves from those repressive relations and other realities that limit, deny and deform our creative capacities as a people. Thus, the call and push for Black Power is first and foremost to realize our will to be free, creative and productive in the U.S.; for only then can we truly extend ourselves and meaningfully insert ourselves in the world struggle for human freedom and peace.

We struggle here against racial oppression and class exploitation—against racism and capitalism, at home and in its imperialist extension. And because of this dual character of our oppression, our approach must be dual—one of nationalism and social revolution. The nationalism we refer to here is not of the separation model, but of the liberation model and takes up as a primary task the negation of racism's suppression of our history and its denial and deformation of our development as a people. We are referring to the nationalism that revives and re-enforces our positive self-concept as a people and poses for us the *revolutionary project* of accepting our historical personality and tasks, and becoming and being other than the organized lies of the oppressor have led us to believe we were and are.

But we must at the same time recognize that nationalism can only negate racism in a relative sense and cannot root it out or deal effectively with the question of class exploita-

tion. Only a broad and profound social revolution can root out racism and resolve decisively the question of class exploitation. For racism and class exploitation have their roots and center of power beyond the community and are national phenomena necessitating a national response. Class exploitation emanates from an economic system of exploitative relations whose basic expressions and origins are in the private ownership of the means of production and the inordinately unequal distribution of wealth. It is a system wasteful and irrational in its workings, ruthlessly inhuman in its mania to accumulate continuously, regardless of its cost or consequences in terms of human life and development and world ecology. The fundamental element of this system is capital which is, in addition to its quantitative dimension, both a social relation and artificial right of exploitation. Capital is not simply money as some little league would-be community "capitalists" imagine, but is the concrete basis for exploitation, both a means to buy labor and a means of production. And since it is obviously exploitative and oppressive both in its one-sided accumulation and assertion of control, it must be protected by massive force, and this means the coercive apparatus of state power.

This, therefore, poses a question of national dimensions, a question outside the power of the black community and beyond the realm and reach of any historical force less than a broad and inclusive social revolution. That is why we say "national" liberation (i.e. community control) for us, as well as other minorities, is at this stage no more than a relative concept and relative possibility, and realistically can become no more than a nominal liberation unless the struggle for liberation continues its historical and social tasks behind respective communities and turns into a broad and inclusive social revolution. Community control, Black power, Red and Brown power remain tenuous, temporary and conditional phenomena until society can be profoundly transformed and the historical reasons and basis for our oppression and exploitation are removed and replaced with a more human alternative.

IN ORDER FOR US TO meet the objective requirements of our struggle, it seems there are certain areas in which we must consciously and constantly apply ourselves. What immediately comes to mind is a list including an ideology and system of values, an expanding circle of conscious and committed intellectuals, a national black party, a genuine nationalist youth movement, an alternative press and media and basic alternative institutions. The struggle is in search and need of an expanding circle of intellectuals who are capable of critical and creative *alternative thought*, for a body of capable and committed men and women who can provide a logic and language of real alternatives based on historical and practical proof. *Progress in struggle is inseparably linked to progress in thought.* And practice uninformed by theory is as empty and meaningless as abstract theory without proof through practice. We talk constantly about the ongoing and increasing need for political education, but how can we educate politically if we have nothing to communicate except a *catechism of impossibilities*, a list of praises and proof of the oppressor's power to coopt, contain and kill. *Political education must above all be an education in alternatives, a comprehensive recognition of reality, but a categorical refusal to accept it as permanent and all powerful.* What we need then is serious research and analysis of our concrete conditions—communal and societal, the development of revolutionary alternatives to the existing order and new ways to win over an old oppressor, in a word, a strategy for our struggle that turns our weaknesses into strengths.

After ideology, we must turn to structure and the building of alternative institutions and organizations that house and promote our aspirations. This leads us to the need for a national black party, for there can be no national liberation without a national party to direct the struggle and defend its gains. Such a party must be a multi-issue oriented party, rooted in and rising, not from a collection of notables and big names, but rather from local initiatives and struggles of the people and capable of centralizing our collective efforts

for power as a people and thus, offering a national coordinated response to national oppression. The advocates of a national party must recognize the radical possibilities inherent in each local community and region and lend themselves to local struggles around issues that the people themselves pose as important, real and rewarding. The people in each community must be organized to struggle for themselves to make choices and meet challenges in collective spirit and action. In a word, they must become *conscious* and *committed* agents of their own liberation. This is not an argument for the anarchist contention that everyone is a leader, but rather a sober recognition of the fact that until serious and extensive work is done among the masses, the party cannot and will not come into being and assume its central tasks and role in the struggle for liberation and revolution.

In the Sixties, the national media tended to take us away from the work needed to be done in our communities and to reduce our struggle to empty rhetorical challenges to the established power which did no serious damage to the system and thus, left all the oppressive and exploitative structures intact. Now, we are faced with the urgent need to revive our Movement and turn it into a real social revolution, to go back to our local communities and again come in revivifying contact with the people we claim to struggle for. This, in the end, is the real "Back to Black" movement, the return to the roots from which all revolutions rise, from the people themselves—in spite of the "spectacles" created and then crushed by the media.

