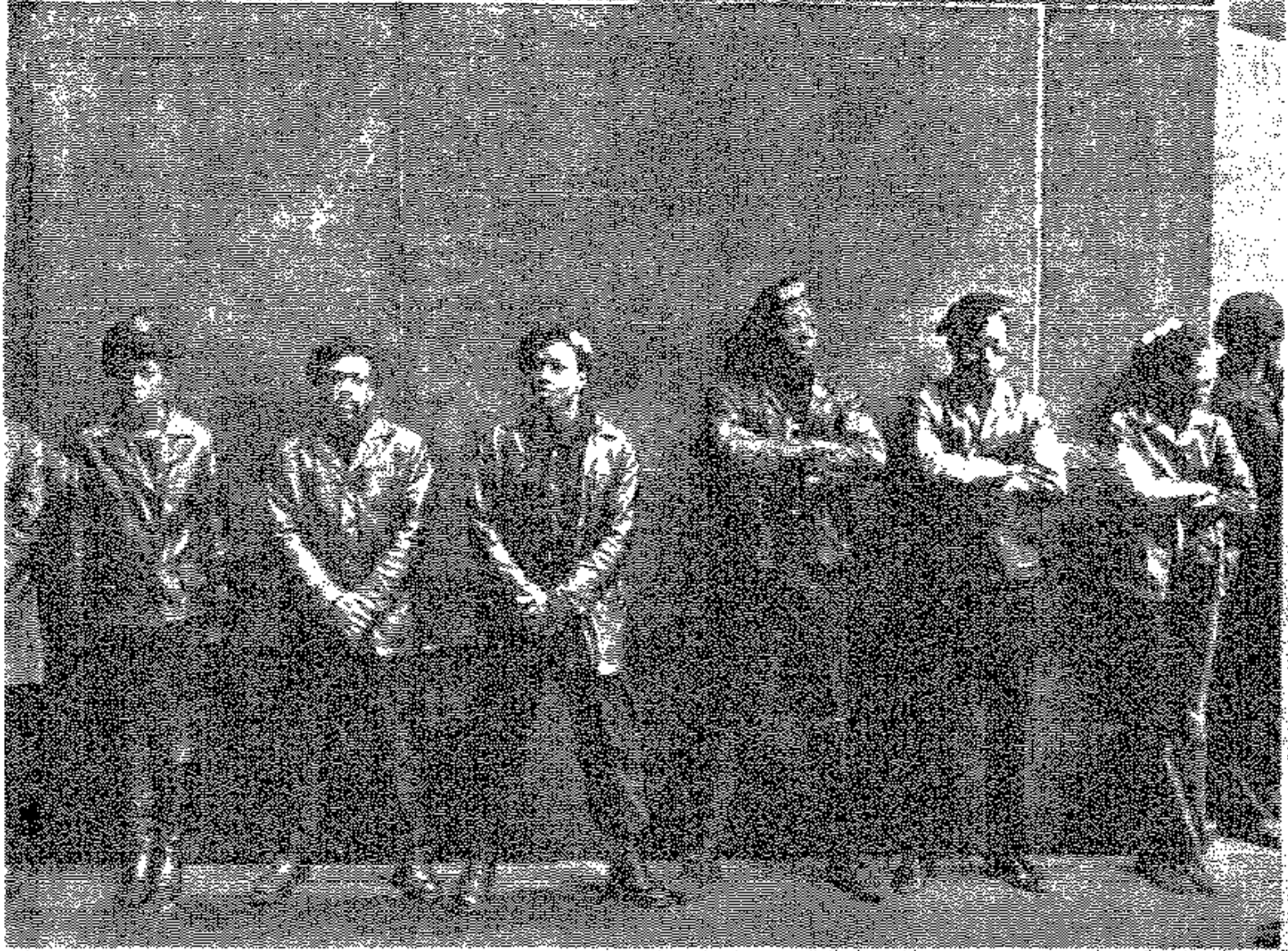


THE ULTIMATE JUSTICE OF THE PEOPLE



BLACK LIBERATION

(CULTURAL & REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM)

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 REP publishes articles on imperialism, political economy, the black colony, the third world, labor, and the university, as well as Something Else, a forum for post-campus organizing. Write for a sample copy of the News-letter and a list of all our publications.

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The recent murders of John Huggins and Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter of the Black Panther Party and the subsequent implication and arrest of several members of Ron Karenga's US organization has served to dramatize the glaring ideological deficiencies inherent in the thought of many of today's so-called black cultural nationalist organizations.

