

A
Scientific
Approach
To



BLACK LIBERATION

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BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

CON A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO BLACK LIBERATION:

*Which Road Against Racism and Imperialism
For the Black Liberation Movement?*

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This is the edited text of a speech presented to a conference called by the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC). The purpose of the conference was to engage in intense ideological struggle, and this was accomplished. This speech reflects a dominant tendency in ALSC, and sets the direction for further ideological study. It was delivered on May 24, 1974, at Howard University, Washington, D.C.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,
COMRADES IN STRUGGLE,

We are gathered here in a very historical conference, a conference that can make a vital contribution to the ideological clarity and development of our movement. The task is to present our different positions on the conference theme in order that everyone here and throughout the Black liberation movement might reach a correct position. This will be done by studying the political lines presented and testing them in practice. We have as our theme "Which Road Against Racism and Imperialism for the Black Liberation Movement?" Our first test of fire follows immediately—a mass demonstration and protest rally raising high the banner of anti-racist, anti-imperialist struggle.¹

Today we stand in a great tradition. There have been many significant conferences in the history of our struggle, and the recent period is no exception. Our recent stages of struggle appear to fit a pattern highlighted by conferences in 1960, 1967, and 1974.

1960

A conference in Raleigh, North Carolina at Shaw University served to sum up the struggle of Black students in the South and resulted in the formation of SNCC, the vanguard organization of the Civil Rights Movement.²

1967

A conference in Newark, New Jersey was the first Black Power Conference, a large conference that summed up the mass motions inspired by national consciousness and directed toward increased struggle against national oppression.³

1974

This conference in D.C. reflects the development of intense ideological struggle within the largest mass motion in

the Black liberation movement, ALSC, an anti-racist, anti-imperialist United Front. Out of this historical development our current conference reflects several advances:

- A. Most of our motion is directly linked to the history of struggle that has developed over the last 14 years and found in almost every community in this country.
- B. This conference results from a higher level of theoretical clarity as reflected in our ALSC Statement of Principles.⁴
- C. Our motion of protest tomorrow grounds this conference solidly in the context of struggle.

So our task is clear: ALSC has set a bold plan for this conference: theoretical struggle. I will put my position forward. I believe it to be correct, as will you when it passes the test of practical application in leading our struggle to victory.

I.

At this critical point of our movement our theory of struggle must clarify four basic questions:

1. What is our problem, its historical development and current structure?
2. Who are our friends and who are our enemies?
3. What are the correct solutions for our problem—the maximum and minimum programs for change?
4. What are the differences and similarities between our struggle in the USA and the struggle in Africa?

As we discuss these four questions we will pay particular attention to demonstrate that our position summarizes the lessons of Black history and world revolution, and we will try to clearly indicate how *what we believe* informs *what we do*. In other words, theory is the summation of historical experience, and theory is to be tested in concrete practice.⁵ Clever rhetoric therefore, is a hollow theatrical stunt unless it is grounded in these principles of science.

The starting point of our analysis must be the description

The starting point of our analysis must be the description of how Black people are exploited and oppressed. One view holds that racial oppression is the principal problem. This position holds that all Black people are the same, and race is the single most important fact of life. Since history is characterized by the struggle of one race to dominate another, the racial factor is the lever that turns history.⁶ Another view holds that class exploitation is the only problem. This line holds that one exploiting class reaping the benefit of another's labor is the only problem faced in capitalist society, and class struggle will automatically result in an end to all other problems. This liquidates the question of national oppression.⁷ *Both of these positions are incorrect.*

The correct scientific view points to the total character of oppression and exploitation, wearing blinders neither to class nor to race.

We need some definitions.

A. "Classes are large groups of people who achieve their primary means of subsistence based upon their role, function, and place in the production process, and who thereby develop common class interests and common class ideas."⁸ There is always one dominant class and one major subordinate class. The capitalist class buys the labor power of workers at a price less than the value created in the production process. Part of the difference is what the capitalist appropriates for private gain, and this is the key way the working class is exploited.⁹ The capitalist class has been characterized by an increased concentration of ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. This concentration represents monopoly capital, the basis of imperialism.¹⁰ The class struggle (meaning workers fighting as a class in their own interests), is strategically against the capitalist system as a whole, but often the leading target is

the super multi-national monopoly corporations initially formed in the wake of the Civil War.