Finally, it is obvious that the party can be no simple vote getting machine, active during the election and hanging loose and in limbo all the time between. It must be constantly active in every level of life, meeting with people where they live, work, play and study, recognizing and responding effectively and imaginatively to their immediate demands and needs. This is not an argument against the relevance of elections, but an attempt to place them in their proper perspective as only one way to gain power. And if we invest ourselves and hopes totally in parliamentary politics and refuse to explore the

possibilities of extra-parliamentary politics, we limit ourselves to the area and means of confrontation (i.e. elections) endorsed by the oppressor and deny ourselves the real and radical alternatives that will lead to our liberation.

THE NEW VALUE SYSTEM we seek to bring into being is to overcome our internal inadequacies and then move to contribute to and take advantage of external conditions that lead to comprehensive and serious social change. We must begin to deal with our internal inadequacies or we'll never be able to collectively defy and defeat the oppressor. Especially must we stop denying our women their full and heroic role in the history and development of our struggle. There were, are and will be again countless Harriet Tubmans, Sojourner Truths, Mary McLeod Bethunes and Fannie Lou Hamers. It is destructive and divisive of our strength and struggle, vicious and in clear contradiction to revolutionary values to assert, sustain and support the twin myths of patriarchy and emasculation attributed to black women. These myths have their roots in the rationale and method of the oppressor's rule. He divided us, destroyed structures and allegiances and thus, minimized the potential of revolt by attacking at their roots relationships that could create the collective consciousness necessary for effective and expansive resistance.

The black woman does not have now nor has she historically possessed the power to create a patriarchy and exercise decisive authority over the black man. Even if she had the will—and history argues the opposite—the oppressor would never have allowed any black power of political entity to constitute and consolidate itself, for such power would have challenged the very nature and structure of his own; and thus it could not be tolerated. Our families have traditionally been more egalitarian than we give ourselves credit for; and decisions of major importance have historically been made collectively, even if they have often evolved from processes and procedures full of hassles and numer-

ous headaches and totally outside the realm of the nauseating niceties of Robert's Rules of Order. This egalitarianism grew out of the brutally equal role our women were forced to assume in the slave labor force and in the exploitative and oppressive economic arrangements afterwards, in the space and place they have won in our hearts and history, thru their heroic resistance to slavery and the systematic oppression that followed it and because of their efforts and successes in keeping our families together against all odds.

Black women have always been equal to black men in oppression and resistance, in production as well as progressive thought and struggle and we are greatly unjust to ourselves to claim otherwise. There can be no real argument against the human equality of man and woman, against the need for liberation and revolution to reach and raise to a higher level of life each and all of us, man, woman and child. To argue otherwise is to undermine and remove the human content and strength from our struggle and deny ourselves as black men an abundant and indispensable source of love, inspiration and power. We will never liberate ourselves as a people unless and until we liberate ourselves from reactionary and repressive attitudes and behavioral patterns like sexism, male chauvinism and parasitic and perverse pimpism in our relations with each other, and unless and until we build an expanding *real of freedom* in our homes and in society in which man and woman, together in commitment, contribution and *creative complementarity* can realize themselves fully and stand and walk in a warmer sun.

FINALLY, WE MUST TURN our attention to and direct our efforts against one of the most serious contradictions to emerge and envelop the Movement during the Sixties—character assassination. Character assassination is such a serious contradiction among us because it in fact, assists the oppressor in his organized and vicious efforts to undermine and eliminate all leadership, all threats, potential and real, to his racist and repressive rule. And it

is destructive because it poses as political criticism and ideological struggle, and thus reduces the serious need for creative controversy to vulgar name calling and labelling and spuriously relieves one of the responsibilities of critical thinking. James and Grace Boggs argue correctly that it is "the general political backwardness of this country which makes it much easier to deal with one's political opponents by character assassination and physical force than by political criticism and ideological struggle." But going beyond this we can also say that it represents a certain cultural and psychic sickness in the Movement and community, a destructive and divisive product of an oppressed mentality which frustrated in its efforts to overcome its oppressor turns on itself and those around it.

Also, there are character assassins obviously motivated by money and promises of audiences and attention and those that harbor some perverse and persistent need to be dominated and directed by outside sources, blandly assisting the oppressor, asking nothing but to be near him. Tackwoods are possible because of the community's susceptibility to their kind of cultural and psychic sickness, because there are those among us who feel some tawdry and twisted sense of joy to hear rumors and false reports that undermine and discolor each other's character, and because for many of us brotherhood and sisterhood begin and end in slogans and do not extend to defense and development or to any constructive expression of this fashionable claim of love and allegiance to our people. Therefore, Tackwoods can come to the community trading on feuds and tragedies, gaining a dollar and a half-opened door to the oppressor and some opportunistic minor league ultraleftists who, unable to gain an audience or claim any achievement in their own community, seek to pimp and pander the petty minds in ours. Political pimps are like any other pimps—perverse and parasitic, vulgar and without values. Therefore, they can claim to be on the Left but will join at convenient junctures with the Right to muzzle and miscast, undermine and eliminate political opponents without feeling any sense of contradiction or compunction.