In this particular instance, the onus of cultural nationalism's historic fallacy just happened to fall on Karenga and US organization. US, though representative of many of the negative trends embodied in much of cultural nationalism's programmatic content, by no means should be viewed here as the sole malefactor. Before continuing though, it must be made clear that black cultural nationalism, in varied forms, historically (the Harlem arts renaissance of the 20's being an excellent example) as well as in the contemporary black experience has been a positive force. It has played an extremely vital role at times in both heightening the level of the black liberation struggle while at the same instant increasing in stages the development of black radical consciousness.

Nonetheless, at this critical point in the liberation struggle it is time for black people to make a thorough questioning analysis of many of the assumptions and goals that have been put forth by many of the self-appointed "new-wave" black spokesmen. Such an analysis I feel will help to place in a more tenable perspective such as yet unsatisfactorily answered questions as: "what do we as black freedom fighters want?" and more importantly "how do we go about getting it." For at present what is sorely needed is to move the liberation struggle from the trappings of personal ego-building phraseology to the collective development of productive ideology. This must be done if black people don't want to see other Huggins' and Carters'.

As can readily be seen... The past half decade has seen awakened in the spirit of Afro-America a new found sense of spiritual and cultural awareness. Black people, in ever increasing numbers, have begun to turn the traditional racist myth of black inferiority around full cycle to the point where now, as the expressions go, black is both beautiful and superior. Symbolically representing the resurgence of black cultural awareness is the current popularity of such things as the "Afro" or natural hair styles, the wearing of traditional African dress, the adoption of African names and the vague attempts on the part of some black people to learn an African language. As Leroi Jones, one of the chief architects of the new black cultural renaissance, has written: "The Black Man must aspire to Blackness." and "The Black Man must idealize himself as Black."

The concepts and ideas embodied in the philosophy of black cultural nationalism have also laid the groundwork for the formation of many new black organizations in Afro-America.

To a great extent, however, the existence of these organizations dedicated to the principles and precepts of cultural nationalism has a very defined and extended history. In fact,

one would be correct in stating that cultural nationalism (at least the internalized feeling) has been a component part of the black experience ever since the first slave ship from Africa arrived in the Western Hemisphere.



The emotive desire embedded within the black masses in the Americas for a national existence and self-expression was the dominant force behind many of the early slave rebellions. Though Cultural nationalism was always present in the manner, ritual and song of black people during slavery, it wasn't until the mid-19th century in the U.S. that any substantive political or social organizational framework could be developed for its expression. The main impetus behind this development was the theoretical writings of a Harvard trained black physician--Dr. Martin Delaney. Delaney, even at that early date, disdained the use of the term negro and preferred to be called black. Delaney, born of pure West African stock, took a pointed interest in the study of African history and culture. Delaney, later, in his seminal work, The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered, published in 1852, outlined a program which he felt would speak to the immediate needs of black people. Part of Delaney's program called for the emigration to, and the colonization of Eastern Africa by black

people. With this plan, Delaney became one of the first black leaders to advance the idea of a black mass exodus back to Africa. This idea, of course, was to assume much greater proportions in the ideology of many later cultural nationalist organizations. Delaney also was the first to enunciate the idea that black people in their separate existence in America did, in fact, constitute a "Nation within a Nation." Since Delaney, the thread of this ideal has been picked up and expounded by nearly every major Black Nationalist spokesman ranging from Garvey to Malcolm X.

Nonetheless, Delaney in much of his planning revealed many of the theoretical weaknesses which have plagued to a large degree many of today's black cultural groupings. One of the more obvious here being the tendency toward rank opportunism. As an example, Delaney in calling for black people to return to Africa actively sought the "aid" and "assistance" of the European Nations; England and France in particular. This came at a time when both of these nations along with the rest of Europe were greedily trying to establish colonial hegemony over the Third World continents of Asia and Africa. Delaney further felt that the contacts with these European nations should be made by certain select representatives of Afro-America which were to be chosen from a "confidential council." This was little more than a 19th century version of the "black missionary complex," which today almost completely colors the outlook and mentality of the black elite in their dealings with the black masses.



