

Africa for Africans at Home and Abroad Build the African Socialist International!

*By Omali Yeshitela,
Chairman of the African People's Socialist Party*

More than 40 years ago Kwame Nkrumah, then president of Ghana, made a compelling case for the unification of Africa in his book, *Africa Must Unite*. Here are some quotes worth mentioning:

“Our continent gives us the second largest land stretch in the world. The natural wealth of Africa is estimated to be greater than that of almost any other continent in the world. To draw the most from our existing and potential means for the achievement of abundance and a fine social order, we need to unify our efforts, our resources, our skills and intentions...”

“To us, Africa with its islands is just one Africa. We reject the idea of any kind of partition. From Tangier or Cairo in the North to Capetown in the South, from Cape Guardafui on the East to Cape Verde Islands in the West, Africa is one and indivisible...”

“We in Africa who are pressing now for unity are deeply conscious of the validity of our purpose. We need the strength of our combined numbers and resources to protect ourselves from the very positive dangers of returning to colonialism in disguised forms. We need it to combat the entrenched forces dividing our continent and still holding back millions of our brothers. We need it to secure total African liberation. We need it to carry forward our construction of a socio-economic system that will support the great mass of our steadily rising population at levels of life which will compare with those in the most advanced countries...”

“Firstly, we should have an over-all economic planning on a continental basis. This would increase the industrial and economic power of Africa. So long as we remain balkanized, regionally or territorially, we shall be at the mercy of colonialism

and imperialism. The lesson of the South American Republics *vis-à-vis* the strength and solidarity of the United States of America is there for all to see.

“The resources of Africa can be used to the best advantage and the maximum benefit to all only if they are set within an overall framework of a continentally planned development. An overall economic plan, covering an Africa united on a continental basis, would increase our total industrial and economic power. We should be thinking seriously now of ways and means of building up a Common Market of a United Africa and not allow ourselves to be lured by the dubious advantages of association with the so-called European Common Market. We in Africa have looked outward too long for the development of our economy and transportation. Let us begin to look inwards into the African Continent for all aspects of its development. Our communications were devised under colonial rule to stretch outwards towards Europe and elsewhere, instead of developing internally between our cities and states. Political unity should give us the power and will to change all this. We in Africa have untold agricultural, mineral and water-power resources. These almost fabulous resources can be fully exploited and utilized in the interest of Africa and the African people, only if we develop them within a Union Government of African States...

“The survival of free Africa, the extending independence of this continent, and the development towards that bright future on which our hopes and endeavors are pinned, depend upon political unity.

“Under a major political union of Africa there could emerge a United Africa, great and powerful, in which the territorial boundaries which are the relics of colonialism will become obsolete and superfluous, working for the complete and total mobilization of true economic planning organization under a unified political direction. The forces that unite us are far greater than the difficulties that divide us at present, and our goal must be the establishment of Africa’s dignity, progress and prosperity.

“Proof is therefore positive that the continental union of Africa is an inescapable desideratum if we are determined to move forward to a realization of our hopes and plans for creating a modern society which will give our peoples the opportunity to enjoy a full and satisfying life. The forces that unite us are intrinsic and greater than the superimposed influences that keep us apart...

“Here is a challenge which destiny has thrown out to the leaders of Africa. It is for us to grasp what is a golden opportunity to prove that the genius of the African people can surmount the separatist tendencies in sovereign nationhood by coming together speedily, for the sake of Africa’s greater glory and infinite well-being, into a Union of African States.”

While Nkrumah’s call for a united Africa continues to resonate, today we have come to understand the question of African unity more completely. Not only is the unification of Africa something that makes sense politically and economically, it also has its basis in the need to correct the verdict of imperialism that results in the oppression and exploitation of African people in Africa and throughout the world.

Moreover, we must be clear that the definition of our unity recognizes the significance of Africans who have been forcibly dispersed throughout the world by European-imposed colonial slavery. Indeed, the oppressive reality that we experience worldwide has its basis in the same set of historical circumstances responsible for conditions in Africa.

We are one people forcibly dispersed over the world, whose separately-fought struggles, objectively speaking, are attempts to resolve the same fundamental contradiction of European intervention that has resulted in Africans at home and abroad being forcibly separated from our assets.

While the alienation of Africa’s material resources are relatively well known by advocates of African unity, it is not so readily understood that Africa has suffered alienation of tremendous value in the form of human resources, namely those Africans who have been scattered worldwide by colonial slavery.