Tackwoods and company must be resisted not repeated, exposed not supported, isolated and shunned not showered with attention and given time and space to spew forth their perversities and lies without limit in number and nauseating viciousness. We must raise critical questions about rumor-mongers and character assassins, questions about their motives and motivations, their interests and objectives, their personal grudges and the groups they belong to and link themselves with in and outside the community. And we must raise the same or similar questions about ourselves if we can let these people and the enemies of our freedom give us vulgar fantasies for facts, trumped up charges for truth, and then we wallow with them in the swill and mud of their malicious misinformation and enjoy it. Every time we hear a brother or sister condemned or character assassinated and we, without valid supporting information or investigation, agree or spread it further, we establish and reinforce a standard which will eventually turn on us and find us vulnerable and victims to the same kinds of attacks. We instruct by our assertions and actions, and if we engage in, encourage or accept without challenge character assassination of anyone, we at the same time teach others the same method and thus design our own undermining and destruction.

Character assassination must not be ignorantly or conveniently confused with political criticism or ideological struggle which are both legitimate and imperative. We seriously need to criticize and struggle ideologically and politically against reactionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies in the Movement, but we cannot allow character assassination to pose as or become a substitute for critical thinking and creative controversy. And we must not permit character assassins to undermine the morale and unity of the Movement, divide us and divert our energies and efforts from the struggle to witch hunts and wipe-outs.

THE STRUGGLE AHEAD is a long one and cannot be posed in terms of months and years.

The Vietnamese have been fighting for their freedom for hundreds of years and so have our own people. How then can we of this generation talk in terms of five, ten, or fifty years or grow weak and wander from the struggle, abandoning our original aspiration? It is important that we who struggle seriously recognize the long time it takes real revolution to mature and come to fruit. And we must stop looking for the illusive "great leap" and work toward bringing it into being. We struggle here in the U.S. for liberation, a liberation that in its full social and philosophical sense offers and organizes an expanding realm of freedom, freedom from want, toil and domination, freedom to love, grow and create. We struggle for a new vision and value system summed up in the *Nguzo Saba*, our Seven Principles: Umoja (Unity—in love and struggle), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics and its socialist extension), Nia (Purpose—the collective vocation of liberation and revolution), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith in ourselves and in the human capacity to overcome and achieve). And again we struggle against two evils—racial oppression and economic exploitation. These two forms of denial and deformation of our development are inseparably linked. For whereas the economic answer to questions about our enslavement, oppression and exploitation is central, it must always be viewed in clear relationship to its reinforcing agent, racism.

We could not have made such an assertion concerning the dual nature of our oppression in the Sixties. The dynamics of the decade argued against it. We were forced into defensive formulations and protective postures by both the Left and the Right—by the Right thru its increased repression and by the Left thru its not so subtle social imperialism, evident in its refusal to accept cultural nationalism and cultural revolution as legitimate forces of serious social change and thus its challenge to our right of self-definition and self-determination as a people. This forced us into a narrowness we didn't need and limited us in our aspirations to project and practice

openness and revolutionary internationalism. But things are in a continuous process of movement and change and full of contradictions, which when solved lead to higher levels of thought and struggle. And now that the tumult and turmoil of the Sixties has toned down and tapered off, rage is being tempered by reason and the loud rhetoric of revolt is turning into quiet and serious study and analysis of the subjective and objective requirements of real social revolution. This is the point we're at now, one of redefinition and reassessment and the conscientious removal of all irrelevancies and those things that obviously restrict our analysis and vision and thus our revolutionary effectiveness.

Therefore, we have come to accept a modified (to deal with racism) class analysis of history. For if history can be viewed as a record of struggles for greater freedom from needs and for fulfillment, we are then led inevitably to critical consideration of class struggle and the struggle for control of the means of production—in a word, to the central role of economic forces in history. We are attempting here a more objective approach to the identification of our enemy and oppressor, a more workable and realistic definition of who we are to defy and defeat, a perspective clearly reflective of an objective analysis of and response to our concrete conditions. This is not an abandonment of our original position, but rather an extension and rational refinement of it—*modest but meaningful evidence of our attempt to remain expansive and unconfined by restrictive concepts.*

The racist remains our enemy and the enemy of human freedom, but unless we mystify racism, there is a material basis for it, an economic and social system that fosters such attitudes, ideas and institutions and profits economically and politically from the division of people whose unity could write its epitaph. Thus it is clear that our struggle must solve economic as well as political and social problems, removing the *profit* from our oppression and the *structures* which support it, as well as altering the *psychic perversion* of poor and ignorant racists who imagine their real interests are served, regardless of

the degrees of their exploitation and ignorance, by being able to say "at least I'm white."