With the Civil War and "emancipation", the organized structure of the cultural nationalist movement collapsed. However, its spirit remained a part of the latent character of the now "free" black masses. It wasn't until the early 20th century, with the establishment by Cyril V. Briggs of the African Blood Brotherhood, that cultural nationalism again received direct and open expression. The Brotherhood based its name on an African cultural rite of fraternization which demanded that the parties involved mingle their drops of blood. The Brotherhood from its beginning was a secrete black organization dedicated to black liberation through racial pride and equality. Included in the Brotherhood's eight point program was the call for a black united front. Brigg's movement, like Delaney's before him, though, only served as a prelude to the granddaddy of all the cultural nationalist movements. And that was, of course, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association's (U.N.I.A.) "back to Africa" movement. With the emergence of Marcus Garvey, cultural nationalism for the first time attained a legitimate wide-spread recognition from literally millions of black people throughout the world (for Garvey's movement was truly international in both appeal and scope). Garvey's skillful espousal of black nationalist tenets combined with his ability to organize black people into a mass base assured his U.N.I.A. of the large membership ever enjoyed by any black organization in America. Garvey's movement added two new dimensions to the ideological framework of cultural nationalism. The first was anti-communism. Garvey indicated on several occasions that he considered "the white capitalist...to be the only convenient friend" of the black worker. In addition, Garvey stated: "Fundamentally what racial difference is there between a white Communist, Republican or Democrat? . . . On the appeal of race interest the Communist is as ready as either to show his racial...superiority over the Negro."

To a degree, what Garvey alludes to here is and has been true in all too many cases in the past. Often the white communist, in so far as black people have been concerned, has been just that -- white first and then (if there is anything left) communist. Also, white racism, being the all-powerful factor in American life that it is, Garvey's mistrust of anything white was at least in part understandable. However, Garvey's anti-communism was much more than just a defense or reaction against the omnipresence of white racism. It was a tactical ploy skillfully designed to cover up the personal exploitative designs held by the black elite themselves (many of whom formed a nucleus of Garvey's organization) on the economy of the black communities. Garvey's anti-communism, based on the mistrust of white people, was phony and misleading, particularly in light of the fact that he was more than willing to work with the Ku Klux Klan (who for the most part were nothing but Southern Democrats with sheets). According to Garvey: "I regard the Klan, the Anglo-Saxon Clubs and White American Societies as better friends of the race than all other groups of hypocritical whites put together."

The second extension Garvey made in the framework of cultural nationalism was the greater emphasis put on the role of black business as a means for black liberation. Whether realized or not, the emphasis placed on black capitalist business, by Garvey, was the direct complement of his position of anti-communism. It should not be a surprise, though, that Garvey did look to business as a source of strength for the building of his movement. For Garvey, as it is known, came to the U.S. in 1915 for the specific purpose of meeting with Booker T. Washington and thereby joining his then Jamaica-based U.N.I.A. up with Washington's movement for black (elite) economic "independence." As Garvey himself related: "I read 'Up from Slavery' by Booker T. Washington and then my doom -- if I may so call it -- of being a race leader dawned upon me." After Washington's death, Garvey lost little time in trying to implement his black capitalist economic program which it must be said even at that early point was already outdated and valueless in so far as the practical needs of the black masses.

Unperturbed, Garvey in 1919 set up both the Black Star Steamship Line and the Negro Factories Corporation which ostensibly was designed to promote business opportunities among black people. As expected, like his smokescreen anti-communism, Garvey's emphasis on black business as a solution to the economic depression of black people played right into the hands of the black elite. As past practice has demonstrated, capitalist business enterprise whether white or black is based solely on the motive of profit; to be more specific, exploitative profit. The black elite, who in reality are little more than corporate enterprises front men in the black communities, have gotten rich themselves off of the meagre earnings of the black workers. Another aspect of the black elite's pursuit of capitalist economics, is the intensification and broadening of the class cleavages within the black communities; thus preventing the attainment of a genuine black united front against capitalist exploitation and racism. As can be seen then black capitalism's proponents -- the black elite -- effects the corporate power structure's main desire. It creates divisions while maintaining vested interest. So Garvey with his promotion of black business enterprise laid the foundation for the future "Buy Black" and "support black" campaigns which the black elite over the years has so judiciously plugged in their quest for profit.

After Garvey's departure from the scene, the Nation of Islam under the leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, became the main standard bearer of the tradition of cultural nationalism. The Nation, since its founding, has, unlike the earlier cultural nationalism movements, placed an inordinate weight on the spiritual content of cultural nationalism.



