Pan-African Theory

by Michael West

It was not until the fifth Pan-African Congress at Manchester, England in 1945 that the Pan-African Movement adopted a militant anti-colonial stance. It was at this Congress, also, that leadership of the Pan-African Movement passed from Diaspora Africans to Africans from the continent. Among the new men who came to the forefront at Manchester, the name of Kwame Nkrumah stands out, both for his contribution to that congress and his subsequent labors on behalf of the Pan-African cause.

Even though the Pan-African Movement was imbued with an anti-colonial agenda, in 1945 at Manchester, no theory of Pan-Africanism was elaborated at that congress. The theoretical backwoods of Pan-Africanism definitely came to an end with the publication of George Padmore’s book, Pan-Africanism and Communism, which had the subtitle, The Coming Struggle for Africa. Writing in the 50’s—prior to the advent of large-scale African nationalism—Padmore concluded that, as far as Africa was concerned, imperialism was a spent force. "Imperialism is a discredited system," he wrote, "completely rejected by Africans.”

At the political level, "Pan-Africanism seeks the attainment of government of Africans by Africans for Africans, with respect for racial and religious minorities who desire to live in Africa on a basis of equality with the black majority. Economically and socially, Pan-Africanism subscribes to the fundamental objectives of Democratic Socialism, with state control over the basic means of production and distribution.”

Thus in terms of Cold War ideological lineup, Padmore appeared to stand midway between the two imperialist powers between East and West. For, according to him, Pan-Africanism "rejects the unbridled system of monopoly capitalism of the West. No less than the political and cultural totalitarianism of the East.”

However, with the benefit of historical hindsight, we can now state unequivocally that Padmore was completely wrong in his estimation of imperialism; namely, its capability to relinquish political control (when cowed by popular demand) over colonial territories, while maintaining, and in many instances strengthening, the economic and cultural hegemony over these "former” colonies. This is a phenomenon that is known as neo-colonialism, of which the United States is the leading exponent in the world. Padmore’s anticolonialism is therefore false. The present struggle for Africa is not between Pan-Africanism and communism, but between Padmore’s colonialism and neo-colonialism, which, according to Nkrumah, “is the last stage of imperialism.”

It is to the latter personage, Kwame Nkrumah, to whom we now turn, the leading Pan-Africanist theoretician after Padmore. In his philosophical treatise, Pan-Africanism and Communism, Nkrumah begins his analysis from a Marxist point of departure. This analysis established a materialist (as opposed to an idealist) basis for the struggle for an independent Africa. Hence the "coming struggle for Africa in governed by the principles of dialectical materialism.

But this thesis has no foundation in the historical tradition of the African people. The age-old African preoccupation with the idea of a materialized religion between materialism and ideology has no parallel in African thought. Nkrumah’s success in popularizing the Pan-African ideal among the African intelligentsia, as well as among a large general run of people, Nkrumah’s quickness is sheer philosophic mystification. As a theoretical accomplishment, it is therefore inadmissible.

True, the time has sufficiently considered a Pan-Africanism in the traditional sense, Amilcar Cabral, in addressing the Tricontinental Congress in Havana in 1966, made what is, as far as we are concerned, the classic definition of Pan-Africanism by an African, dictating his inclusion in this short essay on Pan-African theory. According to the classic Marxist analysis, it is the class struggle— which is, as not even Marxists would admit, a permanent feature in the history of mankind—that is the motive force of history. As one looks at the class struggle in relationship with the various ethnic groups in his country, Guine-Bissau (the then "Portuguese" Guinea), Cabral knew that some of these tribes were not divided into classes; hence there was no class struggle in said societies.

Extrapolating from the classical analysis, it would therefore stand to reason that people living in classless societies, have no history of class conflict. This is the argument, this view, Cabral told the Tricontinentalists, "would be to consider—and this we refuse to accept—that various groups in Africa, Asia and Latin America were living without history, without conflict. According to this view, at the time when they were subjected to the yoke of imperialism.”