Finally, when Cabral told the world that the people of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands are not fighting against the Portuguese people, but against the corrupt, reactionary Portuguese government and its imperialist allies, this was not mere propaganda and verbal tactics, but rather indicative of a certain ideological orientation vital to revolutionary struggle. It was a putting of things in their proper place, an expression of the realization that every revolution, every struggle for human freedom and development needs allies from everywhere in the world, even—and perhaps especially—allies that live and work among the enemy himself. We cannot turn inward and pretend power in isolation, or erroneously equate community control with ultimate liberation. We must invest ourselves in larger areas of social purpose including all progressive peoples in revolutionary opposition to the established order. We must learn to link issues and struggles and see that the issue of welfare is connected to imperialist wars and with the struggle at Wounded Knee and that peace and freedom, Coachella Valley and Vietnam, Spanish Harlem and Johannesburg and all the struggles for liberation, independence and revolution in Africa, Asia and Latin America are all interconnected and interrelated, all historical and heroic opposition to the same source of oppression and exploitation.

WE CAN OFFER NO finished program or final blueprint, but we can deal with guidelines and establish correct political orientations and identify areas of critical importance to the struggle. The real answers will come thru constant movement, and each gain will give us more ground and thus more power to obtain even more. Moreover, the occupation and control of space will change and expand our perspectives and perception of what's possible. Based firmly in the community, we must expand beyond it, beyond local heroes and provincial prophets and link ourselves

with issues and struggles of larger social purpose involving all progressive people. Our hope remains in the masses—not manipulated, but in politically conscious and committed movement. They must be mobilized, organized and nationalized and kept in motion, for it is people in motion and frustrated in that motion that revolt and make revolution.

We have used the words "masses" and "people" many times and it is important to explain what we mean when we use these terms. We use the word and concept people in three basic senses: in the ethnic or national community sense, all blacks; in the social production sense, i.e. black workers, and in the progressive political sense in terms of an anti-racist, anti-capitalist and by extension anti-imperialist black united front made up of different class formations and social groupings and led by black workers. But regardless of what sense we use it, *the essential and decisive role in struggle and history is that of black workers*, not just industrial workers as some ultraleftists insist, but every worker who is engaged in labor essential to the maintenance and development of society and the creation of social wealth. It is black workers—service, agricultural and industrial in working class unity—who will turn our aspiration as a people into actuality—not students, or the parasitic and predatory lumpen or the intellectuals or any other social grouping.

For no matter how militant other social groupings may sound or seem, "most will stop short" as Earl Ofari cogently argues "of a full commitment to class struggle." But "black workers will not. Because they are the most oppressed and exploited with the least to lose." And it is the black workers who thru their leadership in struggle and in the move for a broad working class unity in the U.S. will change the socio-political content of the concept of people and make it mean not only black workers and people, but all progressive peoples in revolutionary opposition to human oppression and exploitation.

Finally, we need to develop a comprehensive worldview and a *science of struggle*, teaching *process* not form, whether in reality

or revolution, *method* not memorization of formulas, and *critical alternative thought*, not catechisms of religionists or revolutionaries. We are moving toward this end, let us continuously encourage each other in our efforts. There is still so much more to learn, analyze, argue and counter-argue before we can overcome critical contradictions and in the process achieve a higher level of organization and struggle. Therefore, this statement is by no means the last word, for there is so much still being written, in every country and down every street where people struggle for the right and space to realize themselves in peace and freedom. These liberation struggles are the motive force of our epoch and will ultimately undermine and overturn every argument and apparatus the oppressor has and constructs in contradiction and opposition to human freedom and fulfillment. Let us intensify our struggle then, further develop our strategy, overturn ourselves and turn our weaknesses into strengths, so that we can increase our capacity to liberate ourselves and create progress; and thus make the profound and far-reaching contribution to human history of which we as a people are capable.



*notes:

already a reality and as if power was as much our possession as the inadequate analysis we used to explain it. "Black is beautiful" we shouted as if it had some magic meaning and could in an instant overthrow ignorance, undo centuries of mental and physical damage and defend us against the diabolical forces that gathered to protect themselves from the televised image of rantin' and ravin' and recently aware nationalists and episodic revolutionaries. We did not bother to extend the slogan beyond its subjective and obvious esthetic implications so that it would carry with it a social significance also, a social significance that emanated from the high level of achievement this awareness should and could engender if we made it an objective reality rather than, or as well as, a subjective reference.