B. Racial groups are based on genetic character as manifested in the physical traits like skin color, hair texture, etc.¹¹ And while these traits can be signs and symbols of racial theories of inferiority and superiority, at a particular time in a particular society it is necessary to understand the historical basis of it, and to understand how racial practices are implemented within the contest of the society. For Black people in the United States, racial practices have been transformed from the general process of one racial group oppressing another (Europeans oppressing Africans) to a new form of national oppression.¹² This is due to the critically important fact that Black people were moulded into a nation during the last part of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century in the Black Belt South. This is based on what a nation has consisted of during the rising capitalist mode of production, "a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture."¹³ So all subsequent "racial oppression" can be scientifically referred to as "national oppression" since it has its most immediate origin and meaning in this context of national development. This includes everything from legal codes of segregation to the fascist terror of lynching and the KKK.

Moreover, a scientific method is based on the theory of contradictions.¹⁴ In all things there is a struggle of opposites, there are many contradictions. But always, there is a principal contradiction. Only one, and it has a great influence over the secondary contradictions. When a principal contradiction is resolved, is transformed, then another contradiction becomes the principal one. This change, from one principal contradiction to another is the basis for all living things, developing in stages. Each stage has its own principal contradiction.

Now this theory of contradictions and our scientific definition of class exploitation and national oppression can help us to understand the historical development of our problem. Beginning in Europe, feudalism was transformed by political, economic, and social revolution, giving birth to capitalism.¹⁵ Under feudalism, the principal contradiction was the class conflict between the serf and the lord classes. This was transformed to the proletariat-bourgeois class conflict under capitalism. What happened was the progressive emergence of a new stage of social development, a new order.¹⁶

Science became an active agent in industry making technological change a basic feature of the economy. Capitalism appeared to be a rational system. Of course as capitalism developed from its early competitive stage to its monopoly stage this impact of science on the forces of production turned into its opposite and became the terror of destruction, bringing ecological disaster. And this happened precisely because it served the bourgeois ruling class. One social function in the 18th and 19th centuries and another in the 20th century. This same story can be repeated for all political, social, and economic gains. The hope of bourgeois democracy has turned into a monopolistic horror. As Lenin indicated, "the political super-structure over the new economy, over monopoly capitalism, is a turn from democracy to political reaction. Corresponding to free competition is democracy. Corresponding to monopoly is political reaction."¹⁷

Now where do we fit? While capitalism had developed in its rudimentary forms, the slave trade provided the economic boost for the explosive development of British manufacturing and set the stage for the industrial revolution.¹⁸ We figured in this process as chattel slaves bought and sold like a tool or article of clothing. But not only that, our primary use was to

provide the labor necessary to make the developing countries of the Americas, North and South and the Caribbean, great producers of sugar, rice, tobacco, and of course, cotton. It was the labor of our forefathers that made this region of the world a great source of wealth. Black people became a vital part of this society by playing an indispensable role in the process of producing wealth. And after the "not-so-civil-war" Black people became near serf-like peasants bound to the land in various types of tenant-sharecropper relations with the large land owners and eventually monopoly capital. And here too we produced the agricultural products that fed this country, clothed it, and provided its tobacco. This process was successively disrupted by the great patterns of migration that occurred out of the South along with two world wars, several depressions, and great class struggle. Blacks were recruited to the factories and began to provide the critical labor supply for the industrial expansion that made the USA the undisputed leading world power from 1945 to the 1960's. We are indispensable to the production of steel, automobiles, meatpacking, and a whole new set of service jobs that became almost exclusively ours. And we remain central to the production and distribution of wealth in this country in many production and service jobs.¹⁹

When we look at this history it is obvious that Black peoples' lives have changed a lot. However, while the form of our work has gone through stages we have remained a source of labor power. We fit directly into the analysis presented earlier—in capitalism the principal contradiction is the class contradiction, and Black people essentially fit into the exploited class of workers. So my first point is that our principal problem—the principal contradiction—is class exploitation—masses of Black people are workers exploited by capitalists. And in this contradiction national oppression and class exploitation are joined.

However, there are three secondary contradictions that reflect the dialectical struggle of national oppression and class exploitation.

1. Black people vs. monopoly capital
2. national contradiction between white and Black workers and
3. class contradiction within the Black community.

Mao Tse-Tung has written:

"There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions."²⁰

Also:

"Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions.

