

Building Strategic Alliances in the African-American Liberation Movement

The African-American national democratic revolution has unique conditions (subjective, national) but also has general (objective, class) laws that has followed the basic laws of national democratic revolutions world-wide and socialist revolutions since 1917.

The African-Americans need to understand that while they are in a unique situation, one that is different historically from other situations, African-American's self determination is tied to the international struggle for socialism because African-Americans enslavement (slavery - 200 years' free labor) played a central role in the building of the world capitalist system and their liberation will be critical to its demise. More important to understand is African-American's present day U.S. form of neo-colonialism (second class-citizenship-20th century slavery-relation to the economy; first hired, last hired-underpaid-overworked-high rents, mortgages-political disempowerment; general "rip-off" industries African-Americans dominate--sports, arts, music, entertainment, culture) from any other nation in the world. Profits the capitalists get from African-American's habits (conspicuous consumption of drugs, liquor, cigarettes, video's/games, VCR's, fashionable clothes, designer jeans and tennis shoes, cars, boom box radios, potato chips) make African-Americans the best consumers per number according to population they ever had. It is estimated that the capitalists, particularly the U.S. capitalists, reap 150 to 300 billion dollars annually from African-America's oppression.

In the black-belt South, where 53% of African-American's live; this exploitation is intensified reaping greater profits (surplus value) from African-American's non-unionized labor by paying African-Americans less wages for the same amount of work paid in other regions of the multinational monopoly capitalist/imperialist state. African-Americans' oppression is unique being they are an oppressed nationality (minority) inside the citadel of world imperialism whose oppression is based on national, race and class lines; with a history tied to slavery which causes them to have a very low national consciousness, low self-esteem, and high degree of self-hatred. Such a form of oppression is so entrenched that it will take the collective efforts of millions of proletarians to overthrow it. While African-Americans can/must win their struggle through their own efforts, their struggle for self determination can be helped immensely by allies, both inside of the imperialist state (USA) and in the international community. The victory of the African American national democratic revolution is therefore integrally linked to victory of socialist revolution in the U.S. and throughout the world. While each has its own laws of social development, they are linked by the objective historical process.

In order to investigate how to build strategic alliances, we shall probe a few questions first:

1. What constitutes the vanguard?

The question of a vanguard is a difficult question because it seems like the term has been overemphasized. The African-American national democratic revolution democratic revolution has had its ebbs, lulls, and high tide like all national liberation movements in the world. The African-American national democratic revolution's weakness has been its lack of integration of the national question, the ideology of Marxism-Leninism through revolutionary practice.

The mood of the masses never remains constant, and movements themselves also pass through phases of high and low activities. What is the duty of the revolutionary vanguard in an atmosphere of political recession? What is to be done when the masses have lost the will to protest and/or take up an aggressive stand.¹

First, let us examine what a vanguard is. A vanguard is a revolutionary organization that has the support of the masses and leads the masses throughout the course of the revolution leading to the seizure of state power. A vanguard guides the overwhelming majority of the masses through all phases of struggle leading up to and including mass revolutionary action.

During the last 37 years of the African-American national democratic revolution, different organizations, collectives, parties, coalitions and politico-military formations have constituted the vanguard of the movement for a brief (5-10 years is brief) period of time. A vanguard ust not only be able to lead one sector of the people. African-American revolutionaries including, New African Freedom Fighters, need to admit no true vanguard exists in the African-American national democratic revolution today.

While the BLA, RNA, APP, APSP and AAPRP have led the African-American national democratic revolution during the 1970's, these organizations alone cannot successfully lead the black liberation movement to victory. This assessment is necessary if Freedom Fighters are to correctly analyze the mistakes of the 60's/70's and rectify them. For a true vanguard to come into

¹Bizham, Jazane. Armed Struggle in Iran: The Road to Mobilization of the Masses. Iran Committee; London, England.

being which will historically evolve, all groups, collectives, and parties' experiences must be taken into consideration, picking out the positive aspects, respecting all true fighters to sum up the past, synthesize for the present and build for the future.

For a vanguard to evolve in the African-American National Democratic Revolution, it must come into existence from revolutionary practice; revolutionary actions that lead to the mobilization of the masses of African-Americans.

The vanguard must realize that the revolutionary armed movement is only one phase of the African-American national democratic revolution. This mistake was made in the mid 60's and early 70's. Many comrades felt "picking up the gun" was equivalent to being revolutionary. They supplanted the military question for all others and in actuality subordinated the political question: the political education, agitation and organization of the masses of people.

For a vanguard political front to emerge (not ready made) it will come into being through systematic organization of the masses around their immediate (economic and political) needs and also by actions that advance the struggle. The two are inter-linked.

In periods of political stagnation it is the duty of the vanguard to shorten it through revolutionary actions. For such actions to be successful, they need to eventually develop to larger ones which can only be led by an African-American National Liberation Front.

2. What is a front?

A front is a league of autonomous political, cultural, civic and communal parties, organizations, groups and individuals who express similarities of ideas and positions in relation to a given socio-political situation, and act collectively towards that situation on matters affecting common interests. As we have said, a unifying force within a front is the existence of a minimum programme to which all affiliates, irrespective of their ideological stance, pledge themselves to adhere. By definition, a front is a contradictory whole, a unity of opposites. (See Le Duan, Selected Writings, Hanoi, 1977, p. 182) While its composition restricts its activities and expansion, it is the same time its very composition which perpetuates the front. That is, while the limited interests of some parties, organizations and so on, tend to restrict and limit its activities, it is at the same time the unlimited and long-term interests of some of the affiliates which perpetuate it.

