

THE IDEOLOGY OF BLACK SOCIAL SCIENCE

OUR SEARCH for understanding through social analysis is conditioned by how we resolve several long standing controversies, not the least of which is the relationship between ideology and science. In the case of Africans captured in the West, particularly in the United States of America), this has all too often been resolved by black intellectuals acquiescing to a white social science. This has meant swallowing the most favorable white positions without piercing through to the implicit ideological assumptions really used to guide history with white interests. Many black social scientists seemingly have not really known the extent to which science is inevitably a handservant to ideology, a tool for people to shape, if not create, reality. This article is an attempt to clarify how the ideology-science controversy might be dealt in a new way, a way serving black interests in our struggle for liberation.

There are two questions that we shall attempt to clarify and begin to resolve:

1—What is the necessary connection between ideology and social analysis for the Black Liberation Struggle?

2—How can black people begin to construct revolutionary thought based on an analysis that leads to a commitment to struggle for liberation.

SOcial Science involves two levels of analysis, empirical and theoretical. One level deals with organizing a set of systematically collected indicators of what's

happening (like answers to a set of questions), while the other is an attempt to develop propositions explaining as wide a range of empirical relationships as is possible. An ideology incorporates these two components of social science under two aspects peculiar to its own makeup. Ideology involves the prophetic vision of an ought as well as the action orientation of a moral commitment to serve. Thus, ideology combines an interpretation of the social world with a moral commitment to change it.

Consider for a moment the notion of social class as a dynamic historical concept that reflected both the fundamental structure of society as well as the basic components of conflict and change. One's class position has a total relationship to power and its function, specifically the ownership and control of the economy. The concept, social class, in the United States is a sterile classificatory term used to merely suggest a hierarchial ordering of individuals by some social measure like education, income, or occupation. Marx is often ruled out as an ideologue, whereas science is at best used for classification. But upon further examination, it becomes clear that what appears to be science in the United States is at best a set of sophisticated tools used in the interests of a quite developed and comprehensive set of ideological beliefs.

Given this distinction, one can easily see that most of our analysis has served a white

Abd-al Hakimu Ibn Alkalimat (Gerald McWorter) is a young social theoretician who received the Ph.d in social theory at the age of 23 from the University of Chicago. He taught for a year at Fisk, the alma mater of W. E. B. DuBois, where he worked with John O. Killens and an informal cadre of eight black professors in arousing the consciousness of Fisk students. McWorter then moved to Spellman College where he remained for a year before returning to Chicago.

by ABD-L HAKIMU IBN ALKALIMAT
(GERALD McWORTER)

ideology, while black ideologies have lacked the support of a systematic social analysis. This observation is supported by Harold Cruse as he develops a critical history of contemporary black culture:

... the black American as part of an ethnic group has no definite social theory relative to his status, presence, or impact on American society. . . . Coming at a moment of racial crisis in America, there has been no school of social theory prepared in advance for black power that could channel the concept along the lines of positive, radical, and constructive social change.¹

White social science has dealt with black people on the basis of two theoretical models, one based on attitudes, the other on behavior. The attitudinal approach focuses on prejudice, the use of generalizations prejudging a group of people or institutions in guiding actions toward them. The behavioral approach is based on discrimination, differential treatment of people who belong to certain identifiable groups. Empirical research in the last 50 years has produced data that on the lowest level of theory can be organized under one of these two concepts. And this covers most of what passes for social analysis of race problems in the United States.

But these two approaches are really two different profiles of the same face, the hideous face of white racism. If one were

to examine the social analysis of race before the empirical studies at the University of Chicago (Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Louis Wirth, etc.), one would find more honest theoretical discussions expressed the world of white racism. Empirical research has resulted in progress toward having access to more incidents of social reality, but has also resulted in the falsification of our understanding. The challenge of organizing vast amounts of social data under manageable theory has resulted in low level theory like the concepts of prejudice and discrimination. We have been looking at the trees and ignoring the essential nature of the forest.

THE FACT is that black people have been oppressed by a system unified on the basis of white racism. Racism is a concept that speaks to the total system, the essential nature of the social order as perceived by black people. While the concepts prejudice and discrimination, are helpful on an analytical level of theory because they are so easily operationalized and quantified, racism is the more appropriate theoretical description of the problem precisely because it captures the qualitative character of the oppression. It's only recently (since Malcolm and the Kerner Commission Report on Civil Disorders) that the concept of racism has become fashionable, and that our understanding of the problem has escaped the static descriptive theory of prejudice and discrimination.