As an African and a colonized man who accepted the validity of the Marxist world view in its broad outline, Cabral sought a way out of this impasse. Consequently, he postulated that while at a particular historical epoch, the class struggle might indeed be the motive force of history, it is the mode of production (i.e., the level of productive forces and the pattern of ownership) that is the true and permanent driving force of history. Thus the historical continuity of a people is maintained, and the integrity of Marxist theory preserved, albeit in a modified form.

Yet in spite of this brilliant tour de force, it is uncertain exactly where Cabral’s theoretical postulations are leading. The truth of the matter is that our left-wing theoreticians have failed to properly assimilate the Marxist creed and reinterpret it in the light of the new realities of an African-centered political framework. Protestations of the universality of the theory and method of Marx notwithstanding, no African Marxist has gone on to demonstrate empirically their applicability to our specific conditions; instead, they seem content with repeating it as a kind of catechism.

We regard Pan-African theory, then; we have, in a sense, come full circle since Padmore. Judging by the output of our theoreticians (this essay has only briefly treated three of the most prominent ones), we have made progress. But fundamentally, no real progress has been made in developing a theory that is grounded in the historical experience of the African people. For not only are Africans united by a common experience, but far more important, as Cheikh Anta Diop and others have repeatedly stressed, there is an underlying cultural unity of all African people. This is what we mean by the "deep” differences which imperialist (continued on p.2)
The Seven Principles

1. Umoja - (Unity)
2. Kuumba - (Self-Determination)
3. Ujamaa - (Collective Work and Responsibility)
4. Ujima - (Co-operative Economics)
5. Nia - (Purpose)
6. Kuumba - (Creativity)
7. Imani - (Faith)

These seven principles of African Nation Building manifest a viable life style for our people. It is this life style that ASAL (African Students for African Liberation), the Black Student organization on the Lake Forest College campus, has made its ultimate goal. We strive for Umoja, unity. We realize that without umujia, nothing of value to us can come. "Colleagues without umujia, we would be as a hand dismembered. Such a hand is completely useless, and severely hampers the use of the arm. In order to obtain our goals of the better life that we seek in Ngazo Saba, it will take maximum Kuumba and self-determination."

These means we must ask and define for ourselves our lifestyles. If an objective of value is needed, through sacrifices, we will gain. The harder it is to obtain, the harder one must work. This takes self-determination. We believe determination to be a most powerful force.

Under the unity with which we brand ourselves, it is a matter of great concern that we have umujia, (collective work and responsibility). Our work must be complementary, that is, we must work together in such a way as to enhance each other's work. To idealize a personality is not our desire, so through the division of work no one person can be singled out as a superior.

We must be responsible to each other, thereby, accountable for and answerable to another. It involves a good method of check and balance if we all understand that we are held accountable for our actions. Will not be so quick to act irrationally, thus decreasing the number of mistakes we will make. We must be willing to share and work together, maintaining umujia and thereby ujima, (co-operative economics). We must also strive to sustain our own existence by pooling our economic forces together. Through umujia, we own and sustain our own businesses, schools, and hospitals, stop all strenuous need and start living (Kuumba). All that we do must have a purpose and we must act in a positive manner in accordance to our purpose. Our purpose must be one as we are and inseparable.

Our purpose must be to create a situation of free people of African descent.

One of our greatest assets, Kuumba, (creativity), must be used at every opportunity. Creativity before anything else is identity, purpose and direction. Through the awareness, acceptance, and practice of our principles, the lifestyle of our people will take on a completely different look, a more beautiful look. We appeal to all brothers and sisters in all parts to examine these principles and to develop and progress through the present situations. This will be a great step towards the liberation of OUR PEOPLE.

Black Achievement

March 1, 1979

From the time that the first Africans were kidnapped, brought to America and forced into slavery, all succeeding generations of their offspring have suffered, and even the stigma of slavery still exists. Therefore, every generation of Black people must do their share to eliminate the effect that slavery has on Black people and to restore our people to their "traditional way of life."