This necessarily suggests the necessity of ideological struggles within a front. In fact, it is these internal ideological struggles that determine, not only the aims and objectives of the front, but its very existence. Therefore, the need to conduct a principled ideological struggle within a front is not something divisive, but rather the responsibility of a leading force within it.²

The vanguard must have a mass line that is in correlation with the interests of the masses. The organization needs a coherent political program which has in it a stipulated set of objectives which the revolution intends to achieve.

3. Why politics must take command--line and practice.

Comrade Jazani sums up why politics must take command:

If the movement fails to employ means through which the people's passive sympathy can be transformed into active cooperation, if it fails to assume the leadership of the masses in a revolutionary struggle, then it will also fail to fulfill its revolutionary tasks.

If the guerillas promise victory over the regime without active participation on the part of the people, if not in theory, then at least in practice, they fail to grasp the historical role of the masses and fail to guide them in an extensive struggle against the regime; then not only will the movement fail to enlist their

²Mashinini, Alex. "Dual Power and the Creation of People's Committees," ANC., p. 5.

active support, but the masses will lose faith in methods of struggle that are feasible and will not turn to armed struggle. This, in effect, ensures their exclusion from struggle and their relegation to the status of spectators.

If the movement is unable to follow a line that will lead to the eventual mobilization of the masses, then despite important tactical success, despite an increase in mass sentiments and despite the guerillas' spectacular sacrifices, it will fail.³

4. Tactics and strategy for building the National Democratic Revolution for seizure of state power.

Tactics for building the National Democratic Revolution for seizure of state power should flow from the objective situation of the time. For tactics to be effective, they come from a strategy. We will return to tactics but first let's deal with strategy.

Strategy for building the National Democratic Revolution should be based on the objective and subjective conditions of the masses. The National Democratic Revolution for self-determination of Black America is both a national (oppressed nationality) and a class revolution at the same time because to fulfill the goal of national self determination, U.S. capitalism will be destroyed and a form of socialism established in both the black belt South and throughout what is now known as the United States. The National Democratic Revolution strategy should be a protracted strategy based on the mobilization, organization, unification and education of the masses. This strategy will be most effective if it utilizes the science of dialectical and historical materialism. This may sound abstract.

Essentially what we are saying is in the National Democratic Revolution class struggle does take place. But before the proletarian leadership and its vanguard can gain hegemony in the revolution several things must take place first. This accounts for the protracted nature of the revolution.

Marxist-Leninist and socialist education of the masses is necessary before the national democratic revolution can be successful. In the African-American situation, black people must be educated to a "African-American consciousness" that they are an oppressed nationality whose oppression is centered in the black belt South. African-Americans must learn how their oppression reaps

³Ibid., p. 52.

super-profits for capitalism and is inter-locked with the oppression of the working class and national oppressed people throughout the world. African-Americans need to know with the overwhelming support of the people of the world and with allies inside the U.S. imperialist state they can win a war for national liberation, self determination and socialism if that war is directed against the main enemy, the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.

How do the masses become educated to this? Several ways. First, through active participation in the national struggle for democratic rights (political reform) and class struggle (economic reform). In the process of mobilizing, organizing the masses around immediate issues that the masses see as important such as housing, jobs, wages, workers benefits, political empowerment, if this mobilizing (tactical mass line) does not flow a strategic (vanguard line), then actions will lead to a blind alley as they have for the last 30 years. This is where strategy, the theory of Marxism-Leninism/dialectical/historical materialism helps our actions.

While the revolutionary school for the masses is national/class struggle which is developed through self organization (spontaneous actions) and scientific mass organization (developed by cadre organizers working with the masses daily), there should also be conscious creative Marxist-Leninist/-scientific socialist education among the advanced sectors of all sections of the population. This education/training of the advanced intermediate from legal struggle is important for training "revolutionary leaders" to build a revolutionary front organization.

African-Americans presently politically are involved in the bourgeois legal electoral process. They still see that as an alternative for achieving political reform. Thousands if not millions will actively support Jesse Jackson for his bid for presidential nomination of the Democratic Party in 1988. While it may seem contemptuous, African-American revolutionaries need to be part of this political maturation, recruit the advanced from this process, educate the intermediate and neutralize the backward. According to the Joint Center for Political Studies (1986), the number of black elected officials increased from 1985 to 1986 from 6,056 to 6,424. However, this still represented less than 1.5 percent of the elective offices in the country. The distribution of black elected officials nationwide roughly parallels the distribution of the African-American population and 63.8 percent of all black elected officials. The North Central region has 19.8 percent of the nation's black population and 19.6 percent of all black elected officials. The Northeast with 18.5 percent black population has 10.9 percent black elected officials and the West, with 8.9 percent, has 5.7 percent of the black elected officials.⁴

⁴Ranks of Black Politicos rising JCPS reports, Call and Post, Thursday, October 23, 1986, p. 5B.

