

BUILDING UNITY FOR THE REVOLUTION
THEME FOR BLACK LIBERATION MONTH 1981

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Long range is Unity is essential precondition for REV
REVOLUTION

BUILDING UNITY FOR THE REVOLUTION

Peoples College dedicates BLACK LIBERATION MONTH 1981 to the theme of

1. BUILDING UNITY FOR THE REVOLUTION. We intend to continue developing our theme
2. for the decade, REVOLUTIONARY/BLACK POWER IN THE 1980s, by taking up an analysis of the concrete forms of unity that are currently developing in the Black liberation movement. This analysis has provided the basis for what we
3. call the Theory of the Three Unities, and this theory can help to guide us as we build resistance and struggle in the remaining years of the 1980s.

- We must begin our analysis of unity with a clear understanding of the
4. current situation: the deep and worsening economic and political crisis facing the U.S.A. and the entire world capitalist system is not just a temporary setback. The problems that we are all having--unemployment, inflation, declining standards of living, etc.--are not going away. They are permanent
 5. conditions of capitalism in crisis that we will have to live with until we change things in a fundamental way. As the great revolutionary leader Mao Tse-tung, once said, "a room will stay dirty until you sweep it!" Our conditions will get worse until we change them.

- From our study of history we can easily see that Afro-American people always have been exploited and oppressed. Within this universal condition,
7. however, Blacks have been subordinated in three different political and economic roles: as slaves, as sharecroppers, and as factory workers. So
 8. while the central theme of Black history is the struggle against racism, national oppression, and class exploitation, the Black liberation movement has had to change in response to the concrete form of the oppression of Black people at any particular time. [Thus, while our search for unity today must make use of our knowledge of the past, it cannot be a mere repeat of the past
 9. since things have changed. (See Introduction to Afro-American Studies by Peoples College).

[Very imp]

Unity of opposites.
-2- Where there is oppression there is struggle

10. Further, in any discussion of unity a distinction has to be made between spontaneous developments and conscious planning. The masses of Black people and existing reformist organizations will usually respond in some way to all developing conditions. Mostly, these are spontaneous developments of self-defense. On the other hand, revolutionary Black power requires a process of planning and new forms of unity. We need to examine both.

Three Spontaneities

11. As the oppression of Black people gets more intense---genocidal attacks on Black children in Atlanta and Black men in Buffalo, police murder in Miami (McDuffie) and in Chicago (Ramey), and KKK murders in Greensboro, RACISM again replaces the facade of liberalism as the dominant orientation of the society. It is necessary to make a distinction between individual racism, institutional racism and societal racism, because each must be fought in different ways. Societal racism is white racism sweeping throughout the entire society setting a permissive climate for brutal attacks on Black people, both planned and spontaneous.

13. In response, Blacks unite around sentiments of national unity that are rooted mainly in our will to survive: "in unity there is strength" and "if we've got the same problem, then we should work for a common solution." In some cases this follows the established Black leadership and is contained within the system, e.g., in Atlanta under the Black mayor (Maynard Jackson).

14. However, in other cases, this becomes a violent eruption whereby masses of Black people rebel against the system, usually against economic targets but with the potential of focusing on political targets as well (e.g., Miami and Chattanooga). In most cases, the problems are experienced by poor Blacks. Because of their poverty, they are attacked as the most vulnerable Black people. In this way, the current crisis leads to an increase in the signif-

not narrow
- but to be built on

icance of racial/national oppression and a response of militant nationalism.

16. Over the long haul, however, the basic contradictions in a capitalist society are those between the haves and the have nots, the capitalists and the workers. As we stated in last year's Black Liberation Month: *news* *in basically a class contradiction*

Our enemy is the capitalist system and all of the basic problems that Black people face are rooted in and caused by this system. By capitalism we mean a system in which the masses of working people are exploited and paid just enough to get by while a handful of wealthy capitalists make billions of dollars though not producing anything. The misery that the masses of people are suffering are thus caused by capitalism. For Black people, economic exploitation is compounded by racist discrimination.

17. It is in large measure due to the economic contradictions that racism can be fueled, as exploited whites attack Blacks instead of attacking the white ruling class exploiters. The economic ills have to be suffered by all people, Black and white, who are not in the ruling class or part of the privileged middle class. *political economy*

18. For example, the Reagan right wing government plans to destroy the minimum wage by hiring youth at starvation wages. This will save the bosses money, by using youth as scabs to replace higher paid adult workers. Black and white youth will both be dragged down by this, as will Black and white workers. A similar impact on both Blacks and whites will come down with the threatened cut in social security and food stamps.