For example, our forefathers who were enslaved had to survive and deal with the physical and mental suffering inherent in the brutal and merciless act of enslavement. Our great-grandparents had to survive in a society where Blacks were considered human and intellectually inferior, and they had to constantly make themselves and their children believe that they were "somebody" and they could make a difference in the society. Our forefathers had to make their children believe that they were inferior when in fact they were constantly being made. This generation, along with the generations of George Washington Carver, and Jackie Robinson, had to break through the color-barrier in colleges, sports, and churches as well as many other aspects of society. And now, in our turn. What is our duty to our people? Our duty is to set and achieve goals that our forefathers did not conceive of achieving under the circumstances. Our generation is responsible for supplying our communities with doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc., so that we will be less dependent on others for our health and well-being.

After setting these goals, it is necessary that we as Black people and students must learn to evaluate when trying to achieve any time spent is necessary to be consistent in how we go about achieving it. There must also be sufficient interest in preparation so as not to do an average, but a very good job.

Many of the brothers and sisters on campus do exhibit this general rule of consistency and devotion when trying to achieve set goals. One individual who serves as an example is Paula Stegot, a junior majoring in economics. Paula's career goal is to become a corporate lawyer and she intends to take the LSAT test this September. Paula has a consistent studying schedule and the time that she devotes to studying is well rewarded by the grades she receives. Because of her devotion and consistency, Paula is on her way!

Someone else who is going about achieving his goal in a very effective way is Steve Cole. Steve, now a senior, decided when he was very young that one of his goals was to become a doctor. Because of his consistent study habits and because he worked hard to perform better than just average, he has been accepted to Stanford's School of Medicine.

Our goal is to achieve Steve, others of us have consistent study habits, and ways which we go about achieving our goals. However, unfortunately as it may be, there are three times as many consistent procrastinators as there are hard workers. We start on assignments the night before they are due, and we do not take proper amount of time to do better than average work. These types of consistent procrastinators do not achieve less than we are, and that is what those of us who fall into the latter category, a few suggestions if adhered to, will certainly improve our performance.

1. Stop procrastinating. Make deadlines and schedules for yourself.
2. Learn your instructors, i.e., know what he thinks is important in note taking, exams and papers.
3. Pull together and make the academic counseling committee more active.
4. Seek help from Brothers and Sisters in your majors, for they are always willing to help.
5. It is time that we stop simply planning goals and start working for the advancement of our people. Making Cs and Ds, when we can make As and Bs is a slap in the face to our forefathers, who struggled and survived in their harsh societies in order to advance our race.

Lake Forest College is but a brief history in our brief history; history of those of us with a great destiny ahead. However, if we do not grasp the good it has to offer, excel in our respective majors, and acknowledge our responsibility to our people, our accomplishments will not be far beyond receiving a mere diploma.

by Beverly Rush

The Need for Black Solidarity

by Gary Chatmon

In a recent issue of Ebony (May 1979), a story was written about Black superheroes and their concern about different Black causes. In the story, composer Quincy Jones states: "It's the stars' fault if they let themselves be insulated and isolated from involvement with their people. I think that when you achieve success, you not only owe something to others, you owe it to yourself to help somebody else."

Mr. Jones is absolutely correct. There is no excuse for Blacks not becoming involved with the problems facing our race today. Those who have climbed to the heights of success have fallen into a crippling syndrome plaguing the Black community today, individualism. Individualism not only exists among Black superheroes, but has also taken its toll on other Blacks, including college students. Black students that go to college have fallen victim to the hollow influence of individualism. The state of Utopia that prevails on campuses has caused many Blacks to not realize or to forget about the full dimensions of the problem facing the Black community.

Some of these individuals feel that there is no need for Black struggle at this time and have taken for granted the state of things as they are. They have failed to realize that they are where they are today because of the collective efforts made by Blacks in the past to insure a place in this society. Other individuals have chosen to become involved with other Blacks or with the Black struggle, but have in stead rallied around the "new Black" or "rightist" white friends. It's good to find a self-proclaimed non-racist white person - one who has the ability as Black people is not to huddle around them and support their non-achievement in addition to their non-racist attitudes to their race of people, the oppressors of our race for over 400 years.