As should be apparent from this brief historical overview, cultural nationalism is deeply rooted in the black experience in white racist America. And like their historic forerunners, the new wave cultural nationalist organizations have adopted, largely unrevised, the same negative theoretical flaws akin to the earlier movements. The only difference being that the scene and circumstance has changed. The Newark Black Power Conference of 1967 is an excellent illustration. Many of the individuals and organizations that played a prominent role in the planning of the conference were basically practitioners of cultural nationalism. As was the case with Garvey, (though on a more restricted basis) nearly fifty years earlier, much of the financing for the activities of the conference itself came directly from some of America's leading corporations. (Robert Allen has placed the number at 50. For a more comprehensive analysis of the role of corporations and foundations, especially Ford, in the subversion of the black liberation movement, see: "Dialectics of Black Power.") The white corporate power structure has shown time and again that it is always ready to move in and either co-opt with money and promises or suppress and subvert with force and violence any movement that it perceives as being a threat to the maintenance of its self-interest, i.e. exploitation and oppression of America's workers. With cultural nationalism, though, it seems American corporate enterprise has never had to consider the latter approach (force and violence). The organizers of the Black Power Conference, it appears, were more than receptive to overtures of assistance (pay-offs?) from white corporate enterprise. In noting some of the resolutions that the conference went on record as supporting, the indications are that the white corporations involved spent their money well. One of the first resolutions passed out of the conference which dealt with black economic planning called for the acceleration of "buy black" policies within all black communities." In other words more black capitalism. On the political front, one of the major resolutions passed called for the election of twelve more black congressmen in the 1968 elections. In passing this resolution, it is assumed that the conference agrees with Ebony magazine when it suggests that somehow a black face in a political office represents Black Power. The fact of the matter is that there is absolutely no equation between the two. Cleveland today has a black mayor, but don't think for one minute that the black masses in Cleveland have any real control over the destinies of their lives. Black self-determination is no more a reality in Cleveland, or for that matter anywhere else in the country where black people are "represented" by a black political figure (head), today than it was before the election of Carl Stokes. The only thing that has changed in Cleveland is the color of the illusion. (Now black people during a rebellion can have the "pleasure," as was the case during the rebellion there several months ago, of seeing a black, rather than a white, mayor call in the police and national guard.)

As a final example of the cooptative pressure put on the Black Power Conference (read: cultural nationalism) let us examine what was undoubtedly one of the most negative proposals passed by the conference. This called for the assignment of "only black police captains to black neighborhoods." With the passage of this resolution, the conference again apparently feels that a black face, this time behind the badge (and the gun); equals Black Power. Sadly enough, by now it should be obvious enough to black people from past experience that a black cop, when it comes to dealing with the problems of black people in the community, is no different or better than a white cop. In many instances a black cop has been known to go out of his way to make it tougher on black people. Make no mistake, this fact should be understood for exactly what it is. A black policeman, like his white counterpart, is still the street arm of the white corporate power structure. His job remains, as a matter of course, that of protector of the interests and welfare of the exploitative businesses and property located in the black communities. This as opposed to his stated purpose namely protecting and serving the people of the community. In America, as the system is presently constituted, the allegiance of the police regardless of both color and disposition, will always remain with the racist power structure. In case for some this truth is hard to accept, one has only to observe the conditions in Harlem and Chicago where black police captains and officials are now, and have been for some time, a reality. The institutions of social oppression there remain unchanged. Or one can take the example of Lucius Amerson, the first black sheriff elected in the modern history of Alabama. Amerson was put in office in Macon county, Alabama by black votes. Amerson, nevertheless, consistently repudiated the black power movement. When black students at Tuskegee Institute (which is located in Tuskegee, the Macon County seat) went on strike and occupied a building on campus in protest against the oppressive conditions at the college (imposed by a black elite controlled administration), Amerson called in the national guard. As one student there put it Amerson was "preoccupied with order." Amerson, of course, had no choice. As a bought and paid agent of the power structure he was forced to respond, like any other dutiful white racist mayor or police chief, to the situation which the ruling class had labelled dangerous.

The resolutions passed by the Black Power Conference then, despite the hysterical scare tactics employed by the racist press, in a different context could generally have been characterized as minimal and mildly reformist. As such, they would have called for no great sacrifice on the part of America's ruling elite to implement. However, if one is seriously concerned with the seizure of state power for the benefit of oppressed people in America, the resolutions passed in their present form by the conference were at the very least elitist in their orientation toward the black elite. Therefore such a program, as the conference went on record as supporting, is not suitably geared toward eliciting or encouraging the support of the maximum number of black people.

As a next step, let's examine more closely the direction which some of the individual cultural nationalist organizations are headed at present. In Newark, Leroi Jones and his United Brothers are actively involved in a campaign to take over black control of the municipal government in the city. As Jones put it: "Our aim is to bring about black self-government in Newark by 1970." It is reasoned that since Newark is 60% black, black people should be the controlling element in the city. Again the same problem arises that the Black Power Conference was unable to deal with regarding black political control. It is still totally unrealistic to think that by stocking a municipal administration with black faces is going to make any real difference in the power balance. The fact remains that today as a means of circumventing black political control, the real power over internal control and the decision making processes is being removed from the large cities which have, or soon will have, black majorities. Real power today is strategically concentrated in the hands of both the racist run state legislatures and the corporate controlled federal government. As H. Rap Brown has aptly summed it up: "As long as the man controls the water or electricity coming into your community it does you no good to control that community... I think the real issue goes way beyond this idea of geographic control."