Liberation strategy must include Africans everywhere

The Manifesto of the African Socialist International that was adopted at the ASI conference on April 16, 2000, speaks to this reality:

“We are fighting to reclaim our destiny as a single people whose forced dispersal in a world defined by artificial borders has served to undermine our common identity and dilute our collective strength.

“We are everywhere. We are in Chicago, Illinois; and in Florida, Texas, California and New York in the United States of North America as well as Toronto and

Montreal in Canada. We are in Brasilia in Brazil, Caracas in Venezuela, Bluefields in Nicaragua in Central and South America.

“We are in Trinidad, Haiti, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Dominica, the Bahamas, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Barbados and all the islands of the Caribbean.

“We are in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Nottingham, England. We are in Paris, Lille, Lyons, Marseilles and Nice in France. We are in Brussels, Belgium; Amsterdam, Holland; Berlin, Germany; Rome, Italy; Spain, Portugal, Russia, Turkey, and all of Eastern Europe.

“We reside in the hundreds of millions in our ancient Motherland which was the birthplace of humankind more than 150,000 years ago and which served as the cradle of human civilization more than 10,000 years ago.”

Hence, when we speak of the liberation of Africa and African people we must be capable of developing a strategy that takes into consideration all Africa’s resources, including those African people ourselves who have been taken from Africa as part of the process of imperialist expropriation that has resulted in the need for Africa’s redemption.

An argument is often made that because imperialism purposely limited the development of a working class on African soil, Africa will be incapable of making a socialist revolution necessary for its rapid development and the restoration of the toiling, producing masses to our rightful place as leaders of society. There is a challenge to our call for African liberation and unification under the leadership of the African working class aligned with the poor peasantry for this reason, as well as because of the incessant attack by imperialism on the peasantry.

However, the weakness of these arguments is not only their reliance on definitions of the working class along the lines of European socialists with their own self-defined mission. It also denotes an unwillingness to recognize that the African working class, though unevenly developed throughout Africa, does exist in some places on the Continent in greater abundance than others, just as the peasantry as a social force is less threatened in some places than in others.

A real capability of anticipating an Africa liberated and unbound by artificially-created borders — borders whose only function is to maintain our oppressive status — would allow us to plan the rational use of the human resources of Africa wherever they are located, either on the Continent or abroad. Hence, African workers of South Africa and Nigeria in

Africa or of Brasilia and Detroit in South and North America would be considered in any assessment of Africa's ability to mobilize a working class to lead our revolution and industrialize our continent.

Moreover, the same African labor that played such a fundamental role in the development of industry and capital in Europe and North America, can, when in the possession of the organized African working class itself, lead to the industrialization of Africa along socialist lines.

In the final analysis, it is up to those of us who unite with the position in this paper to build our African Socialist International. The ASI will be the repository of the philosophy, interests and aspirations of the African working class — however small at this stage in its development — to liberate and unify Africa and her people and to transform itself into the new ruling class destined to rid Africa and the world of class-based society forever.

White world built on pedestal of African exploitation

The entire political economy of the world has its origins in the attack on Africa. The capture of Africa and the trade in black bodies, which was the foundation of the modern world economy, are the genesis of capitalism, which was born as white power in the world.

The initial attack on Africa, which provided the process wherein European imperialist or "racist" consciousness, wealth, and the industrial revolution were forged, totally wiped out the indigenous political economy of Africa. It transformed Africa into a continental entity whose purpose was to provide for the creation and re-creation of real life for Europe and North America.

The economic structures of Africa were born of the slave trade and modified to accommodate colonialism and then neo-colonialism. They serve as a means of transferring Africa's resources to Europe, North America and increasingly to Japan, and for manipulating the political situation in Africa to serve hostile, foreign economic interests at the expense of our people.

The resources stolen from Africa — both material and human — went to the development of the world economy with its dialectic of wealth for the West, which translates as "white," and impoverishment for most of the others of us. Virtually every problem confronting the Continent of Africa and the lives of our people anywhere owes its existence to this "original sin," as Karl Marx called it.

In the beginning of the hunting and capturing of Africans into colonial slavery, where Africans were shipped in the millions to what is now called the Americas and other places, Africa's own indigenous political economy came under assault. The wealth of Africa, both human and material, was going to Europe where it contributed to the rise of heretofore non-existent social forces.

The rise of both the European capitalist class and the working class occurred due to the advent of African slavery and other pillage. The wealth going into Europe from the slave trade and the pillage of Africa and the world by Europeans caused the overthrow of the European nobility and the rise of the new capitalist class, enriched by slavery and plunder.