1. Harold Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution*, pp. 202-203.

Another important aspect of this set of two theoretical models (prejudice and discrimination) is the underlying ideological assumptions. Both prejudice and discrimination are normally conceived as continuous dynamic phenomena. Once one is able to discover strong correlations between indicators of prejudice and/or discrimination and other social data, it is possible to devise programs to structure reality as one wishes. So the most positive white approach has increasingly been strengthened because even social science supports certain programs for solutions to racial problems. For example, if educational achievement is a strong inverse correlate of prejudice (as one gets more racially integrated quality education, one gets less prejudiced), then it follows that placing a strong investment in education is a good integrationist policy. But those black people of the hip world know that everything is everything, and that the whole is not the sum of the relationships between its parts.

Take Robert Park as an example of the white liberal position. He used a sociological frame of reference including five major concepts—contact, competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. His work was based on the optimal outcome of assimilation whereby the black man would be totally transformed from an African into an American, just another cat walkin' and workin'. Moreover, he held that black nationalism (or what he called race consciousness) might well be a true expression of what some black people believed, but that assimilation was an inevitable outcome. His position was clearly stated:

Now that Negroes are free and have become race, if not class, conscious, they are in a position to state their case in more articulate fashion. However, the authors of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution have provided them with a ready made ideology.²

2. Robert Park, *Race and Culture*, p. 307.

3. E. Franklin Frazier, "The Failure of the Negro Intellectual," *Negro Digest*, February, 1962.

Now this was a white dude trying to trick us into diggin' what some slave owners developed about us (remember that they counted us as three-/fifths of a man).

Robert Park was the man most responsible in the social sciences for developing a liberal white game to run on black people. He and his colleagues at the University of Chicago were more responsible than any other graduate school for training black social scientists; perhaps their most important student was E. Franklin Frazier, a brother who was strong enough to collect a lot of important data but fell victim to theory based on the racist, white liberal ideology. However, he wasn't totally a pawn of Park's theory he was able to state in 1962 that:

In view of the Negro's history, the Negro intellectual and artist had a special opportunity and special responsibility. The process by which the Negroes were captured and enslaved in the United States stripped them of their African culture and destroyed their personality. Under the slavery regime and for nearly a century since emancipation everything in American society has stamped the Negro as subhuman, as a member of an inferior race that had not achieved even the first steps in civilization.

There is no parallel in human history where a people have been subjected to similar mutilation of body and soul. Even the Christian religion was given them in a form only to degrade them. The African intellectual recognizes what colonialism has done to the African and he sets as his first task the mental, moral, and spiritual rehabilitation of the African.

But the American Negro intellectual, seduced by dreams of final assimilation, has never regarded this as his primary task.³

ASSUMING the challenge laid forth by Brother Frazier is indeed a primary task of black intellectuals today. We must develop a social theory consistent with a revolutionary black ideology so that what we know will be worth knowing. We must know that which makes us really see/experience the future/past because it gives us "identity, purpose and direction." As the Bird-Coletrane revolution has redefined spirit-emotion, we must set ourselves to

the task of totally redefining our mind-action. As an initial move toward this, we will now attempt to survey a basic set of concepts used in white social science (and quite familiar to all of us), and present an alternative act of concepts for social analysis based on a Revolutionary Pan-African Nationalist ideology.

<i>Terms of White Social Science</i>	<i>Terms of Black Social Science</i>
Negro (non-white)	African (black)
Segregation	Colonization
Tokenism	Neo-Colonialism
Integration	Liberation
Equality	Freedom
Assimilation	Africanization

Social science has constructed a set of terms to explain black people and their experiences and, for the most part, these terms have suffered from being based on sterile analytical theory that attempts to *classify* social reality and not *explain* its essential nature. Perhaps the best illustration of this begins with the word-concept *Negro*. This term had practically no currency until 1880 when a group of middle class black people rejected the terms African and colored; among them were Washington and W. E. B. DuBois. Horace Mann Bond quotes DuBois as saying "It was a short word; it was a strong word; I knew that it had been debased, but I thought it could be resuscitated, and given dignity!" However, when we test the word to see what it does or doesn't do, we find out how denigrating and freakish it makes people who use it to describe themselves.