If what Rap is saying here is not clear, black people have only to look at the examples of the estimated twenty-five all-black towns that exist in America today. In each instance, these towns are politically and economically backward precisely because of what Rap refers to. The control and management of these towns comes from outside. Richard Hatcher, the first black mayor of Gary, Indiana, has stated the problem even more clearly: "There is much talk about black control of the ghetto, what does that mean? I am mayor of a city of roughly 90,000 black people, but we do not control the possibilities of jobs for them, of money for their schools, or state funded social services. THESE THINGS ARE IN THE HANDS OF THE UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION AND THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE OF THE STATE OF INDIANA (emphasis mine). Will the poor in Gary's worst slums be helped because the pawn-shop owner is black, not white?"



If Jones is to be believed in his efforts then belief in blackness is all that is needed to break this effectual strength. On this theme Jones has gone even further. In a recent interview (Black Theatre, 1968, p. 18), Jones expressed his contempt for black people who as he put it "are quick to run to a white European political reference" rather than "quote Nkrumah or Sekou Toure or Nyerere." It may come as a surprise to Jones (though I tend to doubt it) to know that the three African political figures that he mentions all at one time digested the works of Marx, Lenin, and other Marxist theoreticians. Each of the three has brilliantly applied the Marxist meaning to the particular context and conditions of each of their respective countries. As a result today both Guinea under Toure and Tanzania under Nyerere, through the skillful blend of African Socialism, have become two of the most progressive countries on the African continent, and both are in the forefront of the fight against Western Imperialism.

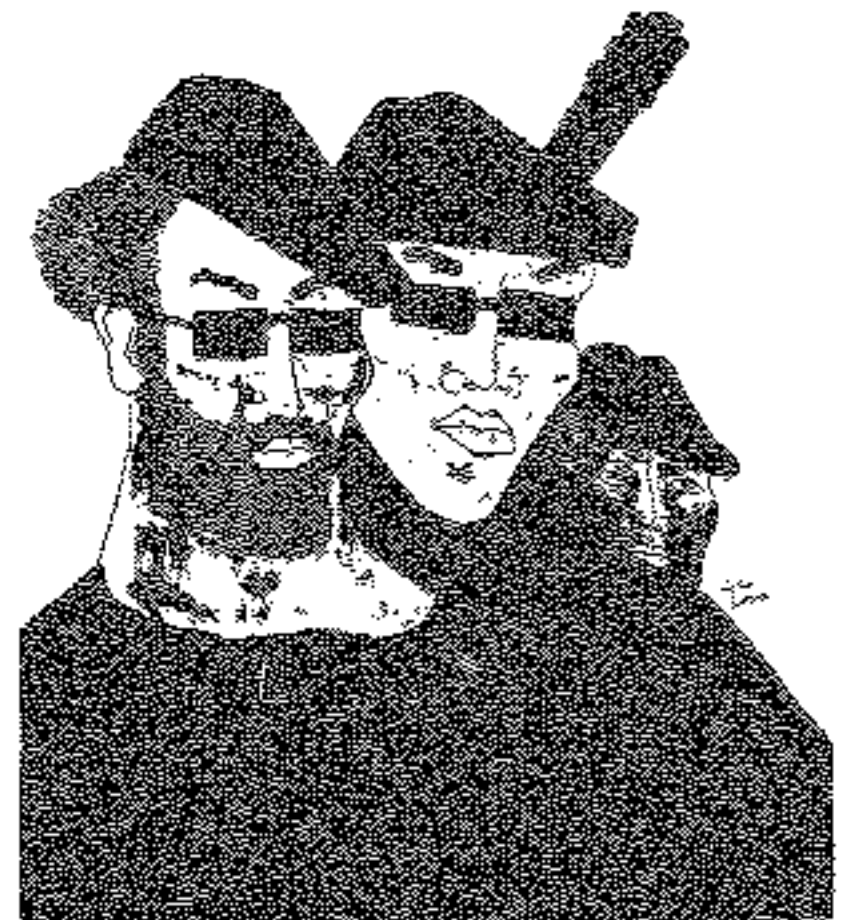
Similarly, Stokely Carmichael has used the same naive reasoning as Jones when he proclaimed in his now famous dictum that "Every negro is a potential black man." In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. For this to be true it would have to be slightly amended as Rap has done to read that if anything "Every negro is a potential traitor." It is absurd, as long as vested interest is the dominant motif in America, to think that every black person in America can be brought around to the ideals of collective struggle and self-sacrifice for black liberation. If Mao Tse-Tung had naively taken it for granted that "Every Chinese is a potential communist" he'd probably be still up in the caves of Northern China today -- if not dead. Contradictions notwithstanding though, Leroi Jones and Stokely Carmichael are quite calculating in their analysis of the content and purpose of the black liberation movement. Jones' attempts to gain black political control of Newark are carefully designed to create both a base and the climate for his professed goal -- the establishment of a separate black nation. As Jones has written: "And it is this that the Black Man must have. An autonomous Nation. His own forms: treaties, agreements, laws."