Simultaneously this slavery and plunder brought ruin and poverty to Africa and to others around the world who fell victim to the European onslaught. Karl Marx, speaking to the implications this plunder had for the development of European society, would eventually call this the "primitive accumulation" of capital, "an accumulation not the result of the capitalist mode of production but its starting point." It is an accumulation, Marx asserts, which "plays in political economy about the same part as original sin in theology."

Colonial slavery resulted in the advent of capitalism. It created the European working class and achieved the industrial revolution for Europe. Over time during this process, the need for raw materials to feed burgeoning industry replaced the need for the agrarian-based colonial slave trade. Thus, direct colonialism in Africa and other places became more lucrative than the kidnapping of African people. Direct colonialism utilized the same basic economic structures forged through the slave trade.

However, direct colonialism came under attack around the globe when the second imperialist world war between the imperialist powers allowed enough democratic space for national liberation movements to challenge it. The growth of national liberation movements pushed the imperialists to retreat to a form of indirect rule referred to as neo-colonialism by Kwame Nkrumah. This form of colonialism, known as paper or "flag" independence, resulted in white power in black faces. The colonial powers made big displays of turning power over to indigenous forces. However, just as in Iraq today, the imperialists would actually rule through these indigenous forces, by controlling and never relinquishing the economy and the State apparatus, which was tailored for exploitation.

Moreover, in a situation such as Africa, born of a parasitic relationship upon which the entire imperialist edifice rests, and divided into mostly untenable distorted microstates which only function as structures to transfer resources to imperialist countries, even the

process of attempting to produce worked against the interests of the people since production could never benefit African people ourselves.

The African national liberation movements that have fought against colonialism, including the settler-colonialism of South Africa and the former Rhodesia, have all fought for power within the colonially-created borders. This has meant that regardless of the outcome, each of the “liberated” territories would continue to rely on a relationship with the imperialists for resources. Even today the vast majority of what is considered trade in Africa occurs between Africa, the former colonialists and the U.S. and other imperialist countries. Less than 10 percent, and in some instances as little as 3 percent, of trade occurs between Africans ourselves.

Today in Africa the imperialists have moved to frustrate every attempt at independent organization by any African state. Every African state relies on imperialist “aid” to pay the salaries of administrators, civil servants and the military. Control of the economy and aspects of the political structures allow the imperialists to manipulate events to their benefit to the detriment of Africa. The current imperialist-imposed borders absolutely prohibit development and frustrate the capacity for African unity. This state of affairs is responsible for the chaos and growing emiseration of our people in Africa and the fractured national consciousness of our people dispersed throughout the world.

The historical basis for African poverty

Unfair trade and debt, both of which owe their existence to the hundreds of years of imperialist intervention in Africa that this conference is determined to overturn, continue to contribute to the grinding poverty of Africa.

This is a contradiction that is far more profound than most people have been willing to recognize in the past. The imperialist critics of Africa always point to our poverty as something self-induced. Even as they point to the so-called progress of other countries and peoples once under direct colonial domination, Africa, they claim is an example of hopelessness only worthy of pity.

However, if we can accept that the motive force of human society is the production and reproduction of real life, it is easy to see that Africa, its resources and African people worldwide function, essentially, to produce and reproduce real life for the imperialist countries but not for ourselves.

If we can accept the premise that value is determined by the socially required time necessary for production and that this formula also includes the value of human labor, it becomes clear that African people in Africa and much of the world do not receive the value of our labor power, value that would be capable of reproducing our capacity to work, value, which, in a word, would allow for the creation and recreation of real life.

This simple fact is responsible for the disparity in health status and life span between Africans and others, especially in the imperialist countries. This is the meaning of African “underdevelopment.”

This is the basis for the conclusions found in the resolution on the debt passed at the London conference of the ASI on April 16, 2000. This long quote from that resolution speaks to the historical basis of this contradiction:

“The economic effects of slavery and colonialism continue to weigh heavily on the lives of African people. African slavery and colonialism were the factors which gave rise to European civilization, rescuing its people from disease, poverty and feudal backwardness at the expense of the political, social and economic development of Africa and our people. Indeed, these factors, which include the trade in African people, constitute the primary elements of primitive accumulation or start-up capital necessary for the advent of capitalism as the world economy.

“The attacks on Africa by Europe transformed Africa and Europe. The transference of material and human resources from Africa to Europe played a fundamental role in creating and elevating new social forces. Among these new forces were the newly enriched capitalist bourgeoisie, made wealthy by the slave trade, as well as the European working class, the development of which rescued the toiling masses of Europe from feudal bondage, giving them a greater share of the value created by their labor. A vast comfortable and affluent European middle class was also created by this process, as tens of thousands of European workers entered the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie on our backs.

