

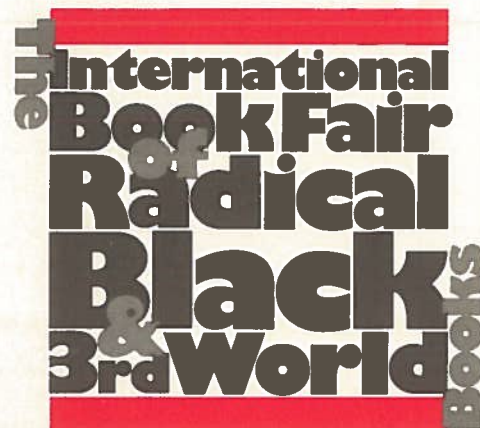
SPEECH BY JOHN LA ROSE AT OPENING OF THE 7TH  
INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR OF RADICAL, BLACK AND  
THIRD WORLD BOOKS.

On behalf of the Organising Committee I wish to welcome you to the 7th  
International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books.

Each Book Fair, each Book Fair Festival, sets us on the road of exploration,  
of discussion, of dialogue, of discovery, of the relationships between  
culture, social life, politics, science and society that will bind us in an  
unswerving tie in the struggle for change. Each stage, each moment of global  
effort to build a society rooted in the ideals of the French Revolution of  
1789, societies striving genuinely for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,  
each herculean effort encounters its brutal ruthless and uncompromising  
opposite. Today we remember the Sharpeville Six in South Africa and the  
people of the Nicaraguan Revolution whose lives are threatened by the ruthless  
intervention of the U.S.A. We express from this platform our solidarity with  
the Sharpeville Six, with the peoples of Southern Africa and of Central  
America who are committed to creating a better world. Whatever the con-  
sequence, however long it takes or the difficulty, the victory of the struggle  
for workers and peoples power is certain.

We have invited to open this book fair Abdul Alkalimat, African American  
academic, intellectual, activist with whom this book fair has forged links  
almost from its inception. At this time when African Americans after three  
long, hectic decades have been striving, attempting, with other groupings,  
to put a more humane stamp on the face of America we welcome him to open this  
Book Fair.

ADDRESS BY ABDUL ALKALIMAT AT THE  
OPENING OF THE 7th INTERNATIONAL  
BOOK FAIR OF RADICAL BLACK AND  
THIRD WORLD BOOKS AT THE CAMDEN  
CENTRE, LONDON, 17th MARCH 1988



This address is dedicated to the students who have given their lives in the democratic struggles for quality education, and for fundamental social change in general. These students can be found in every country as students are always found among revolutionaries willing to give their lives so that others might benefit, so that others might finally realize the full potential of what it is to be human. Specifically, my dedication is to:

Sammy Young Junior murdered in Tuskegee, Alabama in 1966

Samuel Hammond Junior

Delano Middleton

Henry Smith

murdered in the Orangeburg massacre of students at South Carolina State in 1968

Bunchy Carter

John Huggins

murdered in the fight for Black Studies at U.C.L.A. in 1969

Denver Smith

Leonard Brown

murdered in 1972 at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

There are no monuments to these students except in the ritualized memory of our living movements. It is crucial to call the names of those who have fallen, for in them, we build strength and courage in those yet to march into battle.

For oppressed peoples and exploited classes, however, formal educational experiences have been a terrible trick, a process whereby the youth are forced to internalize the language, culture, and an outlook that rationalizes and legitimates their oppression. Therefore, the price for skills and occupational status has often been the negation of self, community and class.

It has been outside of schooling that this oppressive education has been challenged and the slogan raised EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL LIBERATION. The two most powerful forces have been the traditions and innovations of popular culture and political resistance, especially when these merge in the rituals, life style and collective consciousness of rebel youth. This has been the power of reggae, not only in Jamaican society but throughout the world. Progressive reggae musicians have been the master musicians of this new revolutionary generation.

Our experiences in Black studies reflects an attempt to bring the politics and culture of our movement of resistance and change inside of the alien educational schools. We adopted the slogan "ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY" as a way to guide our struggle and stay on course.

Academic excellence is a universal standard for all education, but it is NOT the most important value. Rather, the critical point must first and always be social responsibility.