Instead of objectively increasing the range and roots of Black Power, we held up our fists for the six o'clock news and shouted "right on" or "habari gani" and went right on making the same mistakes. And one of the most damaging debates that occurred during this time was the one that emanated from the false distinction between Revolutionary Nationalism and Cultural Nationalism. It was unnecessary, debilitating and time and energy consuming. But it was as much our fault (the US leadership) as anyone else, for we never issued a comprehensive statement on just what Cultural Nationalism was and this left it open to be misinterpreted and manipulated by anyone who wished to and even those who didn't want to but had no choice in the absence of definitive information. We make this open admission in response to the requirement imposed by our history as well as future movement. For as we have said until we admit, we cannot alter and until we alter we cannot advance and realize our collective aspirations. The scope and content of our struggle—if it is to be successful, real and not reflective of an unproductive past—must be this: 1) to *overturn ourselves*, 2) struggle against our collective weaknesses and 3) defy and defeat the enemy—in this order of importance and through this progression of levels of awareness and increasing strength.

We say the debate over what was errone-

ously called revolutionary nationalism vs. cultural nationalism was false, because the division in reality does not exist. Revolution, like national liberation, as Cabral says, is an *act of culture*, an organized political expression of a given culture. And if, as has been admitted in revolutionary circles around the world, nationalism is a precondition for revolution, it is culture that is the primary vehicle for achieving this national awareness and commitment.

But culture was confused conveniently and ignorantly with song and dance on one level and manifestations of African origins on another. It was not conceived as the crucible in which the struggle took form and the context in which it ultimately succeeded and blossomed into continuous reconstruction. When we talk of cultural revolution, we're talking essentially about cultural reconversion, the conscious and programmatic restructuring of attitudes and relationships that aid us in our aspiration for national liberation. We are recognizing and responding to the fact that the first resistance in any national struggle is cultural resistance and that as we said elsewhere the crucial struggle is to win the minds of our people, for if we lose this struggle we cannot hope to win the political one. Also what we were and are about is the task and responsibility of distinguishing between *popular* and *national* culture, between the fluid everyday culture of groups within a people and the culture of a nation, conscious of and committed to its role and responsibility in its own liberation and its contribution to human history. The essential character of culture is determined by its values, for culture is simply that, a system of values reflecting ways of doing and looking at things on several levels, i.e. in terms of mythology (religion), history, social organization, economic organization, political organization, creative motion (art, music, literature and technology) and ethos.

WHAT WAS AND IS NEEDED NOW to give popular culture a national dimension giving us a consolidated set of nation

CURRENT ISSUES AND EVENTS ANALYSIS

Lecture 1

Proposition 13: Impact and Implications

I. Background

A. Provisions and Projections

1. taxes no higher than 1% of market value and assessment
2. assessment may increase no more than 2% a year
3. 2/3 vote of both houses needed to increase any tax
4. 2/3 vote of voters to authorize any increase in local taxes
5. 1975 as base year for figuring property tax assessment
6. previously approved tax override measures to finance bond issues would be exempt from 1% limitation
7. expected 57% savings on property taxes

II. Economic Implications

A. Job Crisis

1. lay-offs
2. program cuts - CETA (57,000 in Ca.)
3. hiring freezes

B. Reduction of Public Services

1. Education
2. Social Service funds and programs
3. recreation facilities
4. libraries, museums, etc.

C. Relief Assistance Inadequate and Temporary

1. state only provided \$4 billion of needed \$7 billion
2. state assistance exhausted surplus and lasts only one year
3. relief reduces, but does not end crisis

D. False gains of Prop. 13

1. only \$2 billion of supposedly \$7 billion stays in state:
\$2 billion federal government; \$3 billion out-of-state corporations
and individuals
2. will mean higher federal taxes
3. will mean higher sales taxes
4. owners will not likely return savings to renters
5. change of ownership - thru divorce, death, gift, inheritance,
sale - raises taxes
6. impossible to cut taxes without cutting social services in
capitalist society

III. Legal Implications

A. Threat to Court Independence

1. popularity
2. Davis/Younger threat
3. election consideration - Bird, Marvel, Newman and Richardson

B. Challenges

1. revision rather than amendment of the California constitution - shift of local control to state
2. violation of equal protection - roll back to 1975 now, but reassessment at current value when property changes hands
3. denial of due process - vagueness, ambiguity prevents interpretation and implementation, too sweeping and loose

C. Options of Court

1. can deny petitions - meaning further challenges would have to be filed in lower court
2. can grant petitions, assume jurisdiction, schedule oral arguments and issue written decision
3. can grant petitions, get waiver of oral arguments and base decision on both pro and con legal briefs already filed
4. can refer petitions to state court of appeal

IV. Political Implications

A. Reflection of Continuing Conservative Thrust

1. anti-government
 2. anti-tax - 51% of U.S. for Prop. 13
 3. anti-social service - 62% feel almost all welfare could be cut, 61% for cutting public services instead of raising taxes
 4. anti-spending - 62% says government wasteful
 5. isolationistic - national, international
 6. law and order
- *percentage figures from New York Times and CBS poll, 19-23 June 78

B. Reflection of state of Third World Leadership

1. structural incapacity
2. lack of ideological clarity
3. absence of serious radical leadership