"As we have said, one must not treat all the contradictions in a process as being equal but must distinguish between the principal and the secondary contradictions, and pay special attention to grasping the principal one. But, in any given contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the two contradictory aspects be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing

the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position.”²¹

So we have class war between the capitalist class and the working class. This is the principal contradiction in U.S. society. However, as long as the capitalist class rules, the secondary contradictions will be heightened and often appear to be primary. This is the obvious double strategy of dividing the working class to control it, coupled with developing a lackey servant class to manage the affairs of the Black community in the interests of the capitalist class. On the other hand, when the struggle intensifies, the objective interests of the working class has been a major factor of unity with the objective interests of the Black community in unity with the intensification of the Black liberation movement. Here the motion isolates the ruling minority capitalist class.

A scientific study of class struggle in this country reveals this pattern quite clearly. Two examples of well known history can help here.

A. The Reconstruction²²: After the defeat of the Southern aristocracy the Northern industrial capitalist class promoted or allowed to develop a motion of unity and change among the masses. This took the form of reconstruction governments, and centered on political gains (although there were promises of revolutionary land reform). Included here was open access to the electoral process and the running of government, as well as the Freedman’s Bureau, which, coupled with the philanthropical input of New England abolitionists, helped to establish institutions within the Black community allowing the “talented tenth” to develop and provide a professional service class within the Black community. But these two motions of unity were allowed to exist only as long as it served as cover for the penetration of

Northern capital into the region, and then it was removed. The Hayes-Tilden betrayal of Black people brought an end to this and the federal government withdrew its support. The Southern interests rose up and began the process of disenfranchisement. By the 1890’s the ruling class was using the old double deal on us. Bourgeois class interests busted up the populist movement in the South with its great promise, as the ruling class was installing Booker T. Washington as the new leader of the Black elite to manage the affairs of the Black community in the interests of the Bourgeoisie.

B. The 1960’s²³: The masses of Black people were mobilized into struggle during the last decade in great numbers. Our great motions of unity are symbolized by Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. King was moving to form a united poor peoples campaign and focus on defending workers (like the sanitation workers in Memphis). Moreover, he was against the Vietnam War, and despite his pacifism he was moving to a more comprehensive anti-imperialist stand. He had the respect of progressive forces throughout the world. *He was murdered*. Malcolm was building unity within the Black community, building militant consciousness toward struggle, and was boldly presenting anti-capitalist views. Malcolm was received by the heads of State of Africa and had respect as a national liberation leader. *He was murdered*. In their place monopoly capital has tried to project petty bourgeois opportunists who violate the tradition of King and subvert efforts to move the struggle forward, and race theorists who distort Malcolm’s motion toward revolution and turn toward cultism. Their spokesmen have reinforced these two lackey tendencies—former governor of Illinois, Otto Kerner (now a felon for fraud and mismanagement of funds), as chairperson of the President’s Commission on Civil Disorder, released the study of riots and stated that the major problem was racism, a struggle between white and Black

societies.²⁴ So the race theorists and Kerner are the Black and white puppets of that same approach—while Nixon's Black capitalism is the false-faced gimmick that fits the illusions (or self-centered designs) of the opportunist elements.

These two historical references have made it plain. The principal contradiction is the class contradiction, with the Black liberation struggle closely involved. As Mao Tse-Tung put it, "The struggle of the Black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class."²⁵ The two major secondary contradictions being the conflicts between Black and white workers, and the class conflict within the Black community.

II.

On the basis of that summarization of the problem that we face, identifying friends and enemies should not be a difficult task.²⁶ However, our meaning must be clear. We do not mean who we like and dislike; we do not make history in that manner. We mean who has the same objective material interest to bring about change, for their own reasons which will not necessarily be our exact same reasons.

1. Our enemy list has two categories:

- a. The entire capitalist class whose interests we stand categorically against in an antagonistic fashion. The major element here is the giant monopoly group (suggested by the 500 largest businesses listed in *Fortune Magazine*).²⁷
- b. The high petty bourgeoisie: this class strata includes many who are nearly indistinguishable from the bourgeoisie. They include the main agents of the imperialist system in the government (Nixon, Kissinger, Daley, Alioto, Stennis, etc.); trade union bureaucrats like AFL-CIO Chief George Meany and

Leonard Woodcock of the UAW; police officials like Atty. General Saxbe and FBI Director Kelly; and all agencies that serve the ruling class: Council on Foreign Affairs, Rand Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and philanthropic foundations like Ford and Rockefeller.²⁸

2. Friends include three groups:²⁹

- a. Masses of Black people.
- b. Masses of third world peoples (Asians, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Native Americans).
- c. White sector of the working class, and many elements of the petty bourgeois class formation and intellectual strata.