“Hence, progress for all dynamic European social forces was gained on the pedestal of African oppression. Notably, both the European bourgeoisie and the working class, the two major contending social forces, were given birth by the expropriation of African lives and resources. Both of these forces are threatened by the struggles of African people against our oppression.

“The wealth stolen from our Mother Africa by the European bourgeoisie undermined the authority and logic of the ruling, land-based European aristocracy, resulting in democratic revolutions throughout Europe and the United States of North America. This process liberated the European toilers, making them property owners for the first time in their history.

“This stolen wealth of Africa also resulted in the industrial revolution that acted as an impetus for the end of slavery and the advent of direct colonialism, which facilitated the expropriation of raw materials from Africa and other places. Colonialism fed the factories employing the European workers, resulting in the leap in economic development that allowed Europe to overtake the rest of the world.

“Meanwhile, the impact of slavery on Africa was devastating. The slave trade destroyed the political economy of much of Africa, neutralizing and stagnating that which was not destroyed. Whole cities, especially in coastal regions, were obliterated, their escaping inhabitants being pushed by slavers into the interior. Towns and villages were overrun without evidence of their prior existence. Some communities foolishly assumed they could spare themselves from the consequences of the slave trade by selling out their own brothers and sisters.

“An inconceivable number of Africans – some estimates reach 200 million – were kidnapped from Africa, depriving Africa of farmers, scientists, healers, craftsmen, educators, religious and political leaders, poets, philosophers and musicians – indeed, all the human elements necessary for social progress and economic development. All of Africa was transformed into a vast hunting ground for human flesh. The political economy that once fed, clothed and housed Africans in Africa was destroyed and replaced with an alien political economy that fed, clothed and housed Europeans at the expense of our people and the development of our Motherland.

“The parasitic European economic structures that facilitated the capture, transport and sale of African people into slavery were subsequently modified to facilitate the acquisition, transport and sale of raw materials stolen from Africa to feed the European industrial revolution, which was itself a consequence of European development due to the enslavement of African people. This was the era of European colonialism.

“The growth and effectiveness of the African resistance to European oppression and exploitation eventually made direct European colonial domination impossible. Struggles of national liberation of our people emerged throughout Africa and the world. Like Africans in Africa and abroad, the peoples of Asia and Latin America were challenging colonial white power in their homelands. The movement created by Marcus Garvey enlisted membership and support from more than 11 million Africans worldwide.

“Throughout Africa – in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, Guinea, Congo, Rwanda, Egypt, etc. – our people were rising up, sometimes in arms, against our white colonial oppressors. African resistance made it necessary for Europeans to disguise their rule and exploitation by retreating to a new form of indirect colonial rule, called neo-colonialism by Kwame Nkrumah, the first elected post-colonial leader of Ghana.

“Neo-colonialism is white power in black face. It is white power that has been forced by the rising consciousness of the masses of oppressed African people to hand over the obvious trappings of formal political power, while at the same time maintaining control of the economy, which defines the limitations of African political power. Neocolonialism rests on the same structures of imperialism that were initiated by the slave trade.

“The political significance of neo-colonialism lies in its ability to hide the exploitative hand of white power by assigning the responsibility for the growing emiseration of the African masses to its allied though subordinate black puppet stand-ins. Neo-colonialism makes it difficult for the African masses to understand the role of imperialist white power in our lives. Neo-colonialism also creates the rationale for the continued division of Africa by setting the colonial borders as the domain within which neo-colonial rule and neo-colonial puppets flourish. This also creates conditions under which it is impossible for Africa to deal with its imperialist exploiters as a single entity, making it easier for our enemies to exploit each of the microstates separately.

“Economically, neo-colonialism prevents the development of a necessary all-African national economy by locking the economic life of our people within the same colonial borders which were created with no other logic than to facilitate the transfer of our wealth from Africa to Europe, North America and increasingly Japan. Neo-

colonialism prevents Africa from developing a single trade strategy and leaves Europe and North America with the sole ability to set prices for African imports, exports and all trade. It is the necessary condition for the continuing expropriation of African wealth by Europe and North America.

“Neo-colonialism contributes to the economic crisis with which Africa now finds itself confronted. Today only seven percent of Africa’s formal trade takes place within Africa itself, meaning that 93 percent of African trade is simply continued expropriation of African resources by our historical oppressors and exploiters. Additionally, 83 percent of the Gross National Product of the combined African countries goes to pay debt which has been accumulated by the neo-colonial rulers of Africa through the rigged European created and dominated trade relations born of slavery and colonialism. This means that Africa has access to only 17 percent of its own resources after paying the manufactured debt. Once the neo-colonial primitive petty bourgeoisie takes its cut from this, the African masses are lucky to achieve five percent of what they have produced.”