C. Inspires Political Pimping of Issue

1. sacrifice of social programs
2. law and order
3. isolationism on international level
4. Democrats vs. Republicans for conservative image (Brown on Prop.13)

5. Increase in Class Struggle

1. priorities
2. resource sharing

6. Split in Labor Movement

1. homeowners - tax cut regardless
2. non-owners - jobs regardless

V. Proposed Correctives

A. Sen. Ralph Mills (D-Gardena) - constitutional amendment to limit proposition benefits to homeowners only, \$4.5 billion from businesses annually

B. Sen. James Mills (D-San Diego) - Mills initiative

1. 2/3 voter clarification
2. payment of existing local debt thru tax raise

C. Cranston Bills

1. welfare - \$1.2 billion from federal government; \$800 million shared welfare support; 50% tax credit on first year wages to employers of welfare recipients; 10% income tax credit up to 6,000 during first year to welfare recipients
2. tax credit as matching funds

E. Position on Politics

1. Bourgeois democracy - political rights conditioned by economic capacity
2. Theoretically unlimited opportunities to participate in system depending upon individual initiative
3. Pluralism - competing groups vying for advantage
4. Social darwinism - to improve moral character and competitive quality of population

F. Problems of Capitalism

1. Great Depression - 1930 - punctured illusions
 - a. unemployment
 - b. fall of business activity
 - c. social inequality and unrest
 - d. government intervention
2. Rise of corporations - superior access and leverage in the political system. Thus, pose a threat because:
 - a. Superior wealth
 - (1) can buy access and experts
 - (2) finance campaigns
 - (3) finance legal battles, etc.
 - b. Superior organization
 - (1) can define and defend interest with more efficiency
 - (2) build and maintain effective lobby
 - (3) deploy experts in any area necessary
 - c. Institutional base inside government
 - (1) regulatory agencies - corps have heavy influence in them and thru them can make public policy
 - d. Ability to make public policy without going thru normal channels of government - thru:
 - (1) resource transfer policy
 - (2) regulatory agencies
 - e. Lack of adequate accountability
 - (1) internal
 - (2) external
 - f. Maintains a strong legitimacy based on:
 - (1) interest group liberalism
 - (2) private enterprise value

III. Socialism

- A. Operational definition- a socio-economic system characterized by:
1. collective ownership and control of the means of production, and
 2. egalitarian distribution of social wealth
- B. Origins
1. The French socialists - political economy, science, industry, class war, new system
 2. Hegel (1770-1830), dialectics
 3. Marx (1818-1883), synthesis and transcendence
 4. Summary
 - a. politics and economics linked
 - b. history advances in stages by struggle
 - c. class struggle most significant struggle and motive force of history
 - d. two fundamental classes: owners (bourgeoisie) and workers (proletarian)
 - e. working class is the key class and will not only free itself, but eliminate all classes
 - f. end of classes means end of need for the state and rise of self-management by the people - communism
- C. Position on Human Nature
1. Nature is a changeable set of characteristics determined by social and historical conditions
 2. Social consciousness is determined by social conditions
 3. Class consciousness is the most definitive and socially relevant consciousness
 4. Nation, race, etc., are false consciousnesses constructed for political purposes
 5. Human capacity unlimited after advance beyond primordial struggle to satisfy basic needs
- D. Position on Economics
1. Collective ownership and control of means of production
 2. Egalitarian distribution of wealth to each according to his/her needs (and work), from each according to his/her ability
 3. Planned economy
 4. Economic democracy - workers control of where they work
 5. Abolition of classes necessary and inevitable
- E. Position on Politics
1. Proletarian democracy - working people control
 2. Dictatorship of the proletariat
 3. Revolution as most appropriate process of social change
 4. Socialism as a transition to communism

5. Withering away of the state
6. International workers solidarity

F. Problems of Socialism

1. Rise of the bureaucracy - new class
2. Party vs. working class as rulers
3. Sacrifice of rights for economic security
4. Capitalist myth-making
 - a. human nature
 - b. socialism
5. Pseudo-socialisms
 - a. Stalinism
 - b. dogmatic Marxism
 - c. social democratic socialism

CURRENT ISSUES AND EVENTS ANALYSIS

Lecture 3

The U.S. Policy Shift in the Middle East

I. Background

- A. Preferential treatment for the Jews
- B. Problematic relationship with the Arabs
- C. Character of the Shift

II. Contributive Factors

A. Oil Factor

- 1. energy crisis
- 2. Saudi Arabia - 22% of U.S. oil
- 3. bulk of oil in Mideast

B. Dollar Instability Factor

- 1. Saudi Arabia -\$60 billion in reserves
- 2. "responsible" (non-disruptive use of resources)
- 3. support use of dollar as currency for international exchange
- 4. supportive of USA in OPEC structures - prices, politics

C. Soviet-Cuban Factor

- 1. Soviet penetration of Africa
- 2. use of Cuba as surrogate army - Third World, non-super power, invited by factions
- 3. Somali, Ehtiopia and Horn - Red sea shipping lanes; Mideast politics and oil

D. Need for Moderate Arab Allies

- 1. Saudi Arabia - oil, anti-communist, pro-American, Islamic leadership, funding source for radical and backward Arabs.
- 2. Egypt - largest Arab state, confrontation state, anti-communist, strategic location, Suez Canal.