In the meantime, Black people have to stop thinking of themselves as individuals, separate and different from other Blacks, and realize that the only way for a race of people to develop and grow is to direct their individual efforts and accomplishments toward the collective development and growth. We need to become involved with different groups, Blacks and non-Blacks. We will not see the new Black solidarity until we realize that we are the "cream of the crop" from our communities and that we are obligated to take our experiences and our success to our people. Individualism is a cancerous disease that must be cured or else we as Black people will never budge the obstacles which still remain that stifle our growth.

Those of you who feel that the road to success is one of individual struggles, individual deeds, and individual achievements, should look back into history and see just how many battles have been won by a single individual.

(continued from p.1)
What’s all this stuff about dignity?

late 60’s by Russell Jackson

Many people feel that the Black Power movement is getting bogged down in irrelevant issues. They point to the movement’s concern with culture, history, and language as an example of how expenditures of energy in a movement which is supposed to be concerned with social change. These people fail to see the necessity of a cultural heritage in the building of dignity into our lives. They believe that if people are just given jobs and decent housing, they will automatically learn to respect themselves. However, the historical facts show that this is an erroneous view.

For one hundred years, individual black people have been getting in moral jobs, and rather quietly, a little individual dignity. The question is, however, what form of dignity was gained, and how did it help dignify the black masses who were not looking “colored” when the token jobs were given out? In the past, having dignity, and maintaining one’s blackness were definitionally inconsistent. One could not be proud of being black and still maintain full dignity and pride in himself, because being black only served to subtrac from one’s dignity. It has therefore been expedient for black people to attempt to lose their identity because we have been taught that black people have nothing to take pride in as a race. Booker T. and George W. Carver are hinted at as successful black people of our race, however, they are considered historical freaks in the general evolution of the black man in America. So except for these two “Super Negroes,” singers, dancers, and athletes, black people have no reason to take pride in a cultural heritage that does not exist. But as long as we have “black” skin, if we are ever going to be able to take pride in ourselves as individuals, we are first going to have to be able to take pride in our race.

It is therefore necessary for a true account of history to be provided about our people for our people. However, a history alone does not make for a cultural heritage. A strictly black cultural heritage has never developed in this country. In order for the black artists to “make it” in this country, it has been necessary in the past for them to assume all of the styles and the language of their European counterparts.

But a new breed has arisen! Black poets, writers, and artists have thrown off the shackles of the academic styles, and have molded and created an Afro-American style. They use the language of black people, and they maintain the free, throbbing style of a black life. However, this new style of the black artist is not an accident.

These attempts to forge an Afro-American culture are intended to give the black man a true heritage, a heritage that the white man can never again hide from us. And when individuals can learn about and take pride in the heritage and achievements of their people, they will develop a feeling of dignity towards their race, and will thus be more capable of taking dignity in themselves as black individuals.

Some (of my neighbors) seemed really glad to see the work go on, if somebody else would do it.

by Lewis Coffin, “president”

Underground Railroad

Self-determination

by Johnny Trotter

In every aspect it is especially important that we educate ourselves to the things that have held us back as a race and as individuals, such as the manipulation of taboos to bring us to war with ourselves and to fill our minds with negative thoughts about our- selves as Black people. In spite of all this manipulating and deceiv- ing, as the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “We shall over- come someday,” all our faults and the ignorance of our past to one day rise strong and equal to our oppressors as a Black nation within a nation. Once we have achieved this we will have defined ourselves as Blacks, created for ourselves a nation that we can call our own, and will have spoken for ourselves that we have overcome.

As long as we continue to use self-determination and Black pride to better ourselves and our race, the above thoughts will in- deed become a reality for Blacks.