Neo-colonialism: the final stage of imperialism

The calamitous consequences of neo-colonialism that Nkrumah predicted have all proved true. Our Africa is riven with internecine wars of indescribable horror. These wars are often a direct result of intra-imperialist contention for Africa’s resources, the birthright of all Africans, at home and abroad. Our people have been transformed into refugees on our own land and we are afflicted by any number of diseases, great and small, all of which are deadly in their implications because of our imperialist-derived poverty that rests on neo-colonialist structures and relationships.

Our people suffer from Cape to Cairo, from Morocco to Madagascar, as the saying goes. Africa, so rich in natural resources, is being ground down by poverty and a general state of wretchedness. Throughout Africa we suffer from curable diseases, and guinea worm regularly incapacitates huge sectors of our population in West Africa. Our people on the Continent of Africa have been besieged by imperialist induced biological warfare in the form of the AIDS virus that is estimated to kill millions of Central Africans in the next few years at present rates, and by “drought” and “famine” created by colonialist domination of our agriculture which ruins our soil and kills millions of Africans every year.

The social indices that measure the quality of life tell a dismal story in Africa. Infant mortality, life-span (which is in the 40s in some areas), homelessness, jobs and production, trade, etc., all portend even greater misery for our people.

Presiding over this state of affairs in almost every instance are neo-colonialist stooges whose loyalties are given to their masters often in the form of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank.

The lives of our people are also filled with other forms of violence, much of it political such as that normally and traditionally inflicted upon the people as a condition of neo-colonialist rule.

These neo-colonialists have sold Africa to their imperialist masters as a dumping ground for radioactive materials and other toxic wastes that Europe and North America find too dangerous for internal disposal within Europe and North America.

Our rain forests are being sold to Japanese, European and North American imperialists. Even as our people suffer from a lack of housing and firewood used for fuel because imperialism will not allow African industrialization, barges loaded with timber from our life-giving forests are being sold for delivery to lands most Africans will never see.

Struggles involving competing sectors of the African primitive petty bourgeois neo-colonialists are costing the lives of thousands of Africans who only want the capacity to experience life such as it is lived by the peoples in the imperialist countries.

In Southern Africa the question of land has become a dominating issue. Much of the political fallout revolves around the former settler colonies of Rhodesia, now known as Zimbabwe, and Azania, still known by its settler colonial name of South Africa.

While there is currently an imperialist frenzy surrounding the seizure of land from the white settlers by the radical petty bourgeois Zimbabwe African National Union government in Zimbabwe, the question of land is an explosive issue throughout the Continent. Increasingly the government of Namibia, formerly South West Africa, is becoming more involved in this issue of land hunger by the dispossessed African masses and in South Africa where white settlers, comprising 10 percent of the population own 87 percent of the land, an area four times larger than England and Northern Ireland combined, righteous rebellion simmers just below the surface.

The emergence of a dependent primitive African petty bourgeoisie, a social force that achieves its identity primarily through its relationship to imperialism, created the condition for

the implementation of neo-colonialism. The primary function of the African petty bourgeoisie is the production and reproduction of neo-colonialism.

Indeed, it is this symbiotic relationship between imperialist neo-colonialism and the primitive African petty bourgeoisie that lays bare the inability of the petty bourgeoisie to lead our revolution for liberation and unification to its conclusion. The primitive petty bourgeoisie can only satisfy its aspirations short of revolutionary unification, therefore its aspirations are at odds with those of the African working class.

Only the African working class and poor peasantry in Africa and dispersed around the world, have an absolute need to remove the borders that lock us into poverty and despair. This is because all the borders prevent the development of the political and economic forces required for our survival and development.

One people—one organization led by the African working class

Despite the profound contradictions facing our people in Africa, Africans are struggling on every front and in nearly every location to change our conditions. The missing factor is an international movement of African revolutionaries based in the African working class and poor peasantry that is committed to the total destruction of the imperialist structures that separate us and steal our resources. Such a movement would recognize that the African revolution is one revolution to be fought on many fronts, within Africa and abroad.

The struggle to build such a movement has been unrelenting. It is a struggle that has its basis in the initial onslaught on Africa by Europeans that resulted in Africa's capture and our descent into colonial slavery and dispersed around the world.

Since the 18th Century this struggle has achieved more coherence and self-consciousness as a movement designed to unify Africa and African people in a common effort of liberation.