Contradictions are sharp and unity is at a low ebb. But things can change. Things are changing! We must make a distinction here between contradictions with the enemy and non-antagonistic contradictions between friends. "Since they are different in nature, the contradiction between ourselves and the enemy and the contradictions among the people must be resolved by different methods."³⁰ The critical question remains: Can we separate the class struggle from the struggle for national liberation? Can we go it alone if necessary?

A scientific analysis always reveals the class contradiction as the essence of all problems within capitalist society. So a national liberation struggle has a class character and must be viewed in that light.³¹ The only revolutionary nationalists today are those that are guided by the science of the working class and simultaneously fighting to destroy the capitalist system. This means that PAIGC has waged a correct struggle, because it began with the struggle to oust foreign Portuguese colonial rule, and then began to build up a socialist society in the liberated areas.³²

However, our case is different. We do not have a situation here for two stages of struggle. The struggle for national liberation cannot be separated from the class struggle, they are necessary aspects of the same process. If there can be no unity at any particular time with a specific segment of the white sector of the working class, then the masses of Black people will continue to wage class struggle in spite of that and will ultimately overcome the disunity of the working class. Also, if there can be no unity around a particular struggle with middle strata in the Black community, then the masses of Black people will continue to fight for Black liberation and win them over by advancing goals in the objective interests of all Black people.

III.

So what then of our solutions.

The only goal that can cure the ills of this society—this center of the capitalist system—is a socialist revolution. I believe our task is to make a socialist revolution right here in the USA. There can be no *solution* under capitalism, although the bourgeois ruling class will make every effort to convince us that it is possible. If that doesn't work they will encourage correct-sounding socialist ideologies that fall short of scientific socialism or consciously revise its basic tenets. All ideologies have a class character—scientific socialism serves the working class—utopian socialism can easily be used by the ruling class.³³ Both of these schemes have been met head on, but not as decisively as we must do in the coming period.

Socialism is a social-economic formation that is designed to overcome the ills of capitalism, and results from the internal development of the laws of capitalist motion. There develops three major aspects of the general crisis of capital-capitalism.

1. Concentration of capital by an increasingly smaller bourgeois class who appropriates wealth privately while

wealth is the social product of larger and larger groups of people. This is the class character of the crisis in the economy. More and more people get less and less of a share in the wealth produced. This leads to a degeneration of all aspects of social life—food, housing, health, education, etc.—all are attacked.³⁴

2. Militarization of the State to rule over the masses and maintain order for the ruling class. This results in foreign wars of aggression like Vietnam, and domestic fascist plots like those of Nixon, Hoover, Haldeman, Erlichman, and their whole gang. Political corruption, surveillance of civilians by the armed forces, police repression, capital punishment, are all indicators of this rule by the State in the interest of the capitalist class.³⁵
3. Intensification of national oppression by which the ruling class asserts its need to separate the Black and white sectors of the working class in order to prevent the development of the unified and class conscious multinational proletariat. This takes the form of Black and white race theorists reasserting the old 19th century arguments, cut-backs in all government services in the Black community, generally more of all the evil that capitalism represents for Black people.³⁶

The solution of scientific socialism speaks directly to these three aspects of the general crisis:

1. *The Abolition of Private Property* by which the production and distribution of wealth would be a public ownership process, centrally planned to systematically provide for the welfare of all of the people.³⁷
2. *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* by which the government apparatus and all agencies, institutions, and organizations would reflect the interests of the working class—the rule of the entire proletariat.³⁸
3. *National liberation and the right of nations to*

self-determination reflects the solution to national oppression only possible under socialism. All forms of national oppression can be stopped as official policy because they serve no material interests as they did under capitalism. A divided proletariat is good for capitalism, a united proletariat is good for socialism. Lenin summed up the only correct policy possible:

“For different nations to live together in peace and freedom, or to separate and form different states (if that is more convenient for them), a full democracy upheld by the working class, is essential. No privileges for any one nation or any one language, not the slightest injustice in respect of a national minority—such are the principles of working class democracy.”³⁹

These are the basic aspects of scientific socialism for beginning to correct the ills of capitalism. But make no mistake about the nature of the bourgeois class—they are the greatest murderers in the history of mankind. The struggle for socialism will require a political, social, cultural, intellectual, and an armed phase before and after the seizure of power by the working class. Check out the fascist rule today in South Vietnam, and Chile, in Asia, and Latin America. Of course, we are all familiar with the barbaric rule of capital in South Africa—fascism is limited to no national identity but is always possible with imperialism.⁴⁰

So we must keep the true nature of our problem in focus, and also keep the maximum program of socialist revolution as our banner for decisive struggle. But it would be adventurism for us to expect immediate results in one giant leap. It could be in violation of our basic theoretical principle that historical motion forward goes through stages of development.