20. Within this, of course, a greater percent of Blacks will suffer, although whites will be the largest number involved. The capitalists have revved up their propoganda machine to justify the cutbacks and place the burden on the backs of workers. For example, the president of Chrysler, Lee Iacocco, and Doug Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers Union (both Chrysler board members), are asking Chrysler workers to take a pay cut to save their jobs. In this case, mass resistance takes the form of militant rank-and-file trade union and consumer reform struggles.

21. The working class consumer, the position most Black people are in, must fight on both fronts: they must fight to increase their wages on the job because of double digit inflation. And they must fight to decrease the escalating prices for rent, transportation, and food just to stay even.

In sum, we see that the majority of Black people are making three dominant spontaneous responses to the current crisis: [militant nationalism, trade unionism, and consumerism.] These spontaneous responses to worsening conditions are useful, but not sufficient to solve the problems we are facing. In a sense, it's like putting bandaids on a cancer when only cobalt radiation will cure the disease.

23. Peoples College holds the view that only Black Power under Socialism has a chance to solve the problems that the masses of Black people are facing. As we said in last year's Black Liberation Month News:

Black Power of the old type in 1967 was consciously reformist--"the last reasonable opportunity" for capitalism to avoid revolutionary change. Black power of the new type-Revolutionary Black Power-fights for immediate reforms but understands that only fundamental revolutionary change will free Black people in the U.S.

24. [Black Power under Socialism-Revolutionary Black Power-is the appropriate strategic orientation for the Black liberation movement in the 1980s.]

But we understand that there are different views about how Black people will get our freedom. And these different views are precisely why we need unity. As we said last year:

We must develop major efforts to define our struggle in terms of our common enemy versus the vast majority of people. We must develop a new and principled unity that does not attempt to sweep other differences under the rug. This new unity must maintain the necessary unity against our common enemy. And, at the same time, it must allow and encourage study, discussion, and non-antagonistic struggle over our secondary differences.

We sought to contribute to this by stating our views in Black Liberation Month

News-1980, REVOLUTIONARY BLACK POWER IN THE 1980s, and in the introductory
25. editorial for Marxism and Black Liberation: A New Theoretical Journal, and
by concretely engaging in several unity building activities and struggles.

We have learned much since last year. This article will now turn to sum-
26. ming up the leading aspects of our movement to determine the route from the
spontaneous short-run solutions to a conscious revolutionary process for a
successful liberation struggle. *what are the 2a of our movement.*

TOWARD THREE REVOLUTIONARY UNITIES

27. Black unity must be fought for on three basic levels: in struggle over
concrete issues, in conferences through discussion and persuasion, and in ritual
acts of cultural resistance.

28
STUDY
Within these three motions, Peoples College and all other revolutionary
organizations must (1) develop an anti imperialist force that serves to unite
and not split the people in motion; (2) support democratic mass leadership and
not try and take over leadership from the masses; (3) provide consistent poli-
tical exposure to demonstrate that tactile battles must be guided by a conscious
revolutionary strategy; and (4) lead by example in linking revolutionary theory
with the concrete practice of mass struggle.

29. [For the advanced, it is also necessary to draw clear lines of demarcation
on ideological questions.] [Hence, we must strive to build unity in our day-
to-day battles with all who will do so (politics), but we must maintain
theoretical clarity for our revolutionary overall orientation, to fight for
Black liberation and Socialism (ideology).] 30

a. masses
b. advanced
TAKE IT TO
THE MASSES

03
BUILD
UNITY
AROUND
CONCRETE
ISSUES
A. BUILDING UNITY AROUND CONCRETE ISSUES. Unity must involve a joint
commitment to do something together, to use our resources in specific and con-
crete struggles linked to defending and promoting the needs of the broad masses.
Peoples College has proposed an overall framework for this in the Ten Point
Program for Revolutionary Black Power in the 1980s (printed at the end of this

article). For Black Liberation Month 1981, we want to focus on five (5) key battle fronts in which this type of unity is currently being developed. In this way, we can give concrete definition to the Black liberation movement. 32.

33. (1) Fighting Discrimination and Expanding Affirmative Action. Tens of thousands of people stood firm against the racist charge of "reverse racism" in court cases against affirmative action like Bakke (in higher education) and Weber (in the steel industry). But now we see that this was a mere dress rehearsal under Carter for the full assault of the barbarian Ronald Reagan. 34. We have a new opportunity to join and assist the masses, who are likely to throw themselves spontaneously into battle. 35.

36. [Revolutionary forces should link this fight for affirmative action against discrimination to the fight against Reagan and every other cut back in social services until we can effectively indict the capitalist state itself.] In the early 1980s, Reagan will provide us with a target. Revolutionary unity re- 37. quires that we turn all our anger, local and national, against this racist, right wing conservative as we fight all forms of discrimination. [One of the requirements of revolution is that people totally lose hope in the government. They will then realize that the people must take over!] 38.