Cultural nationalism, as evidenced historically by Garvey, Delaney and the Nation of Islam has always contained the seed of separatism within its framework. Better perceived, though, the concept of black nationhood as it relates to cultural nationalism, at present, has perhaps found its greatest expression in the program of the L.A. based US organization. (The Nation of Islam must be excluded here. Over the past ten years there has been a subtle but recognizable shift in the orientation of the Nation's program. Though still advocating black nationhood as a solution to the problems of black people, the Nation is at present placing its prime emphasis on black business development rather than on the promulgation of black aesthetic and cultural values as a basis for black nationhood.)

Briefly, US is a relatively new cultural nationalist organization. The organization was founded in the latter part of 1965 by Ron Karenga. The cultural nationalist spirit is openly evident in one of US organization's favorite expressions -- "Just trying to be Black." US, like many other cultural nationalist organizations, has, instead of offering tangible programs of immediate significance to the black community, contented itself with the celebration of African festivals, holidays, and the promotion of African fashion shows. US also places strong emphasis on the adoption of a new language for black people. Swahili is the African language that has been chosen. As Karenga has explained it: "We need a new language to break the linguistic straitjacket of our masters..." The emphasis on language rather than program has done a great deal to create confusion among many black people. The study of a second language at this point in the struggle is at best a peripheral issue in so far as the immediate needs of black people are concerned. Further, whether it is realized or not, English is the number one language in the world, and one of the major languages spoken in the Third World.

Those then that are seriously concerned about building a national liberation movement in the U.S. capable of linking up with the liberation struggles in other countries must become aware of the need for a common language. With English, the base is partly there. True Socialist (or communist, if you prefer) internationalism must have as its goal, as Marx maintained, the breaking down of all barriers and national boundaries that divide the revolutionary peoples of the world. And as it stands now, outside of U.S. Imperialism, racism and militarism, language differentials are one of the main obstacles to this process.

In the same context, US, like other cultural nationalist groups which include the Yorubas and the Mau Maus of Harlem, feel that it is essential to relate to all the customs and traditions of Africa. Karenga has said: "To go back to tradition is the first step forward." As opposed to this Huey P. Newton, who embodies the spirit of the Black Panther Party, the main force behind revolutionary black nationalism in America, takes a different and much more pragmatic view when he points out: "We have to realize our black heritage in order to give us



strength to move on and progress. But as far as returning to the old African culture, it's unnecessary and it's not advantageous in many respects. We believe that **CULTURE ITSELF WILL NOT LIBERATE US**. We're going to need some stronger stuff." By "stronger stuff" Huey of course is referring to the correct political and economic discipline based strictly on the needs of the black masses.

Going back then to the concept of black nationhood as it involves cultural nationalism, we can see just how weak the premise on which it rests is. But as a final note on this question, neither US nor any of the other cultural nationalist organizations that are pushing the issue of black nationhood have yet shown just how they are prepared to deal with the certain prospect of American economic subversion. Political independence doesn't necessarily mean political or economic control of a national economy. It is an unquestioned fact that of the some forty independent nations in Africa, all of whom have their own black governments, legislatures, flags and presidents, none of them including the aforementioned Guinea and Tanzania, are totally self-supporting. The same principle that is in operation regarding the 25 all-black towns, previously mentioned, applies on an international level with the African and other Third World countries. U.S. imperialism is the major roadblock to the freedom and independence of every individual and country in the Third World bloc.

Cultural nationalism's failure to comprehend adequately the scope of U.S. imperialism stems mainly from the narrowness of its ideological framework. As a consequence, cultural nationalists, in the tradition of Garvey, have completely ruled out, for the most part, the class view of the struggle. And instead of relying solely on the racial analysis, Karenga again interprets the feelings of most cultural nationalists on this point: "The international issue is racism not economics. . . **RACISM RULES OUT ECONOMICS**. . . Therefore we conceive of the problem today not as a class struggle but a global struggle against racism." This view is of course based on an erroneous assumption. Race does not rule out economics. If anything, in America, racist oppression and division are to a great extent the outstanding outgrowth of white America's four hundred year pursuit of capitalist economics. A pursuit that began with the wealth America derived from the African slave trade and the justification for its existence being the rationalized myth of black inferiority. A pursuit that extends through the present with the corporate power structure today still relying on racism (despite the facade of laws, rhetoric and commissions to the contrary) as a weapon to divide black and white workers. This is not to say that white racism would be entirely eliminated if capitalism as a system was thoroughly transformed. For it is undeniably true that racism as a determinant component has completely permeated every institutional fiber in white American society. As a result, white racism as a distinctly separate on-going process has in itself achieved the position of institutional status. Even so, it is still inaccurate to attempt to separate white racism as a process from its base of origin -- capitalism. On their basic level, the two are inseparable. To deny the character of one is to deny the character of the other. In a proper perspective, the eradication of capitalism is a major requisite in any realistic effort to solve the problem of racism.