March 1, 1979

Bad Black

by Steve Cole

Have you ever heard the expression “...that old black magic has a spell on me,” or what about, “...he was the black sheep of the family,” or even words such as blackguard, blackmail, or even black list. These words and phra- ses are very common in everyday speech and tend to flow from peoples’ lips as easily as saying “hello” or “good-morning.” But if we stop for a moment and take a closer look at these terms, we will notice that they all have one thing in common. They all contain the word black, and if we look a little closer, we will see that the word black is used in a derogatory manner in each case. Even after we acknowledge that the previous statements are true, some might still say “so what?” What do mere words and phra- ses have to do with anything, particularly my existence as a Black person?” Ideally nothing, but subconsciously it may have a big effect.

Black people in the United States are continually subjected to some effects of brainwashing from birth until death. From radio to television, from nursery rhymes to history textbooks, from baby dolls to super heroes, every imaginable type of media has been used to propagate a difference between Black and White. Everybody knows the good guys always wear white and the villains black. Black is a symbol of filth and demonic doings. Definitions for black as a term from the American Heritage Dictionary include such meanings 1)cheerless, 2)smilenn, 3)calamitous, 4)Negroid. Sure, you might say that you know all this and that these symbolism’s can’t affect the way you think or the way you feel about yourself or your people, but can you positively say that these things have no effect on our young or our little brothers and sisters. I say no, and I say we can do some- thing about the effects brainwash- ing has on our achievements, and we can start by removing the derogatory connotations associated with Black.

We must put more pressure on the present educators, writers, and even film makers to remove these derogatory expressions from dictionaries, books, and other kinds of media. If there is no legal way to deter people from using these expressions, we must as a people look unfavorably upon persons who frequently use these expressions communion. We must stop using these terms ourselves and discourage others from using them. For surely our language will not suffer by dele- tion of these overly-used pas- sages, while the negative stigma associated with the term black will once and for all be removed.

Are We Animals?

by Joseph Campbell

I ask this question because ani- mals do very little or no thinking. For us not to be animals would imply that we are capable of thinking for ourselves, because you see our mind is a very spilen- did thing.

If we want to follow the minds of others then we are not giving our own minds a chance to develop, thereby leaving ourselves open to fit the definition of an animal. It is very important that we develop our own minds and not the minds of others, because we can be mis- led and manipulated by trying to think like animals. Since we are blessed by God in that everything we have been given to us by Him, including our minds, let us use them to the fullest, then stop depending on others to do our thinking.

Building Self-Esteem

by Joseph Campbell

After the child has gone through the early stages of childhood and has learned about black culture, as a high school student he is now able to further develop his ideas about Black Awareness. The maj- esty and patience he has gained through age will aid him in this task.

When the child is in high school it is very important that the par- ent begin to communicate so that he can build his confidence to- ward Black Awareness. There is no way that one person can install anything within another person unless they are able to respect one another. This respect comes with communication and commitment to help the child when he is dis- appointed at the world or himself. The parent must be patient to give the child the determination he needs for a positive sense of himself as a Black person. In time this makes it possible for the child to listen to the parents when they tell him about achievement and culture within his beautiful race.

Many white racists have the idea that the definition of Black- ness is growing up in poverty, pimping, stealing, and lack of respon- sibility in sports and lacking the study skills necessary to make good grades in school. In applying this definition they figure that they can play with the Black psyche so that they can keep blacks from moving into positions of power. This is when the parents step in. They have to help their children understand that white racist attitudes are the problems of their society and in no way whatsoever measure the child’s ability as a Black person.

As far as the parents are the ones that have the sole re- sponsibility of making their child aware of his Black culture.

Prose and Poetry

May-June 1971

“Ode to Lillian Anthony”

by Maurice Tucker-Halie

Loving of black

insuring

love of self

love of mankind, giving

and never questioning.

All power,

no power, no difference
to her

only that you not stop the battle before you try!

April 1981

Lil Darlin’

by Michelle Johnson

As a ray of sun is conjoined to the sun.

And a raindrop blends harmoniously with the ocean, I ask you not to let distance be the force which will take up space.

We haven’t any motives to object to each other.

And we’ll always be as near as our thoughts.

Though they may duplicate the dawn… every day.

Or imitate the wind… once in a while.