39. (2) Fighting the Draft and Imperialist War Preparations. Peoples College has given leadership to Study and Struggle, a youth/student organization that has embarked on a vigorous campaign against the draft. They are making a long march among the masses of Black Students in Illinois turning their anti-draft petition into an active political education struggle against imperialist war preparations. Again, while the masses actively fight against the draft because of impending war, revolutionary unity must be built by turning this into an anti-imperialist movement against the capitalist system which produces war. Again, Reagan must be made the symbol of unjust war, and civil war at home 40.

against our oppressors must become our alternative. (See article on this)

(3) Fighting the KKKlan and Police Repression. People College endorses the general line of the pamphlet called The Greensboro Massacre: Critical Lessons for the 1980s by the Paul Robeson/Amilcar Cabral Collective and the Greensboro Collective. A leaflet in that campaign stated:

What we should do is to unite all the people who can be united to take up the struggle against the KKK and their accomplices in the city government and higher up. All Black people, whatever class they are in have a stake in this fight. Because in times of economic crisis, such as the present, Black and white workers need to be united more than ever. The KKK's poisonous racist propaganda and program are also harmful to white workers. We should build the broadest possible unity between all the Black churches, political and community groups to build for a massive march and rally to put forward the demands from the community....

Concerned citizens in the Black community and those who support our struggle should join with us to share their ideas and take up this fight. We can't let the KKK get away with murder. We will never go back to the way it used to be.

(4) Fighting to Save Black Institutions and Communities. The potential for Black Power is being destroyed by the liquidation of institutions in our communities. Peoples College unites with such organizations as the Black New York Action Committee in the fight to save Sydenham Hospital in Harlem, NY. Further, we unite with the Black community in Milwaukee in their fight to save North Division High School, a predominantly Black high school which is threatened to be destroyed by a desegregation plan.

Further, what started as urban renewal has now become a full scale attempt to seize back the central cities for middle class, professional whites. From high priced condominiums, to rehabs to coops, poor working class and minority people are being run out of the city. While the entire minority community must fight to survive, by any means necessary (e.g., rehab by the current renters, etc.), revolutionary unity can be built by exposing the joint workings

41.
Read/
Study
Basically -
corrective

42.

43

44.

of the government and the financial real estate interests. Key battles that will take place in local politics (including control of city hall) should also be taken up by revolutionary forces. These will help us to train for the revolutionary seizure of power. (See Electoral Politics: Its Problems and Prospects by Bill Epton).

Rev electoral program

*45.
focus
1983
national
race*

46. (5) Fighting for the Liberation of Africa. Our fight for the liberation of Africa is at a critical stage. Our main work at this time is to fight against the Racist Reagan Regime. It was almost a well-kept secret that Reagan had on his state department transition team a white reactionary who is a registered agent for the racist South African government. (Also see the article on Africa in this Black Liberation Month News)

47. B. BUILDING UNITY THROUGH DISCUSSION. Unity requires clarity of agreement and disagreement between different political forces. It also requires open public discussion aimed both at furthering clarity on new issues that emerge, and to expand areas of agreement.

In 1980, there were major national conferences designed to build unity among various political forces in the Black community, both in the mainstream and in the Black liberation movement. In general, this has been a progressive trend.

48.

MAJOR BLACK CONFERENCES TO BUILD BLACK UNITY IN 1980

Date	Place	Attendance	Name
1. February	Richmond, VA	1,000	National Conference for a Black Agenda
2.	New York City	750	Unity Forum for Black Artists
3. June	Brooklyn	3,500	National Black United Front
4. October	Atlanta	NA	National Black Workers Organization
5. November	Philadelphia	2,500	National Black Independent Political Party
6. November	Chicago	200	National Black Museum Conference
7. November	Atlanta	1,200	Black South Literature and Art Conference

Our general summation is that there are five key tasks to be dealt with as we build revolutionary unity through these continuing discussions and conferences:

49. [1. We have to unite with the masses of participants (mainstream) while reversing the right to criticize consolidated incorrect practices, sell out leadership, and opportunism.] An example of this is the statement by Peoples College at a plenary session of the Black United Front meeting in Brooklyn:

We came to Brooklyn because we felt this meeting had some potential. However, it would be irresponsible for us to not speak our minds. We were consciously excluded from this process. And we made efforts to build unity. But we were excluded because of ideological labels, because there were political stands taken behind closed doors, and because people had dropped some lugs...

But we came anyway! Do you understand that? We came anyway because we believe that at this time unity is essential. We believe in unity and we believe that we have to fight for a principled unity or the unity is worth nothing.