During the first quarter of the 20th Century, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, became the benchmark by which all our efforts would be judged. And rightfully so. The UNIA united Africans worldwide into an organization with a membership in the millions. It also created all the symbols associated with independence and self-government, including the red, black and green African flag. The Garvey movement demonstrated the potential for the

creation of a common national economic life that could raise up our people out of the imperialist-imposed poverty we continue to suffer from even today.

The economic ventures of the UNIA included everything from dry cleaning establishments, recording studios and even a steam ship line to facilitate international trade among Africans and the world. The significance of this feat is made obvious by the fact that more than 80 years later Africans do not own shipping lines to speak of and the formal trade among African micro-states account for only about 7 percent of all so-called trade.

There have been African unity movements since Garvey, some of which, working with various imperialist countries, even arose in opposition to Garvey. But none has been able to match Garvey's movement in its ability to unite and inspire the African masses in Africa and abroad. Therefore, it seems natural that we consider what it was about Garvey's efforts that made him successful in building a movement where others failed.

Two main, critical, elements differentiated the efforts by Garvey from others, some of whom were his opponents:

First, Garvey's movement was based essentially in the African working class. While there were obviously some leaders from the primitive petty bourgeoisie, Garvey was despised by many of his African opponents precisely because of his identification with African workers. This reliance on the African working class gave the movement an automatic mass base that could never be duplicated by the petty bourgeois organizations. Numerically the African primitive petty bourgeoisie was such a small social force, and, unlike Garvey, they were not able to produce a program within which the African working class could see its own selfish interests.

The Garvey movement was not necessarily conscious of itself as a working class movement. Because of ideological imperialist intervention by so-called white socialists in the affairs of the UNIA and of African people, the UNIA developed an antipathy for those who identified themselves as socialists. Nevertheless, Garvey's lack of clarity on this question did not diminish the working class character and anti-imperialist militancy of the UNIA. Nor did it prevent Garvey from sending congratulatory messages to Lenin and Trotsky upon the success of the Russian Revolution with which the two men were associated.

Secondly, unlike the Pan Africanist movement that was comprised of an assortment of class and ideological forces and organizations with their own separate interests and separate strategies, the UNIA was a movement comprised of a single center. There was one strategy for the entire organization. There was one philosophy that bound its entire

membership. There was one set of objectives, agreed upon by its entire membership, that came together in annual meetings to establish policies, adopt resolutions, reaffirm their commitments and elect their leadership.

Build the African Socialist International

This is our call today — to develop a single revolutionary organization of African socialists who are committed to the total unification and liberation of Africa under the leadership of the African working class aligned with the poor peasantry.

Our effort to build the African Socialist International is occurring at a critical time in world history. It is an effort made more significant by our need to take full advantage of the current and deepening crisis of imperialism.

The crisis is one that has been brought on by the cumulative impact of various unrelenting struggles of the world's peoples since the second imperialist world war, fought by imperialists to re-divide the world and our resources among themselves.

The intra-imperialist conflagration made possible a degree of democratic space within the colonial territories that contributed to the eruption of cascading anti-colonial national liberation struggles not only in Africa but worldwide. From India to China and Kenya to Ghana; from Cuba to Vietnam and Palestine to Nicaragua and the domestic colonies of Africans within the U.S., to Uruguay and Iran, progress in the world was being characterized by the determined efforts of the world's peoples to defeat imperialist domination and to re-achieve self-determination.

Herein lies the origin of the current crisis of imperialism. For it is the parasitic relationship between white power imperialism and the rest of us that explains the material differences in the conditions of existence separating citizens of the U.S. and Europe and Africans at home and abroad, even those inside the U.S. and Europe.

U.S. imperialism, the leader of world imperialism since the conclusion of the second imperialist war, is indisputably the most powerful military force in the world and the strategic enemy of African liberation and the world's struggling peoples. The U.S. has assumed for itself the responsibility of rescuing imperialism from its crisis spawned by our struggles to take back control of our lands, resources and freedoms for our own use.

However, the imperialist crisis caused by these struggles undermining absolute imperialist control over the world's resources also led to contention between the imperialist

powers themselves. The U.S. response to imperialist crisis has been to openly re-impose the threat of gunboat diplomacy and, when it so chooses, direct white colonial military intervention as primary foreign policy initiatives.