Given the African-American masses political backwardness, it seems like the masses will attempt to build a legalistic left/center wing inside the democratic party first. When this doesn't work an advanced democratic program will probably formulate in the next eight years around a legalistic social democratic People's Party to vote a transitional form or coalition (socialist) government in power. So the strategy for the national democratic revolution should be one of protracted struggle internally and externally. So we come to the question: How will African-Americans reach national and class consciousness? By political cadre organizers constantly politicalizing, teaching Marxism and re-educating the people when working side-by-side with them on local issues and struggles that involve the community. By raising advanced democratic and eventually socialist demands, cadres help shape the masses consciousness. Being the staunchest fighters for the people's interest them become living examples of what the African-American people should become. Cadres who constantly study while they organize will have more knowledge of the laws of social development than most and, therefore, will be able to get things done--winning.

5. How long will it take for the African-American democratic revolution to be successful?

One cannot put a date on a revolution because things are liable to change at anytime but one can make a general estimate. Because the enemy is still strong and has set the black liberation movement back due to the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program), the BLM's forces are weak, divided ideologically, confused and disorganized approximately (20) years; but this can change according to the ever-changing objective conditions. It will take a complete generation to be raised in scientific mass revolutionary struggle led by a vanguard organization for African-Americans to develop the "will" necessary to wage a scientific, consistent protracted struggle for national liberation.

On Building the Black Revolutionary Formation

First, cadres need to sum up the revolutionary experience of the 60's and 70's, but also seriously study other revolutions throughout the world and do an indepth study of the history of radicalism in the U.S.

Second, we must see that revolutionary organization of the advanced sector of the black proletariat grows out of the spontaneous development of the mass movement. But, also scientific organizing, proper planning (strategy) and ideology guides and helps cadres who emerge from the advanced sector to leap in social consciousness and helps advance and further organize the spontaneous movement of the masses.

So comes the question how will the Black Bolshevik organization come into formation? There must be systematic clandestine organizing. For instance, Lenin organized workers Marxist study circles in St. Petersburg for two years before bringing these groups (cells) together to form the League of Struggle.⁵

⁵Lenin and the Leagues of Struggle, [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978].

So the first suggestion is that revolutionary black Marxists begin to form clandestine study/work groups on a local level that are secretly fused with the masses in some way. That heavy concentration be placed on people firmly understanding the ideological perspective of the struggle, the question of creating a mass political consciousness remains to be a central problem for the Black revolution in America. The 1980's presents us with a unique situation in relation to revolutionary mass mobilization. The world situation is very complex with a major realignment of forces and constant shifts. For the African-American masses to understand the present crisis in the world capitalist system and how to proceed to utilize it to their advantage, it is necessary that they have a Marxist-Leninist world-view; a view moving from their self (subjective) interest and a process that stimulates critical thinking in the world today and how they relate to them. To say the least, this will be a great undertaking and a protracted process. But this process must first take place within each cadre. Every local cadre must not only reflect on its practice, daily day-to-day work, but should also reflect on the theoretical questions that are surging before us in this period. We must emphasize that this ideological/theoretical development in order to be "live," "creative," and not "dead" must be fused with organizing. The cadre must be a body of organizers that is always trying to "root in" among the masses.

Revolutionary black Marxists in any given area need to develop a strategic and tactical plan for building a base (zone) in their given areas. They must train cadre through theoretical work (study)/(Marxism-Leninism) and engaging them in scientific practice in the mass movement. This means systematically having cadre to go into the mass movement advancing each step in accordance with the level of the masses at that time. The three areas the revolutionary black Marxist cadre should concentrate is labor, political and community-based struggles. While engaging in mass work the revolutionary cadre at the same time must guard against "all for the mass movement." The cadre should develop a newsletter to project its line and to recruit. In going into the mass movement cadre, as much as possible, should try to join progressive black organizations already emerged from the mass movement. These organizations reflect the advanced or intermediate sectors of the black working class and is where cadre will find tested recruits for the black revolutionary formation. The black revolutionary formation should advance a tactical program; one in which it would want these mass movements and organizations (intermediate) to take up and also a strategic program around which it would want to unite the advanced around.

What the cadre wants to keep in mind that the labor process educates people and that the revolutionary formation wants to educate African-Americans that the capitalist class is both their national and class enemy.

In order to do this the black revolutionary formation needs a publication that exposes the masses to a national and international perspective showing the interconnections of struggle and the interrelations of forces. So the cadre will evolve through three paths which are interrelated and go in accordance to the mass movement. They are:

1. Education slogan-wise: Educate,
2. Agitation Agitate,
3. Action Organize,

The important thing to do is to begin to educate the African-American people who are mainly workers as to what class struggle is.⁶

6. What is class struggle?

Class struggle of the working class encompasses the economic struggle; struggle against individual capitalists or against individual groups of capitalists for the improvement of workers' conditions and also the political struggle against the racist/capitalist government for the broadening of people's rights, for democracy and the broadening of the political power of the working class.