WHAT A PEOPLE call themselves has meaning because it links them to their ancestors and refers to their role in human history. The only ancestors linked to the word Negro are people who were slaves to white people, people who were told they were inferior burdens to white people. Negroes were told they had no past and had never made significant contributions to human civilization. We were told that the Egyp-

tians were white, and that only by having white blood could a black person develop enough to be somebody and make a contribution. In sum, the only people identifying themselves with the term Negro are people who have suffered the racist oppression of the white West. The Negro is held to be a creation of the West since slavery was supposed to have completely separated us from Africa, making all that we are what they have made us be. (See Arnold Toynbee, Gunnar Myrdal, William Faulkner, and Daniel P. Moynihan for illustrations of the above).

Consistent with the term Negro is the use of *segregation* as the major concept to describe the U.S.A. race problem. Segregation means to keep separate, something that everybody believes in and disagrees with. Not many folks these days are against sexual segregation of public bath rooms, but most homes have communal toilets. Most sensible people agree that the segregationist laws applied to voting on the basis of age should be changed, but not so drastically as to include absolutely everyone regardless of age. Etc. The point is that when black folks have used this term we have meant something entirely different from the denotative meaning of the term. And rightly so, since our essential problem is not the result of being kept separate from white people (whether they do it, or we do it).

Following the term segregation is the concept *integration*. It's only logical that if the problem is segregation the two alternative solutions are integration or annihilation. The white liberal line is that by integration black people with white people everything will work itself out. We have even been militant about this and declared that *desegregation* (essentially meaning the removal of segregationist barriers) was insufficient, as is the *tokenism* involved in allowing a very few blacks in where previously all blacks have been excluded. All of this is in large part based on the goal of *equality*, a near synonym for integration that means having the same life chances as white people. White people have been the

standard for all of our goals, since the problem was that they kept us from them and what they had going for themselves.

UNDERLYING the goals of integration and equality is the same belief expressed by Robert Park: "The race relations cycle which takes the form, to state it abstractly, of contracts, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation, is apparently progressive and irreversible."⁴ *Assimilation* is the ultimate form of progress in the white liberal analysis, a process that more accurately should be called "anglo-conformity." Since the values and norms of white people are those served by the social coercion of institutions in this society, it is inevitable that if any changing is going to happen it will be all those people different from white folks becoming more like them. Even E. Franklin Frazier warned black people of this eventual outcome when he wrote:

In the final analysis, complete racial de-segregation would mean the dissolution of the social organizations of the Negro community as Negroes are integrated as individuals into the institutional life of American society.

The theoretical orientation reflected in these terms is white and Negro. Black is not beautiful nor is it designed to survive. This is a theoretical orientation designed to wipe us out and convince us that our eventual disappearance from the scene is an inevitable outcome in the flow of human history. What we need is a theory of survival. Our understanding of the world must take full account of our past and propel us into the future with glorious possibilities. Let us listen to the prophetic voice of the Mystic Onedaruth (who was called John Coltrane) sing Africa and get on with the work of constructing a social theory giving us the power and strategy to struggle toward capturing that spirit and bringing such a new revolutionary Africa into human history.

4. Robert Park, *Race and Culture*, p. 150.

As listed in the right column in the chart, we will now present a set of concepts more consistent with a black frame of reference. Instead of using the terms Negro and non-white to describe who we are (as does the U.S.A.'s secular Bible, the census), a black social science would refer to us as black people, as African peoples. Black is preferable to non-white because it is positive and distinct, rather than negative and based on white as the standard. However, the more significant name for black people is *African*. We should use African because it is our best link with our ancestors. It describes a continent in the world within which our forefathers built glorious civilizations and maintained high standards of black cultural values. And as *African* ties us to a positive past, so it foretells of our future.

The major arguments against using the concepts African include the following: (1) while we are "descendants" of African peoples, we are American Negroes because we were born here. Brother Malik Shabazz used to answer "If a cat gave birth in an oven, she wouldn't have biscuits, she'd have kittens." (2) Robert Park and E. Franklin Frazier (and others) have demonstrated that slavery and the Middle Passage removed all of African culture from our way of life, and on the plantations of the Antebellum South, we became Americans the best way we could.