To the consternation of its imperialist allies the U.S. has assumed a unilateralist modus operandi that makes clear that its objective is to resolve the crisis of imperialism in a manner that will guarantee permanent U.S. world hegemony. This move toward world hegemony, though designed to resolve the crisis of imperialism in fact deepens it, however. It causes and exposes ruptures between U.S. imperialism and some of its imperialist allies as well as most of the citizens of Europe who, while enjoying the fruits of our colonial domination by imperialism, are resistant to U.S. hegemony over their own lives.

The chaos that currently characterizes conditions in Africa and is partially responsible for the urgency of our efforts to build the African Socialist International has within it both positive and negative features for imperialism in crisis. Chaos in Africa serves the strategic aims of imperialism because it continues to block Africa's access to our own resources and thereby leaving our resources open to continuing vicious imperialist expropriation. On the other hand chaos contributes to imperialist crisis because instability born of chaos creates such a dangerous atmosphere and uncertain conditions that imperialist "investment" and extraction become evermore problematic.

Our task as revolutionaries, as African Internationalists, is to deepen the crisis of imperialism by giving organization and ideological clarity to the struggle for the emancipation of Mother Africa and her children scattered worldwide. The result of this effort, focused on the founding of the African Socialist International, will deprive the imperialist parasite of its lifeblood and contribute, with all the other struggles for self-determination, to the liberation of all of humanity.

Ours can be the strategic blow given to a foul social system born of our oppression and exploitation, a social system that requires as a condition of its own existence that relations between the world's peoples be defined by the unhappy dialectic found in the existence of workers and bosses and slaves and slave masters.

The crisis of imperialism is responsive to the fact that imperialism has lost any dynamic character it may have once possessed. Imperialism is not a developing, growing system any longer. It has become a system fighting for its very life and all its efforts today represent an attempt at self-preservation. Hence, it is clear, that in historical terms, we are

approaching the final offensive in our struggle for liberation and the destruction of imperialism.

We are on the right tract in history at the right time in history.

Forward the international party of the African working class

We must be clear that the international organization necessary to liberate and unify Africa and our scattered nation is a political party in the form of the African Socialist International. With one party rooted in the African working class and allied with the poor peasantry we will have captured the best aspect of the Garvey movement of the 20th Century.

However, unlike Garvey's UNIA we will have an organization conscious of itself as a revolutionary instrument in the hands of the African working class. This will also distinguish our organization from such formations as those that have been characterized as "fronts," "people's organization," "congresses," "unions," "conventions," etc.

The revolutionary party is one that recognizes itself as an instrument for the achievement of the selfish interests of the African working class. The interests of African workers can only be realized by the defeat of imperial domination in Africa and the liberation and unification of Africa and her oppressed children scattered worldwide.

"Fronts" and other such formations are instruments used in revolutionary movements of the past by the African petty bourgeoisie who needed the energy, militancy and numerical strength of African workers and peasants who have been the backbone of every liberation effort in Africa and elsewhere. But the African petty bourgeoisie can never afford for the workers and poor peasants to become conscious of our own selfish interests, which can only be realized through total African liberation and unification.

The party is the advanced detachment of the African working class while the "fronts," etc., steal the energy and militancy of African workers in order to win power for the petty bourgeoisie at the expense of the African working class and poor peasantry. They are organizations within which class issues go unrecognized and class contradictions go unresolved. The centrality of the African working class is obscured.

Acceptance of the basic principles of this document by African militants and socialist create for us the ability to move forward with a call for the creation of the Founding Congress of the African Socialist International. At this congress leaders will be elected for

our International, policies established and the line developed to guide our party throughout the world.

Everywhere there are Africans in the world who can unite with the line and policies of the International, local parties can be established which submit to the discipline of the International. The parties will have the right to create general programs specific to the conditions and immediate history with which they are confronted as long as those general programs are consistent with the line of the International.

The truth is that the African Liberation Movement, both in Africa and abroad, has run into its limitations when fought within the imperialist-imposed borders. We have spoken of the retrogressive implications of the neo-colonialist borders within Africa. However, the outcome of the national liberation movements of the sixties that excited the imagination of Africans everywhere offers our most important lessons.

When we look at the landscape of Africa now “liberated” from direct colonial rule we cannot but be struck by the fact that Africans are suffering more vicious economic exploitation and oppression than we did under direct white power. Only Kwame Nkrumah and a few others fought for a united Africa once coming into power. The fact that in every instance, including those cases where political power was won through armed struggle, independence within the imperialist defined borders has only brought greater misery to the masses of our people.

This is because these so-called national liberation movements were led by the African petty bourgeoisie, even though some were quite radical. Once the African primitive petty bourgeoisie gained power within the distorted microstates it achieved a capacity to meet its needs as a social force at the expense of African workers.