When the workers of a single factory or of a single branch of industry engage in struggle against their employer or employers, is this class struggle? No, this is only a weak embryo of it. The struggle of the workers becomes a class struggle only when all the foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country are conscious of themselves as a single working class and launch a struggle that is directed, not against the government that supports that class. Only when the individual worker realizes that he is a member of the entire working class, only when he recognizes the fact that his petty day-to-day struggle against individual employers and individual government officials is a struggle against the entire bourgeoisie and the entire government, does his struggle become a class struggle. 'Every class struggle is a political struggle' these famous words of Marx are not to be understood to mean that any struggle of workers against employers must always be a political struggle. They must be understood to mean that the struggle of the workers against the capitalists inevitably becomes a political struggle insofar as it becomes a class struggle. It is the task of the social-Democrats, by organizing the workers, by

⁶Yermakova, Antonina, and V. Alentin Ratnikov. What are Classes and the Class Struggle? [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1986].

conducting propaganda and agitation among them, to turn their spontaneous struggle against their oppressors into the struggle of the whole class, into the struggle of a definite political party for definite political and socialist ideals. This is something that cannot be achieved by local activity alone.⁷

By being involved in the general broad mass movement of the African-American masses cadre can correctly make an assessment of the correlation of forces. Further consolidating the National Black United Front, organizing/being involved in and leading organizations of the masses (workers, students, elderly, prisoners, women, inner-city youth) while building an African-American revolutionary/liberation front is step one. Exhausting bourgeois illusions through legal mass revolutionary actions emphasizing mobilizations locally, statewide, regionally and nationally is step two, Revolutionaries should always develop a flexible non-sectarian approach while always advancing African-American demands in these struggles. It is hard to write about this subject because much will have to be learned from the struggle.

Generally speaking, African-Americans should be familiar with the laws of uneven development; the fluctuation and interrelationship between legal and armed struggle. We want to begin by addressing some incorrect ideas presented by Robert F. Williams and carried out organizationally by the Revolutionary Action Movement which spilled over into the Black Panther Party. Robert Williams in 1964 advanced the concept that African-Americans could win a guerilla war inside the United States.* (The potential of a minority revolution). He stated the 'war could be over in 90 days' and that the struggle should be based on revolutionary nationalism and would be a race war. The war would be won because of international allies who would come to African-Americans aid. Williams also stated the revolution could be led by a small tight-knit vanguard which would represent approximately 1% of the total African-American population who would create conditions which would force the

⁷Lenin, V. I. On Building the Bolshevik Party, Selected Writings: 1894 to 1905. (Chicago, IL: Liberator Press, 1976), pp. 78, 69.

entire African-American population into a confrontation. Several factors were missing and misinterpreted which led to a wave (generation) of revolutionaries to get burned out. To start off with in hindsight, 10% of the people cannot defeat 90% especially on racial lines. The analysis did not identify the enemy along class lines which greatly reduces the opposition. It did not take into account the many poor whites and working-class whites whose interests were in common with African-Americans. People's wars of inferior numbers have traditionally been protracted and after we study our struggle we came to learn that it has and will be protracted. But more important even if an oppressed nationality is fighting to win over allies from the oppressor nationality proletariat its struggle must be led by a vanguard that represents the interests of 99% of the people; therefore, it must be a mass vanguard as the ANC (African National Congress) has shown even under more favorable conditions. So, if an oppressed nationality uses armed struggle and African-Americans have used it in different periods of history in order for it to be successful it has to be built on the mass organization of people and must advance a program of demands that progressive whites can see its to their interests to unite and join in with. Sundiata Acoli describes a more mass approach:

It goes without saying that no imperialist nation will conduct a plebiscite among its oppressed nationalities, colonies (foreign or domestic) unless forced, usually by escalating waves of mass demonstrations, strikes and insurrections which often culminate in a people's war. To be successful, the demonstrations, strikes or insurrections must either defeat the oppressor or make it too costly for the oppressor to maintain its colonial domination any longer.⁸

While mass demonstrations, strikes and insurrections play a major role in defeating an imperialist-capitalist class rule, revolutionaries in America need to also utilize the political system to educate the masses. African-American revolutionaries must advance the struggle for legal black political empowerment by building a legal third political party that breaks African-Americans allegiance to the racist-capitalist system (Democratic-Republican

⁸Acoli, Sundiata. Sunviews [Newark, NJ, Creative Images, 1983], p. 61.

parties) and at the same time educate African-Americans that they cannot achieve freedom through the bourgeois legal political process. Assata Shakur describes what should be done in lull periods in absence of a general spontaneous mass movement:

There will be many periods of intense activity and there will be many lulls, periods of calm before the storm. History has taught us that. Let us use these periods of calm to consolidate our forces. We should be using this time to work toward ideological clarity and development. We should be working in disciplined study groups and examine our rhetoric, our premises, principles and our current history. We should be studying history, political and economic theory, international struggles and world politics, etc. We should be using time to improve our skills in mobilizing, organizing, printing, martial arts, communication and propaganda, etc. Amerika is the most media oriented country in the world, and we have got to find ways of utilizing the media to educate our people. We should also be using this time to engineer an overall strategy so that when the next period of activity develops, we are not like chickens in a hurricane but can offer leadership and direction and truly serve as a vanguard force.⁹

7. Building a mass movement for popular support of Revolutionary Action and and Self Determination.

The first thing African-American revolutionaries should realize is that the African-American national democratic revolution has its own laws of development and takes many zig-zag patterns.

The early 60's was the first independent mass confrontation phase. Some 50,000 students were arrested for having participated in the sit-in movement done in 1960. By the middle and late 60's the first ideologically led mass spontaneous insurrections erupted. The slogan,

⁹Angold, Bibi (ed.). Assata (Joanne Chesimard) Speaks and the People Speak on Assata.