So our minimum program for day-to-day struggle is

summed up in the key concepts of *defense, democracy, and development*.⁴¹ We must defend Black workers from the attacks of monopoly capital and by so doing protect the interest of the entire Black community and the working class. We must fight for the democratic participation of rank and file Black workers inside of the trade union movement, and by so doing raise the banner of democracy for all people in the society denied their rights by the ruling class. We must work toward the development of tools of struggle, organizations that mould the Black working class into a fighting class conscious section of the proletariat, organizations that mould Black youth into a vital revolutionary force capable of giving concrete material support to the struggle of Black workers and the struggle for democratic education.

All of this must be focused at the Black working class, whether directly by uniting or indirectly by struggling in the interests of the Black workers. If Black workers' struggle moves to a higher level there will be an intensification of both working class struggle and the Black liberation struggle, because Black workers will fight simultaneously against class exploitation and national oppression.

It might be helpful to give concrete examples of what this minimum program of defense, democracy, and development for the Black working class is all about.

- A. On the Job: In the United Steelworkers of America Union with over 4000 locals and 1.2 million members, the bureaucratic leadership under I. W. Abel sold out the interests of the basic steel rank and file by agreeing to a sweetheart contract with a no strike provision. This denies the rank and file of their democratic rights and leaves them virtually defenseless against the onslaught of the corporations. In Nashville, the Aladdin Industries Corporation, producers of plastic products, has Victor Johnson for a

president—he is on the Board of Meharry Medical College (Black) and is a financial stalwart in Nixon's camp. This plant is organized by the Steelworkers, though they are not in basic steel. They have been out on strike 10 weeks, and there is a solidarity committee giving support. They see it not as just a local shop, but as part of the struggle of all workers—Black and white in opposition to corporate interests. While the majority of workers are white, the ruling class organized students and unemployed Blacks to “scab.” The Black leadership of the solidarity committee was able to effectively move against this motion and build unity between workers and students.

B. In the Community: Almost every Black community has been the object of police repression or capital punishment, particularly aimed at Black youth. This type of issue has been the active concern of ALSC in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Since this type of issue normally results after a terrorist act of the police the ultimate aim of defending the Black community requires the development of an organization of struggle and a relentless campaign to make the governmental agencies of justice democratic. A good example of this is the Nashville Coalition Against Police Repression. Our line was put forward in a speech by the Coalition chairperson.

“The Coalition Against Police Repression is a movement for democracy and justice in a land that has never been democratic and just. The Coalition is a peoples front, a unity movement that unites all class elements and social groups to fight the racist violent tactics of a police state apparatus. This instrument of state power has thrived on the murder of Black people, especially working class Black youth. We must have Justice and we must have it now. We must have a responsive

system of police, a police system based in the community it serves, and sensitive to overcoming the horrible torture and terror of the past. We have been slaves in the past, and we continue to be treated as slaves today. We must have Justice and we must have it now.

“The Coalition is a unity movement that has as its purpose advancing the struggle for democracy. When we say a unity coalition, we mean every segment of the Black community, but most of all we mean uniting the elements that have not been united, and mobilizing those that are not in motion. This means uniting the campus and the community, uniting students and workers, labor and professionals, everybody in the struggle for Justice, Peace, and Freedom.

“In sum, the problem of the police is the problem of class exploitation and racial oppression. The police are poor working class people who are exploited by the ruling class, although they themselves are killing us in the interest of the ruling class. The white working class failed to recognize Black people as their allies during the Reconstruction, during the great depression, and now during the reign of King Richard of Watergate there is another chance. The ruling class wanted to make the issues seem like Black and white issues—they want our movement to be based on Black hatred of white people. But we are not going to fall for it. We are not going to allow the fool mad dog cop who murdered our brother to misguide us. He is not the enemy, he too is a victim. The real enemy is the business interests, the king makers, the ruling class.”