The result of this reality has been a growing number of efforts to overthrow existing neo-colonial states by Africans who have been radicalized by the conditions in their respective territories. Yet, in every instance where they have succeeded they have simply replicated the system they just overthrew. Clearly, this is because there is not going to be a South African, or Nigerian or Angolan revolution with a capacity to carry out the mission of liberating Africa and our people.

The political unity necessary to develop Africa and usher in a new era of prosperity that will lift our people out of the quagmire of poverty, ignorance and violence we have inherited from various colonialisms can only be acquired through the creation of a revolutionary African Socialist International. Only such an organization would have the ability

to bring about the liberation and unification of Africa under the leadership of the African working class as its central aim.

The African Socialist International will have the responsibility of fusing revolutionary consciousness as reflected in this document with the struggles and movements of African workers and poor peasants. It will have the responsibility of forging an African Internationalist consciousness onto the workers and peasant movements, which will make it difficult for the neo-colonialists and imperialists to divide us according to region, religion or ethnicity.

The African Socialist International will have the responsibility of functioning as the advanced detachment of the African working class in all countries. It will have the objective of leading the struggle to overthrow the neo-colonial states. It will replace the neo-colonial state power with revolutionary states organized as the workers and poor peasants in arms. The mission of the workers will include extending the revolution throughout Africa in concert with other African Internationalist-led workers and poor peasants in other neo-colonial states.

Then we would have the South African Front of the African Liberation Movement, along with Nigerian and Spanish and Jamaican and U.S. Fronts, among many others. This would give our movement the organizational framework to implement the liberation and unification of Africa under the leadership of the African working class, aligned with the poor peasantry. This would give our revolutionary movement immediate access to the genius and resources of the entire African emerging nation, dispersed as it is throughout the world.

This would also change the character of our struggles for African liberation abroad. Instead of the concept of "solidarity" with the African Liberation Movement, every Front would be a strategic component of that movement.

For when we speak of the African Liberation Movement having reached its limitations when fought within the imperialist imposed borders we are also speaking of those movements abroad. The ASI raises up the significance of Fronts of our movement in the U.S., England, Germany, Spain, the Caribbean and other places where the oppressive plight of our people is so alarmingly similar. This is because the existence of dispersed Africans represents the transfer of African colonization to the various parts of the world to which we were taken by gunpoint during the slave trade and other colonial experiences.

Beyond Pan-Africanism to African Internationalism

Those of us committed to the creation of the African Socialist International refer to ourselves as African Internationalists. We distinguish ourselves from Pan Africanists. This is because Pan Africanism is a broad concept that embraces almost anyone, whatever his ideology, who chooses to be so defined. The African Revolution cannot be fought to a successful conclusion without a revolutionary worldview in possession of a single, disciplined, revolutionary organization guided by revolutionary theory.

The creation of such an organization is the primary task of our times. It would reaffirm the strategic objective of liberating and unifying Africa under the leadership of the African working class aligned with the poor peasantry while allowing the various Fronts of our revolution around the world to develop tactics and strategies for local struggle consistent with our general strategic objective.

In his 1970 book, *Class Struggle in Africa*, Nkrumah addressed some of the issues contained in this paper. The value of his words is significant for our tasks today:

“The African revolutionary struggle is not an isolated one. It not only forms part of the world socialist revolution, but must be seen in the context of the Black revolution as a whole. In the U.S.A., the Caribbean, and wherever Africans are oppressed, liberation struggles are being fought. In these areas, the Black man is in a condition of domestic colonialism...”

“The core of the Black Revolution is in Africa, and until Africa is united under a socialist government, the Black man throughout the world lacks a national home. It is around the African peoples’ struggle for liberation and unification that African or Black culture will take shape and substance...”

Nkrumah ends his work with these profound words:

“The total liberation and the unification of Africa under an All-African socialist government must be the primary objective of all Black revolutionaries throughout the world. It is an objective which, when achieved, will bring about the fulfillment of the aspirations of Africans and people of African descent everywhere. It will at the same time advance the triumph of the international socialist revolution, and onward progress towards world communism, under which, every society is ordered on the principle of – from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

With the founding of the African Socialist International we will create the necessary vehicle to accomplish the aims of Nkrumah, Garvey, and all the other of our brothers and sisters who committed themselves to the emancipation of our long suffering people.

Izwe Lethu I Afrika!

Build the African Socialist International!

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*For more information contact: The African People's Socialist Party, 1245 18th Avenue South, St.
Petersburg, Florida, U.S.A., 33705. 727-821-6620 APSP.Uhuru@verizon.net*