"Burn, Baby, Burn," the battle cry of the Watts rebellion came to symbolize the insurrections. Falling short of forming "soviets" with demands with the exception of Detroit, the insurrections were basically spontaneous. The Revolutionary Action Movement attempted to give organization and armed resistance to these rebellions. RAM, SNCC and other organizations became targets of the U.S. government's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELLPRO) and were effectively neutralized, isolated and destroyed after Dr. King's assassination in 1968. During this period the Black Panther Party for Self Defense later to be known as the BPP under the leadership of Bobby Seale, Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver began growing into a nationwide organization. The U.S. government launched a most vicious campaign of "seek out and destroy" against the Black Panther Party. By 1970 the BPP was effectively neutralized by the United States government. Disillusioned, many thousands retreated entirely from active politics while others, distraught with so-called bourgeois legality, went underground. The result was what the government had wanted to create "a protracted lull" period. In this period two formations, though weakened, survived: the provisional government of the Republic of New Africa (RNA) and the Black Liberation Army (BLA); which waged an armed guerilla struggle against the counter-offensive of the state.

Also, it should be recognized from the mid-70's the African People's Party led in a struggle for a public mass day-to-day style of work, helped lead the 1979 mass mobilization to the United Nations, developed links with black workers' struggles and led the black united front movement in Philadelphia to stop Rizzo from running another term as mayor.

The APP also led the ideological struggle for a creative approach to the national question, scientific socialism, class struggle and socialist revolution in the U.S. During the 1980's as old formations fade into the background, new formations such as the Black Workers Unity Movement (BWUM) led by the Black Workers for Justice (BWJ) in North Carolina, the New African People's Organization (NAPO), Black Man Against Crack, Black Self Defense and others are coming to the fore. These formations which evolved out of mass struggles from within the African-American national democratic revolution are indigenous revolutionary formations that the African-American struggle has produced.

But before we begin to discuss building a revolutionary African-American movement, we want to talk about a code of conduct that will make that movement strong. One revolutionary who stands as the beacon of light to guide us is the spirit of Malcolm. Malcolm X, like no other revolutionary in modern times, electrified the world. Malcolm was not only fearless, but what made him so important was his honesty, sincerity, humility, self-sacrificing spirit, and total dedication to the people. Malcolm had done just about everything in the book of life. But his transformation made him a reflection of what the people should become. Before African-American revolutionaries can begin to "think" about building popular support for revolutionary action and self determination, we must undergo the same transformation Malcolm underwent; that is the question of revolutionary morals and revolutionary morality. While the question of sex is part of the question of revolutionary morality, all forms of degenerate, hedonism and perversion must be weeded from the ranks of revolutionaries. What we are talking about is "spirit," es spirit de corps, the spirit of revolution; the spiritual will of the people.

Lenin says morality serves the purpose of helping human society rise to a higher level and to get rid of the exploitation of labor. He viewed morality as what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and unite all the toilers around the proletariat in order to build a new society of socialists. Lenin felt communist morality is the morality which serves this struggle, which unites toilers against all exploitation.

We reject all morality based on extra-human and extra class concepts. We say that it is a deception, a fraud, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists. We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is derived from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.¹⁰

African-American revolutionaries must become the new men and women of black America. African-American revolutionaries should be devoid of the aspects that capitalist society injects in extremities, forms of exploitation and perversion into the masses--prestige, power, sex, money and drugs.

Only by having an army that our people can trust and respect will the masses be won over to the cause of national self determination. The BLA has already proven it has the courage and fighting ability but New African Freedom Fighters need to display a high proletarian moral code and revolutionary discipline.

A factor African-American revolutionaries often overlook is Black-on-Black crime. Black-on-Black crime, particularly the rip-offs against our elders is one of the highest political crimes committed. Ripping off our elders and women, neighbors, is anti-African and should be treated as such.

In order to build a mass popular movement for revolutionary action and self determination, the Army must protect the people from enemies inside the African-American nation as well as from colonial oppressors. It is only when the Army makes the streets safe for African-American elders, women and children to walk day or night, can the Army think about mobilizing mass support for self determination. This internal rectification within the African-American nation is a pre-condition to building the "spiritual will," unity of the people to re-initiate a mass offensive.

¹⁰Lenin, V.I. The Tasks of the Youth Leagues. [Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1975], p. 11.

Revolutionary Marxism-Leninism must become the mass ideology of African-Americans.

Other aspects of building a mass movement for popular support of revolutionary action and self determination is for revolutionary internationalist/scientific socialists to join reform mobilizations of the social democrats. During these mobilizations, revolutionary internationalists should raise revolutionary alternatives, programs, slogans of self determination, and reparations. There are many such mobilizations, demonstrations every year and constantly on the local level.

8. Why we must support freedom fighters.

New African Freedom Fighters as the African-American National Democratic Revolution's highest physical manifestation of black America's collective/historical will to be free. New African Freedom Fighters such as Sundiata Acoli, Assata Shakur, Geronimo Pratt, Dhoruba Moore, Zayd Shakur, Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Mark Essex, George Jackson, Jalil (Tony) Bottoms, Herman Bell, Albert Washington, Jonathon Jackson, Komboa Lorenzo Ervin, Frank Fields, Harold Russell, Kombozi Amistad Butler, Masai Gibson, Safiya Asya Bukhari, Shasha Henry Brown, Michael Ashanti, Alston, Gunny Haskins, Harold Walid Simmons, Rema Kearney, Twyman Myers, Woody Green, Kimu White, Victor Cumberbatch, Seth Hayes, Andaliwa, Dalou, Fulani Sunni Ali, Mtayari Sundiata, Sekou Odinga, Kwesi Balagoon, Abdul Majid, Basheer Hameed and countless others follow in the tradition of Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, the maroon guerillas, Seminole warriors, Colored Farmers Association, African Blood Brotherhood, the fighting veterans from World War I and II, Robert F. Williams, Deacons for Defense to Brother Malcolm X.