C. On the Campus: The defense of Black students is critical. In Nashville we have just had the struggle of the United Front to Save Tennessee State University in defense of the democratic rights of Black people to a college education. We developed a viable form in the Front—consisting of over 15 different organizations. The major struggle, once again, was between the ruling class making it appear as if it is a racial conflict

rather than a class conflict. Our struggle was to fight against the merger of T.S.U., and for a just equitable system. It would be rational and just to preserve T.S.U. Our struggle was an integral part of the National Save and Change Black Schools Project.

How then does all of this relate to the African struggle? What are the similarities and differences between the struggles in Africa and in the USA? Africa is a large continent with great diversity.⁴² However we can find three basic types of countries in Africa today:

1. *Advanced countries* – These are generally the ones that have gotten rid of the colonialists, have some form of public ownership of production and distribution, and have a progressive political policy. These are Guinea, Tanzania, Congo (B), Somalia, Algeria, and of course, the New Republic of Guinea-Bissau.
2. *Colonial countries* – These are either settler colonies like South Africa and Rhodesia or exploitation colonies like Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique. Here are the most obvious forms of imperialist rule with Europeans directly over Africans.
3. *Neo-Colonial countries* – This is the most numerous group of countries including independent countries from Ethiopia to Zaire, from Senegal to Kenya. And it is the most odious form of imperialist rule since it puts an African elite in between the imperialists and the masses of workers and peasants.

The principal contradiction in Africa is a class contradiction.⁴³ This is summed up quite clearly by Kwame Nkrumah in *Class Struggle in Africa*:⁴⁴

“At the core of the problem is the class struggle. For too long, social and political commentators have talked and written as though Africa lies outside the main stream of world historical

development—a separate entity to which the social, economic and political patterns of the world do not apply. Myths such as ‘African socialism’ and ‘pragmatic socialism,’ implying the existence of a brand or brands of socialism applicable to Africa alone, have been propagated; and much of our history has been written in terms of socio-anthropological and historical theories as though Africa had no history prior to the colonial period. One of these distortions has been the suggestion that the class structures which exist in other parts of the world do not exist in Africa.

“Nothing is further from the truth. A fierce class struggle has been raging in Africa. The evidence is all around us. In essence it is, as in the rest of the world, a struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed.

“The African Revolution is an integral part of the world socialist revolution, and just as the class struggle is basic to world revolutionary processes, so also is it fundamental to the struggle of the workers and peasants of Africa.”

And this concrete situation is subject to the same scientific program for change. Check out how Nkrumah makes a clear distinction between the different interests of classes in Africa:

“For the African bourgeoisie, the class which thrived under colonialism is the same class which is benefiting under the post-independence, neo-colonial period. Its basic interest lies in preserving capitalist social and economic structures. It is therefore, in alliance with international monopoly finance capital and neo-colonialism, and in direct conflict with the African masses, whose aspirations can only be fulfilled through scientific socialism.”⁴⁵

And other studies have recently spoken of “silent” class struggles in the advanced countries apparently indicating that socialism is yet to be firmly advanced on the African

continent.⁴⁶ So class struggle is waged in neo-colonial and advanced types of countries. Class struggle is also waged in the colonial struggles. For example, in the Portuguese colonies the current situation is where the contradiction of the national democratic revolution is peasants and workers versus the Portuguese and Western imperialism. Within Portugal the feudal fascist regime has been overthrown and a new government is being formed with military leadership. But if the current motion of the new military junta in Portugal goes as they plan, neo-colonialism will be instituted and the contradiction will be transformed into one between the peasants and workers versus a native lackey bourgeoisie and their imperialist allies.⁴⁷

So Afro-Americans and Africans are similar when it comes to scientific laws. But get quite different results when applying scientific principles to our own concrete and quite different conditions.

1. The USA is the most developed country in the world, and Africa is one of the most underdeveloped continents. Afro-Americans are mostly within an advanced industrial and clerical working class while Africa has a peasant majority.
2. Afro-Americans are within a state fighting for self-determination even though there have also been demands for secession. Africa is composed of sovereign countries whose relations include *state* relations.

We have discussed the four major questions set out at the beginning of this presentation.

1. *What is our problem?* The principal contradiction is the class contradiction with the dominant class relationship being the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. The key place of Black workers in the whole proletariat is the basis for the two secondary contradictions between Black and white workers, and

between classes in the Black community. National oppression and class exploitation are linked in dialectical unity, as are class struggle and Black liberation.