E. The Sadat Initiative

- 1. challenged politics of Arab United Front.
- 2. removed confrontation state - ease tension, possibility of peace.
- 3. put responsibility on Israel to respond.
- 4. gave Sadat (Arabs) new image in Western/American opinion.

F. Begin's Intransigence

1. religious mystification of political issues - West Bank
2. militaristic orientation to problems
3. rejection of reality of Palestinians as people and political, military force
4. concession to rightwing religion group in coalition government
5. political immaturity in ruling - national and international
6. confrontation with Carter

G. Rise of Arab Lobby

1. use of economics relation to better political position
2. employ experts to advise in public image
3. advertise
4. production of counter documents, introduce documents
5. James Abourezk (Democrat-South Dakota)
6. National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) - 2,000+ members
7. corporate support

H. Corporate Support (Fluor, Mobil)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|
| 1. oil | - | producers |
| 2. investment capital | - | investors |
| 3. employment | - | employers |
| 4. purchase power | - | customers |

I. Change in American Public Opinion

1. 65% Sadat; 41% Begin
2. Carter
3. Corporate

AFRO-AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE
Lecture I

The Transformation of the Nation of Islam

I. Background

Islam in America before the Nation:

- A. Noble Drew Ali and the Moorish Science Temple
- B. W.D. Fard and the Moorish Movement
- C. Fard and the Nation of Islam

II. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad

- A. Blacks as a chosen people with a definite mission and promise. The lost-found Nation of Islam.
- B. Islam as a vehicle for the mental and moral rectification and social liberation of Blacks.
- C. Separation - (social, racial and political) - as a definite commitment and necessity for Black Liberation and salvation.
- D. Whites as diabolic mutants in the spiritual and physical sense whose world rule is on verge of collapse.
- E. Reparations (states and development capital) for Blacks as a moral obligation of white America for the slavery and oppression imposed on Blacks.
- F. Economic self-help thru collective ventures.
- G. Racial and Islamic solidarity thruout the world.

III. Malcolm X

- A. Nationalism - a necessary consciousness and practice for defense and development - essentially religious nationalism - Muslim.
- B. Community unity - indispensable to build and present a united front against Black oppression and exploitation.
- C. Total community organization - everyone in an organization of choice; each group organized around its own interest and linked in common struggle.
- D. Black struggle as human struggle - redefinition of struggle from one of civil rights to one for human rights.
- E. Third World solidarity - redefinition of Blacks as part of a world majority rather than an isolated American minority.
- F. Youth as value and future - children as agents of continuity and change.
- G. Self-determination - a cardinal principle of world and social peace and an indispensable content of human life and development.

IV. The Transformation

- A. Causes

1. Political economy of economic expansion

- a. politics and economics
- b. ruling group - class and mass
- c. Arab money
- d. government relations - laws, aid
- e. problem of checks - structure and values

2. Problem of succession

- a. establishing authority
 - (1) redefinition of the Messenger
 - (2) redefinition of Islam and Allah
 - (3) redefinition of the race question
 - (4) absolving of Malcolm
 - (5) dismantle and rebuild internal structures
- b. winning new allies
 - (1) Arabs - Islam, funds
 - (2) integrationist Blacks
 - (3) other religious leaders

B. Consequences and Projections

- 1. The separation - Minister Farrakhan and the Nation
- 2. Tendencies and possibilities
 - a. religious
 - b. political

CURRENT ISSUES AND EVENTS ANALYSIS

Lecture 2

Bakke Case: Impact and Implications

I. Background

- A. The Rise of Conservatism
- B. The Crisis in Black Leadership
(and by extension the crisis in Third World leadership)
- C. The Chronology of Events
 - a. 1964 Civil Rights Act
 - b. 1973 Marco Defunis - University of Washington
 - c. June, 1974 Bakke - sues U.C. Davis
 - d. November, 1974 - Superior Court rules U.C. Davis program invalid, but does order admission
 - e. September, 1976 - California Supreme Court rules Davis program unconstitutional and ordered admission
 - f. November, 1976 - U.C. secured permission to keep minority admission program operative until appeal of C.S.C. ruling
 - g. December, 1976 - U.C. seeks Supreme Court review despite numerous civil rights groups opposition
 - h. October, 1977 - Supreme Court hears arguments, Archibald Cox, UCD, Solicitor General Wade McGee offers federal government friend-of-court brief and Reynold Calvin represented Bakke.
 - i. Five days later, supreme court asked for briefs on how 1964 Civil Rights Act affects Bakke case - i.e., stipulation against racial discrimination if receive federal funds
 - j. June, 1978 - ruled Bakke should be admitted, UCD minority admission program invalid, allowed for flexible affirmative action.