Brother Malcolm was an urban guerilla. He definitely saw the need to build a Black Liberation Army. This is the meaning of the Ballot or Bullet. Twenty years later the Ballot or Bullet is even more relevant. New African Freedom Fighters are the living reality of Malcolm's political/military perspective. "Malcolm lives" through the actions of the Black Liberation Army whose fighters "use any means necessary" to secure self determination and dignity as human beings.

What must be realized is the African-American National Democratic Revolution has reached a new stage. African-Americans need to realize it because the enemies of African-Americans realize it. African-Americans can no longer afford to stand back and not support our freedom fighters.

Every Freedom Fighter of all nations inside the U.S. imperialist state (the belly of the beast) must be supported. Freedom Fighters who are locked down are "prisoners of war." We must demand amnesty and their release to a socialist country. They are Freedom Fighters who have engaged in armed struggle against the world's criminal (the U.S. racist-capitalist system).

Freedom Fighters who are in the whirlwind must be protected by the entire African-American Nation.

The African-American National Democratic Revolution develops from practice. This is where our theory comes from.

Revolution means breaking from the old tradition and creating something new. Collectively, African-Americans have never ninety-nine to one hundred percent-wise supported our freedom fighters in the last 400 years. We have chosen to accommodate ourselves with the system hoping the system would reform itself. But what is there to accommodate with or integrate into now?

Support for our freedom fighters must be the central part of our demand for "reparation" for the war crimes committed by Amerikkka against the African-American nation for over 400 years. Not until we as a people continuously support and build a Black Liberation Army will the African-American Democratic Revolution be able to move forward.

9. Which way forward to seizure of state power?

The African-American Democratic Revolution is a protracted struggle taking many hundreds of years to reach the liberation stage. In that historical process African people who were brought from different tribes and parts of Africa, intermingled with Native-Americans and raped by Europeans, forced to till the land of the Black Belt South were welded by oppression and resistance to that oppression into an African-American nation.

Because our oppressors have understood how they built their "Empire," they have hidden the true nature of our oppression and history.

The oppressors constantly spread false ideas (ideology) into our people, constantly dividing us into little tribes; divided by ideology, religion, states, regions, cities, sections of cities, families, personalities and all types of nonsense to keep our people divided.

African-Americans need to realize that we are all in this struggle whether we like it or not. The enemy sees all African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, oppressed minorities as a threat. When the contradictions become such, the Empire cannot adjust to it; the Imperial guard (Nazis, KKK, Christian survivalists, fascist secret orders) will come full blast on all of us. "The handwriting is on the wall." It does not matter if you have not done anything since the 30's, 40's, 50's or 60's. You are still on the radical index in the computer bank in Washington, D.C., and will not get off of it until death.

Malcolm said, "A word to the wise is sufficient." Amerikkka has no alternative but to become fascistic with forced labor/concentration camps. Don't expect the camps to be called that.

But in the protracted process leading to victorious national liberation, what is the general way forward? The first thing is that we have to realize that revolution is a painful process. It is constantly changing. There will be differences in/after the revolution. But we must understand dialectics, historical process, methods of resolving contradictions among the people and contradictions between the people and the enemy and agents of the enemy.

We must develop a flexible approach to revolution, but carry out a very firm principled struggle at the same time.

Our thinking/practice must be one with interests of the people. The 70's and early 80's should be viewed as the critical phase in which a fierce battle took place inside of the African-American National Democratic Revolution to develop a scientific socialist approach to winning our liberation.

What we have failed to do is sum up these experiences and pass them on to the youth. The African-American National Democratic Revolution will continue with or without us, and there is no guarantee we will see liberation in our lifetime. The African-American National Democratic Revolution is a historical process which cannot be reversed involving 30 million African-Americans.

Protracted people's war in Amerikkka must put forth a new slogan. We commit suicide everyday. The number one killer of Black men between ages 15-30 is another Black man. If you kill yourself that is suicide, isn't it? You can't call that genocide or can you? Is it a form of "self destruct" genocide?

Though we have not won every battle, we will win the war. We have and will have casualties. Our strategy must be based on protracted struggle, understanding the dual process taking place--political/military/economic/cultural/social/legal armed struggle.

10. The ideological transformation necessary for a protracted struggle

Politics is the art of the possible. Beyond the limits of the possible begins adventurism. It is for this reason that we appraise our possibilities carefully and soberly and map out our tasks taking this into consideration.¹¹

Ever since Huey P. Newton initiated the foco theory and the adventurist though "individualistic heroic" theory of revolutionary suicide sectors of the BLM have carried that policy forward. The latest example was that of the MOVE organization in Philadelphia. This slogan helped shift the emphasis of struggle from the Anglo-American capitalist class to individual police. While many police are racist and reactionary politically, all are not. Every police should not be called a pig because every police does not have a fascist mentality and to call all police pigs isolates, neutralizes and/or forces liberal police into the camp of the right wing. The object of a revolution is to make friends and win allies wherever possible.

¹¹Mikhail Gorbachev, "In His Words," U.S. News and World Report, Nov. 9, 1987, Vol. 103, No. 19, p. 74.