2. *Who are our friends? Who are our enemies?* The functions of our answer must serve to "Unite the many to defeat the few." We see the capitalist class and their high petty bourgeois officials and lackeys as our antagonistic enemies. And we see the unity of the objective interests between the Black sector of the working class and the entire proletariat, between Black workers and the Black community. And we must struggle to decisively win over the middle strata to increase the ranks of our movement.

3. *What is the correct program for change?*

- a. The maximum program for change is a socialist revolution in which one simultaneously engages in the class struggle and the struggle for Black liberation. Neither is possible without the other.
- b. The minimum program for change is the struggle for defense, democracy, and development in the interest of Black people and the working class. On every issue, in every community to do this will be to both advance the struggle of all workers and fight national oppression in the interests of all Black people.

4. *What are the similarities and differences with Africa?*

- a. The similarities hinge on the common enemy of imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism, and the fact that every struggle is in essence a class struggle.
- b. The differences are in the content and form of the class struggle—especially levels of social and economic development, forms of political structure and struggle, and the character of the national oppression.

In any case, Black people in the USA have a special historical link with Africa and should always defend her interests standing with her through all her struggles against oppression and exploitation. Of course, we are the descendants of the children of Africa!

Now after that broad ideological summary of my position the last question is *what do we do?*

1. Always engage in a serious study of the science of revolutionary theory. This must concretely mean studying the classics of scientific socialism as written by Karl Marx and Fredrich Engles, studying the major examples of how they have been applied by Lenin and Stalin in the Soviet Union, Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, Mao in China, and Fidel in Cuba, and finally apply them to our history and current situation in the USA. Study must be a collective process for people who are developing themselves as part of a revolutionary struggle.⁴⁸
2. Build local coalitions of struggle especially to defend the interests of Black workers in the plants, communities, and schools. The key focus is on defense, democracy and development of struggle; we must withstand the threat of fascism and maintain consistent struggle.
3. From the local base of struggle maintain an active link to the anti-imperialist movement. Keep the liberation of Africa a central concern but something more—be *thorough going* anti-imperialist fighters. Remember Cuba and fight the U.S. Blockade! Remember Chile and fight the terror of U.S. corporations like ITT! Remember Vietnam! Remember that U.S. imperialism is all over the globe.
4. Build a revolutionary party of the working class, guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism and

dedicated to fighting sham distortions of these principles in individuals, organizations, or pseudo-revolutionary parties.⁴⁹

This presentation has been all too brief for the task required. Indeed, many of the issues I've raised are not yet formulated in a definitive manner, and I don't have a firm position on all of them. *However, of one thing I am convinced without any question: there is one solid foundation from which the truth will surely come—the science of dialectical and historical materialism. This is the only real ideological weapon capable of fighting imperialism to the death!* This is the only proven science that can be used to smash capitalism and build socialism according to the laws of social development. So I end my remarks with these slogans:

**LONG LIVE THE HEROIC STRUGGLE OF AFRO-AMERICANS,
AFRICANS, AND THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD!**

LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!

**LONG LIVE THE CREATIVE APPLICATION OF DIALECTICAL
MATERIALISM IN GUIDING REVOLUTIONARIES THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD!**

**BUILD THE ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-IMPERIALIST BLACK UNITED
FRONT IN WHICH BLACK WORKERS TAKE THE LEAD!**

**RACISM-IMPERIALISM NO! NIXON MUST GO! BLACK PEOPLE
MUST BE FREE!**

NOTES

1. The Third Annual African Liberation Day was held May 25, 1974, around the slogan "Racism-Imperialism No! Nixon Must Go! Black People Must Be Free!" There were about 15,000 people who participated in the march and rally in Washington, D.C., while thousands more marched in Toronto, Canada, and St. John's, Antigua.
2. For a discussion of this conference see Ted Dienstfrey, "A Conference on the Sit-Ins," *Commentary* 29 (June 1960), and Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*, (1964).
3. This first Black Power Conference is discussed in *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969), pp. 132-144, by Robert Allen.
4. The ALSC International Steering Committee debated the Statement of Principles in a meeting on Feb. 1-3, 1974, in Greensboro, N.C. The major progressive position is a 60-page document: Abdul Alkalimat and Nelson Johnson, *Toward the Ideological Unity of the African Liberation Support Committee: A Response to Criticisms of the A.L.S.C. Statement of Principles*. It can be obtained from Peoples College, P.O. Box 5747, Nashville, Tn. 37208.
5. See Mao Tse-Tung, On Practice; *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 295-309.
6. See Abdul Alkalimat and Nelson Johnson, Op. cit., pp. 2-3.
7. This is the mechanical anti-Marxist-Leninist view that liquidates the national question and accompanies white chauvinism in the left. The most recent manifestation of this line was advanced by the Progressive Labor Party. See Carl Davidson, "Which Side Are You On?", *Guardian*, (March 20, 1974).