The most obvious refutation of this is our music, our dancing, and the way most of us look. In addition, consider these facts: (1) Lorenzo Turner has found an overwhelming number of African words and syntax patterns in our speech, as well as moving fraudulent white scholars who denied this by simply indicating that they had no knowledge of African languages; (2) Africans were brought to this country as recently as 100 years ago, so that many families can trace their lineage back (Alex Haley has recently done this for his own family by uncovering a wealth of factual information to be presented in a full length book as well as a feature movie); and (3) our basic religious beliefs and practices

have never really changed (same of the middle class mimicking of white folks), and so we have strong attachments to astrology, charms, emotional communion with the spiritual world, and an unshakable belief in the Gods (something white people have never really had integrated into their culture successfully).

SO WE ARE AFRICAN PEOPLES, black folks. Therefore, we can understand quite readily that the real problem is not our being segregated from white people in the West; the problem is our being in the West in the first place (and most regrettable of all, the U.S.A.). It follows, then, that the problem is *Colonization*. This concept of colonialism has definite meaning as a dynamic historical concept. It refers to the interaction of two whole communities of people by which one community attempts to colonize the other and make it subordinate. The concept refers to the oppressive group as colonizers, and the oppressed as the colonized. It implies that a society with this set of communities is bound together by coercion, and is in conflict under normal conditions. And the term suggests a history of before, during and after itself. Colonization is a total attempt at subordination, involving a people's values, beliefs, rituals, norms, institutions, myths, and its history.

Decolonization is a concept referring to attempts by the colonized to sound a total rejection of being colonized, a negation of the colonial oppressors and everything they have created resulting in colonial dependency. Since self-hate is instilled into the colonized, love of self is an important part of decolonization. In the U.S.A., black had always been negative until we were able to make it acceptable to black people; now "Black is Beautiful, and it's so beautiful to be black." Colonization made us distrust one another and only support white people. Now we are self-oriented and concerned about the internal development of our own community. Where once we went to get

culture and good food, we now reject it because we know where we live. Soul is not only what's happening, but where it's happening as well.

The process of decolonization is more toward *liberation*, that process of becoming independent and completely positive about one's self and one's community. It also involves social structures, enabling the black community complete control over its destiny though all political, economic, and social institutions. Liberation is, however, necessarily conceived as a worldwide process. If the forces of racism are to be defeated, then it must be so everywhere, if it is to be so anywhere. Wherever you go to visit black brothers and sisters, you will find traces of concerns like Western white governments, Coca-Cola, Chase Manhattan Bank, United Fruit Company, the oil companies, and General Motors. These are institutional manifestations of white imperialistic colonial forces that must be contained and rendered helpless if we are to achieve liberation and self-determination.

The forces of oppression use several sophisticated schemes of subversion against us as we move toward liberation. Colonialism in its most illusory form is *neo-colonialism*, either the partial but not total control of the black community by black people (*i.e.*, having a black government but continued white control of the economy: Gary, Indiana or post-Nkrumah Ghana) or the use of Negroes to represent the covert interests of whites. Concerning African countries, Nkrumah writes:

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus, its political policy, is directed from outside.⁵

Within this framework of analysis, it is easy to see that programs like "Black Capitalism" are neo-colonialist tricks, because black people have no real capital of their own; besides, America has developed past small, entrepreneur capitalism into corporate, monopolistic capitalism. For example, Citizens Trust Bank,

5. Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism; the Last Stage of Imperialism*, p. ix.

one of the oldest black banks in the country and located in affluent Atlanta, was forced to seek a loan from a major white bank in order to construct a new building.

FANON speaks to this case through his analysis of Algeria: "True liberation is not that pseudo-independence in which . . . (there is) an economy dominated by the colonial past. Liberation is the total destruction of the colonial system. . . ."6 To accept the idea of black capitalism is to accept the position of being a ward of the white man, a highly prized servant who is content with crumbs from the mildewed cake of whites rather than being about the business of baking a fresh black one with a black recipe to satisfy black appetites.

Of course, a major question is whether any reforms can occur that would not be neo-colonialistic. But this is a question that can only be answered once we have a clear set of goals in mind that will begin to give form to our liberation. Our essential goal must be one of *Freedom* from white people and their oppressive, dying system, and not equality with them. There can be no freedom in the present system; it must undergo fundamental changes or be replaced entirely. The only way for it to be changed is to have a new constitutional convention and reconstruct the basic political documents serving as the basis of the social order. We must have a new constitution, a new flag, new symbols, new songs, a new economy, a new way of relating to the rest of the world, a new commitment for peace and justice everywhere. The new society must be hip in the hippest sense of that beautiful word. We must be an answer to Frantz Fanon when he calls:

Come, then, comrades; it would be as well to decide at once to change our ways. We must shake off the heavy darkness in which we were plunged, and leave it behind. The

6. Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, p. 105.

7. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 552 and 255.

8. Maulana Ron Karenga, *The Quotable Karenga*.

new day which is at hand must find us firm, prudent, and resolute . . . we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.⁷

And if anybody gets in our way trying to impede the marching progress of human history, to quote a brother, "we must strike them dead before God gets the word."

But if in our freedom we are responsible to ourselves and really move to "set afoot a new man," then we must begin to conceptualize what kind of positive action will give real meaning to our freedom. Inasmuch as we acknowledge that we are Africans in the Americas who have suffered the tortures of colonization, then it is appropriate that once free we will re-orient ourselves to who we really are (and have always been). We must be committed to *Africanization* for, as Maulana Ron Karenga teaches: "To return to tradition is to take the first step forward." And for those who think of this as wishful romantic utopianism (especially in this highly technological industrial society), he would emphasize the role of cultural values:

Cultural background transcends education. Having a scope is different from having a content.

A value system has three functions: it gives some predictability of behavior, it is an ultimate authority and it serves as a means of security.

We stress culture because it gives identity, purpose and direction. It tells us who we are, what we must do, and how we can do it.⁸

So one real manifestation of Africanization is the re-orientation of our cultural values, a process utilizing all of ancient Africa both as the source of inspiration, as well as the source of truth by which our ultimate judgements are made concerning the present; indeed, Africa before the white man will be the cultural basis for our prophetic vision of Africa's children after the white man.

AFRICANIZATION is essentially the same for black people in the United States of America just as it applies equally as a vision of our tomorrow for all African peoples

colonized on the continent of Africa, or wherever we have wandered or been taken. The basis for our social, political, and economic systems can better be found among the communal traditions of our people rather than among those who have used their systems to oppress if not annihilate us. We must actively pursue concepts like the African Personality, Negritude, African Socialism, Ujamaa, and Pan-Africanism just as our kin folk on the African continent are doing. We must conjure up our ancestral spirits and let them guide us through inspiration.

While this has been simply an exploratory attempt at clarifying two alternative and opposing sets of concepts, it is still quite possible to summarize some of the major differences between the two perspectives. First, the conceptual approach of white social science is only useful on the analytical level of classification since for each term the social content must be specified. The concepts presented for a black social science clearly suggest a specific socio-political content to be understood as the race problem. Moreover a second difference is that the white conceptual orientation is quite local to the U.S.A., whereas the concepts for a black social science are related to an international analysis of African peoples wherever they are found. The model of colonialism is one which has currency among our brothers and sisters throughout the world, though up until now, we have at best thought of it as an analogue. Our understanding must be couched in concepts on the same level as the problems we attempt to understand.

The last major difference deals with models of society and notions concerning social change. The conceptual framework presented as white social science reflects an *equilibrium model* of society based on

evolutionary change. All things happen in due course as the society evolves to a higher level based on more universalistic rational standards of operation. The concepts of a black social science reflect a *conflict model* of society bound together by coercion and changed by revolution. To put this in more pointed terms, the white concepts are based on the myth of salvation for the jailer, while the black concepts more directly speak to the reality of getting black folks out of the jail.

AT THE BEGINNING of this discussion, we attempted to raise two general questions pointing the way toward a black theory of revolution. This is important because we need a revolutionary ideology that reflects the utility of a black social analysis, the inevitable correctness of African prophecy of black gods creating a new man and the immortality of communal love as the basis for a commitment to kill and die for the liberation of all black people. In other words, we need to get this shit on, and for that we need a revolutionary script for the terrible black drama of cosmic forces that we're about to rain down on these pitiful ofays.

Immamu Ameer Baraka teaches us:

. . . let Black People understand that they are the lovers and the sons of lovers and warriors and sons of warriors. . . .⁹

Ramos Mor teaches us:

Is now the heyday Mister John C tells of. . . .

And these whiteys are saying that if you get out of line U gonna get your assed kicked.

Now think about what you have just read in this paper and decide what the hell you're gonna do? We have to do? Africa. Revolution. Love. God. Family. YOU. Revolution. Africa.

9. Immau Ameer Baraka, *Black Fire*, p. 303.