For the last few years many movement circles have been engaged in the discussion of forming a black revolutionary cadre. In order to clearly understand the creation and nature of such a cadre we must first analyze the situation.

Quite a few revolutionaries have mistaken the time, thinking it is a revolutionary period when in actuality we are in a pre-revolutionary period. These brothers have the tendency to overestimate themselves and underestimate the enemy. They have become "image stricken" and mentally drunk from the enemy's reports on them by his mass media. Theories such as "Revolutionary Suicide" develop as a result of being isolated from the people. These brothers have lost contact with the people and have failed to learn from them. They have lost faith in the people's wisdom and consequently become desparate in their attempt to rationalize their isolation from the masses. In terms of scientific revolutionary ideology, strategy and tactics there is no such thing as revolutionary suicide. The role of the revolutionary is to live as long as possible to enhance the revolution, building cadres and mass organizations among the people. This means that if it is necessary for him to retreat for years, he/she will do so. Revolutionary suicide comes from an ingrained martyr complex that is present in the psyche of many black revolutionaries. The black revolutionary must become aware of this strand within him and constantly attempt to weed it out. Revolutionary suicide is an ideology of desparation and advernturism which develops because of one's distance from the people. It is commandism in its most exhausted form. It says, "If the people are ready or not we are going to create a revolutionary situation." As a political guide, revolutionary suicide must be fought and isolated.

Revolutionary wisdom is a term that seems appropriate for our situation. This does not mean we cease to struggle. In fact, it means we increase struggle but on a scientific basis. But we should learn from the correctness as well as the mistakes from the past and present.

No one can map out the exact path of the seizure for state power. The path becomes clearer as the struggle develops. But a strategic line for the general course of the revolution becomes foreseen. The line is that the African-American National Democratic Revolution is simultaneously uniting all classes of African-Americans, balancing inner class struggle with the African-American proletariat/vanguard front, leading the struggle to socialist revolution.

The dual process and zig-zag patterns revolutions take are hard to adjust to. The processes: objective, subjective, legal/armed which was already discussed must be thoroughly understood. Not until millions of African-Americans are in the street, engaging in work stoppages, general strikes, seizures of factories, armed insurrections, demanding self determination will African-American National Democratic Revolution be successful.

How do we get there?

11. The black revolutionary cadre, mass organizations, and the National Black Liberation Front

How do we develop a black revolutionary cadre that is firmly rooted among our people, expresses their national race and class interests and that has a scientific program and ideology? The first thing that must be understood is that such a cadre must represent all classes of black America although it must be led by the black working class and supported by the black underclass (permanently unemployed). It must be a cadre of national liberation because we, as a people, are engaged in a national democratic revolution seeking to end an American form of neo-colonialism over the oppressed African-American nation. Though class conflicts and class contradictions exist within Black America, these contradictions are not as acute as the national, race/class contradictions between the capitalist class of the oppressor nation and ourselves. These national, race/class contradictions have also produced a new form of class stratification unlike any other in the world. It is a society that pronounces to be free of racial discrimination by law but institutional structures a form of "hidden apartheid" in the labor market reserved for workers of color.

In America a larger (strata) percentage of Anglo-American workers profit from the super-exploitation of non-whites and benefits temporarily from domestic racism. This is the material basis for Anglo-American workers false class consciousness. By supporting racism and imperialism, a large sector of the Anglo-American working class joins in with the Anglo-American bourgeoisie in helping to super-exploit the African-American people. They in return become part of the Anglo-American exploiting class that forces most African-American people in this society to become to a large extent a black underclass. Presently 46% of all Blackmen in America are unemployed.

The only way for Anglo-American workers to escape this class is exploitation by total transformation. This entails supporting African-American workers in their just struggles, fighting for self determination of all oppressed nations, accepting the leadership of the internally domestic oppressed nations/minorities, uniting with them and actively engaging in mass revolutionary action to overthrow the monopolist capitalist/imperialist state.

In order for the African-American nation to contribute to the multi-national revolutionary process, it must organize within itself for as much revolutionary strength possible. This means organizing as many elements as possible from all classes in the African-American community to build an African-American Organization of National Liberation (Front).

Logically, the African-American working class representing 90% of the African-American people will lead the African-American Organization of National Liberation. The Black working class is the most stable, consistently revolutionary and best organized are other reasons why it will lead the organization. Also, the organization of African-American liberation wants to create an economic system that does not exploit people, socialism moving in the general trend of world history to eventually form a classless society.

History shows that the black bourgeoisie has participated in fighting racism and even class oppression in certain historical circumstances, but it vacillates and turns traitor in other situations serving its own economic and political interests. Therefore, it is imperative that the organization of national African-American liberation be based on the African-American working class. The Organization of African-American liberation must select progressive elements from all classes in Black America to lead it to national liberation. In order to accomplish this task the organization must send its cadres into the mass movement and mass organizations to provide them with proper guidance. Cadres being revolutionary leaders should become the masses leaders of the mass movements. This does not mean organization cadres must lead mass organizations. It may come about that the membership of a mass organization vote cadres to lead it but it will not be the policy of the organization to seize control of mass organizations because this will kill their role of being mass. The policy of the organization will only be to influence these organizations, educate and recruit "the advanced" from mass organizations into the organization of African-American liberation, while still remaining in the mass organizations.