Or simulate the stars… every night.

Let us conjoin harmoniously.

And enjoy some of Life’s precious fruits…

Each other!

by Steve Cole

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to freedom and yet depurate agitation are men who want crops without plowing. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its mighty waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

by Fred Hampton

by Frederick Douglass, 1857

by Johnny Trotter

by Lewis Coffin, “president”

Underground Railroad

by Joseph Campbell

by Maurice Tucker-Halie

by Michelle Johnson

by Steve Cole

by Fred Hampton

by Frederick Douglass, 1857
PROSE AND POETRY: PAST AND PRESENT

Nov.-Dec. 1973
it is 4 a.m.
beneath the darkness of the night your body’s naked outline next to mine
i want you to leave
you move slightly, toss your arm across my chest
not knowing
the added weight oppresses me, makes breathing difficult
i roll away from you
i am tired and bored
slide out of bed
grab my robe
watch you watching me
that satiated look crumbling off your face

immediately
you fall into that which’s wrong—what did i do?
don’t you love me? i love you

by Regina L. Nichols

November 1974
Together People
black brains rotting, wasting away,
in educational institutions built for
those of a lighter shade,
sitting in on braniwash sessions,
listening to the problem
which is you:
self-determination through non-participation
just barely making the grade.

must we act, yes act, i say!
as if pride is nonexistent in your life?
as if blackness is a curse
and not your life

how long will our heads hang
at each mention of our race
how long will hands shoot upwards
in attempts to hide your face?
must we go on fooling ourselves,
why not take it all the way
we got to get over in this society
where the power-holders are of another race.

awake, my people, awake up i say!
we must come together for
we’re already strayed.
how long my people; how long must we pray;
for the togetherness of a people
who should be together
anyway.

by Anlonzo Whitehead

April 1981
We’re So In We’re Out!

Gotta get some of those jeans.
Hafies be in that crowd.
Hafes have some of those shoes
Or one of those cars.

Anne Klein
Jordache
Juschi
Gucci
Calvin & Gloria
Bonjour, too!
Mercedes-Benz
BMW
Corvettes
A house on the hill

We got it all—except
Our priorities in the right place.

We so in, we got it all.

by Regina L. Nichols

Fall 1971
true i’m not a clawsin blond
and i’ll probably never wear
a cassim original
i’ve never been skiing
or boating
and i’ve never been pushed
into a swimming pool at a party
with all my clothes on
i’ve never seen Paris in the springtime
but i know bik/lave
in the nighttime
and early in the morning hours
warm, sticky and sweet
like licorice syrup
or chocolate candy that melts in your mouth
as well as your hand
i know about smiles that are real
and not just because you have some money
or know someone that does
i’ve tasted peach cobbler
that momma made
just for me

i’ve always gone to bed feeling righteous
after kissing daddy goodnight
true there are many things i’ll never
see and many places i’ll never
go and many things i’ll never
do but the things that will fill me
will be the richness of being black
the feeling
the touching and dancing blk
the singing shouting and praying blk
the feeling
the warmness of blk/kisses
the tears at blk/funerals
the feeling
the reality of the realness of trying to make it real
and
the feeling
the feeling
the feeling
the blackness and sweetness of my
blk/feeling/goodness

by Trigo

by JoAnne Starks

Quiet Desperation
Quiet desperation, the rage that lives
within all men that must take charity,
an unbearable sin.

Their faces reek with worried lines,
hearts heavy with the burden, that
no matter how they work or save, their
future is uncertain.

Desperation fills their lives but
since it is so quiet, the world can’t
hear their silent screams or recognize
their noble dreams.

by Margo Woodfork

Pay the Price
A father’s wealth is in his sights,
he treats the children like they’re
lice. Can he not see quite naturally,
he will pay the price?

A mother’s goal is fame and wealth.
She loves the kids, but more herself.
Can she not see eventually, she will
pay the price?

A family is a fragile thing when
severed ties, united sings. All must
work and sacrifice, for if they don’t,
they’ll pay the price.

by Margo Woodfork