To master nature one must be academically excellent in the natural sciences, mathematics and computers. However, we face ecological disaster and nuclear annihilation because the most excellent academics serve the real rulers of science and technology who are socially IRRESPONSIBLE in their ruthless plunder of the world, their wild and ambitious greed, and their failure to prepare a legacy of survival for the generations yet unborn. So the real choice is profits and power for a few versus well being and freedom for the many. The mindless meritocracy of capitalism must be challenged because it sustains a system of oppression and death. Our goal must be education based on a democratic process of meeting peoples needs to live together and in nature without antagonistic contradictions.

Today the youth of many countries are at the cutting edge of the battle for democracy and socialism, facing the rulers of settler colonialism, neocolonialism and the states of advanced capitalism and developing socialism as well. We see courage and commitment that shakes the world imperialist order as we witness the birth of a new revolutionary generation of youth, a generation baptised in blood, nurtured in prison cells and burning with the desire to realize that universal slogan "FREEDOM NOW".

We can see the youth of South Africa (Azania) who emerged on the scene in the 1970's in a new way after the Soweto uprising against the cultural aggression of Bantu education schemes; the Arab and African youth in France who challenge racist domination in the 1980's and who begin to merge with the broader French students movements and contribute to the radicalization of their challenge to the educational policies of the French state; and most recently the Palestinian youth who dare to challenge the authority of the fascist Israeli state from within its domination of the West Bank and Gaza.

In every society, the youth of every generation are caught between the necessity of absorbing from their elders their social identity and skills to survive, and yet their very survival often requires the negation of what their elders offer. This is as true for the dominated and exploited peoples as it is for the rulers. One can see a dialectical tension between tradition and innovation. Since the continuous emergence of capitalism and its historical motion based on continuous revolutions in science and technology, innovation is the leading aspect and must always be so, while tradition is the foundation for and the ultimate reservoir for change. This is an eternal dialect.

In every society this dialectical interplay between innovation and tradition comes into sharp focus within the process of education. The youth must be educated, must possess the knowledge, culture and skills created by and passed on from previous generations (from their own society and from throughout the world). As well, these youth must not be imprisoned by this tradition, but armed with it, so that their experiences can be confronted anew enabling them to make their distinctive contribution too, TO NEGATE, TO TRANSFORM AND TO AFFIRM.

The great Afro-American intellectual W.E. DuBois put our educational goal for social liberation of humanity quite clearly:

While it was true a thousand years ago, that human toil and energy was unable to feed, clothe and shelter all mankind, this has not been the case since the beginning of the nineteenth century; and today, with what we know of natural forces; with the land and labour at our disposal, with the known techniques of processing material and transporting goods, there is no adequate reason why a single human being on earth should not have sufficient food, clothing and shelter for healthy life.

To accomplish this in the societies of the world is the great challenge facing humanity, specifically the labouring masses and their allies. We must face this challenge in three ways:

1. The challenge to be honest. This means facing up to the BARBARISM of our experiences, objectively and systematically by utilizing the tools of science, historical and dialectical materialism. Only in this way can oppressed peoples and exploited classes of any and all of the nations of the world be truly and essentially honest about the world and their condition in it;
2. The challenge to dream. This means daring to imagine a world free of oppression and exploitation (INDEED, if our rulers get us to dream of nuclear winter surely we can counter this with visions of a class less society). We must imagine a world in which human life is sacred above all else, and exploitation of human social groups is finally and completely ended.
3. The challenge to win. This means the fight to organize and mobilize mass resistance, class war on all levels to achieve peoples power and democratic socialist societies in which Kings and Emirs can't exist but common people are empowered as their own leaders.

In sum, intellectuals, artists, and activists must all become students of revolution and immerse themselves in this political work. Our political work must be rooted among the masses and carried out on a professional level. What is required is that our feet march in the struggles waged by the masses, our hearts throb in empathy with their

joys and sorrows, while our heads rationally use the science of revolution to develop strategy and tactics.

Our marching orders are no where more clearly put than in that great poem FOR MY PEOPLE written by Margaret Walker (1942):

Let a New earth rise. Let another world be born.  
Let a bloody peace be written in the sky.  
Let a second generation full of courage issue forth,  
Let a people loving freedom come to growth,  
Let a beauty full of healing and strength  
of final clenching be the pulsing in our spirits and our blood.  
Let the martial songs be written, let the dirges disappear.  
Let a race of men now rise and take control!

It is in this spirit that I cherish my task today. So, for the students and youth especially, and for all of us as we face the awesome task of creating the 21st century, I DECLARE THIS 7th ANNUAL RADICAL BLACK AND THIRD WORLD BOOK FAIR TO BE OFFICIALLY OPEN.