The question now confronting us is how does the Black working classes give political leadership through its organization to all revolutionary classes in the oppressed African-American nation? First, by struggling around the basic issues that affect our people (better working conditions, more skilled jobs for black people, welfare rights for the poor, organizing the unemployed to demand full employment, community control of schools, better housing and adequate health care) by advancing political slogans that are in accord with the course of historical development and by putting forward calls of action for each stage of development and with each major turn of events thus translating the slogans into reality. Secondly, the Black working class, the vanguard of the black liberation organization should set the example in achieving specific objectives when the whole oppressed nation erupts into mass spontaneous revolutionary action. Third, the black liberation organization should establish proper relations with its allies, develop and consolidate its alliances with them but never compromising its political objectives. Fourth, it should expand the black liberation organization's ranks, maintain strict discipline and ideological unity. By doing this, the Black liberation organization can give political leadership to all Black America.

The Black liberation organization's relationship to mass African-American labor organizations: The African-American liberation (cadre) organization sees the development of mass black organizations as a positive step. Black liberation organization cadres should join and struggle inside these organizations and educate its members in the ideology of Marxism-Leninism/scientific socialism. In addition, cadres should win members over to the organization's minimum program then introduce them eventually to its maximum program. Organization members should fight within mass black labor organizations to keep them as mass organizations and not to prematurely become closed-door organizations with the title of mass.

There is a tendency within some black mass organizations to confuse mass organizations with a vanguard party. This occurred inside the League of

Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) in Detroit in the early 70's. Led by the Watson* faction, some comrades who were well versed in Marxism-Leninism had the tendency of narrowing the League (LRBW), a mass organization, believing that everyone should have declared themselves a Marxist-Leninist. Watson envisioned the League (LRBW) of becoming a state-wide Black Marxist-Leninist Party. This tendency caused a false wedge between those who considered themselves revolutionary nationalists and it eventually led to a split inside of the League. As a result of the split, both factions were rendered into a limited cadre formation and lost their mass character.

Organization (cadre) members should be careful and should fight for open door policy for mass organizations because closed doorism impedes the spontaneous movement from becoming a scientifically organized movement and limits the present organized movement from having a mass character.

The black liberation organization's relationship to major developments in the movement: At all times organization members must study the general trend of the movement and watch with a keen eye for major shifts and developments. The black liberation organization, because of its relative weaknesses, cannot provide organization leadership to the spontaneous actions of the people, but it can provide it with ideological leadership. A revolution does not develop from spontaneous movements but from scientifically organized movements. However, spontaneity plays a role in revolution. New forces often emerge from the spontaneous outbreaks, upsurges of the people and often these outbursts lead to major leaps in social development of the entire movement. The black vanguard organization must then be involved in day-to-day struggle and by doing so, it will be abreast of all major developments among the people.

The black liberation organization's relationship to the National African-American liberation front: In order for a national black liberation front to form, it must be based on the alliance of the black working class, black underclass (unemployed), black petty bourgeoisie and elements of the black intelligentsia.

During the stage of the democratic revolution, it is impossible to avoid contradictions and struggles between classes, parties and political groupings, but it is both possible and essential to put an end to such struggles as are detrimental to unity and resisting . . . the enemy.¹²

*John Watson, one of the leaders of the sectarian Marxist-Leninist faction of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW).

¹²Mao Tse Tung, Selected Works, Vol. 1 [Peking:] p. 272.

The black liberation organization must attempt to create a national black liberation front in order to unite as many elements in Black America as possible. The role of the cadre is to provide the front with a revolutionary perspective. By working from below and organizing the masses, the cadre organization will be able to provide the front with a disciplined organizational base and will be able to lead our people to national liberation.

By joining in with and helping to build powerful broad-based coalitions/formations in which the people are involved is the only way we are going to move forward.

The democratic aspect of our revolution does involve masses of people--"the masses making decisions for themselves." What we need to learn how to do is create more forms for the masses to learn and make decisions for themselves--creating a true people's democracy or dual structure in te protracted struggle. We need to create an African-American National Congress.¹³

The 1st plenary session on Self Determination held in New York in 1981 was a good beginning of this process. Since the Colored People's Convention in the 1800's to the National Negro Congress of the 1930's to the Congress of African People and the Black Political Convention of the 1970's, the idea has been around a long time.

We should not see our organizational forms as competitive because none or all of the African-American activists in the country can presently mobilize 500,000 to one million people in the street. So, people's democracy, propelling the self-education, self organization approach, developing People's councils where the masses make decisions will be an important step towards the seizure of state power. The people will determine the course to self determination, liberation and an end to class oppression. Therefore, the key is building strategic alliances among the people. Once building strategic alliances among the people, building mass political bases among the people, will the people be won over to the cause of national self determination.

Our building strategic alliances with anyone else must be based on the principle that they also are working to build a mass political base among their people. None of this is coming overnight, so there is much work to be done.

11/28/87

¹³v. I. Lenin, Two Tactics [

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Elementary race and class reading list. The following reading list was established for students beginning a scientific approach to the study of African-Americans in the United States.

Economic

Daniel R. Fusfeld and Timothy Bates, The Political Economy of the Urban Ghetto [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984].

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William Nelson and Philip J. Meranto, Electing Black Mayors [Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1977].

Sheila Collins, The Rainbow Coalition [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1986].

Rod Bush, ed., The New Black Vote [San Francisco: Synthesis Publication, 1984].

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