8. Lenin, in "A Great Beginning" defines classes this way:

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

Collected Works, Vol. 29, pp. 421.

9. See Karl Marx, *Wages, Price, and Profit*, (1865), especially Parts VI and XIV.
10. See Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, (1916) and Pierre Jallee, *Imperialism in the 1970's*.
11. See M. F. Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, (1953), and Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, (1963).
12. This is an initial formulation of the Afro-American national question. During the next immediate period a more thorough analysis will be published. This position is consistent with the view that the Black liberation struggle is a revolutionary national liberation struggle.
See Harry Haywood, *Negro Liberation* (1948).
13. This definition is by Joseph Stalin in "Marxism and the National Question," pp. 65-104, in *Selections from V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin on National and Colonial Question*.
14. See Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 311-347; Joseph Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, pp. 6-12.
15. See Karl Marx and Fredrich Engles, *The Communist Manifesto*, (1848), Part I, "Bourgeois and Proletarians."
16. This basic feature of historical materialism can be found in *German Ideology* by Karl Marx and Fredrich Engles, *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, by Engles.

17. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 28-76.
18. See Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (1944).
19. See Harold Baron, *The Demand for Black Labor: Notes on the Political Economy of Racism*, (1971).
20. Mao Tse-Tung, *Four Essays on Philosophy*, p. 51.
21. *Ibid*, pp. 53-54.
22. W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction*, (1935) and John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, (1961).
23. Anthony Lewis, *Portrait of a Decade*, (1964); and Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969).
24. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, (March, 1968).
25. Mao Tse-Tung, "Statement in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression," (1968).
26. See Mao Tse-Tung, "Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 13-21.

"Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. The basic reason why all previous revolutionary struggles in China achieved so little was their failure to unite with real friends in order to attack real enemies . . . to distinguish real friends from real enemies, we must make a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes in Chinese society and of their respective attitudes towards the revolution.

What is the condition of each of the classes in Chinese society?"
27. Ferdinand Lundberg, *The Rich and The Super Rich* (1968) and William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (1967).
28. Mark Green, James Fallows, David Zwick, *Who Runs Congress? The President, Big Business or You?* (1972), and Waldemar Nielsen, *The Big Foundations*, (1972).
29. This is not a comprehensive discussion. We must begin to more systematically investigate the stages of developing unity of the class and national composition of the United Front against imperialism. The political role of a class is always finally determined by what they do in class struggle.

30. Mao Tse-Tung, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, (1957).
31. The essence of a Leninist approach to this question is the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations. Mao Tse-Tung has written, "No matter what classes, parties or individuals in an oppressed nation join the revolution, and no matter whether they themselves are conscious of the point or understand it, so long as they oppose imperialism their revolution becomes part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution and they become its allies." (*Selected Works*, Vol. II, pp. 346-347.)
32. See the works of Amilcar Cabral, especially *Revolution in Guinea* (1970) and *Return to the Source* (1973).
33. This is the profound struggle waged in defeating any reformist revision of the revolutionary character of Marxism. See Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism" (*Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 46-53).
34. See Baran and Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, (1966).
35. See Seymour Melman, *Pentagon Capitalism*.
36. Read the newspaper *The African World*, (P.O. Box 20826, Greensboro, N.C. 27420) for the most accurate current accounts.
37. See Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, (1875) and Joseph Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (1952).
38. See Lenin, *State and Revolution* (1916).
39. See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, pp. 91-92.
40. See George Dimitrov, *On United Front Against Fascism*, (1935).
41. This is based on the Leninist policy that "the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all round, consistent, and revolutionary struggle for democracy." (P. 32, Selections on the National Colonial Question.)
42. The African scene can be summed up by referring to Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972); A. W. Hunton, *Decision in Africa* (1957).
43. Kwame Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa*, (1970).

1974 African Liberation Month Flier

AFRICAN LIBERATION MONTH: MAY, 1974

MAY 23-24
**National
Conference**
WASHINGTON,
D.C.

MAY 18-19
**Local
Demonstrations**

MAY 25 **National
Demonstration**
WASHINGTON,
D.C.

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