We believe that a united front is essentially not an organizational question. It's a political question that involves the unity in action of progressive forces united against the common enemy. This we believe is the essence of the united front. And it is for that very reason that we accept the challenge to unite with our brothers and sisters who we have been divided against in the past, because we believe that we have a common future in victory against imperialism.... And any political differences between genuine fighters against imperialism can be overcome. And it is in that spirit that we, in fact, embrace the call for unity in action and it is in that spirit that we are going back to Chicago in an attempt to build a real united front from the bottom up.

*Build unity
deep among
the masses*

50. [2. We have to struggle to forge an anti-imperialist force within these conferences.] But we must avoid the super "left" error of trying to unite on too many issues prematurely, trying to get everybody to see everything our way or nothing at all. We should be listening to each other and sharing political understanding (line) and political practice (experience). The formation of a

Sumation of practice

51-
labor caucus at the Philadelphia meeting is an initial attempt at this method of building a revolutionary potential within the Black movement, and developing revolutionary theory and links with the overall revolutionary workers government.

52 [3. Peoples College, as a revolutionary organization, thinks that the task of all revolutionaries is to spread the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism.] As we say in the introductory essay to Marxism and Black Liberation: A New Theoretical Journal, we seek "to promote revolutionary scientific socialism in theory and practice. The overall objective of all our efforts is Black liberation based on revolutionary socialism here in the U.S.A.... For this we are guided by the advances made by the world revolutionary movement, the tradition of Marxism..., the science for the masses of people to use in changing the world."

53. Our main focus in these conferences must be on the political and not the ideological, on the concrete and not on the abstract. It is most important to sum up practice, establish revolutionary lessons (things to do and things not to do), and to develop concrete practical plans. It is counterproductive to debate ideas in the abstract, as happened too often over the last few years. While the activists at these conferences might not be flocking to Marxism-Leninism in the coming year, we have to be understood by them and gain their respect by our willingness to discuss the issues but mainly by our hard work and struggle.

54. [On the other hand, there are self-defined "communists" who are making serious errors, especially narrow nationalist errors (that is, maintaining a Black separatist position on strategic matters like building a revolutionary party).] We must discuss this and similar questions in the future to achieve greater clarity. This should include additional study by all of us. There

Build Unity

J5. has been a lot of apparent progress in the last five years and we don't want to mess it up with super-revolutionary posturing and styling.

J6. [4. We must keep politics more important than organization.] There are some people who want to discuss organizational structure and selection of leadership for a year or so and not engage in any serious struggle. This is an obvious attempt to liquidate the positive leadership that must be given now to mass spontaneous struggle. The Black United Front leadership forces in Chicago is particularly guilty of this. What good is a united front if it doesn't do anything, if it doesn't fight back?

J7. C. BUILDING UNITY WITH THE RITUAL CULTURE OF RESISTANCE. The role of culture is often misunderstood. In part, this is because the cultural nationalists have overstated the role of culture as the major force in struggle, in part it is because revolutionary socialists have understated its role in the struggle.

Peoples College supports the continued development and popularization of what has emerged as rituals of resistance--holidays that objectively unite people. There are three holidays that have objectively functioned to oppose racism (Black Christmas/Kwanzaa, African Liberation Day, and Black Liberation Month). And there are two that we think can link the Black liberation movement with the world revolutionary movement (International Women's Day and International Workers' Day).

Further analysis and study must be made of these various holidays to avoid making these days something that they are not, especially letting them become a substitute for militant struggle. But we think that these five observances objectively constitute the development of a ritual culture of resistance.

Danger of tradition
giving into

Old vs. establishing new
directed by revolutionary
consciousness.

Anti
racist
posture
?
How
is it
really
narrow
nationalism

UNITY IN THE RITUAL CULTURE OF RESISTANCE

From Mainstream -----	To Resistance
White Xmas (December 25)	Black Christmas (Dec. 25)
	Kwanzaa (Dec. 26-Jan. 1)
Independence Day (July 4th)	African Liberation Day (May 25)
Black History Month (February)	Black Liberation Month (February)
Mothers Day ()	International Womens Day (March 8)
Labor Day ()	International Workers Day (May 1)

Distribution

Churches /
Mainstream

Where are the advanced

1971 -

collective understanding of Basics of Unity

- 1 BLM & PC
- 2 3 spontaneities
3. Theory of 3 priorities
 - a. Study
 - b conference
 - c culture
4. Study
5. Struggle

BLM news will deal w/ actually what's happening in movement.

Red from the inside out.

OPPRESSION

Which comes 1st
chicken or egg

When

exploitation

What you create

— " you get

What they get (surplus)

275 3822

Keep Striving

Out Drive to Wilson Exit
West 4 Blks post
NO side 1222

BLM 81 — 10 yr PC History
How long?