II. Positive Implications

- A. Narrow decision - immediate impact mostly in field of education
- B. Allowed, with qualification, race as a criteria for preferential treatment
- C. Accepted qualified validity of affirmative action programs
- D. Reverse absolute decision of California Supreme Court

III. Negative Implications

- A. Continuing Conservative Thrust
 - 1. tax revolt
 - 2. rise of police power
 - 3. questioning & negating Black and other Third World gains
 - 4. Marshall's - Post Reconstruction analogy

- B. Pretension of Solving Problem - racial injustice without adequate race-specific solutions; colorblind vs. social myopia
- C. The substitution of search for University diversity for educational social correctives
 - 1. class vs. race
 - 2. geography
 - 3. discipline focus
- D. Rejected social-moral role it has responsibility and capacity to play (ambiguity) in establishing social justice
- E. Problems of Ambiguity
 - 1. tends to give dangerous latitude to each institution in setting up own program
 - 2. tends to redefine and reduce importance and urgency of social correctives for past injustice
 - 3. tends to establish a context non-conducive to social support for social correctives
 - 4. lays ground for future challenges on:
 - a. university admissions
 - b. desegregation - Powell thought different issue, Title 6, Bussing
 - c. employment - validity of race conscious goals
 - d. government programs - Commerce Department grants, National Science Foundation, 1/2 Black and Spanish speaking, 110 programs
 - e. construction - 10% of federal government contracts rule under challenge.
 - 5. puts burden on Blacks to prove discrimination instead of on school, employer to prove did not discriminate
- F. Further Challenge to Black-Jewish Relations
 - 1. historical alliance
 - 2. Jewish support of Bakke - competition for critical social space vs. funding struggle for civil rights
- G. Exacerbation of Race Relations
 - Third World struggle for:
 - 1. new priorities
 - 2. critical social space
 - 3. share of social wealth

MAJOR SOCIAL THEORIES

Lecture I

I. Introduction

- A. Relevance of the Study of Social Thought
- B. Definitions and Distinctions: Forms of Social Thought
 - 1. Opinions
 - 2. Beliefs
 - 3. Theory
 - 4. Philosophy
 - 5. Ideology
 - 6. Value system
 - 7. Worldview
- C. Similarities of Ideologies
 - 1. Comprehensive - positions on every aspect of life
 - 2. Authoritative - projection as ultimate truth
 - 3. Imperative - demands strict observance
 - 4. Integrative - demands a collective will and practice
 - 5. Affective - emotionally rooted
 - 6. Intolerant - internally and externally resistant to change and alternatives
- D. Factors of Analysis of Social Thought
 - 1. Position on human nature - essence and possibilities
 - 2. Position on economics - distribution of social wealth
 - 3. Position on politics - distribution of power and approach to social change

II. Capitalism

- A. Operational definition - a socio-economic system characterized by:
 - 1. private ownership and control of the means of production, and
 - 2. the continuous and compelling pursuit of profit.
- B. Origin
 - 1. Adam Smith (1723-1790), The Wealth of Nations
 - 2. David Ricardo (1772-1823), Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo, ed. Sraffa, (Cambridge University Press, 1951)
 - 3. Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), Essay on Population.

4. Summary

- a. Saw economy dependent on three factors of production:
 - (1) land - food, natural resources, productive facilities
 - (2) labor - till land, productive services
 - (3) capital - money, machinery, etc., productive capacity
- b. Income - profit, wages, rent
- c. Factors of production kept in balance by a market, a self-interested, impersonal process of supply and demand
- d. Market led to maximum production, distribution and consumption at lowest cost (greatest good for greatest number)
- e. Results lead to rise in value of land, and rent - and thus, reduction of profits, wages and food shortage
- f. Wage rate absorb squeeze - must be kept at minimum
- g. Capitalist and landlord remain capable of new productive cycle (dismal science)

C. Position on Human Nature

1. Nature is a permanent state rather than a changeable set of characteristics
2. People are by nature
 - a. individualistic - for self- first, self-seeking
 - b. acquisitive - motivated by desire to get, possess
 - c. competitive - geared toward rivalry
3. People thus must
 - a. be allowed maximum conditions for development
 - b. have private property to achieve self-satisfaction and progress
 - c. be allowed to compete fully to advance morally and materially

D. Position on Economics

1. Private ownership of means of production
2. Pursuit of profit as an inviolable right and necessity for social advancement
3. natural and social necessity of a free and competitive market (laissez-faire)
 - a. market self-regulating- supply and demand
 - b. maximum use of capital produces maximum jobs and production
 - c. high degree of stability at efficient level
 - d. consumer sovereignty - demand key
 - e. reduction of co-ercive intervention cuz essentially private decisions
4. Government must defend freedom and competitiveness of market against domestic and foreign challenges
5. Classes are inevitable