Eldridge Cleaver, as a leading theoretician of the Black Panther Party, has pointed up the dual nature of both the national and class questions in the oppression of black people in the U.S. As Cleaver has said: "We repudiate the capitalist economic system. We recognize the class nature of the capitalist economic system and we recognize the dynamics involved in the capitalist system. At the same time we recognize the national character of our struggle. We recognize the fact that we have been oppressed because we are black people even though we know this oppression was for the purpose of exploitation."

Returning to US and Karenga, it is relevant to note that in keeping with cultural nationalism's historic tradition of anti-Marxism, Karenga endorses its concomittant features of "Buy Black." "Buy Black" (always insert elite), in this case, has become one of the main points in Karenga's "seven-fold path to 'Blackness.'" Black capitalism and anti-communism are once again tightly joined.

Finally, no discussion of cultural nationalism could possibly be considered complete without an analysis or at least a clarification of what is meant by culture and its particular relation to the black liberation struggle. Cultural nationalists, for the most part, are of the opinion that culture is or should be the determining factor in the struggle. Other theorists would of course disagree and take issue with this position. For the sake of discussion, though, let us deal with only one -- Franz Fanon. "Culture," as Fanon defines it, "is first the expression of a nation, the expression of its preferences, of its taboos and of its patterns." Fanon goes on to relate: "In the colonial situation, culture, which is doubly deprived of the support of the nation and of the State, falls away and dies. **THE CONDITION FOR ITS EXISTENCE IS THEREFORE NATIONAL LIBERATION AND THE RENAISSANCE OF THE STATE**," Fanon then is saying that emphasis on culture should be a related but secondary feature of any liberation struggle. Since it is agreed by nearly all involved in the black cultural nationalist movement that Afro-America is in fact a colonized nation and black people are a colonized people then Fanon's assessment of the role of culture should apply to black America as readily as it would to the colonial countries of the Third World. As Fanon views it "national liberation

and the renaissance of the State" is the prerequisite for the successful and permanent growth of genuine black national cultural values and consciousness. As contemporary developments have proved, this has indeed been the case. China is an excellent example. Mao Tse-Tung's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution PROCEEDED NOT PRECEDED by nearly twenty years the seizure and consolidation of state political and economic power. The development of mass-based political and economic power is always the first order of business in any campaign for national reconstruction. Similarly, it took a socialist revolution in Cuba to legitimize within the Cuban national spirit the interest in and the study of African cultural delineations. As a consequence, the Cuban revolutionary government has set up on a permanent basis an Institute of Ethnology and Folklore dedicated solely to the research and understanding of African customs, language and culture. Added to this, many all-black artist groups are presently flourishing in Cuba. Their major interest is, of course, the discovery and promotion of literature and plays based on African cultural creations. Contrary to the belief of many cultural nationalists, culture is largely a byproduct of a nation's economic system. As Karl Marx summed it up: "The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual processes of life in general."



As a corollary to the question of culture, all too often it has been observed that many cultural nationalist organizations as a result of their misunderstanding of the correct role of culture at this stage of the liberation struggle have become trapped in a cult of elitism and mysticism. Elitism and mysticism have produced disastrous results when it comes to these organizations actually relating to black people on a level of comprehension. Elitism, in a few instances, has found expression in the policies of cultural nationalist organizations. Karenga himself has said: "Nationalism can not just go to the masses, it must make (masses) come to it." This bit of inverse (non)revolutionary logic, if followed out to its logical conclusion would insure the permanent failure of any progressive movement among black people toward organization. The plain fact is that it is the obligation of any sincere revolutionary to raise the level of consciousness of black people. An organization that has insulated and isolated itself from the people has taken itself out of position to do this. For such an endeavor requires a concerted, programmatic drive on all levels and at all times to reach, affect and involve people on a maximum scale of participation. If this is not done the organization will cut itself off from potential sources of support (which the community always represents) and thus become either non-functional in its social aloofness or actively counter-revolutionary. To be truly effective, as Mao has said, one must "go to the masses and learn from them."

Cultural nationalism, as it is presently defined ideologically, must be opposed. At this juncture in the black liberation struggle, black unity and active attempts at alliances with all other oppressed groupings in America are of paramount importance. Nationalism, as history has shown, can potentially be a progressive force in bringing about a society's social transformation, provided, of course, that it is not exploited for the selfish, narrow ends of a few individuals. As Fanon has warned: "...if nationalism... is not enriched and deepened by a very rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words into humanism, it leads up a blind alley."

Revolutionary nationalism, both in theory and practice, is a far reaching variant on the traditional concept of black nationalism. Revolutionary nationalists, unlike cultural nationalists, recognize that it is impossible to resolve the problems of black people under the structure of American Capitalism. This has led Huey Newton to correctly point out that one who adheres to the philosophy of revolutionary nationalism must of necessity be a socialist. For revolutionary nationalists, by and large, take the position that in order to oppose capitalism it is mandatory that one adopt an outlook of international working class solidarity with particular emphasis on the struggles of Third World people against imperialism. Generally speaking, cultural nationalists have a one-sided view of American society. The struggle for black liberation to them would be won if only white racism were eliminated. Such a view is absurd. Revolutionary nationalists have clearly seen that white racism is only a convenient tool used by the corporate power structure to divide the working masses in America while maximizing profits. Cultural nationalists also tend to identify only with the liberation struggles on the African continent rather than to see the need for a total world revolution. Any number of examples throughout the world of homogeneous national populations who are not discriminated against because of race but are nonetheless poor and exploited could readily be cited as proof of refuting cultural nationalism's claim that white racism is the only problem black people must deal with.

At the same time, revolutionary nationalists realize that a simplistic Marxist approach to the question of American oppression is by itself limited. Corporate America's superexploitation of the black working class, contrary to what certain Marxist groups such as the Progressive Labor Party maintain, is not the sole obstacle in the path of black liberation. There are special problems of both a cultural and social nature which black people alone face. Most whites are oppressed because they are poor, i.e. from a Marxian class analysis they are exploited economically as workers: this as opposed to being oppressed as a racially distinct national minority group as are black people. It is apparent then that black people are oppressed in America both because they are poor and black. A pragmatic solution then would dictate that before any type of working class hook up can be effect to fight capitalism, it is first necessary to organize black people as a collective body, around the issue of their special economic and cultural needs, into a unified fighting force. This, while combating the racism of white workers. Then and only then can fruitful working class unity be discussed.

Revolutionary nationalists also understand that a united working class in America must be prepared to completely support national wars of liberation that are being, or soon will be, waged against Western Imperialism throughout the Third World.

Further, revolutionary nationalists, like their Cuban and Vietnamese counterparts, realize the vital role which women must be prepared to play in any liberation struggle. This, then, requires the total liberation of women from both economic domination and male social chauvinism. Cultural nationalists, in opposition, tend to relegate black women to a secondary position oftentimes justifying this practice with the contention that this is in the natural tradition of ancient African customs.

At this point it would be fair to say that the only black organization with any significant following which is presently working toward the dual objective of black liberation through black unity and organization AND NATIONAL REVOLUTION THROUGH PROLETARIAN CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS is the Black Panther Party. SNCC is for all practical purposes extinct. This largely due to its failure to adapt itself to the shift of the black struggle from the rural South to the Urban ghettos of the North. CORE, by contrast, has chosen to follow in the steps of Garvey and Booker T. Washington and pursue separate black business development and capitalist economics as its solution to the problems of black people. Nearly every other black "militant" organization has gotten hung up in the pitfalls of their own dead end rhetoric about "getting whitey" and "blowing away the man" and so on. The Panthers, on the other hand, have seen that rhetoric without program doesn't mean a thing when it comes to dealing with the day to day problems that confront black and working people. With this in mind, the Panthers as part of their party platform have worked out in detail a comprehensive ten point program which speaks directly to the basic needs of black people in America.

The Panther program purely from an organizational standpoint is perhaps the most practical program ever devised by any black group for black people. As such it deserves to be listed in its entirety for purposes of study and hopefully emulation by other black groups sincerely concerned about black community betterment.

(1) We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our black community.

(2) We want full employment for our people.

(3) We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our black community.

(4) We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

- (5) We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present society.
- (6) We want all black men to be exempt from military service.
- (7) We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people.
- (8) We want freedom for all black men held in Federal, State, County and City prisons and jails.
- (9) We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer groups or people from their black communities, as defined by the constitution of the United States.
- (10) We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace.

To implement this program the Panthers have moved on several fronts. They have organized community boycotts against exploitative business in L.A. and Oakland. The Panthers currently are working on programs to feed hungry children and to establish free medical clinics within the black communities.



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